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Mission Statement

The European External Action Service (EEAS) is the diplomatic service of the EU. Democracy, human rights and the rule of law are at the core of its action. The EEAS supports a rules-based international order. It represents the EU and engages with partners across the world and in international organisations through its global network of EU Delegations. The EEAS contributes to international peace and to the development of European defence through its military and security structures, including by deploying missions and operations. It provides a high level of awareness, offering a platform to EU Member States for the sharing of intelligence analysis.

The EEAS works under the authority of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and supports him/her in the conduct of the Union's common foreign, security and defence policy. The EEAS addresses both longstanding challenges and threats and emerging security issues, including conflicts, hybrid and cyber threats, disinformation and foreign interference. Building and consolidating international partnerships is at the centre of its engagement.

The EEAS works for and with EU citizens and promotes the interests of a stronger Europe in the world, working to increase the resilience of EU societies. It ensures a crisis response capability to protect European citizens and support EU Member States in the provision of consular assistance, notably in times of crisis. Through strategic communication and public diplomacy, the EEAS enhances the global projection of the EU.

The EEAS strives to be a dynamic, efficient and inclusive service. Valuing talent and the professional excellence of its staff, it is committed to building an organisation where gender equality and the respect for diversity are core values. It works to create a common European diplomatic culture. Results-oriented, it generates ideas and initiatives that meet the requirements of an evolving diplomacy, and acts upon them.

The EEAS cooperates with all EU institutions in a spirit of openness and partnership to ensure the overall political coordination, effectiveness and coherence of the EU's external action. It assists the Presidents of the European Council and of the European Commission in external relations and works also with the European Parliament and with all other European institutional partners. It cooperates closely with EU Member States to deliver policies with global reach in support of equality, prosperity and sustainability.

The EEAS Annual Activity Report is a management report of the Secretary-General of the EEAS to the HR/VP. It is the main instrument for management accountability within the EEAS and constitutes the basis on which the HR/VP takes his/her responsibility for the management of resources, including the efficiency and effectiveness of internal control systems and an overall assessment of the costs and benefits of controls.

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1.1 Introduction by EEAS Secretary-General

This report looks back on the European External Action's (EEAS) work in 2021 – another year heavily overshadowed by the Covid-19 pandemic and security crises in the Sahel, Afghanistan and Ethiopia later in the year. Regardless of the unprecedented challenges, the EEAS delivered results. The lessons learnt from the previous year and the EU's resilience and collective alertness during these challenging times helped to an extent, but posed a serious challenge to our level of preparedness for crisis response. Consequently, we started last year a review how to better adapt our structures and working methods in Headquarters and the Delegation network to cope with the growing challenges.

In spite of the above mentioned difficulties, the EEAS, with its Headquarters in Brussels as well as 144 diplomatic missions and offices and its military and civilian Missions, maintained a high level of support to the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission (HR/VP), who was at the forefront of global efforts to enhance multilateralism and tackle the global pandemic and security crisis.

One of my first priorities since I took office as Secretary-General was to adapt the EEAS' organisation chart to reflect the ever-changing geopolitical context in which the institution operates and to ensure a better distribution of resources and responsibilities that will assist in achieving its political objectives. This led to the largest reorganisation of the service since its creation (see Annex 2 of this report). Since September 2021, the EEAS has a new structure with six large departments covering geographic areas of the world – Africa, the Americas, Asia and Pacific, Europe, Eastern Europe & Central Asia, Middle East & North America and a strengthened department dedicated to the European agenda and multilateral relations. The creation of the 'Office of the Secretary-General' ensured better coordination among the numerous responsibilities in the institution's broad portfolio.

The organisational overhaul of the EEAS structure and working methods was led by a bottom-up participatory process (involving all staff at different levels, both in HQ and Delegations) that identified further challenges the EEAS needed to address in order to become more effective and more relevant both inter-institutionally and abroad. These included – among others – developing a genuine diplomatic culture within the service, a clear sense of mission, a better integration of Delegations in all strands of EEAS work, and the gender and diversity perspective.

On this last issue, progress was made to take this important policy forward with the appointment of the EEAS Ambassador for Gender and Diversity, the #NoWomenNoEUDiplomacy initiative (including creating posts of deputies to the Director, developing further the female talent pools notably through strengthening networks and mentoring, making training on unconscious bias compulsory for managers), and dedicated efforts to enhance selection procedures. This and

initiatives taken so far have led to encouraging numbers in the 2022 rotation as regards appointment of female Heads of EU Delegations and Deputy Heads of Delegations.

The new EEAS Mission Statement reflects both the new realities identified throughout the participatory process and the mission of the EEAS as the Diplomatic Service of the European Union; a dynamic, efficient and inclusive service for all the institutions, enhancing the global projection of the EU.

Strategic communication activities were also heavily impacted by the pandemic as it proved to offer fertile ground for spreading false data and information. To this end, the EEAS strengthened its international cooperation with EU Member States, EU institutions and the NATO. To also reflect better the workload and the importance of the response towards disinformation, the reorganisation brought together the two Strategic Communications Divisions and the Policy Planning and Strategic Foresight Division under a new Directorate for Strategic Communication and Foresight.

As required by the Financial Regulation, the Annual Activity Report provides a detailed analysis of the management of EEAS resources, and is published on the EEAS website in order to ensure full transparency towards the Budgetary Authority and the EU citizens. The Annual Activity Report is structured under three main sections, namely achievements (political and administrative), management of resources and assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of EEAS' internal controls. Similar to last year's Annual Activity Report, a dedicated subsection "EEAS administration response to the Covid-19 pandemic" (2.2.3) summarises the main EEAS actions related to the pandemic and to the institution's duty of care towards its staff and its more than ever vital business continuity.

I am very proud of the EEAS' efficiency, effectiveness and expertise that allowed facing and overcoming the many challenges of 2021 and delivering on the political priorities of the HR/VP and the "geopolitical Commission". It is also important to continue drawing on the lessons learnt from every year into the pandemic in order to make the EEAS best equipped for similar crises. Currently, the focus of the HR/VP and the EEAS are the EU's support to Ukraine against external threats. The unprecedented developments in Ukraine target the stability of the EU and the EEAS is contributing to ensure that in the end peace prevails.

[e-Signed]

Stefano Sannino

1.2 Key political issues in 2021

Much of the EEAS' work to support the HR/VP in delivering on the policy priorities established by the European Council, the Council, and the European Commission in the areas of external action and security and defence was still overshadowed by the Covid-19 pandemic. However, by the end of the year, most attention was taken by the acceleration of dangerous developments in Russia, which led to the unprovoked and unjustified armed aggression against Ukraine in February 2022. The EU was prepared to react swiftly, decisively and in unity with sweeping sanctions against Russia and Belarus as well as with financial, humanitarian and political support to Ukraine. The target of this aggression is not only Ukraine but stability in Europe and the international peace order; its consequences will be far-reaching.

Delivering on cross-cutting and thematic policy priorities

Despite the continued consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, EEAS kept on working towards restoring trust in the multilateral institutions and advancing the global agenda including through coordinated responses to global challenges, such as **health, climate, digital and migration**. In February 2021 the Joint Communication and Action Plan on **strengthening the EU's contribution to rules-based multilateralism**¹ was adopted, inspired by 75 years of the UN. The EEAS coordinated with multilateral institutions on economic issues, such as responsible supply chains in Covid-19 times, human rights and labour rights, while contributing to strengthening cooperation with the G20, notably on debt relief measures to low-income countries, and with international financial institutions such as the EIB and EBRD.

In 2021, the lessons learned from the pandemic were put into action when EEAS engaged its efforts to strengthen the WHO and promote the launch of negotiations on an **international treaty on pandemic preparedness and response**. The EEAS Task Force on **Vaccine Strategy** was able to develop its activities in support to EU coordinated efforts towards a global distribution of the vaccines.

The **connectivity and digital transition** agenda was further developed through mobilising the EEAS Digital Diplomacy Task Force and the network of EU Digital Ambassadors, which collaborated closely to prepare an external digital policy, for adoption in 2022. The EU-India Connectivity Partnership concluded in May 2021 and Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions on Connectivity in July 2021 contributed to the adoption of the Joint Communication "Global Gateway" in December 2021.

¹ (JOIN(2021) 3 final) 17.2.2021

Despite the second year of the Covid-19 pandemic resulting in a further backsliding of democracy and human rights, EU continued to defend the place of human rights at the centre of EU foreign policy. Council Conclusions on a human rights-based post-Covid-19 recovery were adopted in February 2021. Furthermore, a EUR 1.5 billion Global Europe Thematic programme on **Human Rights and Democracy for 2021-2027** was announced by the President of the Commission at the US Summit for Democracy at the end of the year.

Throughout 2021, Strategic Communications activities were impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and the spike of **disinformation** that has been a key feature of this crisis. EEAS efforts in this area focused on raising awareness, training on disinformation campaigns and emerging threats, and on establishing a network of 27 Strategic Communications officers in EU Delegations. In response to growing FIMI (foreign information manipulation and interference) related dynamics across the African continent, the EEAS provided additional support and collaboration with Delegations and Commission services. Furthermore, in line with the European Democracy Action Plan, it developed a **FIMI Toolbox** setting out the range of response options across four priority areas: situational awareness, resilience, disruption, CFSP or diplomatic responses.

2021 marked the start of implementation of the Gender Action Plan III, including the EU Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Policy, aimed at contributing to internal and external policy coherence on **Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment and the WPS agenda**, addressing the high expectations across the world of strong and visible EU political and diplomatic leadership in this area.

Following the entry into force of the new **Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021- 2027**, by the end of 2021, the EEAS had adopted almost one hundred **Multiannual Indicative Programmes (MIPs)**, setting up the country, regional and multilateral priorities for the period 2021-2027, ensuring that international cooperation and development policy is an integral part of EU external action.

Delivering on geographic policy priorities and Common Security and Defence Policy

Despite many difficulties due to the Covid-19 pandemic, in 2021, the work programme with the **African Union** was fully on track, framing EU's relations with the African countries along the four priorities re-confirmed at the EU-AU Ministerial meeting in Kigali in October: investing in people – education, science, technology and skills development; strengthening resilience, peace, security and governance; migration and mobility; and mobilising investments for African structural sustainable transformation. Following the meeting, all efforts were deployed towards preparations of the EU-AU Summit, scheduled for February 2022. Through adopting two revised strategies (on the **Horn of Africa** and **Sahel**) the EEAS showcased an

integrated approach to conflicts and crises based on partnership and mutual accountability.

Transatlantic relations received a significant boost in 2021 with EU-US Summit in June 2021 setting out “Joint Transatlantic Agenda for the post-pandemic era”, launching a number of flagship initiatives such as high-level dialogues on Russia and security and defence, EU-US Trade and Technology Council or a joint EU-US Covid Manufacturing and Supply Chain Taskforce amongst others. At the 45 years of EU’s official cooperation with Canada, EU and Canada confirmed their ambitious agenda for cooperation at the Summit in June. A major effort was taken by the EEAS to intensify the bi-regional relations between EU and **Latin America and the Caribbean**, resulting in the EU-LAC Leaders’ meeting in December 2021 and further deepened in the HR/VP’s mission to South America in November, giving a new impetus to EU’s engagement with the region. Furthermore, the Caribbean Regional Protocol of the new Agreement between the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) and the EU (**Post-Cotonou**) was signed on 15 April 2021, laying the foundation for a renewed relationship with the region, capitalising on the results of current cooperation and contributing to the EU geopolitical ambitions.

Regarding **Asia**, the EEAS contributed towards a successful year in EU’s policy towards the **Indo-Pacific** region. Through the adoption of the Council Conclusions and later the Joint Communication on implementation of the “EU Strategy on Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific”, the EU stepped up its strategic engagement with the region, aiming at maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific for all, while building lasting partnerships on matters from prosperity, green transition, ocean governance or the digital agenda to security and defence. With the withdrawal of foreign troops from **Afghanistan** and the take-over of Kabul by the Taliban, the EEAS provided urgent support in the evacuation of expatriates, as well as local employees and their families from Kabul. The EU Special Envoy for Afghanistan engaged in dialogue with the Taliban-appointed interim government around five benchmarks defined in Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions of September. The Special Envoy consulted with likeminded and regional actors to share analyses and harmonise messaging to the Taliban. The EEAS continued to promote the EU’s interest and values in Asia by organising productive summits and leaders’ meeting with **Japan**, the **Republic of Korea** and **India**. The EEAS continued to work towards bringing together Europe and Asia through the 13th **ASEM** Summit in November with 45 Heads of State and Government and making it one of the most important multilateral meetings of 2021. Following the military coup in **Myanmar**, the EEAS coordinated a swift and robust response, through sanctions, diplomatic and humanitarian efforts, and supporting ASEAN and the United Nations. The HR/VP made his first visit to **Indonesia** and **ASEAN** headquarters, advancing the EU-ASEAN Strategic Partnership and promoting the EU’s Indo-Pacific perspective. Relations with **China** became increasingly difficult in 2021, through the adoption of disproportionate Chinese counter-measures against EU sanctions as well as economic coercive measures

affecting the EU Single Market. The EEAS enhanced coordination and increased exchanges with like-minded partners on the challenges posed by China, and supported the EU in managing this complex and challenging relationship in a realist and multifaceted approach.

The EEAS continued pursuing its geopolitical interest in stability and security in **South East Europe** by deepening the **Western Balkans'** integration with the EU. It worked further to strengthen the EU's overall political and security engagement with the region, in line with the May and November Foreign Affairs Council discussions and as enshrined in the October Brdo Summit Declaration. Throughout the deep political crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the EEAS helped to diffuse the situation by facilitating talks with the political leaders and working on electoral/constitutional reform. The EEAS worked, within the framework of the European Council Conclusions and the 22 March 2021 Joint Communication on the State of play of EU-Turkey political, economic and trade relations, to consolidate de-escalation in the **Eastern Mediterranean**, despite challenges as regards the Cyprus issue, developments in Varosha, and the situation in the Aegean Sea. During 2021, the EEAS started to work on the implementation of the provisions of the **EU-UK** Trade and Cooperation Agreement that entered into force 1 May 2021.

During 2021, the EEAS continued to promote and implement the EU policy towards its Eastern neighbourhood, focusing on continued implementation of the Association Agreements, including their Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas, with **Ukraine, Georgia** and the Republic of **Moldova** with a particular focus on rule of law matters and anti-corruption architecture. The EEAS closely monitored and coordinated the EU's reaction to the Russian military build-up in and around Ukraine's borders (in spring and late autumn). It also supported Moldova during the gas supply crisis and stressed the importance of resilience against potential efforts by third parties to use energy as a geopolitical lever. In **Belarus**, in response to the continued human rights violations perpetrated by Lukashenko's regime against its own citizens, the EEAS worked on a proposal to establish an international accountability mechanism within the UN framework, which was adopted in March 2021 and is now operational. Regarding **Russia**, the EEAS focused its work on managing the increasingly deteriorating relations, in spite of attempts to explore possibilities for constructive engagement with Russia, such as through the HR/VP's mission to Moscow in February 2021. The European Council held two strategic debates on Russia in May and June 2021, after which the EEAS worked jointly with the Commission on a "Joint Communication on EU-Russia relations – Push back, constrain and engage". Considerable work continued on the regional and multilateral levels, with the 6th **Eastern Partnership** Summit taking place in Brussels on 15 December 2021, which endorsed the 'recovery, resilience and reform' agenda, underpinned by the Economic and Investment Plan which will mobilise EUR 2.3 billion to support post-Covid-19 pandemic recovery and sustainable development of economy. In **Central Asia**, the EEAS worked closely with Commission services to

launch the second phase of the Central Asia Covid-19 Crisis Response Programme to help the countries of the region to cope with the repercussions of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the **Middle East and North Africa**, the EEAS focused on addressing relevant challenges and strengthening dialogue and cooperation, both at bilateral and regional level, including in the context of Covid-19 recovery. A Joint Communication on a Renewed Partnership with the **Southern Neighbourhood** was adopted in February, and further welcomed by the European Parliament and supported by the Council through its Conclusions. Taking into account the Joint Communication and specific financial allocations under the new Multiannual Financial Framework, significant efforts were devoted to the preparation of new/updated Joint Documents (Partnership Priorities or equivalent) with Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Jordan, Egypt and Lebanon. The EEAS continued to support and contribute to the UN-led processes in **Yemen, Syria and Libya** as well as in **Iraq**. After the HR/VP's mission to Iraq in September, an Electoral Observation mission for Iraq's parliamentary elections was successfully deployed in October. The fifth Brussels Conference on supporting the future of **Syria** and the region in March helped mobilise donors' pledges and sent a strong signal of the EU's continued commitment to the Syrian people and to finding a political solution to the Syria conflict. As regards the **Middle East Peace Process**, the EEAS was actively engaged in the diplomatic efforts during the latest wave of violence in May 2021. 2021 was also marked by deepening the EU's relations with the **Gulf** countries, with the resumption of institutional engagement with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) after 5 years. The EEAS continued its work on facilitating negotiations over resumption of the full implementation of the Joint Commission of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and on further development of the EU's bilateral cooperation with **Iran**, with the first ever Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2021-2027 finalised in cooperation with Commission services.

On the **Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)**, the EEAS continued to work towards strengthening the EU's capacity to respond to security challenges and to consolidate its role as a global player and security provider. The EEAS continued work on the **Strategic Compass** by conducting a fruitful strategic dialogue process in the first half of 2021. That set the stage for the HR/VP to present the first draft of the Strategic Compass to the Council in November. Following the establishment of the **European Peace Facility** in March 2021, the EEAS has led the implementation of the mechanism, with EPF-funded actions amounting to almost EUR 377 million and aimed at increasing the effectiveness of CSDP and responding to the needs of EU partners. In 2021, the EU's **17 established missions and operations** continued delivering under their mandates despite the impact of Covid-19 pandemic, with **EUTM Mozambique** becoming the 18th EU CSDP action currently in deployment. The **Coordinated Maritime Presence** pilot was established in January 2021 in the Gulf of Guinea and later extended for two more years. The **cyber threat** landscape

evolved in 2021 and the EEAS employed significant efforts on further enhancing the EU's situational awareness, resilience and response options to **hybrid threats**, including in the context of the Strategic Compass preparations. The EEAS continued to engage with **partners** on the whole range of security and defence issues, including through cooperation with the UN and NATO, the OSCE, African Union, ASEAN, USA, Canada, Norway, and with other partners in the European neighbourhood, Asia, Africa and Latin America. In 2021, the EEAS developed new tools to consolidate the framework for EU actions under the **Integrated Approach**. New concepts were adopted on Climate Change and Security, and on Cultural Heritage in conflicts and crises, as well as a Joint Communication on Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration of former Combatants. Finally, the EEAS continued to foster coordinated **EU consular crisis preparedness and response**, contributing to EU coordination for the consular protection and repatriation of EU citizens in the context of crises in Afghanistan and Ethiopia.

2. ACHIEVEMENTS

2.1 Achievements of policy objectives

2.1.1 Managing Directorate for Africa (MD Africa)

In 2021, the Managing Directorate for Africa ensured that the work programme with the African Union (AU) was fully back on track. On 26 October, the HR/VP co-chaired the **2nd EU-AU Ministerial meeting** in Kigali. The EEAS further worked on framing the priorities re-confirmed by Ministers from both sides: investing in people – education, science, technology and skills development; strengthening resilience, peace, security and governance; migration and mobility; and mobilising investments for African structural sustainable transformation. Driven by the discussions at the ministerial meeting, the EEAS worked further with the African countries on issues related to the challenges and opportunities of the joint agenda. These included the fight against Covid-19 pandemic, as well as the vaccines gap and post-pandemic recovery; security; migration; investment and job creation; climate change, in view of the EU-AU Summit scheduled for February 2022. As part of the preparations, it was agreed to establish a joint AU-EU Ministerial Follow-up Committee to monitor the implementation of all commitments from AU-EU Summits and Ministerial Meetings.

Through conclusions of the Council, the EU adopted revised strategies on the **Horn of Africa** and on the **Sahel**, which promoted an integrated approach to conflicts and crises and supported cooperation based on partnership and mutual accountability with countries covered by these strategies.

Relations with **Kenya**, a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, experienced a significant boost with the official launch of the EU-Kenya Strategic Dialogue and the start of technical discussions towards a legal arrangement for the bilateral implementation of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) that was negotiated between the EU and the East Africa Community (EAC).

The EU responded swiftly to the call for support from authorities in **Mozambique** regarding the crisis in Cabo Delgado. MD AFRICA contributed to the successful adoption of a comprehensive political framework for crisis approach (PFCA) and launching of an EU Training Mission (EUTM) for local military forces. The support to Mozambique was accompanied by assistance measures such as delivery of non-lethal equipment, funded under the newly created European Peace Facility.

Throughout the year, the EU maintained its pressure on all parties involved in the conflict in Tigray, in **Ethiopia**, in order to cease hostilities and reach a political solution, ensure immediate and full humanitarian access, and allow for proper investigations into human rights abuses. The EU initiated a resolution on Ethiopia at the UN Human Rights Council that led to the creation of an international commission

of experts, with the mandate to investigate cases of human rights abuses during the conflict.

In the Great Lakes region, the EU opened a new chapter on its bilateral relations with **Burundi**. After more than five years of interruption, MD AFRICA steered the work on relaunching the official EU-Burundi political dialogue in February 2021. The EEAS also worked towards launching the process aimed at lifting of the appropriate measures under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement², which was finalized in early 2022, allowing the EU's direct financial aid to the Burundian administration and institutions to be resumed. However, the EU decided to maintain individual sanctions against several individuals³.

After a three-year gap and following considerable EEAS efforts, the ministerial dialogue between the EU and the **Southern African Development Community (SADC)** resumed in June 2021. The meeting was an opportunity for the EU to pass its key messages on Covid-19 pandemic and EU response to it, peace and security, development, trade and investments.

MD AFRICA also contributed towards further developing EU relations with **Angola**. As part of the Joint Way Forward framework, first rounds of negotiations for a Sustainable Investment Facilitation Agreement took place in 2021. This marked the first-ever negotiations of the EU on the bilateral agreement on investment facilitation. This new form of investment agreement aimed to promote sustainable and responsible investment and to improve the investment climate. It also facilitated the mobilisation and retention of investment between the Parties, based on modern and simplified measures and rules.

Increased efforts to reengage towards a stronger political dialogue with **Tanzania** materialized with high-level contacts between the EU and the new President Samia Suluhu. In bilateral exchanges, both parties agreed to strengthen EU-Tanzania cooperation in a number of areas, ranging from multilateralism to climate change, and including regional issues.

2.1.2 Managing Directorate for Americas (MD Americas)

In 2021, MD AMERICAS continued promoting partnership between the people and governments of the European Union and the Americas, by defining, promoting and implementing a clear policy towards the continent. A key deliverable was the adoption of the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) **regional and country multiannual indicative programmes** under the new NDICI-Global Europe financial instrument for the period 2021 2027.

² Council Decision (EU) 2016/394 of 14 March 2016

³ Restrictive measures under Council Decision 2015/1763 of 1 October 2015

EU-US relations received a significant boost in 2021. The EEAS worked on preparations for the EU-US Summit on 15 June, at which the Leaders set out a “Joint Transatlantic Agenda for the post-pandemic era” and launched several flagship initiatives. This included high-level dialogues on Russia, the EU-US Trade and Technology Council, the relaunch of the Dialogue on China, the Energy Council, setting up a dedicated dialogue on security and defence, and launching a Joint EU–US Covid Manufacturing and Supply Chain Taskforce. High-level EU-US consultations on the Indo-Pacific started in December and the EU-US dialogue on security and defence was launched. The EEAS worked in close coordination with the relevant Commission services for preparations of these engagements.

The EEAS worked on engaging with the US in the fight against the pandemic, including through global distribution of vaccines. Relaxation of transatlantic travel restrictions in November further facilitated business and people-to-people contacts. 2021 marked 45 years of the EU’s official cooperation with **Canada** and a further consolidation of the strategic partnership. Significant efforts of MD AMERICAS were directed to preparations of the EU-Canada Summit, held on 14 June 2021, at which leaders agreed on an ambitious agenda for cooperation and launched a number of initiatives. These included an EU-Canada Dialogue on Health, the organisation of an Ocean Partnership Forum, the establishment of a Strategic Partnership on Critical Raw Materials and Minerals, as well as the participation of Canada in a PESCO project on military mobility. Several meetings and dialogues took place in the framework of the Strategic Partnership Agreement and in addition, discussions on new areas of cooperation such as space, Arctic matters and foreign information manipulation and interference continued. In 2021 EU-Canada trade was 30% higher than before CETA entered into force provisionally.

High-level political dialogue **between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) intensified in 2021**. The President of the European Council participated in the CELAC Summit in Mexico in September, a signal which was well received in the region. An EU-LAC Leaders’ Meeting took place online on 2 December 2021, with the participation of the President of the European Council, the President of the Commission and the High Representative, as well the Heads of State/Government of the 2021 presidencies of the main regional organisations in LAC. The discussion confirmed the relevance of a common agenda focusing on a sustainable, digital and inclusive recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, and showed the EU’s commitment at the highest level to work together with LAC partners. The EEAS continued to work with regional organisations, including the Organization of American States (OAS).

As the **Covid-19 pandemic** continued to rage throughout 2021, the EEAS supported EU coordination of the export and donation of 125 million doses of Covid-19 vaccines, as well as humanitarian aid, to the LAC.

The EU continued its work to finalise the modernisation of the Global Agreement with **Mexico**, with a view to further enhancing the EU-Mexico Strategic Partnership. MD AMERICAS paid particular attention to the security and human rights situation in Mexico, as well as to the proposal to reform the energy sector.

2021 saw a significant effort to revitalise the EU's relations with **South America**, including the consolidation and expansion of the partnerships with several countries. Throughout the year, the EEAS held political dialogues and high-level exchanges with countries across the continent, including the Joint Cooperation Committees with Paraguay and Uruguay, Human Rights dialogues with Ecuador and Brazil and supported reconciliation in Bolivia. The EU continued work towards the conclusion and signature of the EU-Mercosur Association Agreement.

In **Chile**, the EEAS engaged in accompanying and supporting constitutional reform, held the Joint Association Committee with Chile and concluded technical negotiations for the modernisation of the EU-Chile Association Agreement.

In **Colombia**, political and financial support to the implementation of the peace process remained key in EU's strengthened partnership with the country. The EUSR for Human Rights participated in the commemorations of the fifth anniversary of the Peace Process. In September, the HR/VP and Vice-President/Foreign Minister of Colombia signed a Memorandum of Understanding between the EU and Colombia, reinforcing and enlarging the political and sectorial dialogue and cooperation to new areas, notably environment and sustainable development.

The negotiations of a similar Memorandum of Understanding with **Peru** were concluded in 2021. An EU Election Expert Mission was deployed to the parliamentary and presidential elections in Peru. In November 2021, the HR/VP travelled to Brazil and Peru to demonstrate the EU's full support to the South American countries most affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. In Brazil, the visit demonstrated EU's commitment to this key strategic partner, and sought a critical engagement on environmental issues. The EU continued its efforts in South America in support of peace, democracy, rule of law and democracy. In this regard, the EEAS worked on stepping up the EU's engagement in **Venezuela** by deploying an EU electoral observation mission (EOM) to the regional and local elections held in November. The EEAS also continued its efforts to maintain a diplomatic presence and dialogue with all parties in Venezuela, supporting meaningful, pragmatic and inclusive negotiations in the context of the "Mexico talks" with a view to a possible democratic transition. The EU reached out to the main international actors to promote a concerted international engagement. Several meetings of the International Contact Group were organised. The HR/VP personally engaged in exchanges with both the regime and the opposition, in an effort to identify collectively agreed solutions. MD AMERICAS continued supporting national and regional efforts to address the Venezuelan migration crisis aggravated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The region-to-region dialogue with Central America continued throughout 2021, with the Joint Committee taking place by video conference on 18 June 2021. The ratification of the Central American Association Agreement advanced. The EU renewed and reinforced its sanctions regime against **Nicaragua** as a reaction to blanket repression and election fraud. Furthermore, the EU signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Bilateral Consultations with **Panama** on 30 June. Bilateral consultations were held with **Costa Rica** on a similar agreement in November.

The intense institutional dialogue agenda with **Cuba** continued despite Covid-19 pandemic, with a policy of critical and constructive engagement in the aftermath of the social protests of July 2021.

The assassination of President Moïse in July, followed by a major earthquake in August, destabilized **Haiti** and intensified an on-going multifaceted crisis. The EEAS attempted to contribute to the stabilization of the country by emphasizing the need for political dialogue, while focusing on the country's security and humanitarian needs.

The double pressure of the Covid-19 pandemic and Brexit put the **Caribbean region** in dire straits. The Caribbean Regional Protocol of the new Agreement between the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) and the EU (Post-Cotonou Agreement) was initialled on 15 April 2021. It laid the foundation for a renewed relationship with the region, capitalising on the results of current cooperation and contributing to the EU's geopolitical ambitions. The work of MD AMERICAS on relations with **Guyana** and **Suriname** continued throughout 2021 concluding the year with political dialogues held in December 2021

2.1.3 Managing Directorate for Asia and the Pacific (MD ASIAPAC)

In 2021, the **Managing Directorate for Asia and the Pacific**, together with its 27 EU Delegations and Offices, ensured greater EU presence and visibility in the region and focused on having maximum impact on the ground.

It was a breakthrough year for the EU's Indo-Pacific policy: Council Conclusions on *an **EU Strategy on Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific*** were issued on 19 April, followed by the Joint Communication on 16 September, which outlined the implementation of the Strategy. With its Indo-Pacific Strategy, the EU sent a clear signal that it is stepping up its strategic engagement with the Indo-Pacific region, aiming at maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific for all, while building lasting partnerships on matters from prosperity, green transition, ocean governance or the digital agenda to security and defence.

The adoption of the EU's Indo-Pacific strategy had a positive impact on relations with like-minded partners. **EU-Japan relations** under the Strategic Partnership

Agreement were strengthened through the launch of a Green Alliance at the May EU-Japan Summit. Relations with the **Republic of Korea** (RoK) were intense, with a Foreign Ministers' meeting in London in early May and a virtual EU-RoK Leaders' meeting in the margins of the G7 Summit in early June.

The upward trend in **EU-Australia** cooperation continued but was negatively impacted by the announcement, in September, of the AUKUS security arrangement and the related cancellation of a major defence contract with France. Free Trade Agreement negotiations continued in 2021 with both Australia and New Zealand.

MD ASIAPAC contributed to the strengthening of EU's coherence and unity on China by accelerating the implementation of the 2019 Joint Communication "**EU-China: A Strategic Outlook**". While engagement with China became increasingly difficult through the adoption of disproportionate Chinese counter-measures against EU sanctions as well as coercive economic measures affecting the EU Single Market, the EEAS supported the EU in managing this complex and challenging relationship with China in a realist and multifaceted approach. In 2021, MD ASIAPAC enhanced coordination and increased exchanges with like-minded partners on the challenges posed by China. While upholding the EU's interests vis-à-vis **Hong Kong**, MD ASIAPAC witnessed the dismantling of the "One Country Two Systems" in Hong Kong and stimulated the EU's coherent response through the implementation of the package of measures adopted by the Council in July 2020. In 2021, the EEAS also participated in deepening of EU relations with **Taiwan**, while monitoring growing tensions in the Taiwan Straits. The partnership with **Mongolia** was strengthened through the establishment of an EU-Mongolia Political Directors Dialogue.

Afghanistan underwent fundamental change last year, with the withdrawal of foreign troops and the take-over of Kabul by the Taliban on 15 August. MD ASIAPAC and the EU Special Envoy (EUSE) for Afghanistan assisted in the evacuation of expatriates, as well as local employees and their families, from Kabul airport in August. A Safe Passage Task Force was created and continued the operations to allow those who felt threatened or wished to leave Afghanistan thereafter. The EU Special Envoy for Afghanistan engaged in dialogue with the Taliban-appointed interim government around five benchmarks defined in Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions of September. The Special Envoy consulted with like-minded and regional actors, including Qatar, Turkey, Russia, Iran, Central Asia, Pakistan and India, to share analyses and harmonise messaging to the Taliban. The EEAS actively engaged with the Pakistani authorities via a wide range of established dialogues, including on enforced disappearances, trade relations, sustainable development and regional security issues, etc.).

MD ASIAPAC promoted EU interests and values in **South Asia**, notably by deepening and widening the Strategic Partnership with India. At the **EU-India Leaders' Meeting in May**, it was decided to resume negotiations for a free trade agreement and to launch negotiations on a stand-alone investment protection

agreement and an agreement on geographical indications. The EU and India also signed a **Connectivity Partnership**. Meanwhile, the local EU-India Human Rights Dialogue was resumed after an interval of several years. At the Diplomatic Consultations with **Bangladesh**, expansion of relations to a Climate Dialogue and a Dialogue on foreign and security policy cooperation confirmed the intensification of bilateral relations. MD ASIAPAC also continued, jointly with relevant Commission services, to monitor respect of labour and wider human rights conditions linked to preferential trade schemes from which several partners in South Asia, notably Bangladesh and **Sri Lanka**, benefit.

In **Southeast Asia**, negotiations on Partnership and Cooperation Agreements with **Malaysia** and **Thailand** advanced, with a view to their signature in 2022. A profound and negative change took place in **Myanmar**, following the military coup in February. The EEAS coordinated a swift and robust response, through sanctions, diplomatic and humanitarian efforts, and supporting ASEAN and the United Nations.

The EEAS made full use of technological possibilities to represent the EU in the complete annual cycle of activities with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (**ASEAN**) and the ASEAN Regional Forum, as well as to ensure continued bilateral engagements. The HR/VP made his first visit to **Indonesia** and ASEAN Headquarters, advancing the **EU-ASEAN Strategic Partnership**, promoting the EU's Indo-Pacific perspective, and announcing the conclusion of negotiations on the EU-ASEAN Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement, as well as the agreement to hold the EU-ASEAN Commemorative Summit in Brussels in 2022. The **Joint Working Group on Palm Oil** between the European Union and relevant ASEAN member countries met for the first time, online, on 27 January 2021.

In **the Pacific**, the EU sustained its political role through support to the **Bougainville Peace Process** in **Papua New Guinea**. MD ASIAPAC held Political Dialogues with **Vanuatu** and **Samoa**. A High-Level Event on Climate Change took place in October with the participation of European Commission Executive Vice President Frans Timmermans and leaders from the region.

MD ASIAPAC continued to work intensively to bring Europe and Asia closer together. The **13th ASEM Summit** took place virtually on 25-26 November from Phnom Penh, under the title '*Strengthening Multilateralism for Shared Growth*' and with three outcome documents on post-Covid-19 recovery, multilateralism and connectivity. Forty-five Heads of State and Government attended, making it one of the most important multilateral meetings in the autumn of 2021.

Pursuing EU priorities and interests in the Asia-Pacific in the context of the **2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework**, MD ASIAPAC contributed to the complex programming of assistance, both bilateral and regional, which over the period to 2027 will reinforce the relations with Asia and the Pacific.

2.1.4 Managing Directorate for Western Europe (MD EUROPE)

In 2021, the EEAS continued to strengthen relations with **non-EU Western European countries**, the EU's like-minded and closest partners. The EEAS promoted their integration in the Internal Market by ensuring the implementation of the **European Economic Area (EEA) agreement (with Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein)**. Relevant EU legal acts were incorporated into the agreement, including measures related to Covid-19 (such as the EU Digital COVID certificate). The EEAS also ensured the participation of Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway in the relevant EU programmes during 2021-2027. The EEAS concluded the work on the negotiating mandate for the post-2021 EEA Financial Mechanism and on the review of the 2014-2021 mechanism. Moreover, in cooperation with the Commission, MD EUROPE continued to engage with **Switzerland** in the aftermath of the Swiss decision to end the negotiations on the EU-Swiss Institutional Framework Agreement and concluded negotiations on the 2nd Swiss financial contribution to EU cohesion. High-level dialogue between the EU and **Holy See** Leaders continued. In 2021, Association Agreement technical negotiations continued with **Andorra, Monaco and San Marino** on their participation in the EU's Internal Market. In 2021, the EEAS and European Commission adopted a Joint Communication on the EU's updated **Arctic** policy.

MD EUROPE focused on pursuing the EU's geopolitical interest in stability and security in **South East Europe** by deepening the **Western Balkans'** integration with the EU. The EEAS engaged strongly to maintain the political momentum on enlargement in line with the new methodology endorsed by Serbia and Montenegro, following also the March 2020 Council decision to open accession negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia. The EEAS contributed to defusing the deep political crisis ongoing in Bosnia and Herzegovina by facilitating talks with the political leaders and working on electoral/constitutional reform. The EU deployed an Election Observation Mission to Kosovo for the municipal elections. MD EUROPE worked to deepen the EU's overall political and security engagement with the region, as enshrined in the October Brdo Summit Declaration. The EEAS supported the HR/VP's direct contacts with Western Balkan leaders, including convening bilateral and region-wide gatherings, as well as during Stabilisation and Association Councils and political Inter-Governmental Conferences. The EEAS continued its close partnership with the region and with other international partners to foster security, stability and economic prosperity, not least in addressing the Covid-19 pandemic. The Economic and Investment Plan for the region provides for sustainable, people-focused recovery and growth in line with EU global priorities.

After early parliamentary elections in Kosovo, two high-level meetings of the **Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue** took place in 2021. MD EUROPE worked also on facilitating a number of meetings at the level of chief negotiators to advance the

implementation of previous agreements. In September, following tensions between Kosovo and Serbia over the issue of licence plates, an arrangement on de-escalation and temporary measures was reached under EU facilitation.

The HR/VP and the EEAS worked, within the framework of the European Council Conclusions and the 22 March 2021 Joint Communication on the State of play of EU-Turkey political, economic and trade relations, to consolidate de-escalation in the **Eastern Mediterranean**, despite challenges as regards the Cyprus issue, developments in Varosha, and the situation in the Aegean Sea. Re-engagement with Turkey in several sectors of shared interest gained momentum in the second half of 2021 and the EEAS actively pursued further dialogue on counter-terrorism, regional, and foreign policy issues. The HR/VP and the EEAS increased their outreach to the Turkish side, emphasizing the need to overcome existing problems, to further enhance cooperation in important areas and, overall, to develop a cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship, anchored in values and principles, such as the respect of rule of law, human rights and international law.

On 1st January 2021, following the end of the Brexit transition period, **the United Kingdom** became a fully-fledged third country. During 2021, the EEAS started to work on the implementation of the provisions of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement that entered into force on 1st May 2021. The EEAS engaged in pragmatic, informal, ad hoc cooperation with the UK on foreign and security policy issues, wherever it was necessary in order to fulfil EU objectives, including the 2021 UK presidency of the G7. The EEAS continued to support the Commission regarding its work on the implementation of the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement, most notably on citizens' rights and the Protocol on Ireland / Northern Ireland. The EU and the UK reached an agreement in June on the diplomatic status and the Establishment Agreement of the EU Delegation in London.

2.1.5 Managing Directorate for Eastern Europe (MD EURCA)

During 2021, the EEAS focused on the continued implementation of the Association Agreements, including their Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas, with Ukraine, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova with a particular focus on rule of law matters and anti-corruption architecture.

With regard to **Ukraine**, MD EURCA was closely monitoring and coordinating the EU's reaction to the Russian military build-up in and around Ukraine's borders (in spring and late autumn). It worked on options for increasing Ukraine's resilience. It also coordinated the EU's position towards the Ukrainian initiative of the International Crimea Platform.

Negotiations on the revised Association Agendas with Georgia and Moldova were concluded in 2021. The EEAS provided support to **Georgia** for overcoming the parliamentary crisis and strengthening democracy, contributing to the EU mediated

“19 April agreement” and following up on the agreed reforms. It also closely monitored the series of negative developments especially in the judiciary and human rights situation, promoting full respect of rule of law and democratic standards. The EU showed continued support to Georgia’s sovereignty and territorial integrity.

In **Moldova**, MD EURCA provided support to the new government’s pro-reform agenda, especially on justice reforms and fighting corruption. It also supported Moldova during the gas supply crisis and stressed the importance of resilience against potential efforts by third parties to use energy as a geopolitical lever. The EEAS also showed continued support to the Transnistrian conflict settlement process in the “5+2” format and to Moldova’s sovereignty and territorial integrity.

MD EURCA continued to lead the EU and international reaction against the human rights violations perpetrated by Lukashenko’s regime against its own citizens and the instrumentalisation of migrants to put pressure on the EU borders. This included the adoption of further listings under the **Belarus** sanctions regime and a proposal to establish an international accountability mechanism within the UN framework, which was adopted in March 2021 and is now operational.

In 2021, the EEAS worked on the implementation of the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with **Armenia**, which entered into force in March 2021, and on the bilateral agreement with **Azerbaijan**, negotiations on which will be relaunched in 2022. MD EURCA worked closely with EUSR for the South Caucasus on peace-building efforts since the 2020 Armenia-Azerbaijan war.

Regarding **Russia**, MD EURCA focused its work on managing the increasingly deteriorating relations with Russia. In spite of attempts to explore possibilities for constructive engagement, such as through the HR/VP’s mission to Moscow in February 2021, or through bilateral as well as foreign policy consultations at Political Director and MD level, EU-Russia relations followed a negative trajectory due to Russia’s deliberate actions. Against this background, the European Council held two strategic debates on Russia in May and June 2021. MD EURCA drafted jointly with the Commission a “Joint Communication on EU-Russia relations – Push back, constrain and engage” that took stock of the complex relations between the EU and Russia, reflected on how the EU has implemented the five guiding principles and presented options on how to strengthen the EU’s policy towards Russia. Besides the aforementioned activities, MD EURCA continued to counter Russia’s negative actions in violation of international law and its human rights commitments and obligations. MD EURCA assisted in implementing the commitments on increasing EU resilience, including through strategic communication and countering Russian disinformation.

At the regional and multilateral levels, the 6th **Eastern Partnership (EaP)** Summit took place in Brussels on 15 December 2021, preceded by the EaP Foreign Affairs Ministerial meeting in November. The Summit sent a strong signal of unity, support

and solidarity with EU's Eastern partners. It endorsed the 'recovery, resilience and reform' agenda, underpinned by the Economic and Investment Plan which will mobilise EUR 2.3 billion to support post-pandemic recovery and sustainable development of economy. In light of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the EU may need to recalibrate the engagement within the EaP framework.

The High-Level Dialogue with the **Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe** was held in October, in order to further enhance EU-OSCE cooperation e.g. on the climate-security nexus, disinformation or gender issues. The HR/VP participated in the 28th OSCE Ministerial Council in December to further promote multilateralism and peaceful settlement of conflicts. The EEAS was also actively involved in discussions on the European security architecture within the OSCE.

MD EURCA contributed to the EU's engagement in further development of the **Northern Dimension**, the Barents, Baltic and Black Sea. The EEAS focused on enhancing cooperation in people-to-people contacts, sustainable development, environment, health, culture and connectivity. The EU, represented by the EEAS, participated to the Barents Euro-Arctic Council Ministerial meeting in October, two Black Sea Economic Cooperation Ministerial meetings in June and December and the Council of the Baltic Sea States Ministerial meeting in June.

In **Central Asia**, MD EURCA continued to work on the implementation of the EU Strategy of 2019, while addressing the post-Covid-19 recovery and supporting regional cooperation. The repercussions of the regime change in Afghanistan informed the EU's policy towards the region. The EEAS worked closely with Commission services to launch the second phase of the Central Asia Covid-19 Crisis Response Programme to help the countries of the region to cope with the consequences of the pandemic. At the 17th EU-Central Asia Ministerial meeting, in November 2021, participants confirmed their commitment to strengthen EU-Central Asia cooperation to support a green and sustainable post-Covid-19 recovery and to work together on some of the challenges emerging from developments in Afghanistan.

MD EURCA was in the lead on negotiations of a new Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with **Uzbekistan**, which has neared completion. The MD also took an active part in the discussion on the accession of Uzbekistan to the GSP+ scheme (Generalized System of Preference) which the country reached in April. Special attention was paid to human rights, which were discussed with all Central Asian countries in the annual human rights dialogues.

2.1.6 Managing Directorate for Middle East and North Africa (MD MENA)

In the **Middle East and North Africa** (MENA) region, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated pre-existing challenges (high unemployment rates, especially among the youth, rising inequalities, socio-economic challenges), affecting mostly vulnerable groups (notably women, youth, refugees, migrants, displaced persons, foreign workers) and the poorest segments of the population. This increased the risk of further destabilisation of a Neighbourhood region already affected by active protracted conflicts, regional rivalries, social tensions and strong polarisation.

One of MD MENA's priorities for 2021 focused on addressing these challenges while strengthening the dialogue and cooperation with the region, both at bilateral and regional level, including in the context of Covid-19 recovery.

The **Joint Communication on a Renewed Partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood - A new Agenda for the Mediterranean**, issued on 9th February 2021, underlined the strong ambition to renew the EU's strategic partnership with the Southern Neighbours and address the key challenges. The communication was welcomed by the European Parliament and received strong support from the Council through its Conclusions of April 2021. In November 2021, the **EU-Southern Neighbourhood Ministerial meeting** in Barcelona and the 6th Regional Forum of the Union of the Mediterranean (UfM) sent a bold and inspiring signal of a shared ambition for a partnership. During 2021, MD MENA also enhanced the cooperation with regional organisations such as the League of Arab States, the UfM, and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which was helped by the creation of a dedicated regional affairs division within MD MENA.

The EEAS led sectoral dialogues with many **Southern Neighbourhood and Gulf partners** on issues of common interest such as governance, rule of law, inclusive growth and human rights. These took into account recent political developments in each country, such as the EU General Court decision on the revised EU-Morocco protocols on agriculture and fisheries in September 2021, or following the visit of the HR/VP in Tunisia in September 2021. Among other important meetings were the 7th EU-Egypt Association Committee that took place in October, and a High-Level Political Dialogue in October in Cairo.

Throughout 2021, MD MENA continued to **deepen the EU's bilateral relations with the Gulf** countries, including by holding several Human Rights Dialogues: in February 2021 with **Bahrain**, in March 2021 with **Kuwait**, in June 2021 with **Qatar** and **UAE**, and the first ever Human rights dialogue with **Saudi Arabia** in September 2021. The institutional engagement with the **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)** was also resumed after 5 years. The EU welcomed the agreement reached by the GCC members on full normalisation of relations among the six Gulf Countries, which will

contribute to strengthening regional stability and restoring GCC solidarity and cooperation. Work started on preparations of the **Joint Communication on a partnership with the Gulf** which, as part of the Commission Work Programme 2022, will pave the way for a more comprehensive and strategic partnership between the EU and the Gulf countries.

The **protracted conflicts** in the region constitute key obstacles to political stability and development. Through many bilateral and regional engagements with the countries of the region, the EEAS considered how it can better address ongoing crises and conflicts, contribute to stabilisation processes and strengthen cooperation on key Global and European priorities such as democracy, human rights and the green and digital transitions, with a view to build a more stable, resilient and prosperous region.

MD MENA worked on the EU's firm support and contribution to the UN-led processes in **Syria, Libya, and Yemen** (with support to UN Secretary General's Special Envoy efforts), as well as in **Iraq**. The appointment of the Personal Envoy of the UN Secretary General for **Western Sahara** represents a welcome opportunity for joint multilateral efforts in this area. The EU likewise pursued its contributions to stability and security in the region through a number of CSDP operations in **Iraq, Libya and Palestine**.

The EEAS continued to support efforts for a solution to the **Syrian crisis** according to the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR 2254) and including the work of the UN Special Envoy for Syria. The **fifth Brussels Conference on supporting the future of Syria** and the region in March helped mobilise donors' pledges and sent a strong signal of the EU's continued commitment to the Syrian people and to finding a political solution to the Syria conflict.

On **Libya**, the EEAS actively supported the Berlin process towards a peaceful political transition. Several EU high-level visits to Tripoli were conducted after the formation of the interim government of national unity in March 2021, including the HR/VP's visit in September and the visits of the President of the European Council and of some Commissioners. The HR/VP attended several ministerial meetings on the topic, including the Berlin Ministerial Conference on Libya on 23 June.

In 2021, **Lebanon** faced a critical political and socio-economic crisis. MD MENA prepared the visit of the HR/VP to Lebanon in June, during which he expressed his solidarity and support to the Lebanese people. In July, the Council adopted a framework for targeted restrictive measures, aimed at those responsible for undermining democracy or the rule of law in Lebanon, including through obstructing the implementation of critical economic reforms. The mandate of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), to which many EU Member States contribute troops, has been renewed in August 2021 for another year.

As regards the **Middle East Peace Process**, MD MENA was actively engaged in the diplomatic efforts during the latest wave of violence in May 2021, which underlined the fragility of the current situation and the need to work towards long-term solutions and restoration of a political horizon for a sustainable two-state solution. Subsequently, the EU Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process was tasked to work actively with other envoys from the Middle East Quartet to address the crisis. The holding of a first round of local elections in December 2021 in **Palestine** was a positive step.

The HR/VP visited Iraq in September 2021, which was an opportunity to engage on a range of topics of mutual concern, including on addressing common challenges of migration. Upon Iraq's request, the EU successfully deployed an Electoral Observation Mission to the early Parliamentary elections on 10 October 2021. Efforts were also devoted to addressing, in close cooperation with the Iraqi authorities, the instrumentalisation of migrants by Belarus during summer 2021.

With the new Multiannual Financial Framework and the new Global Europe Instrument for International Cooperation, the EEAS faced some challenges with timely programming of funds and delivering in commitments and payments. A large part of MD MENA work was dedicated to prepare the programming for 2021-2027 with a focus on better linking financial assistance and political priorities and injecting a strong regional approach. In this context, efforts were devoted to the preparation of new/updated **Joint Documents** (Partnership Priorities or equivalent) taking into account the Joint Communication on a New Agenda for the Mediterranean and the specific financial allocations, for **Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Jordan, Egypt and Lebanon**, whereas MD MENA also resumed the **institutional meetings** within the framework of the Association Agreements.

2.1.7 Managing Directorate for Global Agenda and Multilateral Relations (MD Global)

In 2021, the change in MD GLOBAL's structure aimed at ensuring a strategic and coherent external action, aligned with the internal and external aspects of the EU thematic policies and enhancing the role of the EU as a global player.

The beginning of the year was marked by the adoption of the Joint Communication and Action Plan, inspired by 75 years of the UN, aimed at **strengthening the EU contribution to rules-based multilateralism**. The overall EU-UN partnership was reinforced by the visit of UN Secretary General Guterres to Brussels in June, the adoption of EU priorities towards the UN for the 76th session of the UN General Assembly in July, and strategic Dialogues held notably with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). MD GLOBAL continued its work on improving the effectiveness of policy coordination on UN matters with EU Member States, not least in areas such as candidacies for international bodies. With regard to the Council of Europe, the EEAS provided advice and outreach in support of the negotiations on EU accession to the European Convention on Human Rights.

2021 marked the restart of election observation activities, which had slowed down until the middle of the year due to the Covid-19 pandemic and travel constraints. The EU deployed **electoral observation missions** to Zambia, Kosovo, Iraq, Venezuela, Honduras and The Gambia. In a great diversity of contexts, some of which presenting challenging security or political circumstances, the successful deployment of these Missions demonstrated once again the positive role of EU Election Observation in contributing to strengthening democratic institutions and building public confidence in electoral processes.

The EEAS continued to put **human rights** at the centre of EU foreign policy despite a further backsliding of democracy and human rights around the globe. MD GLOBAL supported the participation of the President of the European Council and the Commission President in the Summit for Democracy, where the launch of the EUR 1.5 billion Global Europe Thematic programme on **Human Rights and Democracy for 2021-2027** was announced. Council conclusions on a human rights-based post-Covid-19 recovery were approved in February, and the annual EU NGO Forum in December took stock of the pandemic's impact on fundamental freedoms, economic, social and cultural rights and health equity. The new **EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime** was moved swiftly into action with the first listings adopted in 2021. Regular human rights dialogues and consultations were held through the year, including a first human rights dialogue with Saudi Arabia in September. A special programme to support Afghans' participation in the Global Campus on Human Rights was launched.

In UN human rights fora, notably the Human Rights Council in Geneva, successful initiatives included the EU-led resolution on the situation of human rights in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, special Sessions on Afghanistan and the resolution creating the mandate of a Special Rapporteur on human rights in Afghanistan. A Strategic Dialogue with the High Commissioner for Human Rights and EUSR for Human Rights was held in October.

With regard to **global health**, the EEAS supported EU efforts to strengthen the WHO and promote the launch of negotiations on an international treaty on pandemic preparedness and response. The EEAS Task Force on Vaccine Strategy developed its activities in support to EU coordinated efforts towards a global response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The EEAS continued to foster safe international travel to the EU for third-country travellers, taking into account the progress of Covid-19 vaccination at global level. MD GLOBAL supported the equivalence process allowing to link third

countries to the EU Digital Covid Certificate System. By the end of 2021, 30 third countries were thus able to join.

On **economic issues**, MD GLOBAL contributed to the Communication on the Trade Policy Review adopted in February 2021 and supported the external dimension of the EU Anti Money Laundering and Counter Terrorism Financing policies, ensuring political and diplomatic support for their implementation. MD GLOBAL coordinated EEAS work on the responsible supply chains in Covid-19 times, on human rights and labour rights, while contributing to strengthening cooperation with the G20, notably on debt relief measures to low-income countries, and with international financial institutions, such as the European Investment Bank and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

The work on **connectivity and digital transition** advanced considerably in 2021. The EEAS mobilised its Digital Diplomacy Task Force and the network of EU Digital Ambassadors in order to prepare an external digital policy in 2022, while supporting EU priorities in international initiatives such as the Alliance for the future of the Internet, the Christchurch Call and Paris Peace Forum. Furthermore, the EU concluded an EU-India Connectivity Partnership in May 2021 and adopted foreign Affairs Council Conclusions on “Globally Connected Europe” in July 2021. The Joint Communication “Global Gateway”, adopted in December 2021, is a basis for the definition of the Global Gateway Investment Package for Africa.

The EEAS significantly intensified its work on the **external dimension of the Green Deal** in 2021. The Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions on energy and climate diplomacy, adopted in January 2021, were instrumental in accelerating the global energy transition and framing EU diplomatic engagement towards partners in view of the successful outcome of the Glasgow Climate Conference in November 2021. Throughout the year, the EEAS contributed to addressing external aspects of legislative proposals within the “Fit for 55” package, including on countering deforestation, and on the “Farm to Fork” initiative. That was done through numerous outreach actions vis-à-vis partner countries, including big emitters, on biodiversity, the circular economy, plastics and oceans, as well as in support to the implementation of the Global Methane Pledge and the launch of the Just Energy Transition Partnership with South Africa.

The EEAS continued to address the **external aspects of migration** as an integral part of the EU’s foreign policy and dialogue with partner countries and regions around the world. The EEAS promoted comprehensive, mutually beneficial and tailor-made partnerships with countries of origin, transit and destination at bilateral and regional level. MD GLOBAL focused on contributing to the formulation, concrete operationalisation and development of funding for actions under the external dimension of the Pact on Migration and Asylum, including on migrant smuggling or on legal migration and skills. Through active diplomatic engagement, the EEAS was

also instrumental in addressing crisis situations on migration as well as the phenomenon of instrumentalisation of migrants.

2.1.8 Managing Directorate for Common Security and Defence Policy and Crisis Response Services (MD CSDP-CR) and EU Military Staff (EUMS)

In 2021, MD CSDP-CR continued to strengthen the EU's capacity to respond to security challenges in order to consolidate the EU's role of a global player and a security provider.

MD CSDP-CR continued work on the **Strategic Compass**, a document that sets out the EU's ambitions over the next 5 to 10 years in the field of security and defence. The EEAS conducted a fruitful strategic dialogue process in the first half of 2021. This set the stage for the HR/VP's presentation of the first draft of the Strategic Compass to the Council in November.

Following the establishment of the **European Peace Facility** in March 2021, MD-CSDP-CR has led the implementation of the mechanism, increasing the effectiveness of CSDP and responding to the needs of EU partners. EPF-funded actions amounted to almost EUR 377 million, supporting the military components of African-led Peace Support Operations, and providing military equipment in relation to CSDP missions/operations, such as in Mozambique, and strengthening the defence capacities of partners in the Eastern Neighbourhood and the Western Balkans.

Important progress was also registered on **PESCO**. The Council adopted two Recommendations setting more precise objectives for the second initial phase of PESCO 2021-2025 and on the progress made by the project members to fulfil their commitments. In addition, 14 new collaborative projects were launched, amongst others in the air and space domains. Another important step forward was the participation of Canada, Norway and the US in the Military Mobility project.

In 2021, the EU's **17 established missions and operations** continued to operate under the Covid-19 pandemic conditions. MD CSDP-CR conducted a lessons learned process in this regard. In spite of the challenges, CSDP missions and operations remained credible, visible and effective in promoting EU's presence, supporting EU's partners and reassuring EU's citizens. **EUTM Mozambique** became the 18th EU CSDP action currently in deployment. It is the first military 'Train and Equip' CSDP engagement, benefiting from the provision of equipment through the European Peace Facility.

MD CSDP-CR made substantial progress in consolidating the EU's contribution to maritime security and in enhancing EU's role in maritime areas of interest agreed by the Member States. The **Coordinated Maritime Presence** pilot case was established in January 2021 in the Gulf of Guinea and was later extended for two more years. MD CSDP-CR proposed to expand the concept to the Northwest Indian

Ocean, which was approved by the Council in February 2022. EUNAVFOR Atalanta participated in joint naval exercises with Indo-Pacific partners.

Regarding **civilian capabilities and civilian CSDP**, three years after the adoption of the Civilian CSDP Compact, MD CSDP-CR continued to focus on delivering results. MD CSDP-CR continued its work to strengthen links between CSDP and Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) actors, e.g. Frontex, Europol and CEPOL. The third Annual Review Conference (ARC) on Civilian CSDP in November took stock of progress made and identified priorities for the work ahead.

The **cyber threat** landscape had evolved in 2021. MD CSDP-CR worked to prevent, deter and respond to cyberattacks, including by imposing sanctions on those responsible. The focus was on the implementation of the December 2020 EU Cybersecurity Strategy to better protect EU networks and systems and on cooperation with international partners. Significant efforts were placed on further enhancing the EU's situational awareness, resilience and response options to **hybrid threats**, including in the context of the Strategic Compass preparations.

The Council adopted a decision extending the operational responsibility of the Council and the HR to all EU **space** systems and services. The EEAS worked closely with the Commission on preparation of the Joint Communication on Space Traffic Management, adopted in the beginning of 2022. In 2021, MD CSDP-CR started working with the Commission and Member States on a space strategy for security and defence, planned for 2023.

MD CSDP-CR continued to engage with **partners** on a range of security and defence issues. Cooperation with the UN and NATO was further consolidated and important progress was achieved with i.a. the OSCE, African Union, ASEAN, the US, Canada, Norway, and with other partners in the European neighbourhood, Asia, Africa and Latin America. MD CSDP-CR continued to engage with third states regarding their increased participation in CSDP missions and operations.

MD CSDP-CR worked closely with third countries and international organisations on **countering terrorism and preventing/countering violent extremism**, including through dedicated Counter Terrorism Dialogues. MD CSDP-CR strengthened the network of CT/Security Experts, currently present in 18 EU Delegations. The EU will bid, together with Egypt, for the co-Chairmanship of the Global Counter Terrorism Forum.

The erosion of the **non-proliferation and disarmament** architecture continued and MD CSDP-CR actions focussed on sustaining its integrity through the establishment of joint EU positions and targeted projects. The EU preparations for the 10th Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference were of particular significance.

MD CSDP-CR developed new tools to consolidate the framework for EU actions under the **Integrated Approach**. New concepts were adopted on Climate Change and Security, and on Cultural Heritage in conflicts and crises, as well as a Joint Communication on Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration of former

Combatants adopted by the end of 2021. MD CSDP-CR deepened coordination of crisis response through Regional Integrated Approach Clusters and the Crisis Response Mechanism in relation to Afghanistan and Ukraine, among others.

MD CSDP-CR reinforced the **EEAS Pool of Mediators**, and engaged in mediation support in a number of countries. It continued assessing conflict risks and identification of EU response actions through the EU conflict **Early Warning** and **Horizon Scanning** tools.

MD CSDP-CR continued to foster coordinated **EU consular crisis preparedness and response**, contributing to EU coordination for the consular protection and repatriations of EU citizens in the context of crises in Afghanistan and Ethiopia. The lessons learned from those crises are expected to be reflected in the review of the 2015 Consular Protection Directive, which should start in 2022.

2.1.9 Directorate for Strategic Communication and Foresight (SG. STRAT)

The EEAS reorganisation in September 2021 brought together the two Strategic Communications Divisions and the Policy Planning and Strategic Foresight Division under a new **Directorate for Strategic Communication and Foresight**.

The Directorate continued to support EU key initiatives through dedicated campaigns. Communication efforts included a global digital campaign addressing vaccine hesitancy called “Vacc to Normal”. The campaign “Europeans Making a Difference” in the Western Balkans and a campaign dedicated to the Syria Conference both succeeded with high outreach numbers on various social media channels. Addressing environmental issues, the global “EU Beach Clean-Up” campaign was organised in 60 countries, with a total of 277 clean-up events that mobilised 15000 participants and reached over 7 million people on social media. A joint online campaign with UNICEF on the right for children to go to school safely, reached over 21 million people worldwide. A large number of international days were marked with dedicated web activities, out of which the most substantial ones in terms of outreach were “Gender Friday” addressing women’s rights, and the World Press Freedom Day addressing media freedom. A substantive communication and public diplomacy effort was made for the Dubai 2020 Expo: communications, apart from the various on-site activities, also included a tailor-made social media campaign reaching over 10 million people. The Directorate increased cooperation with EU institutions under Team Europe and contributed to strengthening the common EU brand in partner countries.

Throughout 2021, the spike of disinformation has been a key feature of this Covid-19 pandemic. Efforts focused on raising awareness, trainings on disinformation and emerging threats, monitoring of information manipulation campaigns both within and

outside the EU, and taking a data-driven approach to the analysis and understanding of the challenge. The Division further catalogued and exposed pro-Kremlin disinformation on the *EUvsDisinfo* portal, adding over 2,800 new examples in 2021 and gaining over 890,000 unique page-views, and bringing *EUvsDisinfo* social media audience to over 48,600 followers on Facebook, and 55,600 on Twitter. In 2021, *EUvsDisinfo* launched dedicated sections about Belarus and the Eastern Partnership initiative.

In 2021, the Division further strengthened its support to Delegations through the newly established network of 27 Stratcomm officers. Collaboration with CSDP missions has stepped up through pilot support and capacity building of civilian and military missions. In response to growing Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) related dynamics across the African continent, additional support and collaboration with Delegations and Commission services have been provided to respond to needs and challenges on the ground. In line with the European Democracy Action Plan, the Division has developed a FIMI Toolbox setting out the range of response options across four priority areas: situational awareness, resilience, disruption, CFSP or diplomatic responses. International cooperation on disinformation and foreign interference further increased in 2021, especially between the EEAS, NATO and the G7 Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) and with EU Member States and Institutions, in the context of the EEAS managed Rapid Alert System on Disinformation (RAS).

The **Policy Planning and Strategic Foresight Division** worked on policy analysis and policy planning as well as on strengthening the strategic foresight role of the EEAS in areas of major foreign policy priorities, e.g. EU strategic autonomy, geopolitics of Covid-19, green and digital transition geopolitics. It involved the production of various internal analysis and policy notes. The Division was actively involved in the policy planning of the preparations of multiple Joint Communications adopted in 2021. It conducted policy planners' consultations with EU Member States and other non-EU planners (e.g. US, G7, NATO) with the aim to share analyses on geopolitical issues. The Division also organised experts' workshops on specific topics with a view to feed in and inform EEAS own strategic analyses. The Division represented the EEAS in a number of think tank lead events, in the European Strategy and Policy Analysis System (ESPAS) and strengthened its input to the work of the EU interinstitutional foresight network. It led the EEAS work in the Conference on the Future of Europe. The Division also cooperated closely with the European Union Institute of Security Studies in a number of issues and events.

2.1.10 Directorate for General Affairs (SG.AFFGEN)

The EEAS reorganisation in September 2021 brought together the two legal entities of the EEAS, the Division for EU External Relations Law and Public International Law and the Division for Administrative Legal Issues, which, together with the

Inspection Service, Internal Audit and Data Protection Office, now form the Directorate for General Affairs under the supervision of the Director for General Affairs and Chief Legal Officer.

The Directorate for General Affairs continued to provide expertise on demand and prepared regular reports. More specifically, the two legal Divisions provided legal advice to the HR/VP and the EEAS through formal notes, participation in meetings, and in response to consultations. They represented the HR and the EEAS in judicial proceedings. The Divisions ensured that HR proposals and recommendations pursuant to the Treaties and HR and EEAS decisions under the Council decision establishing the EEAS are legally sound and in conformity with the Treaties and EU law.

The work performed in 2021 by the Inspection Service, Internal Audit and the Data Protection Officer is further developed under Part 3 of this annual activity report.

2.1.11 Entities directly attached to the Secretary-General

The reorganisation of the EEAS in September 2021 brought the former Policy Coordination Division directly under the EEAS Secretary General, supporting the SG on all matters relating to EEAS coordination, coordination with the Commission, Council and Member States. The Political and Security Committee team became part of the Council sector in the Policy Coordination Division. Through a joined-up approach to interinstitutional coordination, the **Policy Coordination Division** could thus ensure an effective and efficient conduct of policy and decision-making processes within the EEAS and with regard to the work of the Council (in particular the Foreign Affairs Council, Coreper, PSC and relevant Council preparatory bodies) and the Commission (in particular the Group for External Coordination – EXCO, the Interinstitutional Relations Group – GRI and legislative coordination). In coordination with the HR/VP's Cabinet and under the guidance of the EEAS Secretary General, the Division was responsible for the preparation of relevant Council meetings and for the preparation of the High Representative's participation in the European Council and informal meetings of EU Heads of State or Government.

Furthermore, the Division continued its work on advancing interinstitutional and in-house coordination in areas such as Declarations and Demarches, Legislative Procedures, Briefings, HRVP and Presidents'/Vice-Presidents' correspondence and other general EEAS working methods. The Division coordinated the input to the Commission Work Programme 2022, both as concerns the "Stronger Europe in the World" heading as well as other headline ambitions with an external dimension.

The **Parliamentary Affairs Division** contributed to ensuring the proper fulfilment of the legal obligations under Article 36 TEU, the commitments spelled out in the Declaration on Political Accountability, and in the HR/VP's parliamentary hearing in relations with the European Parliament. The HR/VP participated in 27 debates in 11

EP Plenary sessions and made seven appearances in EP Committees. In the middle of his mandate, the HR/VP's engagement with the EP was the highest since the creation of this function. EEAS management participated in more than 60 meetings of various EP Committees. The EEAS continued its proactive and targeted outreach to the EP on specific topics and major policy initiatives (e.g. Indo-Pacific Strategy, Joint Communication on strengthening EU's contribution to rule-based multilateralism), the EEAS Administrative Budget and the EEAS Discharge. The management of **Parliamentary Questions** continued to require additional resources due to the increasing flow. The Division handled over 6000 PQs in 2022, with EEAS being lead service in 583 cases. The **EEAS transparency** team continued to ensure citizens' access to foreign affairs-related documents and information by replying to requests according to Regulation 1049/2001 and to foreign affairs-related questions via Europe Direct. The EEAS received 181 initial requests for access to documents and 15 confirmatory requests. Europe Direct received over 3200 access to information requests on foreign policy out of which 318 were escalated to the Division and EEAS prepared targeted replies. The Division also handled and coordinated replies to the 19 cases opened and 10 opinions requested by the Ombudsman, to more than 20 requests addressed by National Parliaments and to seven petitions received from EP's PETI Committee.

The crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic required the continued attention of the **Protocol Service** as various sanitary restrictions remained in force not only in Europe but also around the world. At Headquarters, with the lifting of lockdowns and an increasing number of hybrid or small-scale in-person meetings, the Protocol Service was called to ensure appropriate organisation to the highest standards. The Protocol Service continued to act as a link to the Belgian Foreign Ministry with providing specific essential travel certificates to Belgian or other third countries' authorities to support the return of non-resident staff and their family members to HQ during tight travel restrictions. Two years into the pandemic, the work of supporting Delegations, in close coordination with the Legal Affairs Division and the relevant geographical divisions, remains of essence. The Protocol Division has helped dealing with specific issues such as forced quarantine, tracking apps, forced hospitalisation, travel and breach of provisions of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. In 2021, the competence of the accreditation of third countries Heads of Diplomatic Missions to EU was transferred from the European Commission to the EEAS. As of October 2021, the EEAS Protocol Division is thus leading the process of accreditations and in charge of establishing the EU's diplomatic list.

The EEAS continued to contribute to internal and external policy coherence on **Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment and the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda**, addressing the high expectations across the world of a strong and visible EU political and diplomatic leadership that translates into action in this area. This was done through mainstreaming gender and diversity in EU's bilateral external action, and in multilateral and regional fora. In 2021, EEAS started the

implementation of the Gender Action Plan III, including the EU WPS Policy. In preparation of the future Action Plan on Diversity (planned for 2022), the EEAS started outreach with various associations and interest groups on the strategic approach. Furthermore, among the periodic meetings of the EU Task Force on WPS, a dedicated one focussed on the situation of Afghan women took place, resulting in the initiative to set up a Forum for Afghan Women Leaders. Finally, the EEAS undertook enhanced efforts aimed at gender mainstreaming, e.g. engaging actively with the EU Presidency and the member states to make sure gender and the WPS agenda become integrated in the political discussions (e.g. in PSC, Coreper), rather than a stand-alone item. It also worked to ensure that gender equality and diversity are systematically included in EU political dialogues and diplomacy. To that purpose, the EEAS created a new entity under the Secretary General, led by a newly appointed Ambassador at Large for Gender and Diversity, focussing on external activities and coordination of Gender Focal Points both within EEAS Headquarters and across the network of EU Delegations.

2.1.12 Entities directly attached to the Deputy Secretary General for Political Affairs

The **Iran Division** has extensively supported the HR/VP and, on his behalf, the EEAS, as coordinator of the Joint Commission of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (**JCPOA**) and in facilitating the intense negotiations in Vienna aimed at a return to the JCPOA by the United States, the resumption of full implementation of all JCPOA sanctions-lifting commitments by the United States and the nuclear commitments by Iran. The Iran Division has continued its work related to further development of EU bilateral cooperation with Iran as well as on Iran's role in the regional security context during a year marked by elections leading to a new president and government taking office in Tehran and by consequential developments in the Gulf and neighbouring Afghanistan. The Iran Division, together with the relevant Commission services, has produced the first ever Multiannual Indicative Programme 2021-2027 that frames the priority areas of cooperation between the EU and Iran. The Iran Division was instrumental in the European Commission activating the EU Civil Protection Mechanism leading to EU Member States providing more than 10 million Covid-19 vaccine doses to the Iranian authorities. The promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Iran remained one of the top priorities with focus on respect of a fair trial, safe and humane detention conditions, and release of EU-Iranian dual nationals and human rights defenders who were arbitrarily detained.

During 2021, the **Sanctions division** continue to manage close to 40 EU autonomous or EU/UN mixed sanctions regimes, making sure they remain relevant, legally sound and up-to date. The division played a leading role in the development of new sanctions regimes, the quality review of individual designations and in addressing horizontal questions of sanctions policy such as humanitarian

exceptions, coordination with likeminded countries or countering unhelpful narratives regarding sanctions. As sanctions are often part of the first response to major political crises, in 2021, the division has elaborated new or modified sanctions regimes and successive packages of restrictive measures often in record time, including the EU sanctions response to the repression in Belarus (a very large amount of successive listings), the military coup in Myanmar (expanded regime and successive listings) and the crises in Lebanon (new EU regime) and Mali (new EU regime). The division was at the forefront of making the first designations under the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime a reality, a major step forward its instrumentalisation. The sanctions division also played a crucial role in the renewed negotiations with Iran, where US sanctions relief had been a key element.

The **Chair of the Political and Security Committee (PSC)** facilitated discussions and decisions among Member States to ensure that Foreign Affairs Council discussions and decisions were well prepared and properly followed up; that the EU reacted to crises around the world in a strategic and timely manner; and that CSDP missions and operations received appropriate political guidance. Despite the Covid-19 crisis, which hampered PSC's external outreach via working visits, the PSC met the high demands of the EU's Foreign and Security Policy and EU's Security and Defence policy, for example via the operationalisation of the European Peace Facility and the intensive negotiations on the Strategic Compass, which laid the ground for its adoption in March 2022. In addition, PSC paid attention to EU's longer-term policy challenges including the geopolitical dimension of digitalization, climate diplomacy, and human rights. In the domain of CSDP, the PSC continued to provide operational guidance to the EU's 11 civilian and 6 military missions and operations, and played a central role in rapidly setting up a seventh, new EU Military Training Mission in Mozambique against the background of a deteriorating regional security context. Overall, during 2021, the work of PSC ensured that the Council of Ministers discussed, agreed and made progress on priority files in the area of CFSP and CSDP.

2.1.13 Entities directly attached to the Deputy Secretary General for Economic and Global Issues

Through the reorganisation in September 2021, a Division for **Financing Instruments and International Cooperation** (ECO.FIIC) was created under the DSG ECO's office, to ensure that international cooperation and development policy is an integral part of EU external action. With the work of the division, in close cooperation with the Commission, towards adoption of almost one hundred Multiannual Indicative Programmes (MIPs) by the end of 2021, the EU has set and made public the country, regional and multilateral priorities for the period 2021-2027 (10 Neighbourhood MIPs are expected to be adopted in the first half of 2022). These strategic priorities are the result of intense consultations with the partner countries, local stakeholders (i.e. Civil Society, Private Sector, UN System, etc.), International

Organisations as well as Member States and the European Parliament through two High Level Geopolitical Dialogues. Similarly, through the reinforced policy-first principle, the Team Europe approach, and the extended use of the EFSD+, EEAS international cooperation has been strengthened gaining scale, flexibility and coherence for greater impact. As the Team Europe responses to Covid-19, the Afghanistan crisis, migration and others launched in 2021 illustrate, NDICI-Global Europe embeds the Commission's geopolitical policy priorities with all partners (except pre-accession) regardless of their income level. Through the work of ECO.FIIC, the EU has intensified the strategic use of the financial instruments to build alliances with high-income and like-minded countries, to strengthen its policy-driven cooperation with upper- and middle-income countries, to support transformative partnerships with less developed countries, and to respond to crises and the needs of fragile countries through the humanitarian-development- peace nexus approach.

2.2 Achievements of objectives in EEAS administration

For 2021, the Directorate General for Resource Management (DG RM⁴) focused on the following priority areas:

- 1) Pursuing the modernisation of the administration also by consolidating the lessons learned from Covid-19 with regard to new ways of working;
- 2) Supporting staff motivation and engagement in the new working environment while continuing to implement actions for an inclusive, supportive and sustainable working environment;
- 3) Further developing the duty of care and fostering a security culture across all entities through improved awareness, re-examination of real estate policy and simplified procedures.

DG RM also intensified its efforts to further enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the administration.

2.2.1 Pursuing the modernisation of the administration, also by consolidating the lessons learnt from the pandemic with regard to new ways of working.

Reorganisation of EEAS' Headquarters

Stefano Sannino took over as the new Secretary General of the EEAS from 2021 and the Service underwent several major organisational changes in the course of the year.

In January 2021, following the creation of the Integrated Approach for Security and Peace Directorate (ISPD) in March 2019, the organisation structure and title of the division 'Concepts, Knowledge Management and Programmes' was renamed 'Integrated Approach: Methodology and Implementation' to take better into account the reality of its work as well as expectations towards its mandate.

In February 2021, the Secretary General reorganised the services attached to him, with the ultimate goal of ensuring more coordinated and strengthened policymaking. This reorganisation resulted in the creation of the 'Office of the Secretary-General'. In addition, the 'Connectivity Adviser' entity was moved under the Deputy Managing Directorate for Human Rights, Global and Multilateral Issues, the 'Task Force Iran' under the Deputy Secretary-General for Political Affairs and the 'Space Task Force' under the Deputy Secretary General for CSDP and Crisis Response. In March, the

⁴ Previously, the Directorate General for Budget and Administration, renamed Directorate General for Resource Management in the reorganisation entered into force since September 2021.

Space Task Force, previously attached directly to the Secretary General, was transformed into a Division under the Security and Defence Policy Directorate.

In March 2021, he launched a broad consultative process involving all EEAS staff in HQ and Delegations (EEAS@20) to discuss how the EEAS could adapt its working methods and ensure a better distribution of resources and responsibilities in order to attain its political objectives in the ever-changing geopolitical context.

This process led to the largest reorganisation of the service since its creation, which came into force on 1 September 2021. It included the creation of three new Directorates and nine new Divisions, while 53 Divisions were transferred or renamed and 255 posts were created or transferred.

Concerning the services attached to the Secretary General, the Policy Coordination Division was assigned responsibility for the follow-up of the activities of the Political and Security Committee thus ensuring stronger overall coordination⁵. A limited number of additional horizontal structures were assigned to the Secretary General, due to their political and administrative relevance. These structures are: the Division in charge of the relations with the European Parliament, the Protocol Service, the Office of the Mediator and the Gender and Diversity Adviser.

A new Directorate, Strategic Communication and Foresight (SG.STRAT), was set up to enhance synergy among communications, public diplomacy and foresight; the Directorate for General Affairs (SG.AFFGEN) was reshaped to strengthen legal oversight and capacity: the Director in charge has now also the role of Chief Legal Officer and oversees the work of the newly created Division for Administrative Legal Affairs.

The Deputy Secretary General for Economic and Global Affairs was assigned the leading role on the management of financial instruments, with a newly created Division placed under their direct responsibility and in charge of the financing instruments, including the new Global Europe Instrument, and international cooperation (ECO.FIIC).

The Managing Directorate for Global Agenda and Multilateral Relations (MD GLOBAL) is now comprised of two Deputy Managing Directorates (DMD). The DMD 'Global Issues' is in charge of activities linked to the implementation of the Green Deal, the Digital Agenda and the other EU priorities, in cooperation with the European Commission. The DMD 'Values and Multilateral Relations' will continue focusing on multilateral relations and human rights.

Finally, DG Budget and Administration was renamed DG Resource Management and a new information and documentation management Division created. Two new

⁵ The Political and Security Committee Chair was made Deputy Political Director and attached to the Deputy Secretary General for Political Affairs.

Divisions responsible for real estate issues were also created, respectively in charge of Real Estate in Delegations (RM.SECRE.4) and Real Estate in Headquarters, Safety and Greening (RM.SECRE.5), replacing the former Infrastructure and Safety Division (BA.SI.4).

New teleworking policies for Headquarters and Delegations

In 2021, with the emerging of new Covid-19 variants, telework remained the main working pattern worldwide. This contributed to accelerate the transition towards a more modern working environment (e.g. paperless workflows, use of Video Tele-Conferencing -VTC- tools) and to anticipate the related challenges in terms of management, work organisation and psychosocial risks.

With the majority of staff vaccinated by the summer, the EEAS administration implemented a policy of return to the office adapted to the nature of work in Headquarters and in Delegations. It also granted the possibility to telework from outside the place of employment for a maximum of 10 working days until the end of 2021. Flexibility had in any case to prevail to adapt to the evolution of the pandemic and specific local conditions⁶.

DG RM will draw on the lessons learned from this experience for the decisions to be taken in 2022 on the new rules for teleworking and working time. Specific decisions will be adopted respectively for Headquarters and Delegations, with the decision for Headquarters expected to be largely aligned with the European Commission rules, and the decision for Delegations reflecting the specific nature of work in diplomatic missions (necessity of presence on the ground and in-person contacts, technical and security constraints etc.).

2021 Staff Survey EEAS HQ and Joint EEAS – European Commission Delegations Survey

In November 2021, the EEAS conducted its fifth Staff Survey, which covered both EEAS Headquarters and Delegations. For the second time, this was done jointly with the European Commission for all staff in EU Delegations.

The 2021 Staff Survey focussed on recent developments of working methods, cooperation with colleagues and workplace dynamics due to the pandemic, and enabled staff to share their overall experience throughout the past two years. However, in December 2021, the steering committee on EU Delegations (EUDEL)⁷

⁶ In parallel, with a view to improving wellbeing and work-life balance, the EEAS continued to authorise specific working arrangements on a case-by-case basis in support of staff with certain medical conditions or complex family situations. It also granted telework from outside the place of employment for a maximum of 10 working days until the end of 2021

⁷ 'EUDEL' is the Steering Committee for EU Delegations, as defined in Decision JOIN(2012)8. It is an advisory body, that ensures cooperation and mutual consultation between the EEAS and the relevant European Commission Services for all issues regarding the management of EU Delegations. The EUDEL is composed of one representative from the EEAS, DG INTPA, the

was informed that the participation rate was significantly lower in comparison with the previous survey, both as regards EEAS Headquarters and EU Delegation staff (EEAS and European Commission).

Follow-up actions will be developed in 2022 on the basis of the completed analysis.

2.2.2 Supporting staff motivation and engagement in the new working environment while continuing to implement actions for an inclusive, supportive and sustainable working environment

Gender Balance and Diversity Strategy

In cooperation with the Ambassador at Large for Gender and Diversity, the Adviser for Equal Opportunities and DG RM focussed in 2021 on consolidating progress especially in the area of furthering opportunities for women in management and pre-management positions.

In March 2021, on the occasion of International Women's Day, the EEAS Secretary General launched an Action Plan on possible additional measures to address gender imbalance in EEAS Management. This is a working document that introduces and furthers actions across all aspects of human resources, from recruitment to mentorship, to targeted actions with Member States, to gender-responsive leadership.

In June, the Secretary General launched the #NoWomenNoEUDiplomacy strategy, launching new initiatives to reach gender balance within the EU diplomatic network and workforce, thus identifying as priorities gender parity among managers and the development of sustainable, future-proof equality policies.

The EEAS also worked towards the first joint EEAS–European Commission Diversity, Inclusion, and Respect at the Workplace Survey in Headquarters and for expatriate staff in Delegations. The survey was launched in the first quarter of 2021 and provided an opportunity to analyse the composition of staff in terms of diversity as well as to provide input for the development of future human resources policies in the areas of diversity and inclusion.

2021 was also the first year of activity for the newly established EEAS Joint Committee on Equal Opportunities (COPEC)⁸. This Committee contributes, through proposals, opinions or recommendations, which are consultative in nature, to policies

European Commission's Secretariat-General, DG BUDG and DG HR and it is chaired by the EEAS.

⁸ It consists of five full members and five alternate members designated by the Director of Human Resources; five full members and five alternate members, designated by the Staff Committee; a Chairperson appointed by the Director-General for Resource Management in consultation with the Staff Committee; and a Vice-Chairperson appointed by the Staff Committee in consultation with the Director General for Resource Management.

relating to the following areas: the gender and equal opportunities strategy; respect for diversity and non-discrimination; anti-harassment; the organisation of flexible work arrangements and a fair, flexible and respectful working environment to promote talent, skills and work-life balance.

Disability Policy

The EEAS and the European Commission Survey on diversity, inclusion and respect in the workplace (referred to above) was on the basis of staff self-declaring their situation. The analysis of the survey is still being finalised but preliminary results show, inter alia, a need for more information about reasonable accommodation⁹ and about communication and accessibility.

As in previous years, the EEAS communicated about the International Day for People with Disabilities. Throughout the week of 29 November - 3 December 2021, it provided information to staff through dedicated material, events and conferences. The EEAS Roadmap for Action on Disability endorsed in June 2020 by the EEAS Secretary General was updated for the second time. It serves as a guide for EEAS work in this area and includes contacts, useful information and new developments.

With a goal to combat stereotypes, prejudices, and harmful practices relating to persons with disabilities, the EEAS distributed its Guide on Inclusive communication to the network of Delegations and encouraged to use it when referring to persons with disabilities. The guide is available in English and French.

In order to help colleagues with a disability consider applying for a job in a Delegation, Delegations were asked to provide precise information on the suitability and accessibility of the Delegation.

In November 2021, the Director General for Resource Management adopted a Decision on the provision of reasonable accommodation for officials, temporary staff agents and contract staff with a disability. A decision for other staff is under preparation.

Early in 2021, the EEAS adopted an administrative decision to allow for the reimbursement of non-medical costs relating to the disability of a dependent without any financial contribution from the staff member. Until 2020, staff had to contribute between 5 and 35% of the incurred costs, based on their family income. Twenty families benefitted from this measure in 2021 for an amount of EUR 400 000. The measure was an opportunity to streamline procedures for managing social aid.

Anti-harassment Policy

⁹ Reasonable accommodation is any modification or adjustment to a job, an employment practice or the work environment that makes it possible for a qualified individual with a disability to enjoy an equal employment opportunity, without at the same time imposing a disproportionate burden on the employer. Besides the area of working conditions, it applies to all areas of employment, including selection, recruitment, promotion, social benefits, and training.

In 2021, the EEAS focused on the preparation of a decision on the prevention of and fight against psychological and sexual harassment for local staff in Delegations.

The areas addressed in this decision included legal and mediation services, to Human Resource policy and recruitment. The draft decision was finalised at the end of 2021 and it is hoped the new decision will be adopted in the course of 2022, following discussion with the staff representatives through the Social Dialogue.

EEAS training on anti-harassment continued in 2021 both for managers, for whom the training has been mandatory since 2020, as well as for other categories of staff such as Heads of Sections in Delegations. Over the year, the EEAS organised six online training sessions on 'How to create a harassment-free work environment'. Two of these were for managers and four for Heads of Section in Delegations.

Development of a culture of ethical behaviour

In 2021, the EEAS has further increased awareness of ethical procedures and behaviour among staff. Besides classroom and on-line training modules, welcome sessions and pre-posting seminars, the EEAS Ethics Correspondent team conducted a course for future Heads of Administration within the framework of the Heads of Administration College. It updated the ethics Intranet page to improve access to information and make it easier to download the forms to initiate the correct authorisation procedures and submit these through the dedicated functional mailbox.

Development of the social policy team

In 2021, with the aim of providing professional support to staff and families in Headquarters and Delegations, in close collaboration with the EEAS Medical Service, the EEAS Mediator, the European Commission's Pay Master Office (PMO) and the interinstitutional network of social workers, the EEAS recruited a social worker to its social policy team. Around 200 individuals received personal guidance in relation to health/medical cover, psychological, professional and administrative issues.

The work of the social policy team has otherwise focused on the implementation of the new policy framework for disability and the support to families posted in Delegations, with a view to improving wellbeing and work-life balance.

Career

During 2021, the EEAS worked on the reform of its staff appraisal system in particular for better comparability of evaluation reports. The new appraisal system was finalised in early 2022 and establishes notably three performance levels in order to provide a clearer basis for the comparison of merit, and is coupled with clearer

criteria for assessing the various performance areas in order to ensure more transparency.

Learning and Development

The EEAS' Training and Development offer in 2021 was built upon the following two overarching focus areas:

- a) Continuous offering of courses in order to ensure consistent access for EEAS staff to training, to acquire and develop the skills and competences needed to deliver EEAS objectives, both in Headquarters and in Delegations.
- b) Continue to provide training in the skills and coping methods for staff to deal with the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic conditions, such as resilience and well-being, and preparing EEAS staff for the gradual return to the office.

In 2021, the EEAS learning and development offer remained mainly in online format because of the extended use of teleworking due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Based on the experience gathered during 2020, online trainings were successfully offered both for Headquarters as well as for Delegations staff.

In 2021, 45.5 % of participants in courses organised by the EEAS were staff in Delegations. Delegation staff continued to have access to formats usually "reserved" for Headquarters such as policy-driven programming, various thematic courses (e.g. EU-US relations), or indeed the large on-line training offer from the European Commission and the European School of Administration – all continuing to deliver their training in digital format. A new round of the language courses for all staff (Headquarters and Delegations), entitled "Do you speak diplomacy?" was organised online.

A major milestone of the year was the delivery of the first academic year of the four Training Maps launched in 2020. This allows providing targeted training for key job profiles, such as Assistants to the Head of Delegation, Budget/contract and finance Assistants, Political Officers/Diplomats and Newly Appointed Managers. Part of a two-year cycle, the first year of the Managers' Training map was completed, as were whole cycles of the Political Officers, Assistants to Heads of Delegations and Financial Assistants training maps.

In 2021, the EEAS started preparing the launch of a pilot project for the establishment of a European Diplomatic Academy. The European Parliament approved an allocation of EUR 995 000 to the EEAS 2022 budget for this purpose. The objective of the Academy is to provide a common diplomatic training to junior diplomats of the Member States and EU institutions. The Academy, once established after the pilot phase, would create a cohort of Member States diplomats trained on

EU foreign and security. The Academy will help create a European diplomatic culture thus contributing to the efforts to enhance the EU's (and the EEAS') role as an effective foreign policy actor.

Two new courses were also offered for the first time online: a) 54 places for the course on "*the EEAS and its selection procedures*" were offered to representatives of Member States Foreign Ministries and b) European Diplomatic Programme (EDP): *Module III of the EDP*.

Additionally, the EEAS continued offering several mentoring programmes aiming to support new and newly assigned members of staff, both at Headquarters and in Delegations, a kind of support structure that became particularly important within the times of confinement. In particular, all newly appointed Ambassadors and Deputy Heads of Delegations taking up duty in 2021 were matched with a mentor. It is worth noting that the EEAS newcomers mentoring platform won a special mention in the European School of Administration (EUSA) Learning and Development awards for innovative programmes.

Besides, in May 2021, the EEAS created an Internal Coaching Service to offer for the first time individual coaching to all officials, temporary agents and contract agents in Delegations and Headquarters. This replaced and broadened the services of the former EEAS career advisory service by focussing on career transitions (inter alia change of jobs, mobility and rotation, longer-term career planning, or on boarding of newcomers) and personal development coaching.

While personal development coaching was made available to all officials, temporary agents and contract agents, priority was given to those with informal management roles in Delegations and Headquarters: in HQ Deputy Heads of Division, Delegation Heads of Political/ Press and Information Sections and Heads of Administration and in both, Heads of Sector and Team Leaders.

In 2021, the EEAS Internal Coaching Service organised 240 sessions with 131 colleagues. 44 % of the sessions were devoted to career transitions, and 66 % to personal development. 57 % of the colleagues supported in 2021 were women and 43 % men.

Developments for staff serving in third countries

In May 2021, the EEAS launched a new web platform - e-Rights - to process the financial entitlements for the removals and take-up-duty travels of staff in rotation. e-Rights is an intuitive, one-stop portal for staff to request and monitor entitlements and payments under Annex X to the Staff Regulations. It should ensure a faster and more transparent service. The platform will be expanded progressively to streamline and manage most financial rights of expatriated staff in rotation under Annex X, including installation and resettlement, annual travel, education, accommodation, and possibly the living conditions allowance.

In parallel to the launch of e-Rights, progress was made to find alternative solutions to the use of rates (which were until 2018 defined by the International Air Transport Association - IATA) to determine the take-up-duty and annual travel. Pending a sustainable solution compatible with the Staff Regulations, rates continued to be adapted based on salary indexation.

The working group set up in 2019 to revise the methodology for calculating the Living Condition allowances was put on hold due to the need to focus on the administrative aspects of the management of the Covid-19 pandemic and emerging political crises.

Work also continued regarding EEAS Housing Policy. The Housing Norms for 25 Delegations were reviewed (two more than in 2020) in order to align the housing entitlements of staff with the situation on the local real estate market. In addition, the periodical assessment of the list of countries under Article 5 and Article 23 of Annex X to the Staff Regulations took place in order to define whether a change of housing regime was warranted. Under Article 5, the Delegation is responsible for selecting accommodation and providing it to staff whilst under Article 23, staff is responsible for sourcing its own accommodation. Article 23 is the most common system applied while Article 5 applies when security and/or scarcity make it difficult to source adequate accommodation, or when the Delegation owns accommodation. As a result of the review exercise, the EU Delegations to Kenya and Lesotho moved from Article 5 to Article 23. A further modernisation of the Housing policy is planned for 2022, notably to address the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the New Ways of Working on the requirements for staff accommodation.

Further progress was made to implement the 2019 Joint EEAS-EU Member States Action Plan for improving the conditions of staff's partners in EU Delegations. A mapping of employment possibilities throughout countries of posting was finalised, allowing spouses to know where they can engage in gainful employment with only limited loss of their privileges and immunities. The EEAS has identified those countries where it could facilitate spouse employment through the conclusion of bilateral arrangements with local authorities. Information was also compiled on the status of same-sex couples in countries of posting. As part of the 2021 rotation, a dedicated pre-posting training session was held for spouses and partners, in which the EU Family Network association participated. Finally, the EEAS has resumed collaboration with EUFASA (the EU Foreign Affairs Spouses and Partners Association) and attended their annual conference. The EEAS family officer participated actively in the informal network of EU Foreign Ministries' family officers and exchanged practices with Member States throughout the year.

New conditions of employment for Local Agents

The EEAS continued to implement the most significant reform in the past 30 years of the conditions of employment, complementary healthcare insurance and provident savings for local staff, which entered into force on 1 June 2020. The EEAS amended the structure of the EU minimum conditions to be a more responsive and attractive employer in future. New conditions of employment (“LA-CE”) applicable worldwide, brought a wide range of better minimum terms to all, complementing the local law that governs each Local Agent’s employment contract. These advantages were accompanied by more generous conditions for the healthcare insurance (LA-Medical).

In 2021, the EEAS made substantial progress to finalise the 199 specific country and allowance decisions preserving benefits based on specific local practices. To this end, the EEAS conducted the extensive legal analysis for local staff wanting to accept the new conditions of employment before their Delegation’s local practice decision was adopted. The EEAS also made substantial progress on the procedures to adopt decisions covering the 20 countries (23 Delegations) where affiliation to the LA-Medical and/or LA-Provident Fund does not apply due to local circumstances and where in most cases local alternatives are needed.

To secure sufficient time for Local Agents to decide whether the new terms were best for them, the deadline to sign up for the new conditions of employment was extended until 31 December 2021. By the end of 2021, more than 1 700 Local Agents (corresponding to about 68 % of the total number of Local Agents) serving in EU Delegations prior to 1 June 2020 had signed up for the new conditions of employment. All new Local Agents recruited by EU Delegations since 1 June 2020 have been employed on the new and improved terms.

2.2.3 Further developing the duty of care and fostering a security culture across all entities through improved awareness, re-examination of real estate policy and simplified procedures

Providing a safe and secure working environment for all staff at Headquarters and in Delegations and reducing the risk of accidents and injuries at work is a priority for the EEAS. Promoting a genuine culture of safety and security is particularly crucial in times of crises, as it strengthens and safeguards the resilience of the EEAS in a constantly changing and challenging environment.

EEAS administration response to the Covid-19 pandemic

In 2021, the Covid-19 pandemic continued to have a severe impact on all EEAS staff and their families, and was particularly challenging for those in Delegations. All had to adapt and show resilience in a situation of uncertainty, which brought stress and anxiety, sometimes far from home and without the possibility to travel to or from the EU.

The Directorate General for Resource Management worked throughout the year to ensure the duty of care towards its staff and business continuity of the EEAS at the same time.

In Headquarters, the EEAS followed the rules set by the Belgian authorities with regard to travel authorisations for professional or personal travel as well as to staff presence in the office, in keeping with the evolution of the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on the local healthcare facilities. For the biggest part of 2021, all staff were asked to telework, with the sole exception of staff responsible for essential tasks requiring physical presence. EU Delegations were asked, as in 2020, to respect local regulations and recommendations and promote generalised teleworking in place of employment, combined with a reduced physical presence of colleagues in premises.

Concerning communication to staff, the EEAS could rely on the practices developed during the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic to communicate with staff. The dedicated Intranet page on Covid-19 issues for Headquarters and Delegations in the EEAS intranet was kept up-to-date and detailed communications were sent from the Secretary-General and the Director-General for Resource Management to all staff in keeping with the evolution of the Covid-19 pandemic. Staff could also seek advice on issues related to the Covid-19 pandemic through the dedicated mailboxes created in 2020 and could contact the EEAS Medical Service whenever needed, with the required level of privacy being always ensured.

It is worth noting that in May 2021, the EEAS and the European Commission's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) won the 2021 European Ombudsman Award for Good Administration for

their work to bring stranded EU citizens home. While handing the Award to the EEAS Secretary General and the Director-General of DG ECHO on 29 September, the Ombudsman stressed the merits of the unprecedented operation of repatriating some 600 000 EU citizens in early 2020. EEAS staff, including in EU Delegations, helped on every front: from advice to EU citizens, to outreach to authorities to secure exit or transit authorisations to coordination of repatriation flights.

EEAS Medical Service

The EEAS Medical Service continued to play a central role in the management of the Covid-19 pandemic, for both Headquarters and Delegations. It provided advice on preventive measures adapted to the evolution of the Covid-19 pandemic, individual risk assessments, the follow-up of cases and contacts, and the establishment of preparedness plans in Delegations. It also organised polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing for critical staff in Headquarters. Where necessary, support was given to Delegations for the purchase of appropriate protective equipment and medical supplies, and for the establishment of contracts with medical structures.

Once Covid-19 vaccines became available, in April 2021, in cooperation with the European Commission's Medical Service and the Belgian authorities, the EEAS launched the vaccination campaign for staff in Headquarters as well as for staff in Delegations and their expatriated dependants. By the end of the summer, all staff had been offered several opportunities to be fully vaccinated, and the estimated vaccination rate amounted to more than 80% – reaching 100 % in several EU Delegations. In particular, the EEAS shipped vaccines to all 72 Delegations experiencing difficulties to access EMA-recognised vaccines via the local authorities. This covered around 4 000 people, including expatriate staff in Delegations, their family members and Local Agents.

In December 2021, the EEAS Medical Service took full responsibility for the organisation of the booster campaign. 1 500 staff and family members were vaccinated in the EEAS premises before the Christmas holidays. Preparations were also made to send mRNA vaccines to Delegations with a difficult local access to these vaccines.

In line with the new rotation decision, the EEAS Medical Service was increasingly involved in assessing the “fitness to work” of EEAS candidates for EU Delegations, and made 50 pre-deployment checks for the 2021 rotation. In addition, it carried out a pilot project to assess the psychological fitness of eight candidates departing for hardship postings with high levels of stress and isolation. Options for expanding the exercise will be analysed as part of a fully-fledged policy for high-risk countries.

In 2021, the Medical Service broadened its psychological support and advice to the most challenging EU Delegations and to staff having difficulties to cope with the

impact of Covid-19. It provided psychological support to staff and family members where necessary facing difficult professional and personal situations. It helped EU Delegations in identifying appropriate local psychological assistance such as individual and group sessions to strengthen resilience, and provided practical tools for coping with stress. In September 2021, it offered a group debriefing session with a psychologist specialised in acute crisis support for the staff who had lived through the evacuation of the EU Delegation in Kabul.

Security at Headquarters

In 2021, the EEAS continued to modernise the technical security infrastructure in its buildings. The EEAS Capital building's Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) system was entirely renewed and modernised and the Security Control Room was upgraded and remodelled allowing for a more efficient surveillance of the buildings in Brussels. An additional Secure Speech Room was finalised, allowing staff to have meetings on sensitive and classified content in a secure environment, thus further protecting against information leaks. The new Belmont building's technical security installations were also finalised.

In June 2021, the EEAS took over the entire management of the Personal Security Clearance (PSC) process for EEAS staff from the European Commission. This allowed the establishment of direct contact with all National Security Authorities (NSAs) to collaborate on specific cases and to resolve some long-pending requests. As a result of this process and the full-scale follow-up at the end of 2022, PSC compliance reached up 99.7 % in EU Delegations and 95 % in Headquarters.

The EEAS visitor management system (e-Visitor) application proved its effectiveness in 2021. It was rapidly and successfully adapted to meet the needs resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic. Then all visitors were asked via the system to complete a Covid-19 questionnaire and to acknowledge that they would respect the required measures. That contributed to an increased awareness, information and attentiveness of both hosts and visitors with regard to the EEAS measures to combat the Covid-19 pandemic.

In 2021, the EEAS increased the number of security briefings delivered to different audiences (trainees, newcomers, specific target groups within the EEAS, managers, etc.); including the creation of a comprehensive security briefing for newcomers, covering inter alia cyber literacy, counter intelligence and security investigations.

Work on preventing espionage threats has been further intensified. Counter Intelligence awareness briefings were delivered to most geographical Divisions at Headquarters and to a number of EU Delegations. The EEAS offers a number of policy documents and resources aimed at enabling staff to correctly handle and protect sensitive and EU classified information (EUCI) and strengthen the institution's security culture. In 2021, the EEAS finalised its Guidelines on Creating and Handling EUCI and on Emergency Plans for EUCI evacuation and destruction.

Security Investigations are carried out on breaches of rules and compromise of EUCI and sensitive information.

In light of the agreement on Security of Information with the United Kingdom reached at the end of 2020, the EEAS supported the General Secretariat of the Council during an assessment visit to the United Kingdom in June 2021. The EEAS also continued the negotiations on an Implementing Arrangement, allowing for the exchange of Classified Information with the United Kingdom, with a view to finalise it in early 2022.

The EEAS continued strengthening its cooperation with other EU Institutions, Agencies and Bodies with the aim of achieving shared rules and approaches in the field of security. In particular, over the year, the organisation of high-level fora for Security enhanced the close cooperation with the Council of the EU and the European Commission. The EEAS also actively contributed to the interinstitutional Security Awareness Group.

Security in EU Delegations and country evacuations

2021 saw a steady rising trend of international and local tensions, which worsened the security environment in several areas of the world. Security incidents reported in EU Delegations, which had dropped 27 % in 2020 due to Covid-19 confinements, came back to pre-Covid-19 pandemic figures, with a total number of 432 security incidents reported in 2021.

Due to the clear deterioration of the situation in Afghanistan since early 2021, the EEAS gradually reduced the number of expatriate staff in the EU Delegation to Kabul over the year. From 16 to 26 August 2021, given the return of the Taliban to rule in Kabul, the EEAS evacuated successfully over 500 Afghans (EEAS and European Commission Local Agents and their dependents) finding themselves in a life-threatening position due to their link with the EU. The EEAS also supported their asylum's requests, with Member States eventually granting asylum to Afghan nationals with a relation to the EU. On 27 August, the EEAS withdrew completely all Delegation expatriate staff from Kabul.

New security equipment, policies and IT functionalities for security in Delegations

In terms of security equipment, in 2021, the EEAS purchased 18 new armoured vehicles and maintenance equipment for its existing fleet and dispatched them to Delegations worldwide. Concerning the purchase and management of satellite communications equipment, in 2021, the EEAS continued to cooperate with the European Defence Agency (EDA) through the "Joint Procurement Arrangement for EU SatCom Market". The EEAS also reinforced the maintenance of its existing radio network to ensure the continuity of communications in case of crises.

To keep reinforcing preparedness to react to crises, in 2021 the EEAS renegotiated the list of countries included in the Declaration of Intent with the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The new agreement will include 13 new countries. This means that in 68 countries, if needed, French Embassies could support the evacuation of EU Delegation expatriate staff and their dependents.

Also in 2021, different services of the EEAS coordinated preparation of security instructions applicable to certain categories of agents such as Seconded National Experts or Junior Professionals in Delegations, as well as rules for external passengers in EU vehicles. The EEAS also progressed in 2021 on the design of a new incident reporting process to streamline information flows and on rules regarding the use of EU blacklisted airlines by Delegation staff.

Finally, on IT tools, in June 2021 the EEAS launched a new module facilitating the implementation of the Security Risk Management process for the protection of Union Delegations.

Security training

In 2021, the EEAS continued working on the EEAS Security Awareness Programme, an initiative launched in 2018 to raise security awareness and promote a security culture across the whole of the EEAS. The programme seeks to advise staff on known and emerging threats to security and the role their behaviour plays in protecting both themselves and EEAS security interests. Over the course of 2021, the programme was further expanded, inter alia by increasing the number of initiatives available in French and online. Work continued also on the ABCs of Security initiative, a series of cartoon-style posters featuring contrasting poor security behaviour with recommended alternatives. The Cyber Literacy Programme continued in 2021 with a number of initiatives, including anti-phishing campaigns.

In early 2021, the EEAS received a study on the profile of diplomatic security officers from Member States and other International Organisations done by the European Gendarmerie Force (EGF)¹⁰. This study has contributed to the design of a comprehensive new training programme for identified competences of Regional Security Officers (RSO) posted in Delegations. In addition, in 2021 the EEAS put in place a new induction training for newly recruited RSOs helping them to become familiar with the functioning of the EEAS and their responsibilities before they take up duty in their first Delegation.

Despite the pandemic, the EEAS continued organising Hostile Environment Awareness Training (HEAT) in person, including in some EU Delegations. This is a

¹⁰ The European Gendarmerie Force is a multinational initiative made up of seven Member States (France, Italy, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Spain) able to provide security expertise available from a pool of more than 360 000 Gendarmes across Europe.

key training to ensure staff is adequately prepared for postings in or missions to, challenging security environments. In 2021, the EEAS announced a revised HEAT policy to apply as of May 2022, with the aim to enhance staff's preparedness for postings or missions to high-risk areas.

Nevertheless, other security training had to be adapted to an online format. Over 2021, the EEAS provided for the first time online five Security Management Team trainings to staff with security responsibilities in Delegations. In addition, the EEAS organised almost 50 online training sessions for RSOs on dedicated security topics to help them implement new instructions and train them in the use of new IT tools deployed for their daily work.

2.2.4 Enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the administration

In 2021, the EEAS Directorate General for Resource Management continued to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the administration. The major highlights of the year included:

New Financial Regulation

Following the entry into force of the revised Financial Regulation on 1st January 2019, the EEAS adapted its internal rules, including for the possibility to accept Corporate Sponsorship for events organised by the EEAS and for the possibility for the Deputies Head of Delegation to intervene as AOSD for the operational expenditures of the European Commission.

The current experience however shows how the EEAS has still difficulties in managing in an agile and effective way its operations. Therefore, the EEAS has requested some further changes of the Financial Regulation intended to modernise and simplify the financial operations and align our system to that of the main international operators (public and private). In particular, the EEAS aims to simplify the procurement rules in the EU Delegations and to modernise the treasury operations with the introduction of new methods of payment.

Adoption of the 2022 Budget

After a very complicated negotiation, the President of the European Parliament signed the 2022 EU budget on 24 November 2021.

The amount approved for the EEAS administrative budget, which also includes the Amending Letter 1 to the Draft Budget 2022, is EUR 777.7 million, up by 1.3 % from the EUR 767.6 million in the 2021 budget. This amount covers notably the following:

- The opening of a new Delegation in Qatar;
- The governance of the European Peace Facility;
- Reinforcements of EEAS Strategic Communications, both with additional staff and increased financial resources to support the Action Plan against Disinformation, in particular in the Far East region;
- Amounts to finance a pilot project to prepare the possible creation of a European Diplomatic Academy;

The reinforcements authorised by the Budgetary Authority for the EEAS, to fulfil its increasing mandate during year 2022, have resulted in a total of 28 new Full-Time

Equivalent (FTEs). It is however important to underline that the additional staff resources all have been granted exclusively to manage additional tasks with which the EEAS has been charged by the legislator. In no case did the Budget Authority accept to reinforce the EEAS without such reasons.

Simplification of budget lines

The EEAS' budget (Section X of the Union Budget) is very likely the most complex one among the EU institutions when set in relation to its volume of appropriations. Its management continues to be a challenging exercise. The EEAS strives continuously to streamline this procedure and has managed to simplify it significantly in recent years.

In 2020, with the start of the new Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027, the EEAS implemented a simplification proposal which reduced the number of accounting positions in its own budget from the aforementioned 36 to 20. This work has been pursued and built upon in 2021 and discussions are ongoing with the European Commission to seek further simplification in line with the indications from the European Parliament.

Support to EU Delegations

In order to alleviate the workload for EU Delegations, the EEAS continued its efforts to centralise further certain administrative processes. In February 2021, the EEAS centralised the processing and payment of allowances for expatriate staff under Annex X of the Staff Regulation (Article 23 accommodation, Taking-Up-Duty travel allowance and removals) for 23 Delegations in Latin America and the Caribbean and in October 2021 for a further 15 Delegations in Eastern Europe and in the Middle East. Preparations started in view of the next phases of centralisation to Delegations in Africa in 2022. The Support to Delegations Division continued implementing new payroll models for the remuneration of local staff in Delegations, supported the adaptation of existing models organised training and helped to address issues and technical problems reported by Delegations.

As the Covid-19 pandemic continued to impact severely EU Delegations in 2021, the EEAS provided remote or on-site support with a team of Heads of Administration and Assistants to Heads of Delegation “floaters”, and upon request stepped into Delegations' financial workflows, including as Authorising Officer by Sub-Delegation when necessary. Business continuity was guaranteed through the assistance of the responsible Division in EEAS Headquarter, in particular for Delegations in crises (e.g. Myanmar, Afghanistan, Ethiopia). The Division continued to support the previously regionalised Delegations on the monthly payroll for Local Agents, annual salary revisions, processing and payment of medical claims and Prior Authorisation

Requests for Local Agents, providing support for tenders of all values and processing financial transactions.

With the aim of streamlining communication between Delegations and Headquarters providing a single channel for administrative questions and enquiries, in October 2021 the EEAS launched a digital @HelloAdmin platform with the first set of services (budget, procurement, document management, general helpdesk to EU Delegations). Other services will gradually join this.

Real Estate Policy

Throughout 2021, the EEAS made much progress in the implementation of two concepts already adopted by several international institutions during the past years, namely the collaborative space policy and the New Ways of Working (NWoW). The objectives of the collaborative space policy and of the NWoW at the EEAS are manifold:

- Firstly, they made a more efficient use of available office space, replacing the traditional concept of individual offices with new areas for different types of work and interaction. This should eventually bring operational savings by increasing the flexibility of the fitting out, so that office areas can be easily adapted to new teams, tasks or resources, without a need for costly works.
- Secondly, the aim of collaborative spaces is to modernise the workplace, adapting it to new ways of working and promoting interaction between co-workers.
- Thirdly, the EEAS had sought to make the workplace more attractive, so that coming to the office would become a rewarding experience (compared to working from home).
- Finally, the extensive application of these criteria could contribute to the reduction of the environmental impact of EEAS activities.

In 2021, the EEAS started implementing this new policy both in Headquarters and in Delegations. The new EEAS building in Brussels, the Belmont, was fitted out with a layout based on collaborative spaces and became the flagship of the EEAS in this field. It is hosting since November 2021 the Directorate General for Resource Management. The move to the Belmont also provided the opportunity to introduce the 'flexible office' concept, whereby not all staff have permanently assigned workstations. The concept was applied for three pilot Divisions and will be extended on a voluntary basis.

Other achievements related to the EEAS real estate worth mentioning are:

- The development of a multi-annual plan for EEAS Real Estate projects in Delegations. In 2020, the EEAS launched a quality assessment of its Real

Estate in Delegations with a view to establish mid- to long-term priorities for real estate projects in Delegations. The exercise aims at ensuring the gradual quality upgrade of Delegation buildings across the world, and the concentration of scarce resources on critical needs. On this basis, a list of 25 Delegations and Residences (15 % of buildings) requiring priority attention in the next two to three years was created in 2021. The list constituted the first multi-annual planning for building projects in Delegations. About 35% of these projects were finalised in 2021 or will be finalised early 2022, including the new EU Delegations to Argentina, Costa Rica, Malaysia and Moldova.

- The promotion of green initiatives in line with the longer-term objective of setting-up of an environmental management system for the EEAS. For Headquarters, the EEAS launched a call for tenders for consultancy and training services, for assistance in implementing the EMAS (Eco-Management and Audit Scheme) Regulation, a management instrument developed by the European Commission to evaluate, report, and improve the environmental performance of an organisation. For EU Delegations, 2021 saw the launch of a first survey to collect data on green initiatives and on their environmental footprint and to encourage more sustainable consumption patterns (utilities, paper, use of single-use plastics, etc.). Finally, a network of environmental correspondents, including both Headquarters and Delegations, was created.

Real Estate Policy - Headquarters

By the end of 2021, the EEAS occupied four buildings in Brussels (under a usufruct contract) comprising an office space of 76 115 m², supplemented by a rented office space of 778 m² (in the Council's LEX building). In comparison to 2020, the EEAS real estate portfolio became more efficient, more modern and environmental-friendly, by providing more office space while occupying fewer buildings.

During the past years, the need for additional office space had become apparent due to constant staff increases. To partially meet this increasing demand, the EEAS signed in June 2020 a usufruct contract for a 15-years lease of Belmont, an office building of 13 169 m² surface in the European quarter of Brussels. Following the renovation project, which was completed in record time, the occupation of the Belmont started in October 2021 and was finalised in December 2021.

By adding the Belmont building to its portfolio, the EEAS also achieved other objectives, including reducing dispersion of staff by releasing a small and outdated building – B100 – as well as additional rented space in a European Commission building. However, even before the Belmont project had been finalised, it was recognised that even more space was needed in view of the increase of EEAS staff, leaving the Service with the immediate challenge ahead to acquire additional office space with scarce budgetary resources. In this context, the EEAS welcomed the European Commission's initiative to release the part of the 'Capital' building

previously occupied by EPSO (named C-25). In November 2021, the budgetary authority approved the EEAS takeover of the usufruct contract of C-25. This extension to the only part of the Capital building not yet occupied by EEAS was considered as the most suitable option to fulfil the overwhelming space needs but also a strategic action for the EEAS: having all of the Capital building will give the EEAS great advantages and opportunities for the near future in terms of flexibility, visibility and organizational effectiveness. It will enable the EEAS to reinforce its corporate image and to make its Headquarters more representative of its international and diplomatic role.

Real Estate Policy - EU Delegations and Offices

At the end of 2021, the EEAS managed 180 office buildings in Delegations, 150 Residencies, as well as staff accommodation for the 144 Delegations and/or Offices of the European Union. Five potential new office sites also came into the picture, namely in Doha (Qatar), Dodoma (Tanzania), San Francisco (USA), and possibly Nay Pyi Taw (Myanmar), and The Hague (Netherlands). The European Union owns 20 % of this space (vs. 17 % in 2011) and rents the other 80 %. After years of successfully implementing a policy to limit the size of Delegations to 35 m²/staff, in 2021, the ratio reached 33 m²/staff on average for the entire network, well below the threshold.

In 2021, despite the delays in infrastructure projects worldwide linked to the Covid-19 pandemic, office moves and major renovations were finalised in Vienna, Trinidad and Tobago, Panama, Costa Rica, Chile, and Malaysia. The EEAS facilitated the partial return of the EU Delegation to Libya and the search for alternative compounds for the EU Delegations to Afghanistan and Iraq. Another important project was the purchase of office premises in Buenos Aires for which the fit out works were finalised by the end of 2021. Renovation projects were under implementation for the offices in Algeria, Liberia, Barbados, Gambia, Paris and Uzbekistan, as well as for the Residences in Algeria, Senegal, Kenya, Botswana, Burkina Faso and Rwanda. The installation of security equipment in our most vulnerable Delegations also continued.

The concept of shared and collaborative spaces was applied to all new fitting out projects in Delegations. Costa Rica, Panama and Chile were positive examples of such projects in 2021. Similar projects are under implementation in South Africa, Uzbekistan, Argentina, Jamaica, Niger, and Moldova.

In addition, starting from 2021, the EEAS aims to obtain some form of environmental certification for all its new fitting-out projects. The offices in Costa Rica were awarded LEED Platinum rating. Argentina is scheduled to receive LEED Gold and WELL Silver certifications while Malaysia is registered for three major green certifications: Green Building Index, FITWELL and The Oceanic Standard (TOS). In parallel, the EEAS continued to promote the choice of greener and more environmentally friendly buildings when considering relocation projects, and to adopt green initiatives, such

as installing solar panels, rainwater harvesting equipment or the purchase of electric or hybrid vehicles. Solar panels, electrical car charger stations and rainwater harvesting are foreseen in the Jamaica and South Africa Delegations.

Real Estate Policy - Colocation

In 2021, the EEAS continued promoting colocation. The overall number increased from 116 in 2020 to 120 in 2021 (41 with Member States and Partner Countries and 79 with other EU partners). Over the past 5 years, the number of colocations more than doubled. Colocation now represents 8% of the total office surface in EU Delegations and involves almost half of the EU Delegations (68).

In 2021, two new Framework Agreements were signed, namely with the European Central Bank (ECB) and the European Border Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX), bringing the total number of signed Framework Agreements to six with the agreements with DG ECHO, the EU Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO), the European Aviation and Safety Agency (EASA) and the European Investment Bank (EIB).

The centralisation of the management of colocations made it possible to streamline the recovery of costs, which included a fee for administrative overheads. As a result, the EEAS secured the legal basis to recover around EUR 6 million in 2021.

2.3 Discharge of the EEAS Administrative budget

The EEAS considers the discharge procedure of crucial importance in terms of accountability for the sound financial management of the EU budget. It is committed to implementing the main recommendations and observations raised during the discharge procedure with the aim of further improving the management of EU funds.

At its plenary session of 4 May 2022, the European Parliament decided by 555 votes in favour, 83 against and 6 abstentions to grant discharge to the HR/VP in respect of the implementation of the EEAS budget for the 2020 financial year. This continues the positive record since the establishment of the EEAS in 2011. The European Court of Auditors did not report any specific issues for the EEAS and did not identify material levels of error reported in the EEAS Annual Activity Report and governance arrangement.

In the 2020 discharge Resolution, the European Parliament acknowledged that the exceptional situation of Covid-19 pandemic affected heavily the operations of EEAS in Headquarters and Delegations and highlighted the EEAS's central role in conducting the foreign policy of the Union in an increasingly challenging international environment. The European Parliament took note of the EEAS's multiple Special Reports on Covid-19 disinformation, awareness campaigns conducted and country-specific campaigns that were implemented in order to mitigate the effect of disinformation and protect the Union's reputation on the ground. Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) highlighted the role of strategic communications in combatting disinformation and fighting external influence and took note that approved additional amounts were designated for financing the Action Plan against disinformation, the reinforcement of security in Delegations and HQ and investments in cyber-security.

However, the European Parliament stressed the need for intensification of efforts in order to address gender and geographical imbalances. More specifically, the European Parliament called on the EEAS to explore strategies to encourage and facilitate female candidates to apply for management posts and insisted on encouraging Member States to put forward qualified women for management positions, including senior management positions. The European Parliament invited the EEAS to monitor the positions of the former Heads of Delegations, given their sensitive political role and functions in host countries and to review systematically potentially problematic transitions to the private sector or to third country organisations. MEPs reiterated the need to continue monitoring the occupation of the former senior officials until the end of the mandatory cooling-off period. Finally, the European Parliament welcomed the EEAS' intention to introduce the Union Eco Management Audit Scheme (EMAS) for its Headquarters in order to develop a programme built on concrete green initiatives and measures. It called on the EEAS

to explicitly engage in a “zero paper campaign” to further enhance the initiatives already adopted on the matter.

3. MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES

This section reports the control results and other relevant elements that support managements' assurance on the achievement of the internal control objectives¹¹. It is structured as follows:

- the EEAS's assessment of its own activities for the management of its resources;
- the assessment of the results of internal and external audits, including the implementation of audit recommendations.

3.1 Management of human and financial resources by EEAS

This section reports and assesses the elements identified by management that support the assurance on the achievement of internal control objectives.

3.1.1 Management of human resources

At the end of 2021 there were 5 072 staff members in the EEAS, of whom 2 303 (45.4 %) were working in Headquarters and 2 769 (54.6 %) in EU Delegations and Offices around the world. The EEAS population was made up of 1 706 officials and temporary agents, 1 543 Local Agents, 567 contract agents, 467 Seconded National Experts, 43 Junior Professionals in Delegations as well as 746 other external staff and trainees. In 2021, over 450 Local Agent posts were transferred from European Commission to EEAS budget. In addition, 3 327 staff members of the European Commission were employed in EU Delegations. 37.0 % of EEAS AD staff were diplomats from Member States, which was in line with Article 6(9) of the Council Decision establishing the EEAS (2010/427).

Staff distribution by gender, age and nationality

The overall gender distribution at the end of 2021 was close to equal, with women representing 46.7 % of EEAS statutory staff being and non-statutory staff groups. Within AD positions, women hold 37.4% of posts, a figure that however decreases as grade levels go up, with only 30.5 % of women occupying grades AD12-16. The same trend can be observed in contract agent categories, with women occupying 57.8 % of posts but only 46 % of grade IV positions. Women occupy 66 % of AST and AST/SC posts, only 22.2 % of SNE posts, and 59.1 % of Local Agent positions, including at grade 1.

¹¹ Effectiveness, efficiency and economy of operations; reliability of reporting; safeguarding of assets and information; prevention, detection, correction and follow-up of fraud and irregularities; and adequate management of the risks relating to the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions, taking into account the multiannual character of programs as well as the nature of the payments (Financial Regulation Article 36).

The average age of EEAS staff was 46.7 years old, a significant decrease from previous years (47.5 in 2020, 47.3 in 2019, 47.1 in 2018, 46.9 in 2017), with 47.3 years of age on average in Headquarters and 46.1 years of age in Delegations.

Even though the recruitment within EEAS is strictly based on merit, the nationality of staff is closely monitored. All 27 Member States were represented within the EEAS population, and nearly all across all categories of Staff (officials, temporary agents, contract agents and Seconded National Experts. Only Malta does not have any nationals in the contract agent category, and Luxembourg only holds one Seconded National Expert post.

Management positions

By the end of 2021, 320 staff members held management positions in the EEAS, of whom 33.8 % were women. The percentage of women in middle-management positions increased by 7.6 % from 2020, up to 35.4 % of occupied posts in 2021, and this in spite of a slight decrease in women Heads of Delegation for the second consecutive year. The percentage of women in senior management also slightly increased from 25.5 % in 2020 to 26.3 % in 2021.

In geographical terms, all Member States are represented. However, both Malta and Slovakia only hold one middle management position. Luxembourg does not have any national in management.

Resource Allocation

In 2021, the EEAS received 47 additional full-time equivalents (FTE's) from the Budgetary Authority. The EEAS allocated the majority of them in Headquarters, mainly to reinforce the EEAS' efforts to fight against disinformation and to strengthen the CSDP-CR structures, including the establishment of the European Peace Facility. In addition, in light of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the new resources allowed the strengthening of the EEAS Medical Cell and to reinforce physical and IT security. Finally, the EEAS used a number of the additional administrator posts to replace Seconded National Expert posts, in line with the EEAS SNE policy and the concerns raised by the European Parliament.

Network of Delegations

By the end of 2021, the Decision to upgrade the EU Mission to ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) in Jakarta, Indonesia, to a fully-fledged Delegation, had been implemented. Preparations for the opening of San Francisco office, which will focus on the EU's digital and green priorities, were initiated in 2021. The office, formally attached to the EU Delegation to the United States in Washington, is expected to open in September 2022.

By mid-year, a partial relocation of the EU Delegation to Libya started from Tunis back to Tripoli.

Cooperation with the European Commission

Throughout 2021, the EEAS and the European Commission collaborated closely to ensure that staff in Delegations is treated in the same manner, irrespective of their institution of origin. The cooperation continued through the steering committee on EU Delegations (EUDEL), which continued to meet on a quarterly basis to discuss matters regarding the management of Delegations.

EUDEL meetings focused on the preparation and implementation of decisions in all areas of Human Resource Management. EUDEL met at senior level in November 2021 (at the level of EEAS and European Commission Secretaries-General) to discuss the “Geopolitical Delegations”, including the planned Workload Assessment in Delegations (WLAD) and to have a strategic discussion on the EU Delegations network. It also discussed “New ways of working in Delegations” and the career path in external relations.

Local Agents

The EEAS and the European Commission employ over 3 200 Local Agents, the most numerous human resource in EU Delegations, as technical and support staff performing a range of key activities from driving to administration, project management, economic, press or political matters. To simplify and streamline the administrative and financial circuits in EU Delegations, more than 500 European Commission staff in the administrative sections were transferred to the EEAS from 1 January 2021. This transfer had no impact on the rights and obligations of local staff and they retained their contracts.

In 2021, 250 Local Agents took up employment at the Delegations and 183 Local Agents left, including six disciplinary dismissals and one contract termination due to incapacity. In addition, the EEAS handled the termination of the employment contracts of 45 Local Agents following the decision to evacuate the Delegation of the European Union to Afghanistan to guarantee their safety. For these Local Agents, the EEAS implemented an urgent administrative measures package, including special paid leave arrangements, salary advances and benefits associated with economic dismissals.

The following instruments continued to improve the working and living conditions of Local Agents in 2021:

- 359 Local Agents benefited from promotion in addition to the automatic step progression they enjoy each year, while 32 Local Agents were recruited into a higher function group through competing successfully with external candidates for a vacant post;

- 146 new salary grids were applied and 172 salary reviews were submitted by the Headquarters for 119 Delegations, resulting in an average 4.6% increase in salaries in local currency and 2.9% in Euros;
- EUR 2 million in medical expenditures was reimbursed to Local Agents through their dedicated insurance scheme;
- EUR 3 million was disbursed under the LA-Provident Fund to Local Agents whose contracts ended; this instrument allows Local Agents to constitute savings for the end of their employment through employer and employee contributions.

Social Dialogue

In 2021, the EEAS maintained regular exchanges with staff organisations, as they play an important role in relaying information from their members from all staff categories and all places of assignment. Social dialogue procedures had to be adapted to the widespread recourse to teleworking and negotiations/exchanges were organised mostly via videoconferences.

One of the most intense and thorough sessions of social dialogue was the series of meetings held to discuss the new Rotation decision. This decision set out the rules governing the periodic serving of officials and temporary agents in Union Delegations (Rotation). Notably, the Rotation decision provides for the obligation for AD officials to serve abroad after a maximum number of twelve years spent in Headquarters. Discussions in the framework of the social dialogue took place at different levels, from technical up to political level, resulting in a number of improvements in the text eventually tabled for decision.

Other important topics discussed in 2021 included the issue of appraisal and promotion. Several sessions were organised over the year to collect views and ideas from trade unions and to compare the respective merits and weaknesses of different evaluation methods, paving the way to adoption in early 2022.

Of equal importance to staff organisations and the Administration were discussion on a new decision on Home Leave, meant to introduce a balanced and fair system, providing extra flexibility for staff in Delegations. The draft decision took into account the particularities of postings in remote third countries, resulting in the proposal to increase the number of home leave days according to the geographical distance between the place of employment and the place of origin of the staff member. The social dialogue concluded with a very thorough technical concertation meeting in November 2021 and on 9 March 2022, after an intensive social dialogue carried out jointly with the European Commission, the EEAS Director General for Resource

Management adopted a new Decision on home leave for officials, temporary staff and contract staff serving in a third country.

Exchange programmes

The EEAS also developed different secondment and exchange programmes in cooperation with EU Member States, EU institutions, third countries and international organisations.

- Short-term secondment programme with the European Parliament

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the short-term secondment programme was suspended in 2020. However, the improvement of the sanitary situation has allowed the EEAS and the EP to resume the programme by the end of 2021.

In November 2021, the EEAS launched the eighth consecutive edition of the short-term secondment programme between the European Parliament and the EEAS. This programme offers to colleagues the opportunity to be assigned to different divisions in the EEAS Headquarters and Delegations.

In an initial phase, four European Parliament colleagues will benefit from assignment in the EEAS Headquarters (period March-April 2022). The exchange will continue in the period May 2022 - March 2023 with 10 EEAS and 11 European Parliament staff (both in the EEAS Headquarters and in Delegations).

The programme gives an opportunity to colleagues to get an insight into their respective priorities and working methods and to develop closer professional links, thus strengthening ties between the two institutions.

- Diplomatic Exchange and Secondment Programme

The EEAS launches the Diplomatic Exchange and Secondment Programme (DESP) on a yearly basis with the aim of contributing to the creation of a shared diplomatic culture between different actors in EU's foreign policy, notably between the EEAS and the Member States.

The DESP takes place between EEAS officials and diplomats from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Member States. The secondment period of EEAS staff is two years, and can exceptionally be extended to three. As a general rule, exchanges should be simultaneous, reciprocal and involve officials of an equivalent level. In 2021, two exchanges took place in the framework of the DESP programme, with Czech Republic and Germany.

- Diplomatic Exchange programmes with third countries and international organisations

The EEAS has concluded several Administrative Arrangements with a view to improve mutual knowledge and share expertise in sectors of common interest. So far, the EEAS has signed such arrangements with the following countries/organisations: Switzerland, USA, Australia, Argentina, New Zealand,

Tunisia, the League of Arab States, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the African Union Commission and Canada.

Through these Administrative Arrangements and by hosting diplomats from non-EU countries, the EEAS works on strengthening mutual understanding and the development of a common diplomatic culture not only in Europe but also beyond its borders. In 2021, the EEAS welcomed an US diplomat. As per the mutual nature of the Arrangement, one EEAS staff member has been posted at the US department of State in September 2021 for 1 year.

Given the fruitful collaborations and the increasing number of exchanges, the EEAS established an internal security policy for diplomats coming from non-EU countries. These rules aim to mitigate, by preventive security measures, any potential risks of leaks or loss of sensitive information and/or documents.

- Traineeship programmes with Public Administration Schools

The EEAS regularly welcomes students and officials for short-term traineeships based on Memorandums of Understanding with two Nationals Schools of Administration: the French École Nationale d'Administration (ENA) and Krajowa Szkoła Administracji Publicznej (KSAP, Polish National School of Public Administration).

In 2021, the EEAS has not hosted students from Public Administration Schools at its Headquarters.

- National Experts in Professional Training

In cooperation with the European Commission, the EEAS manages the recruitment of National Experts in Professional Training (NEPT) coming from public administrations. This specific training gives NEPTs an insight into the EEAS working methods and policies.

In 2021, four NEPTs were assigned to different EEAS Headquarters services from four Member States (Czech Republic, France, Germany and Poland).

Mediation Service

The direct and indirect consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic still had an impact on requests coming to the Mediation Service in 2021. Some conflicts became latent or calmed down, as colleagues were teleworking and had fewer interactions with one another. Others worsened due to limited communication and allegations of micro-management. The return to the office was a new potential cause for tension and conflict for various reasons, such as different understanding and application of sanitary rules and of new working arrangements. In some cases, the return to the office revived pre-existing conflicts.

The Mediation Service also observed positive elements in this period: there was a number of situations where Administration and colleagues all around the world

showed remarkable adaptability and resilience to new circumstances and changes in the work environment. The EEAS also maintained its Helpline, Help in Confinement, for colleagues facing hardship and seeking support in the context of the Covid-19 related confinement in 2021. The demand was clearly lower in 2021 than in 2020 (14 requests in 2021 to 63 in 2020).

However, the work-related conflict cases reported to the EEAS Mediation Service were still numerous and indicated an increase to previous years (190 requests in 2021 in comparison to 176 in 2020 and 183 in 2019).

Out of the total number of cases reported in 2021, 61 % concerned interpersonal conflicts, while 5 % related to allegations of psychological harassment – confirming a similar trend in 2020. A decreasing number of cases concerned conflicts related to rights and obligations, down from 30 % of all cases in 2020 to 25 % in 2021. In contrast, there was an increase in cases concerning alleged sexual harassment, representing 2 % of all cases in 2021 in comparison to only 0.5 % in 2020. The remaining 7 % of cases referred to other issues, such as stressful work environment.

The EEAS continued to raise awareness of the tools available to staff in case of conflict at work. The Mediation Service intervened in 15 seminars and presentations to all EEAS staff categories, including managers, both in Headquarters and in Delegations.

Complementing the work in this field in close coordination with the Mediation Service, a network of nine voluntary and specifically trained EEAS confidential counsellors, based in EEAS Headquarters and EU Delegations, was available to listen to staff members who faced difficulties in their working environment. The confidential counsellors dealt with 17 cases in 2021, which is an increase in comparison to the previous year (10 cases in 2020).

3.1.2 Management of financial resources

Implementation of the administrative budget

The final voted EEAS budget for 2021 (Section X of the General Budget of the Union) amounted to EUR 767.6 million.

Overall, the EEAS final voted budget of 2021 has been executed at 99.4 % as of 31 December 2021, significantly higher than 95.0 % in commitments in 2020. In payments, it was 84.5 %, increased from 82.3 % in 2020. The rate of execution of payments will increase with the payments to be executed in 2022 on credits carried forward from 2021 to 2022 according to the rules of the Financial Regulation.

The reason for the low execution in payments is, once again, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which slowed down and hampered execution of the budget, most significantly for the mission and training budgets. The pandemic also limited the possibilities to recruit new staff to the extent desirable, resulting in greatly increased vacancy rates and surpluses on the salary lines. The resulting budgetary excess amounts were partially reallocated to finance and strengthen infrastructure investments in EEAS Headquarters to support the changed working methods during the pandemic.

The final budget voted for the EEAS HQ, after transfers, amounted to EUR 295 million. The execution in commitments of this amount at 31 December 2021 amounted to EUR 290.5 million or 98.5 %, significantly higher than 96.7 % of 2020, and in payments to EUR 238.3 million or 80.8 %, increased in absolute terms by EUR 16.3 million and matching the 80.8 % of last year.

The final budget voted for the EEAS for Delegations was, after transfers, EUR 472.6 million. The execution in commitments at 31 December 2021 was EUR 472.4 million or 99.9 %, significantly higher than 93.9 % in 2020, and in payments EUR 410.1 million or 86.8 %, higher than 83.3 % in 2020. As mentioned above, the execution rate for payments is expected to increase following the carry over Decision.

In addition to the EEAS's own budget, the EEAS also disposed of an amount of EUR 211.2 million (including assigned revenues and carried over amounts) of money from the European Commission to cover the administrative costs of European Commission staff working in EU Delegations. This amount was split between the European Commission's Heading 7, the administrative lines of operational programmes (ex-BA lines), and the Trust Funds. Moreover, the EEAS received additional fixed-amount contributions to cover common costs of European Development Fund staff in Delegations and for colocations, and other amounts received under colocation and other agreements.

The total budgetary amount managed by the EEAS in 2021 amounted therefore to EUR 1 091.1 million (commitment appropriations).

Thanks to the good cooperation between the EEAS and the European Commission, no significant difficulties have been encountered with the implementation of the European Commission's contribution to the administrative costs of the Delegations. Internal transfers or additional contributions have handled the unavoidable imbalances between needs and availabilities. Excess amounts have also been returned in some cases.

Budget management

To maximise its available resources, the EEAS runs a very active appropriations management, reverting to transfers either from Title to Title, Chapter to Chapter or from Article to Article or also within articles, depending on needs.

The Budgetary Authority (BA) has been informed of all intended transfers in accordance with Article 29(1) of the Financial Regulation and did not raise any objections. Six autonomous transfers in accordance with Article 29(4) of the Financial Regulation were also adopted by the EEAS.

In absolute terms, the value of all transfers made within the EEAS section of the budget amounted to EUR 47.3 million. The transfers increased EEAS Title 2 (Buildings, equipment and operating expenditure) and EEAS Title 3 (Delegation) budgets by EUR 15.5 million and EUR 0.5 million respectively, and decreased the EEAS Title 1 (Staff at Headquarters) budget by the corresponding amount.

These operations were supported by the EEAS local budgetary management system. This system, having suffered significant start-up problems, is still subject to bugs, regression errors and problems. In the short and medium term, all efforts are put on stabilising the system and eliminating remaining bugs.

During the year, the budget revision was launched in mid-June and the exercise was completed successfully, with the vast majority of budgetary needs successfully satisfied. The EEAS also manages a very important contribution of the Commission, amounting to more than EUR 200 million; monitors and adjust the amounts on a continuous basis to align availabilities to needs, in close collaboration with the concerned Commission Directorates-General.

Accounting function and information

The EEAS, as an independent Institution according to the Financial Regulation, is responsible for the preparation of its own annual accounts, which are the subject of an annual discharge procedure.

In this respect, when it was established, the EEAS was not granted the resources to deal with the tasks of the accountant such as treasury management, preparation of annual accounts, etc. Therefore, opted to benefit from economies of scale and the experience and resources already existing with the European Commission. The Accountant of the European Commission is also the Accountant of the EEAS and the bulk of the accounting functions of the EEAS are in fact implemented by the services of the Accountant (European Commission's Directorate-General for Budget).

Nevertheless, over the years the EEAS has increased its accounting capacity by transferring a part of the clearing process from the Directorate-General for Budget to the EEAS. The clearing of several suspense accounts in SAP (the central accounting IT tool) for the Delegations has been performed directly by the EEAS. This brought new requirements in terms of internal organisation and collaboration with Delegations.

During 2021, efforts were maintained to control the total value and number of outstanding open items on suspense accounts, used in particular by the Delegations but also by some Divisions at the Headquarters. The procedure for a monthly automatic clearing of the open items has improved the efficiency of clearing. In coordination with the Delegations and the Directorate-General for Budget for the clearing suspense accounts, it was possible to maintain the number of open items at a very good level in line with the situation of the past two years. At the end of 2021 the statistics show 45 778 open transactions, of which only 11 834 are overdue.

It is emphasised that the use of suspense accounts in Delegations is necessary due to the nature of certain transactions which are undertaken, in particular the withholding of local taxes and social security from local staff salaries for subsequent payment to the local authorities, and the accounting for Value Added Taxes which are reimbursable by the host country.

The accounting files for the EEAS are established through close co-operation between its Budget Division and the Accounting Officer's services (Directorate-General for Budget).

Concerning the provisional annual accounts of the EEAS for the financial year 2021, the Accounting Officer concluded in her transmission note that the risk of material misstatement as a result of fraud in the 2021 EEAS financial statements has been reasonably mitigated.

The EEAS accounting quality was assessed by the Accounting Officer's service in the framework of the yearly risk assessment of accounting quality. Thanks to a good documentation of existing controls the accounting risk of EEAS evaluated 'low'. The 2021 audit on (financial) local systems performed by Directorate-General for Budget was finalised beginning 2022 without any recommendation.

3.1.3 Digital Transformation and information management

Digital Transformation

In 2021 the EEAS kept on improving the capabilities of the organisation to deliver on its mandate in a context of mostly hybrid working.

The teleworking user experience was enhanced thanks to the reinforcement of our infrastructure: the internet backbone bandwidth has been doubled and the internal VPN has been made capable to better handle meetings.

Concerning videoconferencing, an on-premise, independent and autonomous videoconferencing infrastructure has been deployed in the EEAS data centres, and videoconferencing equipment are now installed in all HQ meeting rooms and all Delegations. Technical adjustments to the network have been made to ensure adequate functioning/quality of on-line meetings and to enable the connection to MS Teams meetings from Corporate Laptops under certain conditions, while work is ongoing to be able to connect to all third party systems. Dedicated support services and training are also available for staff.

In particular, the new Belmont building is fully equipped with wifi (BYOD and guest) in all areas and hybrid working spaces on all floors, including training rooms.

It is also worth noting that, in 2021, substantial progress has been made on the RESCOM work, concerning both the deployment of the application and the preparation of the phase-out of R-EU. Laptops and desktops have been distributed to users and Delegations. The interconnectivity with the Commission has been finalised.

Information Management

The implementation of the ambitious Information Management Strategy (adopted in 2019), continued in 2021, despite the continuing exceptional circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic. The EEAS launched and completed several projects under the Strategy and ensured business continuity. Projects on a corporate search application and a taxonomy continued, and the way was paved towards a collaborative solution to be launched for implementation in 2022. While contributing to the European Commission proposal for a Regulation on Information Security, the EEAS Information Sharing policy was drafted and circulated internally for feedback.

The rollout of the RESCOM project was concluded on 1 December. Before the rollout, training was delivered to the user communities. As a result, a collaborative solution has been made available already for users working with restricted documents.

Training and support was also a major element of work on document management. To cope with the circumstances imposed by the pandemic, the EEAS provided

remote training for Document Management Officers in Delegations to equip them with the necessary knowledge to perform their daily tasks. For Document Management Correspondents in EEAS Headquarters, training for newcomers was offered together with webinars targeting specific aspects of document management.

Data Protection

- EEAS privacy-friendly Return-to-Work and Covid health-preservation measures

The EEAS attributed high priority to preserving privacy-friendly processing of personal data related to the Covid-19 pandemic. EEAS Management, Corona Task Forces and the Medical Service, with the support of the Data Protection Officer (DPO), devoted special attention to the handling of confinement, Return-to-work, Covid digital certificates and vaccination-related data. Measures relating to Covid-19 were elaborated to comply with data protection requirements. Due to the rapidly evolving situation, the EEAS regularly updated Data Processing Record and Privacy Statement in the Covid-19 context. Both were made available for staff and for possible visitors taking into account the varying circumstances and protection measures.

With the gradual return to the workplace, ensuring safety while safeguarding personal data was at the forefront when seeking a data protection compliant approach with regard to the vaccination campaign and testing, in particular in EU Delegations. Following guidance with the contribution of the DPO in this respect, health related information, and EEAS Medical Service handled any other sensitive personal data, always complying with the established data protection rules.

- Achievements of objectives in a data protection compliant way

Throughout 2021, besides handling with the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, the EEAS continued to process personal data relating to both regular and new activities in compliance with data protection rules. According to the accountability principle, data controllers worked on documenting personal data processing activities with the support of the EEAS Data Protection Officer. In addition to the data protection advice on verification of Covid certificates, the DPO issued guidelines on how to handle personal data and deal with specific events, lawfulness, data transmissions as well as on instant messaging. The EEAS continuously reviews compliance documentation on processing of personal data. Monitoring in 2021 concentrated on providing information to data subjects, including availability and completeness of privacy statements. Requests from data subjects, including staff members, citizens and external partners whose data the EEAS processes, were dealt with and information was provided about the processing of their personal data.

The EEAS continued its compliance efforts regarding assessing personal data transfers to third countries, including the United States. The requirements of the Schrems II ruling of the Court of Justice of the European Union were further clarified by guidance from the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) and the European Data Protection Board (EDPB). Given that EU Delegations operate in third

countries, the approach and instruments were particularly relevant for the EEAS. The EEAS coordinates regularly with other EU institutions as well as with the European Data Protection Supervisor. With the objective of harmonising approaches on data transfers, the EEAS Data Protection Officer co-chairs a Working Group on International Transfers within the DPO Network of EU Institutions. Other topics include interinstitutional transmission of data, provision of services and cooperation with Member States and diplomatic missions in third countries. An additional emergency task in cooperation with Member States was to ensure that the database for people requiring assistance due to evacuation observed the privacy rights and safety of individuals asking for such assistance.

Using digital tools with privacy-enhancing technologies was a central topic of awareness raising and a specific workshop along with training sessions held by the DPO in cooperation with the EDPS. The annual EEAS Data Protection Day conference was organised in January 2021 with well-known speakers from leading online platforms. Ensuring data protection compliance of EEAS communication actions focused on flagship events and projects both in Brussels and in third countries. These actions included:

- Conference Cycle 2021-2022 Brussels International College 'Towards a Common European Strategic Culture' in cooperation with the Académie Royale de Belgique;
- India Film Festival and Script Competition EUFF 2021;
- European Higher Education Fair Japan 2020 Webinar Series;
- Pop Vox campaign supported by the Delegation of the European Union to the Council of Europe;
- Virtual Symposium "Ending Child Labour by 2025, to Act, Inspire and Scale-up in Agriculture and Value Chains" organised by the EU Delegation in Rome;
- Transatlantic Conference 2021: EU-US Future Forum.

3.1.4 Control effectiveness as regards legality and regularity

Ex ante control function and results

In order to detect and eliminate errors before the financial transactions (commitments, payments and recovery orders) are authorised by the responsible Authorising Officer by Sub-Delegation, two *ex ante* verification modes are used in the EEAS:

1. For Headquarters transactions in the framework of procurement contracts executed by external contractors (services, supplies and work), a decentralised *ex ante* financial verification with counterweight is carried out by the Public Procurement, Contracts and Finance Division. In this case, the *ex ante* financial verification is an independent function from the Authorising Officer by Sub-Delegation responsible for the transaction. This verification mode was introduced by the Authorising Officer by Delegation (AOD) with a view to enhancing the compliance, legality and regularity of the verified transactions.
2. For all other financial transactions carried out at Headquarters (staff entitlements, services provided under Service Level Agreements, reimbursement of experts, etc.) and for the financial transactions in Delegations, the *ex ante* verification is assured internally by the operational Divisions or Delegations respectively.

The review of the control strategy for transactions linked to public contracts for services, supplies and works at Headquarters performed in 2020 was updated in October 2021. Whereby other types of transaction are excluded from the decentralised *ex ante* financial verification with counterweight, such as: budgetary and legal commitments and payments relating to the expenditures dealt with through MIPS and PRESTO, payments linked to the automatically generated “internal documents” for late interests if below EUR 5 000, provisional budgetary commitments and de-commitments.

During 2021, for transactions falling in point number 1 above, the Public Procurement, Contracts and Finance Division performed:

- 1 454 *ex ante* financial verifications on commitments (1 425 in 2020) concerning 1 030 commitments.
- 1 540 *ex ante* financial verifications on payments (1 810 in 2020¹²) concerning 1 193 payments.

The errors detected linked to irregularities such as "amount not in accordance with legal commitment/framework", "amendment to the contract not in agreement with

¹² The lower number in 2021 is linked the Review of the Control Strategy for transactions linked to public contracts.

FR" and "expenditure not covered by legal basis" were minor: 38 for commitments and 33 for payments.

For public procurement, two *ex ante* verification modes are also in place in the EEAS:

1. For high-value contracts (those above EUR 139 000 for services and supplies, and above EUR 500 000 for works), the *ex ante* verification by the Public procurement, Contracts and Finance Division is independent from the AOSD in charge of the procurement file in the operational Divisions and Delegations. This mode aims at enhancing compliance, legality and regularity.
2. For (very) low and middle-value contracts, the *ex ante* verification is assured internally by the operational Divisions or by Delegations.

During 2021, for contracts in the first category, the Public procurement, Contracts and Finance Division performed:

- 56 verifications of the tender files prior to the launch of the procedure (publication of contract notice / invitation to tender); and
- 53 verifications of the entire procurement procedure prior to the signature of the award decisions that led to the signature of 32 contracts.

In 2020, the EEAS issued a new policy to manage centrally public procurement procedures leading to services, supplies and works contracts with a value equal or greater than the 2014/24/EU Directive thresholds for services and supplies and greater than EUR 500 000 for works. The aim of the centralisation is to professionalise public procurement procedures at the EEAS and therefore minimise inefficiencies by pooling the expertise required in this complex area. This also relieves the Authorising Officers by Sub-Delegation of a great number of tasks. These will be carried out centrally, on their behalf and will relieve pressure on their resources to allow them to concentrate on delivering strategic outcomes. The centralisation has been implemented gradually in 2020 and 2021 in view of the available resources. In 2021, 28 of the 56 public procurement procedures dealt with were subject to the centralisation. With the on boarding of new staff members, in 2022, all procedures fulfilling the criteria set for the centralisation will be managed centrally.

Ex post control function and results

Internal control processes at the EEAS aim at managing and mitigating the risks within the organisation, in order to ensure the reliability of financial reporting, the timely feedback on the achievement of operational and strategic goals, and the compliance with applicable regulatory and contractual provisions.

The *ex post* control function is a critical part of the internal control environment. The objective of *ex post* controls is to verify the financial and operational aspects of finalised budgetary transactions and to measure the level of error, in order to assess whether financial operations have been implemented in compliance with the

applicable rules, and ultimately to obtain assurance on the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions. The residual error rate is compared with the materiality threshold of 2 % of the total expenditure and revenue, as used by the Commission (Directorate-General for Budget) and the European Court of Auditors, above which a reservation in the Declaration of Assurance of the Authorising Officer by Delegation may be considered. Ex post controls provide a comprehensive management information tool for the Secretary-General in accordance with article 74(9) of Financial Regulation 2018/1046 applicable to administrative appropriations as from 1/1/2019.

A new Internal Audit Strategy and a detailed Multi-Annual Strategic Audit Plan for 2018-2021 have been set up as from 2018, following the merger of the Ex post control section, previously part of the Inspection Division, with the Internal Audit Division. The main underlying idea of the new audit strategy is to focus on quality rather than quantity, providing a deeper and more relevant analysis and systemic recommendations, which would be potentially applicable to all Delegations/Divisions. With the aim of better covering all the administrative and support activities of the EEAS, the processes are grouped in four expenditure areas which constitute the running costs of the EEAS as reflected in its administrative budget:

- Staff expenditure,
- Infrastructures and other operating expenditure,
- Security,
- IT and Telecommunication

All financial transactions of the EEAS budget recorded during the budget year are now controlled through random stratified samples:

- Payments (including the matching commitments) stratified according to the above-mentioned domains;
- Revenues – only the revenues duly registered in the accounts. All the entries in the suspense account (also called hors budget) will be in the scope once they are cleared and accounted for.

The methodology for the sampling of transactions, under the new Ex Post Control Strategy, has changed in 2018, following the methodology used by the European Court of Auditors for the Declaration of Assurance. It applies the same parameters for the sample size (95 % confidence level and 5 % audit risk/margin of error) and the same non-judgmental sampling techniques (Monetary Unit Sampling (MUS)).

The stratification is based on the administrative budget lines of the EEAS, which have been divided in accordance with the nature of the expenditure/revenue and the posting criteria. This methodology provides a reduced sample size (150 transactions per domain) while ensuring an objective opinion with the same degree of reasonable assurance on the execution of the budget as the one resulting from the more extensive sampling used in the previous methodology.

In 2020, the EEAS further amended its sampling methodology for ex post controls regarding revenues to take into account the lessons learned with controls in this

domain over the previous two years¹³ and the heterogeneity of the population of the related transactions. In order to overcome the shortcomings noted and ensure the same approach as the European Court of Auditors while maintaining a materiality threshold of 2 % and a confidence level of 95 %, the sampling method used for revenues was amended by stratifying the revenue population between:

- the transactions linked to the European Commission's contribution to the EEAS budget (more than 80 % of the total revenues in 2019, 2020 and 2021) - a few number of transactions of very high value, where the totality of the revenues in 2020 and 2021 as well as the methodology have been tested through a financial reassurance audit initiated in 2020 and finalised in 2021, and
- the transactions linked to EEAS activities - a very high number of smaller value transactions, where the Monetary Unit Sampling was applied (testing of 150 transactions).

This new approach allows for a better assessment of the management of revenues by all the Authorising officers and provides a more accurate error rate.

Following remarks of the European Court of Auditors on their assessment of the EEAS Annual Activity report for 2019, the Internal Audit Strategy was amended to provide more accurate information on the error rates used for the annual statement of assurance of the EEAS. These changes make a clear distinction between the detected error rate (ex post controls' draft results) and the residual error rate (ex post controls' final results). Therefore, the results of the controls, which provided the Authorising Officer by Delegation with the residual error rates per domain and aggregated error rates, will also provide the respective detected error rates.

The distinction between the detected and the residual error rates provides a more accurate information of the action taken by management to correct the errors detected during the ex post control exercise. The detected error rate (based on a representative sample of the population) corresponds to errors detected by ex post controls (after the payment/recovery has been made) which were not detected and corrected through ex ante controls.

The residual error takes account of any corrective action made by management by the end of the reporting year to clear the detected error. Additional corrections made after the closure of the reporting year but before signing of the Annual Activity Report (registered by 31st of March) can be considered as well.

The corrective action taken by management must be substantiated by adequate supporting documents: (a) errors with a financial impact - recovery order authorised even if not yet cashed or amount due recorded in the accounting system for offsetting against the next payment or (b) errors with a reputational impact – launching of a tendering procedure in accordance with the regulatory framework

¹³ EEAS revenues were subject to ex post control for the first time in 2018, following the implementation of a recommendation of the European Court of Auditors on the scope of ex post controls.

(publication notice or letters of invitation sent to tenderers or any other key document submitted to clear the detected error).

In order to follow strictly the Directorate-General for Budget instructions and considering that only a sample of payments/recoveries were subject to ex post controls, it may occur that other (non-audited) payments/recoveries in the population are still affected by errors which are probably of the magnitude of the representative detected error rate. Therefore, the residual error rate in the population combines two parts: it is the weighted average of (i) the error rate in the audited part after corrections and (ii) the error presumed to be affecting the non-audited part.

The 2021 ex post assessment is both quantitative (evaluation of financial errors) and qualitative (nature of the errors detected, showing the main areas of concern in the execution of the budget). Concerning the quantitative assessment, the EEAS follows the guidance of the Commission (Directorate-General for Budget) in the calculation of the error rates, including the treatment of the anomalies detected in procurement according to which there are two categories of irregularities: financial procurement errors and reputational procurement errors. Thus, the ex post controls provide two types of residual error rate:

- error rate with a financial impact;
- error rate with a reputational impact.

The figures relating to the current and previous exercises are set out below:

Financial transactions (EUR million)	Ex Post Controls 2021		Ex Post Controls 2020		Ex Post Controls 2019	
	Expenditure	Revenue (Titles 3 and 4) ¹⁴	Expenditure	Revenue (Titles 5 to 9) ¹⁵	Expenditure	Revenue (Titles 5 to 9)
Total Population (a)	953.60	248.85	919.22	255.05	955.88	243.51
Core Population for the audit (b)	NA	234.15	NA	236.05	NA	NA
Core Population for the sampling	953.60	14.70	919.22	19.00	955.88	243.51
Sampling (c)	126.15	12.69	133.70	14.33	201.02	3.22
% on total	13.23 %	99.15%	14.55 %	98.17 %	21.03 %	1.32 %

¹⁴ The proportion of the sampling in the population in 2021 is calculated as the amount of revenues sampled under MUS on the total population which includes the “core population for the sampling” (population of the transactions linked to EEAS activities) and the population of revenues linked to the Commission’s contribution to the EEAS budget (subject to a financial audit: 332 and part of 3202 in GL 70762). The revenues sampled under MUS excludes Chapter 30 (taxes and special levies on remunerations and staff contributions to pension scheme) and corresponds to Chapters 31, 32 (except 3202 in GL 70762), 33 (except 332 in GL 70762), 40, 41.

¹⁵ The proportion of the sampling in the population in 2020 is calculated as the amount of revenues sampled under MUS on the total population which includes the “core population for the sampling” (population of the transactions linked to EEAS activities, subject to ex post controls) and the population of revenues linked to the Commission’s contribution to the EEAS budget (subject to a financial audit). This is due to the amendment in 2020 of the EEAS sampling methodology for ex post controls regarding revenues.

population = (b+ c)/ (a)						
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Authorising officers by sub delegation	Ex Post Controls 2021		Ex Post Controls 2020		Ex Post Controls 2019	
	HQ Divisions	EU Delegations	HQ Divisions	EU Delegations	HQ Divisions	EU Delegations
Total (a)	21	144	21	144	16	144
Entities controlled (b)	13	124	14	122	11	123
% controlled = (b) / (a)	61.90 %	86.11 %	66.67 %	84.72 %	68.75 %	85.42 %

a) Quantitative assessment – Error rate with a financial impact

For 2021 Annual Activity Report, the quantitative threshold for materiality of 2 % as defined by the European Commission has been used. The level of financial error is understood as the EUR value of any payments overstated or revenues understated, which would be liable for recovery as detected during ex post controls.

The overall residual error rate with financial impact for the Administrative Budget of the EEAS (financial impact on the whole budget) resulting from the ex post controls is **0.23 % for Expenditure**. This rate corresponds to a weighted average error rate for stratified sampling, in accordance with the guidance issued by the Commission. This rate is below the threshold of 2 % used by both the European Commission and the European Court of Auditors to define the material level of error. Therefore, we can trust that these results provide a reasonable assurance that the errors noticed do not have a significant effect regarding the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions for the expenditure side.

The tables below detail the detected and residual error rates per domain, with regard to the samples tested:

Expenditure - Financial Detected Errors – Sampling 2021 (January to December)								
Budget Domain	Population EUR	Sampling		Detected Financial Error on the sampling				
		Number of sampled transactions	Value of the sample EUR	Number of transactions with a detected financial error	Value of detected financial error EUR	Financial Detected Error rate		
Expenditure	Staff Expenditure	519,106,847	150	4,232,686	11	5,958	0.14 %	
	Infrastructures & other operating expenditure	268,125,770	150	42,749,521	9	171,714	0.40 %	
	Security	77,535,563	150	21,652,189	3	6,233	0.03 %	
	IT & Telecommunication	88,835,436	150	57,511,843	4	321,481	0.56 %	
	Total Expenditure	953,603,616	600	126,146,239	27	505,387		
Expenditure - Financial Residual Errors – Sampling 2021 (January to December)								
Budget Domain	Population EUR	Sampling		Corrections and recoveries	Residual Financial Error on the sampling			
		Number of sampled transactions	Value of the sample EUR	Value of corrections and recoveries EUR	Number of transactions with a residual financial error	Value of residual financial error EUR	Residual Financial Error rate on the sampling	
Expenditure	Staff Expenditure	519,106,847	150	4,232,686	295	4	5,664	0.13 %
	Infrastructures & other operating expenditure	268,125,770	150	42,749,521	116,228	7	55,486	0.13 %
	Security	77,535,563	150	21,652,189	491	2	5,742	0.03 %
	IT & Telecommunication	88,835,436	150	57,511,843	0	3	321,481	0.56 %
	Total Expenditure	953,603,616	600	126,146,239	117,014	16	388,373	
Expenditure - Financial Impact - Budget 2021 - Amount at Risk								
Budget Domain	Population EUR	Value of the Sample EUR	Detected financial error rate	Estimated GROSS amount at risk EUR	Residual financial error rate	Estimated NET amount at risk EUR		
Expenditure	Staff Expenditure	519,106,847	4,232,686	0.14 %	730,728	0.14 %	730,434	
	Infrastructures & other operating expenditure	268,125,770	42,749,521	0.40 %	1,076,992	0.36 %	960,764	
	Security	77,535,563	21,652,189	0.03 %	22,321	0.03 %	21,830	
	IT & Telecommunication	88,835,436	57,511,843	0.56 %	496,575	0.56 %	496,575	
	Total Expenditure	953,603,616	126,146,239		2,326,616		2,209,602	
Materiality of the amount at risk						0.23 %		

It is estimated that overall net amount at risk for payments over 2021 – that is the estimated financial exposure in monetary terms for the reporting year – was EUR 2 209 602, that is 0.23 % of all the payments authorised over the year.

Regarding the revenues, the EEAS has amended its sampling methodology as from 2020 by applying the same approach as for expenditure to the transactions linked to EEAS activities (not subject to the financial reassurance audit), as previously mentioned.

The overall residual error rate is **0.62 % for Revenue**. This rate corresponds to a weighted average error rate between the transactions linked to the European Commission’s contribution to the EEAS budget (94 % of the total revenue for 2021) which have been fully audited and the transactions linked to EEAS activities subject to a sampling by applying the same methodology as for expenditure.

The table below gives an overview of the composition of the revenues for 2021:

Revenues 2021			
		Population	Sample
		EUR	EUR
EC Contribution	SLA DEVCO	215,373,439	215,373,439
	SLA DEVCO – additions/returns	- 2,399,600	- 2,399,600
	SLA FPI	21,178,541	21,178,541
	Sub-total EC contribution (a)	234,152,380	234,152,380
Other revenues (non EC contribution) (b)		14,701,803	12,691,120
TOTAL		248,854,183	246,843,501

a) Testing of entire population (Financial audit).

b) Testing of 150 transactions sampled under MUS.

As regards the transactions related to the contribution of the Commission to the EEAS budget, the audit on the matter concluded that the overall amount recovered in 2021 is in compliance with the applicable legal basis.

As the amounts recovered correspond to amounts decided by the European Commission, the risk of misstatement is very low. When the level of assigned revenue is insufficient to cover the costs of European Commission staff in Delegations, the European Commission will have to bear those costs and the costs will revert to the following budget. Therefore, the error relating to this part can be evaluated at 0 %, even though the legal frameworks needs to be clarified and some provisions of the Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA) would need to be updated to reflect the practices currently followed. The details are outlined in the audit report.

The tables below detail the detected and residual error rates per domain, with regard to the audit and the samples tested:

Revenue - Financial Detected Errors – Audit & Sampling 2021 (January to December)								
Budget Domain	Population EUR	Sampling		Detected Financial Error on the sampling				
		Number of sampled transactions	Value of the sample EUR	Number of transactions with a detected financial error	Value of detected financial error EUR	Financial Detected Error rate		
Revenues	EC contribution	234,152,380	N/A	234,152,380	0	0	0 %	
	Other revenues (non EC contribution)	14,701,803	150	12,691,120	19	1,330,099	10.48 %	
	Total Revenues	248,854,183		246,843,501		1,330,099		
Revenue - Financial Residual Errors – Audit & Sampling 2021 (January to December)								
Budget Domain	Population EUR	Sampling		Corrections and recoveries	Residual Financial Error on the sampling			
		Number of sampled transactions	Value of the sample EUR	Value of corrections and recoveries EUR	Number of transactions with a residual financial error	Value of residual financial error EUR	Residual Financial Error rate on the sampling	
Revenues	EC contribution	234,152,380	N/A	234,152,380	N/A	0	0	0 %
	Other revenues (non EC contribution)	14,701,803	150	12,691,120	0	19	1,330,099	10.48 %
	Total Revenues	248,854,183		246,843,501	0		1,330,099	
Revenue - Financial Impact - Budget 2021 - Amount at Risk								
Budget Domain	Population EUR	Value of the Sample EUR	Detected financial error rate	Estimated GROSS amount at risk EUR	Residual financial error rate	Estimated NET amount at risk EUR		
Revenues	EC contribution	234,152,380	234,152,380	0 %	0	0 %	0	
	Other revenues (non EC contribution)	14,701,803	12,691,120	10.48 %	1,540,829	10.48 %	1,540,829	
	Total Revenues	248,854,183	246,843,501		1,540,829		1,540,829	
	Materiality of the amount at risk						0.62 %	

It is estimated that overall net amount at risk for revenues over 2021, that is the estimated financial exposure in monetary terms for the reporting year, was EUR 1 540 829 that is 0.62 % of all the revenues cashed over the year. This means that the financial exposure from the amounts at risk remains below the materiality threshold of 2 % of the related payments.

This is the best conservative estimate intended for the Authorising Officer by Delegation of the amount of expenditure and revenues that does not comply with the applicable contractual and regulatory provisions at the time the transactions were made.

b) Quantitative assessment – Error rate with a reputational impact

Since 2012, the European Court of Auditors has been quantifying all the payments linked to a contract stemming from a procurement procedure containing serious procedural errors in the procurement process with a error rate of 100%¹⁶. The EEAS acknowledges that such errors are indeed serious and uses the same quantification method in order to allow for a comparison of the results of controls of the EEAS with the results of the ECA on the extrapolation of the "most likely error rate".

However, the EEAS, like the European Commission, is of the opinion that the actual financial impact of such errors cannot be quantified in a manner which is consistent with other errors and should therefore not be added to the financial exposure (amount at risk) nor considered for a potential financial reservation. In fact, even if the contractor should/could have been different, this does not mean that the full value (100%) of the contract is at risk.

The tables below detail the detected and residual procurement procedural errors per domain, with regard to the samples tested:

Expenditure – Procurement Procedural Detected Errors – Sampling 2021 (January to December)							
Budget Domain	Population EUR	Sampling		Detected Procurement Procedural Error on the sampling			
		Number of sampled transactions	Value of the sample EUR	Number of transactions with a Detected Error	Value of Detected Procurement Procedural Error EUR	Procurement Procedural Detected Error rate	
Expenditure	Staff Expenditure	519,106,847	150	4,232,686	2	1,020	0.02 %
	Infrastructures & other operating expenditure	268,125,770	150	42,749,521	13	985,298	2.30 %
	Security	77,535,563	150	21,652,189	25	688,210	3.18 %
	IT & Telecommunication	88,835,436	150	57,511,843	28	15,550	0.03 %
	Total Expenditure	953,603,616	600	126,146,239	68	1,690,078	

¹⁶ The ECA has considered as errors serious infringements (namely to the Directive on Public Procurement) which impair the compliance with the principles of open, fair and transparent competition. Although the ECA has quantified this type of errors and included them in the error rate, the Commission has considered that these errors are not necessarily quantifiable (at least not to the same extent as the errors where the amount paid would have been different) and therefore has not added them to the financial exposure but calculates an error rate with a reputational impact instead. The EEAS has been following the same approach as the Commission in this regard.

Expenditure – Procurement Procedural Residual Errors – Sampling 2021 (January to December)								
Budget Domain		Population EUR	Sampling		Corrections	Residual Procurement Procedural Error on the sampling		
			Number of sampled transactions	Value of the sample EUR	Value of corrections EUR	Number of transactions with a Residual Error	Value of Residual error EUR	Residual Procurement Procedural Error rate on the sampling
Expenditure	Staff Expenditure	519,106,847	150	4,232,686	824	1	196	0.005 %
	Infrastructures & other operating expenditure	268,125,770	150	42,749,521	102,167	11	883,131	2.07 %
	Security	77,535,563	150	21,652,189	263,875	17	424,335	1.96 %
	IT & Telecommunication	88,835,436	150	57,511,843	3,040	22	12,509	0.02 %
	Total Expenditure	953,603,616	600	126,146,239	369,907	51	1,320,171	
Expenditure – Procurement Procedural Impact - Budget 2021 - Amount at Risk								
Budget Domain		Population EUR	Value of the Sample EUR	Detected financial error rate	Estimated GROSS amount at risk EUR	Residual Procurement Procedural error rate	Estimated NET amount at risk EUR	
Expenditure	Staff Expenditure	519,106,847	4,232,686	0.02 %	125,041	0.02 %	124,218	
	Infrastructures & other operating expenditure	268,125,770	42,749,521	2.30 %	6,179,810	2.27 %	6,077,642	
	Security	77,535,563	21,652,189	3.18 %	2,464,451	2.84 %	2,200,575	
	IT & Telecommunication	88,835,436	57,511,843	0.03 %	24,018	0.02 %	20,978	
	Total Expenditure	953,603,616	126,146,239		8,793,320		8,423,413	
	Materiality of the amount at risk							0.88 %

Expenditure		EEAS & EC approach		European Court of Auditors approach		
	Population EUR	Residual Financial Error Rate	Net amount at risk	Residual procurement procedural error rate (Breach of key principles)	Residual procurement procedural errors (Breach of key principles) EUR	Total ECA error amount
			(a)		(b)	(c) = (a) + (b)
Staff expenditure	519,106,847	0.14 %	730,434	0.02 %	124,218	854,651
Infrastructures & other operating expenditure	268,125,770	0.36 %	960,764	2.27 %	6,077,642	7,038,407
Security	77,535,563	0.03 %	21,830	2.84 %	2,200,575	2,222,405
IT & Telecommunication	88,835,436	0.56 %	496,575	0.02 %	20,978	517,552
Total	953,603,616	0.23 %	2,209,602	0.88 %	8,423,413	10,663,015
Financial impact		0.23 %	2,209,602	Not meaningful	Not meaningful	Not meaningful
Assessment of materiality		0.23 % <i>Lower than material threshold</i>		0.88 % <i>Lower than material threshold</i>		1.11 % <i>Lower than material threshold</i>
Conclusion on potential reservation		<i>No financial reservation</i>		<i>No reputational reservation</i>		<i>No reputational reservation</i>

The reputational error was found in 51 transactions. The net amount at risk related to procurement procedural errors amounted to EUR 8 423 413.

The error rate that would be comparable with the ECA error rate would be of 1.11 %, which is below the materiality threshold; therefore the AOD's Declaration of Assurance should not include a reputational reservation.

3.1.5 Control efficiency and cost-effectiveness

The purpose of ex post control is to help the entities of the EEAS achieve sound financial management in the implementation of the administrative budget of the Institution through the respect of the principles of economy, effectiveness and efficiency, by detecting operational weaknesses in their processes. The principle of economy requires that the resources used by the Institution in the pursuit of its activities shall be made available in due time, in appropriate quantity and quality and at the best price. The principle of efficiency concerns the best relationship between the resources employed and the results achieved. Effectiveness relates to attaining the specific objectives set and achieving the intended results.

The Financial Regulation foresees that control activities shall be assessed on their efficiency and effectiveness and that an overall assessment of the costs and benefits of controls shall be included in the Annual Activity Report of the Institution. Ex post control is one segment of the control environment. This analysis aims at considering the costs of ex post control in relation to the results achieved over the year.

a) *Estimation and assessment of the cost of ex post controls*

The cost of ex post control has been estimated over recent years as shown in the table below¹⁷:

Estimated Cost of Ex Post Control Operations (1)		2019	2020	2021
FTE AD Officials (1) (2)	Count	1	1	1
	EUR	170,900	172,700	177,300
FTE AST Officials (1) (2)	Count	6	6	6
	EUR	656,400	668,400	684,000
FTE Contract Agents (1) (2)	Count	0	0	0
	EUR	0	0	0
Total Costs on a full-cost basis (3)	EUR	827,300	841,100	861,300

The table below shows the cost of ex post control activities as a percentage of the total audited value:

Assessment of the Cost of Ex Post Control Operations (Economy)	2020	2021

¹⁷ (1) "Guidance on the estimation, assessment and reporting on the cost-effectiveness of controls. - https://myintracomm.ec.europa.eu/budgweb/EN/rep/aar/Documents/Guidance_on_Cost_Effectiveness.pdf

(2) Based on (1) and DG BUDG's "Annual average FTE costs updated in December 2021 – <https://myintracomm.ec.europa.eu/corp/budget/reporting/official-reporting/annual-activity-report/Pages/aar-guidance.aspx>

(3) For 2021, we use DG BUDG's Guidelines in point (2) above, which provide full-cost averages. Historical full cost calculations have been left unchanged.

Total costs of Ex Post Controls	EUR	€841,100	€861,300
Total value verified and/or audited	EUR	€384,078,419	€372,989,740
Ratio	%	0.22%	0.23%

This analysis shows that the cost of ex post control activities remain moderate, in relation to the total value verified.

b) Assessment of the effectiveness of ex post controls including their benefits

Ex post controls are by nature performed after events have taken place. Due to this feature, the main element in the assessment of ex post control activities remains qualitative. The main qualitative benefits of ex post controls are their deterrent effects and the fact that it constitutes a support for the management to take informed decisions on how to deal with the operational weaknesses of the Institution. Among other unquantified benefits of ex post controls are a reduced risk of fraud, prevention of conflict of interests, and avoiding financial and reputational damage.

There are also quantitative benefits, inherent in the implementation of a budget. The table below shows a monitoring of the effectiveness of ex post control operations based on the value of errors detected through ex post control:

Assessment of the effectiveness of Ex post Control Activities		2020	2021
Qualitative Benefits	Management decision support instrument by nature and deterrent effects		
Detected Errors available for quantitative assessment	EUR value of material error detected in the sample	2,295,797	1,835,485
	EUR value related to ECA Reputational Errors	1,387,128	1,690,078
	Total EUR value of Detected Errors	3,682,925	3,525,563

c) Assessment of the efficiency of ex post controls

In 2021, for every Euro spent on ex post control activities, the EEAS detected EUR 4.1 worth of errors. In other words, the EEAS spent 24 Euro cents for every Euro of detected errors.

Assessment of the efficiency of Ex post Control Activities		2020	2021
Total EUR value of Detected Errors	(a)	3,682,925	3,525,563
Total EUR costs of Ex post Control Activities	(b)	841,100	861,300
Value in EUR of errors detected for each EUR spent on Ex Post Control	(a)/(b)	4.4	4.1
Cost in EUR of Ex Post Control for every EUR detected	(b)/(a)	0.23	0.24

Total number of transactions audited		750	750
Total of audited amounts		384,078,419	372,989,740

d) Conclusion on the cost-effectiveness of ex post controls

Quantitatively, ex post controls can be considered as cost-efficient. From a qualitative point of view, ex post controls provide the EEAS management with fact-based guidance for future decisions as it identifies and measures the financial impact of operational weaknesses in the execution of the Administrative Budget of the EEAS. It supports the entities, in particular Delegations, by highlighting weaknesses and offering recommendations to improve the overall financial and operational management.

Therefore, the ex post control strategy is considered cost-effective overall and will be maintained.

3.1.6 Fraud prevention and detection

Relations with the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)

Cooperation with the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) continued effectively during the year, with numerous exchanges taking place in the framework of internal and external investigations between the EEAS Focal Point within the Directorate General for Resource Management and OLAF.

The EEAS has been actively implementing OLAF's financial and disciplinary recommendations and reporting on follow up. Whenever necessary, appropriate actions have been taken to this effect, in close contact with Delegations. In addition, close coordination continued with the Investigation and Disciplinary Office (IDOC), and with other pertinent European Commission Services.

The European Commission updated its Anti-Fraud Strategy in 2019 to prepare for a new generation of spending programmes in the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). In this context, the EEAS continued work on the updating of its anti-fraud strategy as did Commission line DGs active in the area of foreign relations.

Particular efforts were devoted to staff training. The EEAS staff actively participated in the Second OLAF Anti-Corruption Conference (ANTICO II) in December 2021. Between April and October, a series of regional seminars were organised with the participation of the pertinent EU Delegations with the aim to raise awareness on Anti-fraud and corruption issues. Staff newly posted to a Delegation systematically received training on these issues prior to taking up post.

In the course of 2021, OLAF transmitted 7 final reports on investigations involving EEAS staff or interests, out of which 5 included recommendations for action. During the same period, disciplinary proceedings were completed (with disciplinary

sanctions) in 1 case, following up a previous OLAF investigation and relevant recommendations.

Relations with the Disciplinary Office of the Commission (IDOC)

The Investigation and Disciplinary Office of the Commission (IDOC) seeks to ensure that all staff members or former staff members comply with their statutory obligations by conducting administrative inquiries, pre-disciplinary proceedings, disciplinary and suspension proceedings, in an impartial, transparent and timely manner.

The EEAS has a Service Level Agreement with IDOC. Under the terms of the SLA, IDOC carries out an equivalent full case handling service as for the European Commission, including in particular, administrative inquiries and disciplinary proceedings conducted based on mandates provided by the Appointing Authority. Of the 95 new cases registered in IDOC in 2021, 15 concerned the EEAS.

3.1.7 Inspections of EU Delegations

The EEAS continued assessing the performance and the functioning of EU Delegations in 2021 through its dedicated Inspection Service. The challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic affected working methods of inspection activities. Due to travel restrictions, the inspections in the first half of the year were performed via digital means. However, “virtual” inspections made it possible to assess key aspects of a Delegation’s performance and functioning in line with the inspection mandate and objectives. Physical inspections on the ground were resumed in September 2021.

In 2021, a total of 18 Delegations were inspected, 12 virtually and six physically. The Inspection Service formulated 906 recommendations to the EU Delegations inspected and to Headquarter divisions: 5 critical, 134 very important and 767 important recommendations.

In parallel to the ongoing inspections, the Inspection Service also regularly monitored the implementation of recommendations from inspections carried out in 2020. The recommendations and their effective implementation contributed to greater coherence, homogeneity and efficiency in the EU Delegations’ work.

The EEAS Secretary General enacted a revised mandate for the Inspection Service in 2020, according to which it performed its duties in 2021. The new mandate expanded the objectives and scope of the Inspections in order to focus more on the performance of the EU Delegations in addition to their internal functioning. The following aspects of the EU Delegations’ work were evaluated:

- A Delegation’s performance and impact on its local environment in terms of the implementation and promotion of EU policies, effectiveness of the EU

representation and coordination, image of the European Union in the host country;

- Management of the Delegation, its internal organisation, staff management, allocation and efficient use of resources, and operational, financial and security matters.

The EEAS Inspection Service continued to convene meetings of the Network of Inspection Services of EEAS and Member States' Foreign Ministries as a platform for sharing information and best practices between the EEAS and national administrations.

3.2 Assessment of audit results and follow-up of audit recommendations

This section reports on and assesses the observations and conclusions reported by auditors, which could have a material impact on the achievement of the internal control objectives, and therefore on assurance, together with any management measures taken in response to audit recommendations.

3.2.1 Audit functions

EEAS Internal Audit Division

As foreseen by the Council Decision establishing the organisation and functioning of the EEAS¹⁸, an Internal Audit Division (IAD) has been set up in the EEAS. The mission of the IAD is to assist senior management with independent, objective assurance and consulting services, mainly to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of governance, risk management and control processes.

The assignments of the IAD cover all the activities of the EEAS related to:

- the management and control risks;
- the monitoring of control systems, including financial, operational and management controls and
- the assessment of the performance.

The IAD operates in accordance with internationally established professional standards (Institute of Internal Auditors - IIA) and best practices. To ensure independence vis-à-vis operational Divisions, this Division reports directly to the Director for General Affairs and Chief Legal Officer and to the Secretary-General.

The Ex Post Control section, previously part of the Inspection Division, has been merged with the IAD on 1 July 2017. The Ex post audit is one pillar of the new Internal Audit Strategy together with Financial system audits and Operational Audits.

In 2020, the IAD has contributed to the discussions with the relevant services on the setting up of an Audit Progress Committee in the EEAS, which is a new requirement under article 123 of the 2018 Financial Regulation. The Decision approving the Charter of the Audit Progress Committee of the EEAS was adopted by the HR/VP on 18 December 2020¹⁹.

¹⁸ Council Decision of 26 July 2010 (2010/427/EU), Article 4.3(b).

¹⁹ ADMIN(2020)58

The IAD has also contributed to the analysis on the state of internal controls reviewed by the Internal Control Committee for governance on internal controls in the EEAS.

European Commission Internal Audit Service (IAS)

Article 118(4) of the Financial Regulation requires that: “[...] *The internal auditor shall submit to the Union institution concerned an annual internal audit report indicating the number and type of internal audits carried out, the principal recommendations made and the action taken with regard to those recommendations*”. The function of the internal auditor of the EEAS is entrusted by Article 117(2) of the Financial Regulation to the internal auditor of the European Commission: “*For the purposes of the internal auditing of the EEAS, Heads of Union delegations, acting as authorising officers by subdelegation in accordance with Article 60(2), shall be subject to the verifying powers of the internal auditor of the Commission for the financial management subdelegated to them. The internal auditor of the Commission shall also act as the internal auditor of the EEAS in respect of the implementation of the section of the budget relating to the EEAS.*”

The purpose, authority and responsibility of the internal audit activity in the EEAS are formally defined in the Internal Audit Mission Charter signed in 2018. Their audit scope includes all the relevant departments in the General Secretariat of the Council and in the European Commission, which were transferred to the EEAS with effect from January 2011. It should be noted that policy-making is outside the scope of the IAS. The European Commission’s Internal Audit Service has assessed that the internal audit activity’s purpose, authority and responsibility, as defined in the Charter, continued to be adequate to enable the activity to accomplish its objectives in 2021.

European Court of Auditors (ECA)

The European Court of Auditors (ECA) is the EU’s independent external auditor. It enhances the quality of the EU’s financial management, fostering accountability and transparency and acts as the “*independent guardian of the financial interests of the citizens of the Union*”.

EEAS Audit Progress Committee

The Decision approving the Charter of the Audit Progress Committee (APC) of the EEAS was adopted by the HR/VP on 18 December 2020. The EEAS APC will assist the HR/VP in fulfilling its obligations under the Treaties, the Financial Regulation and under other statutory instruments by ensuring the independence of the internal audit function, monitoring the quality of internal audit work, and by ensuring that internal and external audit recommendations are properly taken into account and that they receive appropriate follow-up.

The EEAS APC will also contribute to the overall further improvement of the EEAS’s effectiveness and efficiency in achieving its goals and facilitates the HR’s oversight of

the EEAS's governance, risk management, and internal control practices. The EEAS APC will ensure that the HR/VP is appropriately informed on a timely basis on any issues arising from its work. The EEAS APC is an oversight body and has no management powers. Due to resource issues, the EEAS is still working on how to set up the APC.

3.2.2 Results from audits during the reporting year

EEAS Internal Audit Division

Several audits had been launched in 2018 under the Multi-Annual Strategic Audit Plan for 2018-2021. Apart from an audit on the information flows between the EEAS, DG HR and the PMO (finalised in 2020), the following audits were finalised in 2021 or are being finalised in 2022:

- Audit on the management of training expenses – final audit report issued in early 2022.

The objective of this audit is to provide the management with a reasonable assurance that the internal control system set up and operated by the entity for the purpose of managing risks related to the management of training expenses is adequately designed and operates effectively.

- Audit on the management of Local Agents salary.

The objective of this audit is to evaluate the compliance with the legal framework, the efficiency and effectiveness of the internal control system in place and the completion and accuracy of the IT tools/databases used.

- Audit on the recruitment and management of Local Agents and equivalent local staff.

This audit aims at replying to the following audit issues regarding the compliance of these processes with the applicable rules and the principle of transparency and equal treatment, the efficiency and effectiveness of the control system put in place for recruitment and task assigned to local staff.

The conclusion of the two audits on Local Agents was delayed to 2022 due to the developments related to Covid-19 pandemic, which was still felt in 2021.

In addition, other engagements performed in 2021 led to a re-definition of priorities:

- A financial audit on the Commission's contribution to the EEAS budget, carried out in the context of the amendment of the sampling methodology for ex post controls regarding revenues (previously mentioned) launched in late 2020 and finalised in 2021

- A special audit on the management of the EU Delegation building in Washington - final audit report issued in early 2022
- An audit on the management of the EEAS registry of exceptions and non-compliance events, launched in 2021 at the request of Management.

European Commission Internal Audit Service (IAS)

The audit work of the IAS in the EEAS is based on the strategic internal audit plan (SIAP) that originated from the in-depth risk assessment performed in 2019 and which covers the period 2020 – 2022. The IAS did not issue any final audit report in 2021. Two audits were launched in the fourth quarter of 2021 on ‘information security of EU-restricted and non- classified information’ and on ‘controls over procurement and contract monitoring’ which will be completed in 2022.

Two audits were launched in the fourth quarter of 2021. The first on ‘information security of EU-restricted and non- classified information’ had the goal to assess if the management and control processes set up by EEAS for the security of RESTREINT UE/EU RESTRICTED and non-classified information are adequately designed and effectively implemented. The second on ‘controls over procurement and contract monitoring’ focused on assessing if the governance, risk management and internal control framework set-up by the EEAS for its procurement and contract monitoring activities are adequately designed, efficient and effective, thus providing reasonable assurance that the key internal control objectives are achieved. This audit will be completed in 2022.

The EEAS was also associated to two other audits, which were launched in 2021: ‘Management of restrictive measures’, to assess if the control systems put in place in the European Commission²⁰ and in the EEAS ensure adequate management and oversight of the application of the restrictive measures. and ‘Complementarity and cooperation mechanisms between the European Training Foundation and the European Commission services’, which will be finalised in 2022.

European Court of Auditors (ECA)

As in previous years, the EEAS actively cooperated with the European Court of Auditors in the preparation of the Statement of Assurance for 2021. Numerous sample transactions were examined, leading to recommendations concerning procurement and recruitment procedures. The EEAS has accepted the recommendations and committed to address them within the suggested timeframe.

In the course of the year, the EEAS addressed recommendations issued by the ECA in five Special Report, as an associated service:

²⁰ (European Commission Directorates-General FISMA, NEAR, INTPA, BUDG, ECHO and Legal Service)

- Special Report N° 9/2021 "Disinformation affecting the EU: tackled but not tamed"²¹

The EU Action Plan against disinformation, adopted in 2018, focuses on four priority areas or 'pillars', and consolidates the EU's efforts to tackle disinformation. The ECA found that, despite the relevance of this Action Plan at the time when it was first drawn up, and that its implementation is broadly on track, it is still being outpaced by emerging threats. Therefore, the auditors recommended more coordination at EU level, and that Member States step up their involvement, for instance in the rapid alert system.

The ECA also found that the European External Action Service's three strategic communications task forces have improved the EU's capacity to forecast and respond to disinformation in neighbouring countries. However, the ECA underlined that they should be better resourced and their mandates updated in order to cover some emerging threats.

- Special Report N° 13/2021 "EU efforts to fight money laundering in the banking sector are fragmented and implementation is insufficient"²²

In this audit, the ECA looked at the efficiency and effectiveness of the EU Anti-Money Laundering Policy, in order to inform stakeholders and provide recommendations to further support its development and implementation.

The ECA found that although the relevant EU bodies have a policy-making and coordinating role and limited direct powers, efforts are largely managed at national level. The auditors concluded that the EU-level action to combat money laundering and terrorist financing has weaknesses. Among several other recommendations, the ECA recommended the European Commission to liaise with the European External Action Service for listed third countries.

- Special Report N° 17/2021 "*EU readmission cooperation with third countries: relevant actions yielded limited results*"²³

In this audit, the ECA assessed whether the EU has effectively enhanced cooperation on readmission with third countries, in particular whether the EU has made progress in concluding relevant readmission agreements or similar arrangements.

The ECA found that during the 2015-2020 period, the EU only achieved limited progress in concluding readmission agreements with non-EU countries. In addition,

²¹ https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR21_09/SR_Disinformation_EN.pdf

²² https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR21_13/SR_AML_EN.pdf

²³ https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR21_17/SR_Readmission-cooperation_EN.pdf

EU actions have not been streamlined enough to ensure that non-EU countries comply with their readmission obligations in practice.

The ECA recommended the European Commission to pursue a more flexible approach when negotiating readmission agreements and to create synergies with Member States to facilitate readmission negotiations. At the same time, the ECA suggested to strengthen the incentives for third countries to cooperate on readmissions and to enhance data collection on readmissions and reintegration sustainability.

- Special Report N° 19/2021 “Europol support to fight migrant smuggling: a valued partner, but insufficient use of data sources and result measurement”²⁴

Europol, the European Union’s law enforcement cooperation agency, supports EU Member States in combating migrant smuggling. Part of this role involves serving as an information exchange hub. The ECA found that Europol faces continuous challenges in gaining access to all relevant criminal databases, and in making full use of external information sources. Therefore, the ECA called for improvements to the way data exchange works, particularly to achieve full interoperability between databases.

- Special Report N° 23/2021 “Reducing grand corruption in Ukraine: several EU initiatives, but still insufficient results”²⁵

The EU has backed several reforms to increase the rule of law and fight corruption in Ukraine. The ECA made recommendations for further action by the European External Action Service, the European Advisory Mission Ukraine and the European Commission. Areas included specific actions that target grand corruption; assessing and adjusting the scale of support for civil society organisations and investigative journalism; contributing to removing impediments to free and fair competition; improve monitoring and reporting in order to inform and take corrective action where needed; emphasising integrity and commitment to reform when providing capacity-building support; support the digitalisation of registers; and stipulating stricter conditions for Commission support.

3.2.3 Follow up of audits from previous years

EEAS Internal Audit Division

In February 2022, the Internal Audit Division asked relevant services to provide updated management information on their assessment on the status of

²⁴ https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR21_19/SR_migrant_smuggling_EN.pdf

²⁵ https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR21_23/SR_fight-against-grand-corruption-in-Ukraine_EN.pdf

implementation of audit recommendations and to ensure that senior management is informed of all open recommendations in due time for the annual reporting. A consolidated reply on the status of play of the open recommendations was received in March 2022 and the information on the action taken by management was examined to determine whether any follow up audits should be carried out and served to update the audit strategy for the next audit cycle from 2022 to 2024.

In the auditor's view, there are 10 audits on which 4 "Critical", 50 "Very important" and 11 "Important" recommendations in total remain open as of 31 December 2021. Among these, 18 "Very important" recommendations have been considered, to date, by the service concerned as being implemented or completed.

In the context of the Annual Activity Report and also in view of the future setting-up of the Audit Progress Committee, all the services concerned are invited to assess regularly the progress made to implement these recommendations. In addition, the IAD continues to monitor the action taken by management to address the recommendations included in special reports issued in the context of the ex post controls but which impact exceeds the yearly exercise²⁶.

European Commission Internal Audit Service (IAS)

In 2021, the IAS assessed the progress made in implementing remaining open recommendations: the IAS followed-up seven recommendations addressed to the EEAS, stemming from two audits completed in previous years ('Audit on the European Commission – European External Action Service/2018 coordination and Limited review on the implementation of the internal control framework in the EEAS/2020'). These recommendations were set by the EEAS as 'ready for review' in the issue tracking audit tool (Team Central). Of these seven recommendations, four were assessed as implemented and closed while the remaining three were assessed as only partially implemented and therefore re-opened.

In total, four recommendations stemming from previous IAS audits remained open on 31 January 2022:

Audit on the coordination between the European Commission and the EEAS/2018:

- 1) The working arrangements between the Commission services and the EEAS,
- 2) The workload assessments for staff in EU Delegations,

²⁶ It should be noted that this assessment by the operational management concerned is independent from the particular responsibility of the Internal Audit function regarding the monitoring of the implementation of its recommendations. For that purpose, the internal auditors have to perform a formal audit follow-up within normally one or two years after the report was issued, taking into account the deadlines set for the implementation of the auditee's action plan, as well as progress made by the auditees. If no or insufficient progress is reported, no audit follow-up is possible. Therefore, recommendations may be reported by management as fully implemented but they can only be closed by the auditors as a result of a formal audit assessment of actions taken to address the related risks.

3) The annual management plans and risk management in the EU Delegations.

Limited review on the implementation of the internal control framework in the EEAS/2020

1) Reporting in the annual activity report.

The EEAS is in the process of implementing the agreed action plans for these recommendations.

European Court of Auditors (ECA)

In 2021, the ECA decided to follow up on its recommendations made in the following reports:

- No 04/2018 – “EU Assistance to Myanmar/Burma”
- No 14/2018 – “The EU Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Centres of Excellence: more progress needed”
- No 15/2018 – “Strengthening the capacity of the internal security forces in Niger and Mali: Only limited and slow progress”
- No 20/2018 – “The African Peace and Security Architecture: need to refocus EU support”.

The final results of the audits are expected to be released in 2022.

4. ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INTERNAL CONTROL SYSTEMS

4.1 Financial circuits in Headquarters

The EEAS, represented by the HR/VP, performs the duties of Authorising Officer (AO) in accordance with Article 92 of the Financial Regulation. In accordance with the Decision on the Internal Rules on the implementation of the Budget of the EEAS, the powers of authorisation have been delegated to the Secretary General, who is the Authorising Officer by Delegation (AOD) of the EEAS.

The Secretary General has subdelegated the majority of the powers to the Director General for Resource Management, who acts as Principal Authorising Officer by Subdelegation (P/AOSD). The latter has subdelegated specific powers to Managing Directors, Directors, Heads of Delegation and Heads of Division (AOSD).

At operational level, the budget is implemented by the Heads of Division in Headquarters and by the Heads of Delegations throughout the EU Delegations network.

For the purpose of budget implementation, the EEAS has adopted the following financial circuits at Headquarters:

(1) EEAS STANDARD, which is fully de-centralised with all operations, including initiation and verification, taking place within the line manager's services. The operations processed using this circuit are those consisting of provisional commitments/de-commitments for the Delegations, accounting regularisations and payments to members of staff.

(2) EEAS STANDARD A2, which is also de-centralised with all operations, including financial and operational initiation, and operational verification, taking place within the line manager's services. This model also contains an ex ante verification, which is carried out by the HQ Division dealing with ex ante control and is used in particular for payments related to public procurement to third parties.

(3) EEAS EXTRA LIGHT, used in particular for payment of mission expense claims which have been examined by the PMO for conformity with the mission guide and for payment of representation expenditure to EEAS staff members.

In Headquarters, the financial circuits are operated entirely by EEAS staff.

4.2 Financial circuits in EU Delegations

The EEAS, represented by the HR/VP, performs the duties of authorising officer (AO) in accordance with Article 92 of the Financial Regulation. In accordance with the last Decision on the Internal Rules on the implementation of the Budget of the EEAS, the powers of authorisation have been subdelegated by the Director General for Resource Management to the Heads of Delegation.

For the purpose of budget implementation, the EEAS has adopted the following financial circuits in the EU-Delegations network:

(1) DEL_NORM (Initiating Agent – Verifying Agent / Imprest Account Holder – AOSD) – this is the standard workflow in application in the delegations. The Initiating Agent role is normally performed by a Local Agent (accountant or administrative assistant), the Verifying Agent / Imprest Account Holder is performed by the Head of Administration / Imprest Account Holder, the AOSD role is performed by the Head of Delegation or another AD official of the EEAS;

(2) DEL_SMALL (Initiating Agent / Imprest Account Holder – Verifying Agent – AOSD) – This second workflow permits the signature by the same AOSD, of both the Verifying Agent and AOSD roles. It is used in case of unavailability of actors.

The responsible authorising officer shall define the framework for the use of these financial workflows.

In Delegations, where a large proportion of the personnel are European Commission staff members, the role of initiating agent (both financial and operational) is sometimes performed by members of the European Commission staff working in the administrative sections of the Delegations. The roles of financial and operational verification are restricted to EEAS staff members. The function of AOSD is performed by the Head of Delegation who is an EEAS staff member or by another EEAS staff member in the category AD (with the exception of the Support to Delegations Division at Headquarters where also senior-AST officials are allowed to receive a subdelegation).

It should be noted that the Support to Delegations Division at Headquarters is providing specific services for 27 Delegations covered by the former Regional Centre Europe mandate. Like this, the EEAS can intervene directly in the financial workflows of these Delegations.

Up to 2019, the budget granted to Delegations was totally implemented by the Heads of Delegation. As from 2020, the EEAS decided to deviate from this principle for payments under Annex X of the Staff Regulations. The EEAS HQ Division responsible received budget for that type of payments for the Delegations under the Annex X mandate, the Division at Headquarters thus becoming fully accountable for the implementation of the this budget. The mandate expanded gradually in 2021 and is intended to cover all Delegations over time.

These circuits are considered the most appropriate taking into account the nature of the transactions to be authorised (entirely administrative expenditure) and the resources available to the EEAS.

4.3 Compliance and effectiveness of Internal Control Principles

Following the European Commission's Internal Audit Service (IAS) 2020 Limited Review on the implementation of the new internal control framework, the EEAS developed and implemented throughout 2021 its Action plan to address the IAS' recommendations.

In early 2021, the Director General for Resource Management set up an Internal Control Committee (ICC). It has the role of assessing the effectiveness of EEAS' internal control framework. It is responsible for adopting and monitoring the mitigation actions for identified weaknesses.

The first ICC meeting took place on 20 April 2021. There it decided that the focus of the ICC's primary task should be investigate what weaknesses in internal controls EEAS HQ should address as a priority.

Based on periodic assessment on the state of internal controls and various other sources (such as, the Internal Control Framework survey completed by all Delegations and HQ Authorising Officers by Sub-Delegation (AOSDs) and the related analysis of its results, an Action Plan was compiled over the year and adopted by the ICC in December 2021.

The Action Plan lists weaknesses and mitigating actions per principle. Relevant services are asked to follow up on this and to report for the next ICC.

In 2021, the plan focussed on actions for improving the IT tools and procedures with a view to reducing the occurrence of exceptions and non-compliance events (e.g., automatic reminder to encode calls for tenders when needed). In 2022, work will focus on further improving IT tools and the reporting of non-compliance events, as well as on assessing the efficiency of the IT user support in Delegations, adapting new rules for better information communication and a gap analysis on secure lines of communication (between EEAS HQ and EU Delegations).

Reflection is ongoing on the expansion of the Committee's responsibilities towards EEAS' risk management.

5. MANAGEMENT ASSURANCE

5.1 Review of the assessment by Management at Headquarters - synthesis of the AOSD reports

In accordance with the Charter of tasks and responsibilities of Authorising Officers by Delegation (AOD), the AOD is assisted by the Authorising Officers by Sub-Delegation (AOSD) for the drafting of the Annual Activity Report. For this purpose, all AOSDs were requested to submit a report for the financial year 2021 based on a common template, with a view to consolidating the results and providing an overall assessment for the EEAS 2021 Annual Activity Report.

The analysis of these reports lead to the following conclusions:

- All Authorising Officers by Sub-Delegation provided a positive assurance with regard to the management of the administrative budget entrusted to them.
- The material error rate detected was below the 2% threshold.
- Several AOSDs highlighted difficulties arisen in their respective fields of responsibility linked to the Covid-19 pandemic (higher dependence on IT systems, higher number of transactions).
- Structural understaffing and the difficulties to attract specialists remain key risks for several AOSDs; understaffing also hampers business continuity.
- There is a difficulty in recruiting officials and contractual agents with a sufficient level of specialist knowledge and expertise that fits with the EEAS via the existing recruitment channels.

5.2 Review of the assurance in EU Delegations – synthesis of the DAS of the Delegations

As part of the annual reporting of the administrative budget of the EU Delegation, the Heads of Delegation in their role of AOSD provide a Statement of Assurance each year. The 2021 exercise was launched in December 2021 via the electronic application Reporting Portal, which also encompasses the Internal Control Principles survey.

For 2021, EU Delegations have not submitted any reservations.

5.3 Follow up of previous years' reservations

In 2020, the Head of Delegation to Syria reiterated the 2019 reservation on the management of administrative expenditure. The Covid-19 outbreak and the subsequent closure of borders between Syria and Lebanon, exacerbated issues expressed by the Head of Delegation in 2019. The impossibility of concluding a tender for security and the problems for Local Agents in accessing remuneration, with

particular emphasis on their providence fund when they retire, remained unsolved for 2020.

However, for 2021, continuous efforts from the EU Delegation to Syria and close cooperation with and support from EEAS' Headquarters, the obstacles have been surmounted. Despite the challenging environment in the host country, the Head of Delegation, as Authorising Officer by Sub-Delegation, did not express a reservation in the Declaration of Assurance for the reporting year.

The declarations and the accompanying information are available to the various Divisions in Headquarters in order to assist the Delegations in their controls. They form a basis for the Declaration of Assurance of the Authorising Officer and provide collectively an overview of the financial functioning of the administrative budget in the EU Delegations.

5.4 Overall conclusions on the combined elements on the Declaration as a whole

On the basis of the results of the internal controls, the ex ante and ex post controls as well as specific audits and declarations by the AOSDs, the Authorising Officer by Delegation's estimate of the risk relating to the legality and regularity for the expenditures authorised during the reporting year is below 2%.

On the basis of the analyses of the internal control system of the EEAS as well as the control results, it is concluded that the internal control system implemented by the EEAS is providing sufficient assurance to adequately manage the risks relating to legality and regularity of the underlying transactions.

6. DECLARATION OF ASSURANCE

I, the undersigned, Secretary General of the EEAS, in my capacity as authorising officer by delegation:

- *Declare that the information contained in this report gives a true and fair view.*
- *State that I have reasonable assurance that the resources assigned to the activities described in this report have been used for their intended purpose and in accordance with the principles of sound financial management, and that the control procedures put in place give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions.*
- *This reasonable assurance is based on my own judgement and on the information at my disposal, such as the results of the self-assessment, ex post controls, the work of the internal audit capability, the observations of the Internal Audit Service and the lessons learnt from the reports of the Court of Auditors for years prior to the year of this declaration.*
- *Confirm that I am not aware of anything not reported here which could harm the interests of the Institution.*

30 June 2022,
Brussels

[e-Signed]
Stefano Sannino

7. ANNEXES

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7.1 Annex 1: Statement of the Director General for Resource Management

I declare that in accordance with the EEAS Decision on the Internal Control Framework (ADMIN (2018)26), I have reported my advice and recommendation to the Secretary-General on the overall state of internal controls in the EEAS.

Based on the 2021 reports of the Authorising Officers by Sub-Delegation, I hereby certify that the information provided in the present Annual Activity Report and in its annexes is, to the best of my knowledge, accurate and exhaustive.

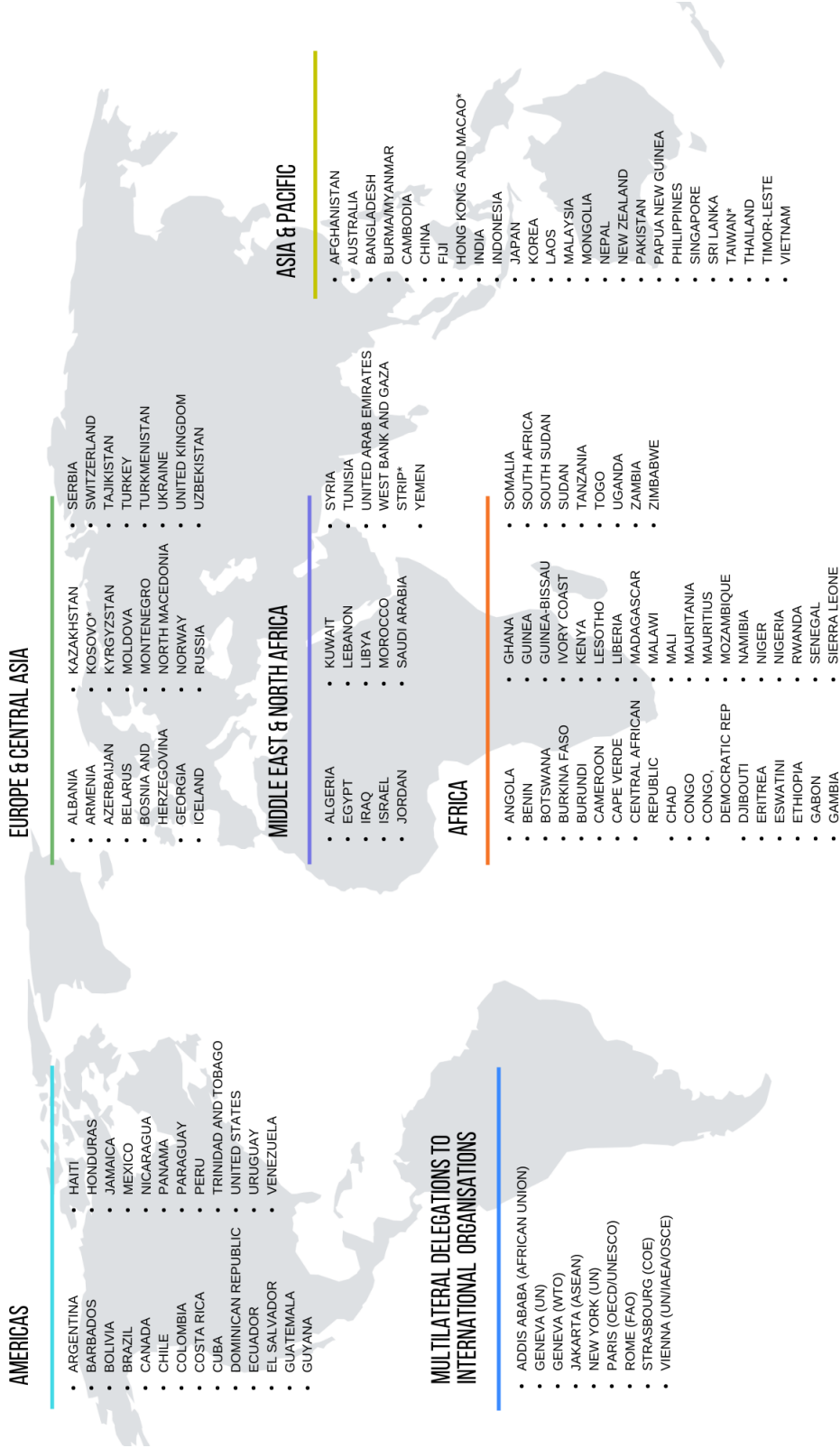
30 June 2022,
Brussels

[e-Signed]

Gianmarco Di Vita

7.3 Annex 3: EU Delegations and Offices

EU DELEGATIONS AND OFFICES



7.4 Annex 4: Human resources

Posts occupied 31/12/2021	Officials		Temporary Agents		Seconded National Experts	Junior Professionals in Delegations	Contract Agents	Local Agents	Total
	AD	AST & AST/SC	AD	AST					
Headquarters	419	425	219	29	406		321		1819
Delegations	243	187	184	0	61	43	246	1543	2507
Total	662	612	403	29	467	43	567	1543	4326

EEAS Staff	Headquarters			Delegations			Overall		Management Gender Balance
	Middle Management	Senior Management	Gender Balance	Middle Management	Senior Management	Gender Balance	Middle Management	Senior Management	
Women	48	8	37.6%	45	7	30.4%	93	15	34%
Men	68	25	62.4%	102	17	69.6%	170	42	66%
Total	116	33		147	24		263	57	
% Women	41%	24%		31%	29%		35.4%	26.3%	

EEAS Staff	Heads of Delegations		
	Officials	TAs	Gender Balance
Women	23	14	26.8%
Men	56	45	73.2%
Total	79	59	
% Women	29%	24%	

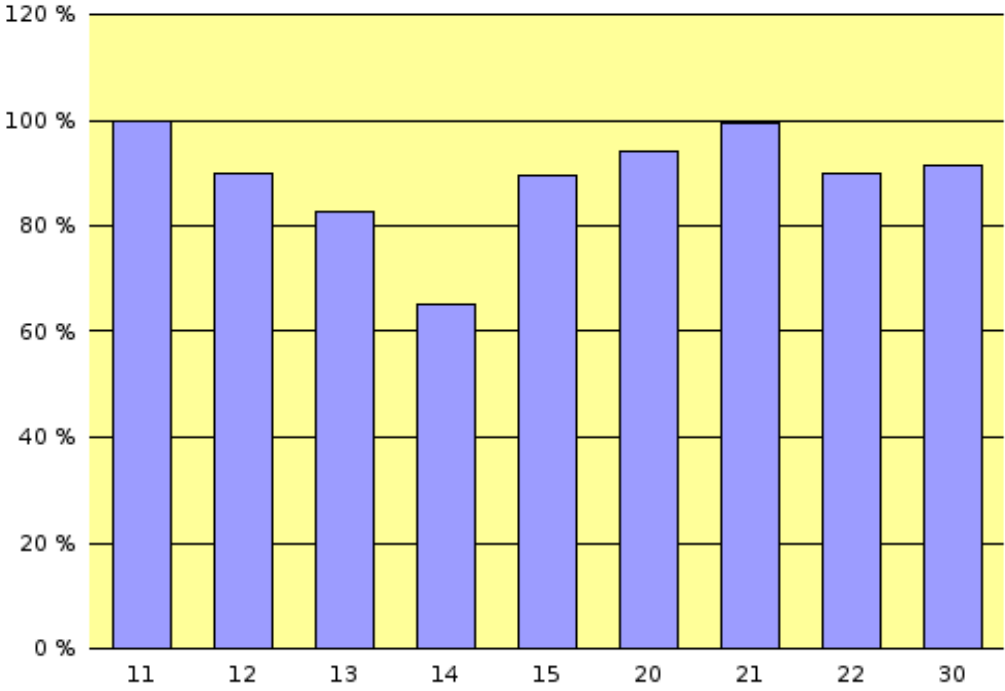
7.5 Annex 5: Financial reports and annual accounts

7.5.1 Table 1: Outturn on Commitment appropriations in 2021

TABLE 1: OUTTURN ON COMMITMENT APPROPRIATIONS IN 2021 (in EUR million) for EEAS					
			Commitment appropriations authorised	Commitments made	%
			1	2	3=2/1
Title 1 Staff expenditure					
1	11	REMUNERATION AND OTHER ENTITLEMENTS RELATING TO STATUTORY STAFF	140.86	140.79	99.95 %
	12	REMUNERATION AND OTHER ENTITLEMENTS RELATING TO EXTERNAL STAFF	37.09	33.3	89.79 %
	13	OTHER EXPENDITURE RELATING TO STAFF MANAGEMENT	2.90	2.4	82.64 %
	14	MISSIONS	8.67	5.66	65.25 %
	15	MEASURES TO ASSIST STAFF	2.35	2.1	89.53 %
Total Title 1			191.89	184.26	96.03 %
Title 2 Building, equipment and miscellaneous operating expenditure					
2	20	BUILDINGS AND ASSOCIATED COSTS	49.09	46.26	94.24 %
	21	COMPUTER SYSTEMS, EQUIPMENT AND FURNITURE	52.28	51.94	99.35 %
	22	STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION CAPACITY	14.38	12.93	89.91 %
Total Title 2			115.75	111.13	96.01 %
Title 3 Delegations					
3	30	DELEGATIONS	783.48	716.14	91.40 %
Total Title 3			783.48	716.14	91.40 %
Total EEAS			1,091.12	1,011.538	92.71 %

* Commitment appropriations authorised include, in addition to the budget voted by the legislative authority, appropriations carried over from the previous exercise, budget amendments as well as miscellaneous commitment appropriations for the period (e.g. internal and external assigned revenue).

% Outturn on Commitment Appropriations in 2021 for DG

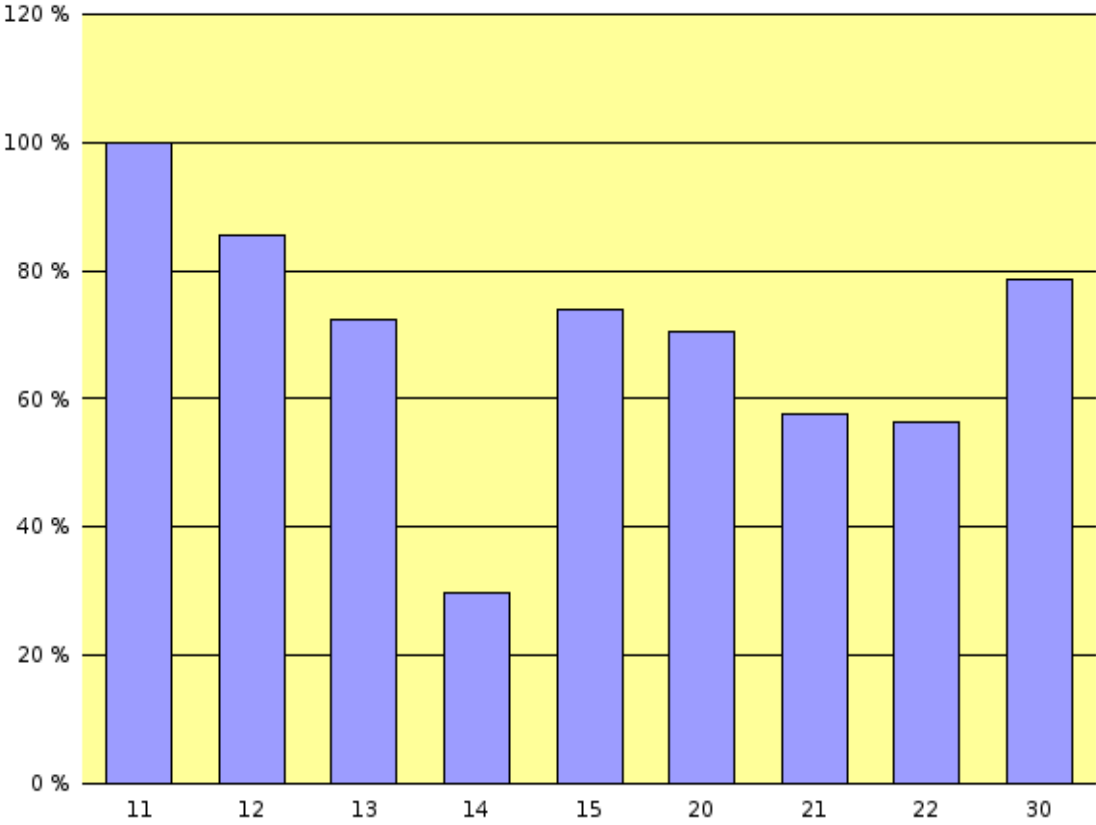


7.5.2 Table 2: Outturn on Payment appropriations in 2021

TABLE 2: OUTTURN ON PAYMENT APPROPRIATIONS in 2021 (in EUR million) for EEAS					
			Payment appropriations authorised *	Payments made	%
			1	2	3=2/1
Title 1 Staff expenditure					
1	11	REMUNERATION AND OTHER ENTITLEMENTS RELATING TO STATUTORY STAFF	140.86	140.79	99.95 %
	12	REMUNERATION AND OTHER ENTITLEMENTS RELATING TO EXTERNAL STAFF	39.13	33.49	85.60 %
	13	OTHER EXPENDITURE RELATING TO STAFF MANAGEMENT	3.77	2.72	72.34 %
	14	MISSIONS	9.51	2.83	29.71 %
	15	MEASURES TO ASSIST STAFF	2.93	2.16	73.93 %
Total Title 1			196.19	182.00	92.76%
Title 2 Buildings, equipment and operating expenditure at headquarters					
2	20	BUILDINGS AND ASSOCIATED COSTS	56.48	39.86	70.57 %
	21	COMPUTER SYSTEMS, EQUIPMENT AND FURNITURE	79.77	46.10	57.79 %
	22	OTHER OPERATING EXPENDITURE	19.03	10.76	56.52 %
Total Title 2			155.29	96.71	62.28%
Title 3 Delegations					
3	30	DELEGATIONS	857.87	674.90	78.67 %
Total Title 3			857.87	674.90	78.67%
Total EEAS			1,209.35	953.60	78.85 %

* Payment appropriations authorised include, in addition to the budget voted by the legislative authority, appropriations carried over from the previous exercise, budget amendments as well as miscellaneous payment appropriations for the period (e.g. internal and external assigned revenue).

% Outturn on Payment Appropriations in 2021 for DG



7.5.3 Table 3: Breakdown of Commitments to be settled at 31.12.2021 for EEAS

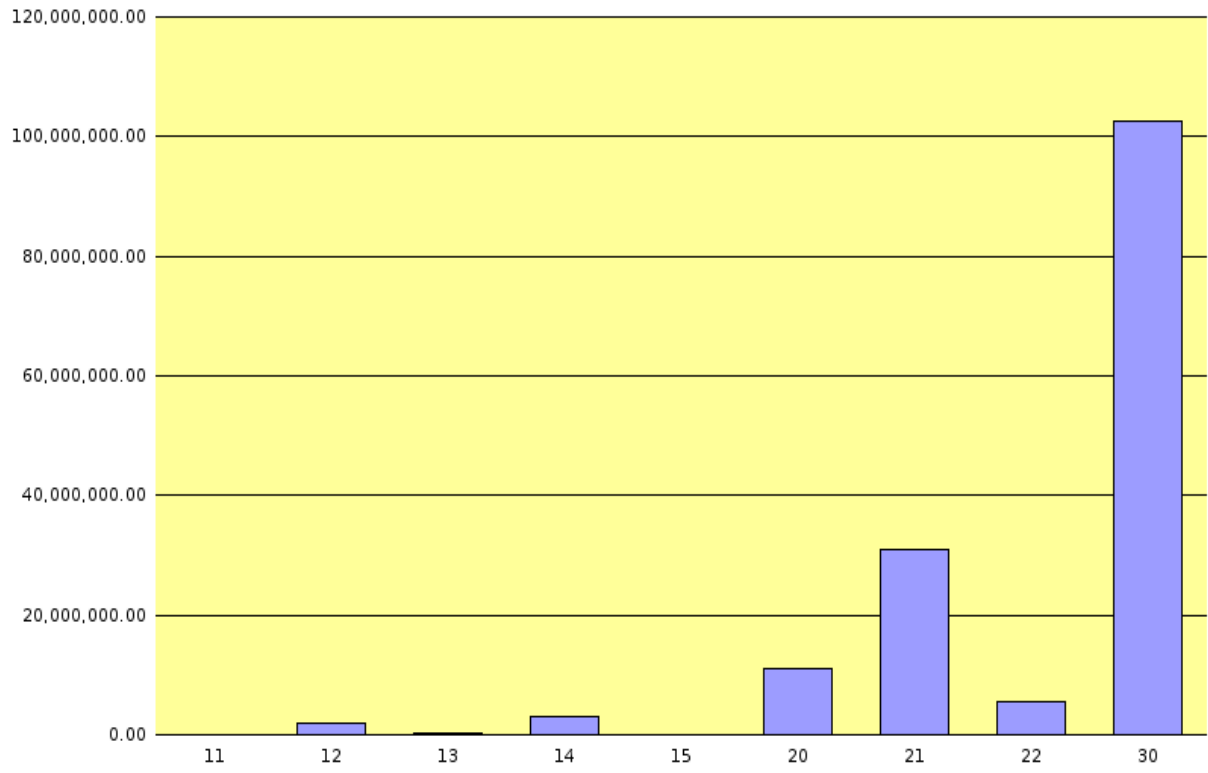
TABLE 3 : BREAKDOWN OF COMMITMENTS TO BE SETTLED AT 31/12/2021 (in EUR million) for EEAS									
Chapter			Commitments to be settled				Commitments to be settled from financial years previous to 2020	Total of commitments to be settled at end of financial year 2021	Total of commitments to be settled at end of financial year 2020
			Commitments	Payments	RAL	% to be settled			
			1	2	3=1-2	4=1-2/1	5	6=3+5	7
1	11	REMUNERATION AND OTHER ENTITLEMENTS RELATING TO STATUTORY STAFF	140.79	140.79	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00
	12	REMUNERATION AND OTHER ENTITLEMENTS RELATING TO EXTERNAL STAFF	33.31	31.46	1.84	5.54%	0.00	1.84	1.84
	13	OTHER EXPENDITURE RELATING TO STAFF MANAGEMENT	2.40	2.00	0.40	16.87%	0.00	0.40	0.40
	14	MISSIONS	5.66	2.71	2.94	52.06%	0.00	2.94	2.94
	15	MEASURES TO ASSIST STAFF	2.11	2.00	0.11	5.30%	0.00	0.11	0.11
Total Title 1			184.26	178.96	5.31	2.88%	0.00	5.31	5.31

TABLE 3 : BREAKDOWN OF COMMITMENTS TO BE SETTLED AT 31/12/2021 (in EUR million) for EEAS									
Chapter			Commitments to be settled				Commitments to be settled from financial years previous to 2020	Total of commitments to be settled at end of financial year 2021	Total of commitments to be settled at end of financial year 2020
			Commitments	Payments	RAL	% to be settled			
			1	2	3=1-2	4=1-2/1	5	6=3+5	7
2	20	BUILDINGS AND ASSOCIATED COSTS	46.26	35.19	11.07	23.92%	0.00	11.07	11.07
	21	COMPUTER SYSTEMS, EQUIPMENT AND FURNITURE	51.94	21.10	30.84	59.38%	0.00	30.84	30.84
	22	OTHER OPERATING EXPENDITURE	12.93	7.49	5.44	42.08%	0.00	5.44	5.44
Total Title 2			111.13	63.78	47.35	42.61%	0.00	47.35	47.35

TABLE 3 : BREAKDOWN OF COMMITMENTS TO BE SETTLED AT 31/12/2021 (in EUR million) for EEAS									
Chapter			Commitments to be settled				Commitments to be settled from financial years previous to 2020	Total of commitments to be settled at end of financial year 2021	Total of commitments to be settled at end of financial year 2020
			Commitments	Payments	RAL	% to be settled			
			1	2	3=1-2	4=1-2/1	5	6=3+5	7
3	30	DELEGATIONS	714.33	611.87	102.45	14.34%	0.00	102.45	102.45
Total Title 3			714.33	611.87	102.45	14.34%	0.00	102.45	102.45

Total for EEAS			1,009.72	854.61	155.11	15.36 %	0.00	155.11	155.11
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Breakdown of Commitments Remaining to be Settled (in Mio EUR) in 2021



7.5.4 Table 4: Balance Sheet

TABLE 4 : BALANCE SHEET for EEAS

BALANCE SHEET	2021	2020
A.I. NON CURRENT ASSETS	444,572,025.88	379,900,116.95
A.I.1. Intangible Assets	641,560.51	88,754.84
A.I.2. Property, Plant and Equipment	373,068,601.03	376,083,307.44
A.I.4. Non-Current Financial Assets	66,962,754.00	-0.00
A.I.6. Non-Cur Exch Receiv & Non-Ex Recoverab	3,899,110.34	3,728,054.67
A.I.7. OLD LT Pre-Financing	0.00	0.00
A.II. CURRENT ASSETS	124,421,223.00	204,891,821.11
A.II.1. Current Financial Assets	2,221,401.08	73,265,157.01
A.II.2. Current Pre-Financing	156,171.36	23,999.59
A.II.3. Curr Exch Receiv & Non-Ex Recoverables	33,243,558.29	51,143,626.33
A.II.6. Cash and Cash Equivalents	88,800,092.27	80,459,038.18
ASSETS	568,993,248.88	584,791,938.06
P.I. NON CURRENT LIABILITIES	-330,374,312.17	-355,895,738.10
P.I.3. Non-Current Financial Liabilities	-330,374,312.17	-355,895,738.10
P.II. CURRENT LIABILITIES	-137,720,328.80	-95,601,875.53
P.II.2. Current Provisions	-80,000.00	-80,000.00
P.II.3. Current Financial Liabilities	-17,613,515.80	-4,548,840.07
P.II.4. Current Payables	-80,210,794.46	-66,759,353.75
P.II.5. Current Accrued Charges & Defrd Income	-39,816,018.54	-24,213,681.71
LIABILITIES	-468,094,640.97	-451,497,613.63
NET ASSETS (ASSETS less LIABILITIES)	100,898,607.91	133,294,324.43
P.III.1. Reserves	0.00	-769,220.12
P.III.2. Accumulated Surplus/Deficit	-133,294,324.43	-123,688,172.51
Non-allocated central (surplus)/deficit*	32,395,716.52	-8,836,931.80
TOTAL EEAS	0.00	0.00

7.5.5 Table 5: Statement of financial performance

TABLE 5a : STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE for EEAS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE	2021	2020
II.1 REVENUES	-963,799,992.42	-931,152,295.01
II.1.1. NON-EXCHANGE REVENUES	-936,745,619.44	-890,116,338.48
II.1.1.6. OTHER NON-EXCHANGE REVENUES	-936,745,619.44	-890,116,338.48
II.1.2. EXCHANGE REVENUES	-27,054,372.98	-41,035,956.53
II.1.2.1. FINANCIAL INCOME	-782,661.63	101,000.46
II.1.2.2. OTHER EXCHANGE REVENUE	-26,271,711.35	-41,136,956.99
II.2. EXPENSES	996,195,708.94	922,315,363.21
II.2. EXPENSES	996,195,708.94	922,315,363.21
II.2.10. OTHER EXPENSES	481,118,838.25	425,856,704.40
II.2.6. STAFF AND PENSION COSTS	507,421,964.08	488,655,139.78
II.2.8. FINANCE COSTS	7,654,906.61	7,803,519.03
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE	32,395,716.52	-8,836,931.80

TABLE 5bis : OFF BALANCE SHEET for DG EEAS

OFF BALANCE	2021	2020
OB.1. Contingent Assets	977,429.40	2,837,549.32
GR for performance	977,429.40	1,641,172.63
GR for pre-financing	0.00	1,196,376.69
OB.2. Contingent Liabilities	-5,229,086.82	-2,762,300.00
OB.2.7. CL Legal cases OTHER	-5,229,086.82	-2,762,300.00
OB.3. Other Significant Disclosures	-481,758,639.02	-475,601,843.06
OB.3.2. Comm against app. not yet consumed	-88,462,507.44	-65,992,519.52
OB.3.3.7. Other contractual commitments	-57,361,683.53	-60,001,675.05
OB.3.5. Operating lease commitments	-335,934,448.05	-349,607,648.49
OB.4. Balancing Accounts	486,010,296.44	475,526,593.74
OB.4. Balancing Accounts	486,010,296.44	475,526,593.74
OFF BALANCE	0.00	0.00

It should be noted that the balance sheet and statement of financial performance presented in Annex 3 to this Annual Activity Report, represent only the assets, liabilities, expenses and revenues that are under the control of this Directorate General. Significant amounts such as own resource revenues and cash held in Commission bank accounts are not included in this Directorate General's accounts since they are managed centrally by DG Budget, on whose balance sheet and statement of financial performance they appear. Furthermore, since the accumulated result of the Commission is not split amongst the various Directorates General, it can be seen that the balance sheet presented here is not in equilibrium.

Additionally, the figures included in tables 4 and 5 are provisional since they are, at this date, still subject to audit by the Court of Auditors. It is thus possible that amounts included in these tables may have to be adjusted following this audit.

7.5.6 Table 6: Average payment times for 2021

TABLE 6: AVERAGE PAYMENT TIMES in 2021 for EEAS

Legal Times									
Maximum Payment Time (Days)	Total Number of Payments	Nbr of Payments within Time Limit	Percentage	Average Payment Times (Days)	Nbr of Late Payments	Percentage	Average Payment Times (Days)	Late Payments Amount	Percentage
7	17	11	64.71%	5.55	6	35.29%	19.67	291,530.20	32.45%
8	24	21	87.50%	4.86	3	12.50%	20.33	14,825.54	73.49%
14	9	9	100.00%	6.22				0.00	0.00%
15	2	1	50.00%	13.00	1	50.00%	24.00	2,720.93	0.73%
21	2	2	100.00%	10.50				0.00	0.00%
22	7	7	100.00%	11.71				0.00	0.00%
30	130542	114336	87.59%	13.86	16206	12.41%	47.23	56,545,563.79	10.62%
45	36	26	72.22%	15.81	10	27.78%	53.40	5,444.68	7.22%
60	599	555	92.65%	19.82	44	7.35%	86.48	3,144,353.50	9.66%
80	1	1	100.00%	75.00				0.00	0.00%
90	113	91	80.53%	26.70	22	19.47%	106.55	570,898.76	30.28%

Total Number of Payments	131352	115060	87.60%		16292	12.40%		60,575,337.40	10.64%
Average Net Payment Time	18.05			13.89			47.40		
Average Gross Payment Time	18.57			14.26			48.97		

Suspensions							
Average Report Approval Suspension Days	Average Payment Suspension Days	Number of Suspended Payments	% of Total Number	Total Number of Payments	Amount of Suspended Payments	% of Total Amount	Total Paid Amount
0	340	157	0.12 %	131352	12,755,282.67	2.24%	569,099,925.17

Late Interest paid in 2021			
DG	GL Account	Description	Amount (Eur)
EEAS	65010100	Interest on late payment of charges New FR	59,082.21
			59,082.21

7.5.7 Table 7: Situation on Revenue and Income in 2021

TABLE 7 : SITUATION ON REVENUE AND INCOME in 2021 for EEAS								
Chapter		Revenue and income recognized			Revenue and income cashed from			Outstanding balance
		Current year RO	Carried over RO	Total	Current Year RO	Carried over RO	Total	
		1	2	3=1+2	4	5	6=4+5	
30	Revenue from staff	48,268,786.63		48,268,786.63	48,268,786.63		48,268,786.63	0.00
31	Revenue linked to property	4,466,115.60	2,393,787.12	6,859,902.72	4,384,561.67	2,367,830.77	6,752,392.44	107,510.28
32	Revenue from the supply of goods, services and work assigned revenue	42,302,508.84	417,885.17	42,720,394.01	42,053,175.97	411,795.66	42,464,971.63	255,422.38
33	Other administrative revenue	199,599,192.09	20,331.10	199,619,523.19	199,539,684.07	12,744.12	199,552,428.19	67,095.00
40	Revenue from investments and accounts	81,806.31		81,806.31	81,806.31		81,806.31	0.00
41	Default interest	2,584.15		2,584.15	2,584.15		2,584.15	0.00
Total EEAS		294,720,993.62	2,832,003.39	297,552,997.01	294,330,598.80	2,792,370.55	297,122,969.35	430,027.66

7.5.8 Table 8: Recovery of payments

INCOME BUDGET RECOVERY ORDERS ISSUED IN 2021 Year of Origin (commitment)	Irregularity		OLAF Notified		Total undue payments recovered		Total transactions in recovery context (incl. non-qualified)		% Qualified/Total RC	
	Nbr	RO Amount	Nbr	RO Amount	Nbr	RO Amount	Nbr	RO Amount	Nbr	Amount
2014							1	4,690.12		
2018	7	19,961.87			7	19,961.87	8	20,346.01	87.50%	98.11%
2019	12	37,635.19			12	37,635.19	15	58,975.44	80.00%	63.82%
2020	17	54,405.98			17	54,405.98	20	60,009.42	85.00%	90.66%
2021	12	46,195.13			12	46,195.13	14	52,801.52	85.71%	87.49%
No Link			1	3,047.98	1	3,047.98	142	226,060,563.07	0.70%	0.00%
Sub-Total	48	158,198.17	1	3,047.98	49	161,246.15	200	226,257,385.58	24.50%	0.07%

EXPENSES BUDGET	Irregularity		OLAF Notified		Total undue payments recovered		Total transactions in recovery context (incl. non-qualified)		% Qualified/Total RC	
	Nbr	Amount	Nbr	Amount	Nbr	Amount	Nbr	Amount	Nbr	Amount
INCOME LINES IN INVOICES							14	1,465,857.47		
NON ELIGIBLE IN COST CLAIMS										
CREDIT NOTES	17	63,253.90			17	63,253.90	149	18,043,826.14	11.41%	0.35%
Sub-Total	17	63,253.90			17	63,253.90	163	19,509,683.61	10.43%	0.32%

GRAND TOTAL	65	221,452.07	1	3,047.98	66	224,500.05	363	245,767,069.19	18.18%	0.09%
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7.5.9 Table 9: Ageing balance of Recovery Orders at 31.12.2021

TABLE 9: AGEING BALANCE OF RECOVERY ORDERS AT 31/12/2021 for EEAS

	Number at 01/01/2021	Number at 31/12/2021	Evolution	Open Amount (Eur) at 01/01/2021	Open Amount (Eur) at 31/12/2021	Evolution
2015	2	2	0.00 %	9,577.09	9,577.09	0.00
2017	1		-100.00 %	3,255.67		- 1.00
2019	2	2	0.00 %	4,477.88	4,477.88	0.00
2020	35	5	-85.71 %	3,025,301.66	32,359.86	- 0.99
2021		34			516,249.28	
	40	43	7.50 %	3,042,612.30	562,664.11	-81.51 %

7.5.10 Table 10: Recovery Orders waivers in 2021

TABLE 10 :Recovery Order Waivers >= 60 000 € in 2021 for EEAS

	Waiver Central Key	Linked RO Central Key	RO Accepted Amount (Eur)	LE Account Group	Commission Decision	Comments
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Total EEAS	0
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Number of RO waivers	0
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7.5.11 Table 11: Census of negotiated procedures (excluding building contracts)

TABLE 11 : Negotiated Procedures in 2021 for EEAS

Internal Procedures > € 60,000

Negotiated Procedure Legal base	Number of Procedures	Amount (€)
Annex 1 - 11.1 (a) – Follow-up of an open/restricted procedure where no (or no suitable) tenders/requests to participate have been submitted	1	1,400,000.00
Annex 1 - 11.1 (b) - Artistic/technical reasons or exclusive rights or technical monopoly/captive market	2	116,682.326
Annex 1 - 11.1 (c) - Extreme urgency caused by unforeseeable events not attributable to the contracting authority	3	3,841,817.29
Annex 1 - 11.1 (e) - New services/works consisting in the repetition of similar services/works	1	359,550.00
Total	7	5,718,049.61

7.5.12 Table 12: Building contracts signed in 2021 (Headquarters)

BUILDING	LOCATION	CONTRACT TYPE	BENEFICIARY	SIGNATURE DATE	ANNUAL AMOUNT
C-25	Brussels	Administrative Agreement	EU Commission	21/12/2021	€ 2,379,714.27
B100	Brussels	Administrative Agreement	EEAS ²⁷	22/06/2021	€ -911,630.98

²⁷ * An Administrative Agreement was signed between the EEAS and the Committees [i.e. the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the European Committee of the Regions (ECoR)] concerning the takeover of the usufruct contract of B100 by the latter. No new commitment has been made by the EEAS, thus the negative annual amount.

7.5.13 Table 13: Building contracts signed in 2021 (Delegations)

REGION	DELEGATION	TOWN	CONTRACT TYPE	SIGNED AMOUNT IN EUR
AFRICA	ANGOLA	LUANDA	RESIDENCE	414,000
AFRICA	BURKINA FASO	OUAGADOUGOU	RESIDENCE	51,223
AFRICA	CAMEROON	YAOUNDE	ACCOMMODATION	329,290
AFRICA	CAMEROON	YAOUNDE	ACCOMMODATION	329,290
AFRICA	CAMEROON	YAOUNDE	ACCOMMODATION	274,498
AFRICA	CAMEROON	YAOUNDE	ACCOMMODATION	365,878
AFRICA	CAMEROON	YAOUNDE	ACCOMMODATION	109,763
AFRICA	CAMEROON	YAOUNDE	ACCOMMODATION	97,323
AFRICA	CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC	BANGUI	RESIDENCE	914,640
AFRICA	CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC	BANGUI	ACCOMMODATION	82,322
AFRICA	CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC	BANGUI	ACCOMMODATION	69,517
AFRICA	CHAD	NDJAMENA	ACCOMMODATION	29,270
AFRICA	CHAD	NDJAMENA	ACCOMMODATION	32,929
AFRICA	CHAD	NDJAMENA	ACCOMMODATION	32,929
AFRICA	CHAD	NDJAMENA	ACCOMMODATION	98,787
AFRICA	CHAD	NDJAMENA	ACCOMMODATION	98,787
AFRICA	CHAD	NDJAMENA	ACCOMMODATION	93,291
AFRICA	CHAD	NDJAMENA	ACCOMMODATION	98,787
AFRICA	CHAD	NDJAMENA	ACCOMMODATION	98,787
AFRICA	CHAD	NDJAMENA	ACCOMMODATION	98,770
AFRICA	CHAD	NDJAMENA	ACCOMMODATION	98,770
AFRICA	DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO	KINSHASA	ACCOMMODATION	171,100
AFRICA	DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO	KINSHASA	OFFICE	1,203,072
AFRICA	DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO	KINSHASA	ACCOMMODATION	134,820
AFRICA	DJIBOUTI	DJIBOUTI	ACCOMMODATION	37,535
AFRICA	DJIBOUTI	DJIBOUTI	ACCOMMODATION	147,249
AFRICA	DJIBOUTI	DJIBOUTI	ACCOMMODATION	150,919
AFRICA	DJIBOUTI	DJIBOUTI	ACCOMMODATION	90,949
AFRICA	DJIBOUTI	DJIBOUTI	ACCOMMODATION	100,477
AFRICA	DJIBOUTI	DJIBOUTI	ACCOMMODATION	105,674
AFRICA	DJIBOUTI	DJIBOUTI	ACCOMMODATION	105,674
AFRICA	DJIBOUTI	DJIBOUTI	ACCOMMODATION	67,961

AFRICA	DJIBOUTI	DJIBOUTI	ACCOMMODATION	110,854
AFRICA	DJIBOUTI	DJIBOUTI	ACCOMMODATION	139,310
AFRICA	DJIBOUTI	DJIBOUTI	ACCOMMODATION	139,310
AFRICA	ERITHREA	ASMARA	ACCOMMODATION	57,600
AFRICA	ERITHREA	ASMARA	ACCOMMODATION	48,000
AFRICA	ERITHREA	ASMARA	ACCOMMODATION	97,618
AFRICA	ETHIOPIA	ADDIS ABABA	ACCOMMODATION	160,932
AFRICA	ETHIOPIA	ADDIS ABABA	OFFICE	180,233
AFRICA	ETHIOPIA	ADDIS ABABA	ACCOMMODATION	160,932
AFRICA	ETHIOPIA	ADDIS ABABA	RESIDENCE	957,297
AFRICA	ETHIOPIA	ADDIS ABABA	ACCOMMODATION	169,402
AFRICA	ETHIOPIA	ADDIS ABABA	ACCOMMODATION	155,145
AFRICA	ETHIOPIA	ADDIS ABABA	ACCOMMODATION	155,145
AFRICA	ETHIOPIA	ADDIS ABABA	ACCOMMODATION	172,383
AFRICA	ETHIOPIA	ADDIS ABABA	ACCOMMODATION	155,145
AFRICA	ETHIOPIA	ADDIS ABABA	ACCOMMODATION	314,240
AFRICA	ETHIOPIA	ADDIS ABABA	ACCOMMODATION	149,184
AFRICA	ETHIOPIA	ADDIS ABABA	ACCOMMODATION	193,931
AFRICA	ETHIOPIA	ADDIS ABABA	OFFICE	81,929
AFRICA	ETHIOPIA	ADDIS ABABA	ACCOMMODATION	143,899
AFRICA	ETHIOPIA AFRICAN UNION	ADDIS ABABA	ACCOMMODATION	157,055
AFRICA	ETHIOPIA AFRICAN UNION	ADDIS ABABA	ACCOMMODATION	207,544
AFRICA	ETHIOPIA AFRICAN UNION	ADDIS ABABA	ACCOMMODATION	254,696
AFRICA	ETHIOPIA AFRICAN UNION	ADDIS ABABA	ACCOMMODATION	156,513
AFRICA	ETHIOPIA AFRICAN UNION	ADDIS ABABA	ACCOMMODATION	216,235
AFRICA	ETHIOPIA AFRICAN UNION	ADDIS ABABA	OFFICE	100,669
AFRICA	GAMBIA	BANJUL	OFFICE	106,500
AFRICA	GAMBIA	BANJUL	OFFICE	300,273
AFRICA	GAMBIA	BANJUL	RESIDENCE	63,100
AFRICA	GHANA	ACCRA	RESIDENCE	906,236
AFRICA	GHANA	ACCRA	RESIDENCE	11,791
AFRICA	GHANA	ACCRA	RESIDENCE	36,039
AFRICA	GUINEA REPUBLIC	CONAKRY	RESIDENCE	750,000
AFRICA	GUINEA REPUBLIC	CONAKRY	RESIDENCE	250,000
AFRICA	GUINEA REPUBLIC	CONAKRY	ACCOMMODATION	130,000
AFRICA	GUINEA REPUBLIC	CONAKRY	ACCOMMODATION	100,000
AFRICA	GUINEA-BISSAU	BISSAU	ACCOMMODATION	72,960
AFRICA	GUINEA-BISSAU	BISSAU	ACCOMMODATION	78,444
AFRICA	GUINEA-BISSAU	BISSAU	ACCOMMODATION	98,787
AFRICA	GUINEA-BISSAU	BISSAU	ACCOMMODATION	95,128
AFRICA	KENYA	NAIROBI	ACCOMMODATION	5,868
AFRICA	KENYA	NAIROBI	ACCOMMODATION	6,012
AFRICA	KENYA	NAIROBI	ACCOMMODATION	10,482
AFRICA	KENYA	NAIROBI	ACCOMMODATION	10,482
AFRICA	KENYA	NAIROBI	ACCOMMODATION	10,482

AFRICA	KENYA	NAIROBI	ACCOMMODATION	10,482
AFRICA	KENYA	NAIROBI	ACCOMMODATION	23,736
AFRICA	KENYA	NAIROBI	ACCOMMODATION	24,261
AFRICA	KENYA	NAIROBI	ACCOMMODATION	52,435
AFRICA	KENYA	NAIROBI	ACCOMMODATION	52,435
AFRICA	KENYA	NAIROBI	ACCOMMODATION	53,550
AFRICA	KENYA	NAIROBI	ACCOMMODATION	53,550
AFRICA	KENYA	NAIROBI	ACCOMMODATION	63,793
AFRICA	KENYA	NAIROBI	ACCOMMODATION	63,793
AFRICA	LIBERIA	MONROVIA	ACCOMMODATION	42,059
AFRICA	LIBERIA	MONROVIA	ACCOMMODATION	158,814
AFRICA	LIBERIA	MONROVIA	ACCOMMODATION	158,814
AFRICA	MALAWI	LILONGWE	OFFICE	794,700
AFRICA	MALI	BAMAKO	ACCOMMODATION	3,430
AFRICA	MALI	BAMAKO	ACCOMMODATION	21,953
AFRICA	MALI	BAMAKO	ACCOMMODATION	58,540
AFRICA	MALI	BAMAKO	ACCOMMODATION	49,393
AFRICA	MALI	BAMAKO	ACCOMMODATION	73,176
AFRICA	MALI	BAMAKO	ACCOMMODATION	73,176
AFRICA	MALI	BAMAKO	ACCOMMODATION	65,858
AFRICA	MAURITIUS	PORT LOUIS	OFFICE	12,774
AFRICA	NIGER	NIAMEY	OFFICE	2,191,200
AFRICA	NIGER	NIAMEY	ACCOMMODATION	80,493
AFRICA	REPUBLIC OF CONGO	BRAZAVILLE	ACCOMMODATION	164,645
AFRICA	REPUBLIC OF CONGO	BRAZAVILLE	ACCOMMODATION	153,669
AFRICA	REPUBLIC OF CONGO	BRAZAVILLE	ACCOMMODATION	82,322
AFRICA	REPUBLIC OF CONGO	BRAZAVILLE	ACCOMMODATION	137,204
AFRICA	REPUBLIC OF CONGO	BRAZAVILLE	ACCOMMODATION	129,734
AFRICA	SENEGAL	DAKAR	RESIDENCE	100,616
AFRICA	SOMALIA	MOGADISHU	ACCOMMODATION	52,064
AFRICA	TANZANIA	DAR ES SALAAM	RESIDENCE	1,465,510
AFRICA	SUDAN	KHARTOUM	ACCOMMODATION	36,641
AFRICA	SWAZILAND	MBABANE	OFFICE	1,200,000
AFRICA	ZAMBIA	LUSAKA	OFFICE	336,409
AFRICA	ZIMBABWE	HARARE	ACCOMMODATION	336,410
AFRICA	ZIMBABWE	HARARE	ACCOMMODATION	20,141
AFRICA	ZIMBABWE	HARARE	ACCOMMODATION	18,534
AFRICA	ZIMBABWE	HARARE	ACCOMMODATION	92,414
AFRICA	ZIMBABWE	HARARE	ACCOMMODATION	92,672
AFRICA	ZIMBABWE	HARARE	ACCOMMODATION	79,530
AMERICAS	ARGENTINA	BUENOS AIRES	OFFICE	9,900,000
AMERICAS	BARBADOS	BRIDGETOWN	OFFICE	22,952
AMERICAS	BARBADOS	BRIDGETOWN	OFFICE	92,614
AMERICAS	BELIZE	BELMOPAN	OFFICE	20,702
AMERICAS	BELIZE	BELMOPAN	OFFICE	19,787

AMERICAS	BOLIVIA	LA PAZ	RESIDENCE	23,200
AMERICAS	BRAZIL	BRAZILIA	OFFICE	117,523,51
AMERICAS	CHILE	SANTIAGO	RESIDENCE	1,300,000
AMERICAS	CUBA	LA HAVANA	OFFICE	471,992
AMERICAS	CUBA	LA HAVANA	OFFICE	203,390
AMERICAS	CUBA	LA HAVANA	ACCOMMODATION	254,237
AMERICAS	CUBA	LA HAVANA	RESIDENCE	329,585
AMERICAS	CUBA	LA HAVANA	ACCOMMODATION	182,202
AMERICAS	GUYANA	GEORGETOWN	OFFICE	271,000
AMERICAS	HAITI	PORT-AU-PRINCE	ACCOMMODATION	7,980
AMERICAS	HAITI	PORT-AU-PRINCE	ACCOMMODATION	38,817
AMERICAS	HAITI	PORT-AU-PRINCE	ACCOMMODATION	48,703
AMERICAS	HAITI	PORT-AU-PRINCE	ACCOMMODATION	606,418
AMERICAS	HAITI	PORT-AU-PRINCE	ACCOMMODATION	89,941
AMERICAS	HAITI	PORT-AU-PRINCE	ACCOMMODATION	102,969
AMERICAS	HAITI	PORT-AU-PRINCE	ACCOMMODATION	79,149
AMERICAS	HAITI	PORT-AU-PRINCE	ACCOMMODATION	142,361
AMERICAS	HONDURAS	TEGUCIGALPA	ACCOMMODATION	34,199
AMERICAS	HONDURAS	TEGUCIGALPA	ACCOMMODATION	21,985
AMERICAS	HONDURAS	TEGUCIGALPA	OFFICE	712,440
AMERICAS	JAMAICA	KINGSTON	OFFICE	402,759
AMERICAS	JAMAICA	KINGSTON	OFFICE	255,216
AMERICAS	PARAGUAY	ASUNCION	RESIDENCE	84,000
AMERICAS	USA	NEW YORK	RESIDENCE	395,746
AMERICAS	VENEZUELA	CARACAS	ACCOMMODATION	3,272
AMERICAS	VENEZUELA	CARACAS	ACCOMMODATION	4,530
AMERICAS	VENEZUELA	CARACAS	ACCOMMODATION	51,755
AMERICAS	VENEZUELA	CARACAS	ACCOMMODATION	144,792
AMERICAS	VENEZUELA	CARACAS	RESIDENCE	597,101
AMERICAS	VENEZUELA	CARACAS	ACCOMMODATION	185,715
AMERICAS	VENEZUELA	CARACAS	ACCOMMODATION	195,548
ASIAPAC	HONGKONG	WANCHAI	RESIDENCE	231,490
ASIAPAC	INDONESIA	JAKARTA	RESIDENCE	638,037
ASIAPAC	LAOS	VIENTIAE	RESIDENCE	39,756
ASIAPAC	MALAYSIA	KUALA LUMPUR	OFFICE	846,141
ASIAPAC	MALAYSIA	KUALA LUMPUR	OFFICE	78,720
ASIAPAC	MALAYSIA	KUALA LUMPUR	RESIDENCE	114,322
ASIAPAC	MONGOLIA	ULAANBAATAR	RESIDENCE	272,076
ASIAPAC	MONGOLIA	ULAANBAATAR	OFFICE	145,322
ASIAPAC	MYANMAR	YANGON	RESIDENCE	641,766
ASIAPAC	NEPAL	KATHMANDOU	ACCOMMODATION	4,838
ASIAPAC	NEPAL	KATHMANDOU	ACCOMMODATION	4,825
ASIAPAC	NEPAL	KATHMANDOU	ACCOMMODATION	53,872
ASIAPAC	NEPAL	KATHMANDOU	RESIDENCE	1,121,395
ASIAPAC	NEPAL	KATHMANDOU	ACCOMMODATION	63,748

ASIAPAC	NEPAL	KATHMANDOU	ACCOMMODATION	71,350
ASIAPAC	NEW ZEALAND	WELLINGTON	OFFICE	184,092
ASIAPAC	SINGAPORE	SINGAPORE	OFFICE	658,700
ASIAPAC	SRI LANKA	COLOMBO	ACCOMMODATION	37,089
ASIAPAC	SRI LANKA	COLOMBO	ACCOMMODATION	50,306
ASIAPAC	SRI LANKA	COLOMBO	ACCOMMODATION	44,058
ASIAPAC	SRI LANKA	COLOMBO	ACCOMMODATION	71,466
ASIAPAC	SRI LANKA	COLOMBO	ACCOMMODATION	115,535
ASIAPAC	SRI LANKA	COLOMBO	ACCOMMODATION	61,485
ASIAPAC	TIMOR LESTE	DILI	RESIDENCE	109,176
ASIAPAC	THAILAND	BANGKOK	OFFICE	944,412
ASIAPAC	THAILAND	BANGKOK	RESIDENCE	441,226
ASIAPAC	TURKEY	ANKARA	OFFICE	27,419
EURCA	BELARUS	MINSK	OFFICE	1,259,039
EURCA	BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	SARAJEVO	RESIDENCE	1,104,000
EURCA	KYRGYZTAN	BISHKEK	OFFICE	3,032,303
EURCA	KOSOVO	PRISTINA	RESIDENCE	235,200
EURCA	KOSOVO	PRISTINA	RESIDENCE	14,700
EURCA	MOLDAVIA	CHISINAU	OFFICE	2,058,313
EURCA	MONTENEGRO	PODGORIZA	RESIDENCE	270,000
EURCA	NORTH MACEDONIA	SKOPJE	RESIDENCE	1,008,000
EURCA	NORWAY	OSLO	RESIDENCE	482,600
EURCA	RUSSIA	MOSCOW	OFFICE	3,475
EURCA	RUSSIA	MOSCOW	OFFICE	4,956
EURCA	RUSSIA	MOSCOW	OFFICE	4,901
EURCA	RUSSIA	MOSCOW	OFFICE	4,726
EURCA	RUSSIA	MOSCOW	OFFICE	81,337
EURCA	RUSSIA	MOSCOW	OFFICE	79,510
EURCA	UZBEKISTAN	TASHKENT	RESIDENCE	592,982
EURCA	UZBEKISTAN	TASHKENT	OFFICES	39,712
MENA	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	ABU DHABI	ACCOMMODATION	6,987
MENA	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	ABU DHABI	ACCOMMODATION	56,904
MENA	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	ABU DHABI	ACCOMMODATION	36,731
MENA	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	ABU DHABI	ACCOMMODATION	146,095
MENA	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	ABU DHABI	ACCOMMODATION	101,324
MENA	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	ABU DHABI	ACCOMMODATION	107,312
MENA	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	ABU DHABI	ACCOMMODATION	111,088
MENA	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	ABU DHABI	ACCOMMODATION	86,854
MENA	EGYPT	CAIRO	RESIDENCE	1,131,980
MENA	IRAQ	ERBIL	OFFICE	26,177
MENA	KUWAIT	KUWAIT CITY	OFFICE	3,024,968
MENA	KUWAIT	KUWAIT CITY	OFFICE	124,551
MENA	KUWAIT	KUWAIT CITY	OFFICE	31,523
MENA	KUWAIT	KUWAIT CITY	OFFICE	64,490
MENA	LYBIA	TRIPOLI	OFFICE	663,000

MENA	LYBIA	TRIPOLI	RESIDENCE	268,344
MENA	LYBIA	TUNIS	RESIDENCE	36,324
MENA	PALESTINE	GAZA	OFFICE	64,800
MENA	SAUDI ARABIA	RIYADH	ACCOMMODATION	123,221
MENA	SYRIA	BEIRUT	RESIDENCE	224,016
MENA	YEMEN	AMMAN	ACCOMMODATION	42,215
MENA	YEMEN	AMMAN	OFFICE	121,956

7.5.14 Table 14: Contracts declared secret

Total Number of Contracts	Total Awarded Amount
4	EUR 2,768,331