

# The work of EPRS

The first three years:  
2014 to 2016

EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service

RESEARCH BY ABOUT EPRS MEMBERS' HOTLINE

POLICY AREA PUBLICATION TYPE AUTHOR

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**EPRS EVENT: GLOBAL TRENDS**  
Risk and Resilience in Foreign Policy: Tuesday, 29 September, 18:00 - 19:30 hours.  
Library Reading Room - Altiero Spinelli Building (ASP OSD)

GRAPHICS WAREHOUSE

THIS WEEK'S RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

**Investment rules in trade agreements: Developments...**  
IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS by PUCCIO, LAURA

**Foreign Investment**

The foreign direct investment (FDI) stocks of EU entities in the US and of US entities in the EU both amount to over €1.6 trillion. Investment access and protection is therefore crucial to EU-US economic relations.

ROBERTO ANTONIO (2015) EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY RESEARCH SERVICE  
INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC LAW INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Post-2020 reform of the EU Emissions Trading System European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights

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Legal and Legal Affairs	Security and Justice

EU Migratory Challenge  
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Topical Digests  
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EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service

invites you to a roundtable discussion on

**PUBLIC OPINION IN EUROPE**  
**Stocktaking and latest trends**

with  
**Bruce STOKES**, Pew Research Center, Washington DC  
**Jacques NANCY**, Public Opinion Monitoring Unit, DG COMM, EP

**THURSDAY, 4 JUNE, 13:30 - 15:00 HOURS**  
EPRS Library Reading Room - Altiero Spinelli Building - ASP OSD



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**THE FIRST FIVE YEARS OF PERMANENT PRESIDENCY OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL:**  
The Van Rompuy Experience

**TUESDAY, 5 MAY, 18:00 - 20:00 HOURS**  
EPRS Library Reading Room - Altiero Spinelli Building - ASP OSD

A roundtable discussion with:  
Martin SCHULZ, President of the European Parliament  
Herman VAN ROMPUY, President of the European Council (2009 - 2019)  
Danuta HUBNER, Chair of the EP Committee on Institutional Affairs

Prof. ALEXANDROVA, Vice PRESIDENT



# The work of EPRS

## The first three years: 2014 to 2016

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# The work of EPRS

## The first three years: 2014 to 2016

### Summary

The European Parliament's Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services (EPRS) was established in November 2013, in order to provide Members of the European Parliament, and where appropriate, parliamentary committees, with independent, objective and authoritative analysis of, and research on, policy issues relating to the European Union, and so assist them in their parliamentary work.

DG EPRS aims to provide a comprehensive range of products and services, backed by specialist internal expertise and knowledge sources in all policy fields, so empowering Members and committees through knowledge and contributing to the Parliament's effectiveness and influence as an institution.

*Since January 2014, EPRS has answered over 8,000 requests for substantive research and analysis from some 88 per cent of individual Members, it has replied to 1,600 such requests from other parliamentary clients, and it has undertaken targeted research work for 17 parliamentary committees. In parallel, over the same timeframe, DG EPRS has also replied to 52,000 reference requests from within the Parliament and over 180,000 citizens' enquiries. It has produced over 1,800 publications (plus another 800 digital only texts), so far eliciting 8.2 million page views electronically, including from over 9,000 unique users within the parliamentary community each year (and over 2,300 each month).*

This report describes the work of EPRS during its **first three years of full operation**, from January 2014 to December 2016. During this thirty-six month period:

- The **Members' Research Service** of EPRS answered a total of **8,096 substantive, confidential requests for research and analysis from Members of the European Parliament** (MEPs) and their staff - 1,660 in 2014; 2,995 in 2015; and 3,441 in 2016 - in some cases with assistance from other EPRS services.
- The Members' Research Service also replied to **1,654 such requests from other parliamentary clients** – such as committee secretariats, policy departments and political groups – for research and analysis (720 in 2014; 497 in 2015 and 437 in 2016).
- The number of Members using the Members' Research Service rose throughout the period, with **88 per cent of Members** having made requests for research or analysis by December 2016, and 75 per cent per cent doing so in the previous twelve months. In autumn 2014, by comparison, the figure was only 22 per cent.
- The Members' Research Service issued **1,547 publications** on EU policies, issues and legislation, for the use of Members generally, during the three-year period: 231 publications in 2014; 594 publications in 2015; and 722 publications in 2016.

- The Directorate for the **Library** also answered over **52,000 reference requests** from within the Parliament and treated over **180,000 citizens' enquiries**.
- The Directorate for the Library **lent over 30,000 books** and e-books to parliamentary clients and provided in-house **training to over 3,300 individuals**.
- The Directorate for the Library supplied over **20,000 historic EP documents** to members of the public, in response to over 2,000 requests, and processed over **one kilometre of archives** during these three years.
- The Directorate for **Impact Assessment and European Added Value** published **319 papers** in support of the work of parliamentary committees in scrutinising the executive and holding it to account.
- Adding in Library publications and blog articles, there were a total of **2,680 EPRS publications** during the three years in question: 541 in 2014; 970 in 2015; and 1,169 in 2016. All of these publications can be accessed via the [EPRS catalogue](#)<sup>1</sup> for that period.
- These EPRS publications and other material elicited over **4.7 million page-views** on the Parliament's intranet in the three-year period in question, as well as some **3.5 million page views** on the internet. By year, the figures for the intranet were 1.3 million in 2014, 1.8 million in 2015, and 1.6 million in 2016. For the internet, they were 700,000 in 2014, 1.3 million in 2015, and 1.5 million in 2016.
- Some **98 per cent of Members or their staff** pro-actively accessed EPRS publications, sources or other material on the Parliament's intranet during the three years in question.

## Creation, role and philosophy of EPRS

The Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services (EPRS) was **established** on 1 November 2013, following a decision of the Parliament's Bureau on 20 May 2013, and it became fully operational on 1 January 2014.

The creation of EPRS followed a detailed analysis, undertaken by a Joint Working Group of the Parliament's Bureau and Budgets Committee, of the strengths and weaknesses of the various kinds of support given to Members in their parliamentary work. The working group identified areas both for potential savings and potential reinforcement over time. Among the latter, it recommended specifically that the provision of 'independent scientific advice' to Members and of analytical support in exercising scrutiny and oversight of the executive should both be enhanced. A detailed comparative study of the parliamentary research services and libraries in France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States identified the services available and best practice to be found elsewhere.

The overall **purpose** of establishing the new directorate-general was thus not only to reorganise certain existing services in a more coherent manner, but significantly to enhance

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<sup>1</sup> [www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/Catalogue\\_EPRS\\_publications\\_2014-16.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/Catalogue_EPRS_publications_2014-16.pdf)

the quality of those services and to develop new ones - so that the European Parliament would have at its disposal a world-class parliamentary research service, capable of providing Members and (where appropriate) committees with independent, objective and authoritative research on, and analysis of, policy issues relating to the European Union. It was also intended to increase the practical capacity of Members and committees to scrutinise and oversee the European Commission and other executive bodies during successive stages of the EU policy cycle.

To strengthen administrative support in these fields, the new directorate-general brought together, in the form of a single service, two previously separate entities - the Directorate for the Library (previously located in DG Presidency) and the Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value (previously in DG Internal Policies) - and it added to them a new directorate, the Members' Research Service, of a kind which the Parliament previously lacked on any scale. The latter offers closely-tailored briefing and personalised research for individual MEPs, and produces a wide range of (synoptic and more detailed) publications for Members as a whole. Together these three principal components now form a single service, designed to offer the kind of comprehensive research capability to be found, in whole or in part, in several other parliamentary democracies.

The **basic philosophy** of EPRS, as defined by the Bureau, reflects the following core principles:

- *to be independent, objective and authoritative in the work undertaken;*
- *to provide a comprehensive service, backed by specialism in all policy fields;*
- *to be client-oriented and responsive directly to the needs of Members;*
- *to offer a single point-of-entry for Members and a rapid response to requests;*
- *to ensure the clear, simple branding of all products and services; and*
- *to complement written material with greater 'in person' briefing of Members.*

In such a spirit, the directorate-general aims to provide a **comprehensive range of products and services**, backed by specialist internal expertise and knowledge sources in all policy fields, so in effect empowering both Members and committees through knowledge.

The administrative title of the directorate-general is the Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services (EPRS). The acronym 'EPRS' stands for '**European Parliamentary Research Service**', a name which the DG may use on its publications, webpages and other public material.

**Organisationally**, DG EPRS comprises **three directorates**, as well as two horizontal units, for Strategy and Coordination, and for Resources:

- *Directorate A* - Directorate for the Members' Research Service;
- *Directorate B* - Directorate for the Library;
- *Directorate C* - Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value.

The three main components of EPRS work - i) research for Members individually and publications for Members collectively, ii) access to knowledge sources, and iii) support for parliamentary committees in scrutiny and oversight of the executive - are reflected in the organisation of the directorate-general into these three directorates.

## Work of the Members' Research Service

The central task of Directorate A of DG EPRS, the **Members' Research Service**, is to provide all Members of the European Parliament with independent, objective and authoritative analysis of, and research on, EU-related policy issues, in order to assist them in their parliamentary work.

The Directorate is organised in **five policy units**, currently covering Economic Policies (EPOL), Structural Policies (SPOL), Citizens' Policies (CPOL), Budgetary Policies (BPOL) and External Policies (XPOL), following the standard committee groupings used within the Parliament's administration. The work of the five policy units is supported by a horizontal Publications Management and Editorial Unit (PMEU), which also serves the directorate-general as a whole.

The five policy units within the Members' Research Service provide, *inter alia*, the following **main services**:

- the provision of **in-house, specialist expertise** in all areas of EU policy, based on the work of policy analysts and information specialists;
- **responses to specific requests from individual Members** for research, analysis and in policy fields covered by the European Union, notably by means of tailored, personalised briefing to Members, both in written form and through in-person meetings;
- a **comprehensive range of pro-active, content-rich, easy-to-read publications** (and other analysis and research) for Members collectively on major EU policies and issues, including the automatic and systematic provision of analysis on EU legislative proposals at their successive stages of passage;
- the contribution of **online content** in all policy fields for use on the Parliament's various external and internal websites.

The Members' Research Service operates in accordance with **detailed rules**, which were adopted by the Parliament's Bureau in June 2014 and can be accessed [here](#).<sup>2</sup> These identify its role in supporting Members individually and collectively, and specify who has the right of access to its services and on what basis.

### *Policy specialism*

A key part of the EPRS design was the creation, through the new Members' Research Service, of a dedicated research capability for individual Members - responding to their requests for research and analysis - and the generation of a much wider and deeper range of in-depth analytical and briefing publications for all Members, across all major policy fields. It follows that these objectives needed to be underpinned by the development and putting in place of a **much higher degree of policy specialism** among staff than was the case in the past.

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<sup>2</sup> [www.eprs.sso.ep.parl.union.eu/eprs/auth/en/members-research-service.html](http://www.eprs.sso.ep.parl.union.eu/eprs/auth/en/members-research-service.html)



The central aim of **building a team of policy specialists** within the Members' Research Service, covering all EU policy areas in detail, has been undertaken over the last three years, both through the reallocation of existing staff and the recruitment of additional staff to, as foreseen by the Bureau and budgetary authority. At the end of 2016, there were 84 policy analysts and 27 information specialists in the Members' Research Service. By comparison, in October 2013, when EPRS was created, the old Library had only 20 colleagues corresponding to what is now a policy-analyst role, most of whom were generalists. As a result of these and other changes, the **volume and quality of output** of the new Members' Research Service has been on a **rapidly rising curve**, as the statistics below illustrate.

A list of the 111 **policy analysts and information specialists** working in the Members' Research Service of EPRS, divided by area of policy responsibility, can be found [here](#).<sup>3</sup>

### *Tailored research for individual Members*

The Members' Research Service has been **responding to an increasingly large number of personal requests for research or analysis from Members or their staff**. All requests are handled on a strictly confidential basis, in accordance with the rules of the Members' Research Service adopted by the Bureau in June 2014.

- There were a total of **8,096 substantive requests from Members or their staff for research or analysis** during the three years in question - 1,660 such requests in 2014; 2,995 in 2015; and 3,441 in 2016 - a figure which rose at an average rate of three per cent per month.
- A further **1,654 requests** for substantive research and analysis were received from **other parliamentary clients**, such as committee secretariats, policy departments and political groups. There were 720 such requests in 2014, 497 in 2015, and 437 in 2016.
- The **length of replies** given was characteristically between one and 30 pages - **five pages on average** - representing a total of some **50,000 pages** of individualised briefing material generated during this period.
- Of the 9,750 total requests for research or analysis received, 8,416 requests were answered by the Members' Research Service alone, and 1,113 with the support of the On-site and Online Library Services Unit, 211 with the support of the Strategy and Coordination Unit, and 10 with the support of the Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value.
- Certain comparative requests received from Members needed to be broken down into a total of **2,787 further sub-requests**, sometimes requiring input from as many as 28 EPRS country experts. If sub-requests are added to the total, as they are in the reporting process of several other parliamentary research services, the total number of requests answered during 2014-16 goes up to 12,537.
- By the end of December 2016, a total of **88 per cent** of **Members or their offices had made requests** for substantive research or analysis to the Members' Research Service

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<sup>3</sup> [www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/Areas\\_of\\_expertise-DirA.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/Areas_of_expertise-DirA.pdf)

since July 2014, and 75 per cent had done so in the previous twelve months. (The corresponding number of Members or their offices making requests in October 2014, soon after the last European elections, was 22 per cent, and by June 2015, it was 66 per cent).

- The requests for research received in 2014-16 concerned **all EU policy areas**, with an emphasis on economic policies (27 per cent) and external policies (23 per cent). Citizens' policies accounted for 19 per cent of requests, structural policies for 15 per cent, and budgetary policies for two per cent. Other requests, mainly of a horizontal or more complex kind, accounted for 14 per cent.
- Around a **56 per cent of the requests** received since January 2014 - which came from **1,044 individuals in 2014, 1,292 in 2015 and 1,431 in 2016** - were **answered on the same or the following day**, and 84 per cent were answered within less than a week.
- The Members' Research Service has also started offering the possibility of **in-person briefing** of Members or their staff on any topic, a service which is being actively developed as part of its client-oriented approach.

### *Publications for all Members*

The Members' Research Service has generated an **increasing number of publications**, all aimed at being clear, accessible and easy to read.

- The Members' Research Service produced a total of **2021 publications** during the 36 months from January 2014 to December 2016. The output rose considerably during this period: there were **384 publications in 2014, 732 in 2015 and 905 in 2016**.
- Of the total 2021 publications, 78 per cent (1568) were available in both printed and digital forms, and 22 per cent (453) were available only online.
- A **clickable PDF list of the Members' Research Service publications** produced between January 2014 and December 2016 can be accessed [here](#).<sup>4</sup>
- All **EPRS publications** can be found on the Parliament's **Think Tank internet website**, at [www.europarl.eu/thinktank](http://www.europarl.eu/thinktank), as well as on the **EPRS intranet** at [www.eprs.sso.ep.parl.union.eu](http://www.eprs.sso.ep.parl.union.eu) and **EPRS blog** at [www.epthinktank.eu](http://www.epthinktank.eu). On-line only publications are available on the EPRS intranet and blog.
- Early on, the presentation of EPRS's **publications** was standardised in an attractive **new format** offered in the following categories, based on length: '**At a glance**' notes, providing a one- to two-page summary of a topic; **Briefings**, offering a more detailed overview of a policy, issue or piece of legislation (up to 12 pages); and **In-depth Analyses** and **Studies**, giving a much more comprehensive and detailed analysis of the same (up to, and more than, 32 pages, respectively).

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<sup>4</sup> [www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/MRS\\_catalogue\\_2014-2016.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/MRS_catalogue_2014-2016.pdf)

- There has also been a strong emphasis on the **enhanced use of info-graphics and statistics** in all EPRS publications, to offer a concentrated visual presentation of useful figures and other information on any subject. A '**Graphics Warehouse**', making available many of the info-graphics used in EPRS publications, was created in May 2014 and is now available on the [EPRS intranet](#),<sup>5</sup> and a parallel '**Statistics Warehouse**' was launched in September 2016, which can be found [here](#).<sup>6</sup>

Throughout the period 2014-16, the Members' Research Service was engaged in the continued development and launch of **new products and services** for Members, both individually and collectively. The development of **coordinated 'series' of publications** has been an important part of that process, and it is being further promoted and refined.

Among the **series of publications so far launched** are:

- (i) *In-depth Analyses* on all major EU policy areas (80 published so far);
- (ii) Briefings on '*EU Legislation in Progress*', which systematically track and analyse the passage of all major legislative proposals, at the successive stages of the law-making process (141 published so far) - a series recently complemented by Briefings on '*International Agreements in Progress*';
- (iii) Briefings on '*How the EU Budget is spent*', analysing specific spending programmes under the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) (23 published so far);
- (iv) Briefings on '*Understanding...*' certain key concepts or issues in EU or international politics, and the debates around them (25 published so far);
- (v) A series of publications on the outlook for the Union early each year, including an annual *Economic and Budgetary Outlook for the European Union* and *Ten Issues to Watch*; and
- (vi) '*Topical Digests*', giving access to selected EPRS publications in various policy areas (30 published so far).

In addition, the Members' Research Service and the Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value have together recently been very actively involved in the development of the Parliament's new online EU '**legislative train schedule**', launched on institution's website in October 2016. To be updated monthly by EPRS, this innovative visual tool uses images of trains, carriages and railway sidings to track the detailed progress - from departure to arrival - of every significant legislative proposal put forward by the current European Commission during its five-year term from 2014 to 2019. So far, the application contains more than 400 carriages, representing around 1,000 pages of analysis.

Efforts have been made to offer Members (and their staff) greater accessibility to publications when they are **outside the EP premises**. As part of this process, an experiment started in mid-2015 with the **podcasting of some EPRS publications**, notably '[plenary podcasts](#)'<sup>7</sup> on major up-coming items of plenary business, '[policy podcasts](#)'<sup>8</sup> on

<sup>5</sup> [www.eprs.sso.ep.parl.union.eu/eprs/auth/en/GWH\\_Graphs.html](http://www.eprs.sso.ep.parl.union.eu/eprs/auth/en/GWH_Graphs.html)

<sup>6</sup> [www.eprs.sso.ep.parl.union.eu/eprs/auth/en/globalstat.html](http://www.eprs.sso.ep.parl.union.eu/eprs/auth/en/globalstat.html)

<sup>7</sup> [www.europarl.europa.eu/rss/podcast/eprs-plenary-podcast/or.xml](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/rss/podcast/eprs-plenary-podcast/or.xml)

<sup>8</sup> [www.europarl.europa.eu/rss/podcast/eprs-policy-podcast/or.xml](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/rss/podcast/eprs-policy-podcast/or.xml)

various longer-term issues, and [science and technology podcasts](#)<sup>9</sup> looking at the potential implications of developments of changes in those fields. By December 2016, a total of 69 podcasts had been made available, all carried on the Parliament's website, EPRS intranet and various social media outlets. A similar experiment is being undertaken with the use of 'animated info-graphics' to better illustrate issues in a user-friendly way.

In return for 60 posts made available to the Members' Research Service under the Parliament's resource-sharing agreements with the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and Committee of the Regions (CoR) of February 2014, the Members' Research Service has begun to deliver targeted research work for **members of the two Advisory Committees**: around 150 such pieces of work were provided in 2015 and 2016, as foreseen in those agreements.

In undertaking all its work, the Members' Research Service **works very closely** not only with the two other directorates within EPRS, but **with other services within the Parliament's administration**. Joint publications, events and/or training sessions have been undertaken with the Directorates General for Internal Policies (IPOL), External Policies (EXPO), Presidency (PRES) and Communication (COMM) during the period in question.

## Work of the Library

The most visible role of Directorate B of DG EPRS, the **Directorate for the Library**, is to operate the Library Reading Rooms in Brussels, Strasbourg and Luxembourg, housing the European Parliament's physical collections, which it acquires and manages. Such a classic library function has existed within the Parliament since 1953. However, today, the Library also provides digital and online access for Members and staff to a very wide range of knowledge sources, including many subscription-based journals, databases, and news and other information sources.

In parallel, the Library Directorate manages and provides access to the Parliament's ever-expanding Historical Archives and it answers a very large number of citizens' enquiries. Until November 2016, it also dealt with public access to parliamentary documents and other transparency issues. A new unit dealing with comparative law was created in September 2015. The Directorate for the Library is currently organised in **four units**.

### *On-site and Online Library Services*

The **On-site and Online Library Services Unit** (LIBS) operates the Library Reading Rooms in Brussels and Strasbourg, and provides physical and online access for Members and staff to some 80,000 books and 20,000 e-books, as well as around 1,000 journals, databases, and news and information sources, whilst also providing training in the use of such sources.

The purpose of locating library services within DG EPRS is to bring it closer to the analytical and research work now undertaken by the directorate-general as a whole, and to realise certain synergies with the new Members' Research Service in particular. Although fewer staff now work in the core library function than before - 31 today, compared with 75 in 2013 - its output has risen in both relative and absolute terms over the last three years.

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<sup>9</sup> [www.europarl.europa.eu/rss/podcast/eprs-stoa-podcast/or.xml](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/rss/podcast/eprs-stoa-podcast/or.xml)

(The majority of the library staff moved over to the new Members' Research Service, where they are now responding to research requests from Members and generating general publications for the Parliament as a whole).

There has been a **steady increase in the use of library services**, witnessed in a growing number of reference requests and greater use of databases, as shown in the statistics below. This has been matched by a more active use of the Library Reading Room as a centre for discussion - hosting an increasing number of EPRS policy roundtables and book launches - as well as intensified training of staff in use of information sources.

- The Library received and responded to an increasing number of **reference requests** (and other comparable requests) from parliamentary clients of various kinds. The figure has risen from **17,391** such requests in 2014, to **20,207** in 2015, and to **22,525** in 2016.
- **1,044 persons** within the parliamentary community made **reference requests** to the EPRS in 2014; **1,292** in 2015; and **1,431** in 2016.
- A total of **4,900 clients** used electronic newswires, news agencies and external databases in 2014, with **5,100** using them in 2015, and **5,200** in 2016.
- The intensity of use of such **online library services** rose considerably during this period: the electronic newswires, news agencies and external databases received almost **137 million hits** in 2014-16: 26.0 million hits in 2014, 37.3 million in 2015, and 73.6 million in 2016.
- **9,500 books were borrowed** from the Library in 2014, **11,000** in 2015, and **11,300** in 2016. A total of 10,000 new books were catalogued in 2014, 9,500 in 2015, and 4,633 in 2016. The number of **e-books available** rose from 2,000 in 2014 to 15,000 in 2016.
- In July 2014, the Library opened a small new [Members' Reading Room](#)<sup>10</sup> on the ground floor of the Altiero Spinelli building, connected to the Astrid Lulling lounge, to complement the existing reading rooms in Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg.
- The provision of **training support** to EP and Members' staff in the use of databases and other information sources has been actively developed. A total of over **3,300 individuals** participated in over **430 training sessions** offered during the period 2014-16.

The **Library Reading Room** and other Library facilities in Brussels have been used much more actively for the holding of **seminars and roundtables** on policy issues, as well as for book launches and other events. The **60 events** held by EPRS between January 2014 and December 2016 - which attracted nearly 4,000 participants - included joint discussions, open to all Members and staff, with partner organisations, such as the European University Institute, EUISS, OECD and IMF, as well as briefing sessions and exchange of best practice with **other parliamentary research services and libraries** in EU member states and worldwide.

Topics covered at EPRS events in the Library Reading Room have included demographic change, global trends, the international economy, economic governance, regional conflicts, security and defence, migration, education, better law-making, budgetary politics, democracy-financing, and European and US elections.

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<sup>10</sup> [www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/AstridLullingReadingRoom.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/AstridLullingReadingRoom.pdf)

The Library Reading Room also served as the setting for **47 events** organised by **individual Members of the European Parliament** during the three years in question.

The Library's online project, '**100 Books on Europe to Remember**', was successfully launched in May 2014, helping to ensure that texts important in the shaping or understanding of post-war European integration are readily available and not forgotten. A summary of each book and biographical details of its author(s) is provided; where possible, access is given to the full text of the book. A major event, involving the President of the Parliament and several living authors, was organised in the Library Reading Room in Brussels in March 2015, whilst an **exhibition of the 100 Books** was held in Strasbourg in October 2016, organised by the Historical Library.

The Library will continue its evolution in supporting the other directorates within DG EPRS in their research and analytical work, in parallel to its existing comprehensive provision of physical and digital collections, news sources and databases for a wide parliamentary clientele. The process of offering **training for Members and their offices** is being further developed, reflecting the wider and deeper range of EPRS products and services now available. By December 2016, staff from 370 Members' offices had attended info-sessions of various kinds.

Continuous efforts are being made to provide Members and staff with easier access to a wide span of **state-of-the-art digital reference materials** to the parliamentary community. The EPRS intranet site already provides Members and EP staff with access to around 100 digital subscriptions, notably to European and national news services (such as Agence Europe, AFP, DPA, Reuters and Financial Times) and databases and other information and research tools (such as Factiva, Nexis and Oxford Analytica). This is in addition to over 700 physical subscriptions to newspapers, magazines, journals and yearbooks. More e-books are being purchased each year - the number of e-books available has risen from around 1,000 in 2014 to more than 20,000 in January 2017. The objective is to move towards a **fully digitally accessible** library in coming years.

### *Comparative Law Library*

During the years 2014-16, increasing emphasis has been placed on the improved **presentation and accessibility** of library material generally, with particular attention to strengthening capacity in the field of comparative law, an area of special interest to a supranational legislature. Reflecting this, a small **Comparative Law Library Unit** (COLL) was created in September 2015, to serve as a centre of knowledge and expertise for the Parliament on the law of the European Union, its member states and comparable democratic jurisdictions internationally.

The unit is responsible for building up and maintaining an extensive **reference collection** of legislation, case law and legal doctrine, as well as engaging in **research and analysis** in the field of comparative law. The unit hosted a major **conference** on the role of constitutional courts in multi-level governance in the Library Reading Room in November 2016. In parallel, the unit published seven studies on the constitutional courts of different EU and non-EU states and on the Court of Justice of the European Union.

## *Historical Archives*

The **Historical Archives Unit** (ARCH), based in Luxembourg, manages and preserves the Parliament's official public documents and other archival material dating back to 1952 and running to almost **five million items**. It assists researchers on the history of the Parliament and European integration, and publishes historical studies based on the archives. It works closely with the EU Historical Archives and the new Alcide de Gasperi Centre for the History of European Integration at the European University Institute (EUI) in promoting the use of the Parliament's archives and study of its history as an institution. The unit also manages the Historical Library Reading Room in Luxembourg.

In 2014, the Historical Archives Unit processed over **80,000 electronic files** and almost 600 linear meters of paper files, whilst also responding to nearly 700 individual requests for historic documents and other information, supplying 7,800 such documents. The exceptionally high number of files treated resulted mainly from the deposition of a very large number of documents, including 55,000 audio-tapes, by parliamentary committees at the end of the last five-year term.

In 2015, the unit processed over **75,000 electronic files**, and processed over 350 linear meters of paper files. 206 linear meters were organised and transferred to the Historical Archives of the European Union. The Unit answered more than 650 individual requests for historic documents and other information, supplying over 6,500 such documents.

In 2016, the unit processed **85,000 electronic files** and digitised over 17,000 audio-tapes. Some 200 linear meters were organised and transferred to the Historical Archives of the European Union. The unit answered more than 750 individual requests for historic documents and other information, supplying nearly 6,300 such documents.

The Historical Archives welcome deposition of the **papers of individual Members** of the European Parliament, past and present, and since the creation of EPRS there has been a much more active effort to seek to secure such papers as an important component of the history of the institution. During the years 2014-16, it received papers from 12 current or former Members and is in the process of archiving them and making them available to the public in accordance with rules defined by the Bureau.

Since 2014, the Historical Archives have also systematised their publications into two series - the **European Parliament History Series** and the **European Union History Series** - with greater emphasis on issues of continuing political interest. In the three years 2014-16, the unit published six studies - including the first two volumes of a major study on the history of the budgetary powers of the Parliament and a study on the history of the common electoral system and the 1976 European Elections Act - as well as ten articles, 21 blog posts, six briefings, and four catalogues relating to the Historical Library collection. The unit is now working on a history of the first two directly-elected Parliaments, from 1979 to 1989. The Historical Archives also organises **exhibitions** around anniversaries and other important occasions. During the period 2014-16, for example, exhibitions were held on Altiero Spinelli, Emilio Colombo, the Sakharov Prize, successive European election campaigns, the EP in Luxembourg, the history of the ACP and the Development Committee, and the '100 Books on Europe to Remember' project.

In parallel, **round-table discussions**, involving authors and historical experts, were held on 25 years of democratic change in Central and Eastern Europe, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the development of a common European electoral system since 1976, Parliament's first hemicycle in Luxembourg, and early forms of European cooperation.

Continued efforts are being made to **mainstream the Historical Archives** more actively in the daily life of the Parliament, based on easier online access to documents and their use to provide a more systematic history of the institutional development of the Parliament over time. A [new website for the Historical Archives](#)<sup>11</sup> came online in March 2015, and a new intranet site with useful information and practical advice for Members and staff became operational in September 2015. A multi-annual project to **digitise the Parliament's archives** is now firmly under way, in attempt to make the Parliament's papers since 1952 the most easily accessible of those of any EU institution.

The **annual reports** of the Parliament's Historical Archives for 2014 and 2015 provide a detailed account of their activities over those two years, and can be found [here](#).<sup>12</sup> The annual report of the Historical Archives for 2016 will follow shortly.

### *Citizens' enquiries*

The **Citizens' Enquiries Unit** (AskEP), also based in Luxembourg, answers information requests from members of the general public on the Parliament and EU issues more widely. The 2014-19 Parliament has witnessed a **significant increase in the volume of requests**, mainly as a result of seemingly coordinated 'write-in' campaigns on topical issues. As a matter of course, the unit replies to correspondence in the official language in which the citizen has sent their letter or email.

In 2014, the unit received **over 8,000 individual letters or emails** from members of the public, and **2,500 enquiries as part of organised campaigns**. In 2015, these figures rose respectively to **9,700 individual enquiries** and **68,000 'campaign' enquiries**, with the volume broadly stabilising at **9,000** and **83,000** respectively in 2016.

On average, over the three-year period, 45 per cent of citizens' enquiries related to aspects of internal policy, 30 per cent to institutional matters, 12 per cent to external issues, and 13 per cent to other questions. Forty per cent of such enquiries were answered within three days and 80 per cent within ten days.

In parallel, intensive efforts have been made to promote **greater diffusion and use** of the work of the Citizens' Enquiries Unit within the Parliament itself. Since May 2015, the unit has been making available '**model answers**' for Members (and their staff) on the [EPRS intranet](#),<sup>13</sup> in order to facilitate MEPs' written communication with constituents and others. Currently, around 150 such replies are available, covering a wide range of issues, and they have been consulted by over 200 Members or their offices so far.

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<sup>11</sup> [www.europarl.europa.eu/historicalarchives/en/home/home.html](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/historicalarchives/en/home/home.html)

<sup>12</sup> [www.europarl.europa.eu/historicalarchives/en/publications/other-publications.html](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/historicalarchives/en/publications/other-publications.html)

<sup>13</sup> [www.askepnet.ep.parl.union.eu/modans/](http://www.askepnet.ep.parl.union.eu/modans/)



A range of publicly-available '**EP answers**' to frequently asked questions - with around 50 topics currently covered - is available on a specially developed platform, called AskEP.net, on the [Parliament's website](#)<sup>14</sup> and on the EPRS [blog](#).<sup>15</sup>

## *Transparency*

In addition to the four units within the Directorate for the Library described above, a fifth unit, the **Transparency Unit** was located within the directorate until November 2016, when - as part of an internal reorganisation within the Parliament's administration - it was transferred to DG Presidency.

The Transparency Unit manages public access to EP documents, over 90 per cent of which can be downloaded from the Parliament's website. As in the field of citizens' enquiries, their objective is to improve the Parliament's interaction with citizens through rapid response to requests and easy access to material wherever legitimate. The unit handled over **1,350 requests for documents** in the period in question: 400 in 2014, 450 in 2015, and 500 in 2016. It also produced a new **handbook on access to documents** for general use by the Parliament's administration.

The Transparency Unit also manages (jointly with the European Commission) the **Transparency Register** of representatives of outside interests (lobbyists). There was a strong increase in the number of registrations during the period January 2014 to December 2016 - almost doubling from 6,055 to 10,555 - with compliance checks on newly-registered entities being conducted on a regular basis. The unit also took on new responsibilities as a result of the updating of the EP-Commission agreement on the Transparency Register in 2014.

The Parliament's Transparency Unit produces **annual reports** in respect of both access to documents and the Transparency Register. The 2014 and 2015 reports are available [here](#).<sup>16</sup> The 2016 report will be produced by DG Presidency later this year.

## Work on Impact Assessment and European Added Value

The third directorate within EPRS, Directorate C, the **Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value**, works to strengthen the European Parliament's capacity to exercise effective **scrutiny and oversight** over the executive at EU level, at successive stages of the legislative and policy cycles, as well as contributing to the quality of law-making itself. It does this by providing timely and targeted support to **parliamentary committees** in their work in these fields, including by supporting the identification, quantification and justification of parliamentary initiatives. The directorate works very closely with the Directorates-General for Internal Policies (IPOL) and External Policies (EXPO) for this purpose and more widely.

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<sup>14</sup> [www.europarl.europa.eu/atyourservice/en/20150201PVL00027/Citizens-enquiries](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/atyourservice/en/20150201PVL00027/Citizens-enquiries)

<sup>15</sup> <https://epthinktank.eu/category/blog/ep-answers>

<sup>16</sup> [www.europarl.europa.eu/atyourservice/en/20150201PVL00050/Transparency](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/atyourservice/en/20150201PVL00050/Transparency)

The Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value is organised in **six units** dealing with various aspects of *ex-ante* or *ex-post* evaluation of EU legislation and policies - as well as undertaking foresight work, whether in the fields of science and technology or wider global trends.

- Over the three-year period from January 2014 to December 2016, the Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value produced **319 publications** of various kinds (69 in 2014; 106 in 2015 and 144 in 2016). Work was undertaken at the request of **17 parliamentary committees** (out of 20), with findings presented orally in full committee or to coordinators on 41 occasions.

The increasingly high priority attached to the involvement of the Parliament throughout the **legislative and policy cycles** and to enhanced **scrutiny and oversight of the executive** are being reflected in a general strengthening of support to parliamentary committees (and the institution as a whole) through the services of the Directorate. Existing work in the fields of impact assessment and European added value is being further developed, so that committees are better placed to analyse legislative options available to the EU institutions, on an *ex-ante* basis, and to review outcomes on the part of those institutions, on an *ex-post* basis.

### *Ex-ante evaluation*

The **European Added Value Unit (EAVA)** analyses the potential benefit of future action by the European Union through *Cost of Non-Europe Reports* in policy areas where greater efficiency or a collective public good could be realised through common action at European level; it provides *European Added Value Assessments* to underpin legislative initiative reports put forward by parliamentary committees; and it seeks to identify and evaluate the added value of existing EU policies in practice.

- In 2014, the European Added Value Unit produced four *Cost of Non-Europe Reports* and four other publications. Among topics covered were five sectoral dimensions of the EU single market, as well as transport and tourism.
- In 2015, the unit produced four *Cost of Non-Europe Reports* - which were on water legislation, volunteering, passenger rights and Banking Union - and two *European Added Value Assessments* - on EP electoral law and corporate tax policies in the EU.
- In 2016, the unit produced seven *Cost of Non-Europe Reports* - on various aspects of Schengen, as well as the single market, the European Research Area, Banking Union, an integrated European research area, organised crime and corruption, and the sharing economy (amounting to almost 1,200 pages) - as well as five *European Added Value Assessments*, which were on an EU mechanism for the rule and law and fundamental rights, cross-border recognition of adoptions, protection of vulnerable adults, limitation periods for traffic accidents, and the coordination of corporate tax policies in the EU (comprising altogether some 1,000 pages).
- During the period in question, work was undertaken by the European Added Value Unit for **ten parliamentary committees**: the Employment and Social Affairs Committee; the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee; the Economic and Monetary

Affairs Committee; the Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee; the Constitutional Affairs Committee; the Culture and Education Committee; the Transport and Tourism Committee; the Legal Affairs Committee; the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs; and the Industry, Research and Energy Committee.

The substantial work undertaken by the unit between 2012 and 2014, before the last European elections, in identifying the potential added value of new EU-level initiatives and on the cost of non-Europe in various sectors was brought together in a **major horizontal publication**, entitled *Mapping the Cost of Non-Europe, 2014-19*,<sup>17</sup> which has attracted substantial positive attention in media, academic and policy-making circles, over three editions.

This 'mapping' exercise proved valuable in the run-up to the European elections in May 2014, in the discussion about **future priorities for the in-coming European Commission**, and in assisting committees to extract concrete policy commitments during the hearings of Commissioners-designate that autumn. It was most recently updated in April 2015 and a further edition, taking account of latest research for committees and in academic and think-tank circles, is due for publication in summer 2017.

The **Ex-Ante Impact Assessment Unit** (IMPA) analyses the quality of impact assessments (IAs) produced by the European Commission - in the form of *Initial Appraisals* of these documents, which are routinely supplied to parliamentary committees in advance of their consideration of new legislative proposals - and it then offers the committees a range of follow-up services, including more detailed appraisals of Commission IAs, substitute or complementary IAs, and IAs on parliamentary amendments.

- In 2014, the Ex-Ante Impact Assessment Unit produced 31 *Initial Appraisals* of Commission impact assessments, two detailed appraisals, three substitute or complementary impact assessments, and one impact assessment on amendments. In 2015, the unit produced 13 *Initial Appraisals* and one impact assessment on four amendments. In 2016, the Unit produced 36 *Initial Appraisals* and one impact assessment on amendments.
- Compendia of all *Initial Appraisals* carried out over the period in question - from [July 2013 to June 2014](#),<sup>18</sup> from [July 2014 to December 2015](#),<sup>19</sup> and from [January to December 2016](#)<sup>20</sup> - are available online.
- Work was undertaken by the Ex-Ante Impact Assessment Unit for the following **13 parliamentary committees**: the Foreign Affairs Committee; International Trade Committee; the Industry, Research and Energy Committee; the Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee; the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee; the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee; the Employment and Social Affairs Committee; the Fisheries Committee; the Legal Affairs Committee; the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs; and the Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee.

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<sup>17</sup> [www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS\\_STU\(2015\)536364](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_STU(2015)536364)

<sup>18</sup> [www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/IMPA\\_APIN\\_COMPENDIUM\\_%20July2013-June2014.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/IMPA_APIN_COMPENDIUM_%20July2013-June2014.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> [www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/IMPA\\_APIN\\_Compndium\\_July2014-December2015.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/IMPA_APIN_Compndium_July2014-December2015.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> [www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/IMPA\\_APIN\\_Compndium\\_2016.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/IMPA_APIN_Compndium_2016.pdf)

- Among **topics covered** were the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), novel foods, air quality, equal treatment, consumer product safety, money market funds, waste management, aviation strategy, capital markets union and European criminal records.

### *Ex-post evaluation*

EPRS support to parliamentary committees in the field of **ex-post evaluation** has, since July 2014, been given by two interlocking units, the Ex-Post Impact Assessment Unit (IMPT) and Policy Cycle Unit (CYCL), which jointly provide a central information and support service on: (i) work being done by the European Parliament, European Commission and other bodies on the implementation and effectiveness of EU law and policies in practice; and (ii) the successive phases of the EU policy cycle, upstream and downstream of the adoption of EU law.

This work has strengthened and deepened the practical capacity of the Parliament to engage in ex-post evaluation through the provision of important **new products** to committees. These include short *Implementation Appraisals*, longer *European Implementation Assessments*, and horizontal ‘rolling check-lists’ of various kinds. As a result of this successful work, the two units will be amalgamated shortly into a single the **Ex-Post Evaluation Unit** (EVAL).

*Implementation Appraisals* are produced pro-actively and offer a synthetic analysis how existing EU legislation is operating in practice, notably whenever a new proposal to update such a measure is foreseen in the Commission’s Annual Work Programme. They thus help parliamentary committees prepare for their detailed consideration of in-coming draft legislation. *European Implementation Assessments* are produced each time a committee decides to undertake an Implementation Report on an existing EU policy or law, and provide a detailed critique of experience to date. The various ‘rolling check-lists’ provide key reference material, in easily accessible form, to assist parliamentary committees in deciding what type of scrutiny of the Commission to engage in, and when and how best to undertake it. So far check-lists, often running to several hundreds of pages, have been produced on review clauses in EU legislation and international agreements, on evaluation work being undertaken by the Commission, on Commission follow-up to Parliament’s requests, and on the special reports of the European Court of Auditors.

- From July 2014, when they became operational, to December 2015, the two units produced 20 *European Implementation Assessments*, 50 *Implementation Appraisals*, and 20 other publications (including ten rolling check-lists).
- The 20 *European Implementation Assessments* were undertaken for the following **nine parliamentary committees**: the Employment and Social Affairs Committee, the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, the Legal Affairs Committee, the Committee on Women’s rights and Gender Equality, the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, the Environment Committee, the Public Health and Food Safety Committee, the Culture and Education Committee, the Constitutional Affairs Committee and the Petitions Committee.

- Among the **topics covered** were employment equality, the rights of persons with disabilities, the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, energy efficiency, trafficking of human beings, food contact materials, the Creative Europe programme, the Erasmus Plus programme, the copyright framework, parental leave, the European Citizens' Initiative, the European Year for Active Ageing, micro-financing, and equal opportunities and equal treatment.

The **European Council Oversight Unit** (ECOS) monitors and analyses the delivery of the European Council (of EU heads of state or government) in respect of the commitments made in the conclusions of its summit meetings, as well as of its various responsibilities either in law or on the basis of intergovernmental agreements. The unit maintains a rolling database of all such commitments (and their follow-up), provides routine briefing notes on their degree of attainment within the Council system, and undertakes detailed research into the operation of the institution. Among its products are rolling-check lists of the delivery of [European Council conclusions](#) and [country-specific recommendations](#) (CSRs), as well as routine briefing notes issued before and after each European Council meeting.

From July 2014, when it became operational, to December 2016, the European Council Oversight Unit produced **64 publications** of various kinds. It also held a series of seminars on the operation of the European Council - for example, on the European Council and crisis management and on the European Council and Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) - including a discussion with the out-going President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, assessing his experience in office during its first five years a formal EU institution.

### *Foresight*

The **Scientific Foresight Unit** (STOA) undertakes **science and technology options assessment** and analyses emerging policy issues and trends in these fields. It undertakes a broad range of forward-looking studies, workshops and other activities, at the request of the **Science and Technology Options Assessment (STOA) Panel** of 25 Members of the European Parliament, nominated by nine parliamentary committees, and it provides the secretariat of the latter body. In 2014, the in-coming STOA Panel endorsed a 'STOA strategy for the future', calling notably for the work and output of the STOA process, backed by greater in-house research, to focus more on issues related to scientific foresight, operate through somewhat shorter projects, and be made more widely available than in the past, throughout the 2014-19 Parliament.

The Scientific Foresight Unit produced a total of **37 publications** in the three years from 2014 to 2016 - nine publications in 2014, 18 in 2015 and 10 in 2016. These can all be found on a [clickable PDF list](#)<sup>21</sup> or on the dedicated [STOA website](#).<sup>22</sup>

Among the topics covered in **major research projects** so far undertaken and/or managed by the unit for the STOA Panel since 2014 have been the ethics of robotics, ICT in the developing world, the collaborative economy, precision agriculture, organic food, learning and teaching technologies, and mass surveillance. In parallel, a new series of shorter publications on the policy implications of technological change - such as 'What if your

<sup>21</sup> [www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/Catalogue\\_DirC\\_publications\\_2014-16.pdf#page=10](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/Catalogue_DirC_publications_2014-16.pdf#page=10)

<sup>22</sup> [www.europarl.europa.eu/stoa/](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/stoa/)

shopping were delivered by drones?', 'What if others could read your mind?' or 'What if I had to put my safety in the hands of a robot?' - has broken new ground and proved popular.

The unit also organised **40 STOA events** in 2014-16, attracting a total of almost 5,000 participants. (These are in addition to the 60 EPRS-wide events referred to earlier in this report). Among them have been three highly-successful '**STOA annual lectures**' with leading international scientists on issues. Since 2014, the popular '**MEP-Scientist pairing scheme**' has brought together 47 Members and 47 scientists to exchange views and experience, and build closer links between the worlds of academia and public policy.

The STOA **annual reports** for 2014 and 2015 are available [here](#),<sup>23</sup> with the 2016 STOA annual report to follow shortly.

Finally, a **Global Trends Unit** (TREN), established in April 2015, seeks to identify, track and analyse medium- and long- term global trends - especially changes in the international economic, social and political environments - which may affect the European Union in the years to come. It keeps Members informed about such trends and their potential policy implications, by publishing briefings and organising seminars. These publications include a new *Global Trendometer*,<sup>24</sup> to be produced at least twice a year, which analyses changes of potential importance to the Union.

The unit also supports the Parliament's participation in the administrative-level dialogue with other EU institutions on global trends - known as **ESPAS** (European Strategy and Policy Analysis System) - and facilitates contact more widely with outside organisations, notably think tanks and universities, working in this field. Each autumn, the unit co-organises - together with the European Political Strategy Centre (EPSC), the in-house think tank of the European Commission - the annual ESPAS conference. The current cycle of three ESPAS conferences is focussed on global trends to 2030.

The two **activity reports for EP work in the fields of Impact Assessment and European Added Value** covering the period in question are available online - for [June 2012 to June 2014](#)<sup>25</sup> and [July 2014 to December 2015](#).<sup>26</sup> The annual report for 2016 will follow shortly. A clickable **PDF list of all publications of the Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value** from January 2014 to December 2016 is available [here](#).<sup>27</sup>

All such physical publications can be found on the Parliament's **Think Tank internet** website, at [www.europarl.eu/thinktank](http://www.europarl.eu/thinktank), as well as on the **EPRS intranet** website at [www.eprs.sso.ep.parl.union.eu](http://www.eprs.sso.ep.parl.union.eu) and **EPRS blog** at [www.epthinktank.eu](http://www.epthinktank.eu). On-line only publications are available on the EPRS intranet and blog.

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<sup>23</sup> [www.europarl.europa.eu/stoa/cms/home/studies/reports](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/stoa/cms/home/studies/reports)

<sup>24</sup> [www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/573301/EPRS\\_STU\(2016\)573301\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/573301/EPRS_STU(2016)573301_EN.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> [www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/IA and EAV-Activity Report 2012-14-final.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/IA and EAV-Activity Report 2012-14-final.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> [www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/IA-EAV-Activity Report-July 2014-December 2015.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/IA-EAV-Activity Report-July 2014-December 2015.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> [www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/Catalogue\\_DirC\\_publications\\_2014-16.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/Catalogue_DirC_publications_2014-16.pdf)

## EPRS-wide services

The development of a series of **cross-cutting EPRS-wide** services has played an important part in the successful launch and operation of the new Directorate-General since November 2013. These include notably the:

- provision of a **Members' Hotline** to give all Members and their staff rapid access to all relevant EPRS products and services;
- pursuit of a conscious '**client needs**' approach to all the activities undertaken by EPRS, underpinned by a dedicated team at the centre of the organisation; and
- widening and deepening of the EPRS presence on various **electronic platforms**.

### *Members' Hotline*

A new **Members' Hotline** was established immediately on the creation of EPRS, to provide a single point-of-entry for all Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and their staff to the products and services of both the Members' Research Service and the Library.

The Members' Hotline operates *online*, through the EPRS intranet site - where there is an [online enquiry form](#) - and an email address for enquiries - [eprs@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:eprs@europarl.europa.eu); *by telephone*, on EP internal extension number **88100** and on 00 322 284 8100 from outside the Parliament; *in person*, at the information desks in the Library reading rooms; and *by fax*, on EP extension 44990. The aim is to provide an initial response to all enquiries within three hours.

To underpin the Members' Hotline concept, the EPRS has strengthened its internal **enquiry management system** (EMS), to allow a better and quicker treatment of the requests submitted by Members and their staff. On-going comparative analysis is undertaken of the operation of such enquiry management systems in all major parliamentary research services and libraries worldwide, in order to import new, state-of-the-art features into the Parliament's own system.

### *Client needs*

The developing breadth, depth and **availability of EPRS services** have been drawn actively to the attention of Members. At the beginning of the new parliamentary term, a 'welcome desk' and a personalised **welcome pack** facilitated this process.

In parallel, small, dedicated **Client Needs Team** was established, on a permanent basis, to **increase knowledge of EPRS products and services** among Members and their staff, presenting the support to potential clients individually and in groups, through **briefing visits or presentations of various kinds**.

Between June 2014 and December 2016, nearly **650 Members or their offices** (or 86 per cent) received **briefing visits or presentations** (on an individual or collective basis) about EPRS products and services. Over 320 Members or their offices (44 per cent) have received such briefing in the last 12 months.

By the end of December 2016, over **200 Members or their offices** (some 27 per cent) were subscribing to **automatic alerts on new EPRS publications**, as soon as they are published, and over **730 Members** (97 per cent) were pro-actively accessing sources available on the EPRS intranet, including newswires and other topical material. Guidance on how to set-up alerts on EPRS publications is given [here](#).<sup>28</sup>

The Client Needs Team has also ensured the distribution of 28,700 relevant EPRS publications at over 300 parliamentary meetings of various kinds, notably hearings, conferences, seminars and debates organised by EP bodies, individual Members and/or political groups. At some of these events, EPRS policy analysts were invited to present their papers in the discussion.

### *Electronic presence*

The **availability of EPRS products** has been enhanced by a significant improvement in both intranet and internet capabilities, and the Directorate-General is experimenting with services for mobile use and multi-media communication, and is increasing the targeted diffusion of EPRS output through **social media**.

#### **= Use of the EPRS intranet site**

- A **new EPRS intranet site**, incorporating a range of new or enhanced features, was launched in May 2014.
- The great majority of the 'Europarl' community uses the EPRS intranet at some point in the year. There was an average of **9,211 unique users** of the EPRS intranet, in each of the three years 2014 to 2016, with some 2,375 using it in an average month.
- The 2014 figure for unique users includes **684 Members** (old and new) personally using the EPRS intranet at some point in the year (before or after the European elections), and over 1,500 parliamentary assistants doing so. For 2015, they were **497 MEPs** and over 1,400 assistants. For 2016, they were **425 MEPs** and over 1,500 assistants.
- Some **98 per cent** of Members or their staff pro-actively accessed EPRS material or sources on the Parliament's intranet during the three years in question.
- Overall, the EPRS intranet site elicited over **1.3 million 'page views'** in 2014, **1.85 million page views** in 2015 and **1.6 million page views** in 2016.
- The various EPRS electronic platforms carried a total of **541 publications** in 2014 - 303 of which were available in both physical and digital forms, and 238 on-line only. The figures for 2015 were **970 publications**, 702 of which were available in both physical and digital forms, and 268 on-line only. The figures for 2016 were **1,169 publications**, 901 of which were available in both physical and digital forms, and 268 on-line only. The EPRS thus produced over **2,600 publications** during the three years in question.

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<sup>28</sup> [www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/Alerts\\_blog\\_TT\\_intranet-A4.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/Alerts_blog_TT_intranet-A4.pdf)



- A new **Graphics Warehouse** was created on the EPRS intranet site and on the EPRS blog, in order to make the (so far) **1,006 downloadable charts, tables, maps and other info-graphics** used in EPRS publications more easily available for use by Members and staff in their own publications.

#### **= Use of the EP 'Think Tank' internet site and EPRS blog**

- The Parliament's updated **internet site** for the public came on stream in August 2014: coordinated by the EPRS and known as '**Think Tank**', it features *inter alia* all EPRS publications. In the last four months of 2014, it registered a total 150,600 page views (or an average of 37,600 per month), with a total of 65,300 visitors. In 2015, the Think Tank elicited over 600,000 page views (or an average of 50,000 per month), reaching a total of 235,000 visitors. The comparable figures for 2016 were **873,000 page views** (or an average of 72,750 per month), reaching a total of **325,955 visitors**.
- In addition, some 250,000 users visited the **EPRS blog** during 2014. The latter published more than 500 posts, receiving some 550,000 page views, during 2014. In 2015, the respective figures were 370,000 unique users, 470 posts and 750,000 page views. In 2016, the respective figures were **330,000 users**, **509 posts** and **660,000 page views**. One linked set of publications by the Members' Research Service - on the Hearings of the Commissioners-designate - was viewed **125,000** times in autumn 2014.
- EPRS is also present on **social media**. Its LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube and Pinterest accounts elicit increasing interest. For instance, followers of EPRS on Twitter have risen from 2,000 in January 2014 to nearly 16,000, including 211 MEPs, in December 2016. The EPRS' page on YouTube offers podcasts, videos of selected EPRS events, and video presentations of certain publications. Some **310 Members** so far have used EPRS material in their social media communications.

All the **publications of the Members' Research Service** can be found on the Parliament's **Think Tank** internet website, at [www.europarl.eu/thinktank](http://www.europarl.eu/thinktank), as well as on the **EPRS intranet** at [www.eprs.sso.ep.parl.union.eu](http://www.eprs.sso.ep.parl.union.eu) and on the **EPRS blog** at [www.eptthinktank.eu](http://www.eptthinktank.eu). On-line only publications are available on the EPRS intranet and blog.

#### *Horizontal support - Resources, Strategy and Coordination*

The provision of these EPRS-wide services - and indeed of all the activities of the three directorates detailed above - has been underpinned by the contribution of **two horizontal units**, respectively for resources, and for strategy and coordination.

The **Resources Unit** (RESU) is responsible for the efficient management of the Directorate-General's **human, financial and information-technology resources**, with three services reflecting each of those activities. The unit is also in charge of local property management and security issues. It works very closely with other directorates-general within the Parliament's administration on a wide range of issues, including on joint training projects.

The Resources Unit successfully undertook the **recruitment of new staff** throughout the three years in question. The number of staff within the directorate-general rose from 214

persons (on its creation) in November 2013 to 327 persons in December 2015, mainly as a result of the cooperation agreements signed between the Parliament and the two Advisory Committees in February 2014 (see above), whereby 60 of the latter's staff (or posts) have been transferred to EPRS, and the recruitment of 40 contractual researchers through an open competition, following a reallocation of internal EP spending priorities by the budgetary authority. These changes were achieved in a budgetarily neutral way for the Parliament.

The Resources Unit has also ensured the harmonisation of **procurement and financial procedures** across the new directorate-general, with a focus on securing optimal value for money. The team verified a total of 2,965 files (from units managing the budget) in the three years under consideration.

Efficient financial management has been facilitated by the fact that, starting in 2015, much of the **budgetary allocation** for the directorate-general was regrouped, for sake of clarity, into a single line in the European Parliament's annual budget (line 3210). On a like-for-like basis, the total budget assigned to the DG EPRS on various lines was € 9.03 million in 2014, € 9.28 million in 2015, and **€ 9.0 million** in 2016.

DG EPRS essentially undertakes **two distinct types of spending**. The first relates to the purchase of general library services, subscriptions, databases, and archival support of various kinds, as well as information technology (IT) support for the whole directorate-general - this amounted to € 6.3 million in 2016, or 70 per cent of the total EPRS budget of € 9.0 million. The second relates to the purchase, where necessary, of externally-commissioned research - notably in the fields of ex-ante impact assessment, ex-post evaluation, European added value, and science and technology options assessment - and any cooperation with partner organisations: this amounted to € 2.7 million in 2016, or 30 per cent of the total € 9.0 million budget.

The **Strategy and Coordination Unit** (SACU) coordinates the overall provision of EPRS services to Members, including through the central Members' Hotline and Client Needs Team. It communicates the directorate-general's activities to internal and external audiences, including by coordinating the EPRS intranet and blog, and the Parliament's Think Tank internet web-pages.

The unit oversees outreach, liaison and dialogue by all parts of the Directorate-General with **national parliamentary research services and libraries**. In 2015 and 2016, there were 44 visits to or from such services of national parliaments, including the German Bundestag, British House of Commons, Italian Senate, French Senate, Dutch House of Representatives and Hungarian National Assembly. There were also visits from the US Congressional Research Service (CRS) and the parliaments of Cambodia, Canada, Japan, Moldova, Myanmar, Pakistan, South Korea and the Pan-African Parliament.

The unit also facilitates relations with relevant **think tanks, universities, research departments of international organisations**, and other relevant bodies and networks, such as the European University Institute, OECD, IMF and EUISS, with whom joint conferences, roundtables or other events have been organised.

EPRS has taken very seriously its commitment to eco-friendly administration, contributing more than proportionately to the attainment of the **environmental goals** set down in the

multi-annual **EMAS objectives** agreed for the Parliament's administration as a whole. This is witnessed in DG EPRS' much lower than average CO2 consumption per capita on staff missions and its pioneering introduction of network printers in its offices, with a consequent fall in use of administrative paper.

Overall, during its first three full years of operation, from 2014 to 2016, DG EPRS has developed an increasingly sophisticated range of products and services designed to support the European Parliament, as the only directly-elected institution within the EU system, in fulfilling its key legislative and oversight roles on behalf of the citizen. The new directorate-general has already made substantial progress, witnessed in the depth, breadth, quality and use of EPRS products and services, described in detail in this report.

Aspiring to reach the highest global standards as a parliamentary research service and in-house think tank - for Members, committees and the institution a whole - EPRS will continue to seek ways to underpin and enhance the work of the Parliament, helping to empower it through knowledge as an effective and influential EU institution, during the second half of the 2014-19 parliamentary term.

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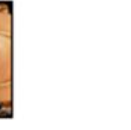
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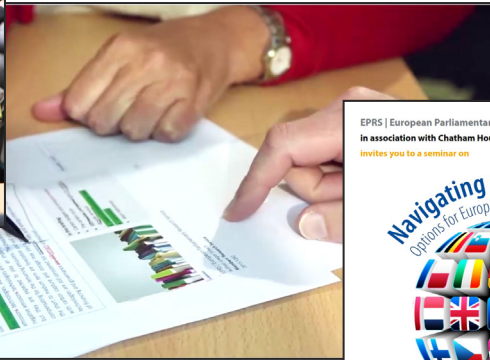
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Publication type: At a Glance | Policy area: Budget | Budgetary Control | Author: Gianluca SQUEO

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 Workshop | EPRS | 10:00-11:00

**15-09-2015**  
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