

The
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EU Annual Reports: Overlooked Insights into Brussels

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Introduction

Every department and executive agency of the European Commission publishes an annual activity report (AAR) which is available online for wider public access. You just need to know the entity publishes a report first – which, thanks to a targeted FoI request followed on by a chase up question to the relevant Commission office, we do.

The AAR “details achievements, initiatives taken and the financial and human resources spent during the year”, as the Commission puts it. For Brussels-watchers on the outside, however, they also provide a rare glimpse of the inner workings of the system.

The documents rarely act as a direct indicator of problems or internal crises, as the texts are written up to portray a Directorate General (DG) or institution working successfully or dealing with minor blips: it generally falls to the auditors to draw out the issues. Nevertheless, for the very patient observer, what occasionally emerges are very disparate fragments of scattered and often unexpected operational detail.

Reviewing the Bodies

Owing to the scale of the task, we have picked out a selection of reports amounting to around 2,000 pages of documentation from the larger total. These cover DGs and their “entrusted entities”, but also separate arms-length bodies. Below, we go through each entity individually and draw out items of interest from the latest available published reports, from 2017. The reports for 2018 are overdue at the time of writing.

Budgets are in Euros unless otherwise stated. Details are obviously correct as at the time of their publication in 2017.

Office for Infrastructure and Logistics in Brussels. This has an administrative portfolio of 65 buildings [so properly, the UK should be swiping half a dozen on Brexit]. This includes a new warehouse in Neder-Over-Hembeek, a Brussels suburb; and a new conference centre replacing the Albert Borschette conference centre (CCAB) in the extended European Quarter. There’s a target of 12 m² net office surface available per workstation.

From the wording of some of the text they appear to include rather arty/pretentious types: “In the new office arrangements, OIB gradually introduces modern collaborative working spaces equipped with new ergonomic furniture, modern colour designs and alternative solutions for social areas and conference spaces. Introducing a project of collaborative space is accompanied by a staff consultation and a set of measures aimed at ensuring staff buy-in. A new Space Design Team was also created in OIB in January and February 2017 to assist DGs with moves and space reorganisation. While the organisation of structural moves has gone smoothly, difficulties have been encountered

with the organisation of punctual moves; an analysis of the workflows is ongoing in order to improve the situation in 2018. OIB has produced a report on the state of the Synergies and Efficiencies – logistic exercise 6 months after its roll-out which was orally presented to the resources directors.” (p12)

The least popular EU buildings for staff are Montoyer 15 (MO15), Josef II 54 (J-54), and Josef II 27 (J-27) (p13). Temperature and noise are the biggest Eurocrat gripes (p15), along with a shortage of office showers.

14 people have been recruited for a new "space design team" in charge of improving the efficiency of the office space design (p20).

10,300 of the target 12,500 swivel office chairs had already been replaced with ergonomic ones – cost unknown.

43,169 items had been written off the inventory – it’s not clear why but it is considered a success as a big increase on the previous year. A new tracking system is being put in place and this now covers 400,000 goods, presumably items of value that might be swiped (p21).

In May 2017 a bike-to-work challenge called "VéloMai" was organised by DG HR and OIB (with the support of DG MOVE, EASME and EUCG). Colleagues across the Commission challenged each other for the highest number of bicycle rides. This initiative is part of the 'fit@work' and staff mobility policy of the Commission. Its main objective is to promote the use of the bicycle as a healthy and sustainable commuting mode. "VéloMai" won in September the Award of the "2017 Bike Brussels Fair" in the category of public organisations (pp21-2).

The Commission is reducing the number of its parking spaces in order to look green: it’s not clear how this will work in practice but it looks like reserved slots are out (p22).

Among the operational changes listed there is one of “selling of wine and fresh pastries on a voluntary base instead of mandatory” (p23).

ISPRA is a nuclear research centre (p24). It has a local club house, childcare facilities and [100] lodgings. “A new cafeteria initiative has been implemented: following the installation of the new automatic coffee machines, a coffee toaster has been installed to improve quality of coffee.” The club house has a grill (p26) installed on the veranda.

Brussels childcare facilities for EU staff cater for up to 1200 nursery slots (p25) with a staff member for every 7 children. An app called 'KiddyMob' monitors children’s movements.

Link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/oib_aar_2017_final.pdf

Its counterpart is the **Office for Infrastructure and Logistics in Luxembourg (OIL)**. In 2017, OIL managed 17 buildings in Luxembourg (of which nine are office buildings and three are childcare facilities) with over 4500 staff. There are three clusters of Commission office buildings (p4). All but one of the buildings are rented or leased. A major clear out of 20,000 junk items was ordered on health and safety grounds (p9).

There are 3,700 *jobkaart* free travel passes for staff (p11).

In 2016, legionella bacteria were found in some buildings (p14).

Link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/oil_aar_2017_final.pdf

Directorate-General Budget. Its report expresses content that the ECA gave a qualified rather than an adverse opinion on the legality and regularity of the EU Budget, with irregularities running at 3.1% in 2016 (p6).

It references the ongoing case raised against the UK in relation to Chinese textiles, and reminds us of the prospect of the UK being fined hundreds of millions even after leaving the EU (OF/2014/1274/B1)(p7, p18).

The task of confirming how much TOR (customs) EU countries pay into the EU budget is correct cost in 2017 1.69 % of the amounts cashed – ie €101.4m simply to double check the sums. The additional cost for checking the Rebate cost an additional 0.08%, ie around €5m (p34 - NB that does not include the approx. one fifth of money raised having to be returned to member states merely as the cost of assessing the customs duty in the first place as it is an inefficient tax for low modern global tariff rates)

Link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/annual-activity-report-2017-budget_en

Directorate-General Climate Action. This DG has around 200 staff, 85% of whom make policy (p4). It accepts the premise that “about €3.5 trillion globally will be needed on average each year until 2050 to address climate change” (p18). Problem areas staff point to in surveys are attracting and keeping competent staff; irrelevant objectives and indicators; and serious internal comms failures owing to staff not being able to speak to one another.

Link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/annual-activity-report-2017-climate-action_en

Directorate-General Communication. A cynical observer would note that propaganda is alive and well, as this DG’s mission is to operate “at the heart of European Union policy-making” (p4). One campaign alone saw “an estimated 100 million people came across two to three pieces of campaign material. The estimated ‘reach’ of paid advertising (print, online, outdoor and social media) stands at 17 million people” (p6). This is not surprising given the DG’s core budget is €142m (p7) and they have 1101 staff (p8). Staff deployed in EU delegations put on “nearly 8 000 different events and actions targeted directly at citizens” (p12).

The Social Media Team set-up and promoted a social media employee advocacy programme called SMARP, for staff to multiply Commission messages on their social media accounts (p23).

Link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/annual-activity-report-2017-communication_en

More links and plans:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/departments/communication_en#department_plans

Strategic Plan: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/strategic-plan-2016-2020-dg-comm_april2016_en.pdf

Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development. This department employs 1000 people in 10 directorates, to hand out 41% of the EU budget (54.1 bn) to seven million people (Source: 2017, pp6-8) and 90% of all farmed land (p24). The 'accepted' level of fraud/error risk runs at 2%, ie about a billion taken across the board (p58) and 5% is considered a major failure – in practice this is reviewed by segment so will be lower. Of one budget section, €320m was considered questionable but this was counted against a larger portion than the agencies reviewed, so was considered by deft number-crunching to fall much closer to the target (p68).

A peculiarity is that DG AGRI reviews the figures supplied by member states and adjusts them to come up with its own figures for how much fraud goes on to generate “the ‘real’ level of error in each case – the adjusted error rate.” It cagily explains, “The fact that DG AGRI adjusts the Member States' error rates does not mean that the data sent by the latter is unreliable. The adjustments are made because the Commission, the Certification Bodies and European Court of Auditors find deficiencies when they audit the management and control systems in the Member States. The impact of such deficiencies is that Member States may not have detected all errors – that is why the Commission tops-up the figures reported to establish the error rate” (p73). Its findings for 2017 were that one in six Interventions in Agricultural Markets (ABB02) were “high risk”; one in nine Direct Aids (ABB03); and one in seven Rural Development (ABB04) and adding in Medium Risk with minimal assurance doubled that (p73). In a peculiar hat tip of sorts to Margaret Thatcher, 23% of the French school milk scheme was found to be ‘in error’ (Annex, p109) but also its EU-funded school fruit (p116). The wording for Italian food promotion measures suggests corruption was perhaps involved (p117).

The UK is one of the four biggest losers from CAP reform in recent years (footnote p8). French farmers run at a deficit and are only kept in the black by the CAP, whereas the UK farmer has the second highest pre-CAP income (p21), meaning that the UK taxpayer is subsidising UK farmers' inefficient competitors. 22% of aid supports just 1% of farmers, those on “big farms” (graphics p26) – the report drily notes, “The equity of the current distribution of the payments is subject to debate”.

The DG pats itself on the back for reducing greenhouse gases, attributing in passing a 22% reduction in “enteric fermentation” to the simple detail that there is fewer livestock to produce the gas (pp37-8) and not commenting on why the livestock industry collapsed over a fifteen year period.

The DG is proud of its new database called “e-ambrosia”, which is a glorified wine list... It lists PGI (geographically indicated) wines and can be found here: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/food-safety-and-quality/certification/quality-labels/geographical-indications-register/> Alongside a large number from the usual suspects, it includes six from the UK, two from the US, and one from Switzerland.

Staff have not been too happy though. A 2014 survey showed only one in three employees thought their bosses cared about their wellbeing (Annex, p4 – you can find similar figures for other DGs in their own annexes).

It has 11 staff doing PR on the CAP, spending 4.1m on events, 3.7m on handing money over to third parties, and €8.5m on corporate communications (Annex, p17).

Link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/annual-activity-report-2017-agriculture-and-rural-development_en

Legal Service. Out of 913 decisions by the CJEU, the EU's Legal Service was successful in 65% of cases and unsuccessful in 7%. The remaining 28% are cases that either were partly won or proceedings were discontinued (p8). It recovered or set off 13m from national litigation cases (ie suing people over bad debts) and was a party in 12 criminal cases (p26).

The Service was responsible for winning a case on the Singapore FTA, which extended the Commission's exclusive competence to sustainable development, transport, intellectual property and the substantive provisions on investment protection – of current relevance as it helps facilitate a broader quick Brexit Deal.

As a sign of how rarely anyone reads these documents, an editorial comment accidentally got copied into the end document (p31): "Comment made by the legal assistants: Two questions, to be checked with Ms Bank's team (like the entire section): should one not say something about the implementation of the more strategic approach adopted in Dec 2016? And should one say something about some particularly prominent infringements?"

Link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/sj_aar_2017_final.pdf

Paymasters Office (PMO). In 2017, PMO established individual rights of more than 37,000 agents from the Commission, the European External Action Service, the European Court of Auditors and EU agencies and paid 43,000 salaries every month; it also reimbursed 2.9 million medical claims, 140,000 missions claims and 60,000 expert files (p4). It appears to run 'VOX' and 'Info Senior', the newsletters of the associations of retired staff (p33).

Link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/annual-activity-report-2017-office-administration-and-payment-individual-entitlements_en

Publications Office of the European Union (OP). They had to proofread 2.6m pages (p16). The data stored amounts to 51,571,153 individual files, which represent a volume of 18 terabytes (p18). 132 million files of metadata were stored in "The Cellar" (p24) and this has been shifted into the Cloud. The office intranet is called YourOP.

Link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/op_aar_2017_final.pdf

Task Force for the Preparation and Conduct of the Negotiations with the United Kingdom under Article 50 of the TEU. There was an extraordinary level of security (and unknown added cost): "in order to minimise the risk of inappropriate access to information and leaks, in addition to the standard Commission measures, the physical space of the Task force was secured with secured doors with badge and finger print access. From an IT perspective, a secured dedicated platform for exchange of documents with other services was set up (tailor made Basis system). The Task Force makes extensive use of SECEM mail for exchange of information. In addition, the secured application

for the management of the EU restricted documents was made available to staff with personal printers isolated from the network. Files are stored in an encrypted disk. Staff was also asked to pass security clearance and to follow security training courses” (p5).

Link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/tf50_aar_2017_final_0.pdf

Consumers, Health, Agriculture and Food Executive Agency (CHAFEA). This agency funds the Bureau Européen des Unions de consommateurs, BEUC, to the tune of 1.75m. BEUC then lobbies CHAFEA to change policy – very circular and cosy.

CHAFEA are known from other annual reports to have organized two High Level Missions with business delegations to Canada (60 participants) in May, Iran (42 participants) and Saudi Arabia (44 participants) in November 2017 (referenced here on pp28-9).

Link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/chafea_aar_2017_final.pdf

Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). EACEA runs the Europe for Citizen's programme which “strives to foster European citizenship” (p3). It has been setting up the European Solidarity Corps, which is a kind of US Peace Corps variant, but with an EU flag on top (p4). Of propaganda note, “the Agency continues to strive towards its mission "to show Europe at its best", by collaborating with stakeholders from the supra-national to the local level and provide the European Union with a human face” (p5).

Part of its ERASMUS programme involves sport (p6). There is a little-known Erasmus Mundus Alumni Association (EMA) referenced (p26), with a declared intent to cooperate more closely in the future [observation: there is a UK chapter and it makes for a natural pro-EU lobby, <https://www.ema.eu/en/about-ema.html>].

Expanding the PR success of its Jean Monnet [academic propaganda] programme, it is now expanding a “Jean Monnet Expert Community (JMEC)” (p6) from its current baseline of 800 academics (p32).

In 2017, the EACEA signed 4,363 new grants/decisions for more than €702m of commitments (p70) – which is a lot of indoctrination opportunity for young people.

Link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/eacea_aar_2017_final.pdf

Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Culture and Sport. This is the relevant DG for the above, though more of the budget goes on research (significant issues concerning which are explored here: http://www.theredcell.co.uk/uploads/9/6/4/0/96409902/research_interests_with_covers_10.pdf). Agenda is governed by the Communication on Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture.

The comments on the Jean Monnet programme are quite telling: “The Jean Monnet activities funded by Erasmus+ aim at increasing interest in understanding and participating in the European Union leading to a more active citizenship. Jean Monnet activities continue to reflect the political priorities of the Commission, as it has done so far with conferences and seminars devoted to themes such as migration, justice and fundamental rights, and EU as a stronger global actor. Being the major

programme at European level supporting studies on the European Integration process, its outputs can be an important contribution to the reflections on the future of Europe. The recommendations formulated by the Jean Monnet Community are also taken into account in shaping the Programme.” (p38)

The EU awards “seals of excellence” to also-ran bids for funding which didn’t get awarded it (p53, more details at https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/funding/funding-opportunities/seal-excellence_en). It gave these chits out to 2,300 applicants.

Link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/eac_aar_2017_final.pdf

European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF). Some anti-fraud work runs under the rubric of the Hercule programme (p6) – it’s not known what Poirot would have thought. The average duration of investigations runs at 15.8 months. The Office has recommended the recovery of over €3 billion. The average amount of time it takes on whether to pursue a case is 2.4 months (p10). In 64% of cases, recommended disciplinary action against EU employees has been pursued by the Commission.

However ... OLAF sifts by setting priority areas, or IPPs (p13). Also, there is a sift based on the amount of fraud involved [meaning, critically, lesser larceny is more likely not to be pursued on cost/time grounds].

OLAF runs an “awareness campaign on ethics amongst staff. This initiative is aimed at ensuring that OLAF's staff lead by example by setting standards of professional conduct in terms of independence, integrity, impartiality and objectivity” (p34).

Link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/olaf_aar_2017_final.pdf

Human Resources and Security. This runs a 260m budget (p4). Its Health & Wellbeing fit@work Strategy and Action Plan 2017-2020 primary focus was on setting the groundwork on the prevention of psychosocial risks; encouraging healthier commuting; and work-life balance (p5). There is a separate Psychosocial Sector (p16).

61 new staff were assigned to prepping administratively for Brexit (p9). 14 USB stick readers have been installed to check staff aren’t introducing malware (p15).

Interesting staff stats (believed to be across the Commission) are as follows (p17):

Physical & Mental Health Attendance rate – 95.8%

Physical Activity, % of staff practicing sport regularly - 34%

Staff satisfaction with their work life balance - 57%

Staff satisfaction with their working environment - 58,6%

Staff satisfaction with the management support - 58% (p18)

Staff who are aware of / know ethics and discipline policy and rules - 88%

The DG still has a file open on an audit concluded in 2015, from the Internal Audit System, on The Management of Absenteeism in the Offices. This does not appear to be in the public domain but was clearly an area of concern (p35).

Link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/hr_aar_2017_final.pdf

European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO). Rather than recruiting staff, EPSO “delivers laureates” (p3). It runs a “Knowledge Garden” (p6). Language testing for potential staff generated a 56% pass rate (p21), and 66% of staff learning a new language (p19).

Link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/epso_aar_2017_final.pdf

European Political Strategy Centre (EPSC). This is the European Commission’s inhouse think tank, established in November 2014 by European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, and operating directly under his authority. This feeds into the forward looking ESPAS format (link here: <https://espas.secure.europarl.europa.eu/orbis/espas/>) meaning that strategic direction drafts are generated internally, outwith EU member states. [An example paper cited on p8 is on options for integration, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52017DC2025&from=EN>, where the Eurosceptic option is fraught with problems.]

Link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/epsc_aar_2017_final.pdf

European Research Council Executive Agency. Project Fear scare stories about the UK being frozen out of research are undermined with the info that scientists from 10 countries are allowed to be research partners: India, USA, China, Japan, Korea, Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, South Africa, and Canada (p6). Other projects expand the list based on geographic necessity: the SPECULOOS astronomy project (named after a Belgian biscuit) is partnered with Chile because that’s where the observatories had to go (p19).

The EU has been funding COMPROP, looking at fake news and manipulation on the internet including as a primary focus the Brexit vote (p19).

Link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/annual-activity-report-2017-european-research-council-executive-agency_en

European School of Administration (EUSA). EUSA had a bad year - “a year of turbulence” – affecting attendance rates at events/courses (p4) as it shifted to “3 "clusters", Managing myself, Managing my team, and Managing the environment” (p10). The confusion meant the beginning of the year saw an unprecedented number of postponed or cancelled courses due to lack of participants.

There were by contrast new trialled two new workshops, on burnout and mindfulness, towards the end of 2017, which raised so much interest that extra workshops had to be planned even before the official launch (p13). The Leadership Club features speakers from areas generally outside EU matters (p10). There are inter-institutional courses on EU History (p11) whose popularity has dropped. Other courses include the programme To Be Or Not To Be A Head of Unit (p14), Next Step - Head of Unit, Non-Conscious Bias, Master Classes: Brussels for Europe,

In 2017 it created the Essentials of Management course, for which demand soared when it was made obligatory for newly appointed Heads of Unit by the Commission. The School kept adding courses until the offer was level with demand.

Another pointer showing how little reviewed these texts are appears on p20, where a cut and paste has been lifted from a guidance document on what form of words should be used, followed by the draft words without the actual information added.

Link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/eusa_aar_2017_final.pdf

EUROSTAT. The Director General of Eurostat is the Chief Statistician of the EU (p4). She is currently (2019) Bulgarian Mariana Kotzeva, whose cv (https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/cv-mariana-kotzeva_en.pdf) shows she was a visiting professor Central European University – the centre of a controversial battle between Viktor Orban and George Soros.

It is looking ahead to the “2021 EU Census round” (p26).

Link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/estat_aar_2017_final.pdf

Directorate-General Interpretation. DG SCIC interpreters are on average assigned to 40 meetings per day or approximately 10,000/year (p3 – collective figure). In addition, DG Interpretation manages an inter-institutional list of about 3000 free-lance interpreters spread all over the world, out of which around 1000 interpreters work alongside its permanent staff on a regular basis. It feeds into an interinstitutional Catalogue of Meeting Room Services and Incident Management system (pp4-5). A half-day session per terp costs €507 (p5), but the DG has failed to charge the cost to the client DG.

In 2017, the Commission put on 215 conferences with over 93,000 participants and budget of just under €38m (p11).

Link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/scic_aar_2017_final.pdf

Directorate-General for Translation. DGT is a ‘trans-Ardenne’ Directorate-General, with staff distributed evenly between Brussels and Luxembourg. It also has field officers in all the Member States except Belgium and Luxembourg (p3). DGT delivered 2.05 million pages of translation and editing services in 2017 (p4). It is working on building up its Irish translators and terps, but only recruited 10 from a target of 62 (p12). Other problems with catching up with Gaelic now being an official language include a massive backlog of the acquis, and signing off on recognised Irish language terminology.

The correction rate, which measures translation quality based on the number of corrigenda and correcting acts adopted by the Commission to correct translation mistakes, was 0.39 % (the tolerance level is 0.5 %) (p8). It ran the 49 Clear Writing training sessions (equivalent to Plain English) and awarded Clear Writing Trophies (p8).

Several computer translation programmes are being trialled (p13).

Link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/dgt_aar_2017_final.pdf

Directorate-General Communications Networks, Content and Technology. The DG shows off by making its Executive Summary basically a word cloud (p6). It is creating a "Digital Pole" by gradually transferring activities and staff from Brussels to Luxemburg (p96).

Link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/cnect_aar_2017_final.pdf

Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations. ECHO is PR conscious – “In terms of traditional press work, DG ECHO continued in 2017 to punch above its weight highlighting once again how well EU civil protection and humanitarian aid activities lend themselves to illustrating the benefits that the EU delivers every day to its citizens and worldwide” (p69 – development aid typically contains clauses requiring recipients to corporately advertise the EU, under contractual threat of otherwise having to hand money back).

Link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/echo_aar_2017_final.pdf

Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME). Executive Agencies are delegated tasks like spending money (p3). In this case, it includes running the funding for the EU Japan Centre (NB – Japan is not an EU state: is one to be expected for the UK, and will it be politically neutral? More info here: <https://www.eu-japan.eu>, website down at time of review). Its work on Strategic Clusters for Defence and Security is referenced (p15) but not the fact that this is driving Defence integration by the back door. The new Director appropriately enough is M. Guerrier (p91).

The Agency recognises the “so called “valley of death” between a successful research and technological development and market introduction of innovation” (p28).

Link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/easme_aar_2017_final.pdf

Financial Services and Capital Markets Union. DG DISMA has, happily for Brexit, been working on equivalence arrangements with the US, Switzerland, Hong Kong and Australia (p20).

Link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/fisma_aar_2017_final.pdf

Directorate-General Informatics. 500 staff running the IT for 33,000 Commission officials, in 65 institutions, for €900m budget (p3). It is also associated with CERT-EU, the Computer Emergency Response Team (p5).

BRIS (not quite “BORIS”) is the Business Registers Interconnection System, which links national business registers allowing open access searches for information filed by companies in the national registers (p7).

Link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/digit_aar_2017_final.pdf

Innovation and Networks Executive Agency (INEA). Commissioner tweet helpfully cited: “The very purpose of the Connecting Europe Facility is to connect Europe” (p6).

Link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/inea_aar_2017_final.pdf

Internal Audit Service. The IAS is the in-house mechanism for reducing fraud. It has 123 internal auditors covering 50 Commission Directorates General and services as well as 42 agencies and other autonomous bodies, spread over Europe (p13). Its failures are picked up by the Court of Auditors. Its budget is €19.20m (p26). 90% of staff rated their own internal controls at 3/5 or above (p34).

Link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/ias_aar_2017_final.pdf

Research Executive Agency (REA). The middleman between academics and EU money. Their database has 130,000 people on it, plus 78,000 fellows whose postgrad work has had an EU flag on it (p5). The document showcases some funding, but more questionable grants can be found at http://www.theredcell.co.uk/uploads/9/6/4/0/96409902/research_interests_with_covers_10.pdf. The “error” objective (including fraud) runs at a high and wide 2 to 5% (p46).

Part of the PR work in 2017 involved a video of people going to Covent Garden for evaluations (p81).

Link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/rea_aar_2017_final.pdf

Service for Foreign Policy Instruments. Basically, €700m on EU overseas deployments (p7). PR work is undertaken to “reinforce the image of the EU as a global player” (p16). The EU Visitors Programme has run 150 study visits to Brussels targeted at “young leaders” (p57).

Link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/fpi_aar_2017_final.pdf

Structural Reform Support Service. This provides support for (16) member states that ask for it. It also covers Turkish Cypriots (p2) by very simplistically having a target of how many recipients they intend to find (p9). It’s helped the Greeks with their *cadastre* programme, which looks like a basic landholding register to help combat longstanding agri-fraud such as non-existent olive groves. Unusually, the IAS reported significant weaknesses for public procurement under the Aid Programme, and concluded that the internal control system audited is (only) partially effective (p44).

Link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/srss_aar_2017_final.pdf

Additionally, the following annual reports that were not on the central register have been individually tracked down

European University Institute. The EUI is one of several EU academic institutions that effectively school up the next generation of EU (and pro-EU) academics, technocrats, and influencers. It has (2017) 234 teaching staff (p97). EU member states are significant direct contributors: UK liabilities are unknown (p113) but BIS appears to have the lead (p119, p122).

Its economics department specialises in postgrad work and claims a ‘top five in Europe’ reputation (p15). 18 doctoral graduates are at the ECB, comprising the highest share of alumni there (p16).

The Department of History and Civilisation with its 13 (>12) professors (p25) seeks to “investigate Europe’s history outside the traditional national narratives that commonly structure the profiles of history departments at most European universities. It foregrounds themes of European integration along with Europe’s diverse relations with the rest of the world, especially its place in global networks of commerce, political organisation, and social thought” (p19) - thus from an outside perspective rendering it a uniquely useful EU corporate PR tool. There is a heavy focus on integration studies, centred on the De Gasperi Centre which is orientated around the EU Archives (p20).

The Department of Law’s ambition is to “shape the terms of legal debate in Europe and beyond, especially on themes of European integration as well as international and transnational cooperation” (p27) – again, a proactive role. A recent arrival was a London professor who is an expert on environmental and climate change law (pp29-31).

The Department of Political and Social Sciences (p35) focuses on “major contemporary challenges to the European Union and its member states”, including “the rise in populism”. One academic has looked at protest waves during the “Great Recession” (the Eurozone Crisis) (p38). An Oxford don has been appointed to the Chair in Federalism, Democracy and International Governance (p39).

The Director of the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies is commentator Professor Brigid Laffan. A key focus of intention is in essence ‘how to integrate’ (p60).

The EU’s historical archives amount to 6,810 linear meters in storage and 9,550 linear meters a Villa (p74).

The EUI is the home for the “School of Transnational Governance” (p79, more here: <https://stg.eui.eu/>). Its interests include Gender Governance.

Link:<https://www.eui.eu/Documents/ServicesAdmin/CommunicationsService/CorporatePublications/PAR/EUI-Activity-Report-2017.pdf>

Robert Schuman Centre. While the EUI provides a basis for research, the RSC provides outreach for practising academics on EU subjects – generally on the premise of accepting the EU as the baseline starting point when considering (p3) the “contemporary challenges of Europe and European integration”.

Programmes or units include the Global Governance Programme, the Loyola de Palacio Programme on EU Energy Policy, the Migration Policy Centre and the Florence School of Regulation, the Middle East Directions Programme and the Florence School of Banking and Finance. Research has included projects on migration, EMU, and security in Europe (p4). In 2017 it had 45 professors, 138 Fellows, and 86 Research Assistants. One project (p9) looked at why some countries were better at dodging taxes than others.

It is home to the EU’s Florence School of Regulation [sic] (pp13+).

Again, from an outside perspective, Schuman can be seen as a useful policy driver that pushes academic review directly into how to integrate, not whether to.

It also engages with the “large community of distinguished EUI alumni in Brussels” (p53).

Link: <https://www.eui.eu/Documents/RSCAS/AnnualReport2017.pdf>.

The European Institute of Public Administration. The annual report’s forward is by Guy Verhofstadt, who lists amongst the continent’s challenges that “Eurocepticism prevails” (p5). Bulgaria and Italy dominate use (p11) which is basically about training up national civil servants on the EU: there were about 35 UK participants in the courses. It has buildings in Maastricht, Luxembourg, and Barcelona.

Link: https://www.eipa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/EIPA_Annual_report_2017.pdf

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education. The Agency manages to produce an annual report remarkable in that it explains nothing about its output; fails to explain its spending and staff; and confirms Euroceptic views that it has zero added-value.

Link: https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/work_programme_2018_0_1.pdf

Outer Orbit Examples

Here are two examples of where throwing money in the right direction can deliver for a European Commission that wants to push further integration, without having to be responsible for running a body.

Academy of European Law. This is an example of a body for helping train EU law specialists, including EC staff, originally set up by the EU and it a peculiar quango-like symbiosis. It ran an exhibition to celebrate its 25th anniversary: catalogue of art here - <https://era25.eu/auction/>) including “Quantum Communion, November Test, Spiritual Gravitation II, and two pieces by an artist with an apparent fixation on bosoms.

Link: <https://www.era.int/upload/dokumente/20501.pdf>

International Centre for European Training. CIFE is not an EU body, but is included here as an example of other organisations that are within the EU’s strategic orbit, are operationally independent, yet are dependent on EU financial and wider support to survive. They thus act ‘deniably’ in support of the EU’s strategic objectives, pushing EU integration without the Commission getting any blame. It publishes material “devoted to the study of European issues and federalism” (https://www.cife.eu/en/5/introduction_106-1). They have for 60 years been “unstinting advocates of European integration”.

Link: <https://www.cife.eu//Default.aspx>

