

# 2022

## Environmental Results

2021 data





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# Towards more green and sustainable Committees – let's take on the challenge!

Despite the difficulties of the COVID-19 crisis over the past two years, the issues related to environmental protection and sustainable development are at the centre of EU policy making. More than ever before, the EESC and the CoR are involved in achieving the European Green Deal goals, in which the EMAS environmental management instrument plays a pivotal role. We cannot neglect or overlook the importance of green policies in our everyday lives. To achieve the 1.5-degree target of the Paris Agreement, all levels of our administration need to be closely involved.

Implementing an environmental management system requires a strategic vision from the management. It is clear that commitment and a participatory approach of staff and other stakeholders also play a crucial role in achieving the Committees' EMAS objectives. In January 2022, the EMAS steering committee adopted the new objectives for the next period. These new objectives take into account the ambitious environmental targets of the European Green Deal as well as the evolution of performance indicators over the past years and new developments in and outside of the Committees (e.g. infrastructure, buildings and COVID-19 developments). As part of this framework, a new target on CO<sub>2</sub> emission reduction has been added to the Environmental Programme, signalling the Committees' commitment to the European Green Deal.

Although 2021, like 2020, cannot be considered a representative year, a positive evolution can be reported in almost all of the Committees' environmental indicators. It is worth mentioning that these efforts bring not only environmental benefits but also financial savings and improvements to the administrative processes. The reductions in gas, electricity and water consumption over the past years also contribute to better budget management, which is especially

relevant considering the recent exceptional rise in energy prices. Partially due to COVID-19 challenges, hybrid meeting technology and efficient digitalised document-sharing possibilities have facilitated more extensive teleworking. Various Committee projects and awareness-raising actions have reduced paper consumption and taken a step towards a more digitalised, streamlined and modern EU administration.

We hope that the progressive return to the office will encourage all of us to evaluate and critically assess the way we function to achieve an even more efficient and environmentally friendly working environment. This process and the changes it may bring may not come easy. But change is the only constant and once we are open to new opportunities it is easier to face these challenges.

June 2022



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# 2021 Main Results



Electricity

↘ 2.1% compared to 2020

↘ 42% since 2009



Gas

↗ 29.5% compared to 2020

↘ 54.4% since 2009



Water

↘ 14.3% compared to 2020

↘ 58.4% since 2009



Paper

↘ 55% compared to 2020

↘ 96% since 2009



Waste<sup>1</sup>

↘ 4% compared to 2020

↘ 83% since 2010



Carbon footprint

8 500 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent

<sup>1</sup> Office and kitchen waste.



The Committees have undertaken to implement the EU's carbon neutrality objectives as part of the European Green Deal. Against this background, the energy performance of the buildings will form a key way of reducing the Committees' carbon footprint. The decrease in electricity consumption was mitigated more in 2021, mainly due to colleagues gradually returning to the office after the restrictions related to COVID-19 were lifted. As regards the increase in gas consumption in 2021 compared to 2020, the main reason is also linked to COVID-19, as it was necessary to work only with new air in air processing units. However, gas and electricity consumption levels remain lower than in the pre-COVID period.

**Indicator:** electricity consumption per person per year. **2021 results:** 3 917.71 kWh/person



## Electricity consumption

↘ **2.1%** in 2021

↘ **42%** since 2009

**Indicator:** gas consumption per person per year. **2021 results:** 2 985.27 kWh/person.



## Gas consumption

↗ **29.5%** in 2021

↘ **54.4%** since 2009

## Current or future actions

- Implementation of action plans to meet PLAGE<sup>2</sup>, Green Deal and EMAS objectives;
- Installation of new anti-COVID filters;
- Further development of an energy register based on smart meter readings in order to be able to analyse consumption more precisely (by activity, area and use) and thus better target corrective actions;
- Energy-intensive lighting systems have been replaced with LED lights and movement sensors.

## Ongoing actions

- Since 2009, the Committees have used only green electricity<sup>3</sup>;
- The Committees produce renewable energy through solar panels on the roof. In 2021, the 150 m<sup>2</sup> of panels produced around 12 MWh, or 0.21% of the total consumption. A call for tender for installation of new solar panels is in progress: if it is successful, the Committees could probably have a framework contract signed for the beginning of 2023;
- Since 2018, cutting off the gas supply in the BvS and B68 buildings during June, July and August. In addition, adjustments to comfort ranges and temperatures have been introduced in line with the measures put in place to control energy consumption in the Committees' buildings.

<sup>2</sup> Plan Local d'Action pour la Gestion Énergétique (local action plan for energy management).

<sup>3</sup> Source: 86% hydropower and 14% wind energy. Geographical origin: mainly France and Norway, but also Belgium and Italy to a lesser extent.

SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS

7 AFFORDABLE AND  
CLEAN ENERGY



12 RESPONSIBLE  
CONSUMPTION  
AND PRODUCTION



13 CLIMATE  
ACTION





## Water

Water is mainly used for catering and cleaning activities, toilets, humidifying air and watering indoor plants and outdoor gardens. Water consumption per person decreased further in 2021 despite the fact that occupants returned to buildings on a more permanent basis after 2020 and the number of visitors increased. We also note that water consumption is still lower than in the pre-COVID period.

**Indicator:** water consumption per person per year

**2021 results:** 7.77 m<sup>3</sup>/person



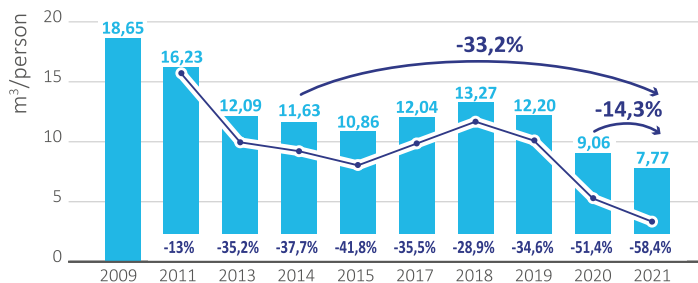
### Water consumption

↓ **14.3%** in 2021    ↓ **58.4%** since 2009

### Current or future actions

- Rainwater recovery system for watering the bamboo plants in the JDE building: the studies were postponed to 2023 and the works to 2024. Environmental benefit: recovery of rainwater with a direct impact on water consumption;
- All buildings: installation of water meters in strategic locations to ensure better water management;
- Launch of a study on water management at the Committees;
- **Awareness-raising:** the Committees regularly organise campaigns to raise staff awareness about water, particularly in conjunction with World Water Day, and through eco-tips.

**Figure 1:** Annual water consumption per m<sup>3</sup> per person for the six buildings.



**SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS**

**6** CLEAN WATER  
AND SANITATION





# Paper



The EESC and CoR are committed to using paper more responsibly. Paper is used in two different ways at the Committees: in offices (printed paper) and for publications and meeting documents. Paper consumption decreased further in 2021 compared to 2020 and 2019. Although an increase should be expected once face-to-face activities resume, it seems that the respective paper reduction and paper elimination strategies adopted by the Committees are bearing fruit.

**Office paper indicator:** number of sheets printed per person per working day.

**2021 results:** 1.2 sheets/person/working day.



## Paper consumption

↘ **55%** in 2021

↘ **96%** since 2009

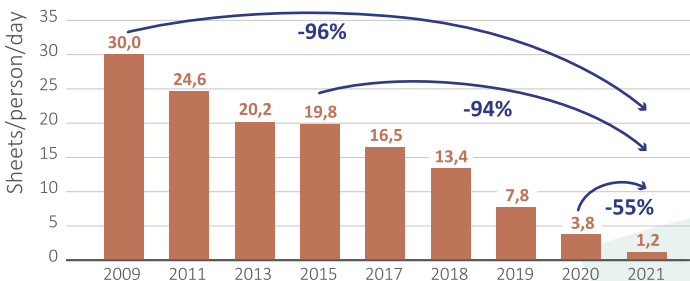
## Current or future actions

- Ongoing digitalisation of administrative, financial and human resources procedures;
- Individual printers have been replaced with shared printers;
- EESC: implementation of a «paper-poor meetings» strategy. A «paper smart» approach has also been adopted with regard to interpretation, which generates much fewer printed documents and distributed copies;
- CoR: implementation of a «paper-free meetings» strategy and a digital communications strategy.

## Ongoing actions

- The A4 paper used for printing (office paper) is “100% recycled”<sup>4</sup>;
- Staff awareness-raising: awareness-raising campaigns were suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic

**Figure 2:** Number of sheets printed per staff member per working day.



<sup>4</sup> Since 2019, FSC-certified paper has been used, as the plant that supplied the Committees with recycled paper had closed.

**SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS**

**12** RESPONSIBLE  
CONSUMPTION  
AND PRODUCTION



**15** LIFE  
ON LAND





## Green public procurement

Where the subject of the contract allows, the Committees opt for goods and services with the least environmental impact. In this way, they hope to adopt more sustainable consumption practices while protecting everyone's health. Some examples of environmental criteria: waste management, storage of hazardous products, type of products and materials (ecolabelled products are preferred if available on the market), or energy performance of electrical and electronic equipment.

**Indicator:** inclusion of environmental clauses in contracts with a value equal to or greater than EUR 60 000.

**Results 2021:** 100% of the contract documents submitted for consultation contained environmental clauses.

**Standardised environmental clauses:** include a reference to the Committees' environmental policy, the obligation to comply with the rules on waste (sorting and traceability) and storage of dangerous products.

**Specific environmental clauses:** are tailor-made according to the applicable categories of goods and services. Where possible, products and services must meet the requirements of recognised environmental labels (e.g. the European Ecolabel, Blauer Engel, etc.) and energy labels.

### 2021 Actions

- 25 public procurement procedures were analysed;
  - Two calls for tenders with a high environmental impact were identified:
    - the call for an architectural and special engineering consultancy for building projects, refurbishment of spaces, special techniques and integrated assistance in the various areas of the building
    - light renovation of the VMA building
- Specific environmental criteria have been added for these tenders.

### Ongoing actions (multiannual contracts)

- The electricity provided is 100% green;
- Cleaning products are ecolabelled<sup>5</sup>. Environmental criteria were also included in the call for tender for the new cleaning contract (sorting and recycling of waste, use of green products, etc.);
- Paints and varnishes are ecolabelled;
- Any wood used in works is FSC- or PEFC-certified;
- Office supplies meet environmental criteria;
- No chemical pesticides or fertilisers are used for green space maintenance.

<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that in the context of health measures, non-ecolabelled disinfectants and hydroalcoholic gel were used in 2020. These are not considered to be regular cleaning products.

SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS

3 GOOD HEALTH  
AND WELL-BEING



12 RESPONSIBLE  
CONSUMPTION  
AND PRODUCTION



## Food



A new catering contract for the EESC and CoR was signed in June 2020. However, as the catering services were suspended for most of 2020 and 2021, the potential of this contract has not yet been fully realised. Sustainable management of the canteen will continue once a regular return to the office is possible.

**Indicators:** percentage of seasonal vegetables on the menu, percentage of organic products relative to total products, percentage of vegetarian dishes and sandwiches relative to total dishes and sandwiches sold, percentage of MSC-labelled fish relative to total fish purchases, percentage of fair trade-labelled products relative to total products

These percentages are calculated for the whole year based on numbers of purchases and sales provided by the supplier.

**2021 results:** Follow-up on the 2021 indicators is not available due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Catering activities were suspended for most of 2021: the canteen was open from mid-October until the end of December. Only data on seasonality are available for these 2.5 months of operation.

### Actions already taken

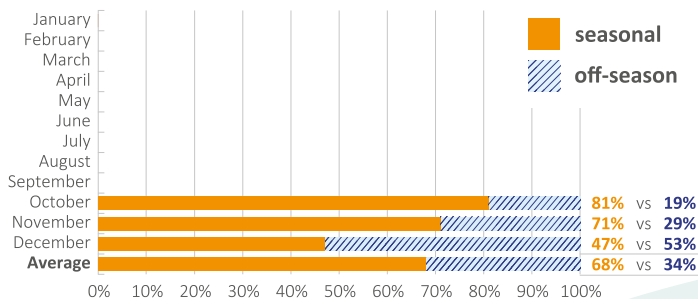
- The first zero-plastic canteen: ban on single-use plastic bottles and supplies extended to all catering activities since June 2020.

### Current or future actions

- obtaining the Good Food label;
- the introduction of strict environmental and sustainability criteria to the catering contract.



Figure 3: Seasonality of menus at the canteen





## Organisation of events

The exceptional nature of 2021 in terms of the organisation of events needs to be highlighted. Most conferences took place online and therefore, obviously, did not generate any waste materials. With the return to the office, the number of visitors and in-person events will increase considerably. It is therefore essential that the Committees put their words into action and adopt a sustainable approach when organising events.

**Indicator:** quantity of waste produced during the three biggest annual events (kg)

### Current or future actions

- Providing videoconference rooms to reduce the carbon footprint of transport. Since 2020, it has been technically possible to organise videoconferences in all conference rooms;
- MS Teams was launched in spring 2021 for members and staff of both Committees in order to allow for efficient teleworking. The majority of meetings and conferences were held remotely, with some in hybrid mode. At the EESC, almost all events, conferences and meetings were held in hybrid mode in 2021. At the CoR, the majority of events took place via videoconference in 2021;
- Reducing the volume of printed material in favour of electronic documents;
- Raising awareness among organisers of environmentally responsible practices, particularly waste sorting, in advance of the event. The update of a guide for organising sustainable events had to be postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and is expected to be finished by the end of 2022;
- Reducing the number of items offered to participants, with preference for reusable and green items;
- Solutions to replace plastic badges (e.g. with self-adhesive paper badges). Plastic badges are collected after events to be reused;
- Since 2020 when the new catering contract came into force, all single-use plastic containers have been banned from all catering activities.

SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS

12 RESPONSIBLE  
CONSUMPTION  
AND PRODUCTION



# Mobility



Mobility has a direct impact on air quality, among other things, and therefore on personal health. Under normal circumstances, 1 254 members of staff come to work in the Committees' buildings every day and 658 members<sup>6</sup> also travel here from across Europe. According to the Bilan carbone, transport of people is the largest source of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions at the EESC and the CoR. The Committees have an active policy to encourage staff to use more environmentally friendly forms of transport. The majority of staff worked remotely several days a week in 2021, which had a direct effect on commuting.<sup>7</sup>

**Indicator:** percentage of staff claiming to mostly use a sustainable mode of transport in their commuting

**2021 results:** Percentage of staff using an environmentally friendly mode of transport<sup>8</sup>:



Staff using environmentally friendly modes of transport

**70%** (EESC)

**76%** (CoR)

## Current or future actions

- Regular staff awareness-raising and information campaigns on all these actions and also on air quality and events that have an impact on mobility;
- Expanding the possibilities for remote working<sup>9</sup> following the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Ongoing actions

- More opportunities for organising videoconferences and webstreaming of conferences;
- Financial contribution to the cost of public transport season tickets (EESC and CoR);
- Kilometre-based subsidy for cycling (EESC);
- Remote working and flexible working hours to reduce traffic congestion at peak times;
- Official bicycles, and parking and infrastructure for cyclists, including cargo bikes;
- Promotional events such as Friday Walk/Bike Day or the Step Challenge;
- Participation in the VéloMai and Walking Challenge interinstitutional initiative;
- Charging facilities for e-bikes and e-cars;
- Sustainable mobility workshops (e.g. on bike maintenance and repair);
- Increasing the number of parking places for car-pooling and motorbikes;
- A joint EESC and CoR forum to find partners for carpooling;
- Announcement by the CoR of a new policy to encourage the reduction of emissions caused by staff missions and launch by the EESC of the Low Emission Missions initiative.

<sup>6</sup> Since October 2020.

<sup>7</sup> We cannot measure this impact as data is not available.

<sup>8</sup> These results come from the mobility survey organised within the EESC and the CoR, which was last conducted in 2021.

<sup>9</sup> Remote working options were expanded before the COVID-19 crisis and may be further developed in the future.

SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS

**3** GOOD HEALTH  
AND WELL-BEING



**11** SUSTAINABLE CITIES  
AND COMMUNITIES





## Waste

The EESC and CoR generate a large amount of various types of waste. We have seen continuity in the decrease in the amount of waste generated in 2021 compared to 2020. Nevertheless, the Committees face two major challenges: reducing the quantity of waste and implementing a waste sorting system in line with legislation. In 2021, a majority of staff and members continued to telework, which continued to have a direct impact on the amount of office and kitchen waste.

**Indicators:** amount of office and kitchen waste (kg) per person per year. Other types of waste as well as waste generated during renovation works are monitored separately.

**2021 results:** 52.3 kg of waste per person per year.



### Waste

↘ **4%** in 2021

↘ **83%** since 2010

### European Week for Waste Reduction (EWWR) 2021

In 2021, activities were organised around the theme of **circular communities**. In view of the COVID-19 crisis and widespread teleworking, the SERD campaign was mainly carried out online. A visit to Tournevie (an accessible and ecological tool library) took place and a reuse workshop was held at the Committees with the association R-use Fabrik.

### Future actions

- Establishing recycling corners in the various buildings in order to collect the most common types of small waste.

### Ongoing actions

- Information and raising the awareness of staff and visitors (campaigns, displays, signage);
- Encouraging staff to use reusable rather than disposable crockery;
- Donating obsolete IT equipment and furniture to a charity;
- Eco-advice for event organisers.

SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES  
AND COMMUNITIES



12 RESPONSIBLE  
CONSUMPTION  
AND PRODUCTION



# Biodiversity



The loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystems is a particularly significant threat and could eventually lead to a high risk of a food crisis. The EESC and the CoR are committed to helping protect urban biodiversity.

**Indicators:** land use (built/unbuilt area)

Built areas are not conducive to biodiversity, as they are sealed and plants cannot grow there.

**2021 results:** The EESC and CoR occupy a surface area of 13 500 m<sup>2</sup>, of which almost 28% is made up of green roofs and gardens.



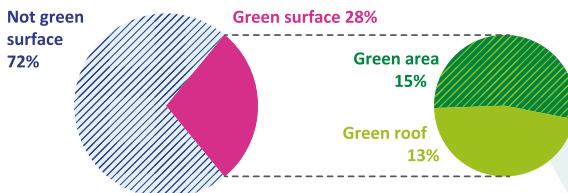
The EESC and CoR  
occupy a surface area of  
**13.500 m<sup>2</sup>**

of which almost **28%**  
is made up of green roofs  
and gardens.

## Ongoing actions for biodiversity

- Two beehives have been installed on the JDE roof since 2012. Due to the COVID-19 crisis a new call for tenders could not be launched in 2020. At present, the benefits of reinstalling beehives will be assessed on the basis of the biodiversity study carried out by the Gembloux Agro-Bio Tech Faculty of the University of Liège at the request of the European Commission;
- Green areas are maintained without chemical pesticides or fertilisers;
- The 1 800 m<sup>2</sup> of green roofs improve thermal and sound insulation of the buildings while reducing air pollution and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. They are made up of melliferous plants and filter and regulate the flow of excess rainwater. This action is consistent with the initiatives and objectives of the Brussels region to combat soil sealing. Green roofs also reduce the urban heat island effect and provide protection for urban biodiversity;
- Two participatory gardens were installed on the terraces of JDE and B68 along with a worm composter. Aromatic plants, vegetables, fruits and flowers are grown. The catering contractor also intends to grow herbs for catering purposes at the Committees.

**Figure 4:** Use of green spaces in unbuilt areas  
(Land use total 13 508 m<sup>2</sup>)



SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS





## Bilan carbone

The Bilan carbone is a tool for calculating an organisation's environmental impact in terms of CO<sub>2</sub> emission equivalent. It gives a clear picture of the activities that contribute most to the Committees' CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The challenge is to find measures to reduce the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions while maintaining the quality of the services offered to staff and Committee members. The exceptional nature of 2021 needs to be highlighted, as it cannot be regarded as a representative year in terms of the Committees' carbon footprint.

**Indicator:** carbon emissions in CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent in tonnes per FTE (full-time equivalent)

The Bilan Carbone® (carbon balance) method used by the Committees and other European institutions was developed by a French institution, the French Environment and Energy Management Agency (ADEME), and is managed by the Carbon Training Institute.

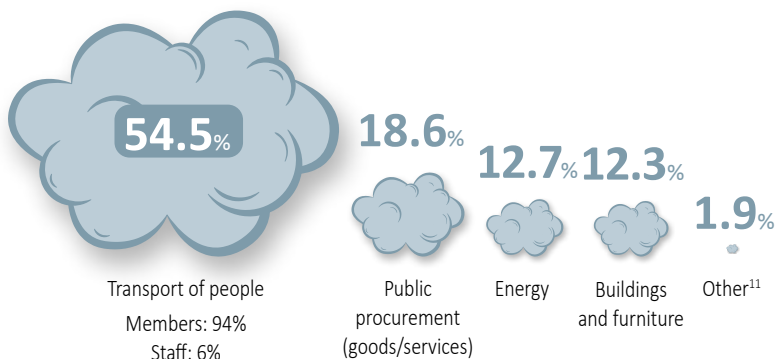
**2021 results:** 8 500 of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent = emissions of 1 133 EU residents<sup>10</sup>

As in previous years, and despite a sharp fall in 2021, the main source of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions at the Committees is still the transport of persons.



2021  
**8 500 tonnes**  
d'équivalent CO<sub>2</sub>

= émissions de **1 133** citoyens de l'UE.



**SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS**

**13** CLIMATE  
ACTION



### Current or future actions

- The EMAS service has commissioned a study on the Committees' carbon neutrality by 2030 in the context of the Green Deal. The results are expected by the end of September 2022. It will propose two emission reduction scenarios and a list of the main possible measures.
- The Committees adopted a new carbon emissions reduction objective in January 2022: the Committees committed to reduce their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 10% between 2019 and 2030 for areas within the remit of the administration.

<sup>10</sup> Source: Eurostat, greenhouse gas emissions per capita based on 2020 data (2021 data not yet available).

<sup>11</sup> Waste 1.1%, refrigerant 0.8%, freight 0.0%



# The Committees' environmental management system

The EESC and CoR have been EMAS- and ISO 14 001-registered since 2011. These certifications guarantee that we assess, manage and continuously improve our environmental performance.

## The Committees

**115 000 m<sup>2</sup>**  
of buildings  
(total surface area  
including grounds and  
basement)

**658 members**  
(329 EESC members  
and 329 CoR members)

**1 254 staff**  
members

**20 000**  
visitors per year<sup>12</sup>

## The environmental management system

<b>1</b>	EMAS team in the Infrastructure unit – Directorate for Logistics
<b>80</b>	EMAS contact persons each representing a directorate or unit
<b>12</b>	members of the EMAS Steering Committee (secretaries-general, directors, staff representatives)
<b>1</b>	annual audit by an accredited environmental auditor (Vincotte)
<b>2</b>	environmental certification/labels



<sup>12</sup> 2019 data (before the COVID-19 pandemic).



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