Council of the European Union
General Secretariat

EMAS
MANAGEMENT ENVIRONNEMENTAL VERIFIE
BE-BXL-000037

Environmental statement 2023

Updated: November 2023

2022 DATA

Cover: Flowerbeds in front of the Justus Lipsius building

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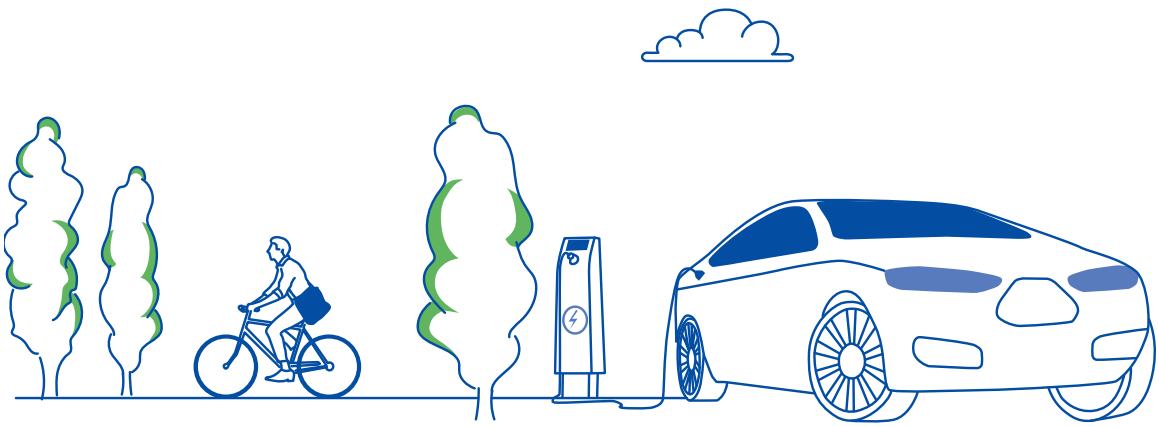
2022 DATA



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1. Foreword

On 25 January 2016, the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union (GSC) obtained EMAS registration[1], validating the quality of the environmental management system in place since 2010.

This statement contains an update on the GSC's environmental performance up to 2022. The continued implementation of an effective environmental management system has enabled the GSC to go even further in reducing its energy consumption. These positive results lend credibility to the environmental initiatives which have been in place at the GSC for a number of years, and which were validated by the EMAS registration. The environmental management system enables the GSC not only to measure and monitor the impact of its activities so as to better control it, but also to continuously improve its performance.

One of the main aims of environmental management is to raise awareness among all staff of how to integrate sustainable development principles into their day-to-day work. The GSC thus leads by example in its application of the environmental policies adopted by the Council of the European Union.

1. EMAS (Eco-Management and Audit Scheme) is the European Union's environmental management and audit scheme as defined by Regulation (EC) No 1221/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council and amended by Commission Regulations (EU) 2017/1505 and (EU) 2018/2026 and Commission Decision (EU) 2019/61.

2. Introduction

2.1. The European Council

The European Council is an institution that defines the general political direction and priorities of the European Union (EU). It sets the EU's policy agenda, usually by adopting conclusions during European Council meetings, which identify issues of concern and actions to be taken. However, it is not one of the Union's legislative institutions, so it does not negotiate or adopt EU legislation.

The members of the European Council are the heads of state or government of the Member States of the European Union, the President of the European Council and the President of the European Commission. The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy also takes part in European Council meetings.

The European Council meets at least twice every six months. Its meetings, often referred to as 'EU summits', are held in Brussels and are chaired by the President of the European Council, who can convene extraordinary European Council meetings when needed.

2.2. The Council of the European Union

The Council of the European Union, commonly referred to as the 'Council of Ministers' or the 'Council', is a key European Union decision-maker. The Council is the institution that represents the governments of the Member States, in which the national ministers of all EU countries meet to:

- negotiate and adopt legislative acts, in most cases together with the European Parliament through the 'ordinary' legislative procedure, also known as co-decision. In these cases, the Council legislates on the basis of proposals submitted by the European Commission;
- coordinate Member State policies in areas such as economic and budgetary matters, education, culture, youth and sport, and employment;
- define and implement the EU's foreign and security policy, which is based on the guidelines set by the European Council. Together with the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Council ensures the unity, consistency and effectiveness of the EU's external action;
- conclude international agreements;
- adopt the Union's budget, together with the European Parliament.

2.3. The General Secretariat of the Council

The General Secretariat of the Council (GSC) ensures that the European Council and the Council of the European Union operate smoothly. It gives them all the assistance they need to be able to carry out the missions conferred on them by the treaties to further the development of the European Union. The GSC advises and supports the European Council, the Council and their presidencies, in all areas of activity, as well as in the context of ministerial meetings and intergovernmental conferences.

The GSC provides logistical support and handles the practical organisation of meetings (including the management of meeting rooms, document production and translation).

In addition, the Legal Service assists the European Council, the Council and its preparatory bodies, the Presidency, and the General Secretariat, in order to ensure that the legal acts are within the law and drafted to a high standard. The Legal Service also represents the European Council and the Council in proceedings before the courts of the European Union.

The GSC is based in Brussels, where the European Council and the Council of the European Union usually meet. GSC staff work in the Justus Lipsius, Lex and Europa buildings, located on rue de la Loi/Wetstraat. The GSC also manages the Council crèche, located on avenue de la Brabançonne/ Brabançonnelaan, Brussels.

All of these activities have an impact on the environment. The GSC endeavours to reduce this impact through high-quality environmental management. In January 2016, EMAS registration and ISO 14001 certification were further official recognition of the GSC's high-quality environmental management.

3. Environmental management at the General Secretariat of the Council

3.1. The environmental management system

The environmental management system set up at the GSC is in line with the environmental management system known as the 'Eco-Management and Audit Scheme' (EMAS). EMAS aims to improve the environmental performance of organisations by helping them to control the impact of their activities on the environment.

This system is implemented on a continuous basis in the following phases:

1. The GSC takes into account the context of its activities through a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis, as well as the needs and expectations of stakeholders.
2. The GSC carries out an environmental review in order to determine the impact of its activities on the environment, and to assess that impact on the basis of a number of criteria, or on the basis of any applicable regulatory requirements. This environmental review is regularly updated and makes it possible to identify significant environmental aspects.
3. The environmental policy of the GSC is then established or confirmed. This involves a commitment to complying with applicable environmental rules, and a willingness to continually improve and to communicate to interested parties the objectives and results of the environmental management system.
4. The environmental policy is transformed into an environmental programme which aims to control significant environmental aspects and

to improve environmental performance. This programme includes working instructions and thematic action plans accompanied by objectives to achieve within reasonable time frames. Particular attention is paid to raising awareness among staff and encouraging their active participation.

5. Independent internal auditors periodically verify progress in the implementation of the environmental programme, compliance with regulatory requirements and the environmental management system's compliance with EMAS requirements. The effectiveness of the environmental programme and the conclusions of these audits are analysed by the Environment Steering Committee during periodic management reviews.

6. The objectives and results of the environmental programme are set out in the environmental statement, which is published on the Council's website and made available to interested parties.

3.2. Scope

The environmental management system applies to the GSC's activities in the four buildings it occupies in the Brussels-Capital Region (Justus Lipsius, Lex, Europa and the crèche) (NACE code[2]: 9900).

As well as office space and meeting rooms, the services housed by the Justus Lipsius, Lex and Europa buildings include: kitchens, restaurants, archiving, printing, reprographics, IT rooms, sports facilities, waste disposal areas, loading bays, infirmaries, libraries and mechanical rooms.

All four buildings include some green spaces.

The following buildings and their primary uses are included in the scope of environmental management:

Building	Location	Net area (m^2)	Heated surface area[3] (m^2)	Status	Primary use
Justus Lipisus	Brussels	207 552	146 942	Owned	Offices, training and conference rooms, catering, archives, storage of materials
Lex	Brussels	75 664	66 350	Owned	Offices, training and conference rooms, catering
Crèche	Brussels	5 363	4 630	Owned	Crèche, offices, catering
Europa	Brussels	66 622	60 966	Owned	Conference rooms, offices, catering

2. The term NACE (from the French 'nomenclature statistique des activités économiques dans la Communauté Européenne' – statistical classification of economic activities in the European Community) refers to the classification of economic activities in the European Union.
3. The air-conditioned or heated surface area is taken into account in certain environmental performance indicators in the following sections.

Justus Lipsius, Europa and Lex buildings

Crèche building

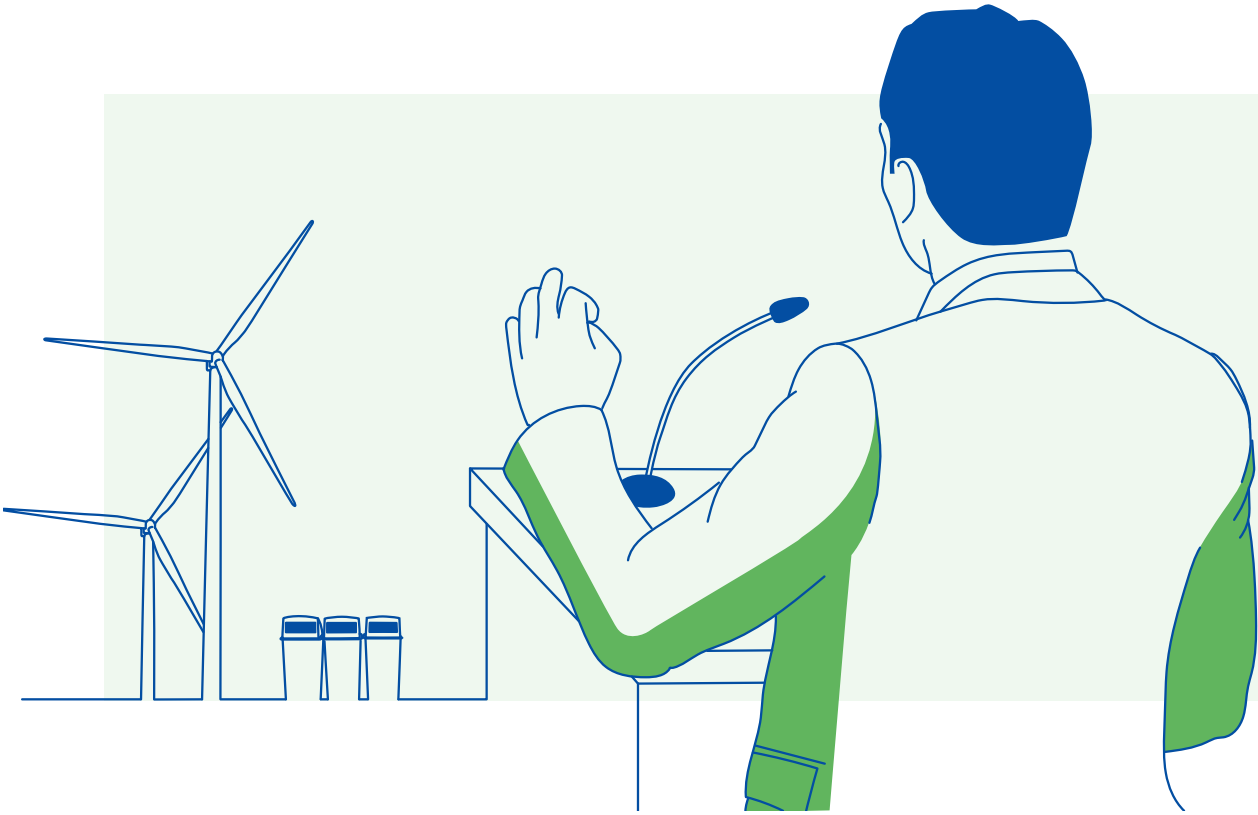
3.3. Significant environmental aspects

An environmental review is a fundamental part of an environmental management system. The review consists of an 'initial comprehensive analysis of environmental aspects, environmental impacts and environmental performance related to the activities, products and services' of the organisation. 'Environmental aspect' means 'an element of [...] activities, products or services that has or can have an impact on the environment'.

The review takes into account, on the one hand, direct environmental aspects associated with the activities, products and services of the organisation itself over which it has direct management control, and on the other hand, indirect environmental aspects which can result from the interaction of an organisation with third parties and which can to a reasonable degree be influenced by the organisation. Once all the environmental aspects and impacts have been identified, each impact is assessed according to a scale ranging from level 1 (no or very little impact) to level 5 (very significant impact). Each member of the environmental team assesses these impacts within his or her field of competence, and then those analyses are assessed again and weighted by the team as a whole. An environmental aspect is deemed significant when its level is assessed as being between 4 and 5.

This review process, first carried out in October 2012, has been updated regularly. The following table summarises the significant aspects related to the GSC's activities and their origin:

Topic	Activities, products or services	Environmental aspect
Air	Operation of refrigeration and air-conditioning equipment Operation of equipment containing refrigerant gas Operation of boilers Operation of gas engines (cogeneration)	Air pollution, ozone layer depletion, greenhouse gas emissions
Biodiversity	Green space and plant management: use of products, choice of vegetation, choice among varieties of vegetation	Loss of biodiversity, impact on human and animal health
Waste	Meal preparation Renovation, fitting-out and refurbishment work Maintenance of technical installations Dispensary activities and medical examinations Waste management; reuse, sorting, recovery IT equipment management Use of smoking booths and management of smoking areas	Generation of hazardous and non-hazardous waste that needs to be treated
Water	Use of toilet facilities Water usage - technical installations Water usage - other activities (kitchens, cleaning, watering, etc.)	Discharge of polluted water, depletion of natural resources, excess water consumption
Energy	Use of electrical appliances and equipment Lighting of common areas, meeting rooms Air-conditioning Operation of boilers and cogeneration	Excess energy consumption, depletion of natural resources, CO_2 emissions, global warming
Resources	Renovation and/or construction of buildings	Depletion of natural resources, waste generation
Purchasing (public procurement)	Renovation or construction projects Maintenance and cleaning products Catering Purchase of equipment (IT, furniture) etc.	Management of resources, waste, energy
Indirect aspects	Waste end-of-life treatment Environmental rules to be followed by contractors	Impact on the environment in terms of consumption and discharge



3.4. The environmental policy

In 2013, the Secretary-General of the Council of the EU adopted an environmental policy formalising the GSC's pledge to become actively involved in a high-quality environmental management initiative. This policy was updated in 2019. The resulting environmental programming entails improvements as regards, for example, more rational use of energy and natural resources, and waste management, but also other environmental issues such as mobility and sustainable public procurement.

The GSC's environmental pledge is thus enshrined in the environmental policy, as follows:

The General Secretariat of the Council (GSC) is aware of the importance of environmental issues and has been taking steps to improve the environmental performance of its activities for years.

Recognising the positive contribution it can make to the sustainable development of society, the GSC aims to enshrine the principles of sound environmental management in its day-to-day work. As a result of the environmental management programme put in place as from 2011, the GSC's environmental management system is registered under the EMAS Regulation on the voluntary participation by organisations in a Community eco-management and audit scheme.

Determined to continuously improve the environmental performance of its activities and to ensure compliance with the applicable European, national and regional/local environmental legislation and rules, as well as other compliance obligations, the GSC undertakes to:

- *maintain the EMAS registration of its environmental management system;*
- *prevent pollution by reducing the environmental impact of its activities and by ensuring efficient use of energy, water, products, consumables and materials;*
- *reduce greenhouse gas emissions resulting from its operations and activities;*
- *actively promote sustainable mobility in staff commuting and work-related journeys;*
- *work on possible options for reducing the environmental impacts of delegates' travels;*
- *contribute to creating a cleaner and thus more liveable city through reduced car use and enabling a greater uptake of electric vehicle use by its staff;*
- *set up and monitor key performance indicators and objectives to quantify and measure its continuous improvement in terms of environmental performance;*
- *include environmental criteria in the relevant public procurement procedures and in the rules on events organisation;*
- *avoid producing waste with particular attention to eliminating single-use items,*
- *encourage the re-use of written-off material resources and promote the recycling of end-of-life materials;*
- *ensure appropriate management of hazardous products and waste in line with the applicable legislation;*
- *encourage environmentally-friendly behaviour in all its staff, contractors and visitors through training, information and awareness-raising;*
- *promote transparency on matters covered by this decision in communication and dialogue with the public and other interested parties;*
- *apply the above principles to all of its activities and its buildings.*

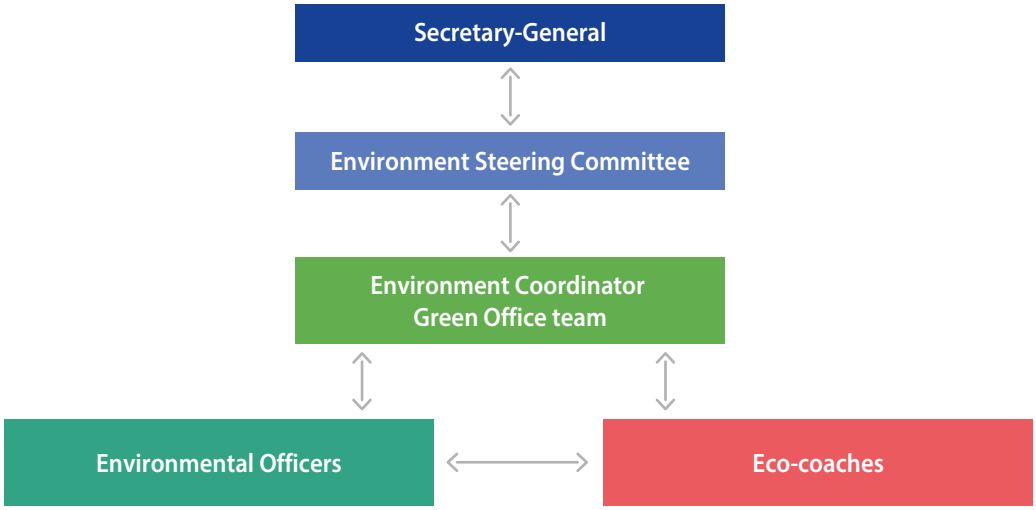
The Environment Steering Committee adopts environmental objectives, targets and action plans, supervises all activities relating to the environmental management system and makes provision for the necessary resources. The Environment Coordinator takes charge of the day-to-day administration of the environmental management system and coordinates the implementation of environmental programming at the GSC.

The environmental management team assist the Environment Coordinator in operating the environmental management system. The Environmental Officers ensure that the activities of their respective departments comply with the current Environmental Policy. The voluntary network of eco-coaches provide for a grassroots approach in informing and engaging the personnel of the GSC in environmental issues.

Brussels, 19 December 2019.
The Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union

3.5. Roles and responsibilities

The various actors involved in environmental management at the GSC can be set out as follows:



The Secretary-General defines the GSC's environmental policy and determines the organisational structure for the establishment of the environmental management system (EMS).

The Environment Steering Committee is made up of the managers of the departments involved in environmental management. It adopts environmental objectives, targets and action plans, supervises all environmental management activities and makes provision for the necessary resources.

The Environment Coordinator, appointed by the Steering Committee, acts as project manager, coordinates the environmental management team (Green Office) and is in charge of following up on decisions taken by the Committee. The Coordinator and their team are responsible for putting in place action plans in the various areas, coordinating audits, managing environmental permits, monitoring environmental legislation and environmental indicators, and any other activities necessary for the smooth functioning of the EMS.

The members of the environmental management team assist the Coordinator in carrying out various tasks relating to environmental management, in line with the allocation of roles by the Coordinator.

Environmental Officers are appointed in the departments most involved in environmental management and are well acquainted with the workings of their departments. They monitor environmental issues in their own

departments, liaise with the Environment Coordinator and support the implementation and operational monitoring of the EMS.

Eco-coaches (an informal network of officials who have an interest in the environment) are the key contact persons in the directorates and units of the GSC. Their incorporation in the organisational structure of the EMS ensures an approach which is in touch with the grassroots, with the aim of getting staff involved in implementing the environmental programme.

In total, this cross-departmental approach involves around 50 people working permanently or regularly on environmental management.

3.6. Applicable regulatory requirements

The GSC complies with the environmental legislation and regulations in force in the Brussels-Capital Region.

Each of the buildings is covered by its own environmental permit issued by Bruxelles Environnement/Leefmilieu Brussel, the region's environmental authority. The monitoring of legislation and regulations is ensured by the establishment and updating of a comprehensive register of applicable regulations and by regular compliance audits. The register is updated on a monthly basis for the various environmental activities concerned.

The GSC monitors environmental permits and compliance and informs the operational departments of regulatory developments so that they can adapt the relevant work processes where necessary. In the event of an accident or incident entailing environmental or health and safety risks, the GSC will immediately inform Bruxelles Environnement/Leefmilieu Brussel.

Below are the reference numbers for the current environmental permits:

Justus Lipsius:

Extension	No. 585829 of 16/9/2016
Corrigendum	No. 585829 of 24/10/2016
Amendment	No. 695144 of 18/10/2018
Corrigendum	No. 695144 of 19/11/2018
Amendment	No. 1722149 of 4/9/2019
Amendment	No. 1865416 of 11/01/2023

Europa:

Basic permit	No. 305423 of 11/4/2008
Amendment	No. 600495 of 14/9/2016
Amendment	No. 1825673 of 14/1/2022

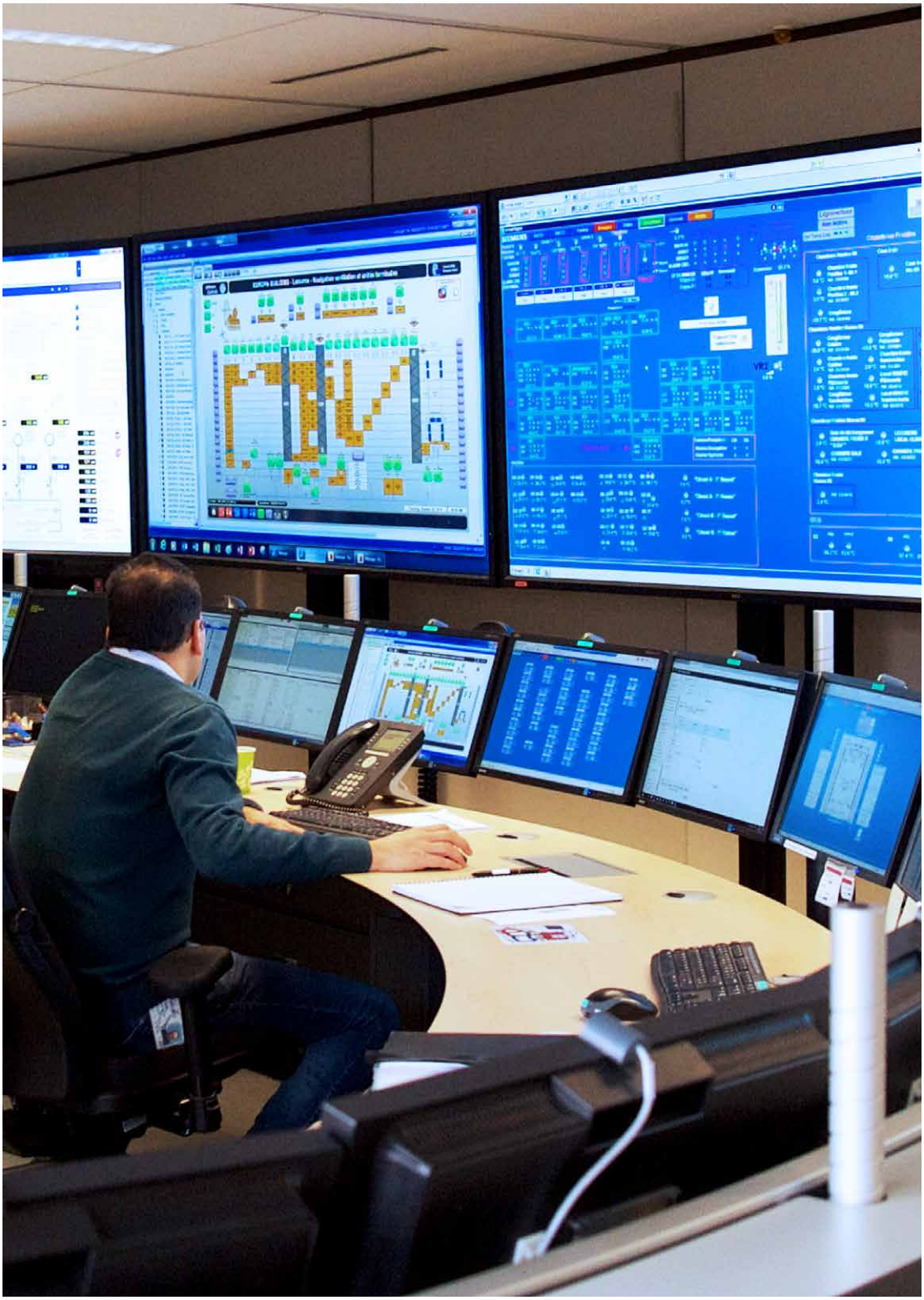
Lex:

Extension	No. 619046 of 14/11/2017

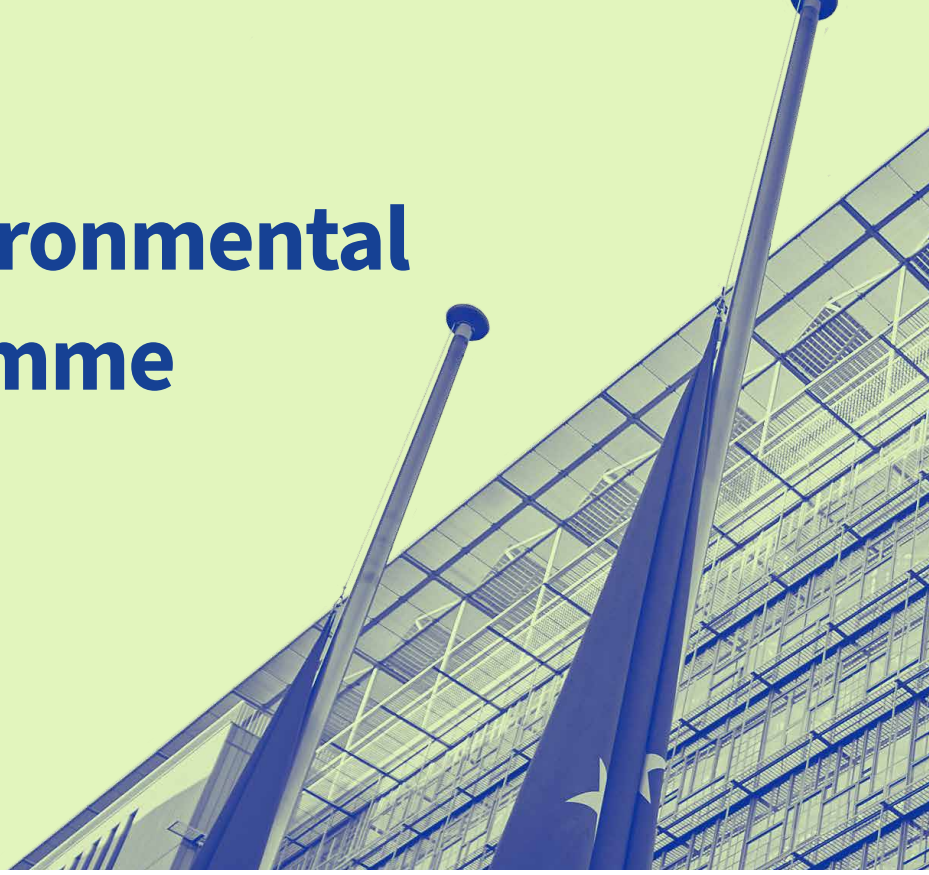
Crèche:

Extension	No. 1.695.450 of 16/6/2020

Control centre of the centralised technical management system of the Justus Lipsius building.



4. Environmental programme



The GSC has established a multi-faceted and constantly developing environmental programme which adheres to the guidelines laid down in the environmental policy. The measures developed within this programme aim to reduce environmental impact and are gradually leading to improved control over significant environmental aspects. The environmental programme is organised by topic or by environmental aspect.

The GSC employs some 3 000 officials and, on average, receives 2 000 people from outside the GSC each day, including the members and experts of national delegations, journalists, staff from outside firms and visitors. Changes in environmental impact are weighted in some cases by the surface area of the buildings or by the average number of people working in them.

For ease of reading, the graphs in the following pages illustrating year-by-year trends in various environmental aspects do not include the years 2011 to 2018. The year 2010, in which several multiannual plans were started, has been kept as the reference year.

For the year 2010, all indicators relating to a number of people are calculated in proportion to the occupants of the Justus Lipsius and Lex buildings and the crèche, with the exception of data relating to paper use, waste and mobility, which, for technical reasons, also include people working in the Europa building.

From 2018, the same indicators are calculated on the basis of figures obtained from the reading of access badges in real time. The resultant occupancy rate is around 90 % of that calculated

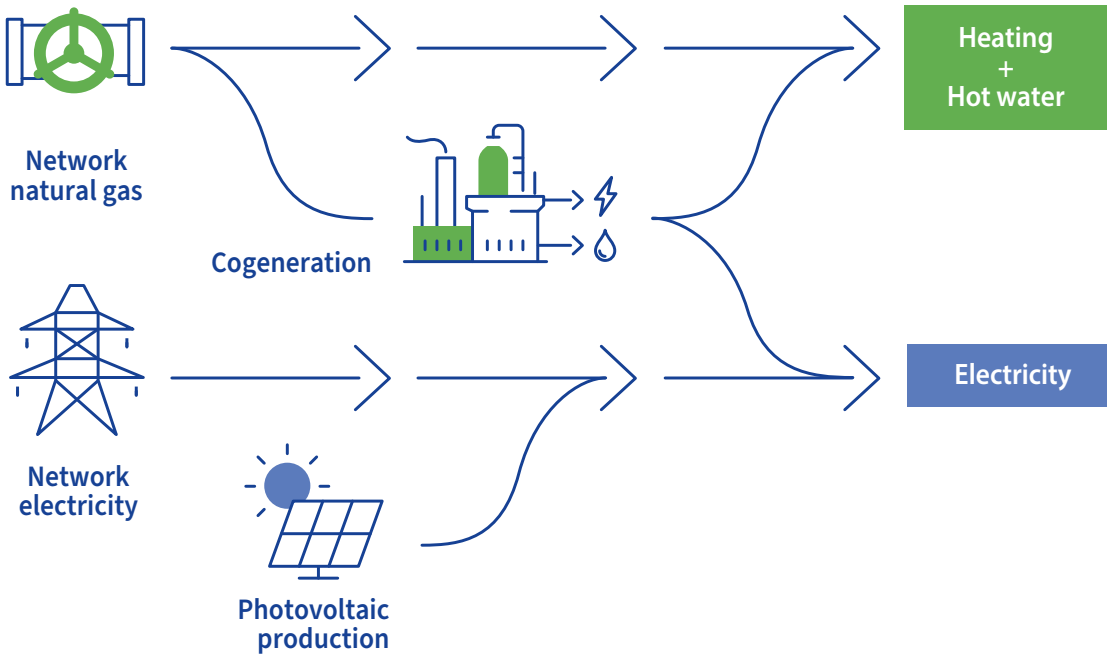
using the method applied in previous years. As a consequence, the indicators expressed relative to numbers of occupants were based on a lower rate in 2018.

The GSC also assesses its environmental performance using the environmental performance indicators set out in Annex IV to Regulation (EC) No 1221/2009 and the benchmarks of excellence in the sectoral reference document, Commission Decision (EU) 2019/61. In the sections to follow, these indicators are marked with a green star★.

4.1. Energy

Background

Energy is used in several forms and entails the use of natural resources.



Gas is mainly used to heat the buildings and produce domestic hot water, and to cogenerate electricity and useful heat in the Justus Lipsius, Lex and Europa buildings.

Electricity is mainly used for lighting, the buildings' air conditioning and ventilation, the IT infrastructure, active cooling in certain areas (such as the data centre), catering services, activity relating to the press centre and visitors, and the operation of lifts.

Annual consumption of gas and electricity in the Justus Lipsius, Lex and Europa buildings is also influenced by the number and type of events which are held there (summits, multilateral conferences, Council meetings, etc.).

Environmental performance indicators

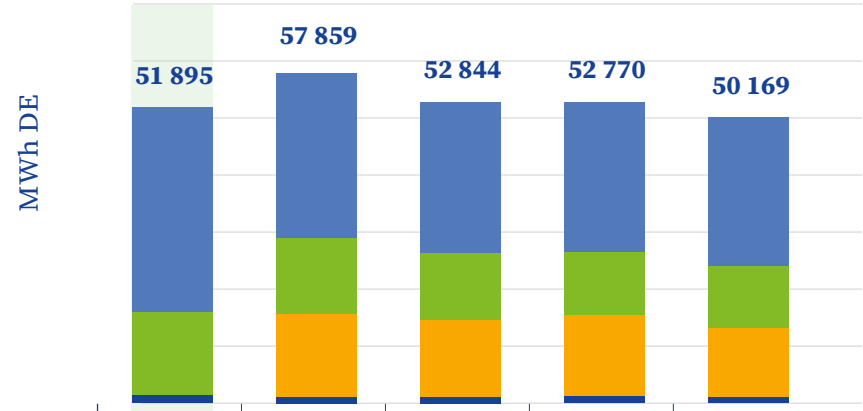
Following the amendment to the EMAS Regulation, two energy indicators are used in this reporting exercise: one called 'direct energy', and the other to measure primary energy.

The 'direct energy' indicator reflects the amount of gas consumed and the amount of electrical energy drawn from the grid plus the electricity generated on site by solar panels, all of which is consumed internally. This indicator gives a more comprehensive picture of energy demand than the separate indicators for gas and electricity.

Primary energy consumption is an indicator used to measure the environmental impact of obtaining energy and transporting it from its source to the GSC buildings.

Direct energy

Figure 1: Direct energy consumption

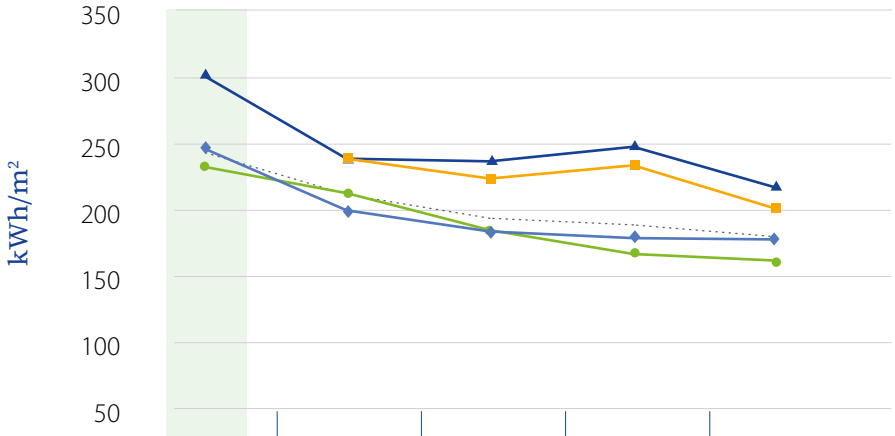


	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022
Justus Lipsius	35 905	28 974	26 649	26 325	26 185
Lex	14 646	13 398	11 624	11 061	10 748
Europa		14 424	13 516	14 236	12 230
Crèche	1 344	1 063	1 055	1 148	1 006
Total for all sites	51 895	57 859	52 844	52 770	50 169

Since the direct energy consumption indicator is not normalised (see explanation in the paragraph on '"Primary energy", page 25), variations in outdoor temperature affect overall consumption. Between 2021 and 2022, consumption decreased by 4.9 %. This decrease in consumption in 2022 is due to several factors. While electricity consumption remained almost the same, efforts were made to lower gas consumption (-18 %) due to the energy crisis: the set temperature was lowered to 19 °C; the margin for adjusting the set temperature was reduced from +/-3 °C to +/-1 °C;

the temperature in passageways was adjusted (e.g. the Atrium of the Justus Lipsius building). Improvements to the technical management of the Europa building were also a determining factor. Finally, winter 2022 was particularly mild compared to winter 2021.

Figure 2: Direct energy consumption per m² ★

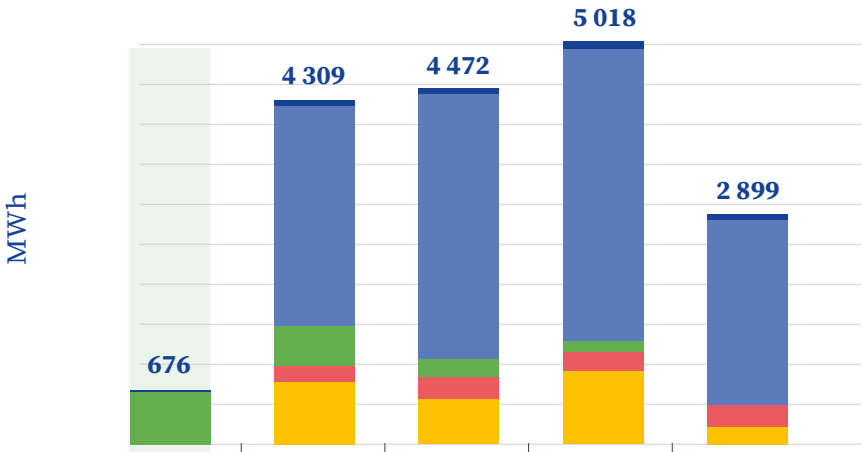


	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022
Justus Lipsius	247	200	184	179	178
Lex	233	213	185	167	162
Europa		239	224	234	201
Crèche	302	239	237	248	217
Average of all sites	244	212	194	189	180

Figure 2 clearly shows the ongoing improvement in our buildings' energy performance. Between 2010 and 2022, direct energy consumption per m² decreased by 64 kWh. This decrease corresponds to approximately 26 % of consumption in 2010

Electricity produced by solar panels and cogeneration

Figure 3: Electricity produced by solar panels and cogeneration ★



	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022
Solar Justus Lipsius	25	84	85	102	85
Cogeneration Justus Lipsius		2 748	3 305	3 645	2 310
Cogeneration Lex	651	503	231	131	
Solar Europa		195	271	250	270
Cogeneration Europa		777	562	908	218
Total for all sites	676	4 309	4 472	5 018	2899

In 2022, total electricity production in the Justus Lipsius, Lex and Europa buildings corresponded to around 10.6 % of our total electricity demand, which was 30 172 MWh in 2022.

Electricity production in 2022 was about 40 % lower than in 2021. The three main reasons were: cogeneration in the Lex building was not working; there was a cogeneration breakdown in the Justus Lipsius building; there were excessive NO_x emissions from the cogeneration system in the Europa building, meaning it had to be shut down on several occasions. Solar PV production in the Justus Lipsius building also broke down, compromising optimum operation.

Primary energy

The energy performance of a building is generally measured in primary energy. This approach makes it possible to take into consideration the effect of high-efficiency energy conversion systems such as cogeneration on the consumption of non-renewable natural resources.

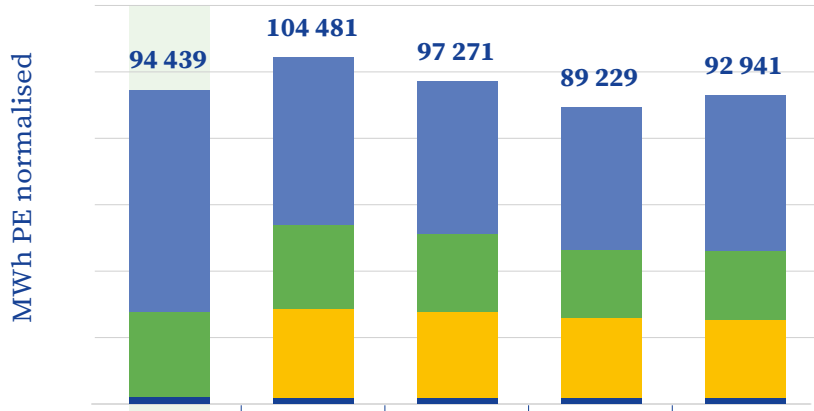
Primary energy is the 'raw' form of energy available (for example, gas, coal or wood) before conversion into useful energy (such as electricity or heat). The consumption of electricity and gas in the Council buildings can thus be expressed in terms of primary energy. Electricity bought from

the grid is converted into primary energy using a conversion factor[4].

The fluctuation in annual gas consumption is closely linked to heating requirements in a given year. This 'climatic' effect can be evened out by normalising gas consumption linked to the heating requirements of the building, thus making it possible to compare developments from one year to the next. The normalisation of consumption is explained in **subsection 6.1, page 62**.

As shown in the graph below, the total normalised primary energy consumption in the Council's buildings fell by 1.6 % between 2010 and 2022, despite the addition of the Europa building. The combined consumption of the three buildings that already existed in 2010, i.e. the Justus Lipsius, the Lex and the crèche, amounted to 69 315 MWhPE in 2022 – a decrease of 26.6 % compared to 2010. The energy crisis led to the introduction of some energy saving measures which contributed to that decrease.

Figure 4: Normalised primary energy consumption

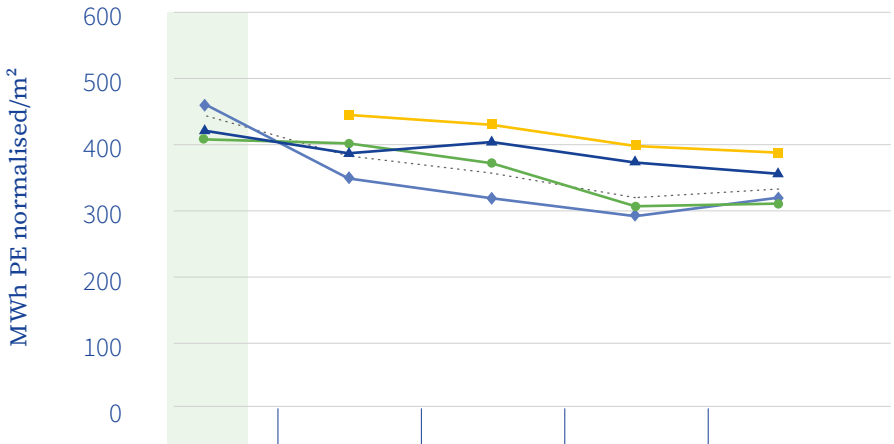


	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022
Justus Lipsius	66 910	50 731	46 243	43 885	47 016
Lex	25 651	25 262	23 342	20 375	20 651
Europa		26 779	25 885	24 240	23 626
Crèche	1 879	1 727	1 801	1 729	1 648
Total for all sites	94 439	104 481	97 271	89 229	92 941

4. In accordance with the energy performance certification protocol for public buildings in the Brussels-Capital Region, a theoretical yield of 40 % is used to convert electricity bought from the grid into primary energy.

The average energy performance for all sites fell from 444 kWh/m² in 2010 to 334 kWh/m² in 2022, as shown in Figure 5, which amounts to a 24.7 % decrease between 2010 and 2022.

Figure 5: Normalised primary energy consumption per m² ★



	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022
Justus Lipsius	461	349	319	292	320
Lex	408	402	372	307	311
Europa		445	430	398	388
Crèche	421	387	404	373	356
Average of all sites	444	383	357	320	333

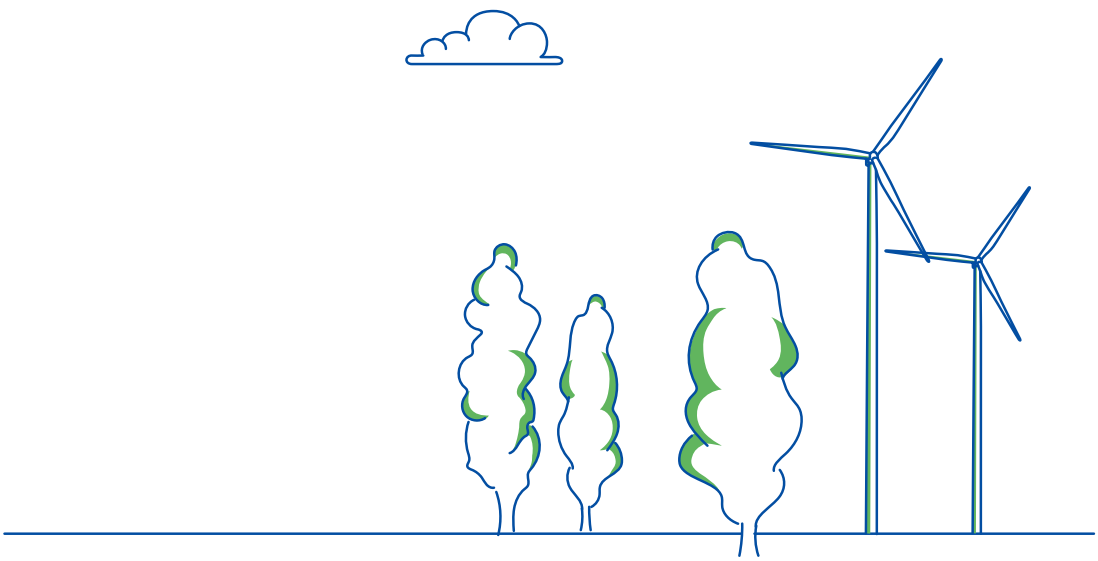
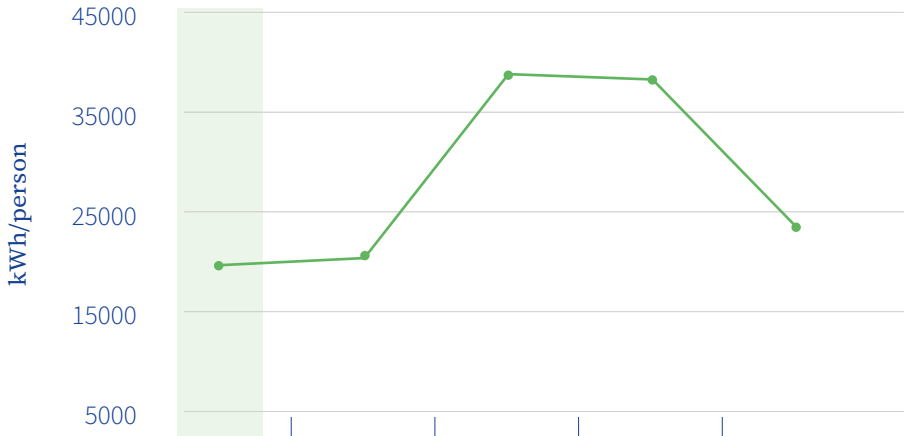


Figure 6 shows the annual trend in normalised primary energy consumption per person for the four buildings. Consumption has thus been corrected by an occupancy factor for the buildings which allows the intensity of the Council's activities to be taken into account. For the year 2010, the calculation of the occupancy ratio does not include the occupants of the Europa building, as explained at the beginning of **section 4, page 20**.

Energy consumption in relation to the occupancy rate in 2022 is almost similar to that in 2019 (before the COVID-19 crisis). The figure is slightly higher than in 2019 as the occupancy rate is proportionally lower (5 008 vs 3 866), partly due to the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis, especially new teleworking patterns.

Figure 6: Normalised primary energy consumption per person ★



	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022
Actual primary energy	19 664	20 375	38 806	38 269	23 463

Objectives and action

Objectives

Directive (EU) No 2018/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 on energy efficiency came into force on 24 December 2018. It extends the energy savings obligations established by Directive 2012/27/EU beyond 2020. Member States are required to achieve a cumulative end-use energy savings target for the entire 2021-2030 obligation period, equivalent to new annual savings of at least 0.8 % of final energy consumption.

In compliance with the Directive, the GSC is committed to ensuring that energy is used efficiently in all Council buildings. The 2025 target is indicated in Table 1a for the Justus Lipsius and Europa buildings and in Table 1b for the crèche and Lex buildings.

Table 1a: 2025 energy efficiency target for the Justus Lipsius and Europa buildings

Year	Normalised consumption in MWh	Energy saving compared to 2019 in MWh	Relative decrease compared to 2019 in %
Reference: 2019	77 492	n/a	n/a
Outcome: 2021	67 125	10 367	-13.4 %
Outcome: 2022	70 642	6 850	-8.8 %
Target: 2025	70 130	7 362	- 9.5 %

Note: n/a = not applicable.

Table 1b: 2025 energy efficiency target for the Lex and crèche buildings

Year	Normalised consumption in MWh	Energy saving compared to 2019 in MWh	Relative decrease compared to 2019 in %
Reference: 2019	26 989	n/a	n/a
Outcome: 2021	22 104	4 885	-18.1 %
Outcome: 2022	22 299	4 690	-17.4 %
Target: 2025	24 560	2 429	- 9 %

- The GSC has undertaken to reduce normalised primary energy consumption by 9.5 % between 2019 and 2025 in the Justus Lipsius and Europa buildings, in accordance with the Local Action Plan for Energy Management (Plan Local d'Actions pour la Gestion Énergétique/ Plan voor Lokale Actie voor het Gebruik van Energie – PLAGE) legislation which applies to public buildings in Brussels, and by 1.5 % per year for the Lex

and crèche buildings, i.e. by 9 % over the period 2019-2025.
- The energy efficiency target for the Justus Lipsius and Europa buildings has almost been met, as by 2022 primary energy consumption had fallen by 8.8 % since 2019. For the Lex and crèche buildings, the energy efficiency target has already been met; it will therefore be necessary to maintain it.

Action taken

The GSC has put in place measures which have resulted in a structural improvement in energy performance since 2010. The action taken includes the following policies and measures:

- the minimum set temperature for activation of the heating system has been lowered to 19 °C;
- the minimum set temperature for activation of air conditioning has been raised to 27 °C;
- the margin for locally adjusting the set temperature has been reduced from +/-3 °C to +/-1 °C;
- the settings for heating during the winter and air conditioning during the summer are monitored continuously in order to optimise consumption;
- gas and electricity consumption are continuously monitored through an internal reporting system;
- lighting control by motion detection has been introduced in communal areas;
- lighting has been replaced with LED technology wherever possible;
- the server park in the data centre has been optimised by means of virtualisation (approximately 60 % of servers have already been virtualised); energy performance criteria are systematically incorporated in procurement procedures for IT equipment;
- the Europa building's technical installations are being optimised to meet its specific needs;
- regular awareness-raising campaigns for building occupants are carried out to encourage them to use energy more economically;
- an innovative system has been installed to recover heat from the waste water of two showers and reuse it to preheat the water of the same showers (pilot project);
- a PLAGE action plan has been submitted to Bruxelles Environnement/Leefmilieu Brussel (PLAGE is the Brussels-Capital Region's programme to implement Directive 2012/27/EU in respect of public buildings).

Action to be taken in 2023 and 2024

The GSC undertakes to:

- implement, monitor and evaluate the PLAGE action plan;
- ensure the continued implementation of the existing actions presented in the paragraph entitled **'Primary energy', page 24**; regularly monitor other energy efficiency measures not included in the PLAGE action plan;
- identify other actions that could generate energy savings;
- continue to monitor gas and electricity consumption so as to more effectively detect anomalies.

4.2. Water

Background

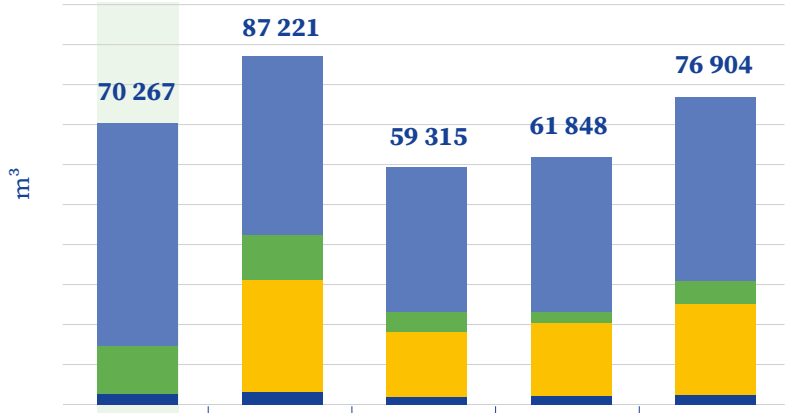
In Council buildings, water is used primarily in the kitchens, toilets and showers, as well as to clean the premises and to humidify the air in the offices and conference rooms. The GSC uses mains water in the Justus Lipsius, Lex, Europa and crèche buildings, but also rainwater in the Lex and Europa buildings.

Environmental performance indicators [5]

Figure 7 shows the trend in mains water consumption between 2010 and 2022 for the Justus Lipsius, Lex, Europa and crèche buildings.

Water consumption in 2022 increased compared to the COVID-19 period, which is logical given the increase in the presence rate in buildings.

Figure 7: Mains water consumption

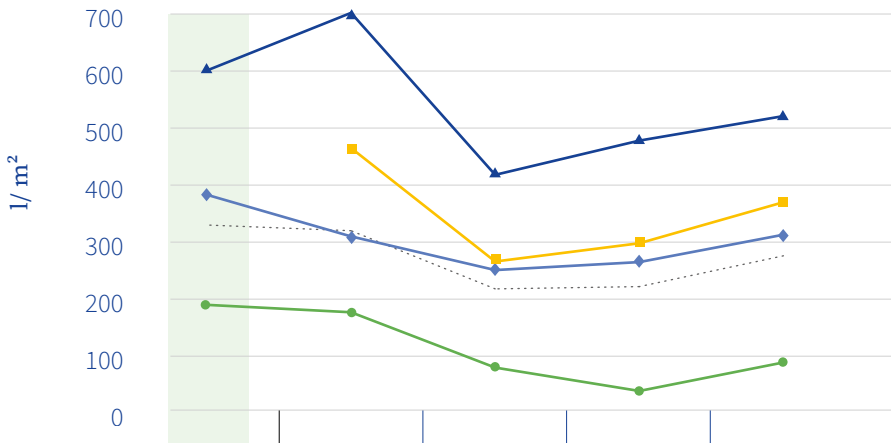


	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022
Justus Lipsius	55 631	44 980	36 374	38 878	45 994
Lex	11 956	11 114	5 032	2 584	5 925
Europa		27 997	16 045	18 173	22 575
Crèche	2 680	3 130	1 864	2 213	2 410
Total for all sites	70 267	87 221	59 315	61 848	76 904

5. Water data has had to be estimated for November and December due to the delay in sending water bills.

Figure 8 shows the mains water consumption per m² for each of the buildings. Mains water consumption in the crèche is relatively high due to the building's use as a childcare facility.

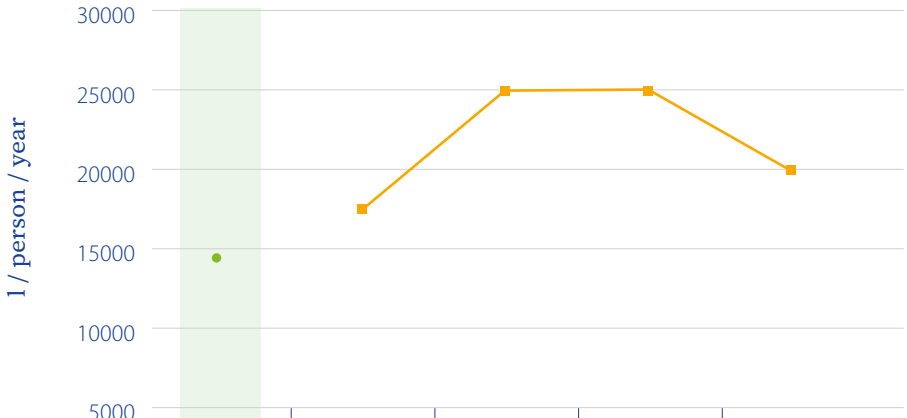
Figure 8: Mains water consumption per m² ★



	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022
Justus Lipsius	383	310	251	265	313
Lex	190	177	80	39	89
Europa		465	266	298	370
Crèche	601	702	418	478	521
Average of all sites	330	320	318	222	276

Figure 9 shows the trend in annual mains water consumption per person. Consumption has thus been corrected by an occupancy factor that takes into account the intensity of the Council's activities. Water consumption per person per day increased slightly compared to the pre-COVID-19 period. Indeed, although consumption in 2022 was lower than in 2019, the occupancy factor was also lower in 2022 than in 2019 (3 866 vs 5 008).

Figure 9: Annual mains water consumption per person ★



	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022
Water (l/person) including Europa		17 418	24 954	26 363	19 892
Water (l/person) excluding Europa	14 399				

Objectives and action

Objectives

In line with its environmental policy, the GSC is committed to an approach of preventing pollution while ensuring the efficient use of water.

Action taken

The GSC has implemented the following measures:

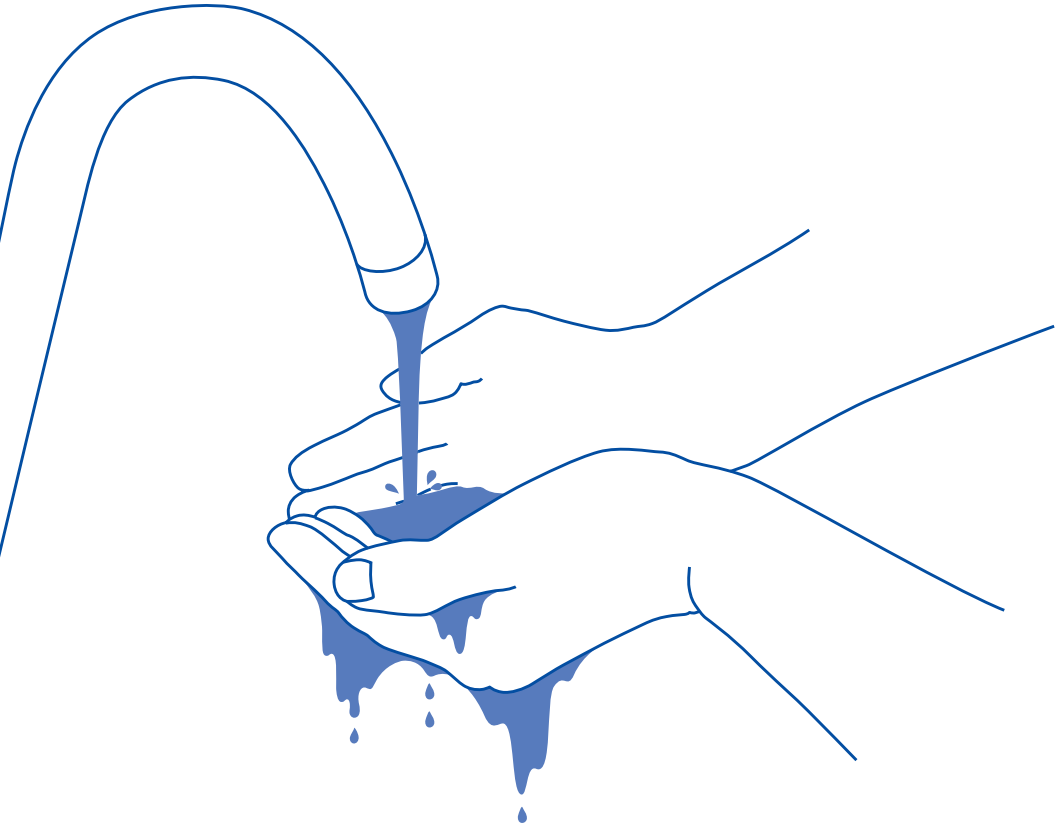
- a rainwater collection system with a total capacity of around 970 000 litres has been installed in the Lex and Europa buildings to supply water to flush the toilets;
- in the Justus Lipsius and Lex buildings, toilets have been fitted with a dual flush button and urinals with a presence detector;
- awareness-raising campaigns have been conducted encouraging users to report any water leaks to the Buildings Unit, which is also responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the facilities;
- awareness-raising campaigns have been conducted encouraging the occupants of the buildings to use water sparingly;
- regular checks are carried out on the valve in the rainwater collection system in the Lex building;

- spray taps with water brakes have been installed in the Lex toilets to limit the flow rate to 50 %.

Action to be taken in 2023 and 2024

The GSC will identify the most relevant measures to be put in place as part of a water action plan and will have the plan approved by the Steering Committee.

Awareness-raising poster on saving water in the toilets.



4.3. Waste

Background

The very wide range of activities carried out by the GSC means it produces many different types of waste, some of which are classified as hazardous. The GSC's waste mainly comes from the fitting-out and maintenance of its premises and technical installations, from catering and from the daily activities of its staff. The types of waste collected within the GSC buildings are:

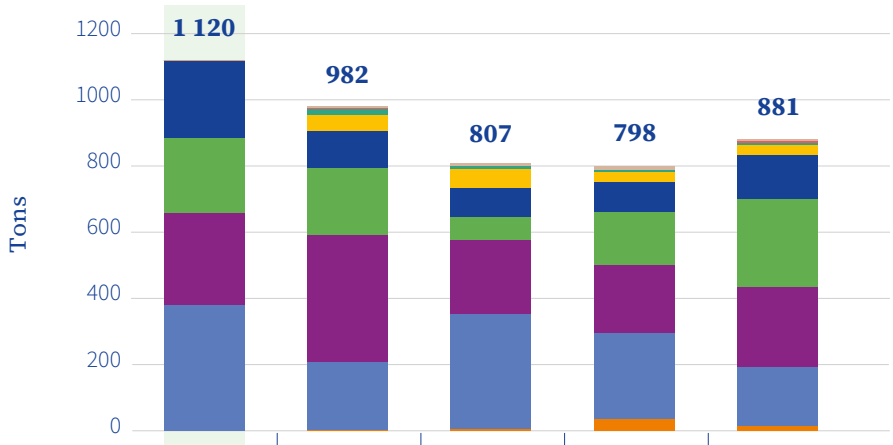
- hazardous waste (neon tubes, cans which contained hazardous products, waste oils, electronic waste, waste from the Medical Service, printer ink cartridges, etc.);
- PMC (plastic bottles and containers for liquids, cans and foil packaging, and drinks cartons);
- glass, metal;
- paper and cardboard;
- organic waste (from the catering service);
- general waste (from offices and meetings, packaging, etc.);
- refurbishment and renovation waste, construction waste;
- equipment withdrawn from service (IT, furniture, etc.).

Environmental performance indicators

Figure 10 illustrates the changes in combined waste generation for all buildings between 2010 and 2022. Improving the quality of sorting has

made it possible to collect a larger proportion of PMC and glass, the collection of which has been organised more systematically since 2012. Due to changes in the classification of hazardous waste, certain kinds of waste (including frying oil, detergents and printer cartridges) now come under a new category called 'other waste'. This new category also includes other new forms of recyclable waste.

Figure 10: Waste by type



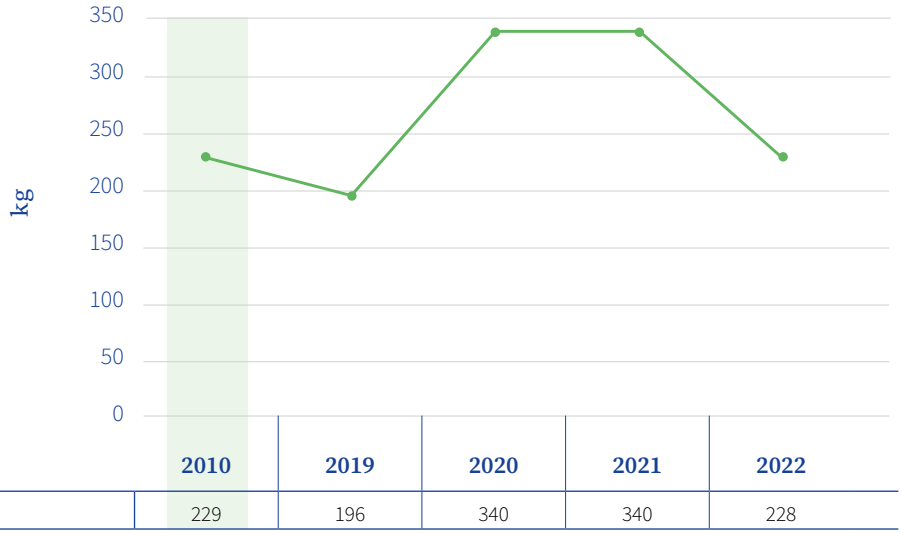
	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022
Hazardous waste		8,3	6,5	10,2	6,9
PMC	1,5	3,6	2,1	2,7	4,7
Glass		16,1	7,5	6,1	8,6
Metal		48,5	58,5	27,6	28,6
Paper and cardboard	235	112,1	86,5	92,5	133,6
Organic waste	227	202,6	72,4	157,4	265,3
All waste	276	384	221	208	241
Bulk waste, renovation…	380	204	349	260	179
Other waste		3	4	34	14
Total of waste (T)	1 119	982	807	798	881

The total amount of waste decreased by around 27 % between 2010 (1 120 tonnes) and 2022 (881 tonnes).

The increase in the amount of waste between 2021 and 2022 is due to the effects of the return to the office after the COVID-19 period and the resulting significant increase in organic waste, paper and cardboard and general waste. The graph shows that PMC, hazardous waste, glass, paper and cardboard, organic waste and general waste increased compared to 2021, while bulk waste and renovation waste decreased.

Figure 11 shows the trend in the amount of waste produced annually per person. Between 2019 and 2020, the annual amount of waste per person increased from 196 kg to 340 kg, due to the effects of the pandemic. In 2021 this figure remained stable, and in 2022 it decreased to 228 kg per person, as a result of new teleworking patterns after the pandemic.

Figure 11: Waste per person



	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022
Waste per person	229	196	340	340	228

Objectives and action

Objectives

The objectives of the 2016-2020 waste action plan were to continue to improve the waste management system and, between 2012 and 2020, to stabilise and if possible reduce the overall quantity of waste, particularly non-recyclable waste, generated per person.

The main objective of the 2021-2025 waste action plan is to follow a hierarchical approach by giving precedence to the most environmentally friendly processing methods. The measures required to achieve this include:

- continuing the existing waste inventory;
- ensuring regulatory compliance in the area of waste management;
- ensuring that the sorting, collection and disposal of waste are fully in line with the applicable environmental legislation;
- stepping up waste prevention and reduction;
- ensuring, where possible, that equipment withdrawn from service is reused;
- ensuring that waste is recycled;
- opting, where possible, for incineration with energy recovery in preference to incineration without recovery or landfill;
- systematically carrying out a waste sorting audit at least once a year;
- taking an innovative approach in this field.

The GSC also continues to ensure that hazardous products and waste are managed appropriately.

Action taken:

The following steps were taken to improve the sorting and recycling of waste:

- removing individual general waste bins from offices in all buildings, replacing them with separate waste collection bins on the patios, in the corridors, in the catering facilities, etc.;
- installing signs to provide contractors and external providers with better information on sorting at the loading bay;
- periodically measuring the quality of sorting and raising staff awareness among staff of this issue;
- reusing some of the furniture withdrawn from service;
- biomethanising organic waste: food unfit for consumption and kitchen waste from the Justus Lipsius and Lex buildings are collected and processed in specialised processing centres which produce biogas;
- recycling cardboard packaging and increasing the useful life of IT equipment by reusing or recycling it;
- adding a specific waste collection bin for the collection and recycling of cardboard cups;
- removing collection points for ink cartridges and light bulbs, which have become obsolete, and promoting the collection of batteries instead;
- replacing the general waste bins provided for journalists during major events with sorting areas;
- glass recycling bin consolidation: reducing the total number of glass recycling bins and communicating about where they are located.

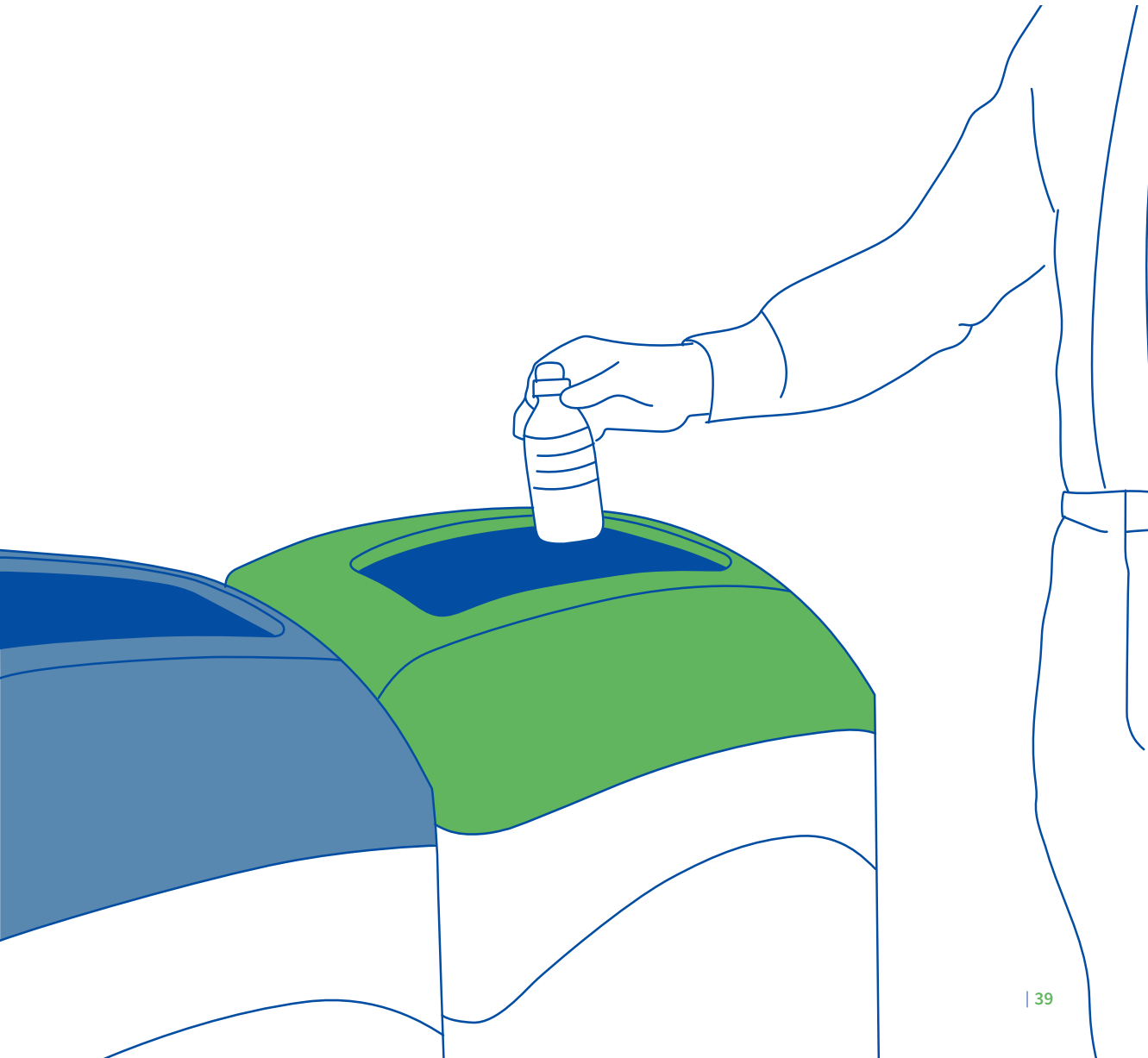
Action to be taken in 2023 and 2024

The GSC undertakes to:

- continue to raise awareness among staff;
- increase the use of recyclable or reusable office supplies as far as possible; continue and extend (if applicable) contracts involving

the reuse of some of the equipment withdrawn from service;

- set up a sorting system for plastic packaging films and raise awareness among contractors and subcontractors;
- start reflecting on the implementation of the circular economy at the GSC, both for renovation work and for logistics.



Waste sorting

4.4. Greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants

Background

All of the following activities conducted by the GSC generate greenhouse gas emissions (non-exhaustive list):

- operation of buildings and buildings policies;
- staff transport, travel and missions;
- technical, construction and renovation projects;
- use of natural resources, incoming and outgoing materials;
- catering;
- holding of meetings, conferences and summits;
- freight.

Annual emissions of air pollutants such as sulphur oxides (SO_x) carbon monoxide (CO) and nitrogen oxides (NO_x)[6] are controlled through the adequate monitoring of technical installations (CO and NO_x).

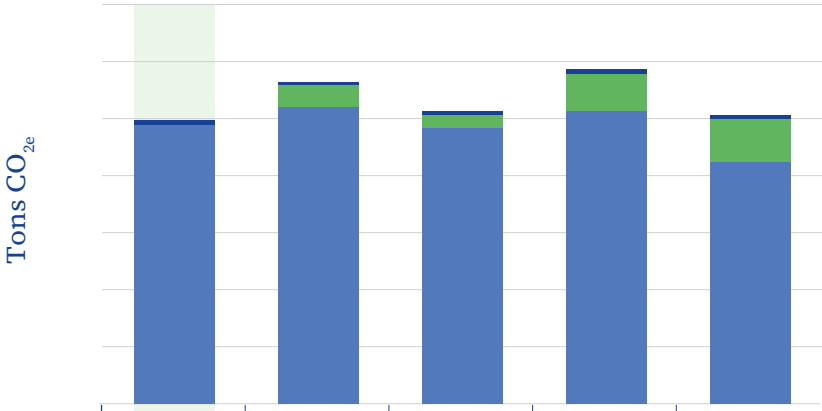
6. The global warming potential (GWP) represents the combined effect of the differing times these gases remain in the atmosphere and their relative power of absorption of outgoing infra-red heat radiation, and is generally based on a 100-year time horizon. The GWP is used to translate the overall emissions of greenhouse gases into emissions of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO_{2e}).

Environmental performance indicators

The greenhouse gases taken into account in environmental programming are carbon dioxide (CO_2), nitrous oxide (N_2O), methane (CH4), sulphur hexafluoride (SF6), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) and perfluorocarbons (PFCs). The GSC currently measures the direct emissions of greenhouse gases resulting from the operation of its buildings. These direct emissions are among the performance indicators of the EMS. They are mainly emissions related to the use of gas for heating and cogeneration and of fuel for service vehicles, and accidental emissions of refrigerants, the warming effect of which is measured in carbon dioxide equivalent. The GSC purchases green electricity, in respect of which greenhouse gas emissions are not taken into account as such electricity comes from renewable energy sources and high-efficiency cogeneration. Direct emissions of these air pollutants are not significant (PM and SO_x).

Direct emissions of greenhouse gases are shown in Figure 12 and include emissions from boilers, the cogeneration systems and the service fleet, and refrigerant leakages. These direct emissions fluctuate considerably from one year to another, owing mainly to variations in gas consumption but also to accidental leaks in refrigeration systems.

Figure 12: Direct greenhouse gas emissions[7]

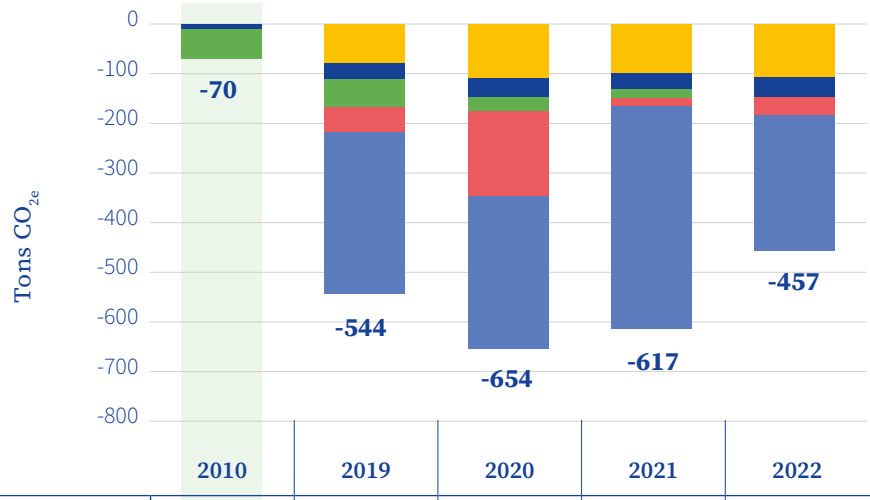


	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022
Service fleet	100	52	54	73	74
Refrigerants		373	232	467	758
Gas	4 877	5208	4832	5134	4229

7. Figure 12 takes into account the direct emissions in the three main Scope 1 categories. The indirect or upstream emissions caused by these activities are excluded from these data.

Figure 13 shows the greenhouse gas emissions avoided thanks to the photovoltaic and cogeneration installations. In 2022, these enabled savings of 457 tCO_{2e}[8].

Figure 13: Greenhouse gas emissions avoided thanks to the photovoltaic and cogeneration installations

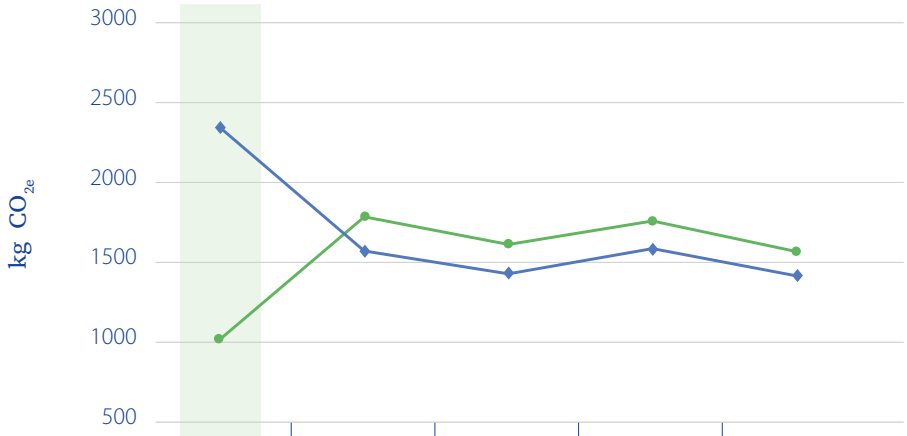


	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022
EU - Solar electricity		-77	-107	-98	-106
JL - Solar electricity	-10	-34	-40	-33	-40
LEX - Cogeneration	-60	-55	-27	-17	
EU - Cogeneration		-51	-173	-18	-37
JL - Cogeneration		-327	-307	-449	-273
Total	-70	-544	-654	-617	-457

8. The CO_2 emissions avoided thanks to the solar panels were calculated in accordance with the Ministerial Decree of 24 July 2008 setting out the energy assumptions to be taken into consideration when carrying out technical and economic feasibility studies in the Brussels-Capital Region. The CO_2 emissions avoided thanks to the cogeneration systems were calculated by comparing the CO_2 emissions with those of equivalent heat production from a high-efficiency boiler (efficiency = 90 %) and with those of equivalent net electricity production from a gas/steam power plant (efficiency = 55 %).

Figure 14 shows the trend in direct greenhouse gas emissions per FTE (full-time equivalent), which fell from 1 785 kg of CO_{2e} per FTE in 2019 to 1 567 kg of CO_{2e} per FTE in 2022.

Figure 14: Direct greenhouse gas emissions per 100 m² and per person[9]



	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022
kg CO_2 per 100 m²	2 343	1 571	1 428	1 586	1 415
kg CO_2 per person	1 019	1 785	1 612	1 759	1 567

Objectives and action

Objectives

In accordance with its environmental policy, the GSC is taking steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions resulting from its operations and activities. To that end, it will implement the recommendations set out in the conclusions of the Council of the European Union of 11 May 2015 on Special Report No 14/2014 by the European Court of Auditors: 'How do the EU institutions and bodies calculate, reduce and offset their greenhouse gas emissions?'.

The GSC has set itself the target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions resulting from its operations and activities by 25 % between 2017 and 2030, in accordance with the corresponding objectives of the European Union (-40 % between 1990 and 2030).

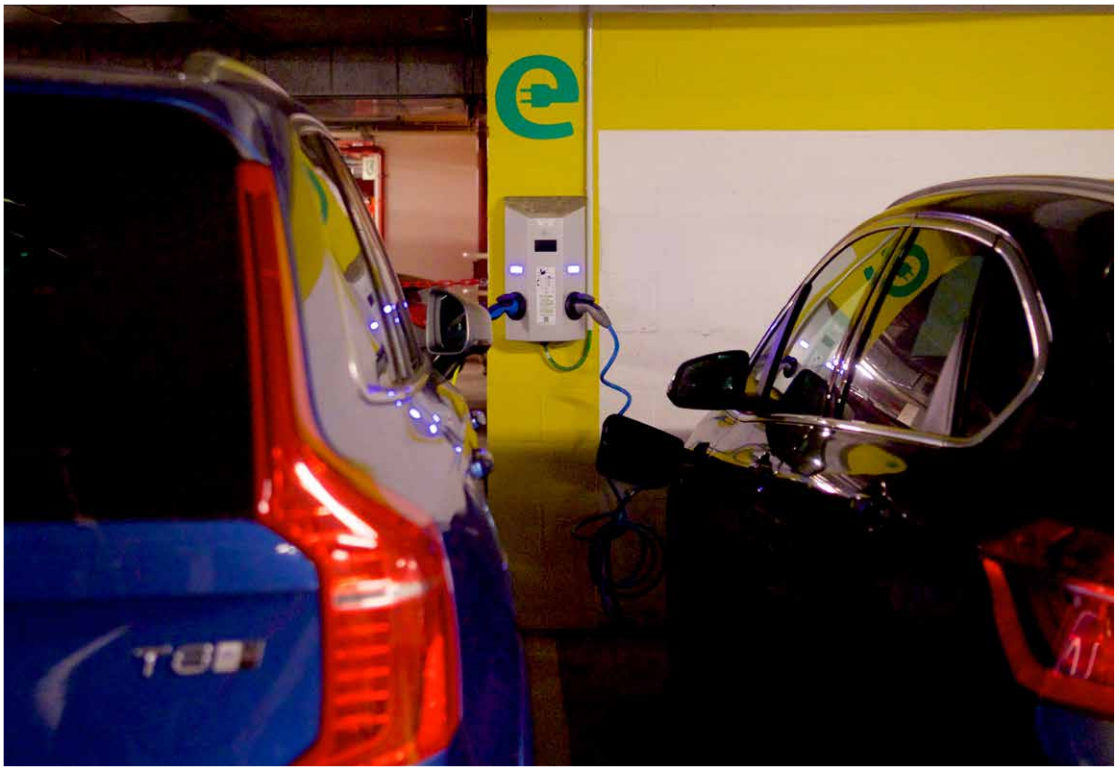
Action taken

The GSC has taken the following steps to reduce the carbon footprint of its activities, extending the scope beyond that defined by gas and fuel consumption for service vehicles and refrigerants:

9. Figure 14 takes into account the direct emissions in the three main Scope 1 categories. The indirect or upstream emissions caused by these activities are excluded from these data. The surface area includes offices, warehouses, catering facilities and car parks.

- optimising energy management (see subsection 4.1 on energy);
- promoting alternatives to car use (see subsection 4.6 on mobility);
- purchasing green and renewable electricity;
- offsetting emissions from the production of paper delivered to the GSC;
- making video conference rooms available to reduce the amount of travel required and raising awareness among staff of the availability of video conferencing;
- investing in hybrid vehicles and downsizing, thus reducing the climate impact of the entire service fleet[10];
- annual update of the carbon footprint study covering all GSC activities;
- having the catering services obtain and keep the 'Good Food' label for the Justus Lipsius, Lex and Europa buildings, emphasising local, seasonal and, for the most part, organic products;
- improving the system for making food donations to the Red Cross, and for donating decommissioned furniture to Oxfam;
- completely removing single-use plastic from the Europa canteen.

Electric vehicle charging stations for staff.



10. Manufacturers' data, except for armoured vehicles.

Action to be taken in 2023 and 2024

The GSC undertakes to:

- regularly update the study on the carbon footprint of its activities, based on a standardised approach to calculating, reporting and reducing its direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions;
- extend the 'zero single-use plastic' project to the Justus Lipsius canteen and the Lex cafeteria;
- include all of the canteens and cafeterias in the zero-waste campaign.

4.5. Paper-based resources

Background

The volumes of paper consumed comprise primarily the standard A4 office paper used by staff in printers and photocopiers, but also the publications and brochures produced internally and for external use.

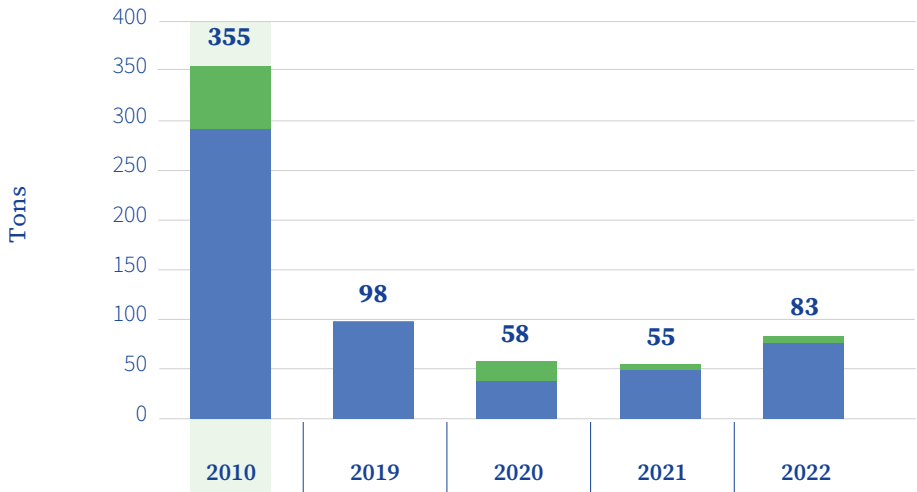
Environmental performance indicators

Total paper consumption fell from 355 tonnes in 2010 to 83 tonnes in 2022, as shown in Figure 15, representing a 76 % reduction. The sharp decline in consumption in 2020-2021 was due to the COVID-19 crisis. Internal paper consumption per person fell from 60 kg in 2010 to 20 kg in 2020, as shown in Figure 16, which represents a 66 % reduction.

Overall, total paper consumption decreased fairly steadily between 2010 and 2019. The 2020-2021 data will remain historically unique due to the COVID-19 crisis and the resulting obligation to work from home.

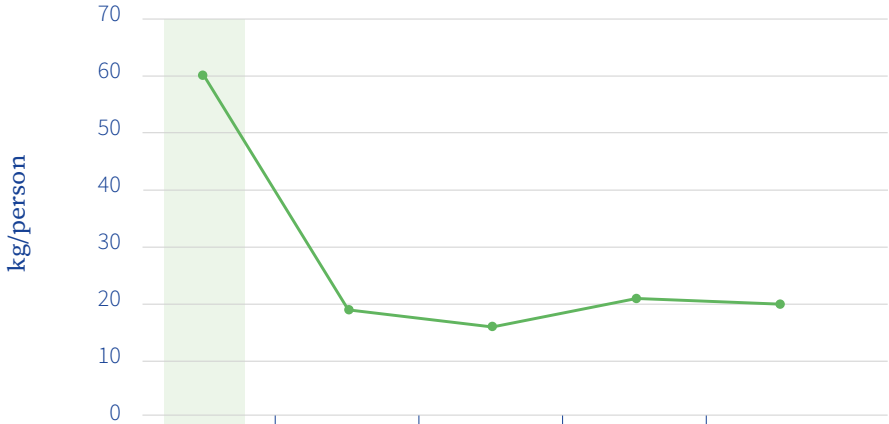
In 2022, there was a rise in consumption, which, however, remains below the 2019 figure.

Figure 15: Paper consumption



	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022
External publications	63	1	20	6	7
Internal consumption	292	97	38	49	76
Paper consumption	355	98	58	55	83

Figure 16: Paper consumption per person



Objectives and action

Objectives

The action plan for paper, which was first adopted in 2012, has been updated for the period 2021-2025 with the following objectives:

- to reduce total paper consumption by 30 % and paper consumption per person by 10 % by the end of 2025 as compared with the average for 2017, 2018 and 2019;
- to maintain the environmental performance of the paper used, i.e. in 2025, 90 % of the paper should bear a European eco-label such as Nordic Swan, Blue Angel or equivalent;
- to evaluate and improve the paper recycling rate;
- to improve the inventory of paper.

Action taken

Paper consumption decreased owing to the numerous measures taken, the most significant of which are as follows:

- introducing a system enabling copying/printing to be activated by personal badges, thus reducing the number of printing errors and/or duplicate printing;
- monitoring the implementation of the policy to reduce the number of individual printers in favour of shared and network printers;
- gradually replacing desktop computers with laptops and hybrid computers (laptops/tablets), and installing Wi-Fi in the GSC's meeting rooms, which helps reduce the use of paper during meetings;
- adding new functionalities to Delegates Portal: a computerised meetings file, intended to replace the paper files prepared for meetings of the Council, is accessible on Delegates Portal. There, users can consult and/or save a PDF file containing the agenda for meetings of Coreper and the Council. All documents relating to the computerised meeting file are synchronised with the respective delegates' diaries and marked for ease of navigation;

- widespread teleworking (with a single screen provided for working from home and no printer);
- implementation of a stock-take for paper each year between mid-December and mid-January.

Action to be taken in 2023 and 2024
In accordance with the 2021-2025 action plan for paper, the GSC is committed to:

- proceeding with the change in weight of A4 paper used by staff from 80g/m^2 to 75g/m^2;
- introducing a system which generates automatic reports showing paper consumption by department;
- developing the Agora and Delegates Portal applications to optimise document management for delegates with a view to a more systematic digitisation of documents;
- developing digital solutions for the interpreting service to reduce/eliminate paper copies;
- providing regular training for (newly recruited) cleaning staff in sorting waste, including paper.

Other measures under consideration are designed to maintain the environmental performance of the paper used and increase how much it is recycled.

4.6. Mobility

Background

The GSC employs around 3 000 people who commute daily between their homes and workplaces (primarily the Justus Lipsius and Lex buildings). Work-related journeys are also undertaken every day, mainly in the Brussels-Capital Region.

Environmental performance indicators

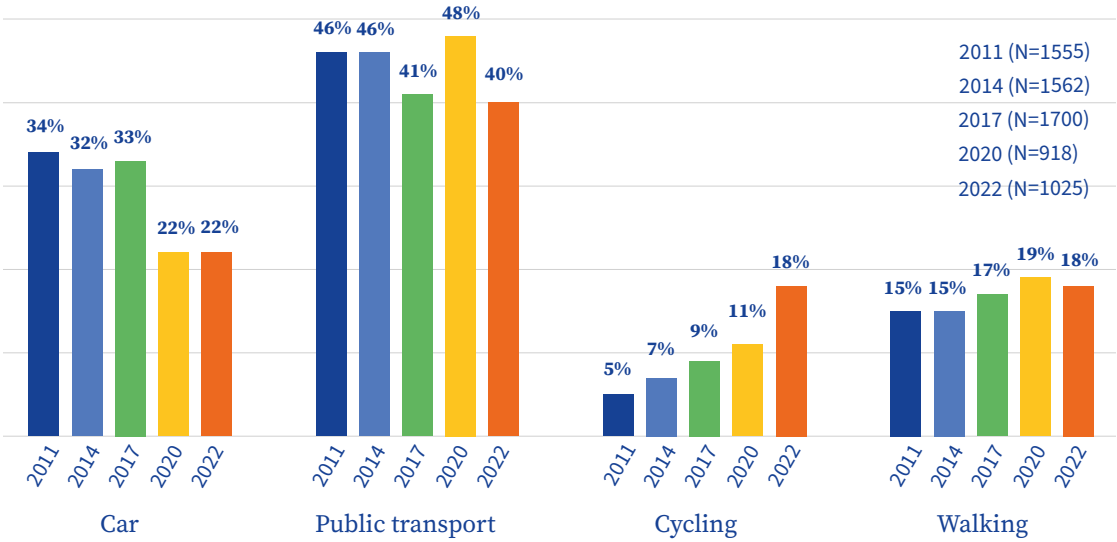
Commuting between home and work
The employee transport plan (plan de déplacements d'entreprise/bedrijfsvervoerplan - PDE/BVP)[11] is updated every three years. In this context, several mobility surveys have been carried out at the GSC, most recently in 2017, 2020 and 2022. The last mobility survey in 2022 recorded a response rate of 33 %, which was 2 % higher than that recorded in the previous survey in 2020.

59 % of the staff who responded to the survey live in the Brussels-Capital Region (576 persons). 23 % of staff commute from Flanders and 18 % from Wallonia.

Figure 17 shows how GSC staff commuted between home and work between 2011 and 2022. The proportion of staff travelling exclusively by car fell from 34 % in 2011 to 22 % in 2022 (a rate that has been consistent since 2020), resulting in a shift towards walking, cycling and public transport.

11. The employee transport plan involves examining, implementing, evaluating and updating measures to promote the sustainable management of work-related journeys (decree of the Brussels-Capital regional government on employee transport plans; Moniteur belge/Belgisch Staatsblad of June 2017).

Figure 17: Commuting between home and work ★



Work-related journeys

The 2022 mobility survey indicates that only 12 % of GSC staff make work-related journeys. Of those 12 %, 82 % make fewer than four work-related journeys per month, and only 5 % make ten or more work-related journeys per month.

Objectives and action

Objectives

The Good Move regional mobility plan[12], approved in 2020, aims to reduce the use of cars in Brussels by nine percentage points in 2030 compared with 2020 (from 33 % to 24 %).

More people are expected to take public transport, cycle and walk over the same period. The main objectives of the GSC's 2021-2024 employee transport plan are as follows:

- to establish a more flexible management system for travel allowances;
- to ensure ease of access to GSC buildings;
- to provide information to, and raise awareness among, staff about soft mobility;
- to contribute to reducing CO_2 emissions related to GSC activities.

The changes in the modal split for journeys, based on the results of the 2022 interim mobility survey, are set out in Table 2 below. The Brussels public transport network (STIB/MIVB) is the most used form of transport for travelling to work, with 41 % of respondents using it. A total of 22 % use motor vehicles to commute (car, moped/motorcycle or car sharing), 18 % make the journey to work on foot and 19 % cycle to work. Overall, 88 % use sustainable forms of transport.

12. Good Move mobility plan, Brussels-Capital Region, November 2020.

Table 2: Changes in transport habits

	Survey of GSC staff				
Main mode of transport	2011 (N = 1562)	2014 (N = 1562)	2017 (N = 1700)	2020 (N = 930)	2022 (N = 1042)
Public transport	46%	46%	41,2%	48%	**41%**
Car	34%	32%	33%	22%	**22%**
Walking	15%	15%	17,2%	19%	**18%**
Cycling	5%	7%	8,6%	11%	**19%**
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

NB: 'car' covers car sharing and journeys made by motorcycle; public transport includes train, STIB, De Lijn and TEC.

Action taken

The GSC's mobility policy complies effectively with the Brussels-Capital Region's requirements for each of the nine compulsory measures: the presence of a mobility coordinator, informing and raising awareness among staff, the multimodal access plan, encouraging the use of public transport, bicycle parking areas, taking into account the Ecoscore when purchasing service vehicles, the procedure to follow in the event of a pollution peak and the policy on electric vehicles. In 2022, a new sustainable mobility contribution system was introduced. A half-yearly flat-rate mobility contribution is automatically paid to staff members who have waived the right to access the car parks and who thus choose a sustainable mode of transport.

Two of the three bicycle parking areas in the car parks of the Justus Lipsius building (floor 06) were enlarged in 2022 and 2023. A total of 245 parking spaces (including 17 spaces for cargo bikes) were added to the original 148 places. The car parks were equipped with electrical sockets and bicycle battery lockers to recharge bicycle batteries.

Action to be taken in 2023 and 2024

In accordance with the timetable for the Brussels-Capital Region, a new GSC employee transport plan will be submitted to Brussels Mobility at the start of 2025. A further mobility survey will be conducted in 2024 for this purpose.

To improve its mobility policy the GSC undertakes to implement the measures listed in the table below as part of its mobility plan for the period 2020-2024:

Measure	Description	Expected result
Car park management	Draw up a policy on parking in the car parks for staff from outside firms and visitors	Freeing up parking spaces in the Justus Lipsius and Lex buildings
Accessibility for bicycles	Continue to improve existing parking areas (signage), the changing rooms and the charging points for electric bicycles	Maintain/increase the number of staff using bicycles
Accessibility for pedestrians	Ensure that the GSC's buildings are easily accessible for pedestrians (when works are being carried out)	Maintain the percentage of staff walking to work (18 %)
Communication/ awareness-raising	Hold annual awareness-raising events (Mobility Week, VéloMai), inform newcomers and existing staff about the mobility policy	Boost the number of staff taking public transport, walking and cycling and raise awareness of mobility measures
Mobility contribution	Continue to implement and raise awareness of the new sustainable mobility contribution system	Increase the use of sustainable modes of transport

4.7. Sustainable public procurement

Background

By opting for environmentally friendly goods, services and works, the GSC is making an effective contribution to supporting sustainable consumption and production. Public procurement is sustainable when a public authority seeks to obtain goods, services or works which will have less impact on the environment over their lifetime.

Objectives and action

Objectives

The GSC aims to ensure that environmental criteria are increasingly included in public procurement procedures wherever relevant.

Action taken

The GSC is actively involved in an interinstitutional working group which develops and shares best practice in the field of sustainable public procurement. Since the start of its environmental management programme, the GSC has implemented the following actions:

- inclusion of environmental criteria in a number of public contracts: floral decoration, catering service, purchase of recycled paper with high environmental performance; waste disposal and recycling, shredders; building-cleaning services; purchase of highly energy-efficient IT equipment (computers, printers, servers, etc.); maintenance of technical installations; catering contracts; leasing of service vehicles; running of the Council's crèche; finishing services; moving services; changing room and toilet refurbishment; works for rainwater recovery;
- purchasing green electricity;
- renewal of a contract for making available an interinstitutional Help Desk on sustainable public procurement procedures until 2024;

- regular presentations on various topics related to sustainable public procurement (labels, sharing of experiences and good practices, etc.) organised by the interinstitutional Help Desk.

Action to be taken in 2023 and 2024

The GSC undertakes to take the following action:

- ensuring the continued implementation of the measures in place and the inclusion of environmental requirements and criteria in relevant public procurement procedures;
- developing the expertise of the departments concerned in the field of sustainable public procurement;
- designing and implementing a procedure for sustainable public procurement within the Project Evaluation Committee (for expenditure above EUR 400 000);
- disseminating within the GSC the content of presentations and training courses run by the European Parliament, via the dedicated interinstitutional Help Desk for sustainable public procurement;
- carrying out a general review on eliminating single-use plastic and gradually reducing packaging.

4.8. Biodiversity

Background

The GSC's direct impact on biodiversity may be judged from the way in which the land is occupied by the premises of the Council of the European Union, in particular the built area. Since a built area is sealed, it cannot in theory host any plant species and therefore will not contribute to biodiversity.

The use and management of hazardous products and paper resources and the organisation of catering services needed for the smooth functioning of the GSC may have a significant indirect impact on biodiversity.

Environmental performance indicators

The GSC has fitted out a number of internal spaces (patios) in such a way as to contribute to biodiversity. The table below shows, for each building, the total size of the plot, the built area, the surface area of the patios and the other areas (including the ground floor). The data given have not changed since 2019.

Building	Plot size	Built area	Green areas (including bodies of water)	Other areas (surrounding areas: roads, vehicle and bicycle parking facilities, pavements, etc.)
Justus Lipisus	39 375 m^2	19 356 m^2	10 040 m^2	9 979 m^2
Lex	6 879 m^2	4 454 m^2	568 m^2	1 857 m^2
Europa	8 027 m^2	6 740 m^2	n/a	1 287 m^2
Crèche	2 067 m^2	1 010 m^2	n/a	1 057 m^2

Note: n/a = not applicable.

Objectives and action

Objectives

The GSC undertakes to pay particular attention to preserving biodiversity in all activities which may have an impact on it.

Action taken

The GSC has taken the following measures to improve biodiversity:

- greening the patios in the Justus Lipsius building;
- purchasing eco-friendly paper bearing an EU eco-label and an FSC label [13];
- using, wherever possible, eco-friendly cleaning products;
- establishing sustainability criteria for the catering services, with a focus on local and seasonal products and fish from sustainable fisheries (Good Food label);

13. Forest Stewardship Council certification.

- installing an insect hotel, mainly for solitary bees, and nesting boxes for urban birds in the trees in the Justus Lipsius patios;
- incorporating a green wall into the Europa building.

Action to be taken in 2023 and 2024

The GSC undertakes to incorporate biodiversity protection criteria in relevant public procurement contracts. A study will be carried out with a view to increasing the number of planters and enhancing biodiversity as much as possible in this urban setting.

Biodiversity (Justus Lipsius building).

4.9. Communication and awareness-raising

Background

The GSC employs approximately 3 000 officials and has an average of 2 000 external visitors per day.

The behaviour of GSC staff and visitors has an environmental impact, in terms of consumption of resources (such as water, energy and paper), waste management, and air pollution arising from transport choices.

Environmental performance indicators

The results of communication measures – focusing on awareness of the EMS and a quality assessment of it – were measured in the mobility survey conducted in 2020.

On average, 29 % of respondents said they had either good or very good knowledge of the measures put in place by the GSC. Those relating to waste (prevention, recycling) are the best known; a total of 74 % of the respondents said they were aware of the GSC's environmental messages, in particular in the areas of waste, paper and mobility. By contrast, 46 % said that they had insufficient knowledge of the Green Office website.

Objectives and action

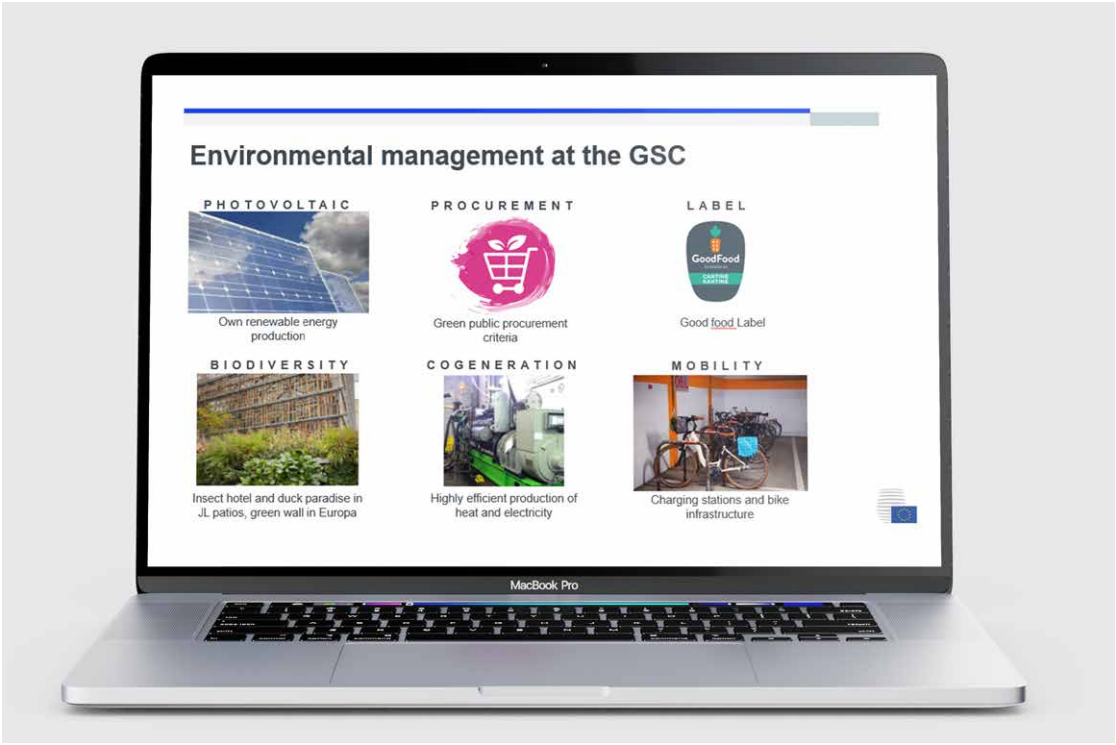
Objectives

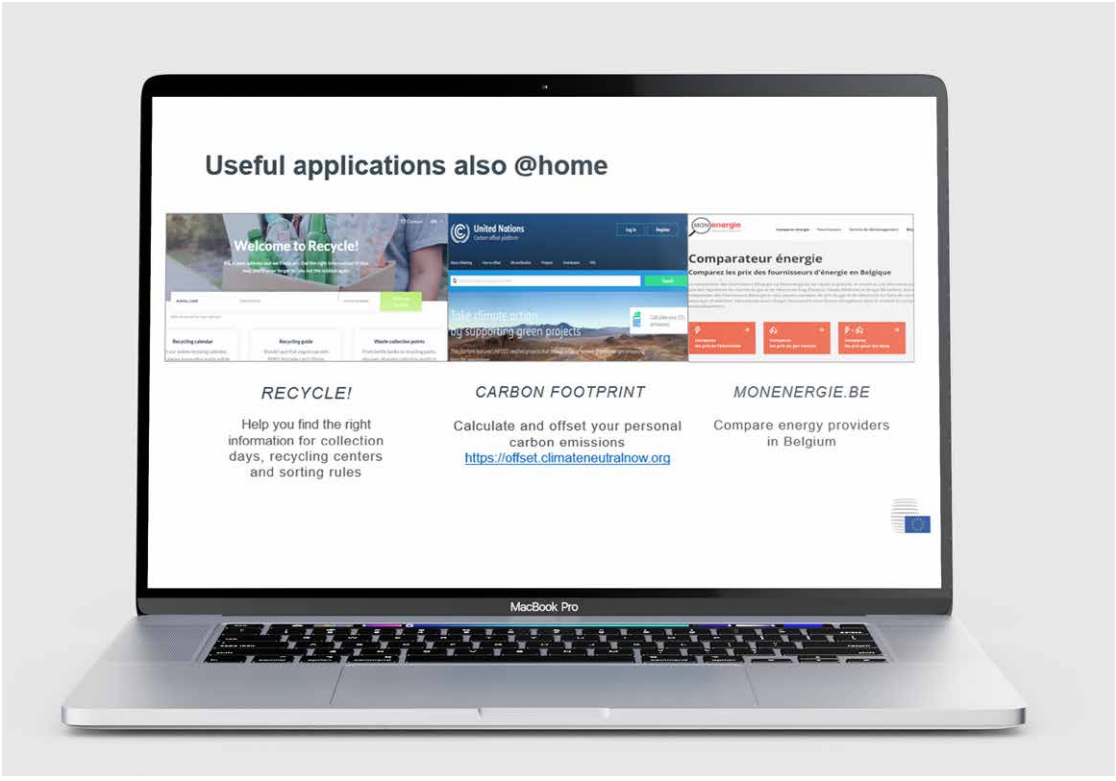
An annual programme entitled 'Communication and environmental awareness-raising' has been set up.

It comprises both one-off and systematic internal communication activities scheduled for the year in question. The communication programme's targets consist of planning, informing, raising awareness, and promoting stakeholder participation, in particular:

- informing staff about environmental management targets and achievements;
- raising awareness of good practice and disseminating notable examples adopted in various departments and units;
- promoting staff involvement in and commitment to environmental management;
- consulting staff (on particular activities and themes);
- creating a sense of ownership;
- maintaining and encouraging action and motivation;
- planning awareness-raising campaigns and initiatives.

Two pages from the EMAS presentation for newcomers.





Action taken:

The action taken can be divided into four main categories:

- measures to promote ongoing awareness of the programme using the GSC's intranet (Green Office website): articles, awareness-raising campaigns on European or local events such as Mobility Week or the European Week for Waste Reduction;
- campaigns aimed at all staff on good practices to be adopted (energy, sorting waste, reducing paper consumption, etc.).
- mobilisation campaigns led by the environmental network, and awareness-raising campaigns for newcomers and all staff;
- external communication initiatives through the Green Office team's involvement in the inter-institutional EMAS Days and the VéloMai campaign.

Training has also been organised for specific target groups, based on their involvement in a particular environmental area, e.g. for contractors' staff.

In June 2022, the fully revised Green Office website migrated to a new platform (SharePoint).

An interactive workshop on energy was held to encourage staff to participate in defining measures on energy-related issues.

Lastly, training and awareness-raising on environmental issues for management was developed together with the Staff Development Unit and technical management teams.

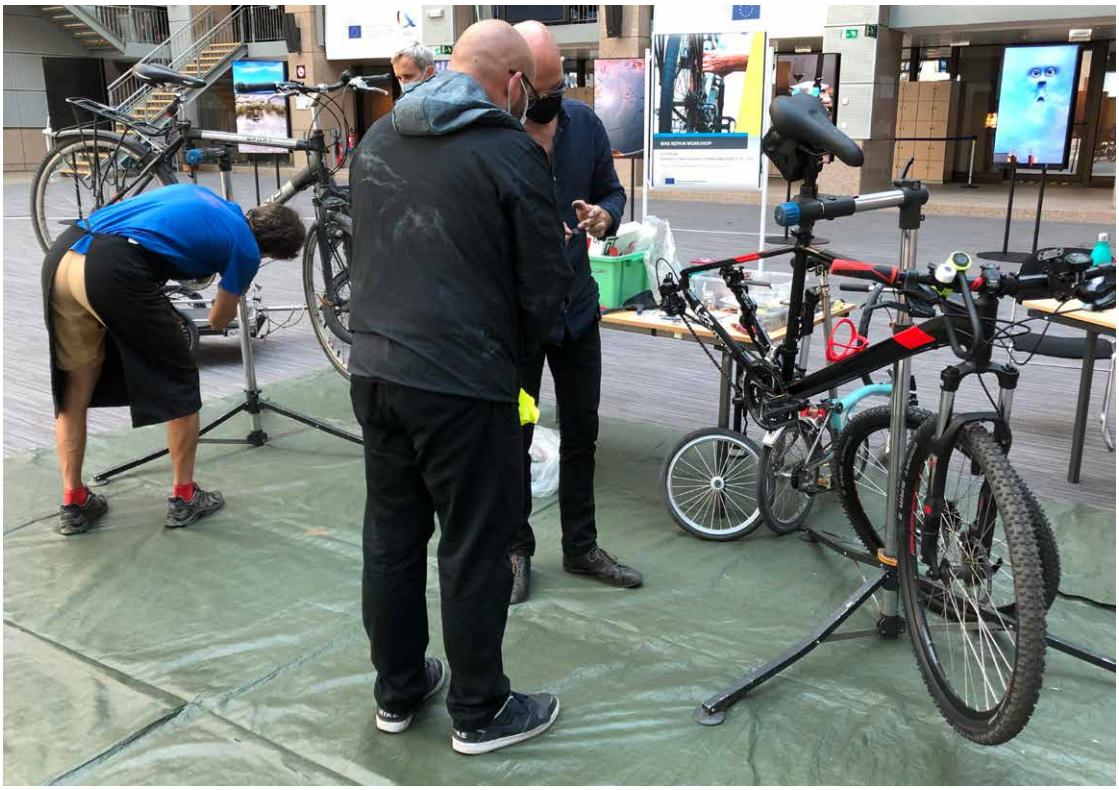
Action to be taken in 2023 and 2024

The GSC will implement the following measures:

- ensuring that environmental management remains in the spotlight by producing articles, participating in regional environmental campaigns and raising staff awareness of various environmental issues;
- publishing and periodically updating the environmental statement;
- participating in the VéloMai campaign to encourage staff to cycle to and from work;
- participating in the interinstitutional network of EMAS-registered European institutions in order to develop joint measures;
- continuing to ensure that external contractors are aware of environmental management;
- providing a training/awareness-raising programme for management on environmental issues;
- developing new training and awareness-raising for staff;
- ensuring awareness-raising among delegates, too.

Bike repair workshop poster.

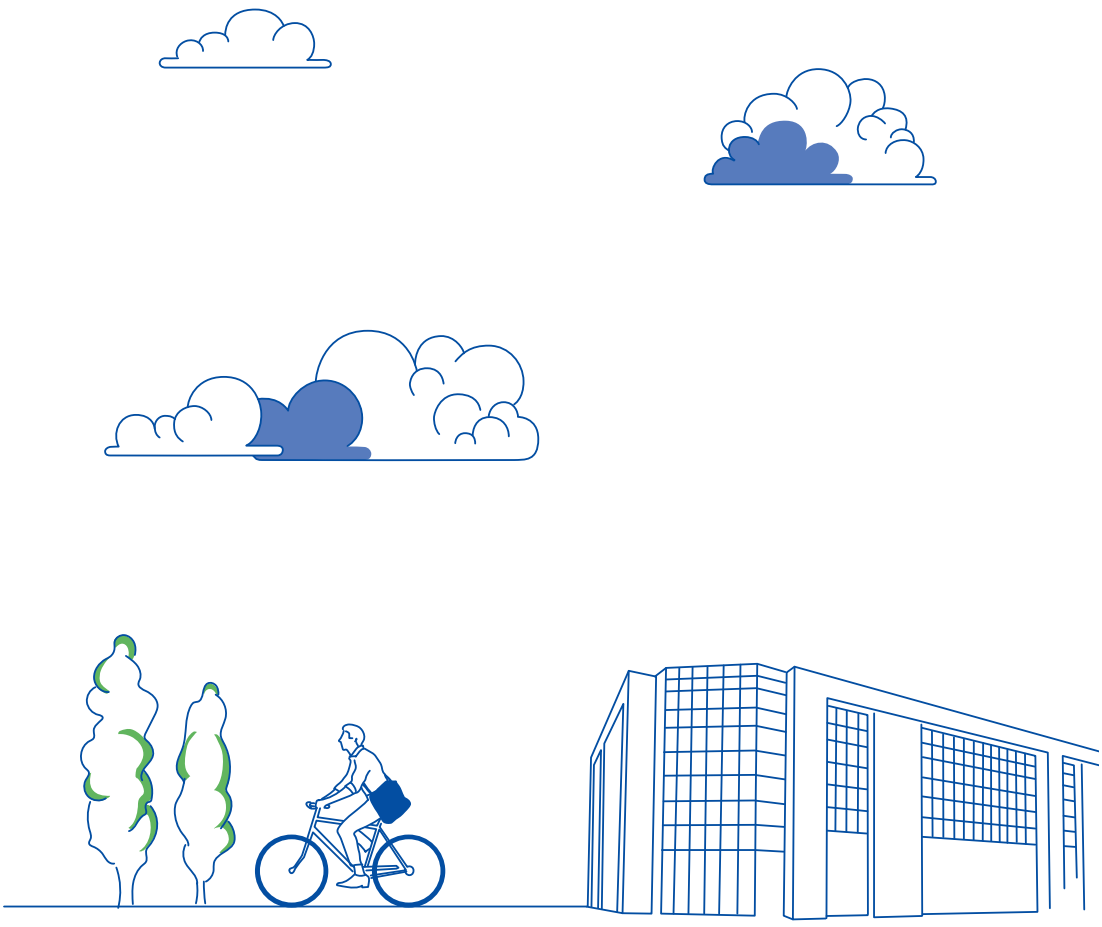
Bicycle repair workshop for staff.



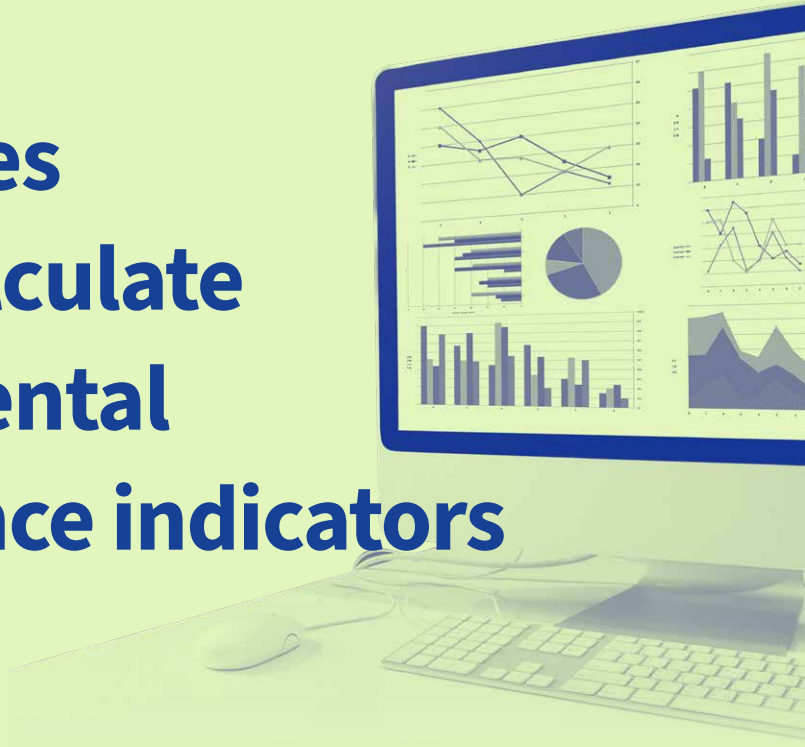
5. Verification data

This version is a full translation of the french version verified by the EMAS verifier.

For the new certification, the next full revision and publication of the statement are planned for the second half of 2024.



6. Variables used to calculate environmental performance indicators



A ratio is used to calculate environmental performance, using appropriate variables for the operational context. The main variables used by the GSC are:

- degree days;
- average number of occupants per day;
- the heated or air-conditioned surface area of the buildings.

6.1. Degree days

The concept of degree days may be used to assess the severity of the season in which heating is required. This enables a comparison of the heating requirements of different buildings or of the same building at different times of the year. A commonly used concept is '15/15 degree days'. The first 15 represents the average comfortable temperature in our climate over a 24-hour period and in a whole building, i.e. 18°C, minus 3°C, which is the average amount of heat conveyed by the sun and internal gains (lights, office equipment, people, etc.).

The second 15 represents the outside temperature below which there is deemed to be a need for heating, and which is consequently used to define the heating period. A more general benchmark may be obtained by normalising degree days. The most commonly used benchmark is 'normal degree days'. This figure represents the average number of 15/15 degree days over the last 30 years as calculated by the Belgian Royal Meteorological Institute (sources: www.energieplus-lesite.be; www.bruxellesenvironnement.be; energie.wallonie.be).

Year	Normal degree days	Actual degree days
2010	2 087	2 309
2019	1 940	1 739
2020	1 940	1 439
2021	1 835	1 905
2022	1 835	1 554
2022	1835	1554

6.2. Number of people

The number of people is equal to the average number of occupants per day of all the buildings, based on the number of officials and people treated as such, staff from outside firms, visitors, members of delegations and journalists. Following the entry into use of the Europa building, a large number of activities were transferred there, resulting in staff moving to the new building too.

The year 2020 was unusual due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The occupancy rates were normal from 1 January until 15 March 2020. After that date, due to the health emergency, the occupancy rates fell dramatically. Due to the pandemic, teleworking became the rule and presence in the buildings was only compulsory for essential staff.

Year	Average number of occupants per day (people)
2010	4 880
2019	5 008
2020	2 377
2021	2 347
2022	3 866

6.3. Heated or air-conditioned surface area (in m^2)

Council buildings are subject to energy performance of buildings (EPB) certificates based on their heated or air-conditioned surface area. That is why this surface area was chosen for calculating certain environmental performance indicators.

Year	Total heated or air-conditioned surface area (in m^2)	Heated or air-conditioned surface area of the justus lipsius (in m^2)	Heated or air-conditioned surface area of the lex (in m^2)	Heated or air-conditioned surface area of the europa building (in m^2)	Heated or air-conditioned surface area of the crèche (in m^2)
2010	212 366	145 134	62 775	n/a	4 457
2019	272 595	145 134	62 775	60 229	4 457
2020	272 595	145 134	62 775	60 229	4 457
2021	278 882	146 942	66 350	60 960	4 630
2022	278 882	146 942	66 350	60 960	4 630

6.4. Number of meetings

The table below indicates the number of meetings held by the Council in the Justus Lipsius, Lex and Europa buildings and in Luxembourg. This indicator has a significant impact on the Council's environmental footprint.

In 2020 the number of meetings was reduced due to the pandemic.

Year	Number of confirmed meetings[14]
2019	3 983
2020	2 902
2021	4 289
2022	4 415

14. Since 2020, the Council has used the number of meetings confirmed by official monitoring to have taken place, instead of the number of scheduled meetings.

Rue de la Loi cycle path.

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Pdf: ISBN 978-92-824-9640-4 doi:10.2860/336703
ISSN 2443-8170 QC-AQ-23-002-EN-N

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Previous editions: 2022

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QC-AQ-23-002-EN-N

Rue de la Loi/Wetstraat 175
1048 Bruxelles • Brussel
Belgique • België
Tel. +32 (0)2 281 61 11

www.consilium.europa.eu

/eucouncil

ISBN 978-92-824-9640-4