



Environmental statement 2022

Updated: November 2022





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2021 DATA

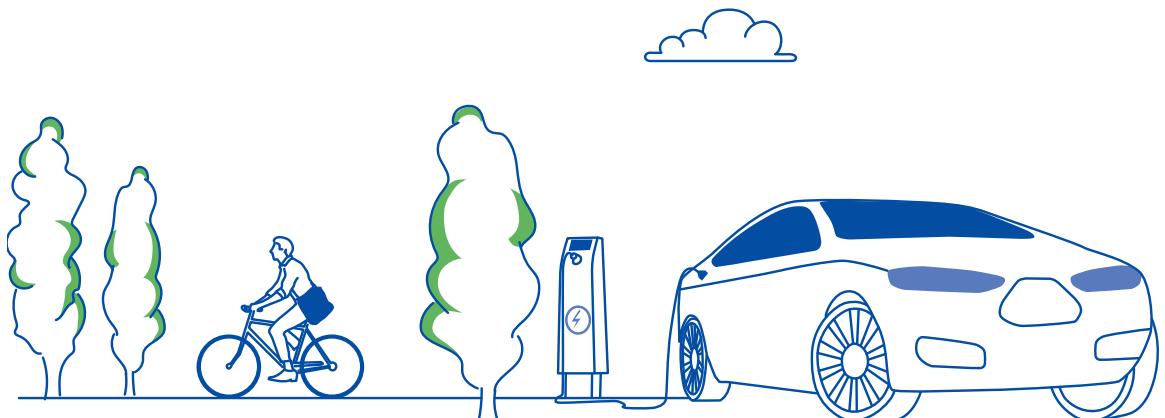
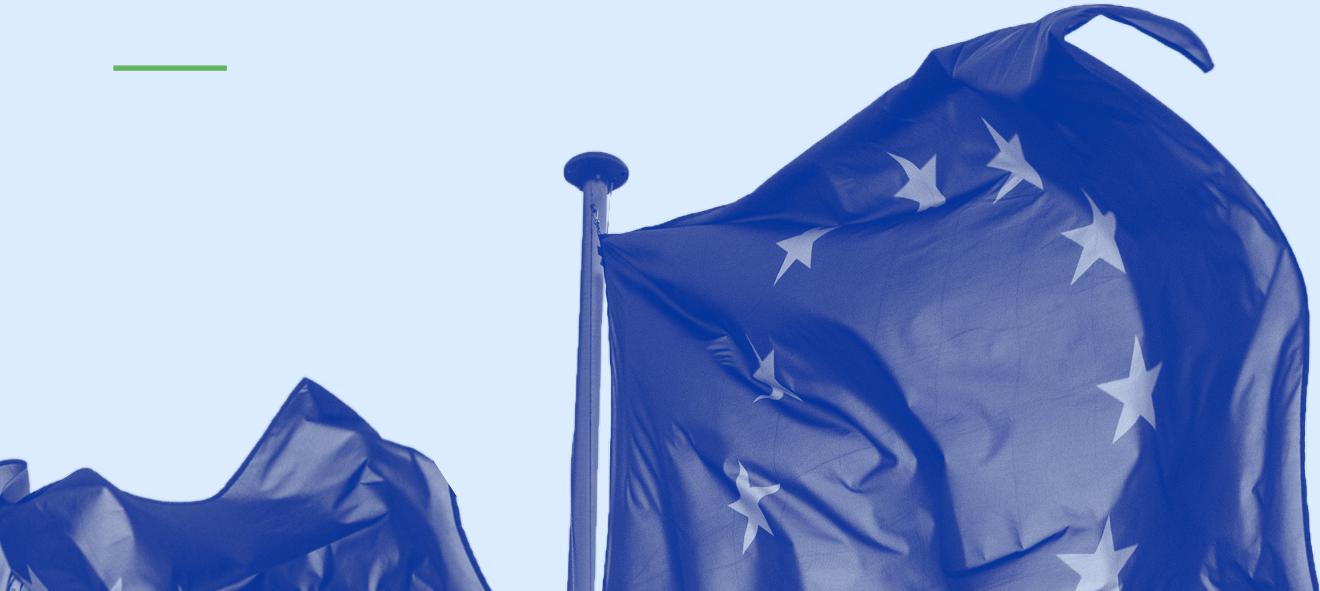


Table of content



1. FOREWORD	6
2. INTRODUCTION	8
2.1. The European Council	8
2.2. The Council of the European Union	8
2.3. The General Secretariat of the council	9
3. ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AT THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE COUNCIL	10
3.1. The environmental management system	10
3.2. Scope	11
3.3. Significant environmental aspects	12
3.4. The environmental policy	14
3.5. Roles and responsibilities	16
3.6. Applicable regulatory requirements	17

4. ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMME	20
4.1. Energy	22
4.2. Water	32
4.3. Waste	36
4.4. Greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants	41
4.5. Paper-based resources	47
4.6. Mobility	50
4.7. Sustainable public procurement	54
4.8. Biodiversity	56
4.9. Communication and awareness-raising	58
5. VERIFICATION DATA	62
6. VARIABLES USED TO CALCULATE ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	64
6.1. Degree days	64
6.2. Number of people	65
6.3. Heated or air-conditioned surface area (in m ²)	66
6.4. Number of meetings	66
7. ANNEX	68
7.1. Introduction	68
7.2. Emissions considered	69
7.3. Overall results	69

1. Foreword



On 25 January 2016, the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union (GSC) obtained EMAS registration¹, 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 2020. The continued implementation of an effective environmental management system has enabled the GSC to go even further in reducing its energy consumption and to maintain the downward trend in the amount of paper used annually per person. 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 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 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 codecision. 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.

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 GSC’s 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/Brabançonnaan, Brussels.

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 presidents in all areas of activity, as well as in the context of ministerial meetings and intergovernmental conferences.

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, the 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 complies 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 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 severity, frequency and our capacity to control it, or on the basis of any applicable regulatory

requirements. This environmental review is regularly updated and makes it possible to identify significant environmental aspects.

2. 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.
3. 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.

4. Independent internal auditors periodically verify the progress of 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.
5. 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).

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. The Justus Lipsius, Lex, Europa and crèche buildings also have some green areas.

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

Building	Location	Surface area (m ²)	Heated surface area ² (m ²)	Status	Primary use
Justus Lipsius	Brussels	206 205	146 942	Owned	Offices, training and conference rooms, catering, archives, storage of materials
Lex	Brussels	75 562	66 350	Owned	Offices, training and conference rooms, catering
Crèche	Brussels	5 363	4 630	Owned	Crèche, offices, catering
Europa	Brussels	66 712	60 960	Owned	Conference rooms, offices, catering

2. The air-conditioned or heated surface area is taken into account in certain environmental performance indicators.

The activities of the European Council President and of his or her aides, as well as those of the Council of the European Union and the Member States, are excluded from the scope of the environmental management system. These include processes independent of the functioning of the GSC over which it has no influence.

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 in-depth analysis of the environmental aspects, environmental impact and environmental performance related to the activities, products and services’ of the organisation. ‘Environmental aspect’ means ‘an element of the 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 that may result from interaction between the organisation and third parties, 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 moderated 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 impact
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 and cleaning of premises and toilets	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 Waste management Catering Purchase of (IT) equipment, 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 many years.

Conscious of 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 among staff who commute daily and in work-related journeys;*
- *work on possible options for reducing the environmental impact of delegates' travel;*
- *contribute to creating a cleaner and thus more liveable city through reduced car use, and to enabling a greater uptake of electric vehicle use by its staff;*
- *set up and monitor key performance indicators and objectives to quantify and measure the continuous improvement of its environmental performance;*
- *include environmental criteria in the relevant public procurement procedures and in the rules on organising events;*
- *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 buildings.*

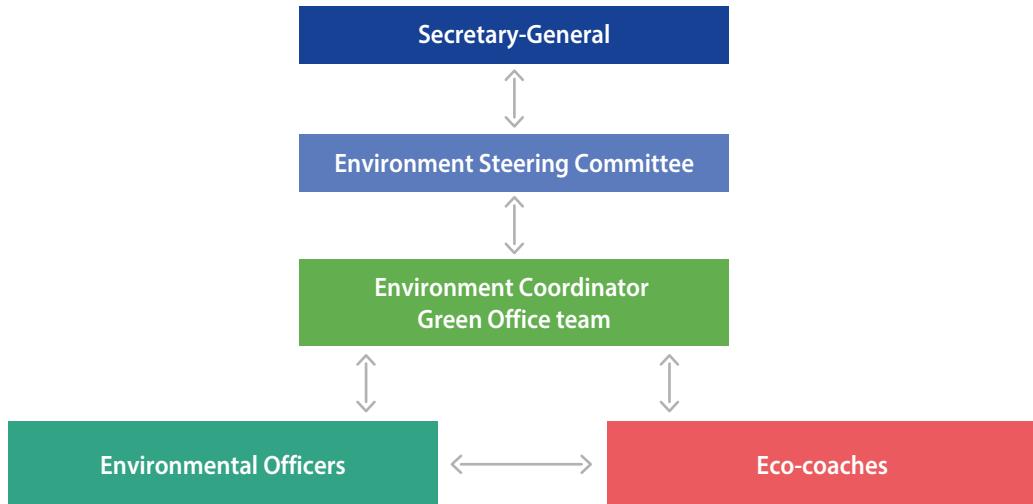
The Environment Steering Committee will adopt environmental objectives, targets and action plans, supervise all activities relating to the environmental management system and make provision for the necessary resources. The Environment Coordinator will take charge of the day-to-day administration of the environmental management system and coordinate the implementation of environmental programming at the GSC.

The environmental management team will assist the Environment Coordinator in implementing the environmental management system. The Environmental Officers will ensure that the activities of their respective departments comply with the current environmental policy. The voluntary network of eco-coaches will provide for a grassroots approach by informing and mobilising GSC staff on 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 lays down 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 provides 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 environmental management system.

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 environmental management system.

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 environmental management system 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 70 people working permanently or regularly on environmental management.

3.6. Applicable regulatory requirements

The GSC is committed to ensuring compliance 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 16/09/2016
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 04/09/2019

Europa:

Basic permit	no. 305423 of 11/04/2008
Amendment	no. 600495 of 14/09/2016
Amendment	no. 1825673 of 14/01/2022

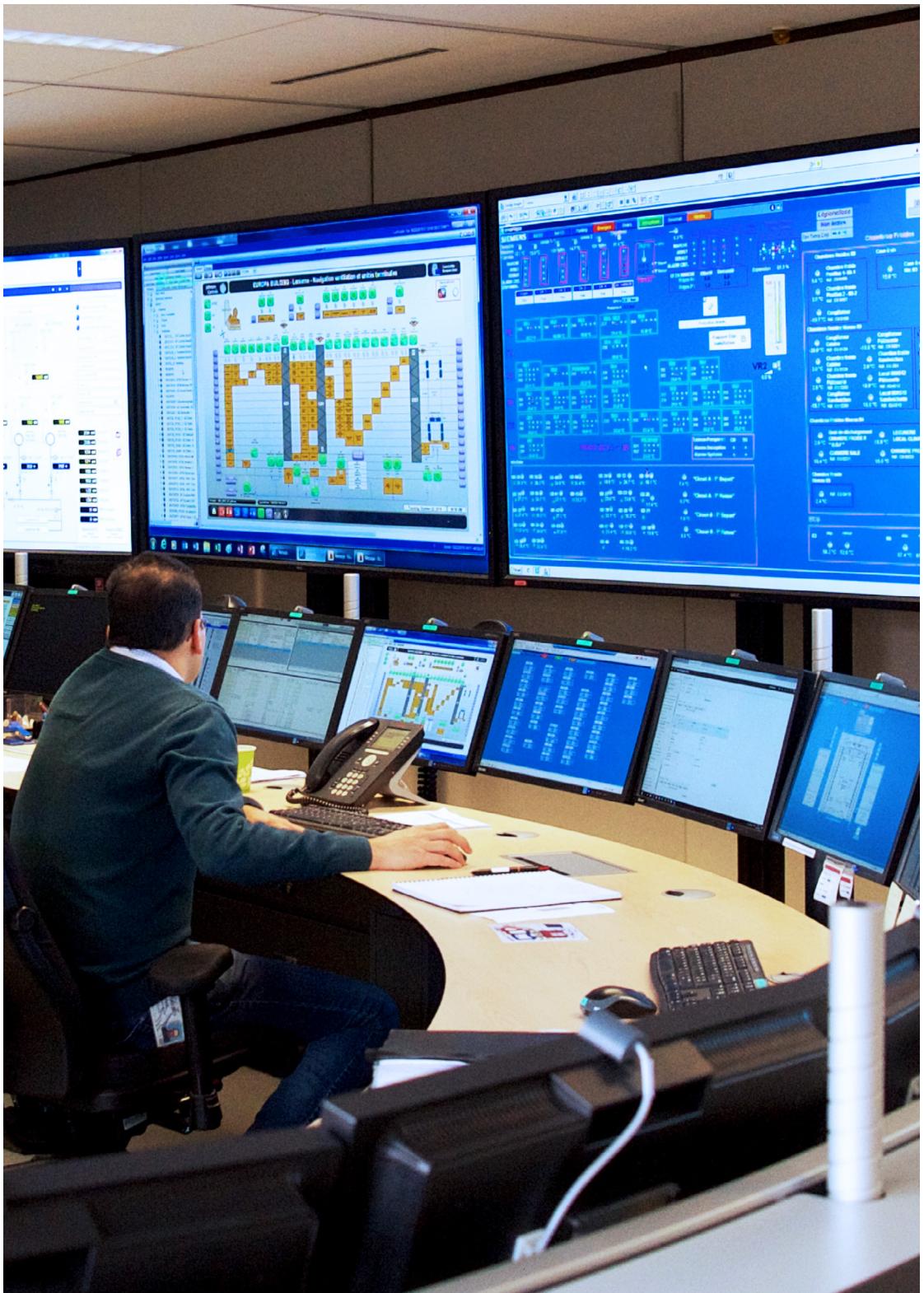
Lex:

Extension	no. 619046 of 14/11/2017
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Crèche:

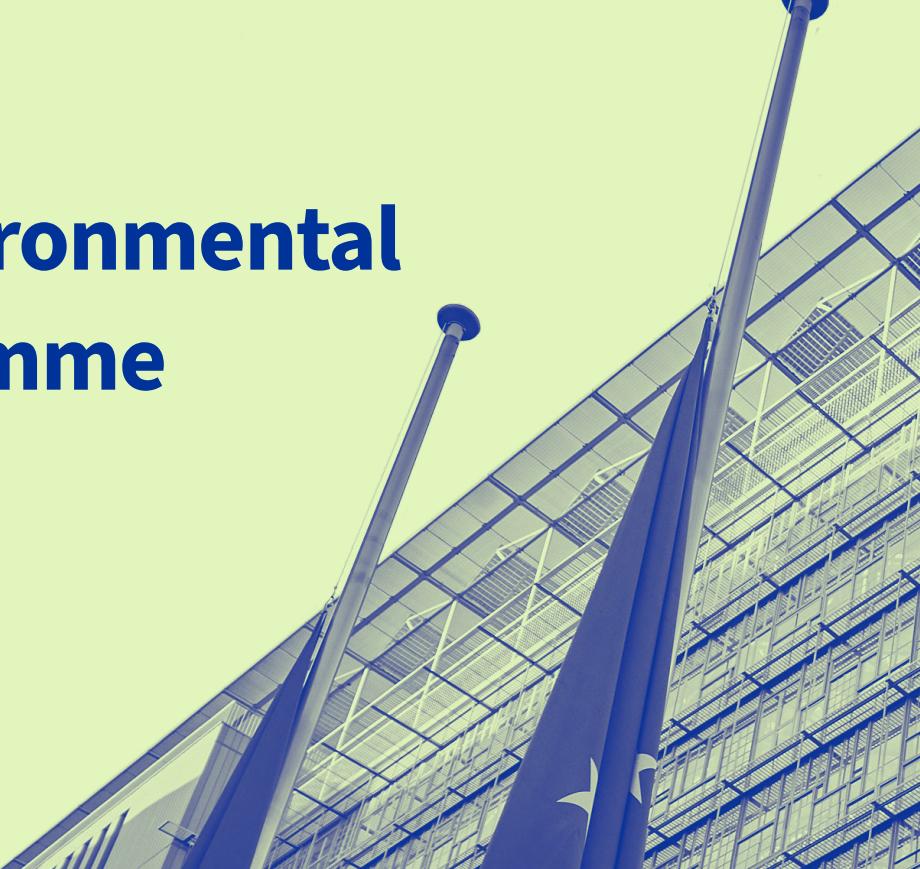
Extension	no. 1.695.450 of 16/06/2020
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Control centre of the centralised technical management system of the Justus Lipsius building





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 2016. The year 2010, in which several multiannual plans were started, has been kept as the reference year.

For the years 2010 and 2017, 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



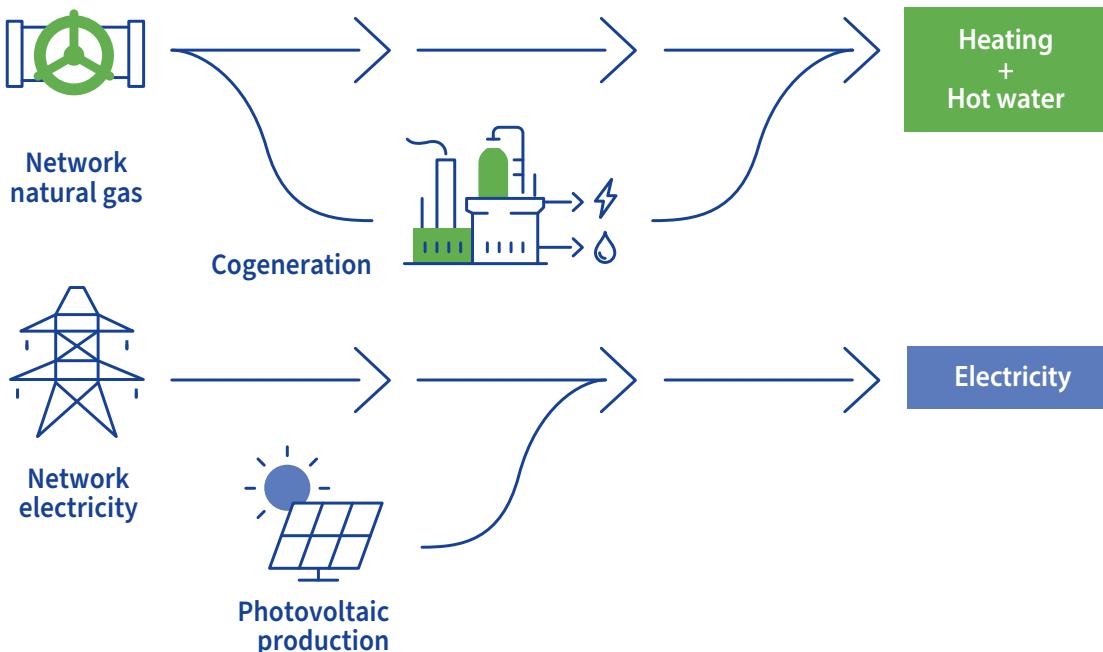
occupancy rate is around 90 % of that calculated using the method applied in previous years. As a consequence, the indicators expressed relative to numbers of occupants were based on a lower rate, and thus generally had higher values, in 2018 than in 2017.

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.

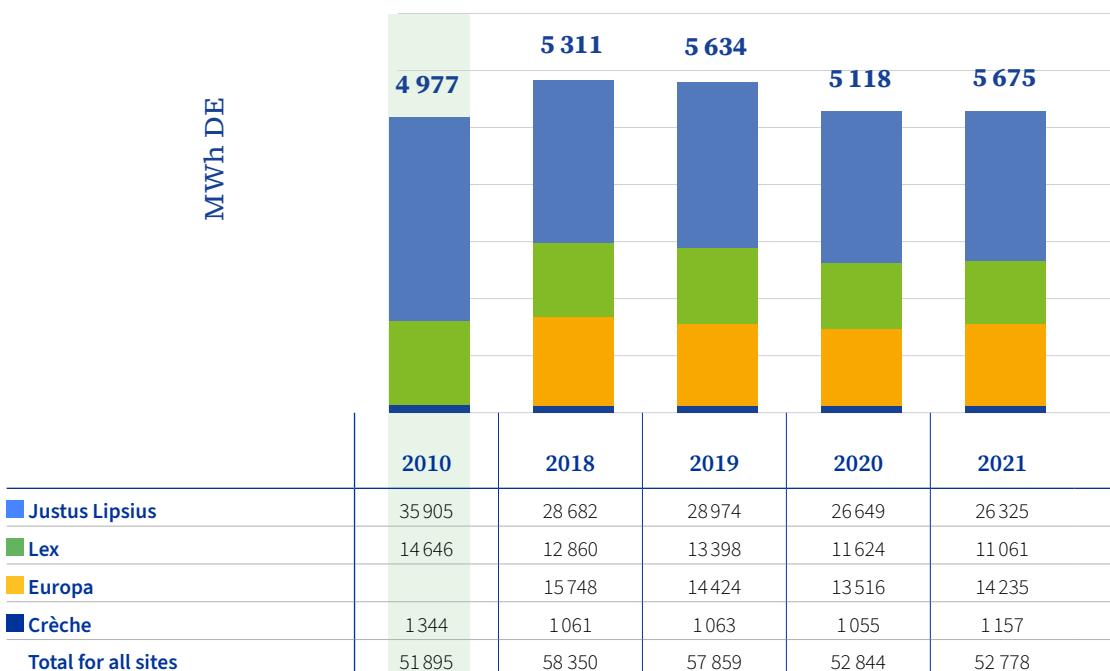
The 'direct energy' indicator reflects the amount of gas consumed and the amount of electrical energy drawn from the grid plus the electricity generated on site by solar panels,

all of which is consumed internally. This indicator gives a more comprehensive picture of energy consumption 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



Since the direct energy consumption indicator is not normalised (see explanation in the paragraph on [‘Primary energy’, page 26](#)), variations in outdoor temperature affect overall consumption. Between 2019 and 2020, consumption decreased by 8.6 %. This decrease began in March, linked to the fall in

our buildings’ occupancy rate following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The impact of the COVID-19 crisis could still be seen in 2021. 2021 was also colder than 2019 and 2020, which particularly affected the Europa and crèche buildings.

Figure 2: Direct energy consumption per m² ★

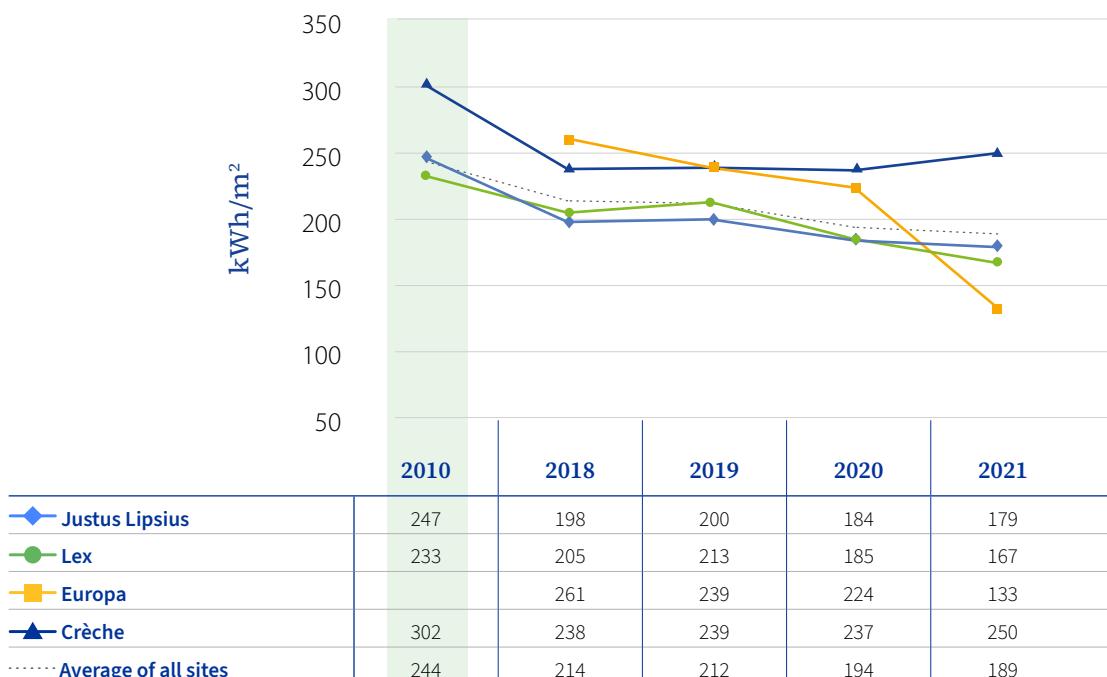
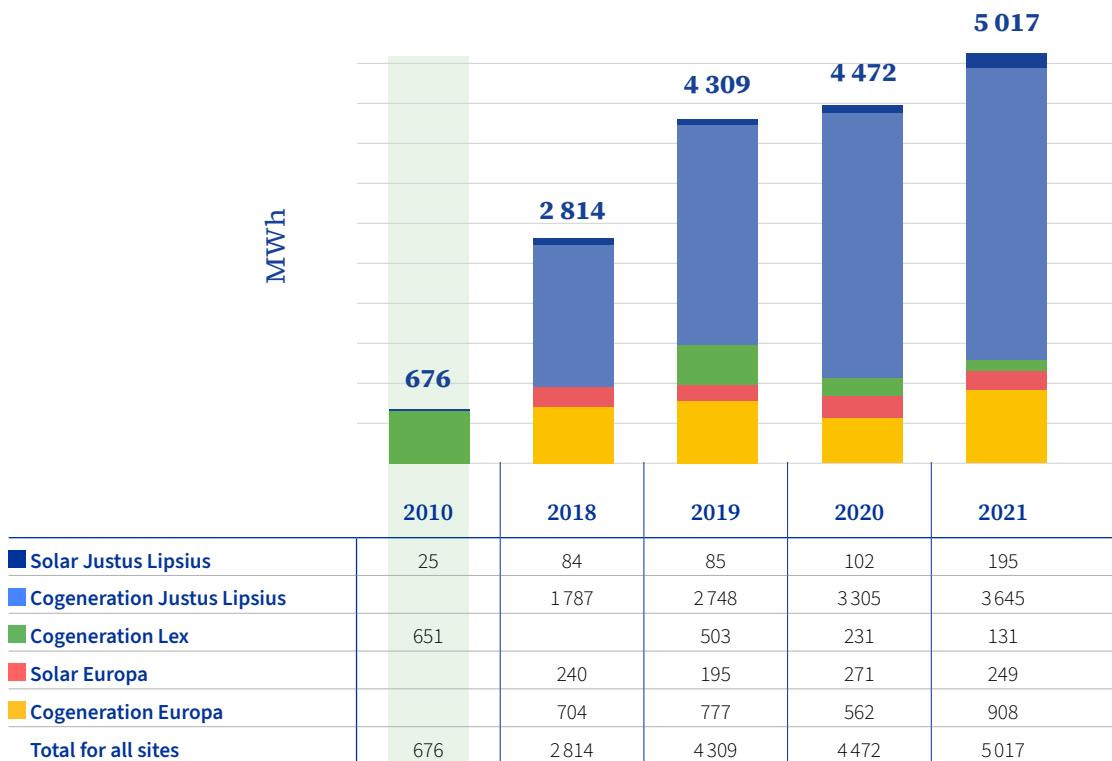


Figure 2 clearly shows the ongoing improvement in our buildings’ energy performance. Between 2010 and 2021, direct energy consumption per m² decreased by 55 kWh. This decrease corresponds to approximately 20 % of consumption in 2010. As mentioned above, the reduction that

took place in 2019 and 2020 is largely due to the decrease in building occupancy due to COVID-19. The impact of COVID-19 was still apparent in 2021.

Electricity produced by solar panels and cogeneration

Figure 3: Electricity produced by solar panels and cogeneration ★



Total electricity production in the Justus Lipsius, Lex and Europa buildings corresponds to around 17 % of our total electricity demand, which was 29 511 MWh in 2021.

The cogeneration adjustment in the Lex building in 2018 and optimisation of cogeneration in the Justus Lipsius and Europa buildings enabled an increase in the level of on-site electricity production in 2021 compared to previous years.

In the Justus Lipsius building, electricity production from cogeneration increased in 2021, due both to optimisation of the cogeneration system, which was improved even further compared to 2020, and to the decision to

prioritise occupancy of this building during the COVID-19 period, necessitating greater heat production.

In the Lex building, production fell considerably because the cogeneration system was only in operation between February and May and has not worked since June 2021.

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 factor³.

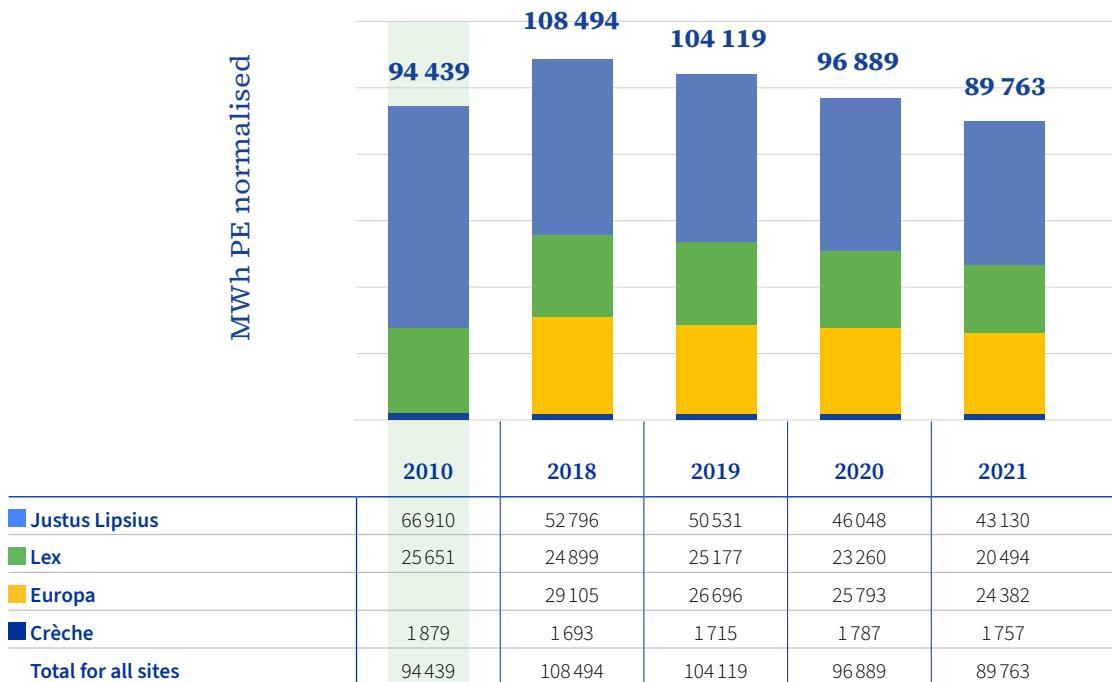
The fluctuation in annual gas consumption is closely linked to heating requirements in a given year. This ‘climatic’ effect can be evened out by normalising gas consumption linked to

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](#).

As shown in the graph below, the total normalised primary energy consumption in the Council’s buildings fell by 5 % between 2010 and 2021, despite the addition of the Europa building. Taken separately, the combined consumption of the three buildings that already existed in 2010, i.e. the Justus Lipsius, the Lex and the crèche, amounted to 65 381 MWhPE in 2021 – a decrease of 31 % compared to 2010. Although the enforced lockdown in 2020 due to the COVID-19 health crisis necessarily played an important role in this decrease, it is also partly due to the actions implemented to reduce energy consumption (presence detectors, better control of equipment, etc.). Normalisation of the primary energy (see previous paragraph) shows that in 2021 the overall performance of the buildings, especially the Europa building, was better than in 2020.

3. 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.

Figure 4: Normalised primary energy consumption



The average energy performance for all sites fell from 444 kWh/m² in 2010 to 322 kWh/m² in 2021, as shown in Figure 5, which amounts to a 27 % decrease between 2010 and 2021. As with the other indicators, there was a sharp decrease due to the drop in occupancy during the COVID-19 crisis.

Figure 5: Normalised primary energy consumption per m² ★

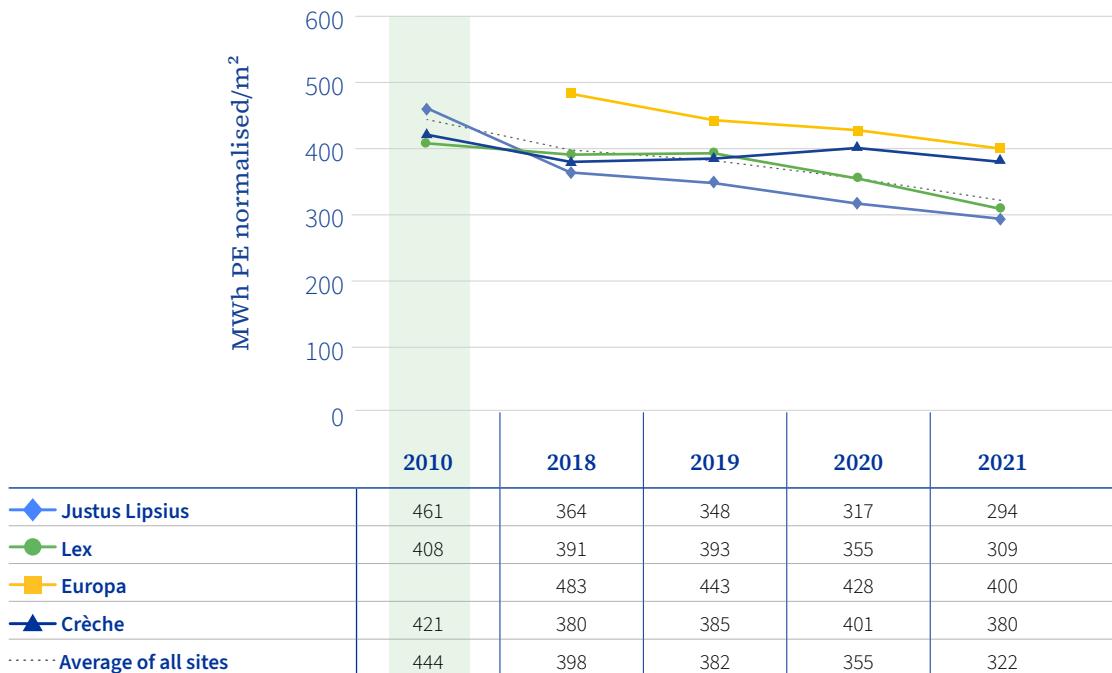
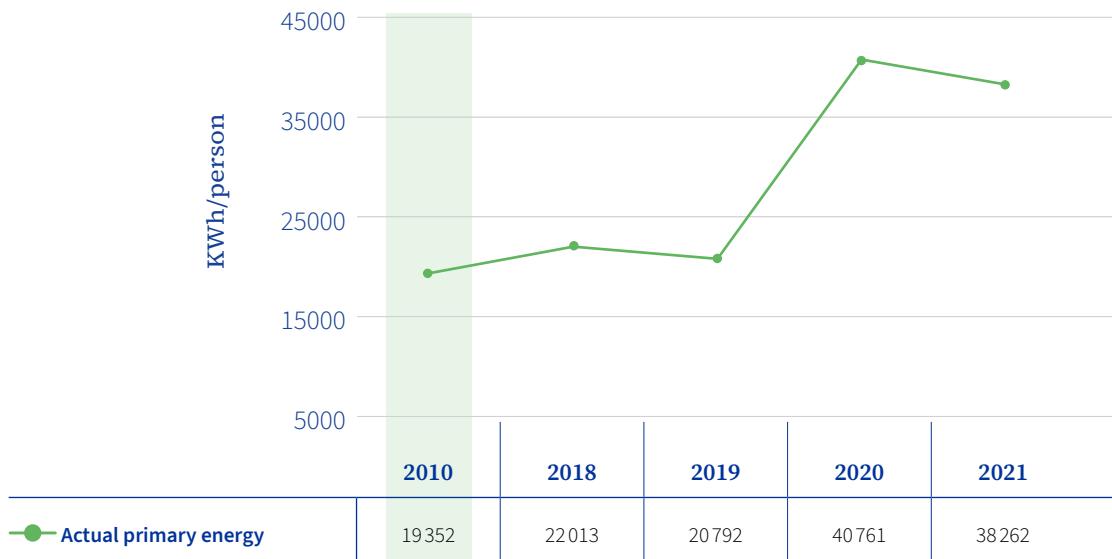


Figure 6 shows the annual trend in normalised primary energy consumption per person for the four buildings. Consumption has thus been corrected by an occupancy factor for the buildings which allows the intensity of the Council's activities to be taken into account. For the years 2010 to 2017, for technical reasons the calculation of the occupancy ratio does not include the occupants of the Europa building, as explained at the beginning of [section 4](#). Energy consumption in relation to occupancy rates almost doubled between 2019 and 2020, while overall consumption decreased by one fifth over the same period (Figure 4). This means that energy consumption in absolute terms (see previous graphs) has not decreased

in proportion to the decrease in building occupancy. The explanation lies partly in the basic consumption needed to keep a building in operation, regardless of whether it is used at full or low capacity, and partly in the limited capacity of buildings and their management to adapt to changes in occupancy.

The need to renew and heat all of the air is an important factor that explains why energy consumption relative to the occupancy rate almost doubled between 2019, 2020 and 2021.

Figure 6: Normalised primary energy consumption per person ★



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, namely to increase energy efficiency by 20 % by 2020. In addition, 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 en %
Reference: 2019	77 227	n/a	n/a
Target: 2025	69 890	7 337	- 9.5 %
Outcome: 2020	71 841	5 386	- 7 %
Outcome: 2021	67 512	9 715	- 12.5 %

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	26 892	n. a.	n. a.
Target: 2025	24 472	2 420	- 9 %
Outcome: 2020	25 048	1 844	- 7 %
Outcome: 2021	22 251	4 641	- 17 %

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.

These targets are already being met; however, the impact of the resumption of business after the COVID-19 pandemic should not be underestimated.

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 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 monitored continuously by our providers;
- lighting control by motion detection has been introduced in communal areas;
- LED technology is used for lighting when fitting out new areas;

- 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 upgraded to meet its specific needs;
- regular awareness-raising campaigns for building occupants are carried out to encourage them to use energy more economically; energy performance certificates are displayed every year at the entrances to the buildings;
- 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);
- the measures set out in the energy action plan drawn up following the energy audit of the Justus Lipsius building in 2015 and of the Lex building in 2016 have been carried out;
- the energy audit of the crèche was completed in 2018, enabling an energy action plan to be drawn up for the building;
- a draft 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).
- identify other actions that could generate energy savings;
- continue to upgrade the technical installations in the Europa building;
- continue to monitor gas and electricity consumption so as to more effectively detect anomalies;
- implement the PLAGE action plan.

Action to be taken in 2022 and 2023

In 2022 the GSC undertakes to:

- ensure the continued implementation of the existing actions presented in the paragraph entitled '[Primary energy](#)', [page 26](#);
- implement and periodically evaluate the energy action plans for all of the audited buildings;

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 indicators⁴

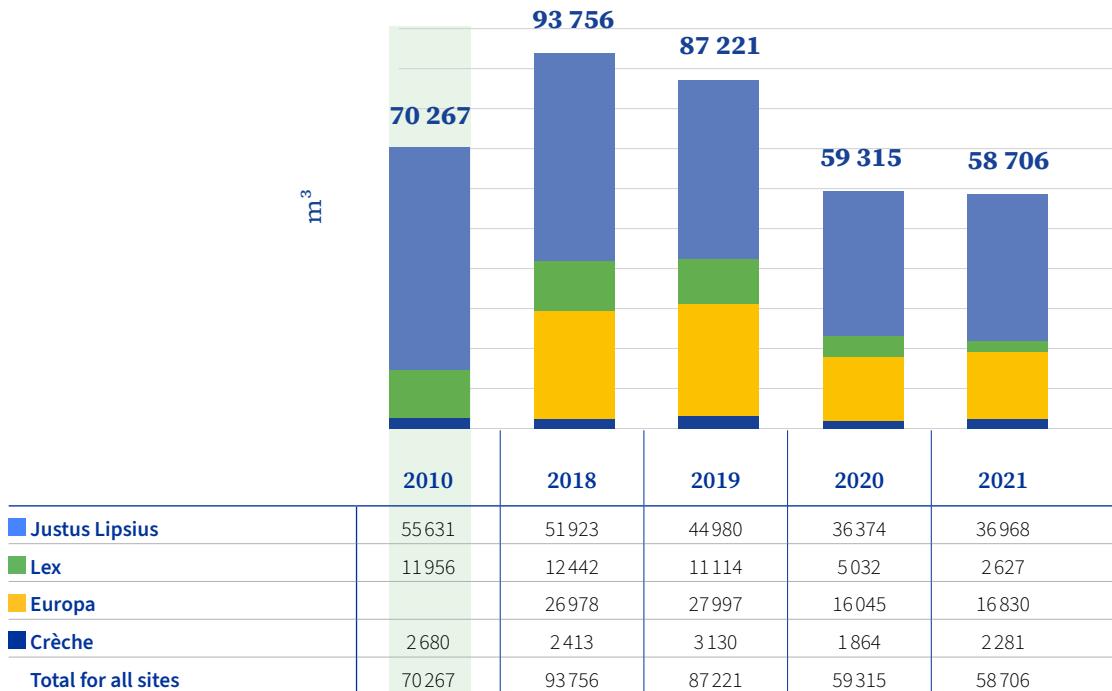
Figure 7 shows the trend in mains water consumption between 2010 and 2021 for

the Justus Lipsius, Lex, Europa and crèche buildings.

Consumption in the Justus Lipsius building shows a downward trend, with the exception of 2018 when there was excess water consumption, primarily due to a leak. The unusually high level of consumption in the crèche building in 2019 was also due to a leak.

The sharp fall in consumption in 2020 and 2021 was mainly a result of the drop in the occupancy rate due to the COVID-19 crisis.

Figure 7: Mains water consumption



4. 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 ★

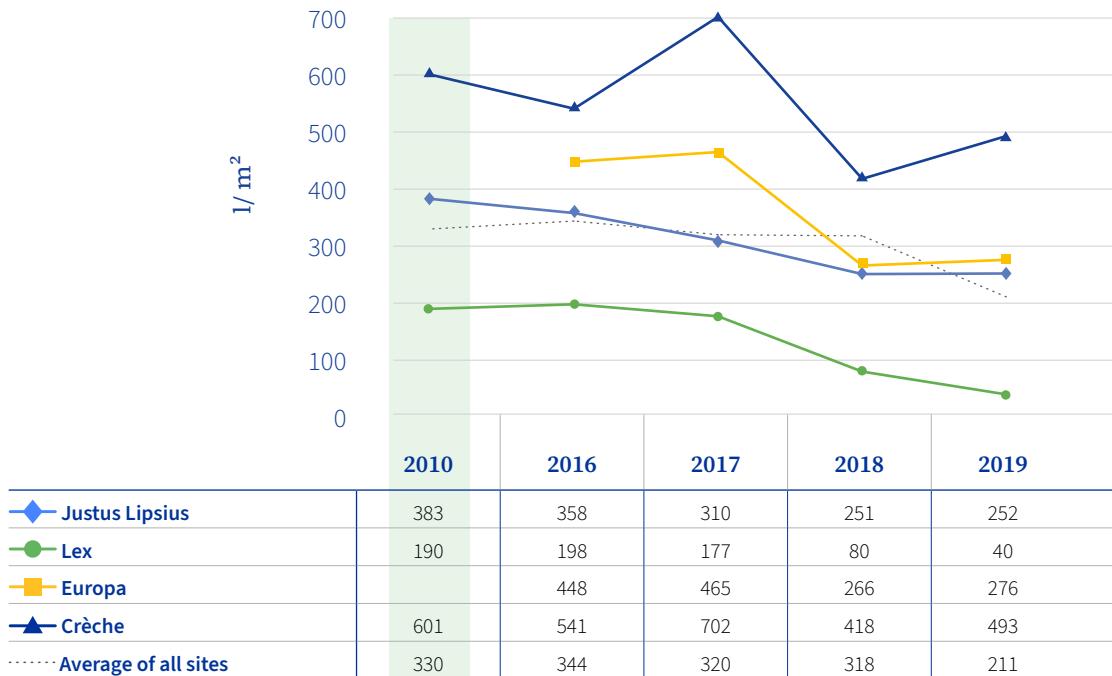
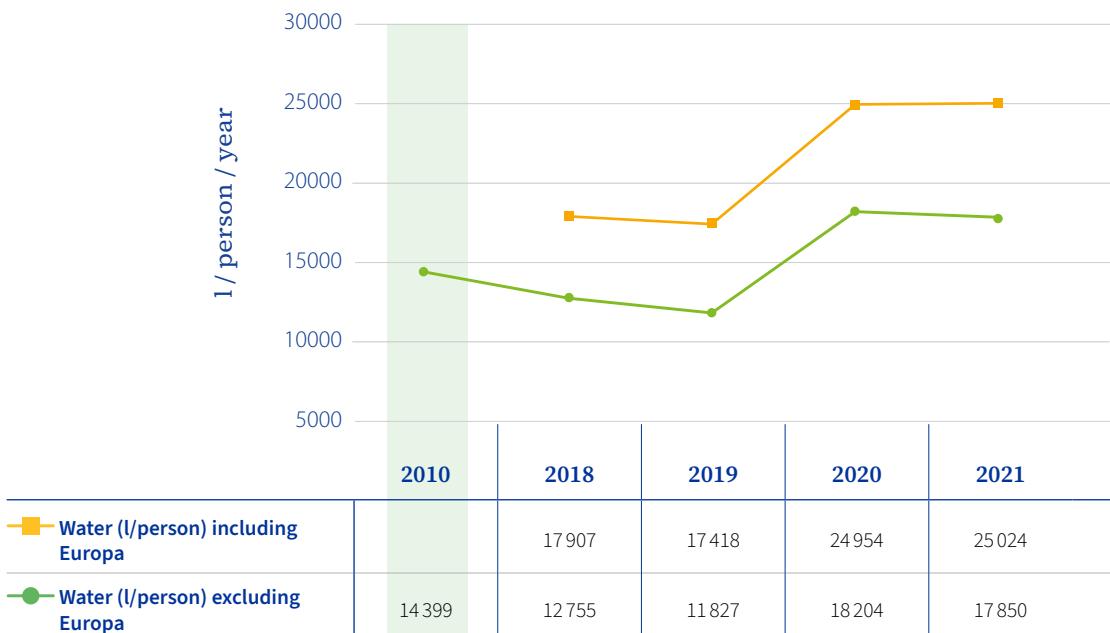


Figure 9 shows the trend in annual mains water consumption per person. Consumption has thus been corrected by an occupancy factor that takes into account the intensity of the Council's activities. Water consumption per person per day decreased slightly between 2010 and 2019, while in 2020 and 2021 it increased significantly. As in the case of energy, this shows that consumption is not directly proportional to occupancy, as a fixed part is necessary for the proper functioning of buildings and equipment. Nevertheless, there appears to be a closer link between water

consumption and occupancy rate than between energy consumption and occupancy rate. Water consumption per person increased by around 37 % between 2019 and 2020/2021, while energy consumption increased by around 90 %.

The decrease in water consumption is not proportional to the decrease in water consumption per person, in particular due to the use of water for heating, ventilation and air conditioning.

Figure 9: Annual mains water consumption per person ★



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 %.

Awareness-raising poster on saving water in the toilets



Action to be taken in 2022 and 2023

- 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.



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,

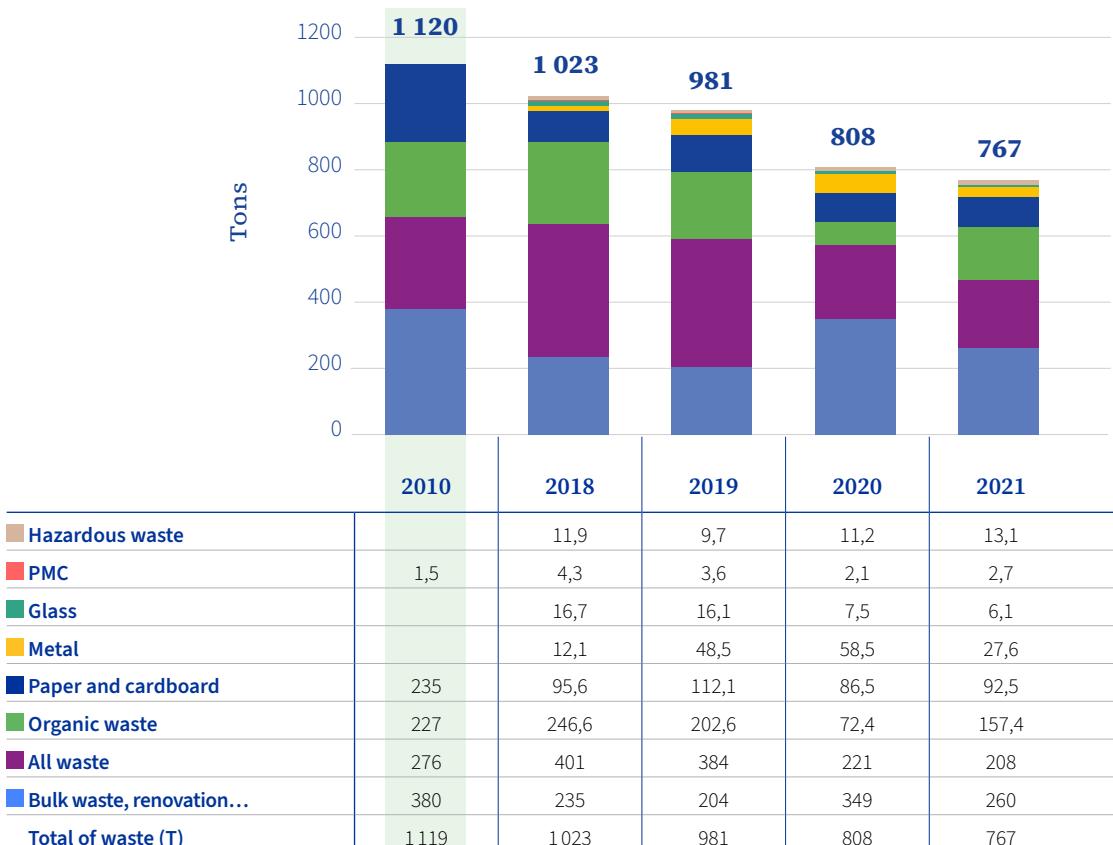
electronic waste, waste from the Medical Service, printer ink cartridges, etc.);

- 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 2021. 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.

Figure 10: Waste by type



The total amount of waste decreased by around 46 % between 2010 (1 120 tonnes) and 2021 (767 tonnes).

The decrease in the amount of waste is due to the effects of COVID-19 in 2020 and 2021, and

to the significant increase in teleworking. The graph shows that PMC, paper and cardboard waste and organic waste have increased compared to 2020, while glass waste, metal, general waste, bulk waste and renovation waste have 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, that figure decreased slightly to 327 kg per person

Figure 11: Waste per person



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 in 2021

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

- launching a project to remove individual general waste bins from offices in the Justus Lipsius and Lex 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 or use such waste for compost or animal feed;
- 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;

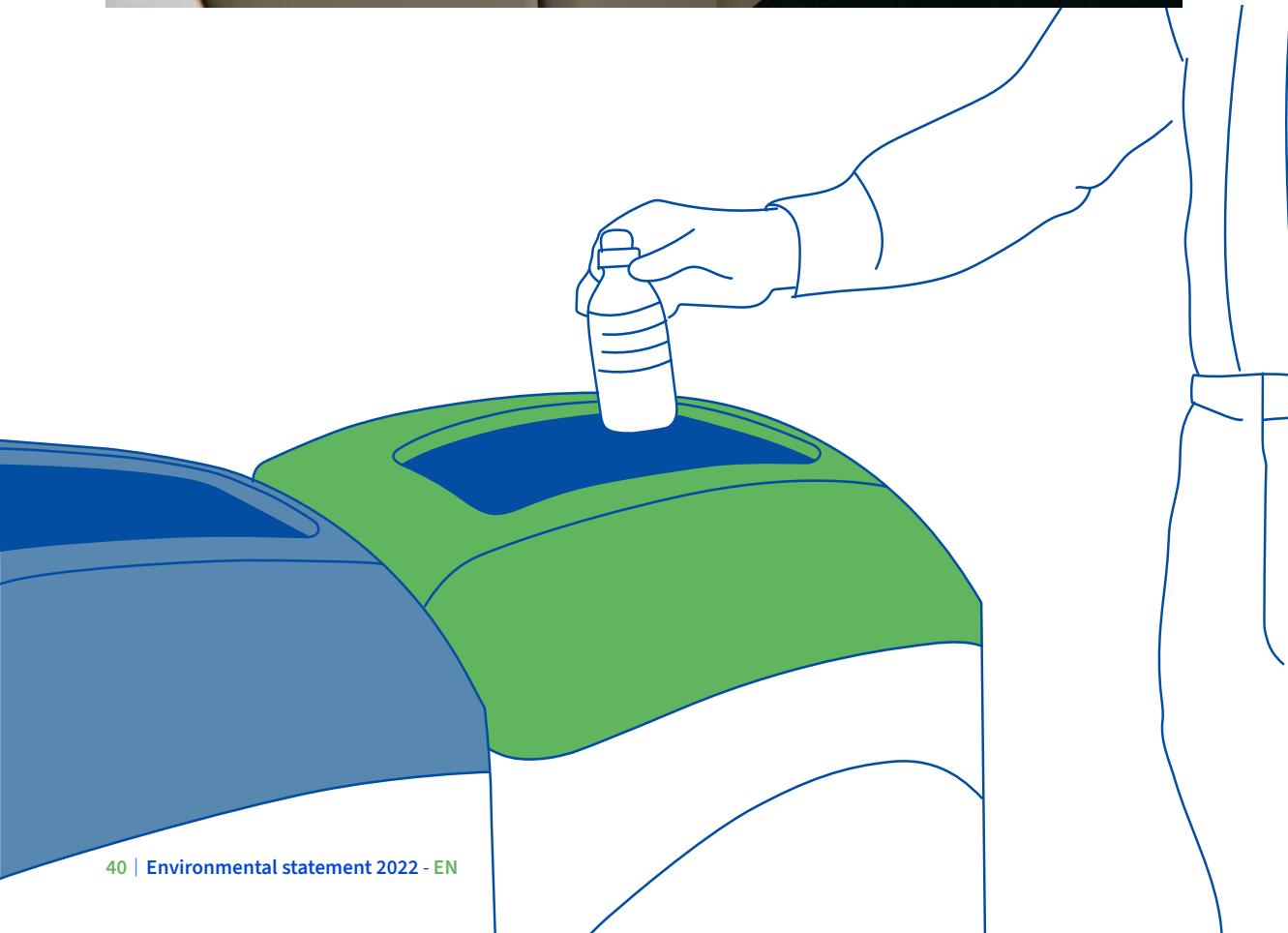
- replacing the general waste bins provided for journalists during major events with sorting areas.

Action to be taken in 2022 and 2023

The GSC undertakes to:

- continue to raise awareness among staff;
- extend the project involving the removal of individual general waste bins from offices and the creation of sorting areas in corridors to the Europa building;
- 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):

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

Annual emissions of air pollutants such as carbon monoxide (CO) and nitrogen oxides (NO_x)⁵ are controlled through the adequate monitoring of technical installations (CO and NO_x).

Environmental performance indicators

The greenhouse gases taken into account in environmental programming are carbon dioxide (CO_2), nitrous oxide (N_2O), methane (CH_4), sulphur hexafluoride (SF_6), 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 environmental management system. 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 the demand for heating in winter but also to accidental leaks in refrigeration systems. The graph shows a decrease in gas consumption in 2020, which was due to the COVID-19 crisis and the decrease in the number of staff and visitors over the year as a whole. The increase in gas consumption seen in 2021 can be attributed to the partial exit from the COVID-19 crisis.

An annex setting out the overall results of a comprehensive study of the carbon footprint of

5. 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).

all Council activities, including emissions from on-site gas combustion and other activities such as travel and the use of goods and services, etc., is attached at the end of this statement.

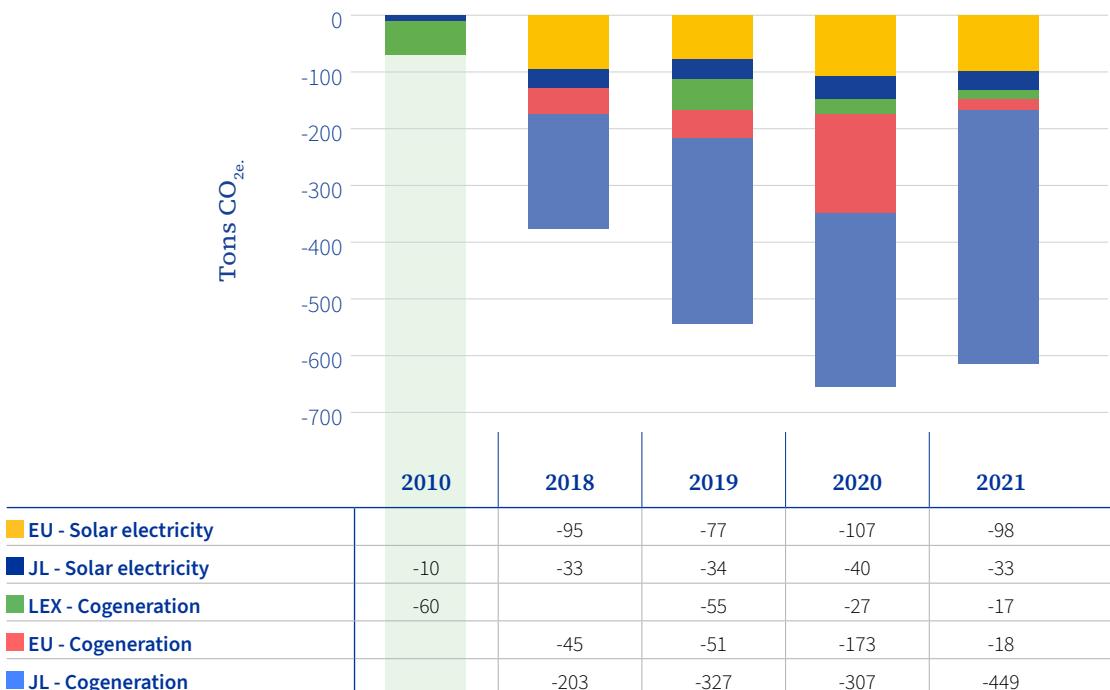
Figure 12: Direct greenhouse gas emissions⁶



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

Figure 13 shows the greenhouse gas emissions avoided thanks to the photovoltaic and cogeneration installations. In 2021, these enabled savings of 617 tCO_{2e}⁷.

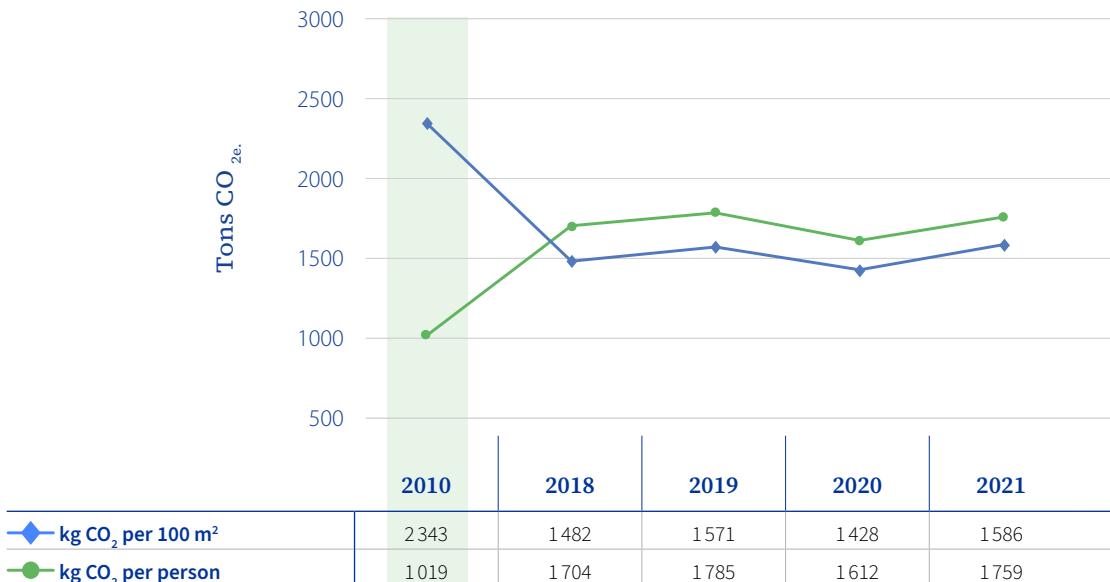
Figure 13: Greenhouse gas emissions avoided thanks to the photovoltaic and cogeneration installations



7. The CO₂ 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 CO₂ emissions avoided thanks to the cogeneration systems were calculated by comparing the CO₂ 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 increased from 1 337 kg of CO_{2e} per FTE in 2016 to 1 759 kg of CO_{2e} per FTE in 2021.

Figure 14: Direct greenhouse gas emissions per 100 m² and per person⁸



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?'

This will mainly involve cooperating with the other EU institutions and bodies to establish a common approach to the voluntary offsetting of their residual 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).

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

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:

- optimising energy management (see subsection 4.1 on energy);
- promoting alternatives to car use (see subsection 4.6 on mobility);
- purchasing green electricity;
- offsetting emissions from the production of paper delivered to the General Secretariat of the Council;
- 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, which reduced the climate impact of the entire service fleet⁹ from 256 g of CO₂ on average per km in 2013 to 109 g of CO₂ per km in 2021;
- carrying out a comprehensive study on the carbon footprint of all Council activities, including emissions from on-site gas combustion and other activities such as travel and the use of goods and services, etc., and updating that study;
- 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, in particular during summits and the days before the

offices close for longer periods (e.g. at Easter and Christmas);

- since July 2020, including all of the mandatory ‘Good Food’ criteria in the catering contract, with the restaurants in the three buildings, Justus Lipsius, Lex and Europa, having been awarded this label in 2017, 2018 and 2020;
- replacing some of the range of drinks and snacks in the vending machines with more local products (from Belgium);
- completely removing single-use plastic from the Europa canteen.

9. Manufacturers' data, except for armoured vehicles.

Electric vehicle charging stations for staff



Action to be taken between 2022 and 2023

Between 2022 and 2023, 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;
- establish with the other EU institutions and bodies a common approach to the voluntary offsetting of 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;
- continuously seek more sustainable alternatives to the products in the drinks and snack machines;
- submit a new application for the ‘Good Food’ label for the Justus Lipsius restaurant.

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 54 tonnes in 2021, as shown in Figure 15. The sharp decline in consumption in 2020 was due to the COVID-19 crisis. Paper consumption per person fell from 73 kg in 2010 to 24 kg in 2021, as shown in Figure 16.

Overall, total paper consumption decreased fairly steadily between 2010 and 2018, reaching an exceptionally low level in 2019. Given that the GSC's paper consumption is closely linked to the pattern of the European Commission's legislative work, the decrease in the volume of documents produced in 2019 by the new Commission led to a fall in the GSC's paper consumption. The same phenomenon had already been observed in 2015. The 2020 value will remain historically unique due to the COVID-19 crisis and the resulting obligation to work from home.

That continued to be the case in 2021, with consumption remaining on a downward trend, although less because of COVID and more because working from home remained widespread.

Figure 15: Paper consumption

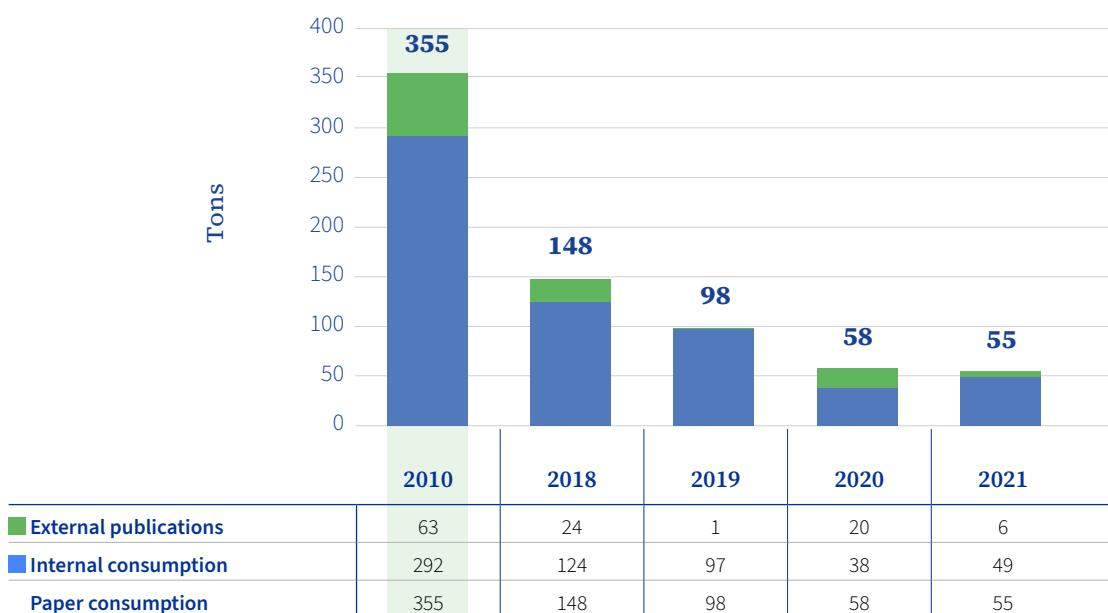


Figure 16: Paper consumption per person



Figure 16 shows internal paper consumption per person. Over the entire period from 2010 to 2021, internal paper consumption per person fell by 61.6 %.

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 paper consumption per person by 30 % 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 per person per year decreased by 75 % between 2010 and 2021 thanks 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 a large proportion of 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 between 2022 and 2023

The action plan for paper updated for the period 2021-2025 aims to reduce paper consumption per person by 30 % by 2025 as compared with the average for 2017, 2018 and 2019. To achieve that target, a number of measures have been identified, including:

- a continued change in the weight of A4 paper used by staff from 80g/m² to 75g/m²;
- introducing a system which generates automatic reports showing paper consumption by department;
- continuing the gradual replacement of a large proportion of desktop computers with laptop computers and installing Wi-Fi in all the GSC's meeting rooms;
- developing the Agora and Delegates Portal applications to optimise document management for delegates with a view to a more systematic digitisation of documents;
- training of 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

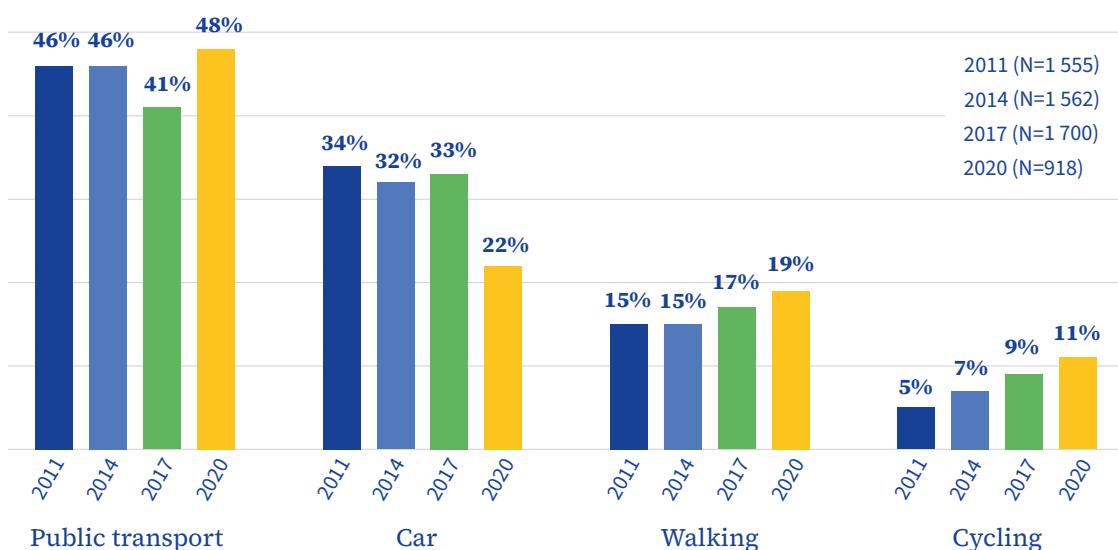
Commuting between home and work

The employee transport plan (plan de déplacements d'entreprise/bedrijfsvervoerplan - PDE/BVP)¹⁰ is updated every three years. In this context, several mobility surveys have

been carried out at the GSC, most recently in 2011, 2014, 2017 and 2020. The latest mobility survey had a much lower response rate than the previous one (53.3 % in 2017 and 31 % in 2020) due to the specific situation created by the COVID-19 crisis. The 2020 results should therefore be interpreted with caution, but they do give an idea of the way habits are changing. Most members of staff live in the Brussels-Capital Region (72 %). Staff who live outside Brussels are mainly concentrated in Vlaams-Brabant (15 %) and Brabant wallon (5.5 %).

Figure 17 shows how GSC staff commuted between home and work between 2011 and 2020. The proportion of staff travelling exclusively by car fell from 34 % in 2011 to 22 % in 2020, with a shift towards walking, cycling and public transport.

Figure 17: Commuting between home and work ★

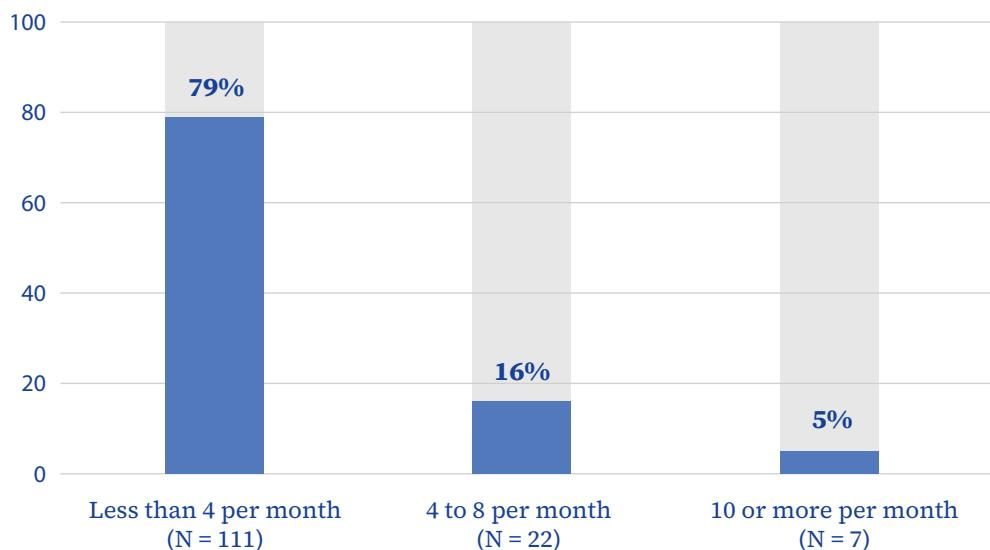


10. The employee transport plan involves examining, implementing, evaluating and updating measures to promote the sustainable management of work-related journeys (decree of the Brussels-Capital regional government on employee transport plans; Moniteur Belge/Belgisch Staatsblad of June 2017).

Work-related journeys

The 2020 mobility survey indicates that only 15 % of GSC staff make work-related journeys. Of those 15 %, 79 % make fewer than four work-related journeys per month, and only 5 % make ten or more work-related journeys per month.

Figure 18: Work-related journeys (source: 2020 mobility survey)



Objectives and action

Objectives

The Good Move regional mobility plan¹¹, 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 employee transport plan are as follows:

- by 2020, to have 75 % of staff use a form of transport other than driving to get to the GSC;
- to ensure ease of access to GSC buildings;
- to provide information to, and raise awareness among, staff about soft mobility;
- to contribute to reducing CO₂ emissions related to GSC activities.

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

The changes in the modal split for journeys, based on the results of the 2020 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 30 % of respondents using it. A total of 22 % use motor vehicles to commute

(car, moped/motorcycle or car sharing), and 19 % make the journey to work on foot. Overall, 78 % use sustainable forms of transport. The target set in 2017 of 75 % of staff using a sustainable form of transport has therefore been attained.

Table 2: Changes in transport habits, compared with the modal shift objectives

Main mode of transport	Survey of GSC staff			Modal shift objective
	2014 (N = 1 562)	2017 (N = 1 700)	2020 (N = 930)	2020
Public transport	46 %	41.2 %	48 %	50 %
Car	32 %	33 %	22 %	25 %
Walking	15 %	17.2 %	19 %	15 %
Cycling	7 %	8.6 %	11 %	10 %
TOTAL	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %

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.

As part of the Bike Project in the summer of 2019, a fleet of 35 bicycles (electric, folding and classic bicycles and one cargo bicycle) was made available to interested members of staff for a period of 10 days as a way of encouraging them

to use this form of transport. In 2020, toolkits were made available to cyclists in the parking areas of the Lex, Justus Lipsius and Europa buildings and a new bicycle parking area was created between the Justus Lipsius and Europa buildings.

A process of reflecting on the policy for contributing to the cost of season tickets for public transport began in 2021, seeking to simplify the system and allow more people to benefit from it, with the ultimate aim of encouraging staff to use sustainable modes of transport.

Action to be taken in 2022 and 2023

In accordance with the timetable for the Brussels-Capital Region, the GSC employee transport

plan will be submitted to Brussels Mobility at the start of 2022. A further mobility survey will be conducted in 2022.

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 parking management	Draw up a policy on parking in the car parks for staff from outside firms and visitors	Free up parking spaces in the Justus Lipsius and Lex buildings
Accessibility for bicycles	Fit out the Etterbeek exit for cyclists. Provide new bicycle parking areas and improve the existing ones, 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 (15 %)
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
Car sharing	Implement measures to encourage car sharing, especially personalised access to the Carpool platform	Car sharing for journeys between home and work and a reduction in the number of cars
Battery charging cabinets	Install secure cabinets for charging removable electric bicycle/scooter batteries	Encourage users to switch to electric bicycles/scooters
Mobility contribution	Launch the new sustainable mobility contribution system	Increase the use of sustainable modes of transport
Pic de pollution	Prévoir et appliquer un plan de communication et un plan d'action spécifiques en cas de pic de pollution	La procédure à suivre a été rédigée et intégrée dans le manuel du système de management environnemental EMAS.
Véhicules électriques	Définir une politique interne concernant la recharge des véhicules électriques	La politique a été définie et signée par le secrétaire général le 2 juin 2017.

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. The GSC has implemented the following measures:

- 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;
- purchase of green electricity; 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;

- awareness-raising as regards eco-friendly purchasing: the Green Office team is regularly involved in the formulation of environmental criteria for relevant public procurement procedures;
- making available, on the Green Office's intranet site, structured information on sustainable public procurement for authorising departments;
- 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;
- as part of ongoing efforts to make environmental improvements, reviewing contracts coming to the end of their term in 2022 (internal environmental audit, recycling, cleaning, maintenance).

Action to be taken between 2022 and 2023

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;
- designating focal points in the most affected departments (Buildings and IT), as well as in the Procurement Coordination Unit;

- providing environmental support in the context of post-COVID reorganisation, teleworking and the setting up of open spaces (New Ways of Working project) in the same way as for the Green Light initiative;
- 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;
- gradually implementing the recommendations of the new financial regulation as regards the inclusion of environmental criteria.

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	Other areas (surrounding areas: roads, vehicle and bicycle parking facilities, etc.)
Justus Lipsius	39 375 m ²	19 356 m ²	4 753 m ²	15 266 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. = non 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 label¹²;
- 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);

12. 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 between 2022 and 2023

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 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 structural 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.

The tablet screen shows the title "Environmental management at the GSC" and a "Validation declaration" section. The declaration is issued by VINCIOTTE nv, Jan Oostingelaan 35, 1820 Vilvoorde, Belgium, to the General Secretariat of the Council. It covers three buildings located in the Brussels Capital Region (Cinquantenaire, Leopold and the Berlaymont). The declaration is valid until 31 December 2017. It includes logos for VINCIOTTE, BE-LAC, and the Chairman of the Certification Committee.

Some measures

The "Some measures" section lists several environmental initiatives:

- Cogeneration**: Highly efficient production of heat and electricity.
- Photovoltaic**: Own renewable electricity production.
- Procurement**: Green public procurement criteria.
- Biodiversity**: In the patios: insect hotel and duck paradise.
- Certification**: The first award to the environmental management.
- Mobility**: Charging stations for electric cars.

The tablet screen shows the question "how can you contribute".

MON energie: Your reference in the energy market. <https://www.monenergie.be>

Choose a green energy supplier
<https://www.monenergie.be>

Calculate and offset your personal carbon emissions
<https://offset.climateneutralnow.org>

Take climate action by supporting green projects
This platform features UNFCCC-certified projects that reduce, avoid or remove greenhouse gas emissions from the atmosphere. The projects are implemented in developing countries and are monitored with Certified Emission Reduction (CERs), a voluntary mechanism that allows companies to contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in developing countries. The full contributions go directly to the projects.

Action taken in 2021

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.).

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

Due to the COVID-19 crisis, a certain number of planned campaigns and other awareness-raising activities could not be carried out in 2020 and 2021. However, cycle repair workshops were held as usual in May and September 2021.

Bicycle repair workshop for staff





Action to be taken in 2022 and 2023

The GSC will continue to assess progress achieved on communication and awareness-raising. The following action is also planned:

- 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;
- redesigning the Green Office intranet site and migrating it to a new platform (SharePoint);
- 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;
- preparing interactive training for staff to stimulate participation in defining measures relating to energy;
- preparing training/awareness-raising for management on environmental issues.

5. Verification data

Environmental verifier's declaration on verification and validation activities

Déclaration de Validation

Système Communautaire de Management Environnemental et d'Audit (EMAS)

VINÇOTTE sa

Jan Olieslagerslaan 35, 1800 Vilvoorde, Belgique

Sur base de l'audit de l'organisation, des visites de son site, des interviews de ses collaborateurs, et de l'investigation de la documentation, des données et des informations documenté dans le rapport de vérification n° **61063194**, VINÇOTTE SA déclare, en tant qu'organisme de vérification et de validation, que pour le système de management environnemental mentionné ci-dessous, les articles 10, 11, 13, 16, 18, 19, 20 (excl. 20.51), 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30.2, 30.9, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43, 45, 46, 47, 49, 50, 52, 53, 55, 56, 58, 59, 60, 62, 63, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 79, 80, 81, 82, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 90, 93, 94, 95, 96, 99 (code NACE) avoir vérifié si les sites figurant dans la déclaration environnementale 2021, données 2020 de l'organisation

**Conseil de l'Union européenne –
Secrétariat Général** portant le numéro d'agrément **BE-BXL-000037**

situé à

Rue de la Loi 175
1048 Bruxelles
Belgique

et utilisé pour:

**Activités du Secrétariat général du Conseil dans les trois bâtiments occupés en
Région de Bruxelles-Capitale, (Europa, Justus Lipsius, Lex et la crèche).**

Respecte(nt) l'intégralité des dispositions du règlement (CE) no 1221/2009 du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 25 novembre 2009 concernant la participation volontaire des organisations à un système communautaire de management environnemental et d'audit (EMAS) tel que modifié par les règlements (UE) 2017/1505 et (UE) 2018/2026.

En signant la présente déclaration, je certifie :
que les opérations de vérification et de validation ont été exécutées dans le strict respect des dispositions du règlement (CE) no 1221/2009 modifié par les règlements (UE) 2017/1505 et (UE) 2018/2026;
que les résultats de la vérification et de la validation montrent qu'aucun élément ne fait apparaître que les exigences légales applicables en matière d'environnement ne sont pas respectées;
que les données et informations fournies dans la déclaration environnementale 2021, données 2020 des sites donnent une image fiable, crédible et authentique de l'ensemble des activités des sites exercées dans le cadre prévu dans la déclaration environnementale;

Le présent document ne fait pas lieu d'enregistrement EMAS. Conformément au règlement (CE) no 1221/2009 modifié par les règlements (UE) 2017/1505 et (UE) 2018/2026, seul un organisme compétent peut accorder un enregistrement EMAS. Le présent document n'est pas utilisé comme un élément d'information indépendant destiné au public.

Nom de la déclaration: **16 EA 87b-1**
Date de délivrance: **5 décembre 2022**

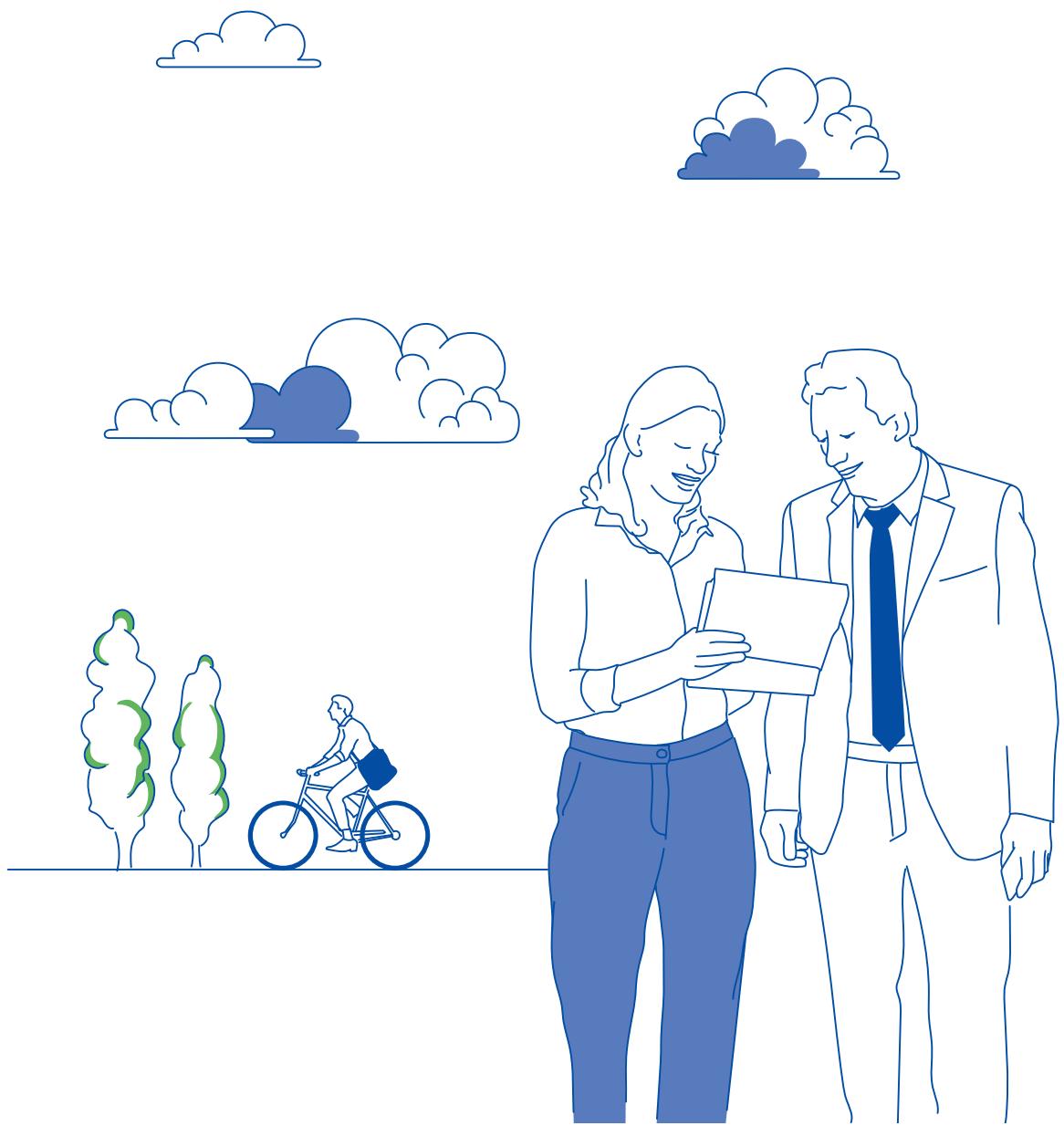


Pour le vérificateur environnemental:

Eric Louys
Président de la Commission de Certification



The next update to the environmental statement is due to be published in the last quarter of 2023. For the new certification, the next full revision of the statement is 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 standardising 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
2016	1 913	1 948
2017	1 902	1 780
2018	1 902	1 740
2019	1 902	1 739
2020	1 902	1 439
2021	1 902	1 905

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)	
	On the EMAS sites: JL, LEX and crèche	On the EMAS sites incl. the Europa building
2010	4 880	-
2016	5 013	-
2017	4 746	5 236
2018		4 929 ^{13, 14, 15}
2019		5 008
2020		2 377
2021		2 347

13. New calculation method

14. Inclusion of the Europa building in the EMAS scope.

15. By way of illustration, with the previous method the occupation rate would be 5 469.

6.3. Heated or air-conditioned surface area (in m²)

Council buildings are subject to energy performance certificates (EPCs) 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
2016	212 366	145 134	62 775	n/a	4 457
2017	212 366	145 134	62 775	n/a	4 457
2018	272 595	145 134	62 775	60 229	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

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 ¹⁶
2014	4 241
2015	3 702

16. From 2020, the Council will use the number of meetings confirmed by official monitoring to have taken place, instead of the number of scheduled meetings.

Year	Number of confirmed meetings ¹⁶
2016	3 763
2017	4 289
2018	4 604
2019	3 983
2020	2 902
2021	4 289

Rue de la Loi cycle path



7. Annex

Extract from the calculation of greenhouse gas emissions resulting from the activities of the GSC, based on 2020 data.



7.1. Introduction

The aim of this review is to update, based on 2021 data, the greenhouse gas emissions resulting from all the GSC's activities. The first review of this kind was carried out in 2014.

The review uses the Bilan Carbone® (carbon balance) method and complies with ISO 14064.

The degree of accuracy in determining the values and emission factors varies from one item to another. In order to take into account the margin of error caused by less accurate

data, elements of uncertainty have been included, while still following the method referred to above.

Emissions for some items are evaluated by order of magnitude.

In order to cover the entire scope of the GSC's activities, this review is not limited to the EMAS buildings (Justus Lipsius, Lex, Europa and the crèche), but also includes the Luxembourg site and the Neder-Over-Heembeek warehouse.

7.2. Emissions considered

This review takes into consideration gas emissions generated directly within our organisation (direct emissions), as well as gas emissions generated off-site through activities necessary for organisational purposes, e.g. transport, the provision of services (indirect emissions).

Greenhouse gases such as methane (CH_4), nitrous oxide (N_2O) or refrigerants (hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs)) have been translated into CO_2 equivalents (CO_2^e) using coefficients defined by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) according to their global warming potential.

7.3. Overall results

Figure A1: Percentage breakdown by category

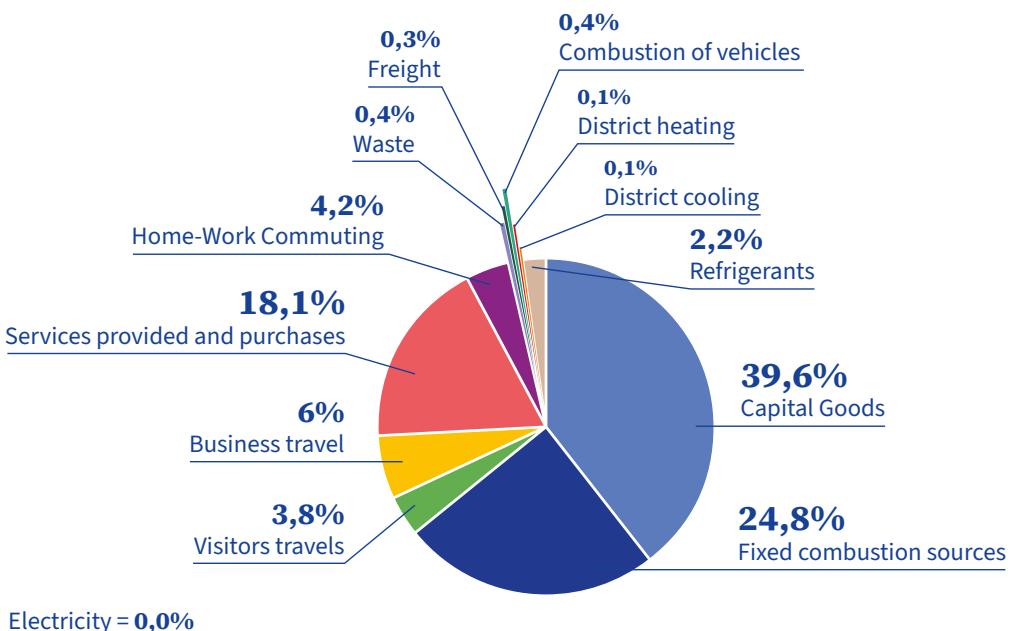


Figure A1 provides an initial overview of the percentages of CO_2 emissions per category in 2021.

Figure A2: CO₂ equivalent emissions (CO₂e)

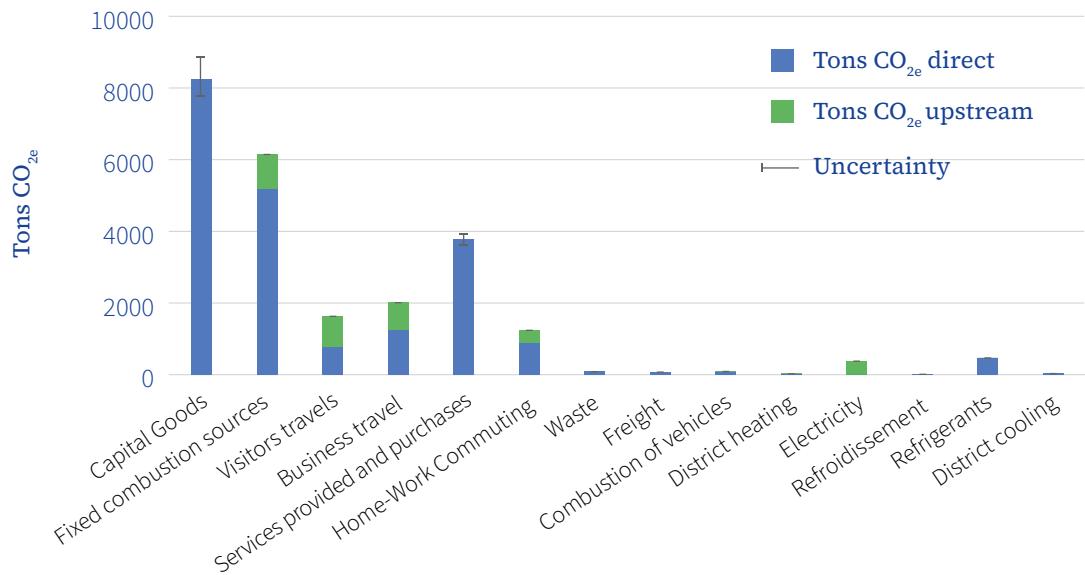


Figure A2 shows the highest direct CO₂ emissions by category and ‘upstream’ emissions, i.e. emissions related to the production and transport of fossil fuels. It also shows the degree of uncertainty attached to each category in 2021.

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