



ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT 2021

November 2021

2020

data



Council of the European Union
General Secretariat





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1. FOREWORD

On 25 January 2016, the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union (GSC) obtained EMAS¹ registration, 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 take. 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.

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.

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, situated on avenue de la Brabançonne/Brabançonnelaan, Brussels.

All of these activities have an impact on the environment. The GSC endeavours to reduce that 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 comply 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 that are to be

achieved within reasonable timeframes. 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 efficiency 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:

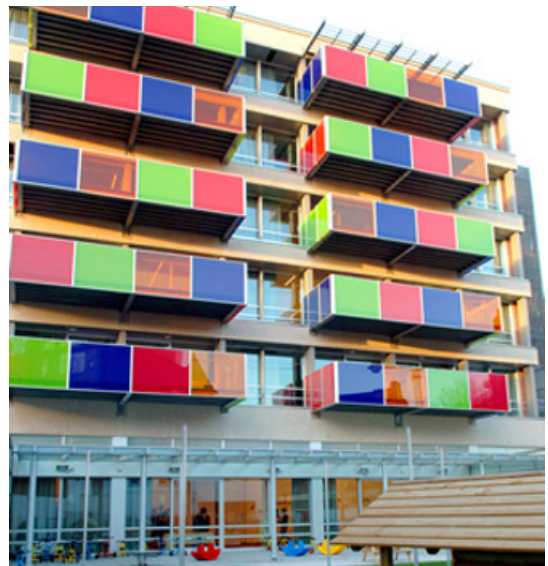
Justus Lipsius, Europa and Lex buildings



Building	Location	Surface area (m ²)	Heated surface area ² (m ²)	Status	Primary use
Justus Lipsius	Brussels	206 205	145 134	Owned	Offices, training and conference rooms, catering, archives, storage of materials
Lex	Brussels	75 562	62 775	Owned	Offices, training and conference rooms, catering
Crèche	Brussels	5 363	4 457	Owned	Crèche, offices, catering
Europa	Brussels	66 712	60 229	Owned	Conference rooms, offices, catering

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.

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

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

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	Air pollution, ozone layer depletion, greenhouse gas emissions
	Operation of equipment containing refrigerant gas	
	Operation of boilers	
	Operation of gas engines (cogeneration)	
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	Generation of hazardous and non-hazardous waste that needs to be treated
	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	
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	Excess energy consumption, depletion of natural resources, CO ₂ emissions, global warming
	Lighting of common areas, meeting rooms	
	Air-conditioning	
	Operation of boilers and cogeneration	
Resources	Renovation and/or construction of buildings	Depletion of natural resources, waste generation
Purchasing (public procurement)	Renovation or construction projects	Management of resources, waste, energy
	Maintenance and cleaning products	
	Waste management	
	Catering	
	Purchase of (IT) equipment, etc.	
Indirect aspects	Waste end-of-life treatment	Impact on the environment in terms of consumption and discharge
	Environmental rules to be followed by contractors	

3.4. ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

In 2013, the Secretary-General of the Council of the EU adopted an environmental policy formalising the GSC's commitment 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 commitment 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 assists the Environment Coordinator in implementing 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 provides 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 11/01/2022

Lex:
EXTENSION No. 619046 of 14/11/2017

Crèche:
EXTENSION No. 1.695.450 of 16/06/2020

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 the 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 of 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 paragraphs 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 those people working in the Europa building.

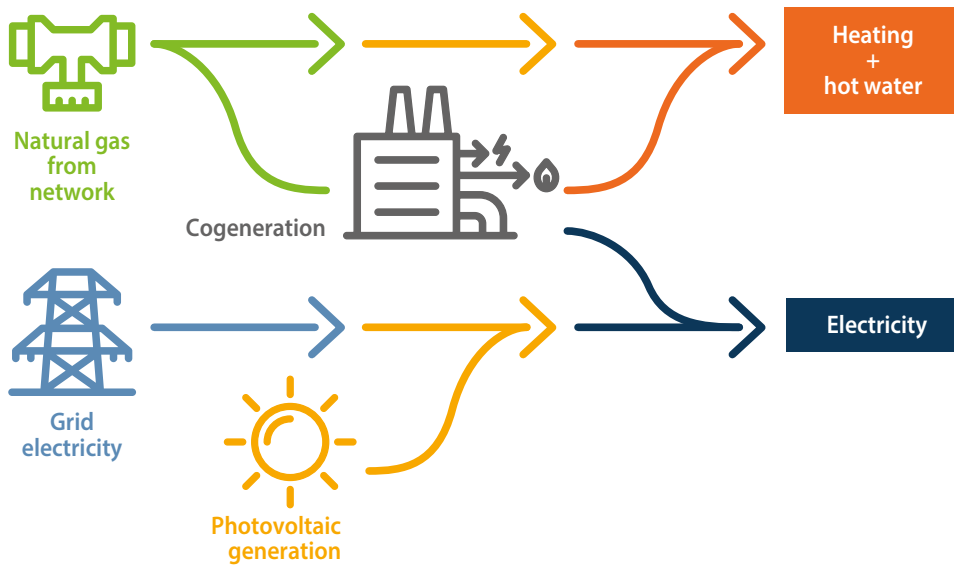
From 2018, the same indicators are calculated on the basis of figures obtained from the reading of access badges in real time. The resultant occupancy rate is around 90 % of that calculated using the method applied in previous years. As a consequence, the indicators expressed relative to numbers of occupants 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.

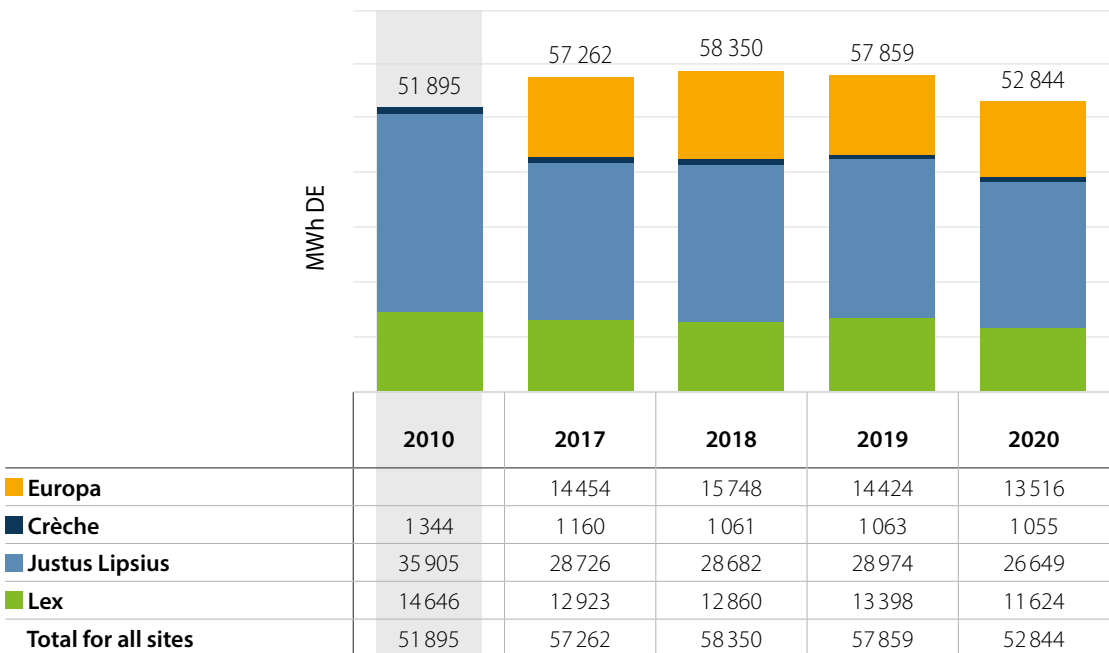
The 'direct energy' indicator reflects the amount of gas consumed and the amount of electrical energy drawn

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 24](#)), 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.



Figure 2: Direct energy consumption per m² ★

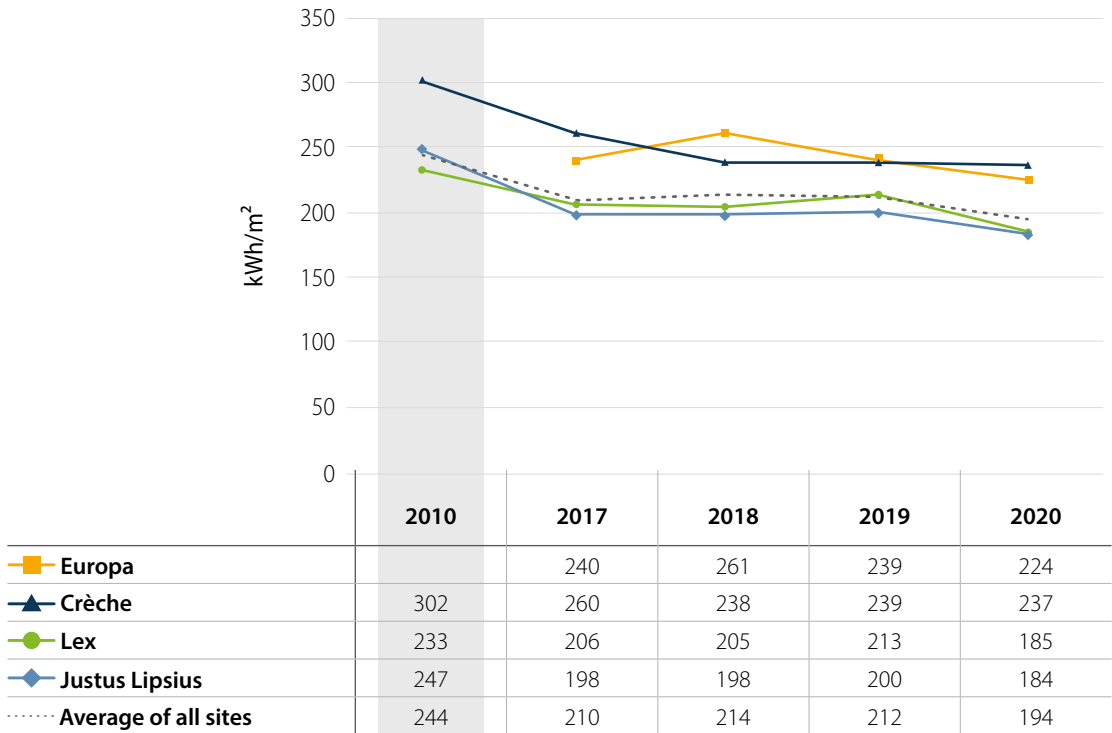


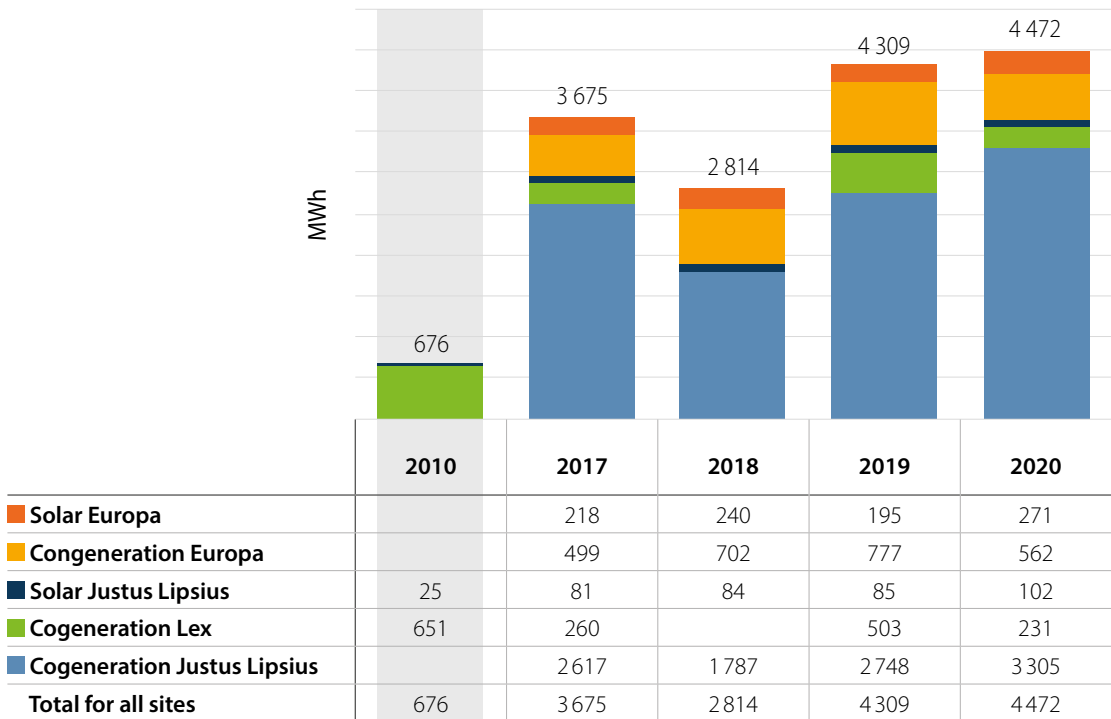
Figure 2 clearly shows the ongoing improvement in our buildings' energy performance. Between 2010 and 2020, direct energy consumption per m² decreased by 50 kWh. This decrease corresponds to approximately

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.



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 15 % of our total electricity demand, which was 30 606 MWh in 2019.

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 2020 compared to previous years.

In the Justus Lipsius building, electricity production from cogeneration increased between 2019 and 2020, due to both the optimisation of the cogeneration system and the decision to prioritise occupancy of this building during the COVID-19 period.

In the Lex, production fell considerably, as the building was almost completely unoccupied between March and December 2020.

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

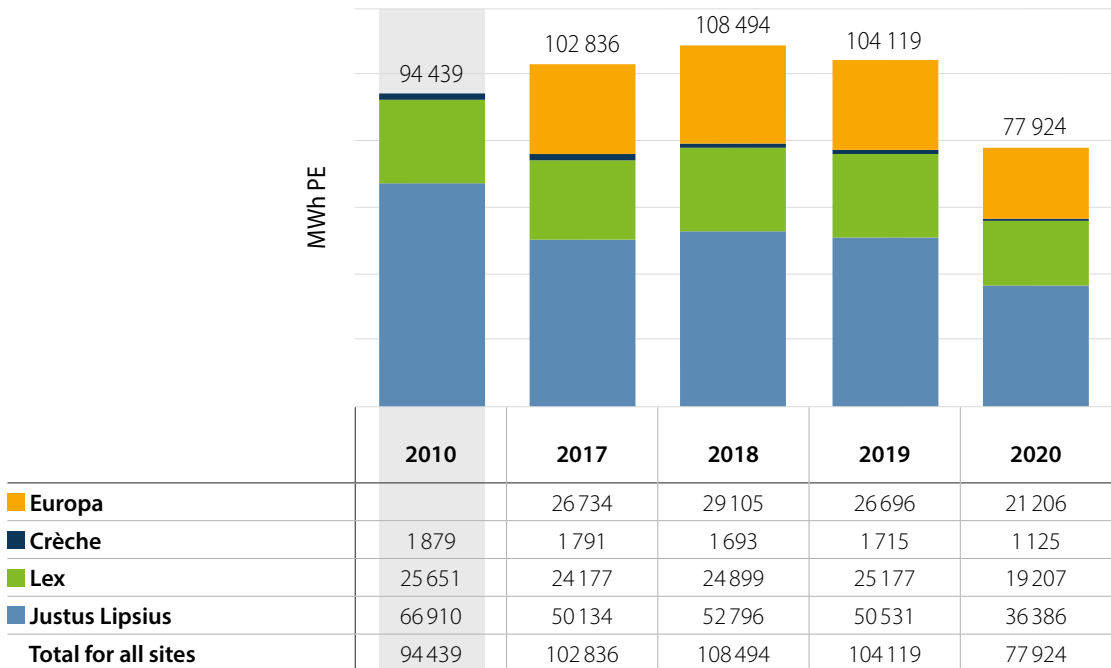
3. In accordance with the energy performance certification protocol for public buildings in the Brussels-Capital Region, a theoretical yield of 40 % is used to convert electricity bought from the grid into primary energy.

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 13 % between 2010 and 2019, despite the addition of the Europa building. Excluding the

consumption of the three buildings already present in 2010, i.e. the Justus Lipsius, the Lex and the crèche, total normalised primary energy consumption was 61 012 MWhPE in 2020, a decrease of 35 % 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.).

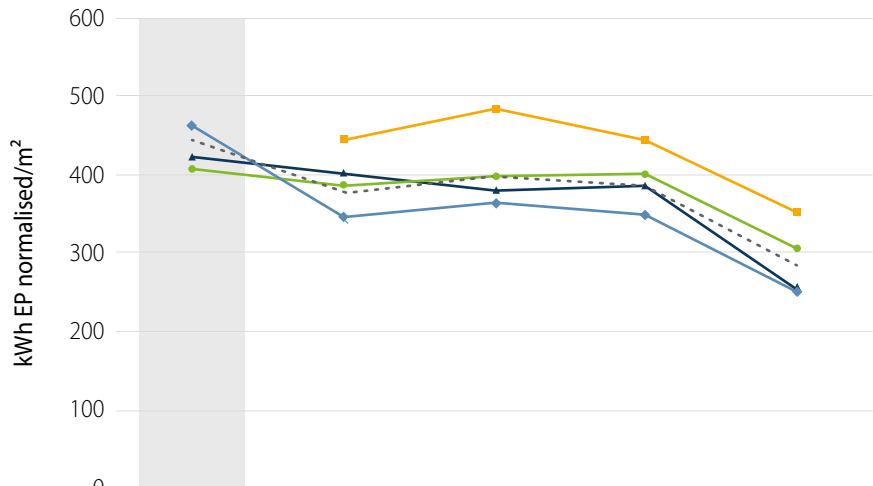
Figure 4: Normalised primary energy consumption



The average energy performance for all sites fell from 444 kWh/m² in 2010 to 286 kWh/m² in 2020, as shown in Figure 5, which amounts to a 35 % decrease over that

period. 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 ★



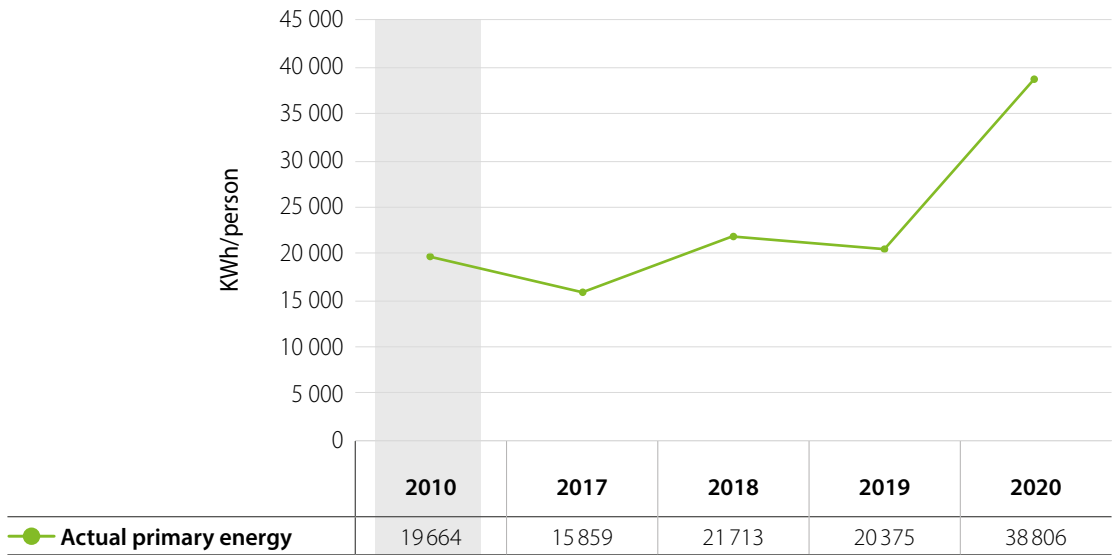
	2010	2017	2018	2019	2020
—■— Europa		444	483	443	352
—▲— Crèche	421	402	380	385	252
—●— Lex	408	385	397	401	306
—◆— Justus Lipsius	461	345	364	348	251
..... Average of all sites	444	377	398	382	286

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 and 2020.

Figure 6: Normalised primary energy consumption per person ★



Objectives and action

Objectives

Directive 2012/27/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on energy efficiency came into force on 4 December 2012. This Directive establishes a common framework of measures to promote energy efficiency in the Union. It aims to contribute to the Union's target of achieving a 20 % increase in energy efficiency by 2020 and promoting further energy efficiency improvements after that date.

The Council of the European Union, the European Parliament and the European Commission jointly stated

on 2 October 2012 that, due to the high profile of their buildings and the leading role they should play in the field of energy performance, they would, without prejudice to applicable rules on budgeting and public procurement, subject the buildings they own and occupy to the same requirements as those applicable to the buildings of Member States' central governments under Articles 5 and 6 of the Directive.

The GSC is thus committed to ensuring that energy is used efficiently in all Council buildings. The target increase in efficiency for the Justus Lipsius, Lex and crèche buildings together for the 2010-2020 period is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: 2020 energy efficiency target for the Justus Lipsius, Lex and crèche buildings

ANNÉE	NORMALISED CONSUMPTION, in MWh	ENERGY SAVING COMPARED TO 2010, in MWh	RELATIVE DECREASE COMPARED TO 2010, in %
Reference: 2010	94439	n. a.	n. a.
Target: 2020	79573	14166	-15%
Outcome: 2020	61012	33427	-35%

Note: n. a. = not applicable.

The GSC undertook to cut its normalised primary energy consumption by 15 % between 2010 and 2020 in the Justus Lipsius, Lex and crèche buildings. That objective was achieved and surpassed, with an energy saving of 35 % in 2020 compared to 2010. The GSC also undertook to improve its energy performance by an average of 1.5 % per year between 2010 and 2020. This objective equates to a reduction of 66.7 kWh primary energy per m² in the average energy consumption of all buildings in 2020 compared to 2010. This objective was achieved, with a saving of 142 kWhPE/m².

The overall objectives for reducing energy consumption from 2020 onwards will be reviewed in line with the legislation of the Brussels-Capital Region, particularly the local action plan for energy management (Plan Local d'Action pour la Gestion Énergétique – PLAGÉ), and with the results of the energy audits already carried out and in progress, as will be demonstrated in the next two points.

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;
- the energy audits of the Justus Lipsius building in 2015 and the Lex building in 2016 have helped to determine the cost-effective energy performance potential of and to devise an energy action plan for each of the two buildings;
- the energy audit of the crèche was completed in 2018, enabling an energy action plan to be drawn up for the building.

Action to be taken in 2022

In 2022 the GSC undertakes to:

- ensure the continued implementation of the existing actions presented in the paragraph entitled '[Primary energy](#)', page 24;
- implement and periodically evaluate the energy action plans for all of the audited 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;



- put in place the PLAGÉ system, the Brussels-Capital Region's programme to implement Directive 2012/27/EU for public 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 indicators

Figure 7 shows the trend in mains water consumption between 2010 and 2020 for the Justus Lipsius, Lex, Europa and crèche buildings.

Consumption in the Justus Lipsius building is trending downwards, 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 due to a leak.

The sharp fall in consumption in 2020 was mainly due to the drop in the occupancy rate due to the COVID-19 crisis.

Figure 7: Mains water consumption

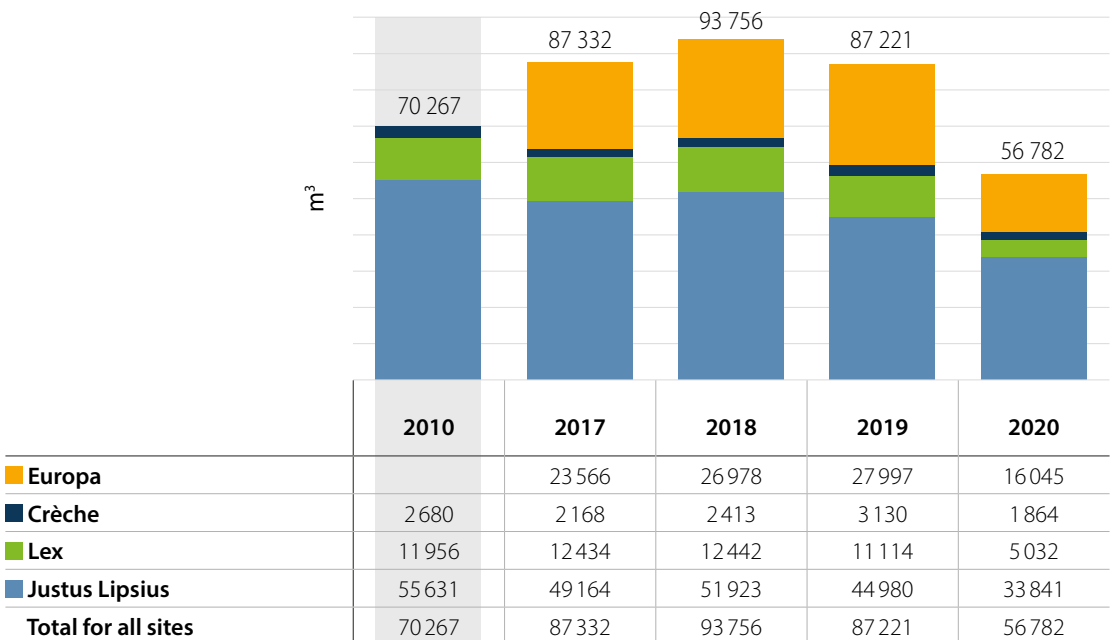
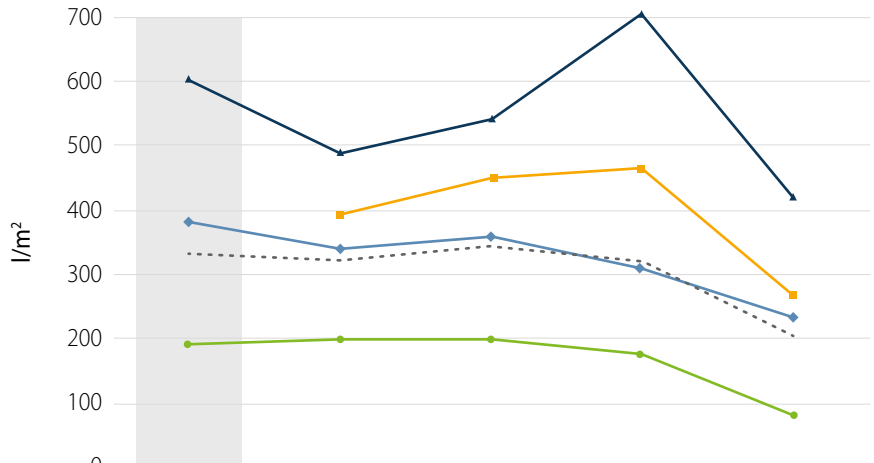


Figure 8 shows the mains water consumption per m² for each of the buildings. Mains water consumption

in the crèche is relatively high due to its activity of providing childcare.

Figure 8: Mains water consumption per m² ★



	2010	2017	2018	2019	2020
Europa		391	448	465	266
Crèche	601	486	541	702	418
Lex	190	198	198	177	80
Justus Lipsius	383	339	358	310	233
Average of all sites	330	320	344	320	208

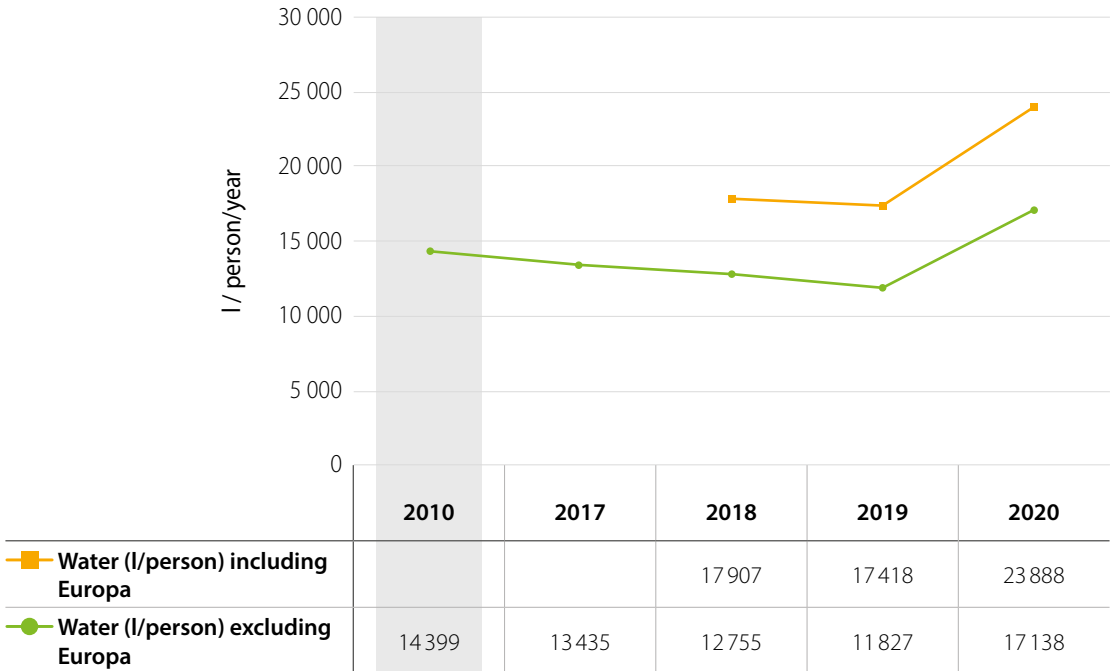
Figure 9 shows the trend in mains annual water consumption per occupant. Consumption has thus been corrected by an occupancy factor that takes into account the intensity of the Council's activities. Annual water consumption per person decreased slightly between 2010 and 2019, while in 2020 it increased 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. Indeed, the increase in water consumption per person between 2019 and 2020 is 37 %, while the increase in energy consumption is 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: Mains annual water consumption per occupant ★



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 that encourage 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 that encourage 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 brake 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

The GSC will implement the following measures:

- installation of an innovative system to recover heat from the waste water of two showers and reuse

it to preheat the water of the same showers (pilot project).



4.3. WASTE

Background

Given the very great diversity of its activities, the GSC 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:

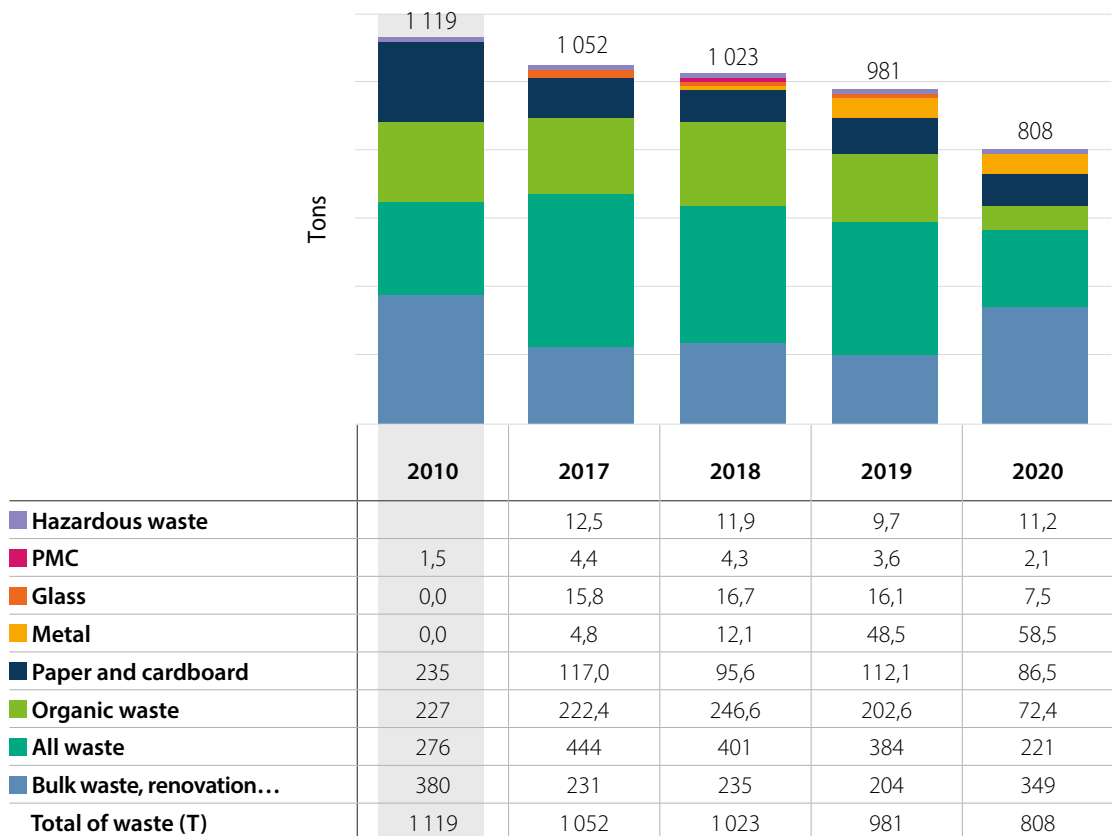
- hazardous waste (neon tubes, cans which contained hazardous products, waste oils, electronic waste, waste from the Medical Service, printer ink cartridges, etc.);
- PMC (plastic bottles and containers for liquids, cans and foil packaging, and drinks cartons);

- 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 2020. 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



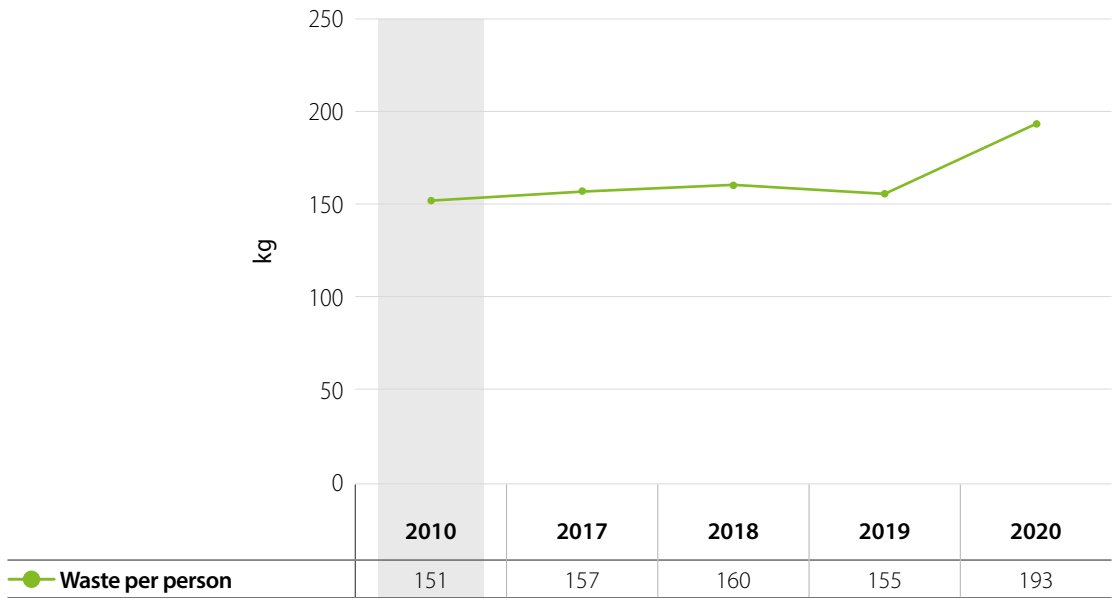
The total amount of waste decreased by 27.8 % between 2010 (1 119 tonnes) and 2020 (808 tonnes).

The decrease in the amount of waste is due to the effects of COVID-19 in 2020 and the significant increase in teleworking. The graph shows that PMC, glass, paper and cardboard waste, organic waste and general waste have decreased compared to 2019, while hazardous waste, metal, bulk and renovation waste have increased.

This is mainly due to the renovation work that took place in the Justus Lipsius building in 2020.

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 (all waste minus renovation waste) increased from 155 kilograms (kg) to 193 kg, due to the effects of the pandemic.

Figure 11: Waste per person ★



Objectives and action

Objectives

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

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

Action taken

To improve the sorting and recycling of waste, the following steps have been taken:

- launching a project to remove individual general waste bins from offices in the Justus Lipsius,

replacing them with separate waste collection bins on the patios and individual waste-paper baskets in offices, interpreting booths and training rooms;

- providing waste-paper baskets in the conference rooms, interpreting booths and offices;
- installing signs to provide contractors and external providers with better information on sorting at the loading bay;
- periodically measuring the quality of sorting and awareness-raising among staff;
- 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 packaging and recovering IT equipment through reuse and recycling;
- introducing waste sorting in the catering areas of the Lex, Justus Lipsius and Europa buildings;
- reviewing the technical specifications in the new waste management contract, including audits on the quality of waste sorting;
- introducing waste-sorting checks, carried out by the contractor in the corridors and car parks of our buildings.

Waste sorting



Action to be taken in 2022

In 2022, the GSC undertakes to:

- ensure the continued implementation of the measures taken under the previous action plan, and to establish a new action plan;
- continue to raise awareness among staff;
- expand the project to remove individual general waste bins from offices and install sorting areas in corridors in the Lex and Europa buildings;
- increase the use of recyclable or reusable office supplies as far as possible; continue and extend (if applicable) those contracts involving the reuse of some of the equipment withdrawn from service;
- establish the separate collection of paper cups;
- abolish the collection of ink cartridges and light bulbs, which have become obsolete, and enhance the collection of batteries;
- make contractors and subcontractors aware of the need to reduce wrapping and packaging, or compel them to do so by means of special clauses;
- replace the general waste bins provided for journalists during major events with sorting areas;
- initiate a reflection on the circular economy implemented at the GSC for both renovation work and logistics.

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 contracts;
- 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 sulphur oxides (SO_x), carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen oxides (NO_x or CO)⁴ 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 is currently measuring 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. In 2020, the graph shows a decrease in gas consumption, which is due to the COVID-19 crisis and the decrease in the number of staff and visitors over the year as a whole.

An annex setting out the overall results of a comprehensive study of 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., is attached at the end of this statement.

4. 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).

Figure 12: Direct greenhouse gas emissions⁵

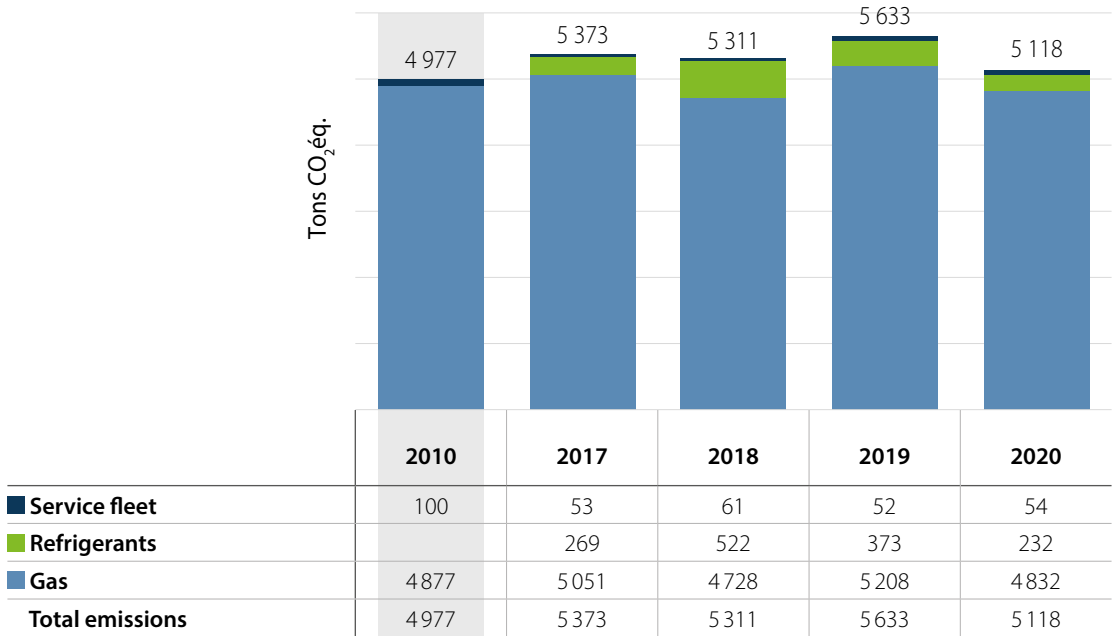


Figure 13 shows the greenhouse gas emissions avoided thanks to the photovoltaic and cogeneration installations. In 2020, these enabled savings of 654 tCO_{2e}. In 2020, the proper functioning of the

cogeneration systems and photovoltaic panel installations prevented CO₂ emissions from reaching their highest level to date.

⁵ Figure 12 takes into account direct emissions in the three main Scope 1 categories. Excluded from these data are the indirect or upstream emissions of these activities.

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

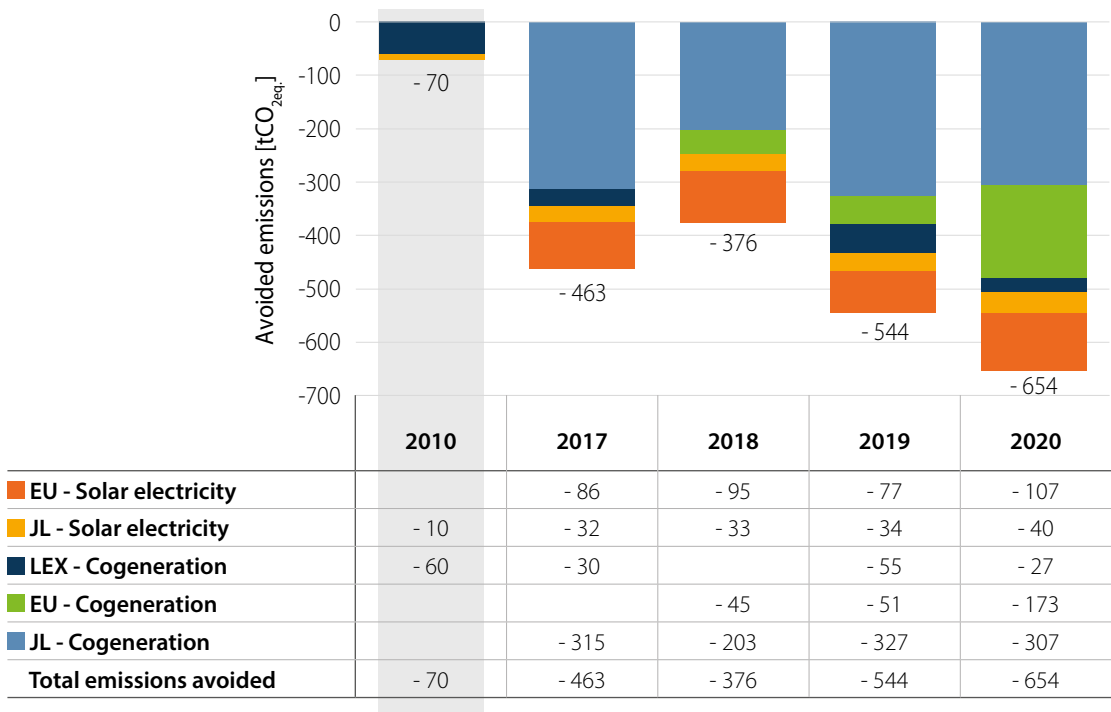
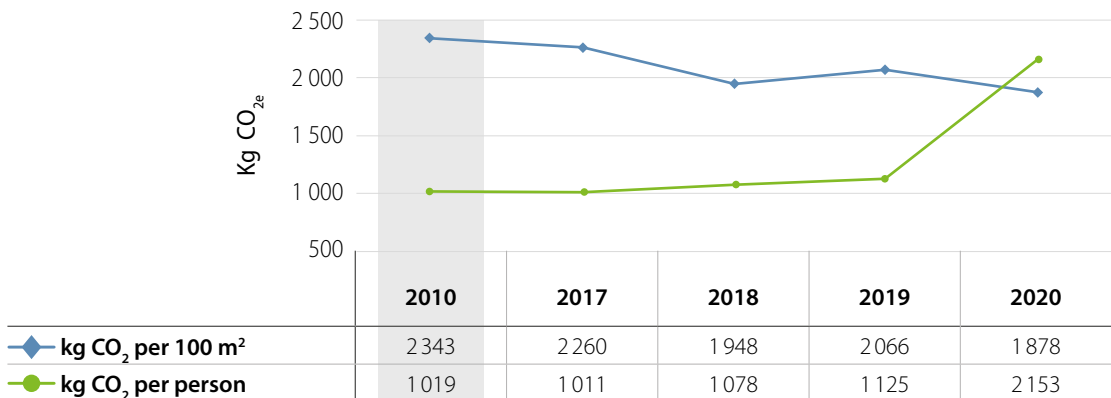


Figure 14 shows the trend in direct greenhouse gas emissions per FTE, which increased from 1 337 kg of CO_{2e} per FTE in 2016 to 1 612 kg of CO_{2e} per FTE in 2020.

Figure 14: Direct greenhouse gas emissions per 100 m² and per person⁶ ★



6 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 of these activities. The surface area includes offices, warehouses, catering facilities and car parks.

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).

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);
- installing electric vehicle charging stations and making them available to staff free of charge;
- purchasing green electricity;
- offsetting emissions from the production of paper delivered to the General Secretariat of the Council;
- setting up a more sustainable canteen which offers vegetarian dishes, with special emphasis on promoting seasonal vegetables and limiting food waste, and on managing the footprint of disposable products (e.g. recyclable packaging);
- 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

fleet⁷ from 256 g of CO₂ on average per km in 2013 to 135 g of CO₂ per km in 2019;

- 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;
- planting vegetable patches with aromatic herbs in one of the patios and the level 80 terrace of the Justus Lipsius building, initially for the kitchen preparing official meals and the Europa building canteen;
- improving the system for making food donations to the Red Cross, in particular during summits and holiday seasons (Easter, 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.

7. Manufacturer's data, except for armoured vehicles.



Action to be taken between 2021 and 2022

Between 2021 and 2022, 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;
- draw up a climate action plan to achieve the greenhouse gas emissions reduction target of 25 % between 2017 and 2030, and assess progress in 2023;
- define a common approach with the EU institutions and bodies regarding the voluntary offsetting of greenhouse gas emissions;
- conclude a contract for the purchase of 100 % renewable electricity;
- extend the 'zero single-use plastic' project to the Justus Lipsius and Lex canteens;
- 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;
- renew the 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 externally.

Environmental performance indicators

Total paper consumption fell from 355 tonnes in 2010 to 58 tonnes in 2020, as shown in figure 15. The sharp decline in consumption in 2020 was due to the COVID-19 crisis. Paper consumption per person went from 73 kg in 2010 to 19 kg in 2019, and to 24 kg in 2020, as shown in figure 16. The increased consumption in 2019 and 2020 is due to the fact that this indicator

is a ratio whose denominator is the number of staff present, which fell sharply during the health crisis because of the lockdown.

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 work of the European Commission, 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.

Figure 15: Paper consumption

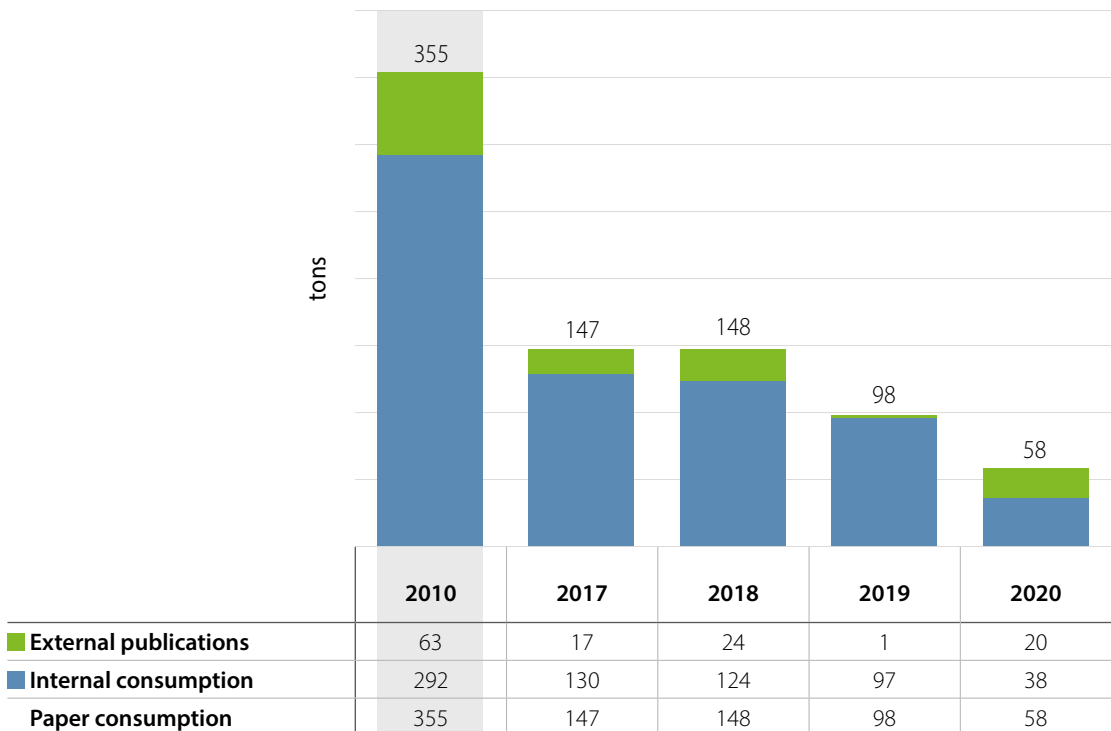


Figure 16: Paper consumption per person

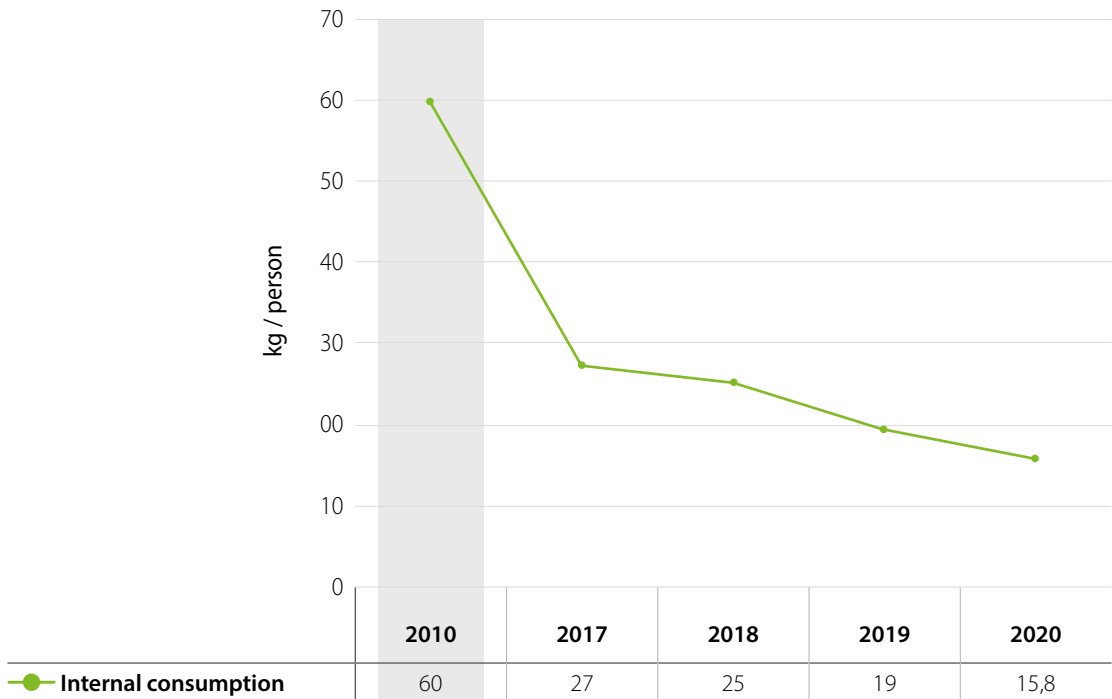


Figure 16 shows internal paper consumption per person. Over the entire period from 2010 to 2020, internal paper consumption per person fell by 73 %.

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;
- evaluate and improve the paper recycling rate.

Action taken

Paper consumption per person per year decreased by 60 % between 2010 and 2020 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 (laptop/tablets), and installing Wi-Fi in the GSC's meeting rooms, which helps reduce the use of paper during meetings;
- adding new functionalities to the delegates' portal: a computerised meetings file, intended to replace the paper files prepared for meetings of the Council, is accessible on the 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.
- shift to teleworking.

Action to be taken between 2021 and 2022

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 eConsilium and Delegates Portal applications to optimise document management

for the delegates with a view to a more systematic digitisation of documents;

- more widespread use of two screens per person in open workspaces and dynamic office allocation

Other measures under consideration are designed to maintain the environmental performance of the paper used and increasingly recycle it.



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

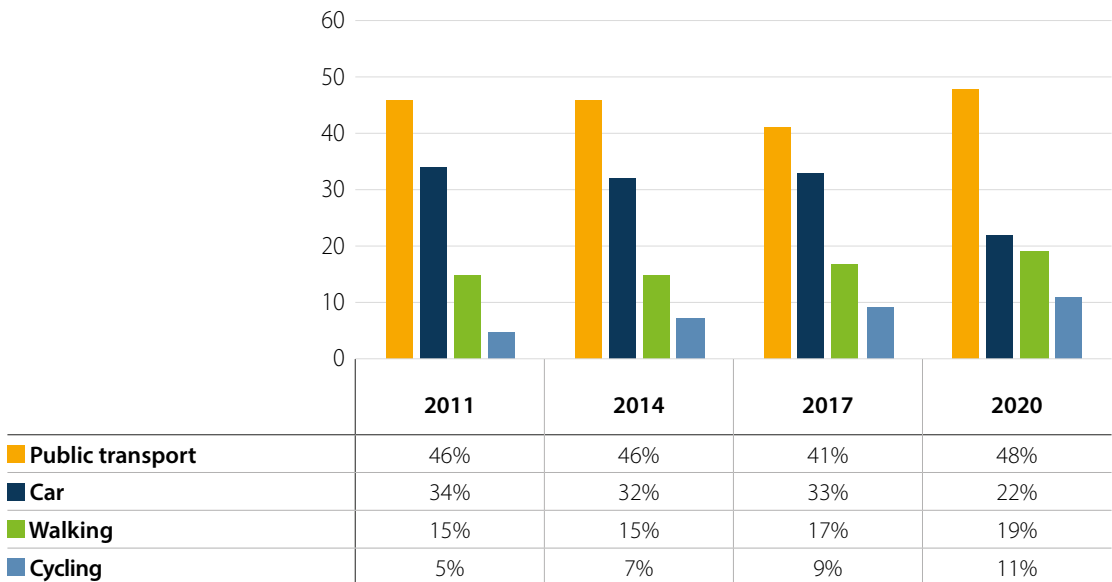
Commuting between home and work

The employee transport plan (plan de déplacements d'entreprise/bedrijfsvervoerplan - PDE/BVP)⁸ 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 about 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 (source: 2020 mobility survey) ★



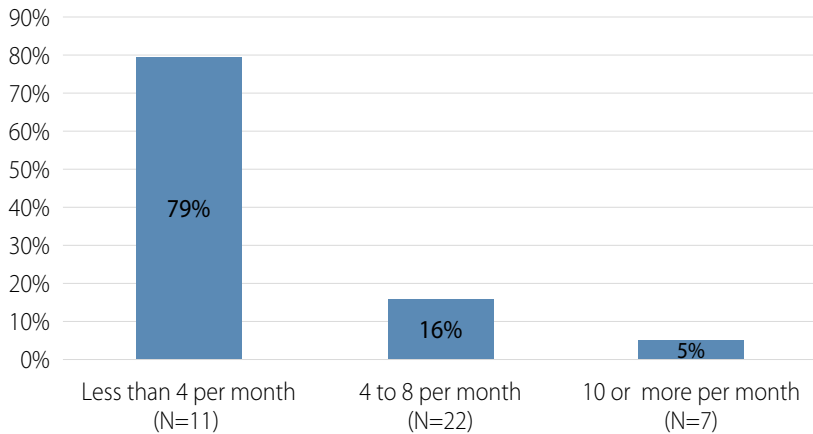
Work-related journeys

The 2020 mobility survey indicates that only 15 % of GSC staff make work-related journeys. Of those 15 %, 79 % make at least four work-related journeys per

month, and only 5 % make ten or more work-related journeys per month.

8. 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 18: Work-related journeys (source: 2020 mobility survey)



Objectives and action

Objectives

The IRIS II⁹ regional mobility plan, approved in 2010, aims to reduce the number of cars on the road in Brussels by 20 % in 2018 compared with 2001.

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, have 75 % of staff use a form of transport other than driving to get to the GSC;
- ensure ease of access to GSC buildings;
- provide information to, and raise awareness among, staff about soft mobility;

- contribute to reducing CO₂ emissions related to GSC activities.

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) 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. We can observe that sustainable forms of transport account for 76 % of the overall modal share. The target set in 2017 of 75 % of staff using a sustainable form of transport has therefore been attained.

9. IRIS II mobility plan, Brussels-Capital Region, November 2010.

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

Mode de transport principal	Enquête personnel SGC			Objectif DE report modal
	2014 (N = 1562)	2017 (N = 1700)	2020 (N = 930)	2020
Transports publics	46%	41,2%	48%	50%
Voiture	32%	33%	22%	25%
Marche	15%	17,2%	19%	15%
Vélo	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 all staff for a period of ten 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.

Action to be taken in 2022

To improve its mobility policy the GSC undertakes to implement the action 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 employees of external firms and visitors	Free up parking spaces in the Justus Lipsius and Lex buildings
Accessibility for bicycles	Carry out the fitting-out work at the Etterbeek exit for cyclists	Maintain/increase the number of staff using bicycles
	Provide new bicycle parking areas and improve the existing ones, changing rooms and charging points for electric 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	The number of staff taking public transport, walking and cycling will increase and there will be greater awareness of mobility measures

MEASURE	DESCRIPTION	EXPECTED RESULT
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

In accordance with the timetable for the Brussels-Capital Region, the GSC employee transport plan will be evaluated and updated in January 2022.

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, destructors;
- 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, a webpage on 'green public procurement' for authorising departments;
- preparation of the renewal of a contract for making available an interinstitutional Help Desk on sustainable public procurement procedures (since March 2017);
- 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 between 2021 and 2022

The GSC is committed to taking 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;

- defining and implementing a procedure for sustainable public procurement;
- disseminating within the GSC the content of presentations and training courses run by the European Parliament, via the dedicated

interinstitutional helpdesk 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).

BÂTIMENT	SUPERFICIE DE LA PARCELLE	SURFACE BÂTIE	SURFACE ESPACES VERTS	SURFACES DIVERSES (abords: voirie, parkings, parkings vélo, trottoirs 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 certificate¹⁰;
- using, wherever possible, eco-friendly cleaning products;
- holding a seminar for staff entitled ‘The impact of urbanisation on biodiversity: lessons and challenges’ to raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity, even in cities;
- establishing sustainability criteria for the catering services, with a focus on local and seasonal products and fish from sustainable fisheries;

10. 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;
 - redevelopment of one of the patios in the Justus Lipsius building as a wild flower garden;
 - incorporating a green wall into the Europa building;
 - organising a workshop as part of the inter-institutional EMAS week on 'Biodiversity in the city' (8 June 2017);
- planting tubs of aromatic herbs on one of the patios of the Justus Lipsius building and on the terrace on floor 80 initially for the kitchen that prepares the official meals and gradually extending to the kitchens of the Justus Lipsius restaurant.

Action to be taken between 2021 and 2022

The GSC undertakes to incorporate biodiversity protection criteria in relevant public procurement contracts.

Green wall in the Europa 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 area 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 and mobilisation in environmental management;
- consulting staff (on particular activities and themes);
- creating a sense of ownership;
- maintaining and encouraging mobilisation and motivation;
- planning awareness-raising campaigns and initiatives.

Environmental management at the GSC

Validation declaration

Community Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS)

VINCOTTE nv
Jan Olenegaterslaan 35, 1800 Vilvoorde, Belgium

Based on an audit of the organization, only of the activities with its staff, and the assessment of the documentation for the environmental management system (EMAS) and the results of the audit, the Commission of the Communities for EMAS in the Brussels Capital region (CoR) has issued a validation declaration for the period 1st January 2021 to 31st December 2021. The CoR has issued a validation declaration for the period 1st January 2021 to 31st December 2021. The CoR has issued a validation declaration for the period 1st January 2021 to 31st December 2021. The CoR has issued a validation declaration for the period 1st January 2021 to 31st December 2021.

**Conseil de l'Union européenne –
Secrétariat Général**
with registration number BE-BXL-000037

**Rue de la Loi 175
1048 Brussels (Belgium)**

Activities of the General Secretariat of the Council in the three buildings it occupies in the Brussels Capital region (Lambre Léopold, Lee and the crèche).

Registration number: BE-BXL-000037

For the environmental verifier: **BELAC EMAS BE-4-0010**

Some measures



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

how can you contribute



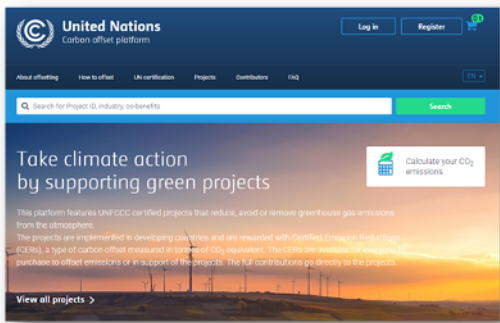
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United Nations Carbon offset platform

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 rewarded with Certified Emission Reduction (CER), a type of carbon offset measured in tonnes of CO₂ equivalent. The CERs are available for purchase to offset emissions or in support of the projects. The full contributions go directly to the projects.

Action taken

The action can be divided into four main types:

- measures to promote ongoing awareness of the project using the GSC's intranet (Green Office website): articles, awareness-raising campaigns on European or local events such as Mobility Week, the European Week for Waste Reduction;
- campaigns for all staff on good practices to be adopted (energy, sorting waste, reducing paper consumption, etc.);
- organising a participatory action to clean up the Parc du Cinquanteenaire on 19 November 2019 as part of the European Week for Waste Reduction (EWWR);
- 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 2012 Open Day and those from 2015 to 2019, in the interinstitutional EMAS Week organized in May 2016 and the interinstitutional

EMAS days held on 8 June 2017 and 18 and 19 March 2019.

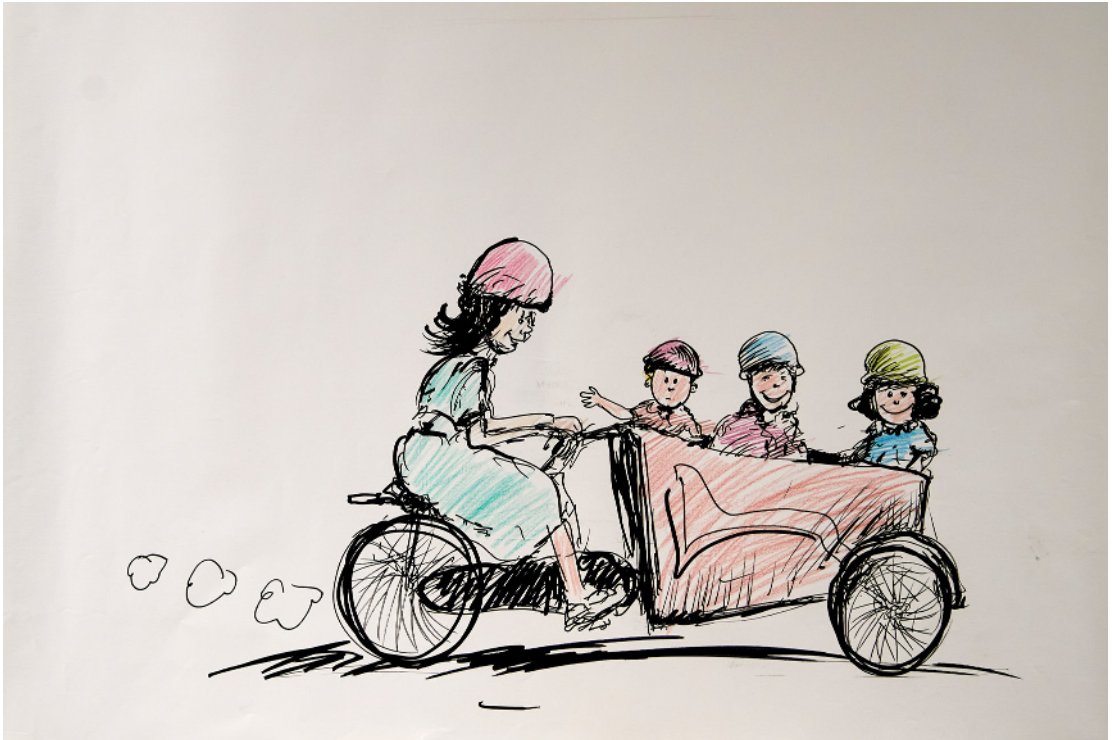
Training has also been organised for specific target groups, based on their involvement in a particular environmental area, e. g. for people using hazardous products or for members of the environmental network.

Finally, awareness is being raised among staff and parents at the crèche by means of posters explaining the environmental management approach and encouraging everyone to get involved by taking practical, everyday steps (saving energy, sorting waste, etc.).

Due to the COVID-19 crisis, a certain number of planned campaigns and other awareness-raising activities could not be carried out in 2020. However, a mobility survey was conducted on the intranet in April 2020 accompanied by a video to encourage colleagues to respond. A total of 30 % of staff responded to that survey.

Pictures from the campaign for the 2020 mobility survey





Action to be taken in 2022

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;
- organising training activities and conferences on relevant environmental issues;
- publishing and periodically updating the environmental statement;
- continuously updating the Green Office intranet site and revamping it in order to increase its visibility;
- participating in the VéloMai campaign to encourage staff to cycle between home and work;
- participating in the interinstitutional network of EMAS-registered European institutions in order to develop common communication campaigns;
- ensuring that external contractors are aware of environmental management.





5. VERIFICATION DATA

THIS VERSION IS A FULL TRANSLATION OF THE FRENCH VERSION VALIDATED BY THE EMAS VERIFIER.

The publication of the next environmental statement is due in December 2022.



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-site.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

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, the staff of external companies, visitors, members of delegations and journalists. Following the entry into use of the Europa building, a large number of activities were transferred and, consequently, staff moved to this new building.

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 ^{11,12,13}	
2019	5 008	
2020	2 377	

11. New calculation method.

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

13. 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 area

was chosen for calculating certain environmental performance indicators.

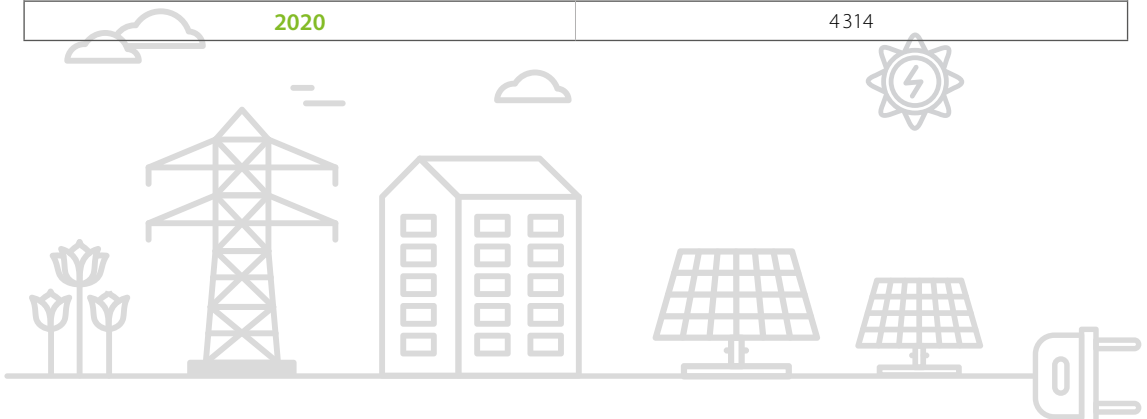
YEAR	TOTAL HEATED OR AIR-CONDITIONED SURFACE AREA (in m ²)	JUSTUS LIPSIUS HEATED OR AIR-CONDITIONED SURFACE AREA (in m ²)	LEX HEATED OR AIR-CONDITIONED SURFACE AREA (in m ²)	EUROPA HEATED OR AIR-CONDITIONED SURFACE AREA (in m ²)	CRÈCHE HEATED OR AIR-CONDITIONED SURFACE AREA (in m ²)
2010	212 366	145 134	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	212 366	145 134	62 775	60 229	4 457
2019	212 366	145 134	62 775	60 229	4 457
2020	212 366	145 134	62 775	60 229	4 457

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 session meetings
2014	5 252
2015	5 774
2016	6 276
2017	6 750
2018	7 277
2019	6 712
2020	4 314



YEAR	Number of confirmed meetings ¹⁴
2014	4 241
2015	3 702
2016	3 763
2017	4 289
2018	4 604
2019	3 983
2020	<u>2 902</u>

14 From 2020, the Council will use the number of meetings confirmed by official monitoring instead of the number of session meetings.



Rue de la Loi cycle lane



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 2020 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 emissions 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 and the crèche), but also includes the Europa building, the Luxembourg site and the Neder-Over-Heembeek warehouse.

7.2. EMISSIONS CONSIDERED

This review considers 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 (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O) or refrigerants (hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs)) have been translated into CO₂ equivalents (CO₂e) 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

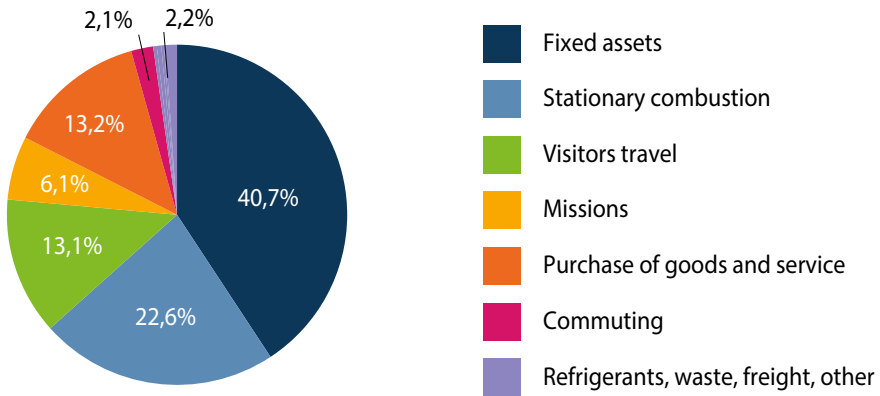


Figure A1 provides an initial overview of the percentages of CO₂ emissions per category in 2020.

Figure A2: CO_{2e} emissions

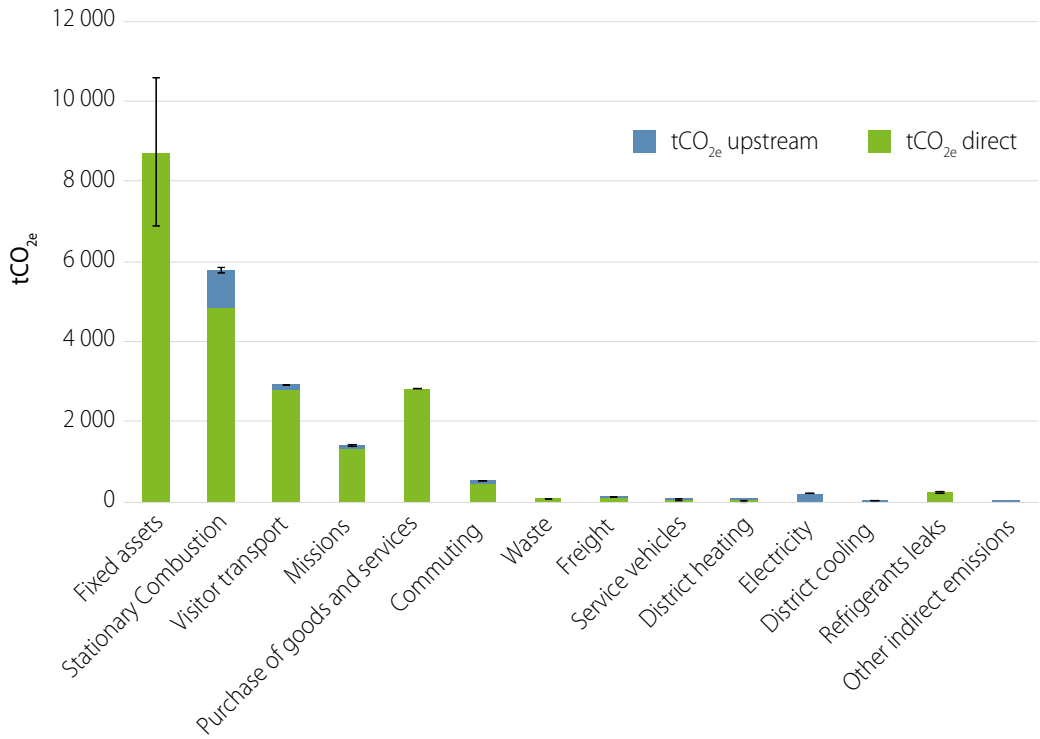


Figure A2 shows the highest direct CO₂ emissions by category and 'upstream' emissions, i.e. emissions related to the production and transport of fossil fuels. It also shows the degree of uncertainty attached to each category in 2020.

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

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