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# Archives of the European Parliament

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2022 annual report

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Directorate for Innovation and Central Services  
Attached to the Secretary-General

**Archives Unit**

January 2023

Archives Unit  
Directorate for Innovation and Central Services  
Attached to the Secretary-General

*Cover: Inaugural presentation of the exhibition '70 years of presence of the European Parliament in Luxembourg' in the presence of Grand Duke Henri of Luxembourg, Grand Duchess Maria Teresa of Luxembourg, President of the European Parliament Roberta Metsola, Prime Minister of Luxembourg Xavier Bettel, Quaestor of the European Parliament Christophe Hansen, and Secretary-General of the European Parliament Klaus Welle  
10 May 2022, Luxembourg, European Parliament*

*All images: © European Union*

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## Summary

Each European Union (EU) institution, including the European Parliament, has the legal obligation to identify, acquire and maintain an archive of its official documents. Parliament's Archives, carrying out this obligation, have existed since the launch of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1952, and its *fonds*<sup>1</sup> now numbers around five million items.

Parliament's Archives are keepers of the institution's 'memory', and should, with their holdings and services, reflect Parliament's history and development as accurately as possible, particularly as regards European integration. In order to achieve this, the Archives Unit works to manage and preserve Parliament's official documents and other archival material, including the papers of individual Members who choose to submit them. The unit supports Members and the administration in accessing the historical records they need for their work. It makes the archives publicly accessible, assists academic researchers in retrieving necessary files for their use and carries out promotional activities such as events and exhibitions.

The work of the Archives Unit is set out in this report, covering its activities for the year 2022. Looking at the figures below will give a quick overview of the unit's work, which is described in greater detail in the report and is summarised in the table below:

<b>Archives:</b>	
- Transfers received (submission to archives):	37
- Submissions of administrative and legislative archives:	29.4 linear metres (lm)
- Submissions of digital files:	361.4 gigabytes (GB)
- Items from the official mail archives:	8 lm
- Transfers to the Historical Archives of the EU:	66 lm (528 archive boxes)
- Archives processed (paper):	107.5 lm and 8 382 photos
- Archives processed (electronic):	14.1 GB
- Number of items checked:	142 581
- Number of pages digitised:	472 299
<b>Searches:</b>	
- Number of requests for documents:	227 requests
- Number of sessions on the public dashboard:	4 113 sessions
- Number of study visitors (researchers) received:	5 study visitors
<b>Outreach:</b>	
Events and exhibitions:	3
Views on social media/online unique visitors:	75 585/63 482
Websites maintained:	1
Posts:	135 pages on the internet

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<sup>1</sup> In archival science, a *fonds* is a group of records that share the same origin and that have occurred naturally as an outgrowth of the daily workings of an agency, individual or organisation.

## **Part I - Objectives and progress in 2022**

### **1) Background**

This is the 19th annual report of Parliament's Archives. The activity of the archives is regulated by Council Regulation (EEC, Euratom) No 354/1983 of 1 February 1983 (amended by Council Regulation (EU) No 2015/496 of 17 March 2015) concerning the opening to the public of the historical archives of the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community.

The regulation establishes a legal obligation for the EU institutions to maintain archives and, after a period of time, to deposit those already 'opened to the public' in the common Historical Archives of the European Union (HAEU), which are located at the European University Institute in Florence. Article 9(2) of the regulation stipulates that 'each institution shall publish information annually on its historical archiving activities'. The annual report on Parliament's Archives is submitted to fulfil this obligation.

The Archives Unit, within Parliament's administration, manages and preserves Parliament's official documents and other archival material dating back to 1952, including the deposited documents of individual Members. Formally, as requested by the decision of Parliament's Bureau of 2 July 2012 on document management, the unit is responsible for the acquisition, storage, processing and accessibility of the official documents of the institution. It provides these documents, both internally to Members and to the administration, and externally to organisations and citizens, in particular researchers and historians, through 'tools that facilitate online access to information'. It assists researchers in their study of the history of Parliament and European integration, and publishes historical studies based on the archives, using 'any means of documentary or academic dissemination or publishing'. It works closely with the Historical Archives of the European Union in promoting use of the archives and the study of Parliament's history.

Located in Luxembourg, the Archives Unit is part of the Directorate for Innovation and Central Services attached to the Secretary-General. The unit also carries out research, as well as dissemination and communication activities aimed at promoting awareness of Parliament's history.

### **2) Objectives**

The objectives of the Archives Unit are:

- i) to acquire material of historical value from Parliament, organise them in an orderly manner for future access and preserve them; and,
- ii) to ensure access to this material and its use in order to promote understanding of Parliament's history and of European integration more broadly.

In greater detail, these objectives consist of the following:

1. To pursue a long-term strategy for the Archives Unit – and the Directorate in which it is located – to address the challenges posed by the digital revolution, so as to become a centre of excellence and reference for historical research into European integration and the European Parliament;
2. To continue contributing to the definition and implementation of Parliament's document management policy and the rules governing the transfer of archival and library materials for permanent preservation from the Directorates-General and services (with a particular focus on archival materials);
3. To streamline the acquisition of institutional archives and namely:
  - a) to diversify the variety of services guiding the transfer of documents and publications to the Archives in order to meet the services' specific needs;
  - b) to continue streamlining the processes for transferring electronic data to the unit's collections and databases;
  - c) to contribute to broadening the sources covering European Parliament history, specifically by expanding oral archives with testimonials from former Presidents, Secretaries-General and Members;
4. To plan and implement a strategy for the long-term preservation of the archives' material, i.e.:
  - a) to implement the measures needed to ensure reliable digital preservation and to guarantee integrity and legibility over time, namely by preparing for the long-term preservation of digital content in collaboration with other institutions and the HAEU, and by developing and integrating tools for processing digitally born documents and data; and
  - b) to revise the archives' metadata policy, in order to create, reveal and connect information on archival funds and, in particular, to ensure efficient transfers from business applications to the Archives' database;
5. To ensure the internal and external accessibility of the Archives, i.e.:
  - a) to further strengthen a client-oriented historical research service by ensuring timely and adequate response to historical requests from Members and Parliament staff submitted by email;
  - b) to prepare online archives, specifically by creating web pages for historical information about former delegates and Members and making the historical archives database available on the internet;
6. To make a meaningful contribution to promoting understanding of the history of EU integration and of the European Parliament, i.e.:
  - a) to design and pursue an overall communications strategy, in cooperation with the relevant services, to promote the Archives, thereby ensuring a strong online presence;
  - b) to support research into, and the publication of studies on, the history of the European Parliament;
  - c) to participate in managing the dedicated websites and contribute to Parliament's research and history-related websites;
  - d) to foster interinstitutional and professional cooperation, in particular with the Interinstitutional Archives Group, and by being involved in expert groups and professional organisations, so as to develop projects of common interest (digitisation, unification of metadata and controlled authorities).

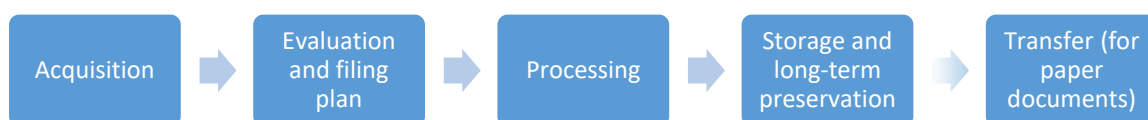
Progress towards achieving these objectives is ensured by:

- i) the daily work of the unit, which meets Parliament's legal obligation and raises awareness about its history;
- ii) specific projects needed in order to adapt to technological progress and to embed piloted innovations and good practices into the unit's daily work.

### 3) Progress in 2022

This section sets out, in greater detail, the archiving processes and the qualitative progress made in the services provided by the Archives Unit. Archiving means ensuring both order and preservation. The processing of archives refers to the orderly organisation of *fonds* on the basis of their evaluation and subsequent filing plan. The items archived are assigned metadata<sup>2</sup> (i.e. data reflecting their organisation and their place within the archives).

The main steps in the archiving process are explained below:



#### Acquisition and filing plan

These activities require logistics management and specialist knowledge about archiving. In order to carry out acquisitions, storage and transfer, the Archives Unit:

- collects and registers Parliament's official archives (which are both legislative and administrative in nature);
- receives, organises and manages the private archives of Members;
- receives, organises and manages the archives of Parliament's official mail;
- ensures the restoration and preventive conservation of archived materials;
- prepares and manages transfers to the HAEU;
- manages the relevant stocks and storage spaces.

In 2022, an additional effort was made following the move of more than 1 500 linear metres of documents from the Schuman building to the Adenauer building. The Archives Unit currently manages five storage rooms (four rooms that consist of physical documents and one temperature-controlled room for microfiche). We currently hold 3 282 lm of documents, including both legislative and administrative collections, some of which are still being processed.

After the COVID-19 crisis, staff could once again access the European Parliament's premises throughout the year. The main activities in relation to acquisitions were:

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<sup>2</sup> Metadata is 'data about data': a standardised set of data describing where each item is stored and what it is about.

- continuing to diversify the variety of services guiding the acquisition of documents and publications in order to meet the specific needs of various offices and administrative services;
- continuing efforts to streamline the electronic acquisition of data into the unit's collections and databases;
- contributing to broadening sources on Parliament's history, specifically by providing integrated access to documents.

As its core mission, the Archives Unit manages and preserves Parliament's official public documents and other archival material dating back to 1952, comprising around five million items to date.

In 2022, 37 acquisitions were completed. A total of 29.4 lm of paper files and 361.4 GB of digital files were acquired by the Archives Unit. The following graphic illustrates the impact of the pandemic in 2020 and 2021, during which most staff were teleworking. This meant that they were not acquiring physical files, as they only had very limited access to Parliament's premises. The acquisition of physical files has been newly permitted since July 2021.

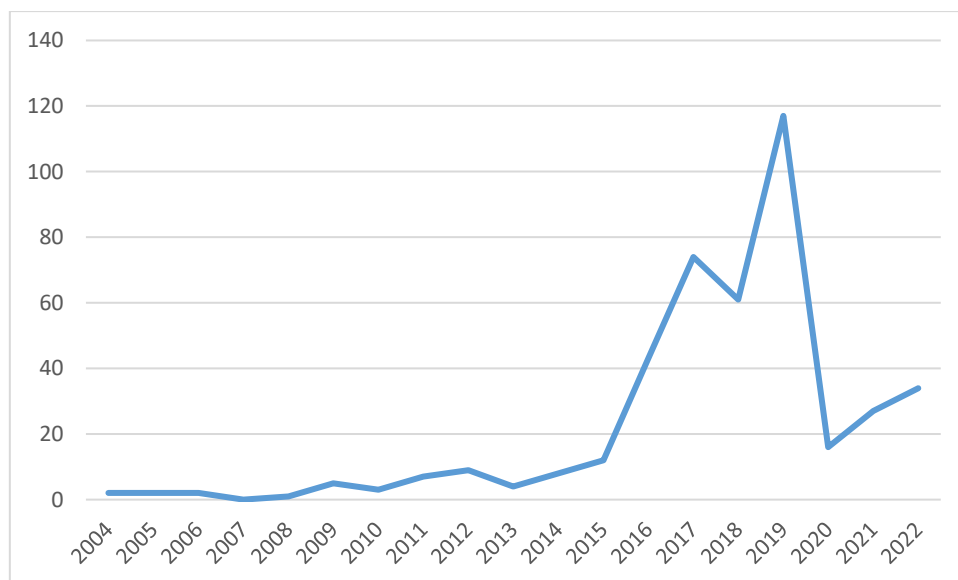


Figure 1: Number of transfers per year

The Archives Unit has maintained the quality of its acquisition procedure by requesting a detailed inventory based on the filing plan that must be provided with each acquisition. Regular reminders about several improvements were issued to the document management officers of each Directorate-General. The goal of such a detailed inventory is to facilitate the cataloguing of the acquired documents at the end of their retention schedule and to make it easier to search for them when requested, depending on the processing of the corresponding *fonds*. The graph below illustrates the impact that these reminders have had on the number of detailed inventories provided, compared with the number of acquisitions. Continuing the quality level reached in 2021, each acquisition carried out in 2022 was accompanied by a detailed inventory.



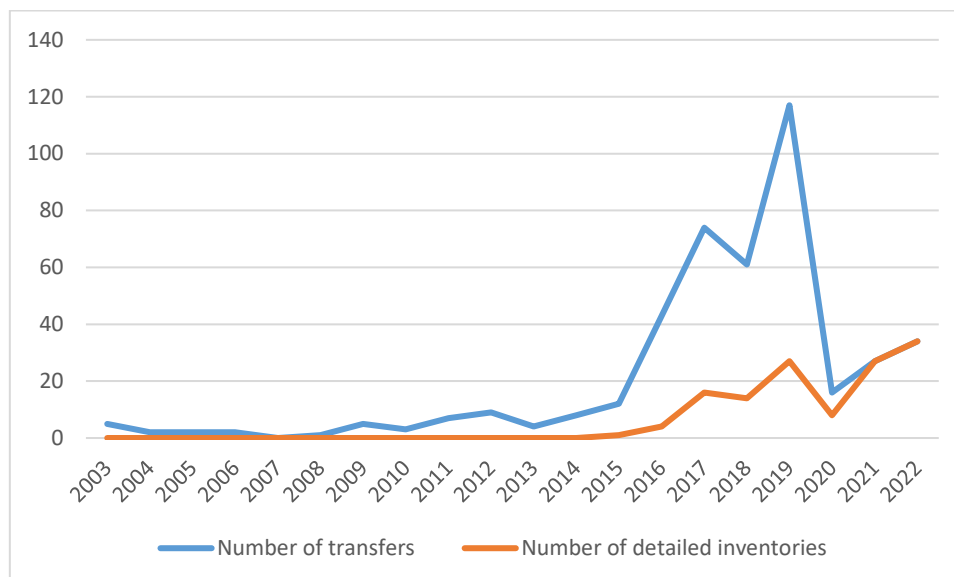


Figure 2: Number of detailed inventories compared to the number of transfers per year

The main acquisitions in 2022 included documents from:

- Members (1.5 Im);
- Office of the President (341 GB);
- Directorate for the Plenary (11.4 Im);
- Directorate for Legislative Acts (0.3 Im);
- Directorate for Members' Financial and Social Entitlements (9 Im);
- Directorate for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs (3.1 Im);
- Directorate for Economic and Scientific Policies (18.5 GB);
- Directorate for Democracy Support (1.8 Im).

The Archives Unit welcomes and invites individual Members and former Members of the European Parliament to submit documents to the archives (private archives).

The Former Members' Association actively supports awareness-raising activities encouraging the submission of private archives, which comprise Members' parliamentary work in Brussels or Strasbourg, or their domestic or European political work. The private archives are of great historical value, since they illustrate the wide variety of work carried out by Members, and will be of great use to future generations.

## Processing

In relation to the processing of Parliament's Archives, the Archives Unit:

- defines the policy, strategy and practical arrangements for archival processing;
- plans and manages archival processing and digitisation projects;
- manages the outsourced processing of archives and digitisation;
- coordinates internal and external archival processing projects;
- carries out quality control for processing and metadata (descriptive data).

Once the files have been received, their contents are identified and organised according to their source, so as to protect their original context. This is important in order to ensure that documents can be easily identified later on. A hierarchical description (hierarchical layers of metadata) is then

undertaken, in accordance with the ISAD(G)<sup>3</sup> archiving standard (series and files) and in compliance with a wide range of criteria, and is entered directly into the database. Each document, whether 'paper born' or 'digitally born', will have a similar description and will be kept electronically in the Archive Management System (AMS).

The electronic archives (AMS) contain more than five million items. They are currently only available for consultation (for publicly accessible documents only) at the archives' premises in Luxembourg and, outside the archives, for legislative documents from between 1952 and 1979, through the archives' website.

The archival processing methodology was updated in 2016, comprising a revision of the methods for processing and description, the enhancement of controlled authorities and the controlled thesaurus<sup>4</sup>, the quality control of descriptive data, and the enforcement of the rules concerning access to public archives. The tender for processing, which was based on this methodology, resulted in the signing, in 2017, of a contract for processing archives. This contract ensured the provision of specialised archivists for the processing of paper archives until 22 May 2021, which was then replaced by another contract under the lead of the European Commission as of 28 July 2021. This contract is currently in force.

The teleworking situation allowed for systematic quality control to be launched in the AMS, enabling the staff to examine over 142 581 items, and for a retrospective analysis of the *fonds* processed to be carried out. This enabled anomalies to be corrected and greatly increased the quality of the digital versions of the archived documents. Examples of these anomalies include inconsistent dates for documents and series, missing digital documents and illegible documents. Quality control was carried out on documents from the European Parliament's first parliamentary term resulting from direct elections. 10 % of anomalies were corrected for the above-mentioned documents.

The processed archives were:

- Former Member Petra Kammerevert: 1 lm
- Former Member Barbara Lochbihler: 5 lm
- Former Member Elisabeth Morin-Chartier: 10 lm
- Former Member Christine Revault d'Allonnes-Bonnefoy: 0.5 lm
- Former Member Dagmar Roth-Behrendt: 9.5 lm
- Former Member Ramón Luis Varcárcel Sisó: 2 lm
- Former Member Jean-Antoine Giansily: 2.5 lm
- Former Member Catherine Bearder: 3.5 lm
- Former Member Christopher Jackson: 30 lm
- Member Andrey Kovatchev: 6 lm
- Bureau and Conference of Presidents - meetings: 0.2 lm
- Service Science and Technology Options Assessment: 10 lm
- Studies from the Research and Documentation/Study Direction: 3.1 lm
- Press division - Publications: 6 lm
- College of Heads of Administration: 3.5 lm
- Cabinet of the Secretary-General Klaus Welle: 1.2 lm
- Directorate-General for Personnel - Individual Right Unit: 2 lm

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<sup>3</sup> [General International Standard Archival Description](#) – standard developed by the International Council on Archives to provide general guidance for the preparation of archival descriptions

<sup>4</sup> The description of archives (metadata) is based on a well-defined set of keywords grouped in a thesaurus.

- Public Opinion Monitoring Unit: 2.5 Im
- European Parliament Liaison Office Paris: 2.9 Im
- European Parliament Liaison Office Dublin: 6.4 Im
- DG EXPO - Eastern Partnership and Russia: 1.8 GB
- DG EXPO - Subcommittee on Human Rights: 6.1 GB
- DG EXPO - Election Observation and Follow-up: 5.2 GB
- DG IPOL - Economic Governance Support Unit: 0.8 GB
- DG IPOL - Legislative Affairs Unit: 0.1 GB
- Former Member - Sharon Bowles: 0.1 GB

Iconographic *fonds* were also processed. In January and February 2022, 8 382 photographs of Members selected in 2020 or 2021 for permanent preservation were filed in folders and boxes, and described in our CLAVIS database. The descriptive notices for 324 MEPs were created, 255 other ones were updated and 478 additional ones were standardised (with the deletion of 1 273 incorrect occurrences).

The processing of archival records includes preparing them for digitisation (if they are not digitally born) and their long-term preservation. Parliament maintains a full digital copy of all its paper archives, including the documents submitted to the HAEU, so that they can be consulted by the public. Data related to archived information are available in the AMS and are hosted inside Parliament's premises to ensure their safe processing. The AMS is compatible with the standards related to the long-term preservation strategy of digital archives. Long-term preservation refers to digital archives and is a challenge for all archives throughout the world: electronic documents may become illegible after just a few years, owing to obsolete software, hardware or media, or because of their sheer size. The digitisation process was suspended in 2019 due to a pending interinstitutional contract. In 2022, 472 299 pages of archived documents were digitised making use of the contract for which the European Commission was the lead and providing access to archive-processing services.

### **Long-term preservation**

Our collaboration with several technical teams was prolonged in order to transfer the digital-born files that had already been collected. The documents contained in the Parliamentary Questions system, e-Petitions system and knowledge management system were analysed in order to import the documents automatically into the AMS. The efficient uploading of these documents will be carried out on an annual basis. The new version of the AMS enables the mass uploading and automatic creation of documents and folders. This version was expected in March 2022. However, following intensive test sessions, it was finally approved in November 2022. The upload of documents will be initiated in 2023.

### **Transfers to the Historical Archives of the EU**

Systematic quality control continued to be undertaken for the transfer of archives to the HAEU, in accordance with the transfer procedure established in 2014. 66 Im of archive documents (528 archive boxes) were transferred to the HAEU on 6 December 2022. The transfer was made up of the following *fonds*:

- Fifth Legislature (PE5) – Documents from the meetings of parliamentary committees (1999-2004):
  - Committee on Constitutional Affairs – AFCE
  - Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy – AFET
  - Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development – AGRI
  - Temporary committee on foot and mouth disease – APTH
  - Committee on Budgets – BUDG
  - Committee on Budgetary Control – CONT
  - Committee on Culture, Youth, Education, the Media and Sport – CULT
  - Committee on Development and Cooperation – DEVE
  - Temporary Committee on the Echelon Interception System – ECHE
  - Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs – ECON
  - Committee on Employment and Social Affairs – EMPL
  - Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Policy – ENVI
  - Committee on Women’s Rights and Equal Opportunities – FEMM
  - Temporary Committee on Human Genetics and Other New Technologies in Modern Medicine – GENE
  - Committee on Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy – ITRE
  - Committee on Legal Affairs and the Internal Market – JURI
  - Committee on Citizens’ Freedoms and Rights, Justice and Home Affairs – LIBE
  - Committee on Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism – RETT
  - Temporary Committee on improving Safety at Sea – SEMA
  - The Parliament delegation to the Conciliation Committee – DELE
  - Committee on Fisheries – PECH
  - Committee on Petitions – PETI

In order to maximise the quality of the transfer, a full quality control of each document (32 955 items) was carried out prior to the transfer. This included verifying the completeness of the files (2 196), consistency with the description in the AMS and the packaging in pH-neutral archival folders and boxes.

#### **4) Services to researchers and other users**

The Archives Unit provides access to Parliament’s historical documents and publications for researchers wishing to explore the history of the institution and of European integration more broadly. The unit maintains relations with the Council for International Archives and the EU Diplomatic Archives and hosts trainees and visitors undertaking research on relevant topics.

In 2022, the unit hosted five study visitors:

- 24-25 January, Institute for History Leiden University (Netherlands);
- 17-18 February, University of Strasbourg (France);
- 27-28 June, Personal Data and Public Administration (Greece);
- 7-8 July, Science Po Strasbourg (France);
- 12-13 July, University Paris I (France).

## Publications and outreach

The Archives Unit organised one exhibition in 2022. This exhibition was made possible by the support of Parliament's services, and it was put online in close collaboration with Europeana<sup>5</sup>. The organisational success of this exhibition resulted from the matrix linking the many services involved, which meant that additional external services were not needed to ensure that the exhibition went live. The online exhibition was viewed by 6 687 unique visitors and obtained 75 585 views on social media<sup>6</sup>.

In 2022, 101 650 booklets related to the six exhibitions organised by the Archives Unit since 2020 were printed, distributed and made available to citizens at the visitor centre of Strasbourg. The physical exhibitions were seen by 204 810 visitors in this visitor centre. Since the first exhibition was held in May 2020, the six online exhibitions have been viewed by 278 839 online unique visitors and have obtained 6 216 282 views on social media.

### *1- The Jean Monnet House, Creating a Home for Europe*

A founding father of the European Union, Jean Monnet (1888-1979) dedicated his life to bringing Europeans together and establishing unity and peace in Europe and across the world. His vision for a united Europe, a vision that would change this continent forever, was created in his unassuming home on the outskirts of Paris. Over the years, dignitaries and leaders from across the world met with Monnet at Houjarray to discuss the future of Europe. After witnessing the horrors of the Second World War, it was there that Monnet worked to bring European countries together and to create a strong, unified Europe. This led to France and Germany combining their steel and coal production under a common authority, ensuring war could never again break out between the two countries and paving the way for the European Union we recognise today. And it all began there - at Houjarray, the home for Europe.

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<sup>5</sup> Europeana is an EU initiative, financed by the EU's Connecting Europe Facility and the EU Member States. The Europeana services, including its own website, are operated by a consortium led by the Europeana Foundation under a service contract with the European Commission.

<sup>6</sup> The views were calculated from the official European Parliament and Europeana channels on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.





Figure 3: Outside panels of the Jean Monnet house exhibition

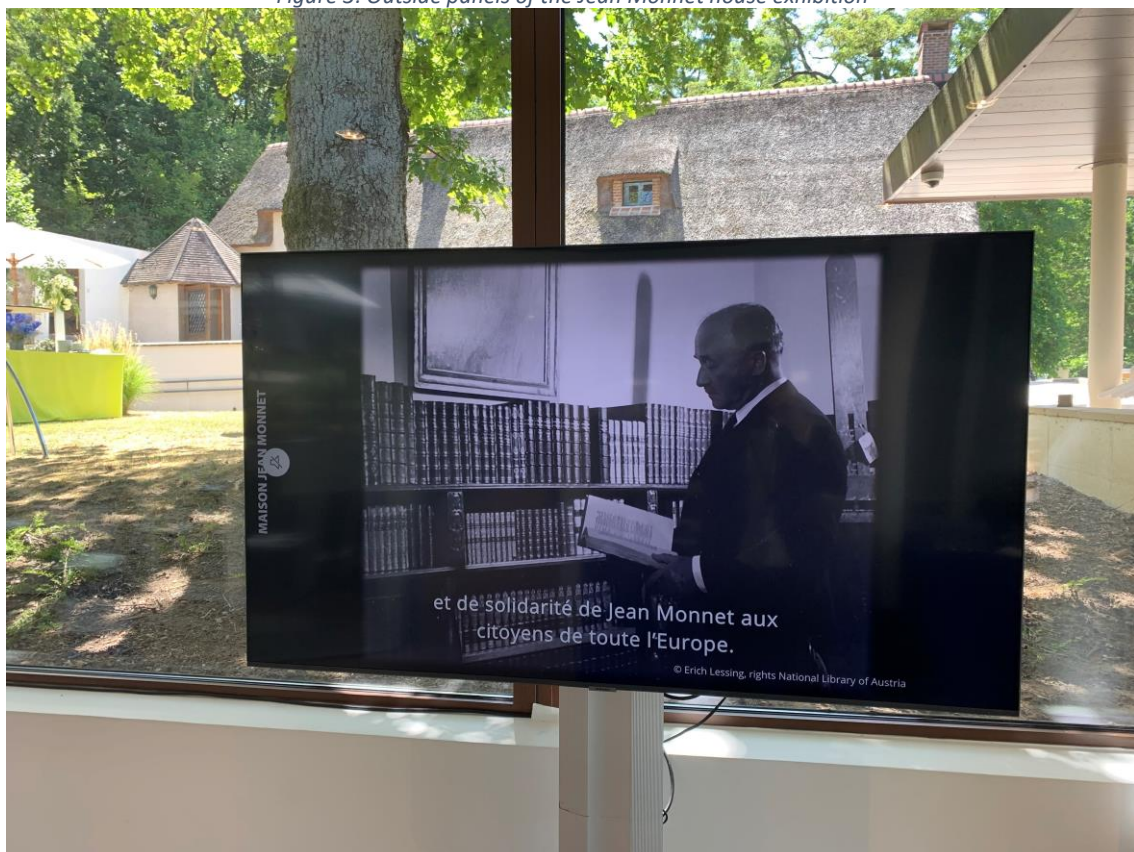


Figure 4: Video of the exhibition displayed in the Jean Monnet house



The exhibition<sup>7</sup> is dedicated to the Jean Monnet house. This exhibition was produced in a digital format with outdoor panels and an introductory panel containing a QR code linking to the digital content. The success of the exhibition was made possible by support from campaigns on social media and the quality of the presented multimedia content. The exhibition was inaugurated by the President of the European Parliament Roberta Metsola during the Away Days of the Bureau on 13 June 2022.



**LA MAISON JEAN MONNET :**  
**UN BERCEAU POUR L'EUROPE**



Multimedia coverage in 24 languages led to the production of various types of content, such as subtitled videos and podcasts<sup>8</sup>. Their availability via the Multimedia Centre facilitates their dissemination to the press and to stakeholders. The videos with subtitles in 24 languages were an undeniable success. Booklets in A4 format were provided in three languages (at the stakeholders' request).

Figure 5: Panel of the visual expo

## 2- The Václav Havel bench: a space for discussion and connection

Havel's Place is a public art project that creates a series of meeting places dedicated to the memory and the democratic views of the last president of Czechoslovakia (1989-1992) and the first president of Czechia (1993-2003). The installation consists of two garden chairs by a round table with a tree growing through its middle, while the rim of the table bears Havel's quote 'truth and love shall prevail over lies and hatred'.

Each Havel's Place is an invitation to dialogue, a place where people can meet and have a democratic dialogue with others. As such, it promotes the values of real dialogue, open discussion, listening to other's views and freedom of speech. A new Havel's Place was inaugurated on 13 June 2022 in the Jean Monnet house's garden by President of the European Parliament Roberta Metsola.



<sup>7</sup> <https://www.europeana.eu/en/exhibitions/the-jean-monnet-house>

<sup>8</sup> [https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/package/exhibition-on-jean-monnet-house-creating-a-home-for-europe\\_23801](https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/package/exhibition-on-jean-monnet-house-creating-a-home-for-europe_23801)

Figure 6: Inauguration of the Havel's Place

A booklet was produced for the inauguration of the Havel's Place in German, English, French, Czech and Slovak. This booklet is composed of a foreword from the President of the European Parliament Roberta Metsola, a biography and a transcript of speech Václav Havel gave at the European Parliament on 8 March 1994.



Figure 7: Booklets in the Jean Monnet house garden



#### THE VÁCLAV HAVEL BENCH

A SPACE FOR DISCUSSION AND CONNECTION:  
A PATH TO DEMOCRACY AND UNITY



Figure 8: Booklet cover page

### 3- Louise Weiss: a committed European

A lifelong progressive and a steadfast witness to many of the 20th century's great upheavals, Louise Weiss (1893-1983) has left an indelible mark on today's Europe. As both a determined intellectual and a tireless activist, she was a pioneer of the European ideal. She was born on 25 January 1893 into a liberal, upper middle-class family from Alsace. After obtaining a prestigious qualification (*agrégation de lettres féminine*) in 1914, she became a journalist and, from the 1920s onwards, was involved in efforts to build peace and unity throughout the continent.

A passionate campaigner for women's rights, she organised suffragette demonstrations in the 1930s to demand the right to vote and equal civil and political rights for women. After the war, she travelled the world making ethnographic documentaries and became a well-known conference speaker, writer and memorialist, working alongside some of the greatest politicians and thinkers of her age.

In 1979, she was elected to the European Parliament at the first European elections held by direct universal suffrage. As the oldest Member of the European Parliament, she chaired the constitutive session of Parliament and delivered its first inaugural address. Louise Weiss died in 1983. In 1999, the building containing the Chamber of the European Parliament in Strasbourg was named in her honour. The book was edited as a continuation of a 2021 exhibition<sup>9</sup> about her.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.europeana.eu/en/exhibitions/louise-weiss-a-committed-european>



Launched in 2020, the client satisfaction survey for the online exhibition showed an impressive satisfaction rate of 93.27 %.

## Intranet pages

The Archives Unit's intranet pages are divided into several sections that offer information on the archives and the unit's objectives and on services provided to Members, assistants and Parliament staff<sup>10</sup>. A softbot (a software conversational agent dubbed Archibot) answers questions about the archives. The softbot provides quick access to documents related to the Common Assembly (1952-1957), the Ad Hoc Assembly (1952-1953), the European Parliament Assembly and the European Parliament prior to direct elections (1958-1979) if the end user has enough information to uniquely identify a document. Since its deployment on 28 October 2021, Archibot has managed 2 610 conversations.

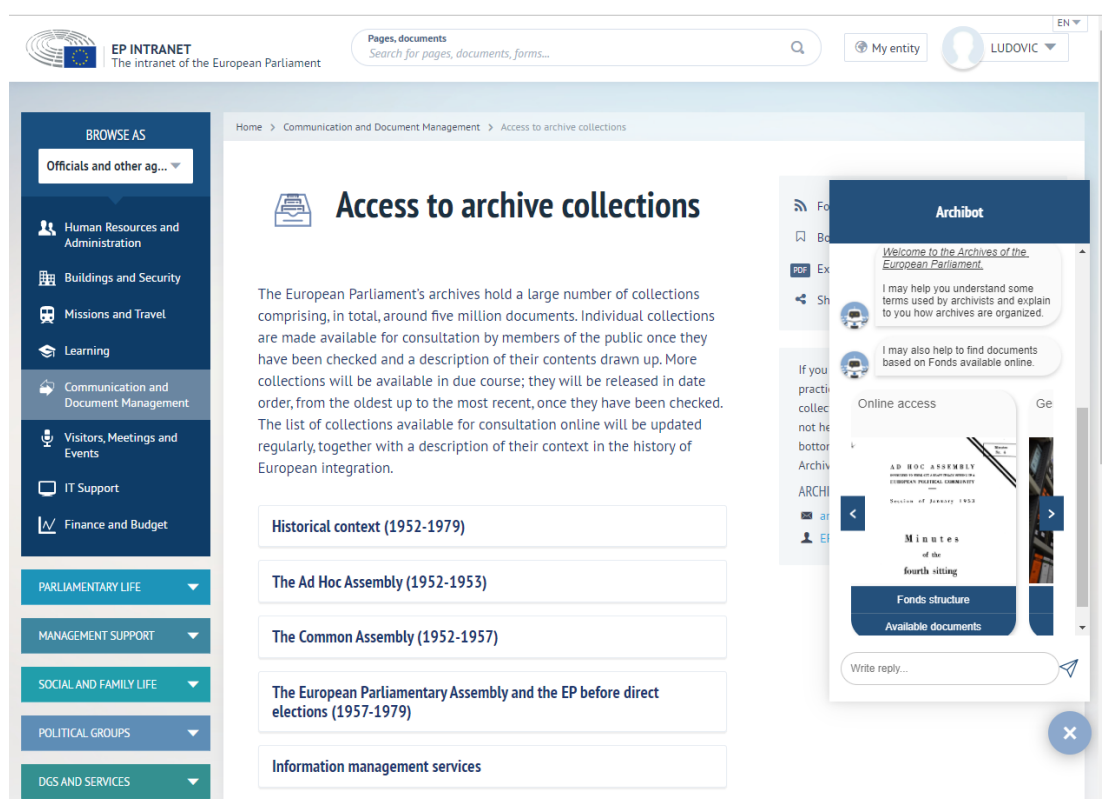


Figure 9: Welcome screen from the archive pages on the Intranet

If the end user would like a summary of the document to get an overview of its content, a summarising tool is available. It condenses text in any of the EU's official languages, based on conditions set by the user. This tool is provided in the 'Information management services' section.

The summariser uses the extractive summarisation technique, which extracts and groups together the most important words and/or sentences to produce a summary. The words and/or sentences used in the summary come from the text itself. No data is retained after the summary has been generated. The system summarises text based on the expression dynamic of the original text, which means that formatting, spacing, paragraphs, numbering and punctuation are pivotal to obtaining

<sup>10</sup><https://epintranet.in.ep.europa.eu/home/browse-as/communication/document-management/tools-and-procedures.html>

excellent results. The model used in the summariser has been trained and subsequently optimised to work with the EU's official languages.

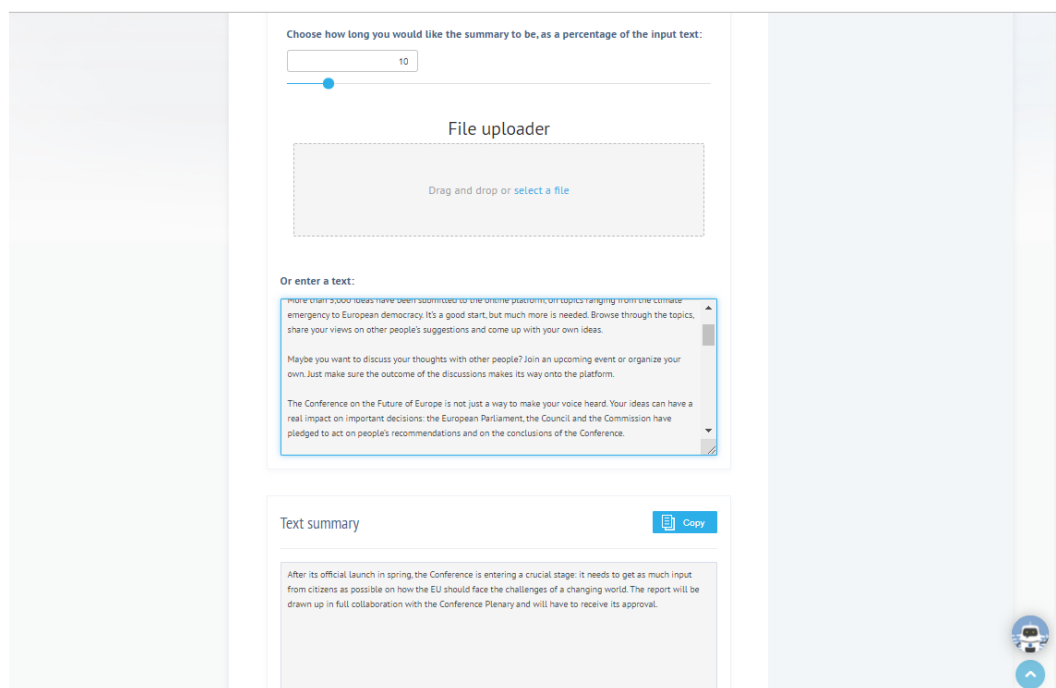


Figure 10: Summarisation of a text to 10 % of its initial size

Presentations about the summariser and the softbot were given during the following events:

- 'AI applied to the European Parliament's Historical Archives', Talks and debates, 27 April 2022, Bussola Tech (Brazil)<sup>11</sup>;
- 'AI applied to the European Parliament's Historical Archives', Interinstitutional Archives Group, 28 June 2022, Florence (Italy);
- 'Digital transformation in Archiving', International Democracy Week, 12 September 2022, Bussola Tech (Brazil)<sup>12</sup>;
- 'AI applied to the European Parliament's Historical Archives', International Democracy Week, 14 September 2022, Bussola Tech (Brazil)<sup>13</sup>;
- 'Libérer le potentiel numérique de l'Europe et de la France', Keynote in Cloud Expo Europe 2022, 16 November 2022, Paris (France).

In 2022, the summariser was used 187 times.

## Internet pages

The historical archives' website<sup>14</sup> gives the Archives Unit the opportunity to better communicate and promote our holdings, services and publications to the outside world. The new site was launched on 22 December 2021 and presents the exhibitions organised by the Archives Unit in a newly created 'Cultural Heritage Collection' section, which will be constantly updated.

The site was completely refreshed in 2021, in terms of both its design and content.

<sup>11</sup> <https://bussola-tech.co/debate-ai-in-legislative/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://bussola-tech.co/legistechforum2022/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://bussola-tech.co/legistechforum2022/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://historicalarchives.europarl.europa.eu/home.html>



Figure 11: Home page

A description of the *fonds* is provided. This section is structured to provide a:

- detailed description of all former Presidents and their contributions to Parliament's Archives;
- description of the 33 former Members who have given part or all of their private archives to Parliament, including some recordings of speeches in plenary;
- detailed description of all former Secretaries-General and their contributions to Parliament's Archives;
- detailed description of the holdings related to members of senior management, interinstitutional cooperation and parliamentary activities.

In 2022, an additional effort was made to provide a site available in German, English and French. A specific editorial activity was undertaken to improve the accessibility of the site. It scores 88.1 out of 100 according to the European Parliament quality assessment framework for the overall site composed of 135 pages. Continually improving accessibility will require a software developer to change the code of the application, as editorial changes via the user interface are not sufficient.

In addition, the site provides a direct link to 452 833 archived documents dating from 1952 to 1979 through an interactive dashboard. These documents can be retrieved graphically, through the use of graphics components with filters, or a hierarchical approach. 4 113 sessions using the dashboard were registered. A video posted on the home page explains how to use the dashboard.

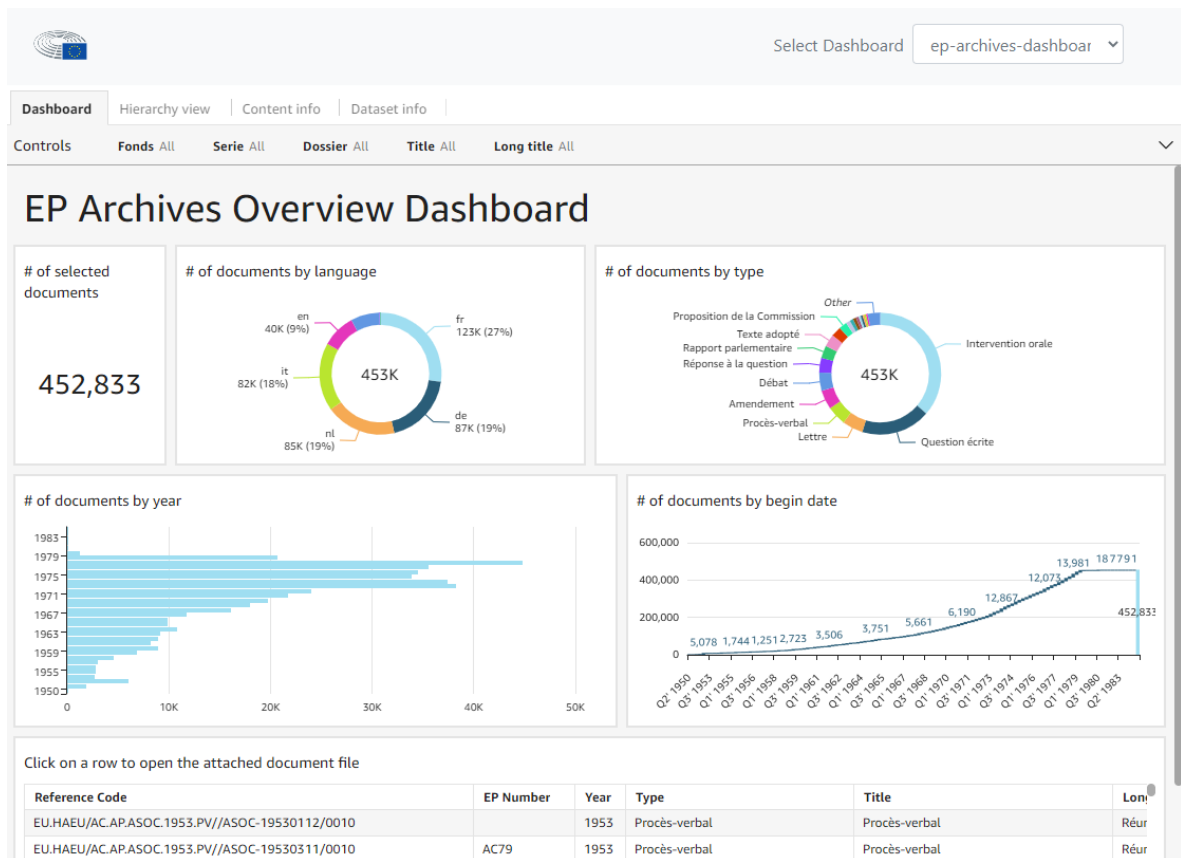


Figure 12: Interactive dashboard to access archived documents (1952-1979) by clicking on the document file line

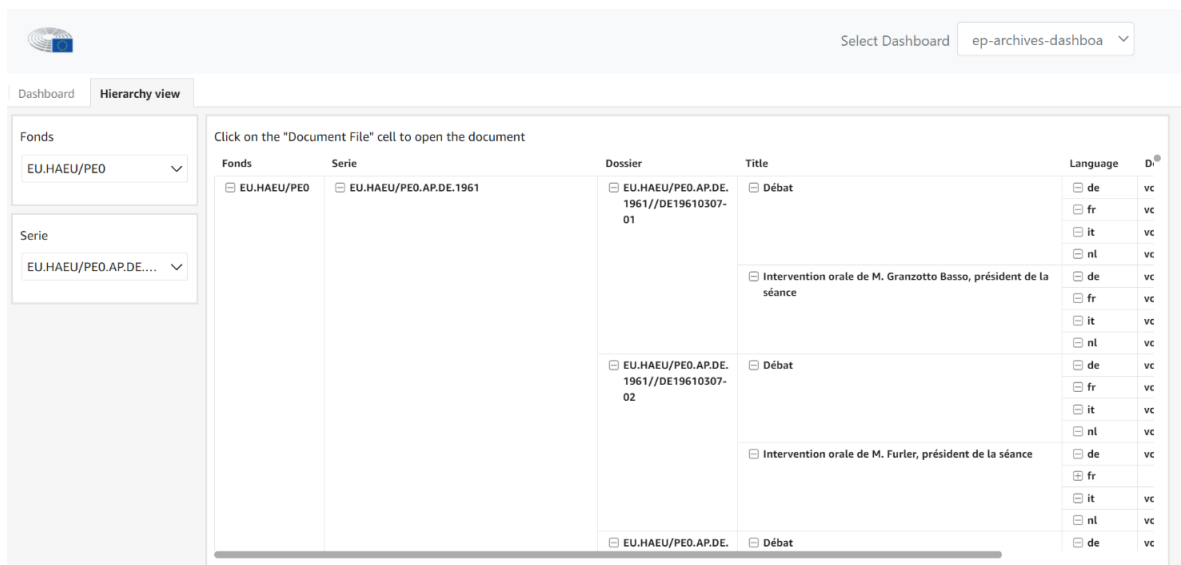


Figure 13: Access to documents via the hierarchical view

[illegible]

Figure 14: Parliamentary questions with an automatically generated summary and topic auto-classification

These parliamentary questions have been automatically classified and the top words have been extracted to suggest documents based on the search intention of the end user. The dataset info tab contains a document that provides a very detailed explanation of the document pre-processing, the artificial intelligence algorithms used and the visualisation tools proposed (inter-topic distance and topic frequency).

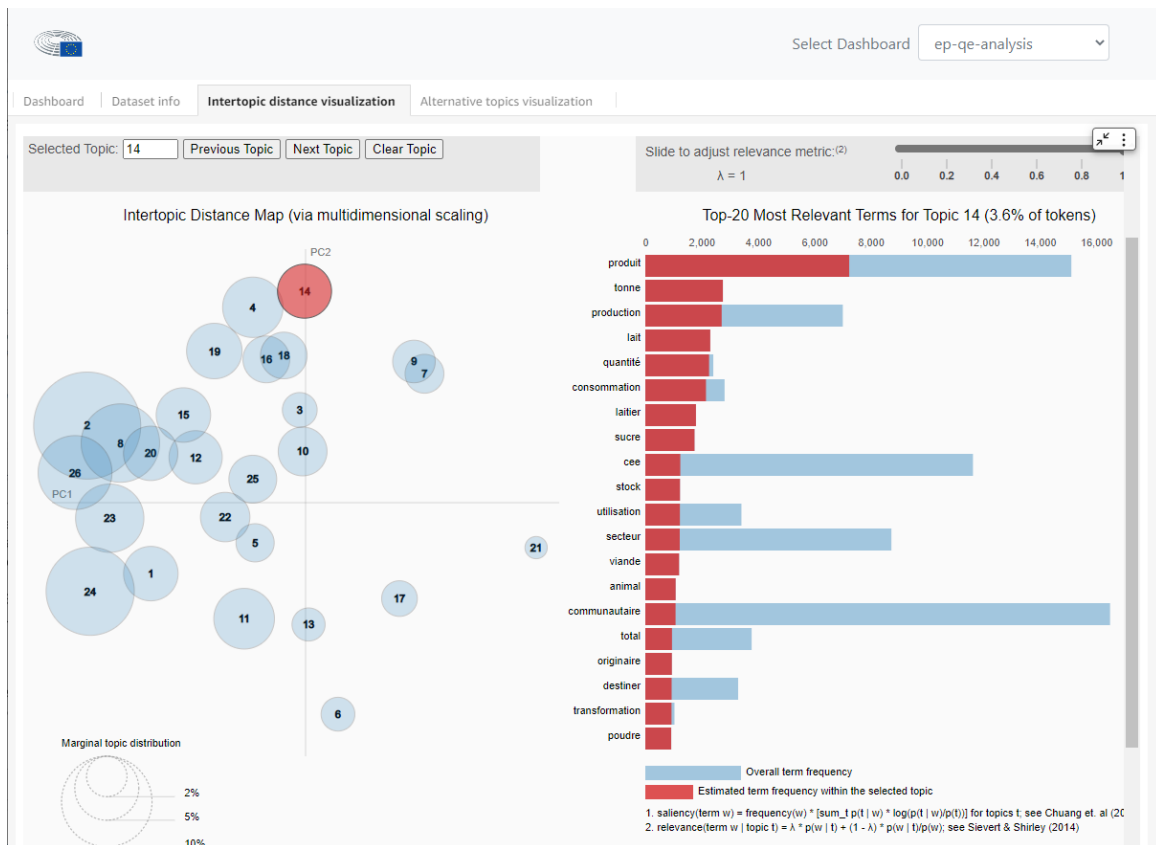


Figure 15: Parliamentary questions intertopic distance visualisation

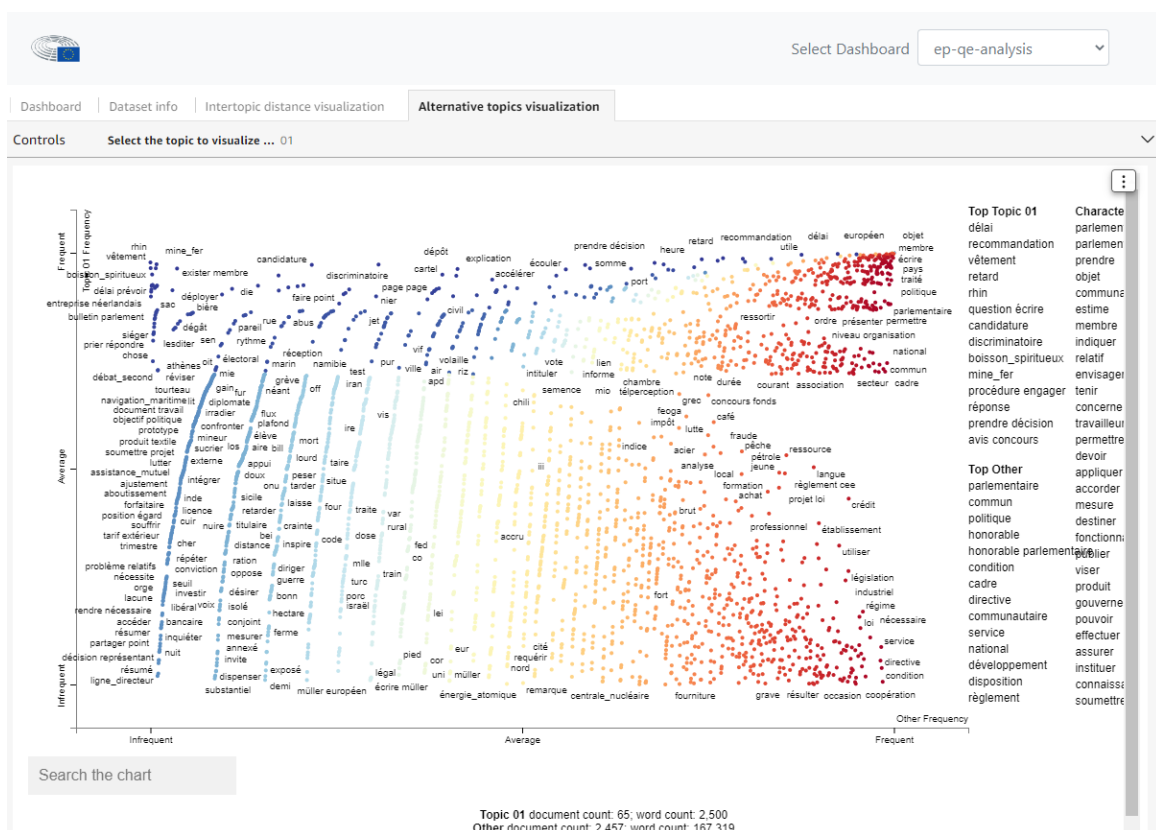


Figure 16: Parliamentary questions based on topic frequency per cluster

The website was viewed by 2 883 unique visitors in 2022, in addition to the direct access to the dashboard. The bounce rate was 31 %<sup>15</sup> and the time spent per page was 00:01:32.

## Historical research

In 2022, the Archives Unit responded to 227 requests. Most of the questions were about documents related to reports (18%), European Parliament governance (15%), activities of Members (13 %) and legislative domains (13%).

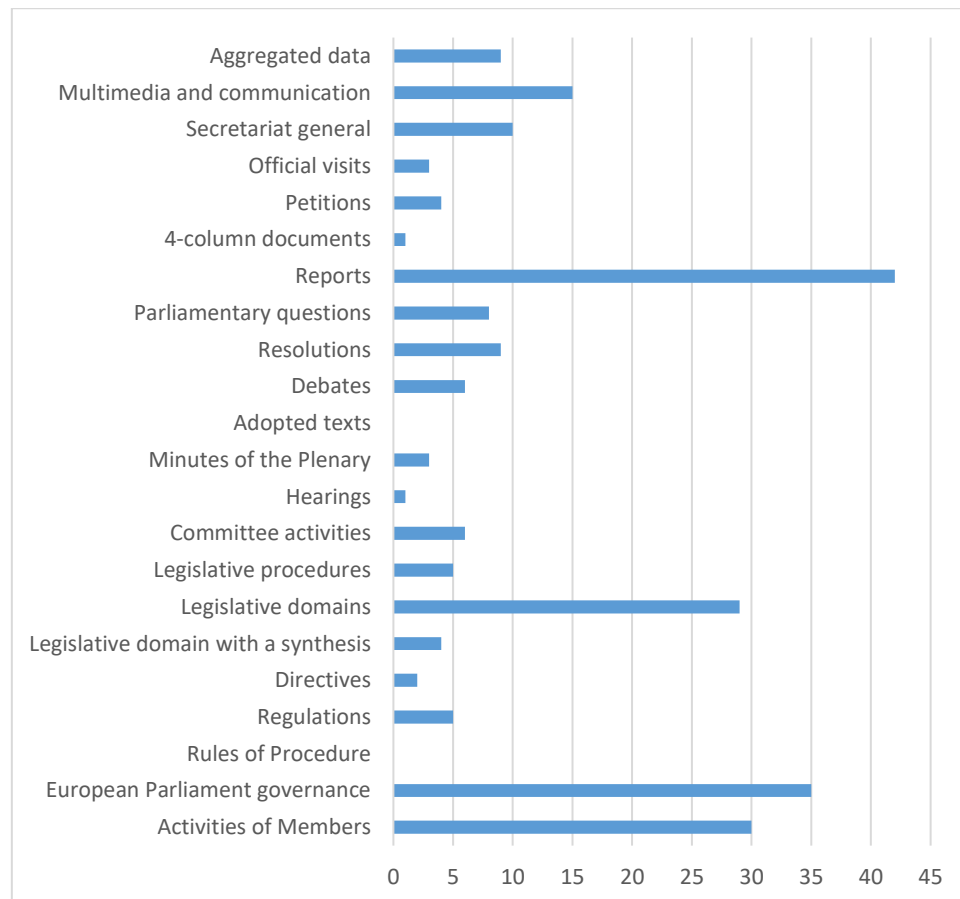


Figure 17: Number of requests per type of document requested

It is worth noting that 30 % of the questions pertained to the availability of a single type of document (e.g. minutes of the plenary, adopted texts, debates, resolutions, parliamentary questions, reports and four-column documents).

Most of the searches were about the following types of document:

- Activities of Members: speeches;
- Legislative domains: mostly documents related to an ordinary legislative procedure.

Questions were received through requests; a single request may contain several questions. The origin of the requests were as follows:

<sup>15</sup> Bounce rate: Bounce rate is a variable in digital analytics that shows the ratio between the total number of visits and the number of visits that don't go beyond one page.



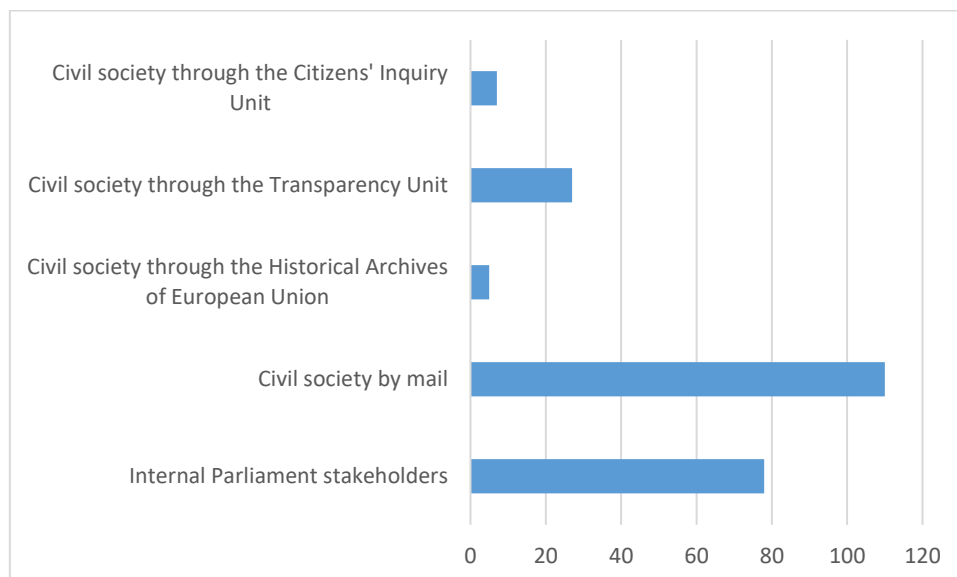


Figure 18: Number of requests per type of requester

In 2022, the client satisfaction rating related to the search process rose from 4.61 to 4.78 out of 5 (44.06 % response rate). 3 652 documents were transferred to respond to the requests. In addition, 4 113 sessions using the dashboard allowed citizens to access publicly archived documents and to download them without requesting direct help from the archives' staff.

A dashboard is accessible from the website and illustrates the provenance of the requests received since 2020.

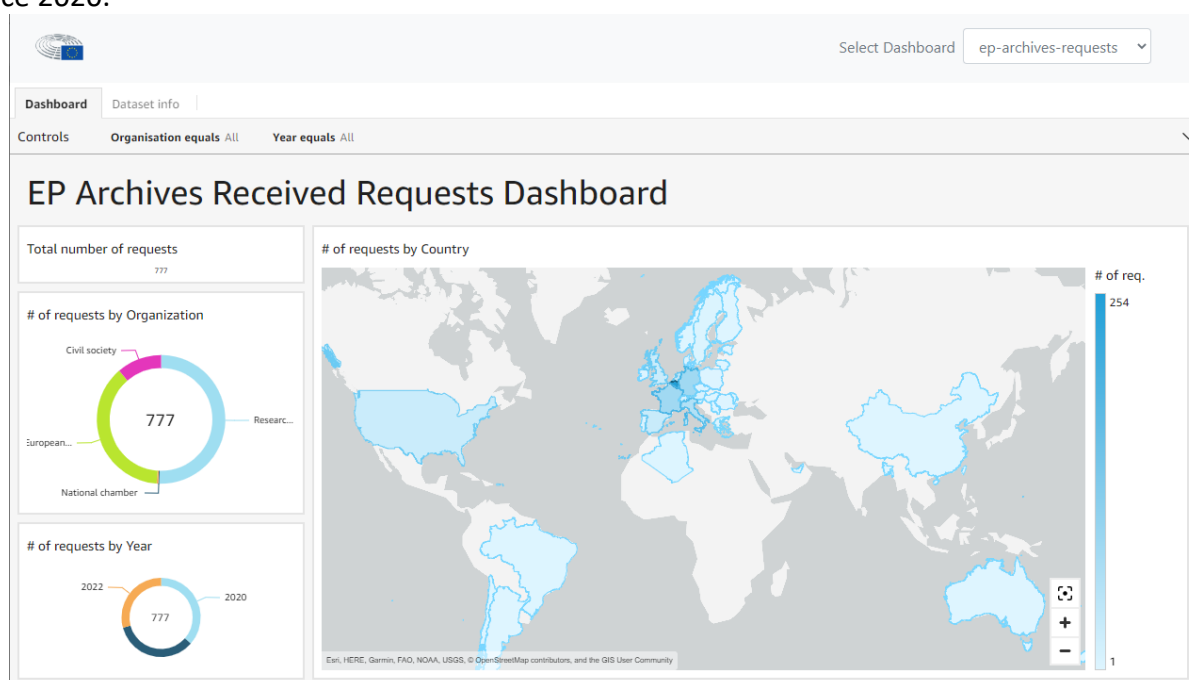


Figure 19: Number of requests per organisation and location

## Oral history project

An oral history project to provide access to testimonies from former Members and staff is currently being drawn up. A new section related to oral history has been put online. This includes extended interviews with former Presidents Lord Plumb and Pat Cox. Interviews, transcripts, contextual information and archival documents are provided to illustrate these interviews. The interviews are split into thematic chapters.



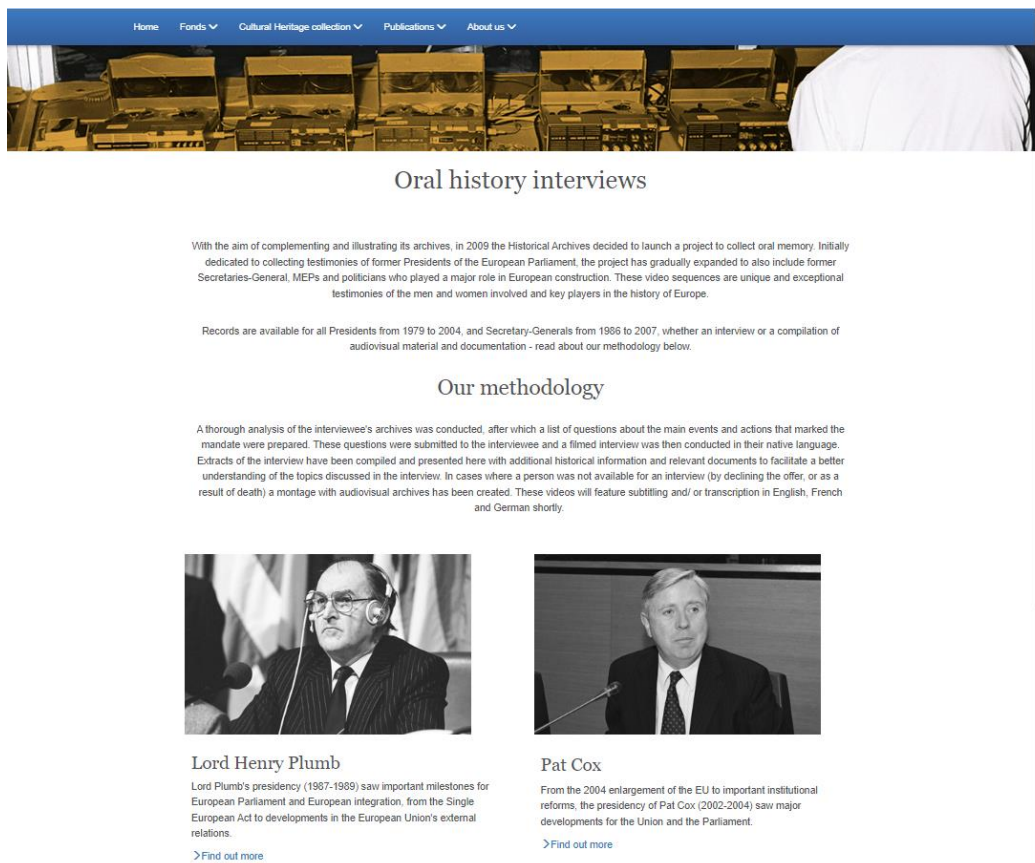


Figure 20: Oral history landing page

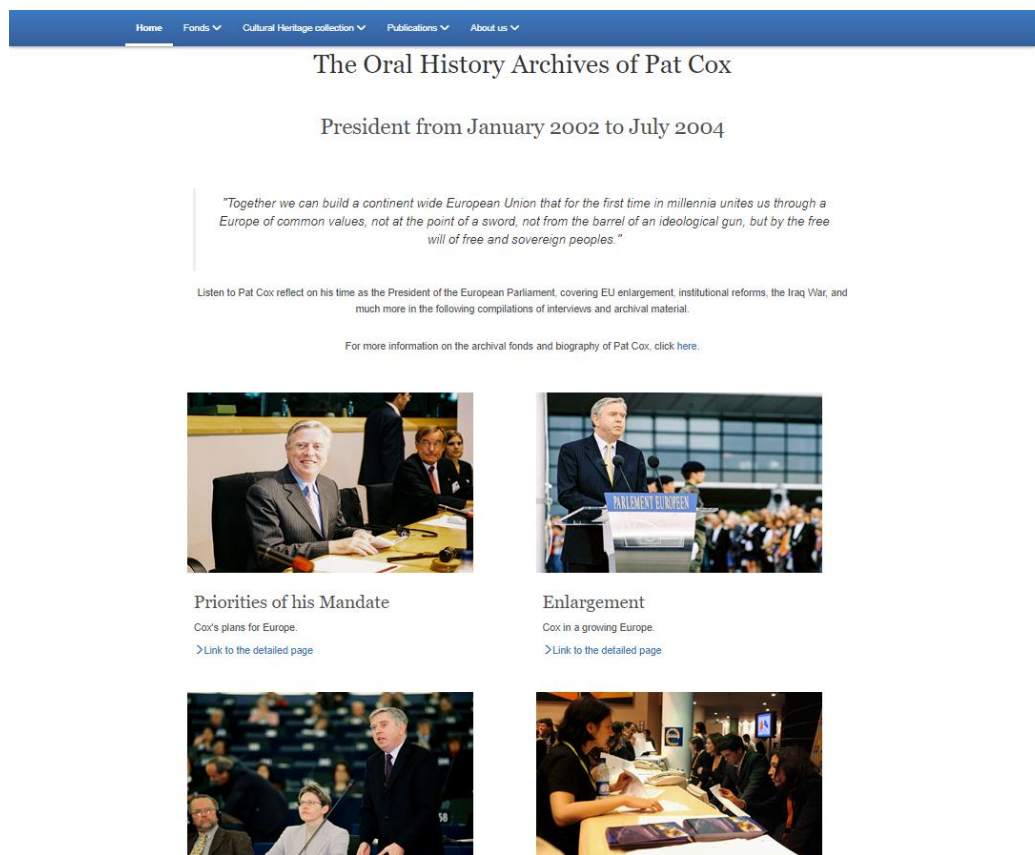


Figure 21: The Oral History Archives of Pat Cox

Additional interviews with former Presidents will be published in 2023.

While the Schuman building in Luxembourg was released by the European Parliament, an oral history project with former Member Astrid Lulling has been initiated with a session filmed in the hemicycle within the building. Former Member Astrid Lulling participated in plenary sessions in the Schuman building and has been involved in European integration since 1952. This oral history project will be released in 2023.

## **5) Relations with other EU institutions and international bodies**

The Archives Unit actively participates in the twice-yearly interinstitutional meeting of the Interinstitutional Archives Group, during which the HAEU report is also scrutinised by the financing institutions (Parliament contributes funds on an annual basis). In exchange, the HAEU provides the storage space for archives that consist of paper documents and uses them for promotional activities. The HAEU holds around 1 700 lm of physical archives from Parliament.

## **Part II - Administration of the Archives**

### **1) Budget**

In 2022, the Archives Unit managed its appropriations under the following European Parliament budget line:

Budget Line	2022 approved budget after transfer
3210-07	EUR 1 677 000

### **Contribution to the annual budget of the Historical Archives of the EU (HAEU)**

In 2022, the European Parliament contributed its quota of EUR 416 807 to the budget of the HAEU.

### **Investment in electronic archives**

A limited amount of IT-related funds were used in 2022, which were allocated to the maintenance of the AMS (EUR 18 000). An additional amount of EUR 40 785 was spent to evolve the ingestion module of the AMS to ease the integration of large batches of digital files. This new function was positively tested when automatically ingesting more than a hundred thousand files stored in an information system to be decommissioned.

### **Processing of the archives**

The main items of expenditure in 2022 involved the sorting, organising and processing of paper documents (the processing of electronic documents was partially automated, and, in the case of unstructured archives, was carried out mainly by staff, owing primarily to the complexity of organised unstructured material).

In 2022, the processing of paper archives cost EUR 1 186 475. The processing of the archives was related to the processing of *fonds* from Members' and former Members' private archives, and from parliamentary activities (EUR 1 014 295). The digitisation of archives consisted of scanning documents already prepared by the archivists and storing them in the central AMS (EUR 172 180).

The amounts reflect the very substantial volume of work involved in processing individual paper files, preparing them for digitisation, adding indexing and metadata and uploading them to the database. The preparation for processing - drawing up an inventory and evaluation, structuring the files, incorporating metadata and preparing batches for processing - is carried out by the unit's staff.

The Archives Unit relies on the provision of services through framework contracts with specialised companies for processing work. The tasks assigned to the external company are organised into projects, which are benchmarked and monitored. Each project concerns well-defined submissions, so that the indexing and assignment of metadata is consistent across the project. All tasks relating to responsibility for and the management of each project are carried out by the unit's staff. The Archives Unit opted for an in-house approach to processing owing to the unique and sometimes confidential nature of the archives we process and for external staff for the quality control of the digital archives in the AMS.

The maximum number of external staff employed in a year varies, depending on the number of projects launched and completed within the year. A maximum of 11 external staff members have been working on processing archives and two external staff members worked on digitisation throughout 2022.

## **Valorisation**

The main item of expenditure in 2022 involved the printing of the Louise Weiss book. This book, produced in the context of the Louise Weiss exhibition, was printed by the Publications Office of the European Union. 508 books in German, 808 books in French and 1 310 books in English were printed (EUR 26 500). These books are mainly for the use of the Protocol Unit and are offered by the President in the context of official visits.

## **2) Staff establishment plan**

On 31 December 2022, the establishment plan of the Archives Unit stood at 19 officials, of whom two were temporary agents and four were contract agents. A Schuman trainee joined the Archives Unit from October 2022 to March 2023.

## **3) Cooperation within Parliament's administration**

The Archives Unit works closely with both other administrative units in the Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services and with other Directorates-General and services within Parliament's administration more widely. For example:

### *- Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services*

The Archives Unit in Luxembourg works closely with the Directorate for the Library and Knowledge Services, mainly in the context of exhibitions. The editor for the 2022 exhibitions was a member of staff from the Archives Unit, while the curator was a colleague from the Directorate for the Library and Knowledge Services.

The Citizens' Enquiries Unit (AsKEP) passes all of the information requests they receive for historical documents from members of the public on to the Archives Unit. The Archives Unit also works with units from the Members' Research Service, in particular when researching documents.

The Archives Unit also regularly works with other Directorates-General and services, such as:

### *- Directorate-General for the Presidency*

The Archives Unit organises and archives, in paper and digital formats (the latter searchable online), all outgoing and incoming official mail of the European Parliament (8 lm in 2022), which is transferred from the Official Mail Unit on a regular basis.

The Archives Unit cooperates with the Transparency Unit, in particular when requests are made for access to documents under Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001, involving more extensive searches with historical profiles. In 2022, 27 extensive searches were carried out.

*- Directorates-General for Internal Policies and for External Policies*

The Archives Unit cooperates with both Directorates-General, in order to acquire the archives of the parliamentary committees and to add them to its existing holdings. Since 2017, a systematic transfer plan has been in place to ensure the comprehensive acquisition of all such material for the archives.

*- Directorate-General for Communication*

The Archives Unit works closely with the House of European History, the Events and Exhibitions Unit and the European Parliament Liaison Offices in the Member States, both on acquisitions and on organising events and exhibitions.

In addition, and in the context of online exhibitions, the Archives Unit works very closely with the Directorate for Campaigns in implementing exhibition work plans, the graphic design for digital assets and their production (communications for social media, visual expos and booklets). In the context of storing multimedia products, the Archives Unit works closely with the Audiovisual Unit and the Photobooking team in particular.

*- Directorate-General for Translation*

Digital products such as podcasts, audio content and subtitles for educational videos in 24 languages are possible thanks to our cooperation with the Directorate for Citizens' Language. All texts displayed online have the original language verified by the Clear Language and Editing Unit in the Directorate for Citizens' Language and are translated into 23 languages by the Directorate for Translation.

*- Directorate-General for Innovation and Technological Support*

The Archives Unit works closely with the Directorate for Publishing, Innovation and Data Management. These activities are very closely related to the online exhibitions developed by the unit and make full use of the printing facilities on various type of supports (booklet A4/A5, visual expo). The unit also works with the Directorate-General on the use of artificial intelligence in the context of natural language processing tools.

*- Other Directorates-General and services*

In the context of events and exhibitions, the Archives Unit works extremely closely with several units from the Directorate-General for Logistics and Interpretation for Conferences (the Conference Technicians Unit in particular), the Directorate-General for Security and Safety, the Directorate-General for Infrastructure and Logistics (for catering and cleaning during events and for booking exhibition spaces), the Protocol Service in the Directorate-General for the Presidency and the Former Members' Association. In 2022, this cooperation was centred on two official visits:

- 10 May 2022: inauguration of the Adenauer building by President of the European Parliament Roberta Metsola
- 17 November 2022: visit from the Quaestors of the European Parliament.

The Archives Unit works with various other DGs and services to explain and apply retention schedules, and works in particular according to the Inter-DG Steering Group on Document Management (GIDOC)<sup>16</sup>, to establish filing plans and common conservation lists for the institution as a whole.

#### 4) Premises

##### - Stocktaking and preventive conservation

The unit consistently works on archive preservation and storage management. It maintains the general inventory of storage spaces and archives to ensure:

- the identification and description of all storage spaces;
- the assignment of location identifiers to each storage location;
- the verification of the presence or, failing this, the identification of each set of archives kept by the Archives Unit (i.e. acquisitions, archives processed, digitisation lots, microfilms, posters and audio cassettes);
- quality control or, failing this, the establishment of associated research instruments (i.e. transfer and digitisation forms);
- the verification of the condition of the archives and their containers;
- the rationalisation of the containers for better conservation and reconditioning, if necessary;
- the classification of each file holding unit in association with a location in the storage areas.

This stocktaking operation made it possible for us to identify the documents that had been stored without an associated research instrument, sometimes for several years, thus enabling us to better monitor the material kept by the archives. It was therefore possible for us to establish a more rational programming of processing and to avoid successively treating scattered parts of the same group of archives, thereby ensuring greater consistency and coherence in the descriptions. Since 2022, all stock rooms have been located inside the Adenauer building.

##### - Microforms

A specific assessment of the condition of the microforms in the archives was carried out in 2016 in order to evaluate their exposure to 'vinegar syndrome'. Our assessment confirmed a slight change in most of the oldest microfilms, which were made from acetate film. A prevention programme was undertaken in 2017 and the microforms are now held in a controlled preservation environment (in an air-conditioned *microthèque* where the temperature and humidity are regulated). Checks since 2018 have showed a stabilised chemical process.

##### - New Adenauer building

As requested by the Directorate-General for Infrastructure and Logistics, the Archives Unit contributed to the site plans for the location of the archives in the new Adenauer building, which

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<sup>16</sup> 'The Inter-DG Steering Group on Document Management officers (GIDOC) was created by the Note by the Secretary-General of 13 October 2022. It supersedes the Inter-departmental group of document management officers established by the Bureau decision of 2 July 2012 (GIDOC) to ensure the implementation and monitor the development of the document management system created pursuant to that decision and its implementing measures. Each directorate-general and equivalent administrative body is represented in the group by a document management officer (also known as RAD, Responsable de l'administration des Documents).' (source: Intranet)

was partly delivered on 1 November 2020. This zone is still under construction (expected completion in 2024).

In the meantime, between September and December 2022, all storage rooms (1 500 lm) were moved from the old part of the Schuman building to the Adenauer building. The contents of the old storage room were moved to the new storage room provisionally allocated in the Adenauer building.

## **5) Computerisation**

### **- Maintaining the archive management software (CLAVIS)**

Since 2000, the Archives Unit has been using an AMS known as CLARA as its main archival tool. This system has also been used for consulting purposes by the Bureau Secretariat, the Secretary-General's Office, the Transparency Unit and Parliament's Library in Brussels (the ARCDoc database). In 2014, a call for tender was launched to purchase a new, more up-to-date archival and document management software, known as CLAVIS, which would keep the functionalities of CLARA, while adding new ones, such as compliance with modern archival standards, for example ISAG(D). In July 2015, a contract was signed with the winner of the relevant tendering process. In November 2015, the process of analysing the requirements and customising and developing the application started, and this work continued in 2016. In parallel, an analysis was carried out of the new system's interoperability with Parliament's applications. In addition, the business workflow with the new application was documented and analysed. The project was carried out throughout 2017, and the new archive management software (CLAVIS) was delivered in 2018. Since 2019, the major activities performed have been to ensure the smooth running and availability of the platform.

After conducting an assessment of the documents contained in CLARA and ELEURA, the content of these two information systems was ingested into the new AMS, CLAVIS, in 2022. Both the CLARA and ELEURA applications have been proposed for decommissioning to the Directorate-General for Innovation and Technological Support.

### **- Intermediary archives**

A decision by the Secretary-General in October 2008 marked the launch of a project to set up 'retention schedules' in order to establish uniform procedures for the retention of the current and intermediate archives held by Parliament's Directorates-General and services. Each Directorate-General was required to draw up such a schedule, in cooperation with the Archives Unit.

A Bureau decision of 2 July 2012 (Article 6) stipulated that all retention schedules should be adopted by the end of January 2013. It established the inter-departmental group of document management officers (GIDOC) to ensure the implementation and monitoring of the development of the document management system, under that decision and its implementing measures.

Work on the retention schedules, which was initiated and promoted by the Archives Unit and, since 2012, by GIDOC and the document management officers in each Directorate-General, is fully underway. The retention schedules are applied by the services themselves, thus resulting in a systematic and orderly submission of material to the archives when considered by the Directorates-General. These are continuously updated to cope with the changes to regulations and the Secretariat-General's organisation.

The process related to digital documents is ready for automation. The new Electronic Records Management System (ERMS) is still under development by the Directorate-General for Innovation and Technological Support. Once it is fully deployed, an integration study will be carried out with a view to ensuring the interoperability of the AMS and the ERMS.