

Impact assessment and European added value work during the ninth legislative term, 2019 – 2024

Better law-making has grown significantly in importance in recent years. As a methodology, its purpose is to design and to decide on regulation that is fit for purpose.

This is achieved through a set of measures applied at all stages of the policy cycle, starting from agenda-setting, policy design and consultation, through to the actual moment of decision-making by the co-legislators. It also includes the phase of ex-post evaluation, when, after a period of transposition and implementation, the laws and regulations are evaluated to determine whether they have fulfilled their purpose or if they require adaptation to respond more effectively to evolving needs.

Responsibility for better law-making is shared between the European Union (EU) institutions. At European level, an Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-Making that came into force in April 2016 provides the regulatory framework for the joint efforts of the EU institutions to boost evidence-based policy-making throughout the regulatory process and beyond. The aim is to generate European legislation of the highest possible quality for the benefit of European citizens now and in the future.

Parliamentary structures and support

Ex-ante and ex-post impact assessments are not new instruments. In fact, the European Commission began to accompany many of its various legislative proposals with ex-ante impact assessments as early as 2002. Parliament continuously supported and encouraged this development, as the impact assessment (IA) process constitutes an important aid to the legislator. Parliament argued that the concept of 'impact assessment' in its broadest sense, should be applied throughout the policy cycle – on both an ex-ante and an ex-post basis – from the design of legislation through to its implementation, evaluation and possible revision. It also advocated a proper assessment of European added value by the EU institutions, 'in terms of what savings will result from a European solution and/or what supplementary costs would arise ... in the absence of a European solution'.

Parliament consequently developed substantial administrative capacity to support parliamentary committees at the various stages of the policy cycle, encompassing agenda-setting, the legislative phase, and ex-post scrutiny. A dedicated Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value was set up. It is now called the Directorate for Impact Assessment and Foresight, and is an integral part of the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS).

During the 2014–2019 legislative term, the directorate developed a targeted but comprehensive portfolio of impact assessment activities to support committees in this respect. The following three units assume impact assessment-related tasks:

- The Ex-Ante Impact Assessment Unit (IMPA) undertakes Parliament's own ex-ante impact assessments (IAs) upon request by committees, e.g. substitute or

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Author: Wolfgang Hiller

Directorate for Impact Assessment and Foresight

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complementary IAs or IAs on substantial amendments, and routinely appraises impact assessments put forward by the Commission to underpin legislative proposals.

- The Ex-Post Evaluation Unit (EVAL) automatically draws up background studies in support of Parliament's implementation reports and, in addition, carries out other ex-post evaluations if requested by committees.
- The European Added Value Unit (EAVA) prepares cost of non-Europe reports and European added value assessments, for example to support Parliament's legislative-initiative reports, analysing policy areas where action at EU level could bring greater efficiency and public good for European citizens.

The role of these three units is (i) to scrutinise the European Commission's impact assessment work; and (ii) to conduct their own impact assessments and evaluations, in support of parliamentary committees' activities (e.g. legislative-initiative reports, implementation reports). The units' publications are either drafted in-house or commissioned from external experts. These publications range from short briefing notes to in-depth studies.

At administrative level, the directorate works very closely with the Directorates-General for Internal Policies (IPOL) and External Policies (EXPO) within the Parliament's administration. At political level, governance and oversight is provided by the Conference of Committee Chairs (CCC), which is 'coordinating the parliamentary committees' approach towards impact assessment and European added value, and supervising the Parliament's work in this area, as well as developing a more consistent and integrated approach to the matter'.

Overall, during the ninth legislative period, these three units produced a total of 362 publications of various kinds (all publicly available on the [Parliament's Think Tank](#) website). Work was undertaken for practically all parliamentary committees, with findings presented orally in full committee or to coordinators on a regular and more frequent basis every year. The [annual report](#) on impact assessment and European added value provides the latest figures on the units' activities.

Better law-making is not limited to the publication of briefings and reports, however. The principles of better law-making and evidence-informed policy-making also require stakeholders and decision-makers to work closely together and to discuss processes and the content of the various policy initiatives on a regular basis. To this end, it is also essential to create a public sphere where the principles of better law-making and their application in day-to-day political decision-making are fine-tuned and put to test. This can involve conferences at which experts and stakeholders meet to discuss the latest developments in this field. The directorate organised two high-level conferences during the period in question. The first was entitled 'Forward looking policy-making in times of multiple crises' and took place on 8 September 2022. The second – 'Foresight and better law-making | Legislating for future generations: Trends and challenges in impact assessment and anticipatory policy-making' – took place on 7 and 8 March 2024.

Ex-ante impact assessment

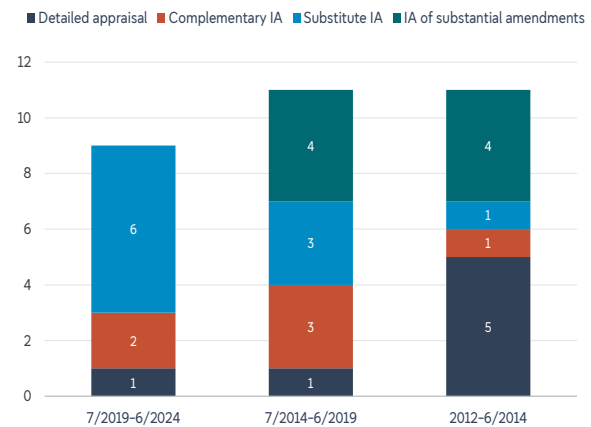
The Ex-Ante Impact Assessment Unit (IMPA) provides targeted, timely and specialised support for parliamentary committees in their work on ex-ante impact assessment, covering all policy areas and available at any stage in the law-making process. The [Impact Assessment Handbook](#) of the European Parliament's Conference of Committee Chairs offers a framework for the provision of these products and services.

In the 5 years of the ninth legislative period, between July 2019 and June 2024, IMPA produced 148 impact assessment-related products. Compared to the previous term this represents a 21 % decrease in the number of routinely provided products (reflecting both the significant drop in the number of legislative proposals with impact assessments in 2019 and 2020, and reduced capacities in the unit). IMPA dealt with nine requests from committees, a figure that is comparable to the eighth legislative term. Multiple requests came from committees in the last months of the legislative term, showing an increased interest in impact assessment-related work.

Products on request

Ex-Ante Impact Assessment Unit publications are produced at the request of individual parliamentary committees on the basis of a decision gathering broad political support among the committee coordinators. The Impact Assessment Handbook states that the parliamentary committees responsible for a legislative file may request (i) more **detailed appraisals** of the quality of Commission impact assessments focusing on one or more specific aspects; (ii) **complementary or substitute impact assessments** on aspects of a legislative proposal not dealt with adequately (or at all) by the Commission in its impact assessment; and (iii) **impact assessments of substantial amendments** to a Commission proposal.ⁱ

Figure 1 – Specific requests for impact assessment-related work



Source: EPRS.

To ensure topical pertinence, the scope of each request is defined by the requesting committee with the assistance of the Ex-Ante Impact Assessment Unit. The drafting of the requested publication is however an independent process, in line with the EPRS policy of strict impartiality for its studies. In methodological terms, in accordance with Article 15 of the Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-Making, as a general rule, impact assessments of substantial amendments take the Commission's impact assessment as their starting point. As far as possible, the impact assessment is structured in such a way as to facilitate comparisons with the Commission text, although without duplicating the Commission's work. In general, Parliament's impact assessment studies broadly follow the criteria of the Commission's Better Regulation Guidelines.

On 13 July 2022, coordinators of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) decided to ask EPRS to conduct a complementary impact assessment on the Commission's proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down rules to prevent and combat child sexual abuse (2022/0155(COD)). The proposal was seen as highly controversial, as it was argued that several of the proposed measures would interfere with certain fundamental rights, such as the right to privacy and the right to data protection. It was within this context that the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) decided to ask EPRS to investigate, inter alia, the likely impact of the proposal on the internet, its likely impact on fundamental rights and whether the measures it envisaged were necessary and proportionate.

LIBE discussed the [complementary IA](#) at its meeting of 13 April 2023. The rapporteur, Javier Zarzalejos (EPP, Spain) welcomed it as a significant new contribution to the debate, notwithstanding his differences with the findings. Shadow rapporteur Patrick Breyer (Greens/EFA, Germany) noted how the complementary impact assessment served as an eye opener against the impulse to go beyond the legal limits, with the consequence that the measures would be struck down and children would end up just as vulnerable as before.

The [annual report for 2023](#) on how the Council handles impact assessments describes how renewed discussions, following this complementary IA, prompted some delegations in the Council's Law Enforcement Working Party to endorse a declaration calling for these matters to be revisited during further negotiations.

Impact assessment is a tool to aid decision and policy-making but is in no sense a substitute for political decisions within the democratic decision-making process. Therefore, committees are not bound to take the study findings into account; they merely serve to help inform the political decision.

Routine products: Initial appraisals of European Commission IAs

The Unit's support continues with the systematic provision of initial appraisals of Commission impact assessments. These appraisals are short briefings, transmitted to the committees responsible; they

offer a critical overview and analysis of the quality of the European Commission impact assessments (IAs) accompanying legislative proposals.

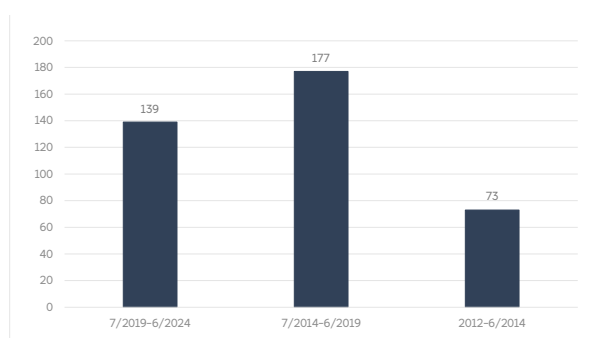
The European Parliament is committed (under the 2016 EU Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-Making) to take full account of the Commission's impact assessments when considering the latter's legislative proposals. In this context, the initial appraisals of the Commission's impact assessments seek to support the informed and effective consideration of legislative proposals at committee stage by providing focused and timely input, geared towards promoting evidence-based policy-making. They check that certain quality criteria have been met and identify the basic methodological strengths and weaknesses of the Commission's impact assessment, in the light of the latter's own [Better Regulation Guidelines](#) and relevant European Parliament [resolutions](#).

Experience suggests that initial appraisals make a constructive and practical contribution to the consideration of the legislative proposal at committee stage, with their findings being taken up or referred to in the explanatory statements of committee reports. They flag up particular issues that Members may wish to investigate further and they prompt committees to invite the Commission to explain its analysis and methodology and respond to any criticisms or shortcomings identified. They may also lead committees to request further impact assessment-related work from the Ex-Ante Impact Assessment Unit, addressing any concerns with weaknesses or omissions in the Commission's texts.

Initial appraisals therefore help to empower the Parliament in its role of scrutinising the work of the executive, and as co-legislator to ensure greater consistency and quality of EU legislation, in line with the general objective of better law-making. Policy analysts are available to present their initial appraisals to the committees.

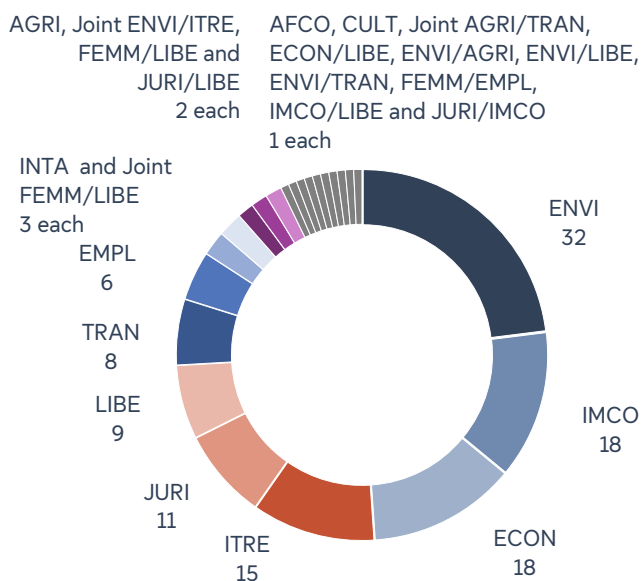
In the last legislative period the Unit produced 139 initial appraisals of Commission impact assessments, with the Committees on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI), Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO), Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON), Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE), Transport and Tourism (TRAN) and Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) the most frequent addressees of these products.

Figure 2 – Initial appraisals of European Commission impact assessments



Source: EPRS.

Figure 3 – Breakdown of initial appraisals by committee



Source: EPRS.

Impact assessment of substantive amendments: A decision-making aid

Under the 2016 [Interinstitutional Agreement](#) on Better Law-Making, the European Parliament undertook to assess the impacts of its amendments when appropriate and necessary for the legislative process. Based on experience, impact assessments of Parliament's substantial amendments can lead to one of three outcomes:

- they can strengthen and confirm the evidence-base for the amendments, providing analysis to defend the adoption of the amendments in committee or plenary;
- they can lead to a reconsideration of whether to maintain or support the amendments in question; or
- they can help to focus and advance the discussion, and possibly lead to the adaptation of a compromise.

The work of the Ex-Ante Impact Assessment Unit in the process leading to the adoption of the **Directive on Contracts for the Sale of Goods** was a clear example of how the legislative process can be influenced by impact assessment work done or commissioned by the Unit.

First, the initial appraisal of the Commission's impact assessment accompanying the proposal on online and other distance sales of goods (COM(2015) 635), prepared by the Ex-Ante Impact Assessment Unit, questioned the fact that the Commission had not waited for the evaluation of all the relevant existing legislation before adopting its proposal, as this could have led to the proposal having a wider scope.

Second, the Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee (IMCO) decided to explore the possibility of extending the proposal's scope, by requesting an impact assessment of two amendments to the proposal. The amendments sought to extend the scope of the proposal to offline sales and to repeal Directive 1999/44/EC (on consumer sales and guarantees). The findings of the [impact assessment](#) of these two amendments commissioned by the Ex-Ante Impact Assessment Unit clearly indicated the need to ensure a common set of rules for online and offline sales, supporting the rapporteur's position in favour of extending the scope of the directive to offline sales. The IA found that harmonisation of rules across Member States and sales channels would reduce the fragmentation of the legal framework and enhance the clarity and transparency of the applicable rules, to the benefit of both consumers and businesses.

Finally, the Commission published an amended proposal ([COM\(2017\) 0637](#)) on the sale of goods, extending the scope of the original proposal to include face-to-face sales. The proposal's explanatory memorandum clearly acknowledges the importance of the impact assessment conducted by EPRS and of the developments in the interinstitutional negotiations (pages 2–3).

European added value

The European Added Value Unit supports the agenda-setting function of the European Parliament by analysing opportunities for more EU action and the potential benefits that could be generated for citizens, businesses and civil society. Between 2019 and 2024, the Unit prepared close to 60 analytical publications for the European Parliament.

Publications

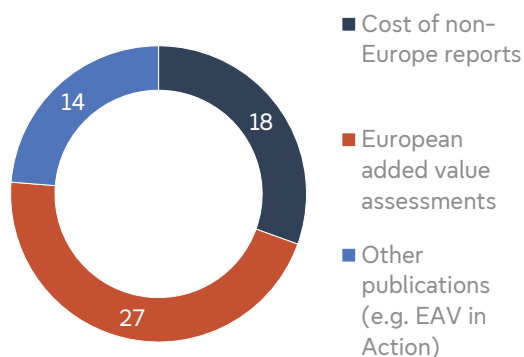
The three main types of publication produced by the Unit are:

- **cost of non-Europe reports (CoNEs)** – these identify policy areas where there is significant potential for achieving European added value through greater efficiency and/or for realising a 'public good' through common action at EU level, and where such action is currently absent;
- **European added value assessments (EAVAs)** – accompanying all INL reports under Article 225 TFEU, which allows the European Parliament to call on the European Commission to propose an EU legal act on a topic that the Parliament deems necessary to be addressed at EU level. EAVAs investigate why action at EU level is needed and why it could be more justified and beneficial than at other governance

levels; they also analyse proposals' potential impacts – costs and benefits. Whenever possible and suitable, EAVAs include a quantitative assessment.

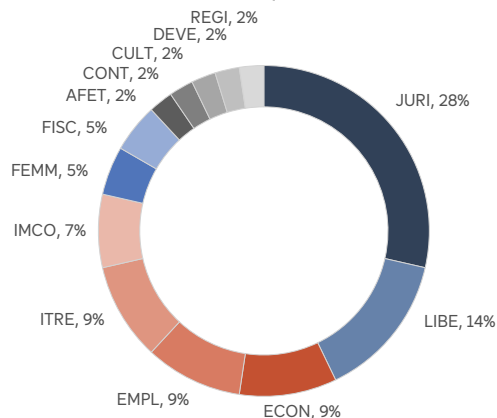
- **European added value briefings (EAV in action)** – analyse the benefit of existing EU policies in practice and the need for further EU action. They are drafted both in response to committee requests and proactively.

Figure 4 – Breakdown of publications by type, 2019-2024



Source: EPRS.

Figure 5 – Breakdown of publications by requesting committee, 2019-2024



Source: EPRS.

During the 2019-2024 legislative term, the unit's publications provided an evidence base for a range of key policy topics, including [artificial intelligence](#), [digital](#) and [energy systems](#) transformation, [gender-based violence](#) and [health policy](#). Whenever possible, the studies draw on advanced quantitative techniques to generate monetised estimates of the potential losses arising from EU inaction and/or the potential benefits of further EU action. The studies also consider the different dimensions of impacts including the economic, social, environmental and fundamental rights aspects. The [conceptual underpinnings and methodology](#) of the unit's work have evolved over the past 10 years to support the agenda-setting function of the European Parliament.

The unit published three editions of its flagship publication - **'Mapping the cost of non-Europe'** - during the ninth legislative term. The first - [Coronavirus and the cost of non-Europe: An analysis of the economic benefits of common European action](#) - highlighted the potential gains of an EU response to the COVID-19 pandemic in May 2020. The second - [Increasing European added value in an age of global challenges: Mapping the cost of non-Europe 2022-2032](#) - included updated figures and policy areas where new EU action could be taken or existing EU action could be deepened. The third - [Ten ways that Europe could do more for you](#) - published ahead of the 2024 European elections, identified key proposals, supported by European Parliament resolutions, of ways to unlock the EU's potential. The study found that more EU action could deliver up to €6 700 per citizen per year by 2032.



The unit also developed two **tools** tailored for use in the European Parliament. The [budgetary 'waste rates'](#) tool identifies savings generated by shifting certain national budgetary spending to EU level. It is highly relevant in the context of limited public budgets and the promotion of better public spending. The [stress-testing](#) tool is relevant in light of the recognised need for EU policies to be ready and resilient to future shocks and challenges.

During Parliament's ninth term, the unit also supported parliamentary committees with **ad-hoc studies and briefings** on timely topics such as EU support for [national short-time work schemes](#) in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the potential gains of completing the single market for [goods](#) and [services](#), on the 30th anniversary of the European single market.

Presentation of research results

The unit presented its research results on more than 30 specific occasions in Parliament's committees. The unit was also invited to present its work in other settings including outside the Parliament. A briefing about [care work](#) was presented at the [2023 Beyond growth conference](#) and at an [EPRS roundtable event](#) with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on how to ensure a sustainable and fair European care sector. An EAVA on [legal migration](#) was presented as part of the keynote address to a 2021 conference of the European Migration Network on [Talent and Skills Mobility Partnerships](#). The unit was also invited by the European Commission to present its research results at the 2022 annual event of the [Task Force for Equality](#).

The unit also organised two events to disseminate its research within the Parliament and beyond. The online policy roundtable [How to stress-test EU policies? Building a more resilient Europe for tomorrow](#) gathered perspectives on the EPRS stress-testing methodology from the European Parliament and partner organisations, and built on an earlier presentation to the network of national parliaments' research and documentation services ([ECPRD](#) network). The EPRS high-level conference [Increasing European added value in an age of global challenges](#) disseminated key



EPRS conference: Increasing European added value in an age of global challenges, 7 March 2023.

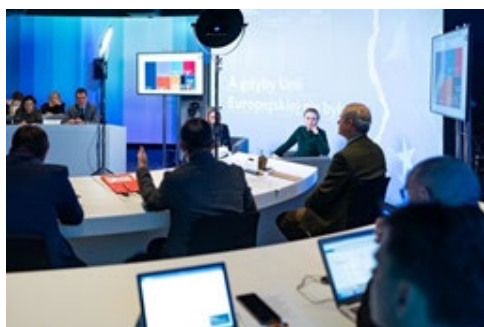
Source: European Parliament.

findings from the process of mapping the cost of non-Europe and fostered debate between Members, other representatives of the Parliament, the Commission, and representatives of academia and think-tanks. The relevant study was presented subsequently on more than 15 occasions in the European Commission (e.g. DG BUDGET and DG MOVE), in EU Member States facilitated by Parliament's liaison offices (for instance in Berlin, Helsinki, Rome, Bucharest, Stockholm and Warsaw), in universities (e.g. University of Turin and University of Leiden) and in think-tanks (e.g. European Policy Centre).

Uptake of research results

Parliamentary resolutions have systematically quoted the unit's publications, but the uptake of this research has been even broader. MEPs have quoted EAVA studies in public speeches and on social media, and Parliament press releases have made reference to them as well.

Other EU institutions, in particular the European Commission, have also widely quoted the studies' results and used them as arguments for more ambitious and united EU action. The publications have also been cited by think-tanks and academic journals.



Presentation of the mapping of the cost of non-Europe in the Parliament Liaison Office in Warsaw on 4 December 2023.

Source: EPRS.



Speech by Sophie in 't Veld in the LIBE committee on 7 November 2021.

Source: EPRS.

Following a presentation of [Avenues for EU action on citizenship and residence by investment schemes - European Added Value Assessment](#) in the LIBE committee, Sophie in 't Veld (Renew, the Netherlands) noted 'I would like to express my gratitude to the European Parliamentary Research Service for doing a really exceptional job. The assessment provided a fantastic basis for our proposals'.

Reflections of the Unit's research findings in proposals and impact assessments by the European Commission in the areas of [deforestation](#), [quality traineeships](#), [corruption](#) and [gender-based violence](#) have boosted the voice of the European Parliament in evidence-based policy-making.

The Unit's publications are frequently accompanied by multimedia products to support the uptake of research findings in traditional and social media. Presentations of the Unit's work in national settings enjoyed national press coverage.

The work of the Unit has also found itself reflected in high-level policy documents that will help shape the 10th legislative term, such as [Enrico Letta's single market report](#).



Article referring to an EPRS cost of non-Europe study, *Corriere della Sera*, 3 April 2023.

Ex-post evaluation

The EPRS Ex-Post Evaluation Unit (EVAL) supports parliamentary committees in their evaluation work by strengthening Parliament's role as a co-legislator and its oversight capacity towards the executive. During the ninth legislative term, the Unit further developed its capacity to act as a

'competence centre' on all aspects of policy evaluation, notably concerning the implementation, enforcement, and effectiveness of EU law and policies in practice.

Under the framework of the interinstitutional better law-making agenda, the Commission's Better Regulation Guidelines and toolbox, and Parliament's own rules, the Unit produces various types of publication. In particular, it underpins the evidence base of committees' own-initiative implementation reports with studies and in-depth analysis. The Unit also contributes to other ex-post evaluation work upon the request of committees, and publishes concise briefings on legislation that the Commission's annual work programme has scheduled for revision.

EPRS studies underpinning own-initiative implementation reports

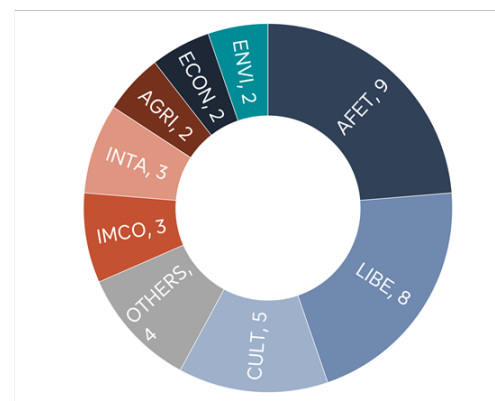
First and foremost, the EVAL Unit contributes to evidence-based policy-making in the European Parliament by preparing impartial and factual studies to inform Parliament's own-initiative implementation reports. This specific type of own-initiative reports allows the committees to scrutinise the implementation and application of EU legal acts, spending programmes, soft law instruments, and international agreements. Committees' implementation reports inform Members and help them draw conclusions on lessons learned regarding implementation of a specific EU act or policy and to make concrete recommendations for further action, such as amendments, revisions or repeals.

The supporting studies and in-depth analyses referred to as 'European implementation assessments' (EIAs) offer an overview of the operation of an EU act or policy in practice. To this end, they typically assess its effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and European added value. In terms of methods and scope, these studies adhere to the evaluation criteria outlined in the Commission's Better Regulation Guidelines and toolbox, but are tailored to the specific needs of the committees. Produced in house or together with external experts, they commonly rely on publicly available data and information, which can be supplemented with primary data collected through different means, such as targeted consultations.

In the 2019–2024 legislative term, Parliament's committees have shown a growing interest in ex-post evaluation: 62 implementation reports were initiated, and EPRS prepared supporting evaluation studies in 37 cases. In many other cases where a comprehensive study was not possible due to time constraints, the EVAL Unit supported the committees with other published or unpublished work. Committees' reliance on research support from EPRS is high, with 12 out of the 20 standing committees having made use of EPRS upstream evaluation studies at least once in this legislative term. In particular, the Foreign Affairs Committee (AFET) made use of nine EPRS studies to underpin implementation reports. Next were the LIBE and CULT committees. Together, these three committees accounted for almost 60 % of the total work.

These upstream studies are designed to inform the deliberations of the committee, leaving it to Members' discretion whether the studies' findings and recommendations are actually incorporated into the political work. Committees have generally been receptive to EPRS evaluation studies, viewing them as valuable contributions to the debate, and have effectively taken into account many of the research findings in their reports and in Parliament resolutions. In fact, committees regularly invite EPRS policy analysts to present the main findings of studies in committee meetings, shadows meetings or hearings: between 2019 and 2024, presentations were made in 19 out of 37 cases, and were generally well received by rapporteurs and other Members.

Figure 6 – Breakdown of EVAL studies underpinning implementation reports, by committee, 2019–2024



Source: EPRS.

While EPRS ex-post evaluation studies are commonly presented to and discussed in committees, they have occasionally also been referred to in plenary.

I would like to highlight ... the study commissioned by the European Parliament's research service, which significantly helped us to identify areas for improvement. Thank you to all those who contributed.

Rapporteur for the ECON implementation report (2020/2046(INI)) on EU requirements for exchange of tax information Sven Giegold (Greens/EFA, Germany) in the plenary part-session of 15 September 2021.

In the majority of cases (70 %), Parliament's implementation reports explicitly acknowledge EPRS studies as providing input, with substantial arguments often drawing on the study.

Cases of direct reference to EPRS ex-post evaluation studies

Implementation of directives on procurement of defence and security and transfer of defence-related products ([2019/2204\(INI\)](#))

The EVAL Unit produced a study to support the IMCO committee in its report on 'Procurement in the field of defence and security and transfer of defence-related products: Implementation of relevant directives'. The report and Parliament's resolution of 25 March 2021 both refer to the [study](#) entitled 'EU Defence Package: Defence Procurement and Intra Community Transfers Directives' as one of its main sources and in the context of substantial arguments. An example of such reference is the effect of the Defence Procurement Directive on the Europeanisation of defence value chains.

Implementation of the ambient air quality directives ([2020/2091\(INI\)](#))

The [study](#) 'EU policy on air quality: Implementation of selected EU legislation' assisted the ENVI committee in its implementation report on the Ambient Air Quality Directives leading to a Parliament resolution on 25 March 2021. The committee report and the resolution both mention the study as one of its key sources. The resolution refers, for instance, to the monetary calculations of significant human and economic costs of air pollution to the society discussed in the study.

Other ex-post evaluation studies upon committee request

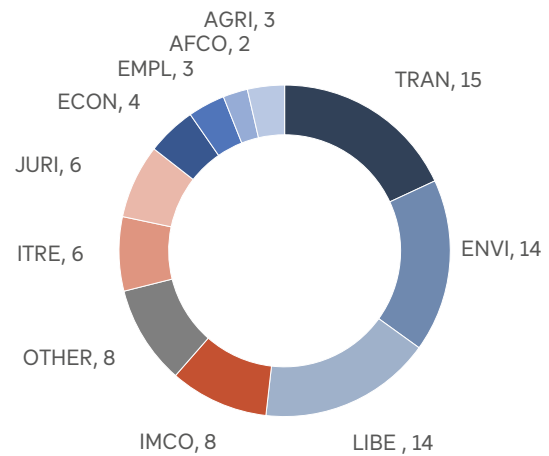
Committees can ask the EPRS Ex-Post Evaluation Unit to provide evaluation studies beyond the conventional scope of implementation reports. During the ninth term, the Unit drafted a total of 24 such analyses on the performance of an EU act or policy. For example, the temporary Special Committee on the COVID-19 pandemic (COVI) commissioned two studies – published in early 2023 – on parliamentary oversight of governments' responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and on the European public health response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the Unit produces a set of four rolling check-lists (RCL)ⁱⁱ to provide committees with reference materials on horizontal topics, including review clauses in the EU legislation and evaluation activities in the European Commission. These regularly updated studies are designed to inform Members and parliamentary committees in the exercise of effective scrutiny and oversight of the executive.

Implementation appraisals on legislation coming up for revision

Succinct briefings known as 'implementation appraisals' inform committees on the current performance of legislation in force. These 12-page briefings aim to address all legal acts announced as being due for revision in the Commission's annual work programmes. Published before the adoption of the Commission proposal, their objective is to identify strengths and weaknesses in the implementation, application and enforcement of the act being revised, thus, helping the committee to scrutinise the Commission proposal.

During the ninth legislative term, 83 implementation appraisals were prepared for committees, predominantly focusing on topics in the remit of the TRAN, ENVI, LIBE, and IMCO committees.

Figure 7 – Breakdown of implementation appraisals by committee, 2019–2024



Source: EPRS.

Reference to EPRS evaluation studies in the European Commission's work

Over the past 10 years, ex-post evaluation has made a significant contribution to the evidence base of political debates at all stages of the policy cycle. During the ninth term, EPRS published 61 evaluation studies – compared with 62 during the eighth term – amounting to a total of 123 studies in a decade. These numbers reflect the institutionalisation of ex-post evaluation in the European Parliament law-making process. They also confirm that ex-post evaluation is considered an integral part of parliamentary processes to hold the executive accountable, namely as regards the implementation and enforcement of EU law.

Parliament's implementation reports and other ex-post evaluation work typically highlight the lessons learned based on observed implementation deficits and call for the Commission to remedy these issues. Thus, they seek to influence Commission work in terms of the preparation of upcoming revisions. In accordance with the rules in place, the Commission is expected to follow up on Parliament's requests expressed in own-initiative resolutions within 3 months by explaining actions taken and/or by justifying its stance not to react.

While the Commission obviously has no obligation to comment on or to react to EPRS studies, it has regularly taken their findings and recommendations into account in its work. For example, the Commission proposal (COM(2020)610) for a regulation on asylum and migration management makes direct reference to the EPRS study on the 'Dublin Regulation on international protection applications' when listing existing evaluations. This study was drawn up to assist the LIBE committee with its implementation report on the Dublin III Regulation (2019/2206(INI)). Furthermore, EPRS evaluation studies have contributed to ex-ante impact assessments, evaluations and out-sourced Commission studies. For instance, in the area of employment equality, the Commission implementation report (COM(2021)139) on the application of two Council directives refers to the EPRS study on the 'Implementation of the Employment Equality Directive in light of the UNCRPD'. This study supported the implementation report by the EMPL committee on the topic (2020/2086(INI)).

Another example is the Commission's complementary evaluation support study on the EU school fruit, vegetables and milk scheme, which referred to the EPRS study on the 'Implementation of the EU school scheme for fruit, vegetables and milk products'. That study was drafted to underpin the work of the AGRI committee on the implementation of the scheme (2021/2205(INI)).

Finally, in its [evaluation report](#) and [impact assessment](#) for a regulation on the statute and funding of European political parties and European political foundations ([COM\(2021\) 734](#)), the Commission referred to the analysis of an EPRS [evaluation study](#) on the topic carried out for the AFCO committee.

Developments and future trends in better law-making

During the ninth parliamentary term, the interinstitutional better regulation agenda has constantly evolved to cover all stages of the policy cycle. As it is the responsibility of one of the executive vice-presidents, better regulation has featured prominently among the priorities of the von der Leyen Commission. This built on the approach taken by the Juncker Commission.

Early in its mandate, in April 2021, the Commission issued a new communication on better regulation: 'Joining forces to make better laws', followed by an update of the Better Regulation Guidelines and toolbox. This introduced a set of additions to the existing framework, notably strategic foresight and the one-in, one-out approach to cutting red tape. In its [resolution](#) on Better Regulation of 7 July 2022, Parliament reiterated its commitment to better law-making, welcomed the integration of foresight elements into the Commission's better regulation agenda in impact assessments and evaluations, while highlighting, in particular, the need for transparency and openness regarding the one-in, one-out approach.

At the end of the ninth term, the European Parliament embarked on an internal reform process to enhance its working methods. On 10 April 2024, Parliament approved the revised rules with a view to strengthening its ability to act as a co-legislator, its role as a budget authority and its oversight function. The new rules will streamline Parliament's legislative work, improve scrutiny of the Commission and ensure a more effective approach to budget and discharge procedures. This reflects Parliament's continuous commitment to the joint interinstitutional effort of delivering high-quality EU legislation. The work EPRS does in the areas of ex-ante impact assessment and ex-post evaluation is likely to gain further importance in light of the emphasis placed on parliamentary scrutiny.

ENDNOTES

- ⁱ Under the provisions of Parliament's Impact Assessment Handbook, impact assessments of substantial amendments are always carried out by external experts.
- ⁱⁱ The four RCLs are: European Commission follow-up to European Parliament requests; Evaluation in the European Commission; Review and monitoring clauses in EU international agreements; and Review clauses in EU legislation.

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eprs@ep.europa.eu (contact)

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