

EU institutions agree to communicate in partnership

Today in the European Parliament a political declaration was signed which aims at encouraging cooperation among the EU institutions and member states on communication about Europe. The declaration, entitled "Communicating Europe in Partnership", was signed by Alejo Vidal-Quadras, Vice-President of the European Parliament, the French Minister of State Jean-Pierre Jouyet, on behalf of the Council of the EU and Margot Wallström, Vice-President of the European Commission.

Alejo Vidal-Quadras said: "More information and better communication are necessary if we want to raise the interest of European citizens in the European Union and make them aware of the achievements of the European Union for their daily lives. We need to convince them of the value of the common European project, guaranteeing peace and defending a unique way of living and working together. I very much welcome the joint effort of the institutions for achieving this by joining their forces in the area of communications."

Jean-Pierre Jouyet said: "We are all aware that communication is a key element in the way to convince public opinion of the benefits of the European Union and each of us must keep in mind the outcome of the recent consultations in different countries.. Thanks to this political declaration I hope that the three institutions and the member states will reinforce their cooperation on that matter, especially in the coming months with the perspective of the European elections."

Margot Wallström said: "To communicate you need to plan, to prioritize and to work in partnership. These are the key tools for a successful communication. This political declaration puts in place a framework in which we can use these tools in an efficient way. In today's world we cannot afford not to work together. It is time to recognise the importance of addressing the communication challenge on EU issues in partnership between Member States and the EU institutions. We need the EU to deal with the global challenges we are facing. All the key actors involved in the EU decision-making have a responsibility to discuss, inform and explain these issues."

Against the backdrop of a generally low level of knowledge of European citizens about the European Union, this declaration underlines that EU-institutions and Member States attach the utmost importance to communicating effectively with their citizens about Europe.

According to the objectives of the political declaration, citizens should be provided, in a language they understand, with adequate and objective information on the EU's issues and policies, which takes into account their expectations.

With this political declaration the institutions and the Member States have decided to develop synergies in order to address the communication challenge together. They have agreed on a pragmatic partnership approach based on the annual selection of joint communication priorities and practical cooperation between the communication departments of Member States and Institutions.

The Commission has been requested to report back on the implementation of the agreement at the end of each year.

Background documents:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/index_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/wallstrom/index_en.htm

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