

## *Communication Strategy*

In accordance with Internal Control Standard n°12, DG Environment has adopted the following communication strategy, after discussions with the Cabinet and in coordination with DG COMM.

### **I. Policy Context**

***Communication activities in DG Environment should be regarded as an integral part of our overall operation – supporting the conception and implementation of policy.***

Even the worst economic crisis in living memory did not affect the positive attitudes of European citizens towards the environment. According to Special Eurobarometer survey (EB75.2), 95% of citizens consider protecting the environment to be important to them personally (a 1% decrease since EB.68.2 of 2007). 72% of citizens are willing to buy environmentally friendly products, even if they cost a little bit more.

Public support for environmental policies and funding at the Union level remains strong, with 81% of citizens considering EU environmental legislation to be necessary to protect the environment in their countries and 64% supporting the environmental decision making to be made at EU level (32% preferring the national level).

A large majority of Europeans agree that the efficient use of natural resources (83%) and the protection of the environment (77%) can boost economic growth in the EU. The idea that environmental protection can boost economic growth has clearly gained increased support since 2009 (66%), as Europe moves away from the idea that environmental protection blocks rather than reinforces economic growth and job creation.

The 2011 "Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe" and the 2012 "Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water" echo public opinion trends in the Member States, where the main environmental concerns remain the depletion of natural resources (33%), water pollution (41%), the growth of waste (33%) and unsustainable consumption (19%).

Public support however does not necessarily translate into political support for new policy proposals or public acceptance of the implementation of the measures, so there is a constant need for communication on these issues to stakeholders as well as public at large.

These communication activities should provide further support to the long-term upward trend in citizens' personal engagement for the sake of environment and resource efficiency in the areas such as sustainable consumption, waste separation, water and energy efficiency and so on.

There is a need to communicate throughout the policy making cycle, starting from the early stages of recognising new issues and formulating policies, with a view to gradually building understanding, acceptance and support. Communication needs to be built into policy from the early stage to support its overall preparation, adoption and implementation. Targeted communication efforts will therefore support the delivery of the annual DG ENV work programme across specific policy areas, while broader outreach activities will cover a limited number of priority areas such as resource efficiency and water. Following the launch of the multi-annual resource efficiency campaign in October 2011, the campaign will continue thorough 2012, with a particular emphasis on water.

The ongoing communication campaign on biodiversity will continue to provide support to a new EU biodiversity strategy, adopted in 2011, exploiting synergies with communication activities on the Natura 2000 network and the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the LIFE programme.

A communication presence in Member States will be also reinforced in the context of Green Week 2012 satellite events. A "Clean Up Europe" initiative will be further explored in the context of the European Week of Waste Reduction, supported by LIFE+ programme.

Opportunities for increased dialogue with municipalities and better visibility of environmental issues among city inhabitants will be followed in the context of the European Mobility Week and the European Green Capitals Award.

Communication is an integral part of the successful implementation of EU environment policies, and plays a key role in promoting the take-up of policy instruments that rely on decisions by individual citizens or economic actors, such as EU Ecolabel and EMAS. Environmental awareness of the business sector will continue to be raised in the framework of European Business Award for the Environment as well as of the Resource Efficiency campaign.

Building on existing tools, efforts will be stepped up to highlight achievements and demonstrate the added value of implementation of EU-level environmental legislation. Areas where implementation has been less successful will also be explored.

Feedback on the attitudes of European citizens towards the environment and key environmental policies will be provided through Eurobarometer surveys linked to the Commission strategic priorities, in particular the Blueprint for European Waters and 2013 air policy review. This will also provide input to 2013 communication priority of air.

On the international stage, communication will also be used to build pressure for a positive outcome at the Rio +20 conference to be held in June 2012.

There will be a number of targeted communication actions to support DG ENV policy and programme initiatives, such as LIFE+, Eco-Innovation Action Plan, Eco-label, EMAS, Retail Forum and so on, implemented in coordination with the Communication Unit.

## **II. Communication Objectives**

The 2012 Commission Work Programme "Delivering European renewal" makes sustainable growth and solidarity a priority. The Commission's approach to a resource efficient and low carbon economy, which will be integrated into economic policy and the Annual Growth Survey, has set out how smart growth needs to be well directed, to turn the challenge of a sustainable Europe into our competitive advantage. This approach is embedded in Europe 2020. An important example of pursuing resource efficiency in sectoral policy areas will be the 2012 proposals on securing availability of clean and sufficient water: the Commission will adopt a blueprint to safeguard water resources to focus public policy on tackling the pressures on water today. The Rio+20 summit in June will put the spotlight on the global effort for sustainability and promoting green growth. EU policies will be in the vanguard of that effort.

### **1. External**

The objectives of our external communication activities are to:

- Build understanding, acceptance and support for our policies; not least by answering questions from citizens, academia and stakeholders and presenting environmental policy to groups, mostly multipliers;
- Make our activities better known, and raise the Commission's profile as a key player in environmental matters on the international arena;
- Advocate a resource-efficient society by raising awareness about environmental issues among the general public and encouraging citizens to take positive actions;
- Encourage stakeholders and opinion leaders to adopt and promote environmentally friendly actions in their field of activity, namely through facilitating the exchange of best practices and by rewarding consistent efforts.

### **2. Internal**

The objectives of our internal communication activities, implemented jointly with the Shared Resource Directorate, are to:

- Inform: communicate to personnel about the objectives, priorities and activities of the DG and what is expected from them, in particular through the DG Environment intranet site;
- Support: evidence-based policy-making (for example by the provision of information and guidance for staff through the library and information centre, and providing special guidance for newcomers);

- Motivate: strengthen corporate spirit and establish an atmosphere of openness and confidence, guide the personnel through organisational changes;
- Manage: ensure the effective implementation of the operational objectives of the DG by ensuring that everyone has access to the information necessary for carrying out his/her tasks; encourage dialogue and the sharing of ideas, knowledge and good practices.

### **III. Communication Activities**

#### **1. Contribution to the Commission's communication priorities**

##### **Europe 2020 – Sustainable Growth - Flagship Resource Efficient Europe**

Following the adoption of the Resource Efficiency Roadmap in September 2011, DG Environment launched a multi-annual, pan-European campaign on resource efficiency entitled GENERATION AWAKE ([www.generationawake.eu](http://www.generationawake.eu))

The Roadmap to a resource-efficient Europe outlines how we can achieve the resource-efficient growth which is essential for our future wellbeing and prosperity. The roadmap identifies the economic sectors that consume the most resources, and suggests tools and indicators to help guide action in Europe and internationally. It is an agenda for competitiveness and growth based on using fewer resources when we produce and consume goods and creating business and job opportunities from activities such as recycling, better product design, materials substitution and eco-engineering.

By 2050 the objective is that the EU's economy has grown in a way that respects resource constraints and within the boundaries of what our planet can bear, thus contributing to global economic transformation. Our economy is competitive, inclusive and provides a high standard of living with much lower environmental impacts. All resources are sustainably managed, from raw materials to energy, water, air, land and soil.

The GENERATION AWAKE communication campaign has two main objectives.

- 1) To raise awareness about the increasing pressures on natural resources and the risk that future resource scarcities could present risks for the economy, the environment and our quality of life. The links between consumption and pressures on resources are made more evident, including water, biodiversity, air and climate change.
- 2) To promote changes in mainstream consumption patterns.

#### **1.2. Target audiences**

Citizens, consumers, media, NGOs, industry and businesses (in particular retailers)

#### **1.3. Messages**

##### **General messages**

- Sustainable recovery requires that growth and investment are channelled towards the resource-efficient and low carbon economy.
- Natural resources are crucial to the functioning of the economy and to our quality of life. Depleting natural resources puts the stability of our way of life at risk.
- The long term objective of our resource-efficiency policy is to ensure that by 2050 the economy will still be able to deliver the best of what citizens want: good health, good jobs, security, housing, mobility, food and entertainment, within the constraints facing the world.

- Europe's "ecological footprint" shows that we are using up resources as if we had 2.5 Earths at our disposal, and humanity's footprint as a whole is around 1.4 Earths. This trend is unsustainable. Favour environmentally friendly products and services and avoid resource-depleting goods.
- Massive amounts of food are wasted in the EU. It is estimated that up to one third of the food bought by households becomes waste, of which over half could be avoided, saving money, resources and reducing emissions of green house gases.

## **1.4 Tools**

Communication tools/activities envisaged:

- Public awareness-raising campaign, centred around an integrated web-social media platform, including a website in all official EU languages linked to the Europa website,
- Audiovisual material, with increased focus on productions of viral videos for the Internet and other new media,
- Publications for the general public and entrepreneurs disseminated via the Website and Europe Direct Relays; articles in the quarterly DG ENV Environment for Europeans newsletter,
- Press materials and events: press briefings for media from the 2012 EU Presidency countries, press activities to support the implementation of the Roadmap,
- Presence at relevant exhibitions, conferences; organisation of meetings/seminars/workshops with relevant opinion leaders, decision makers, stakeholder representatives and potential multipliers.

## **1.5. Actions**

### **1.5.1. Public awareness campaign**

A pan-European public awareness campaign ([www.generationawake.eu](http://www.generationawake.eu)) launched in October 2011 in the EU-27 will be implemented throughout 2012, with the main focus on water policy. The campaign will be implemented through an integrated platform of viral video, web page and Facebook in all Member States. The campaign focuses in particular on a restricted number of countries, to ensure maximum effect from input, and where leverage is greatest.

### **1.5.2. European Mobility Week**

European Mobility Week will continue to promote sustainable urban mobility and shift towards sustainable modes of transport among local authorities in Europe and worldwide. The theme of European Mobility Week 2012 will be Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning and it will promote the benefits of sustainable urban mobility solutions for efficient resource management.

### **1.5.3 European Green Capital Awards**

With four out of five Europeans living in towns and cities, the European Green Capital Award scheme will continue to promote dialogue with local authorities on sustainable urban development policy. In particular, events addressing the issue of water will be organised in cooperation with Vitoria-Gasteiz as the holder of the EGCA 2012 title, including an award ceremony for the 2014 European Green Capital.

### **1.5.4 European Business Awards for the Environment**

Resource efficiency and eco-innovation will continue to be promoted in the framework of the European Business Awards for the Environment. The Award ceremony will take place in 2012 (bi-annual prize). It will be the first edition with a fifth category on Business and Biodiversity, in addition to the Process, Product, Management and International Business Cooperation categories.

### **1.5.5 Clean Up Europe**

Possible development of pan-European Clean Up campaign will be continued to be explored in the context of the European Week of Waste Reduction.

## **1.6. Evaluation**

The awareness raising campaign as well as individual Communication actions have in-built evaluation mechanisms (publications and AV materials in terms of dissemination and up-take, events/exhibitions in terms of visitor satisfaction and media coverage etc.). Results for a first month of the implementation indicate that the public awareness campaign is off to a strong start, with more than 91 000 visits to the website and more than 24 000 views of the videoclip (other than on the campaign website), while more than 7 100 people became campaign's fans on Facebook.

Some baseline data for water policy and air will be provided by the two flash Eurobarometer surveys which will be carried out in 2012. These will allow for evaluation of trends in European citizens' attitudes towards these issues.

In addition, there will be a dedicated peer review of DG ENV external communication strategy by external experts.

## **2. DG Environment Communication Priorities**

### **2.1 Water**

The Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water will aim to ensure, in the long term, sufficient availability of good quality water for sustainable and equitable water use. The time horizon of the Blueprint is 2020 since it is closely related to the EU 2020 Strategy and in particular to the Resource Efficiency Roadmap, where it features as

the water milestone. The Blueprint will assess the implementation and achievements of the current policy while identifying gaps and shortcomings, and look forward to the evolving vulnerability of the water environment to identify measures and tools that may be needed in several EU policy areas in order to ensure the sustainable use of good quality water in the EU in the long term.

The Blueprint will synthesise policy recommendations building on three on-going assessments: the assessment of the River Basin Management Plans delivered by the Member States under the Water Framework Directive, the review of the policy on Water Scarcity and Drought and the assessment of the vulnerability of water resources to climate change and other man made pressures. A crosscutting theme of the Blueprint will be the link between safeguarding water resources and addressing emerging challenges such as food, energy and industrial production; mobility, health and services provision. The Blueprint will therefore identify means to foster the integration of water and other policies, by improving water resource efficiency (reducing water consumption/pollution at the source) and by managing trade-offs through a better understanding of the costs and benefits of both economic activities and water resources management.

### **2.1.1. Target audiences**

Citizens, consumers, media, NGOs, industry and businesses.

### **2.1.2. Messages**

Messages will be built around seven key themes:

1. Land Use
2. Economic Incentives
3. Quantitative water use targets
4. Governance
5. Knowledge Base
6. Innovation
7. Global Dimension

### **2.1.3. Tools**

Communication tools/activities envisaged:

- Message for the general public mainstreamed in the awareness-raising campaign on Resource Efficiency ([www.generationawake.eu](http://www.generationawake.eu));
- Press materials and events: regular newsletters to keep interest level throughout year, to be delivered in conjunction with the EEA on a series of messages agreed in advance
- Audiovisual material, for the internet and for TV and other audiovisual media



- Presence at relevant exhibitions, conferences; organisation of meetings/seminars/workshops with relevant opinion leaders, decision makers, stakeholder representatives and potential multipliers.
- Publications and an app (iphone and android) for stakeholders, entrepreneurs and young people disseminated via the Website, Europe Direct Relays; articles in the quarterly DG ENV Environment for Europeans newsletter.

#### **2.1.4. Actions**

##### **2.1.4.1 Public awareness campaign Generation Awake**

A water component is already included in the messages of the pan European public awareness campaign ([www.generationawake.eu](http://www.generationawake.eu)). It will be further developed and featured more prominently in 2012. There will be special campaign events organised in 4-5 Member States where water issues are of particular importance.

##### **2.1.4.2. Green Week 2012**

Water, in particular the strategic initiative Blueprint to safeguard Europe's Waters will be the topic of Green Week 2011. The main function of the event is to facilitate an effective policy dialogue with opinion leaders and stakeholders in Brussels as well as in Member States in the context of the stakeholder consultations on the Blueprint (expected adoption in November 2012).

Green Week will be held from 22-25 May 2012, serving as a useful platform not only for consultation with stakeholders but for building a wider political momentum and launching public debate. The Green Week exhibition will be a forum for Member States to share good national practice in running schemes that promote the efficient use of resources, as well as for innovative front-runner companies to promote their business processes and models, goods and services. Other Commission services as well as key stakeholders will be called to contribute to the development of the programme.

Following the 2011 exercise, the format of Green Week 2012 will be expanded to include a limited number of activities and debates in other Member States and to mobilise interested relays in order to multiply the outreach. The Spanish city of Vitoria-Gasteiz, European Green Capital 2012, will also host a side event. A number of stakeholders will also be invited to organise events in conjunction with the Green Week theme, with a view to generating debate in the Member States.

##### **2.1.5. Evaluation**

Standard evaluation note (including data from participant's survey) will be issued after the Green Week 2012.

## **2.2. Biodiversity / Natura 2000**

On May 3 2011, the European Commission adopted a new strategy to halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU by 2020, and restoring them in so far as feasible, while stepping up the EU contribution to averting global biodiversity loss. The strategy is built around six mutually supportive and inter-dependent targets with corresponding actions to reach them. It focuses in particular on anchoring biodiversity objectives into other key sectoral policies, stepping up efforts to fully implement existing EU nature legislation and closing important policy gaps. Work has now turned towards implementing the actions of the strategy. In 2012, the Commission will work on two key actions: a Green Infrastructure Strategy for the EU and a legislative proposal on Invasive Alien Species.

21 May 2012 will mark the 20th anniversary both of the Habitats Directive (and thus of the Natura 2000 network) and of the LIFE programme which has contributed to its implementation. It is a unique opportunity to raise the profile of both the Habitats Directive/Natura 2000 Network and the LIFE programme with the general public, national stakeholders and national media. For LIFE, a series of decentralised events in May 2012 is already foreseen – they will be organised and financed locally by individual LIFE project beneficiaries. However, setting up a joint celebration of the Habitats Directive and LIFE through organising a few centrally-led, high level events, each in an emblematic Natura 2000 site with a successful LIFE Nature project will be explored.

### **2.2.1. Target audiences**

Segments of the general public (families, young urban adults), media, stakeholders. For Natura 2000 in particular various interest groups involved in site management.

### **2.2.2. Messages**

Messages should focus on informing the public what is biodiversity and how its loss directly affects people's lives – there are important links between the services provided by resilient ecosystems, biodiversity and our economic prosperity, social well-being, health and quality of life. Also, biodiversity and ecosystem services have an important role in the transition towards a new, more sustainable economic model. Healthy ecosystems can offer the same services as man-made technological solutions, often at significantly lower costs. Protecting biodiversity should not be perceived as an obstacle to economic development but as an opportunity

A need for personal engagement and individual action should also be highlighted. The general population tends to perceive biodiversity as a complex issue falling under government and other stakeholders' (businesses etc.) competence. An informed public can have a huge positive impact through, for example, consumption preferences.

For Natura 2000, the messages should highlight nature conservation successes and how these benefit people/local communities and the fact that Natura 2000 is not a

'roadblock' but an enabler for economic development of an area. Important themes include: ecosystem services (with concrete examples), protection of resources, European Heritage.

### **2.2.3. Tools**

Communication tools/activities to be continued:

- The Public awareness-raising campaign, based on the integrated platform of the website (in all official EU languages) - social media (Facebook) - viral video;
- Audiovisual material;
- Publications (fact sheets, brochures, Natura 2000 newsletter, etc.) disseminated via the Website and Europe Direct Relays, ,
- Presence at relevant exhibitions, conferences etc.

### **2.2.4. Actions**

#### **2.2.4.1 Public awareness campaign "We are all in this together"**

In 2012 the campaign will continue engaging with fans through interactive activities, focused on Natura 2000 to create synergy with activities that will be organised to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Habitats Directive. Due to budgetary limitations activities will be concentrated on-line, mainly in social media.

DG ENV will also work with all other interested Member States and multipliers to ensure widest possible dissemination of the campaign messages and seek the assistance of the Representations in the Member States to be active information and communication relays.

#### **2.2.4.2. Events in Natura 2000 sites**

Several real level events will be organised in emblematic Natura 2000 sites to serve as highlights of the 20th anniversary of the Habitats Directive celebration. The events will aim to build a positive image of Natura 2000 through relations with media and decision makers at national and regional level. The events will have an attractive format and will combine official part for high level VIPs and activities for general public. The list of countries / sites is still to be determined, but one of the events will be co-organised with the Danish presidency. In addition, a high level conference in Brussels will be organised to celebrate the achievements to date as well as to debate ideas for future.

### **2.2.5. Evaluation**

The contractor in charge of implementing biodiversity campaign and N2000 events will provide final reports at the end of 2012.

### **2.3. Rio+20**

Rio+20 is a unique opportunity for countries around the world to address today's interlinked economic, environmental and social challenges, and to work together and achieve ambitious goals for a sustainable development. The EU's concrete proposals in relation to the green economy theme focus on the sustainable management of key natural resources (water, energy, land, biodiversity/ecosystems, the marine environment/fisheries, chemicals), and enabling conditions, such as capacity building and indicators to measure progress towards a greener economy.

The main communication objective is to ensure a timely and well-argued presentation of the Commission proposals in the run-up to the Summit, to influence either directly or indirectly the positions of the key decision makers who will be determining the outcome of the Summit. Communication to a broader audience of our positions and presentation of our current activities, for example in the context of the Green Week 2012, will support this objective.

DG ENV will closely coordinate its activities with DG COMM and other relevant DGs.

### **3. Internal communication**

Internal communication is the joint responsibility of the Communication Unit and the Shared Resources Directorate (SRD). The Information Centre, in-house seminars and learning & development as well as administrative information for staff are the responsibility of the SRD, while the Communication unit provides cross-cutting communication expertise and support and ensures the overall management of the Intranet.

The intranet is the main information tool for internal information, shared by DG ENV and DG CLIMA. In 2011, a revamped intranet site became fully operational, promoting green life style and allowing for informal exchange of opinions among staff via social media corner.

In 2012, internal communication policy will be adapted in the light of the findings of the 2011 internal audit, if necessary.

### **4. Other communication tools and services of the DG**

#### **4.1 Website**

The Environment website on Europa attracts a steadily growing number of yearly visits. It remains the main outlet of DG ENV policy information for an expert and stakeholder audience as well as interested members of the general public. This website is in English only, which permits swift in-house updating of information. While the site does not reflect the latest state of the art technology, it still serves its purpose well. Moderate improvements to the page layout, design and content structure are being implemented on an on-going basis. An additional layer of multilingual environmental information, more generic and static in nature and targeted to a non-expert audience will be put online in the course of 2012.

## **4.2 Publications**

In 2012, DG ENV publications will focus on supporting major policy priorities, notably Resource Efficiency and Water and communication priorities, principally the Green Capital Award.

As we now have a complete range of publications covering the majority of subjects, we will start a new range of publications which aim at showcasing major environment policy successes.

## **4.3 Audiovisual Products**

The audiovisual framework contract is used to target television in the MS through VNRs when new initiatives need to be flagged, to target a younger audience through the Internet and new media, and to produce clips for specific events such as conferences. Projects for 2012 include films on EU objectives for Rio+20, water, and air pollution.

## **4.4 Environment for Europeans Newsletter**

Environment for Europeans, the DG's in-house magazine, is a quarterly publication which appears in 13 languages. It aims to give broad exposure to the policy areas covered by the DG, keeping policymakers, local government officials and an interested public up to date on EU environmental affairs.

## **4.5 Library and Information Centre**

The Library and Information Centre constitutes a useful information resource to help staff who need information for policy development or updating of skills and knowledge. Its principal objective is to make relevant and recent information/documentation available to Commission staff to assist them in their work.

# **IV. Evaluation**

## **1. Ex-Ante Evaluation**

For 2012, three surveys proposals were submitted to DG COMM

- A Flash Eurobarometer survey on Attitudes of European citizens towards water (approved)
- A Flash Eurobarometer survey on Attitudes of European citizens towards air (tbc)
- A Flash Eurobarometer on Resource Efficiency/Sustainable consumption and production. (tbc)

subject to DG COMM approval and budget availability.

These surveys will make it possible to evaluate overall trends in attitudes of European citizens towards the water, air and resource efficiency/SCP.

## **2. Ex-Post Evaluation**

DG ENV will carry out an external ex-post evaluation of its Communication Strategy.

Annex II: Indicative list of events in 2012

Annex III: Indicative list of publications 2012