

THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR ENLARGEMENT IN THE APPLICANT COUNTRIES

PROGRESS REPORT #2 [MARCH 2002]

The European Commission published in March 2002 its first report on the implementation of the communication strategy for Enlargement, covering the period since the launch of the strategy in May 2000. The report is available at http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/communication/pdf/explaining_enlargement.pdf.

The following is a monthly update of that report, covering [...] 2002. It lists the various activities carried out as part of the communication strategy for enlargement in the candidate countries, and provides background material, such as opinion polls. For more information on the situation of public opinion, please see the section on the enlargement web site at <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/opinion/>.

For more information on the activities of the Commission Delegations in the candidate countries, see [link to the new part of the “Who does what” section listing the individual delegations]

The DG Enlargement Information Team

The COMMUNICATION STRATEGY ON ENLARGEMENT

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This is the second regular monthly update of that report, including information from the candidate countries, as well as important background material, namely opinion polls. The period covered is the month of March 2002.

THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY IN CANDIDATE COUNTRIES - GENERAL

General Developments

☞ Increasingly information activities in the candidate countries focus on the **Convention on the future of Europe**. Thus a special section has been included for each country where such information activities took place.

What the polls say

- At the turn of February and March 2002 the effort of the **Czech Republic** for the integration process into the EU was supported by 59 % of Czechs; 25 % did not agree with it; and 16 % did not have a clear point of view. This is the result of an opinion poll conducted by the CVVM polling Institute.
- EMOR's monthly public opinion poll showed that support for the EU among **Estonia's** population has remained relatively stable, fluctuating between 54 and 59% in favour of accession. During the month of March, the support level remained constant at 59%.
- An opinion poll conducted in February showed a dramatic change in public opinion about **Latvia's** accession to the EU. For the first time since 1998 the number of those who would vote against the accession to the EU exceeded the number of those supporting accession.
- According to a poll conducted by Vilmorus the number of respondents who would vote in favour of **Lithuania's** accession to the EU has fallen to 49.2% (55% in February). 26% of the population would vote against the accession (cf. 20.8% in February).
- The February survey conducted by the polling agency CBOS in **Poland** indicates a trend of growing interest in EU-related issues: 64% of respondents declared their interest. However, the subjective assessment of being informed about the EU remains limited:

more than a half of respondents feel themselves poorly informed and only 8% - very well informed.

- EU membership for **Slovakia** is supported by 69 % of Slovakia's citizens while 24 % are against it shows a poll conducted between 1 and 11 March by the Public Opinion Research Department of the Statistics Office (UVVM).
- According to a poll realised for the GFK in **Turkey**, the percentage of people who would vote “yes” in a referendum was 69,8% in February.

Events and Creative Ideas

- The Delegation in **Estonia** will organise with the environmental NGO Estonian Fund for Nature (ELF) a three-day promotional event in Southern Estonia in the end of May 2002. The event consists of a three-day bike trip and two concerts.
- The Delegation in **Slovakia** is supporting TV spots, featuring well-known Slovak personalities and their views on the EU
- The Forum on the Future of Europe, the Slovene equivalent to the Convention, held its inauguration session in the Slovene Parliament on 11 April. The main role of the Forum is to provide an opportunity for the Slovene civil society, universities, trade unions, chamber of commerce and other associations to present their views on the future role of their respective institutions as well as the role **Slovenia** should play in the future EU.
- In a special competition involving elementary and secondary school children in **Turkey**, children were asked to draw their image of the EU and Turkish candidacy. Successful drawings were used in the 2001 New Year Calendar of the Delegation.

THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY BY COUNTRY

Bulgaria

- The government announced its communication strategy aiming to co-ordinate the existing institutions.

Public opinion

- According to a survey by GEPS, the EU is associated with high living standards for 85 % of Bulgarians. Yet, only few draw a connection between EU membership and a common value system. Bulgarians do not hold their government or society at large responsible for accession to the EU.

Media

- A contract was signed with TV Varna for the production of six documentaries on regional projects supported by the EU.

Publications

- A “FAQ” brochure was prepared.

Information Centre

- The EUIC director had numerous media presentations and gave a number of interviews.

Networking events

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Convention

- On 27 February the Bulgarian Parliament approved Bulgaria’s position in the debate on the future of the EU. The decision calls on the participants in the Convention to adopt stances guaranteeing that Bulgaria will complete its EU accession negotiations on the terms it started them.
- Live broadcasting of the opening of the Convention was hosted by the EUIC on 28 February. A wide audience attended.
- The opening of the Convention was marked by a new campaign of the EUIC as part of its strategy to popularise current EU activities.

Cyprus

During his visit to the island (7-8 March) Commissioner Verheugen gave a speech on Enlargement at a European Conference and visited the new European Information Centre at the Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce.

Public Opinion

- The release of the details of the EuroBarometer 2001 results for the candidate countries drew attention to the fact that Cypriots have more faith in their government and parliament than in any of the EU applicant country. Cyprus ranks higher than all the applicant countries in terms of wealth, which the EuroBarometer linked to the current life satisfaction in applicant countries.

The Czech Republic

- According to polls the percentage of citizens favouring EU accession has increased in comparison to the period of spring 2001 when it reached its lowest level.

Public opinion

- CVVM polling Institute found at the turn of February and March 2002 that the effort of the Czech Republic for the integration process into the EU was supported by 59 % of Czechs, 25 % did not agree with it and 16 % did not have a clear point of view.
- Further analysis of data showed, that the respondents who reject the integration of the Czech Republic into the EU are less willing to participate in a referendum (9 %) than are the supporters of membership.

Media

- The first “Press hour”, an informal meeting with journalists on different topics, was organised by the Delegation on March 7. The topic discussed was gender equality.
- Several Press conferences and Press lunches were organised.

Information Centre

- In total 7 lectures were provided for different groups of students, mostly on the enlargement process.
- Regular public seminars were held every Thursday. Lectures were given by “Team Europe” members on following topics: the Euro, trade unions and the EU, equal opportunities for men and women, social and economic impacts of the accession to the EU and the Barcelona European Council Summit results.

Networking events

- A career information day on conference interpreting organised by the Joint Interpreting and Conference Service (SCIC), Czech MFA and Translation Institute at the Charles University took place at the EUIC on March 20.
- A regional roundtable in Ceske Budejovice took place on 21 March.

Products

- Preparation continued of the Czech versions of several publications.
- New fact sheets on the EU Convention, eContent, eEurope & eLearning and ISPA projects in the Czech republic were produced.
- Following the publishing of *10 Years of Phare in Czech Republic* brochure, an exhibition *Phare Success Stories in the Czech Republic* is being prepared as a follow-up activity for better visibility of Phare.

Internet

- The use of the DEC-EUIC website is still growing with 33,401 hits in March.

Convention

- Czech Convention members Jan Kavan and Josef Zieleniec demanded that candidate countries have a representative in the Presidium of the Convention. Kavan said that one government representative and one national parliament representative from candidate countries should be represented in the Presidium, while Zieleniec said he would be satisfied with one representative from the parliament of each candidate country in the Convention.

Estonia

Public opinion

- EMOR's monthly public opinion poll showed that support for the EU among Estonia's population has remained relatively stable, fluctuating between 54 and 59% in favour of accession. During the month of March, the support level remained constant at 59%.
- Over two thirds of the respondents to the EMOR survey claim there is not enough information on the EU and 58% say it is too complicated. However, 54% of respondents say they could easily get the necessary information if they wanted to. EU-related issues of most interest to voting age citizens are the lifestyle of normal people and wages/salaries in the EU. The Delegation is using the results of the survey in preparing its new information and communication programme.
- For the first time in recent years the support of Russian-speakers for EU accession is now significantly below the support rate among ethnic Estonians - support among the Russian-speaking population fell from 57% in favour of EU accession in December-January to 47% in February-March.

Media

- On 19 March the Delegation issued a press release on the officially published results of the EuroBarometer survey that was conducted in October 2001. The survey showed that Estonians are predominantly pro-EU but claim they have insufficient information about it.
- On 20 March, the Delegation issued a press release about the annual conference for EU information providers organised by the EU Information Centre. The release attracted a lot of media interest and the event was covered in the main news programs.
- On 8 April, a press release was issued in which the Delegation expressed its conviction that Estonia will become a net beneficiary from the EU budget after its accession to the Union. The press release came as a response to an Austrian study quoted in the Estonian press, which claimed that the new entrants to the Union would be paying more than they would receive from the EU budget during their first years of membership.
- Estonia's largest commercial TV station, TV3, started airing a popular family quiz show devoted to the EU and its Member States on 24 March. The programme has an "infotainment" angle, where information is combined with entertainment.

Internet

- The Estonian / English re-designed Delegation website will be re-launched by 9 May.

Networking

- The Delegation, EUIC and LIC concluded successful negotiations with the prominent environmental NGO Estonian Fund for Nature (ELF) for organising a three-day promotional event in Southern Estonia in the end of May 2002. The event consists of a three-day bike trip and two concerts.

Products

- The EUIC released 4 weekly electronic newsletters called *European Union This Week*. The Newsletter is mailed weekly to over 3,500 recipients, including national and local politicians, the government sector, NGOs, entrepreneurs and the major media channels.

Events

- The annual one-day conference was held on 21 March, bringing together all EU information distributors in Estonia. The topic was *Preparations for the pre-referendum period*, which served as a kick-off seminar on this subject in Estonia.
- The first event of the Europe Days series took place on 4-5 April in Narva, Ida-Viru County, and was organised by the EUIC in close co-operation with the French Embassy and the Ida-Viru County Government.

Information Centre

- The EUIC continued preparations for the regional *Europe Days 2002* with several EU member state embassies and regional co-operation partners.
- A lecture was held on 10 March on the topic of Estonia-EU relations for the Estonian Teachers Association.
- Two lectures were held on EU information sources for students on 20 March and 12 April.

Convention

- The Deputy Speakers Tunne Kelam of the opposition's Pro Patria Union and Peeter Kreitzberg of the coalition's Centre Party will represent Estonia in the Convention on the Future of Europe until the Riigikogu is able to elect its representatives to the Convention.

Hungary

Public Opinion Polls

- The Open Society Institute in co-operation with the Central European University and the Eotvos Lorant University of Sciences are planning to conduct a poll focusing on the issues stemming from the prospect of joining to the European Union.

Information Events

- The Centre continued to organise its weekly “Euro-Wednesdays”. During February 3 school groups from secondary schools participated in an afternoon information session on the Euro, including a video introduction and an interactive part with games.
- The Centre organised a lecture on consumer protection in Hungary. It was the first of the monthly series *Let's talk about Europe* dealing with subjects attracting a broader public. The first three events will all focus on consumer issues. The Centre co-operates with experts from administrations and other organisations in this matter.
- IC staff participated in various conferences and information events, among others a meeting of Hungarian Information Points, meetings with target groups (Trade Unions and Pensioners) and a meeting for librarians.

Convention

- Staff of the EUIC gave a speech on the convention on the Future of Europe on 8 March in Miskolc.

Latvia

Public Opinion

- An opinion poll conducted in February showed a dramatic change in public opinion about Latvia's accession to the EU. For the first time since 1998 the number of those who would vote against the accession to the EU exceeded the number of those supporting accession. Only 36% support Latvia's accession to the EU, 42,6% would have voted against accession and 21,4% are still undecided. This compares to 43,2% for, 31,2% against and 25,6% undecided in November.
- Many analysts agree that these changes have appeared due to the proposals published by the European Commission for the financing of agriculture in candidate countries after accession. These proposals were published in the very end of January thus immediately before the poll was conducted.

Information events

- The EUIC participated in the Baltic Book Fair 2002 (7-10 March). Mostly secondary school students, teachers and librarians, visited the information stand of the EUIC. Some 4000 visitors were listed. Besides distribution of information material numerous discussions were held with visitors of the information stand.
- A Regional Information day in Liepaja has taken place in March. An event in Liepaja Marine College has gathered many pupils, teachers and representatives from the Liepaja Naturalisation Board as well as NGO's.
- The Head of Delegation visited the Kurzeme region (Kuldīga and Kandava).

- A number of EU information days were organised, mainly for students from schools outside Riga.

Products

- It was decided to prepare short fact sheets about all negotiation chapters explaining the EU policy in respective sectors and explaining Latvia's situation.

Information Centre

- A seminar on the topic *What Kind of Information is Needed* took place on 19 March. Representatives from EU Information points, governments and NGO's have participated. Main TV channels have covered this seminar in their news programs.
- The EUIC has established very good relations with radio *Doma laukums* – the National Radio channel broadcasting in Russian. This radio channel is broadcasting every Friday a programme devoted to EU affairs called *Virziens Eiropa* (Direction Europe). The director of the EUIC is a regular guest of this programme informing about the public information programme activities, discussing EU affairs.

Lithuania

Public opinion

- According to a poll conducted by Vilmorus the number of respondents who would vote in favour of Lithuania's accession to the EU has fallen to 49.2% (55% in February). 26% of the population would vote against the accession (20.8% in February). Vilmorus experts argue that the Commission's financial proposal and the decommissioning problem have most probably caused the substantial change in public opinion.
- According to a poll conducted by the Bank of Lithuania in February, 61% of directors of companies in the main Lithuanian cities gave a positive evaluation to the litas re-pegging to the Euro. 52% of respondents stated they had prepared well for this transition, 31% had been more or less prepared and 17% had been unprepared.
- Preparations for a wide-scale research on public opinion have started. Consultations took place with Government institutions and experts.

Media

- A joint project with the Public Radio is going on. Short inserts, including some aimed at the Russian-speaking public, are being aired on a weekly basis.
- Joint projects with the regional radio stations in Alytus and Mazeikiai are continued. They produce weekly programmes on EU matters.
- 12 regional journalists went for a study visit to the EU institutions in Luxembourg and Brussels - the third group to do so.

- The Delegation continues co-operation with the *INFOBALT*, Association of Information Technology, Telecommunications and Office Equipment Companies of Lithuania.

Information Events

- A Seminar and an opening of an exhibition took place in Ukmerge (70 km from Vilnius) on 10 April. This was one of the series of seminars for librarians working in public libraries that belong to the so-called EU Information Network developed by the Delegation and the Government.
- During the second part of the seminar, local government representatives, farmers and NGOs were invited to listen to two lectures. The first covered general issues related to the EU accession, the second issues of agriculture related to the EU accession. After the seminar an exhibition of books on the EU was opened.
- The Head of Delegation gave welcome speeches to two seminars – in Klaipėda and Vilnius – for businessmen on lobbying in the EU, relations with EU institutions and lobbying in the Commission organised by the Eurochambers together with the Lithuanian Chambers of Commerce.
- On 4 April a conference entitled Eurobusiness, organised by the European Committee under the Government and the International School of Management, took place in Vilnius. Over 300 businessmen participated.

Internet

- The Delegation's new website was launched on <http://www.eudel.lt/>. There were two types of information included: a) material prepared in a centralised way, b) original material prepared either by a hired expert or by Delegation staff. Special attention was given to the section in which EU support programmes (Phare, ISPA, and SAPARD) are covered.

Products

- The Delegation's Infocentre produces the weekly electronic newsletter e-Zinios, which includes information from various sources. The target audience is Government, media, academic circles, etc. The number of recipients increased significantly.

Information Centre

- The Information Centre was involved in many activities mentioned above.

Other information activities

- A seminar for regional journalists on corruption was organised by the Phare project. The *Special Investigation Service* presented their plan for fighting corruption.
- The Government has opened an information telephone line, where each citizen can call toll free and inquire about Lithuania's accession to the EU.

Convention

The Lithuanian media continues to devote permanent attention to the European Convention. Participation of representatives of Lithuania, their interviews, comments by journalists are frequently heard or read in the media.

Malta

Public Opinion

- A quarterly survey carried out on behalf of the government by MISCO in February showed that EU membership is viewed as more important than the outcome of the next general election due to be held by January 2004.
- The survey shows that a total of 55% would vote in favour of EU membership in a referendum, 36% would vote against, 6% were undecided and 3% would not vote.
- The EuroBarometer survey for Malta in 2001 showed that 40% would vote in favour of membership in a referendum. Regarding the question of how well informed they felt about the enlargement, 36% replied very well/well informed whilst 62% replied not very well/not at all 62%.

Media

- Meetings were held with the producers from the main TV stations to gauge interest in using material generated by the DGs in Brussels in news and current affairs programmes.
- A briefing lunch was held with the editors of the Malta Times, The Malta Independent, L'Orizzont and In-Nazzjon.

Internet

- The website has also seen significant development. The response to the website has been very positive. The staff of the Delegation and visiting Officials has made numerous presentations at locally organised events.

Information Events

- A large number of information activities have been supported. The activities have been divided into five categories: delegation activities, civil society, institutional support, business community and technical assistance.
- Eleven initiatives have been supported in the area of civil society. The beneficiaries have been the National Council of Women, the National Youth Council and the UHM Union.
- Six initiatives have been supported in the area of institutional support. A major beneficiary in this area has been the Malta-EU Information Centre with three initiatives supported.
- Four initiatives involving the business community have been supported.

Products

- The development of the two principle elements of the information strategy, i.e. the Delegation Newsletter and the website continued during the period.

Information Centre

- There is no Commission supported Information Centre in Malta. However, the Malta-EU Info Centre (MIC) a body funded by the Maltese Government has the task to promote the EU. MIC undertakes a wide range of information activities in all branches of the media and through the organisation of local events.

Convention

- Opposition leader Alfred Sant delivered his first speech to the Convention, spelling out the Labour's policy on relations with the EU, which can be described as partnership not membership.

Poland

Public Opinion

- The February survey conducted by the polling agency CBOS indicates a trend of growing interest in EU-related issues: 64% of respondents declared their interest. However, the subjective assessment of being informed about the EU remains limited: more than a half of respondents feel themselves poorly informed and only 8% - very well informed.
- At the same time, only 19% of Poles think that Poland should enter the EU as soon as possible while 57% believe this should happen only after Poland is able to take full advantage of the benefits of membership.
- Perception of relations between Poland and the EU have worsened recently. Only 5 % of respondents state that Poland gains more than the EU Member States from enlargement, almost every fifth describes the relations as bilaterally profitable and 59 % claim that the EU Member States not Poland will profit from Polish accession. Farmers are still the strongest opponents to a Polish membership in the EU. 79 % maintain that Member States benefit more the Poland would.

Research and measurement

- A search has been conducted with the help of the *list of main events in the regions of Poland planned for 2002* for co-organisation of Europe days this May, June and July. The pre-selection of 8 events has already been concluded. All of the pre-selected events are cultural or historical festivities or theme events, attracting a wide audience.

Media

- A Press conference, meeting and reception was organised in the context of the visit of Patrick Cox, President of the European Parliament.

- The media covered extensively the official stance on Poland's EU integration published by the Catholic Church in the document *Polish bishops on European integration of Poland*. Although cautious, the church sent a clear pro-EU message.

Information events/programmes

- Meetings with partners were held and preparations launched for several projects. These were e.g. a TV Euro-quiz (for secondary school students), inserts in the daily *Trybuna* and weekly *Tygodnik Solidarnosc*, a series in the Agricultural TV, a series of programs in *Sygnaly Dnia* (Polish Radio), *Union's borders* - a programme of regional Radio ZacHead of Delegation and Radio Bialystok
- The Schuman days, including a parade, information stands and several discussion groups and conferences on European issues will be organised by the Schuman Foundation, with whom a grant contract was signed.

Internet

- The Delegation's Website has been updated in Polish as well as in English at <http://www.europa.delpol.pl/> Under the heading *Programmes*, new pages have been created on NGOs and the EU with all relevant documents related to ACCESS and SPF (in Poland and in general).

Products

- The titles of new fact sheets and brochures have been given to qualified authors.

Info Point

- IP staff held 19 presentations during the month of March, among which presentations on enlargement and on the euro for a school in Czechowice, on furthering of integration in Radosc, and on Regional Policy at the Higher School of Business and Marketing. Five presentations were held at Europe-related events outside the Info Point.

Convention

- In their March survey CBOS shows that only 28 % of those surveyed have heard about the Convention on the future of Europe.
- Polish participants to the Convention, Minister Hübner, senator Wittbrod and local bishop Gocłowski were the main speakers at the second meeting within the *Forum Together in Europe* on 15 April. Media underlined that the audience was much more interested in current problems related to the pre-accession process than in the main theme of the debate, which was the future of Europe.

Romania

Public Opinion

- A debate with the media on 19 March entitled *Romanians perception over the European integration process*, based on full results of the EuroBarometer for applicant countries, was organised by the EC Delegation. Main conclusions were that Romanians are enthusiastic about accession, although they lack information, they have a good image about the European Union and they trust European institutions more than national ones.

Media

- The Head of Delegation gave interviews to *Europa FM* (17 March), the *Diplomatic Club* (monthly newspaper, late March), *Frontiera* (border police monthly magazine, March issue).
- During the second half of March a debate on the full results of the EuroBarometer was launched by the Delegation and taken up in the media.

Information events

- Information material was provided for the *Euro and Romania* Conference, taking place on 15 March, organised by the Academy for Economic Studies in Romania. The EC Delegation made a presentation on the impact for Romania of the introduction of the Euro.
- Mailing of the new released leaflet *10 Questions about the Euro* continued with sending the product to 402 addressees.

Networking

- The Head of Delegation attended the regional SAPARD-conference at Satu Mare. In Baia-Mare the focus was on more sensitive issues such as child protection and pollution matters at Romplumb SA. A debate took place with representatives of the civil society in Baia-Mare.

Internet

- 2, 711,336 hits were registered on the Website and 15, 518 visits. Most downloaded files were *Twinning Sapard*, *YOUTH User Guide-685* and *ISPA in Romania*.

Products

- A list of titles under the series *EU themes* was decided for publication.
- An Info Kiosk was installed in the Info Centre.

Information Centre

- The lunch of the funded *Comment enseigner l'Europe* took place at the *Institut Francais* of Bucharest on 11 March.

- A presentation of IC information activities was organised for librarians following a professional training programme on 18 March.
- Following the publication of detailed EuroBarometer results, media attended a roundtable debate with opinion leaders and the Head of Delegation on 19 March.

Convention

- On 6 March *Synergy Communication* and the *European Institute of Romania* organised a debate on the report *Thinking enlarged* prepared in the context of the Europe-wide debate on the Future of Europe. The debate focused on the identification and definition of Romania's views on the future of Europe.

Slovakia

- A current priority is raising of awareness about the importance of September's parliamentary elections for the successful and timely completion of the accession process. The Delegation's contribution to the "GO TO VOTE!" Campaign consists of TV spots targeted at young people who are generally highly motivated and supportive of EU membership. The basic concept is to present well-known Slovak personalities who professionally and personally succeed in the EU, thereby demonstrating a successful example of the free movement of persons, labour etc. The Delegation will co-ordinate with other partners in the campaign to ensure adequate presentation of EU matters on Slovak State Television as well as the private *Markiza TV*.

Public Opinion

- The EU membership of Slovakia is supported by 69 % of Slovakia's citizens while 24 % are against it, shows a poll conducted between 1 and 11 March by the Public Opinion Research Department of the Statistics Office (UVVM). Support for Slovakia's integration in the European Union is the highest since 1995, the early March poll suggests.
- Regarding information about Slovakia's admission into the EU, 45 % of respondents regard it as sufficient while 38 % see it as insufficient. Almost three-quarters of respondents lack information on benefits from Slovakia's integration and 58 % would welcome more information on disadvantages resulting from the membership.

Media

- An introductory press conference of Ambassador and Head of Delegation Eric van der Linden took place on 14 March 2002.
- The monthly TV programme *Ciel Europa* co-produced with the Slovak State Television was broadcast on 3 March 2002. The programme featured the Financing of Enlargement and the visit of Commissioner Wallström to Slovakia.
- The weekly *TREND* business newspapers published the first two supplements (double newspaper page – 12 standard pages) with analytical and impact studies of EU instruments, policies and negotiating chapters.

Regional information events

- *The Europe Information Day* (EID) in Skalica on 12 March included a lecture for secondary school pupils and teachers from the Skalica region (120 participants), a meeting with regional NGOs (32 participants), a meeting with representatives of regional media (11 participants) and a lecture for secondary school teachers.
- The *Youth Information Centre in Poprad* operates the European Information Centre in the district capital Poprad (High Tatras region). EIC Poprad has been established with financial and logistical assistance of the Delegation. The Centre provides to its visitors free access to EU publications and to Internet resources.
- The *Europe Information Day* in Zvolen included a lecture for secondary school pupils and teachers from the Zvolen region (90 participants), a meeting with regional NGOs (47 participants), a meeting with regional media (9 participants) and a lecture at the University of Matej Bell in Banska Bystrica (100 participants). In total, 250 people participated.

Convention

- The National Convention on the European Future of Slovakia was set up in May 2001. It is composed of representatives of the parliamentary political parties, academic circles, churches, interest groups, trade unions, municipalities and regions as well as non-governmental organisations.
- The third meeting of the National Convention on the European Future of Slovakia took place on 4 March after the inaugural meeting of the Convention on the Future of the European Union.

Slovenia

Public Opinion

- A monthly Politbarometer, a survey carried out by the Centre for Public Opinion Research of the Faculty of Social Sciences, showed that public support for Slovenia's EU accession slightly dropped in March. 48% of those polled would vote 'yes' in a referendum (48.6% in February) and 33,3% would vote 'no' (32.5% in February), with 19,7% undecided.

Media

- The Delegation issued three Press Releases in March relating to several of its activities.
- On the occasion of the presentation of the credentials to President Kučan, the new Head of Delegation gave several individual interviews.
- The visit of the Director General of DG MARKT was used as an opportunity for two individual interviews (*Finance and TV Slovenia*). The Communication Team members continued with the regular co-operation with the Ljubljana-based TV Pika.

Information Events

- A briefing on the Commission's Agricultural Study for agricultural journalists took place on 22 March.
- In Kočevje a Town Hall Meeting, comprising a public debate on the EU with the Head of Information Section and Slovenian Deputy EU negotiator (on 6 March) and the official opening of the Delegation's Regional Information Corner in Kočevje took place.
- The Press Officer gave a lecture for students of the University of Ljubljana on the Commission's Enlargement Communication Strategy and the role of the Delegation.
- The Regional Information Officer gave a general lecture on the EU at the library in Krško and Kočevje.

Internet

- The Internet page of the Delegation and Center Evropa continues to attract visitors. A few minor modifications have been undertaken in the structure of the web page and the Delegation's section on www.evropska-unija.si received a facelift.

Products

- e@Evropa, a biweekly electronic newsletters was sent to around 500 recipients and made available on www.evropska-unija.si.

Information Centre

- Four *European Wednesdays* were organised on immigration in the EU, the presentation of the *Culture 2000* programme, measures to prevent money laundering in the EU and on the Information Sources of the EU.
- In co-operation with the Irish Embassy in Slovenia Center Evropa hosted the so-called Irish Week in Center Evropa and organised a successful Irish evening to mark St. Patrick's Day.
- The Delegation and Center Evropa hosted a one-day seminar for the Information Officer at the Delegations' Information Corners and joint Information Corners with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry on 4 March.
- Center Evropa has taken an active part in the implementation of this year's project and is now planning the final event within the *Europe at school* initiative.

Convention

- Several meetings have taken place with the Slovene representatives in the Convention on the future of Europe and the Task Force to plan joint public events.
- The Forum on the Future of Europe, the Slovene contribution to the Convention, held its inauguration session in the Slovene Parliament on 11 April. The main role of the Forum is

to provide an opportunity for the Slovene civil society to present its views on the future role of respective institutions in the EU.

Turkey

Public opinion

- According to a poll realised for the GFK, the percentage of people who would vote yes in a referendum on accession was 69,8% in February.

Media

- Support was given to local initiatives promoting the knowledge of the Euro promotion campaign

Internet

- Information on the assessment of Turkey's progress in Acquis chapters from the 2000 Regular Report is prepared separately for each sector of the Website.
- The legal texts page is updated with the new regulation on financial assistance to Turkey.
- The EU Secretariat General website provides information on EU – Turkey relations; general news on the developments in the EU; EU/Turkey and financial co-operation and different documents concerning EU/Turkey relations.

Products

- A special children's competition was designed as an information project in co-operation with the eleven EU information relays and the General Directorates of Ministry of Education in the cities where the relays are set up. Elementary and secondary school children were asked to draw their image of the EU and Turkish candidacy. These pictures were used for the annual calendar.
- The EU Secretariat General published an electronic monthly EU news bulletin for the last four months. The January issue includes news on e.g. EU Laeken Summit, statistics on other candidate countries, latest situation of negotiations carried out by the Candidate Countries.

Convention

- One of the major goals of the newly defined communication strategy is to stimulate the Turkish debate on Future of Europe and raise awareness of the participation of Turkey in the Convention.