

Core Group Meeting 18 April 2007

Minutes

Date: 18.04.2007
Meeting venue: DG Environment,
Avenue de Beaulieu 5
Brussels

Attendants:

Core Group Members: Gerald Fleming (Ireland), Martin Hedberg (Sweden), Jaroslaw Kret (Poland), Tomas Molina (Spain), Marina Raibaldi (France), John Teather (the United Kingdom)

The European Commission: Nicolas Hanley, Renita Bhaskar, Carina Vopel, Katarzyna Wolos

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the objectives, tasks, organisational structure, roles (of the network, the Core Group, the President) and the scope of the co-operation between the network and the European Commission.

1. Round-table discussion on the character of the network

Nicholas Hanley welcomed the Core Group members. The summary of media coverage following the conference of 16 February 2007 was circulated.

John Teather raised a question whether it is the Commission's intention to create a purely European entity or membership of weather broadcasters from outside Europe is also foreseen. Nicholas Hanley replied that in the first phase, the objectives of the network should be established and the network should consolidate internally, but since climate change obviously has international dimension, in future a collaboration with partners from outside Europe may be considered (e.g. they could be invited to attend the Annual Meetings etc.). This was however primarily a question for decision by the network members rather than by the Commission.

Nicholas Hanley recalled a question that was posed during the conference of 16 February 2007 whether an entirely new network should be created or should there be some synergies with existing networks/organisations (such as International Association of Broadcast Meteorology, European Meteorological Society or Forum International de la Meteo). He stressed that the Commission was looking for synergies with these networks and would like to develop a concept of partnership with other organisations rather than creating competition with existing entities.

After an intense debate over this it was decided that the network should be made up of both individuals that do not belong to any existing organisations acting in the field of meteorology across Europe and members belonging to these organisations.

Regarding the communication tasks of the network Marina Raibaldi stressed there is a need of developing 2 approaches – one towards the professionals and experts and the second towards the broad public. Addressing the same issue, Gerald Fleming indicated that it deserved a deeper consideration as some excellent scientists might not be good communicators.

John Teather raised the issue of funding. Martin Hedberg commented that this was not the most important aspect and gave the example of the IPCC. Nicholas Hanley stated that within the budgetary constraints the European Commission can provide support to the network and its secretariat by financing the Core Group meetings, the work of the secretariat and by contributing to the costs of the Annual Meetings.

2. Charter of the network

The objective of the network, its operational remit, roles of the network, the Core Group and the President, organisational aspects, tasks of the secretariat are described in the revised Charter of the Climate Broadcasters Network - Europe.

3. Cooperation with the Commission

Carina Vopel specified the role and tasks of the secretariat in supporting the work of the network, Core Group and President. The importance of the website to be created for the network was underlined – it was agreed that it would be a tool for exchanging good practices and examples of actions taken by the members in order to meet the objective of the network (participants agreed that network members will be sending video materials, articles, links that document their activities and these materials would be placed on the website). Photos of the network members, links to their websites should be also available on this website. Martin Hedberg suggested that it would be a good idea if network members wishing to do so could have links to their blogs incorporated into the network's website. Carina Vopel confirmed that this was possible.

Renita Bhaskar provided the participants with information on the Climate Change Awareness Raising Campaign which will continue during the course of 2007 and 2008. She explained the main emphasis will be put on countries which so far have not developed major awareness raising programmes towards combating climate change, such as Poland, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria.

Renita Bhaskar gave an overview of various activities of DG Environment, which could be seen as opportunities for co-operation between the network and the European Commission. The flagship events of DG Environment, such as Green Week (organised every year in June), Mobility Week (also a yearly event taking place in September) were mentioned, as well as other initiatives (e.g. European Union Sustainable Energy Week organised by DG Transport and Energy). Renita Bhaskar also informed that the Commission had its Representations in Member States, which could also be used in promoting initiatives and actions of the network.

The Commission offers a support to the network members by providing them with the materials that have been created within the context of the Climate Change Campaign (postcards, posters, brochures, other promotional materials); there is also a possibility for the members of the network to receive short video materials on climate change (available in DVD and Beta Cam formats). Jaroslaw Kret underlined the importance of a thorough debate on how

these resources could be used in the most efficient way by the network members and suggested that members could exchange information how they use the materials, so the best examples could be followed.

5. Network Membership

Referring to the admission of new members, Renita Bhaskar stressed that the first priority is to consolidate the network and then seek to increase membership if required. She also added that in the first instance the network should try to use the potential of participants of the 'Communicating Climate Change' Conference of 16 February 2007, who have sufficient credentials to create an important and influential entity, rather than extending membership. To increase the number of members should not be the first priority for the network.

Carina Vopel also supported the statement and said that the network should first gain a 'critical mass' and only after achieving some tangible results it should seek for co-operation with other networks/organisations.

4. Administrative aspects and final remarks

Core Group members voted to elect an interim President who will hold office until the first Annual Meeting, during which the President will be elected by the members of the network. Martin Hedberg and Tomas Molina received an equal number of votes and thus both of them will act as interim Presidents until the election of the President at the Annual Meeting 2008 by general membership. The co-Presidents will send a letter to participants of the 'Communicating Climate Change' Conference of 16 February 2007 in order to formally invite them to become members of the Network.

The next Core Group meeting will be organised in September or October.

The meeting ended with presentations of some good examples of the actions that have already been taken by some of the Network's members as a follow-up to the 'Communicating Climate Change' Conference.