

**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology

Cooperation
Stakeholders

Brussels, 8 March 2013

Subject: Meeting minutes: Young Advisors Expert Group on implementation of the Digital Agenda for Europe, Brussels, 4 - 5 March 2013

The Young Advisors Expert Group held its first meeting in Brussels on 4-5 March. On 4 March in the morning, the Young Advisors met with Vice-President Neelie Kroes and officials of DG CONNECT. The Young Advisors also participated in the Grand Coalition conference "Filling the gaps: e-Skills and Education for Digital Jobs" which took place on 4 March (afternoon) and 5 March 2013 in Brussels.

This report covers the operational meeting with DG CONNECT and VP Kroes on 4 March 2013.

1. WORKING TOGETHER, DG CONNECT AND YOUNG ADVISORS

Linda Corugedo Steneberg (LCS, chair) informed the Young Advisors about last year's reorganisation of DG CONNECT and the goal to further engage with stakeholders. She outlined thematic priorities within the Digital Agenda for Europe. She further drew Young Advisors' attention to other fora, such as the Connect Advisory Forum (CAF), Digital Champions, "going local" initiatives, and encouraged them to establish links with these fora. In terms of the year ahead, LCS highlighted a number of major events for DG CONNECT – notably, the Girls in ICT Day (25 April in Brussels), Digital Agenda Assembly (19 – 20 June in Dublin) and the ICT 2013 Event (6 - 8 November 2013 in Vilnius) which would be of particular interest to Young Advisors.

Antoaneta Angelova-Krasteva (AAK) presented the new Stakeholders Unit, its role in engaging with stakeholders and some concrete activities, in particular Digital Champions, Women in ICT, Corporate Social Responsibility. She further provided the Young Advisors with practical information (website etc.) about their future work.

During the follow up discussion, the following points were raised:

- Reimbursement of experts participating in Commission's expert groups – COM explained that the rules and procedures for the activities of the group, including the rules for reimbursement, are set in the Terms of Reference. No further comments on Terms of Reference were made.

- Impact of the recent MFF deal at the European Council on DG CONNECT's priorities (broadband rollout, cloud computing, support to new entrepreneurs, jobs/skills mismatch, cyber-security)
- Update on the copyright framework reform – COM outlined the initiative for setting up a structured stakeholder dialogue and noted that this topic might be of particular interest to YA
- Role of the Connect Advisory Forum (CAF) in detail and possibilities for interaction between the two groups
- Horizon 2020 and new modalities of access to finance, in particular to small and medium sized enterprises

2. MEETING WITH VICE-PRESIDENT NEELIE KROES

VP Kroes encouraged Young Advisors to provide her and the Commission with input and ideas that by definition are not part of our daily routine. She asked them to reflect on i) what in their view could be done from Brussels within the given timeframe (until the end of the Commission's mandate), and ii) positive and negative developments in the policy so far.

In the discussion, the following views were expressed:

- **Education** needs to adapt and become more flexible. Informal learning spaces and processes should be promoted. E-learning should be recognised. Several Young Advisors questioned the usefulness of certification of e-skills and were of the view that this practice should be abandoned. There has to be a link (match) between local industry needs and educational offer. The Commission should promote ICT in the curricula at primary and secondary education, and even earlier. However, at present not many indicators are available that would allow the measurement of just how digital schools in the EU actually are.
- **Jobs/skills mismatch:** It is likely that there will be 700,000 – 1 million ICT vacancies by 2015 unless more is done. Consequences for European industry and European competitiveness more generally are clear. VP Kroes highlighted the objectives of the Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs, noting that change cannot happen (anymore) in a step-by-step manner. Action is needed now.
- **Women in ICT:** One of the necessary conditions to address this mismatch is to encourage more girls to opt for ICT education/careers.
- **Entrepreneurship:** Education developing entrepreneurship spirit should be encouraged. Access to finance is crucial. At present, it is still problematic for SMEs to finance their R&D projects from structural funds, because of their administrative capacity. Also difficult to comply with conditions set by banks (guarantee issue etc.), which is even more difficult when you are considered "under-aged". New methods of financing under Horizon 2020 were discussed. A completed and truly functioning Single Market would help. Further incentives to cooperate in Europe (venture capital) need to be

created. Tax competition among Member States is an issue. However, the Commission's competences in fiscal area are limited.

- **Need to act locally, deal with local problems and listen to all range of voices (not only big companies)**
- **Concrete initiatives:** Several Young Advisors presented their concrete projects – e.g. the Green Light for Girls project on involving women in ICT (Mercedes Diaz Sanchez), citizen science (influenza surveillance (Vittoria Colizza), experience with establishing start-ups and operating in different countries. The Digital Champion of Romania - Paul-André Baran also presented his activities, in particular his work on connecting public libraries to the internet in rural areas and on a project to help farmers find new markets for their products via the web for their products. He suggested that Young Advisors and Digital Champions closely interact and mutually cooperate on specific topics in their respective areas or countries.

VP Kroes invited the Young Advisors to work together on an article along the theme "creating new vision of education", which could be then published in national newspapers.

3. GRAND COALITION FOR GROWTH AND JOBS CONFERENCE

On 4 March (in the afternoon) and 5 March, the Young Advisors took part in the Grand Coalition for Growth and Jobs Conference. They attended different workshops and plenaries bringing the young generation perspective into the debates.

<http://www.filling-the-gaps.eu>

4. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

- Draft a joint article on education – the Young Advisors have to send their ideas to CNECT/D4 which will liaise with the Cabinet of VP Kroes.
- The next meeting should take place in the not-too-distant future and in a more participatory and interactive environment.
- In the meantime, discussions will continue using social media.

Participants:

Young Advisors: Vittoria Colizza, Julie Cullen, Renata Danieliene, Christos Demetriades, Mercedes Diaz Sanchez, Gabriel Dragomir, Alberto Elias, Janne Elevelid, Bruno Ferreira, Jordan Hatch, Alja Isakovic, Luis Ivan Cuende, Ieva Jonaityte, Efrastios Kehayas, Tobias Martens, Nico Perez, Maria Prekopova, Vassil Terziev, Gyula Vamosi, Karlien Vanden Eynde,

Observers: Mariann Unterluggauer, Chris Conder

Commission: Vice President Neelie Kroes

Peter Power, Jack Schickler - Members of VP Kroes Cabinet

Linda Corugedo Steneberg (Director D), Antoaneta Angelova Krasteva (Head of Unit D4), Dana Kovarikova, Alexandre Rogalski (Unit D4), Peter Chloupek (Unit D3) – DG CONNECT

Apologies:

Young Advisors: Anna Mazgal, Lucie Jagu, Keimpe de Heer, Christian Lanng, Federico Morello.

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