

Your Europe Editorial Board Meeting

20-21 February 2014

MINUTES

20 February

Venue: *DG Enterprise & Industry, avenue d'Auderghem 45, 1040 Brussels, room 12/A*

Welcome by Heads of Unit of ENTR.D2 and MARKT.B1

ENTR introduced the new members of the Your Europe Business (YEB) team, mentioned the migration of the YEB content to Your Europe content management system (Your Europe Syndication Tool – YEST), and the 2014 plans, in particular the revamp of the national content of YEB.

MARKT presented shortly Your Europe Advice and Solvit, and encouraged the EB members to exploit synergies with the representatives of these networks during the evening event.

Your Europe Action Plan for better information – state of play

DG MARKT and DG ENTR updated the EB on the progress in implementing Your Europe Action Plan:

- Filling the gaps: based on feedback from users, Europe Direct and other intermediaries. In particular on YEC, travel section is being updated with information on travel documents, where input from EB will be needed. Also information will be added on Energy labels from the consumer's perspective. On YEB, information on standards will be added.
- Synergies are being explored with other portals, such as Eures, e-Justice, Immigration portal. Whenever possible, YE team will obtain national information from other Commission services, to unburden the EB.
- User satisfaction:
 - o User surveys and feedback:
 - based on one conducted on YEB in the last quarter of 2013 (over 1600 responses), the vast majority of YEB visitors are satisfied with the portal and with the information it provides. The majority of users are either owners of or employees in companies (predominantly small and medium).
 - According to preliminary results of an online survey currently on-going on YEC, the users' satisfaction remains at a very high level and has even slightly increased compared to a previous survey.
 - An improved feedback form has been implemented on YEC (YEB will follow soon). Feedback on YEC has already increased with this new tool;

- A study on usability and accessibility commissioned by MARKT is underway. Among others, the consultant is requested to propose ideas for a common YEB+YEC homepage and for improved cross-navigation between two sections of the portal.
- Work on virtual assistant will start soon;
- Mobile version of YEB will be available soon.
- Engaging with users:
 - Improved links to social media from YE;
 - EB members requested to connect to YE on social media;
 - Plans to make relevant public consultations available through YE;
- Both the European Parliament (report voted in Plenary session on 27/2) and the Council in its Conclusions of December 2013 welcomes the Commission's Action Plan to boost the Your Europe portal and invites the Member States to provide the necessary information about relevant rules and procedures on the national portals, so that it can be linked to or syndicated from and to YE.
- Promoting YE to its end users: YE team thanked those EB members who provided information on their promotional activities and linked to YE from their national sites.

YE has almost 6.5 million visitors in 2013 (compared to almost 4.3 million in 2012).

Your Europe Business: plans for 2014

- 1) Presentation of the new team and their tasks – YEB team has switched from working with an external contractor to in-house consultants;
- 2) Follow-up to the revamp of the EU content: minor bugs fixed, links to “related pages” (both on YEB and YEC) added, a form to contact directly the relevant Enterprise Europe Network's partner added;
- 3) Gathered feedback: from user tests (some recommendations already implemented), online exit survey, Europe Direct consultants.
- 4) 2014 plans:
 - Closer cooperation with other DGs to fill content gaps;
 - Close cooperation with the Commission's web rationalisation team, to possibly take over some relevant content;
 - Closer cooperation with Europe Direct, Points of Single Contact, Enterprise Europe Network;

- SEO and promotion;
- Migration to YEST to be completed by May; as a result both sections of YE will use the same technology.
- Technical enhancements: mobile view coming soon and improved feedback form to be implemented by March.
- Revamp of the national content, section by section – starting with “Start & grow” section:
 - Will start sending questionnaires to EB in June 2014;
 - Which topics require national information: input from EB needed;

National information via YEST (Your Europe Support Tool)

MARKT reminded that YEST is a content management system custom-made for YE which enables to provide national content via:

- 1) web forms to be filled in with content - whenever complete, good quality content is available on national portals:
 - first exercise launched for the Residence section of YEC: 3 countries (FR, LI and IT) completed all the forms so far (Deadline: end of February 2014)
- 2) deep links to be included in a structured page - where good quality content exists on national portals and matches the information required for Your Europe
- 3) content syndication based on “semantic tags” (agreement on certain keywords to mark the relevant part of a portal and to retrieve its content) - where good quality information is available on national portals.

This requires a basic investment in technical terms (tagging) which quickly pays off since the transfer of the content from your national portal to Your Europe is done automatically. This means that no request will be addressed to the EB members in the future for updates of content already syndicated in the past.

- Four countries expressed interest so far:
 - a) Estonia started but had to withdraw temporally;
 - b) Austria and Spain exploring the possibility;
 - c) Malta started the process for the Residence section.

Roundtable on experiences with the different models for content provision for the residence section:

SE: web forms work well (similar to any other content management system), largely managed to be filled in intuitively without the user manual. The system is a bit slow though;

FR: web forms work well. Still interested in content syndication but currently prevented because of budgetary constraints;

ES: as a new EB member, no experience with YEST yet;

RO: experienced problems with YEST but should finish the forms on time;

SK: forwarded requests via forms to the relevant services, but no feedback so far;

FI: initially experienced some problems to fill in the forms with text and only with links but YEC team was very helpful in solving them;

LU: works well as CMS, although a bit slow and one has to re-log too often; has all the required information which will be validated by next week;

PL: initially some technical problems with access but already resolved; seems simple to use and better than MS Word forms; having questions in EN only a bit problematic, as other services that need to be consulted may refuse or not be able to answer, so need to translate internally first;

IS: Still gathering information from the relevant authorities and have not used YEST yet;

IE: no major issues and YEST team is very helpful; will finish completing the forms;

BE: still hasn't filled in the web forms; not being used to working directly in a CMS; will ask for help for completing the forms;

AT: decided to go for content syndication, not yet started;

DE: as a new EB member, no experience with YEST yet; will ask for help for completing the forms;

CY: as a representative from Cyprus's Permanent Representation, not directly involved in the project. Colleagues in CY are gathering information and have reported no problems for the time being; the questions in the web forms are clear, which is helpful to provide information;

EE: initially went for content syndication, which seemed easy at the beginning. However, constraints encountered later with their own CMS which forced them to revert to web forms. Working in YEST should be easy as being used to working directly in a CMS. Unfortunately, as editors in EE are busy with another project, EE will not be able to meet the deadline;

BG: still gathering feedback internally; may have questions on YEST next week;

IT: web forms not translated into IT which implied to make them translated internally; sometimes difficult to be both short and exhaustive; raised questions about the use of Chrome;

CZ: was not able to use YEST due to internal issues, so had to request to use MS Word templates; content will be provided on time

HR: finalising launch of their national portal; expect to ask questions on YEST and content syndication; required the keywords for syndicating content from YE to national content;

MT: decided to go for content syndication; as the required information is difficult to collect, but may not be able to meet the deadline and ask for an extension;

Feedback from the YEST team:

- In response to a question from DE whether other people in the MS administration, apart from the EB member, can get access to work in YEST directly, MARKT explained that to ensure quality, EB member is expected to check and validate the contributions of their colleagues. Therefore, even though possible from the technical point of view, only EB members should have access rights to YEST. Once we've worked longer with YEST, we may look into this again, but for the time being, we want to keep the workflow simple.
- It is possible to syndicate content both ways, i.e. also from YE to a national portal.
- Performance problem (slow speed) to be dealt with; (LU and SE)
- The issue of frequent re-logging has already been resolved; (LU and SE)
- Incompatibility of browser (IT) will be processed;
- Any problems should be reported to Nadine VIGNEROL, who will liaise with the IT Commission's (YEST) team;
- Working on including more browsers to a list of YEST supported browsers;
- The Commission's IT team will work on the relative links to be supported as absolute links
- With regard to limited length of the text allowed in the web forms, it is recommended to keep it short on YE and link to the national portal for more details. FR said that they aim to be long and exhaustive on their national portal – how to reconcile this with YE editorial approach when they decide to syndicate content? MARKT responded that the intention has never been to syndicate whole pages, but only to tag and syndicate relevant parts.

New national content for YEC

YEC team will extract data on tax rates directly from DG TAXUD's database, so will no longer ask EB for this information (unless not available in the database). The same goes for the cross-border healthcare.

EB will still be requested to provide information through YEST on: expired passports, travel documents for minors, and validity of driving licences.

New online platform for the Editorial Board

MARKT and ENTR presented a demo of the new EB intranet on YEST to replace the current online platform from the beginning of March. EB will be informed when it is launched.

As the new intranet will be a part of YEST system (via "Intranet" button in the navigation), EB members will use the same password to log in, and be able to switch back and forth easily between web forms and the intranet.

Main functionalities:

- news page (homepage);
- Who is who (some contacts already migrated from the current platform);
- Organisation of meetings, including registration;
- Library of documents.

Feedback from EB was positive. Suggestion for enabling evaluation of the meeting through a web form will be discussed internally with a view to be implemented by the Commission's IT team at a later stage.

Your Europe 2013 statistics and promotion: update and 2014 plans

YEB:

21 thousand people were reached at the events attended by YEB in 2013. In 2014 YEB will focus on key business gatherings and will keep targeting amplifiers.

Google Adwords "Pay-per-click" campaign ran for 12 weeks (Sept-Dec 2013) in 28 countries, focusing on 10 YEB themes. It was a success, with higher than expected click-through rates. Another Google Adwords campaign is tentatively planned for Q4 2014.

On social media YEB uses LinkedIn, with 1357 connections at the moment (and growing). In 2014 YEB will move from the "direct messaging" approach to a more "social mood", and explore new tools to engage with our LinkedIn network (i.e. LinkedIn polls).

Two-way communication is essential. YEB has engaged and gathered feedback from: users (user test, online survey), Enterprise Europe Network partners, Points of Single Contact, Europe Direct.

Both page views and visits to YEB have increased considerably: from 1,648,528 in 2012 to 3,285,875 in 2013 and from 1,052,114 in 2012 to 1,610,958 in 2013, respectively. The ambition for 2014 is to further increase these figures, with targets of 2 million visitors and 5 million page views.

YEC:

4.9 million visits in 2013 - 81% more than in 2012, nearly 4 times more than in 2011. Work and Travel section accounts for 61% of visits. Most visitors come from IT, UK, and DE.

In 2013 YEC has launched an online promotional campaign, which included active participation in discussion fora, initiating cooperation with popular blogs (e.g. travel blogs), and advertising via Google: Google Display Network and Google AdWords.

2013 campaign results: 293 entries on relevant forums, threads, 23 online editorial works, online ads – 50% of the total clicks in SK, PL, IE, BG.

2014 campaign goals: successful follow-up with higher budget, multiplication of links, wider outreach thanks to boosted advertisements.

On social media, YEC is present on Facebook (over 10 000 followers, 25% from Romania and Bulgaria), Twitter (relatively new, 192 followers), and Google+ (just launched, for the time being mirroring Facebook).

What can EB do to help promote YE?

- place visible links to YE from relevant government sites (good examples: Italy, Spain, Portugal);
- Register on social media, and post messages with links to YE (or share messages posted by YE) in their language. Give us advice on what to post (what are people interested in?);
- promote YE internally, act as a multiplier.

YE team can support EB with promotional material and advice.

Discussion:

PL sometimes encounters difficulties to have other departments agree to link from their pages, as they have their own editorial policies. BE also has constraints (limited number of banners). YE Team suggested referring to the recent Council conclusions and the EP report when arguing the importance of YE.

IT asks to receive the keywords used in Google Adwords campaign, as the most effective links are deep links using the right keywords. IT also requested promotional material for an event in May.

IS suggested placing links to YE on embassies pages: YE can save them work. IS also asks embassies to share Facebook posts.

PL suggested to explore possibilities of joining events to celebrate the 10th anniversary of 2004 EU enlargement.

HR is very active (and successful) on social media.

YE Team explained that due to limited budget, the focus is on online promotion, as the overwhelming majority of visitors to YE arrive through search engines and from other websites.

Numerous EB members suggested us to send an official letter from a high ranking Commission official to relevant national authorities, which would help them in promoting and contributing to YE. YE team will look into a possibility to send to appropriate authorities a support letter co-signed by Vice-President Tajani and Commissioner Barnier. EB members should indicate the preferred addressees.

The online Governance Scoreboard 2014

MARKT introduced the concept of the scoreboard. It measures progress of different instruments that are meant to help the Single Market work (including YE). It allows benchmarking between countries and peer learning. It was first compiled last year, there are no new indicators this year (so only information updates). It will cover the whole of 2013.

There are the same three indicators for YE as used last year:

1. Provision of national information by EB members (average of YEB and YEC scores);
2. Promotion based on two criteria: back-linking to YE and all other promotional activities;
3. Participation in EB meetings and activities (member of EB appointed, attendance)

MARKT presented the preliminary scoring for different countries (red, orange and green), based on the information available to YE team. EB members are invited to comment and provide information on their activities, if missing, by end February.

Presentation of next day's breakout sessions

The participants opted for a training session on YEST, two sessions on promotion, and a session on how different EB members organise national content's updates internally.

Drink and networking dinner with Your Europe Advice and SOLVIT representatives, hosted by the Commission

Venue: Sheraton hotel Brussels

21 February

Venue: Madou Tower, *Place Madou 1, 1210 Saint-Josse-Ten-Noode, Brussels*

Break-out session 1 on YEST

The aim of the YEST session was to help the EB members familiarise with the system, discover its functionalities and clarify doubts. Participants have logged-in into the YEST content management system with their own login and learned how to use it having access to their own content (with the exception of Croatia for whom content was not available yet). Support was provided by the European Commission. Participants found the workshop useful. During the session, some bugs have been identified and reported.

Break-out session 2&3 on promotion

Interesting exchanges on challenges (lack of time, budget, human resources), ideas, best practice:

- IT concluded an agreement with some top universities to engage students close to the end of their Master. The students get work experience which is credited by their University;
- Facebook campaign in EE: to get more followers and raise awareness, they organised a lottery for those who shared their posts (prize: 1 year free parking in Tallinn);
- IE collaborates with stakeholders, Point of Single Contact, key ministries, Commission Representation in Dublin to create synergies when organising events or promoting YE; they also use social media (also through other organisations); plan 6-7 events in 2014;
- A number of EB members cooperate with Commission Representations in their countries (e.g. joint events);
- YE team used to present YE to Representations' press officers while on training in Brussels

Break-out session 4 on national content's updates

Good practice shared by participants:

- Designated contacts in each ministry, who in turn identify and contact the right people inside their ministry;
- Ideally a team includes editors who draft content, which is then validated by the line ministries; but not all EB members are so lucky;
- MT has hired copy writers to research and draft content for the national portal (in cooperation with an expert from a relevant ministry); once the contract expires, the national portal's staff will contact experts directly for updates;
- FR: The editorial work is performed by a team of 20 editors.

AOB

HR has identified problems with quality of translations into HR when checking the translation of EU content in the Consumers section. HR recommended to other EB members to check their respective languages. As YE team does not have staff able to check the quality of all language versions, we ask EB members to randomly check content in their languages and send feedback with concrete examples of substandard translations that can be forwarded to the Commission translation service.

No date was fixed for the next EB meeting, but YE Team proposes to hold in earlier than usual (e.g. in October), considering that this meeting took place earlier than normally.