



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
ENTERPRISE AND INDUSTRY DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

SMEs and Entrepreneurship
Enterprise Europe Network

Your Europe - Editorial Board Meeting

8 November 2012 (9:30-15:30)

DG ENTR, Avenue d'Auderghem 45

Meeting room 05/A

MINUTES

PARTICIPANTS

DG ENTR: P. Wragg (Head of Unit), D. Przuldzka, G. Raab

EACI: N. Noyen

**DG MARKT: A. Verhoeven (Head of Task Force), A. Ziller,
J. Golinski, L. Mangiat, C. Bijlsma-Saelens**

Editorial Board (EB) Members: see attached list of participants.

Introduction

Mr Peter Wragg (Head of Unit, DG ENTR) presented the agenda and stressed the role of Your Europe (YE) portal as a source of information on the single market opportunities for both companies and citizens. The information and guidance the portal offers matter even more in the context of the economic crisis. In addition, with all administrations, including the Commission (COM), cutting costs, the role of YE as a single gateway to information is likely to grow.

Your Europe – Business: Content development, state-of play of EU and national content

Mrs Nahid Noyen (EACI-4) presented the on-going major revamp of the Your Europe – Business (YE-B) EU-level content (the first one since 2007/08). The new EU content will have 52 chapters, and the structure will be adapted too. The texts are to be short, jargon-free, and practical (no policy background), focused on end-user's needs. At the moment the texts are being validated internally.

National content update was launched in June 2012, in three waves (3rd and final batch sent out the week of the EB meeting). The first updates will be on-line by the week of 12 November. EB is happy with the current procedure for updates and no adjustments are deemed necessary.

For editorial guidelines for national content (concerning e-gov icon, links and style): see [presentation](#) (slides 8-11).

Access2Finance

Mr Georg Raab (DG ENTR) [presented the new Access2EUFinance site](#), which is being incorporated into YE-B. The site will provide a single access point on EU financial instruments with contact details for banks and venture capital funds that offer financing to SMEs supported by the EU and European Investment Bank (worth 100 billion euro 2007-2013).

EB is invited to review the current national Access to Finance content on YE-B with a view to simplifying and shortening it. Links to national single access points on finance should be established, based on good practice in some countries.¹

Questions & Answers

The revamp of the EU content and the changes to its structure will not affect the EB, as the national level's structure will not change (at least not in foreseeable future).

The problems with opening templates seem to be resolved but EB is requested to report any problems.

CY asked to keep in the Greek version of the website references to law available in Greek only, even if it cannot be translated for the EN version. COM asked CY to provide translation of the title and two line description for EN version.

As there had been lots of changes to the law in IT, some of recent updates need to be revised already. COM is aware and ready to take them on board.

AT proposed that whenever national law changes, EB members should request updates immediately, without waiting for the annual update, so that pages are always up to date. COM is open to the suggestion but too many ad-hoc update requests would necessitate a review of the way we work. It also depends on how important the change is.

CY apologised for being late with updates due to the Presidency. COM has been alerted in advance and understands the circumstances.

Your Europe – policy context

Mrs Amaryllis Verhoeven (Head of Task Force, DG MARKT) informed that YE was mentioned in the Commission's Communication on how to better govern the Single Market (adopted on 7 June 2012) as a single gateway that answers the need for better information. In the same document, EU Member States (MS) were urged to cooperate with the Commission and step up their efforts to better inform the citizens and businesses. DG MARKT, in cooperation with ENTR and other DGs, is working on an Action Plan for better information scheduled for 2013, which will make concrete proposals. It will be discussed with the EB too. In preparation of the Action Plan, DG MARKT is trying to find out more about what users think of YE and whether it meets

¹ See for instance: www.foerderdatenbank.de; <http://www.aides-entreprises.fr/>

their needs. This information is partly derived from the web statistics, and the feedback function of the website. In order to improve the knowledge-base, two surveys will be launched shortly. One survey addresses stakeholders, including the members of the EB, who will be alerted once the survey is online and members are requested to fill it in. A second survey will be addressed to the visitors of the portal and be available as a pop-up on YE.

The 2012 Governance Health Check Report will evaluate the performance of all Single Market governance tools, and will evaluate both YE-C and YE-B, including a country-specific evaluation. The report will be published online only, focusing mainly on outputs. MS performance regarding YE will be evaluated based on three criteria: (1) availability of the national information on YE, (2) MS involvement in EB, (3) proactive promotion of YE in the MS.

DG MARKT presented the draft evaluation (three colour codes: green, orange and red).

Regarding the 3rd criterion, for the moment and as a preliminary score, DG MARKT has measured the traffic to YE via links from national sites (table with links distributed to EB), and has taken into account any national promotional activities that they were aware of. EB is asked to complete the data available (table of links) and inform DG MARKT of any other promotional activities by 15 January 2013.

Questions and answers

UK informed that they have no control over the content of their new government portal. Consequently they cannot guarantee that a link to YE will be included.

IE asked to define 'proactive promotion'. Judging only the incoming traffic from national sites is not a fair indicator. DG MARKT agreed and stressed that this is only a start, as these data were available to them and EB is requested to inform about their promotional activities. Even though a country is not judged by the number of visitors of the portal, DG MARKT would nevertheless like to include these statistics in the report as a success factor of the tool.

Answering IS's question, DG MARKT explained that most EEA countries are 'grey' as not all of them participate in Single Market tools.

AT wanted to know how many links from national sites are required to get a positive evaluation and suggested to couple the number of links with a number of visitors.

Your Europe – Citizens: Content development, state-of play of EU and national content

Editorial team, DG MARKT (Annegret Ziller, Jacek Golinski, and Luca Mangiat) presented the state of play and foreseen updates for the YE-C content (see [presentation](#) for details). Input from EB is needed on: tax obligations for pensioners and residence formalities, as well as on links for sections (Family and Education & Youth). DG MARKT will contact relevant EB members to provide or validate content.

General updates on YE-C:

- link to migration portal for non-EU nationals wishing to move to the EU;

- Croatian language version coming soon;
- Mobile version available (10% of the traffic);
- Possibility to dial the Europe Direct phone number when viewing the site on a mobile phone.

Questions and Answers

CY did not receive the request to provide some of the information for the updates mentioned. DG MARKT explained that in one case (physiotherapists) they requested information directly via other contacts, as they appreciate that EB members are busy and not experts in everything. They will make sure though that the EB member is always in copy of the request.

MT will send updates this week.

FI asked for a list of all the requests to help keep track of them (especially useful in case of a handover). DG MARKT will publish the list on the common online platform shortly after the meeting.

UK is concerned that due to lack of resources they may be unable to deliver. Also, as a lot of the information requested is available from the central government site gov.uk, we risk duplicating content. More efficient and effective way to cross-link should be found. EB members may not be aware of some law changes in between updates, so YE content risk being outdated. DG MARKT replied that content syndication, as enabled by the pilot syndication tool may be an answer.

Your Europe Content Syndication tool (YEST)

Mrs Annegret Ziller from DG MARKT [presented](#) preliminary results from a pilot project on content syndication using YEST, a tool which aims to publish content from national portals directly to YE-C ('syndicate'). EB members from Austria and France have participated in this pilot project (running till the end of 2012) to test it. The next steps are a report on governance of content syndication (being drafted by the contractor) and the technical tool allowing syndication. DG MARKT will give a more detailed presentation at the next EB meeting where there will be room for a broad discussion with the members of the EB.

Mr. Peter Reichstädter, EB member from AT, shared the Austrian experiences from the pilot project. The technology itself is user-friendly enough, but differences in structure between the YE and national sites pose a challenge. The Commission was requested to provide a services and product catalogue to be agreed with the EB, to try to better match the structures. It would be appreciated if the tool worked both ways, i.e. to get also content from YE to national sites, especially the EN translations. Furthermore, he suggested that the proposed semantic asset and the findings of the pilot project would be validated by more interested countries and that YEB would also adopt the idea of content syndication.

MT, DE, EE, FI, IT and potentially the UK expressed their interest in trying YEST.

FI appreciated the advantage of not publishing the same content twice, but was concerned about technical challenges, as well as about how YEST will affect the current

way of sharing work and taking responsibility for content. DG MARKT suggested discussing it at the next EB meeting, as the report will address these issues.

The current approach differs between MS: some national portals have a similar structure to YE, some have decentralised websites. As many sites are not in EN, translations for YE might be foreseen.

Promotion, statistics

Mrs Annegret Ziller and Mr. Luca Mangiat from DG MARKT presented the web statistics and promotional activities for YE-C. For detailed statistics see the [presentation](#).

DG MARKT has commissioned a research on the main relevant blogs and forums in all MS, to which EU citizens already turn when they have questions that YE could also help answer. In a second phase these platforms would be targeted to post/suggest/provide links to YE. Once the study is completed, the EB will be asked for feedback. DG MARKT asked the members to link from their national sites to YE. A video message on YE-C from Commissioner Barnier is being prepared.

YE-C receives 13,000 visits/day and 300,000 visits/month - 100% growth in last year and 25% more questions asked to legal advice service (YEA). The visits peaked during a DG COMM promotional campaign in February and have been on a rise since after summer. DG MARKT has used Facebook and Twitter in cooperation with partners (e.g. European Commission, European Parliament) to promote YE-C. "Your Europe, Your Rights: a practical guide" brochure was published and EB members can order copies.

Mrs Nahid Noyen from EACI presented YE-B statistics and promotional activities (for details, see the [presentation](#)). Animations for YouTube were produced and YE-B LinkedIn profile was used more to promote YE-B. Visitors peaked during the February promotional campaign and increased again since August, with the 2nd best result of 104 568 in October (33% increase on September). It is a very positive trend, especially because there is no advertising associated. It coincides with the development of the LinkedIn activities. New promotional material, including a stand, roll-ups and flyers, is being produced and EB is welcome to borrow these for their events.

All promotional support (leaflets, videos, social media links, web buttons, linking policy etc) for YE-C and YE-B is available from <http://europa.eu/youreurope/promo>

Best practice presentation for promotional activities of EB-members & discussion

Mr. Claudio Celeghin, EB member from IT, shared his promotional strategy and activities, which focused a great deal on requesting links to YE. They have e-mailed various government portals introducing YE, stressing its relevance, and requesting links to complementary information. The initial e-mail was followed by a more specific one and phone calls, if necessary. For monitoring, they created a database with information who, and when were contacted and what was requested of them. Once the requested link was activated, a 'thank you' gadget was sent.

Tips and lessons learnt:

- Approach first those who are already mentioned on YE (more chance they will reciprocate);
- Be clear what you want them to do, i.e. suggest a specific link relevant to them (personalised e-mail);
- From Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) perspective, links have greater impact if:
 - There are keywords in the text ('real links') rather than placed under 'useful links';
 - They come from a relevant site;
 - They lead to YE internal pages rather than homepage;
 - They are in text format rather than images (logo);

Challenges faced: few replies to the initial e-mail, lack of action despite expressing willingness, linking to homepage only, and general lack of interest due to workload. For details, see the [presentation](#).

Mr. Marc Ledwith, EB member for IE, shared their Single Market Week experience. YE was mentioned in the plenary and they had a stand together with SOLVIT and the Point of Single Contact. Thanks to this, they could refer visitors there if what they needed fell outside of scope of YE. The most common problems included tax questions, problems with finding information. Visitors also liked gadgets.

Questions and answers

CY asked for advice on case studies for a YE presentation – how detailed they should be. EB members advised to 'put yourself in a real businessperson's shoes', try to make it practical and tangible.

IT suggested preparing a sample case based on common problems referred to YEA that EB could use.

In reply to a request from AT, DG MARKT promised to upload on the [online platform](#) any material provided by the EB members about their promotional activities.

EB was requested to share their best practice on the online platform (<http://www.youreurope-network.eu>).

Your Europe – Business: presentation of the findings from the user testing of the EU content

Mrs Dorota Przuldzka from DG ENTR presented the results of user tests of the new EU content of YE-B. The tests showed that users find the current business phases structure confusing and would prefer to group content into legal requirements (e.g. EU standards) and practical advice (e.g. taxes, human resources), too technical and specific content shouldn't be too prominent, and that a tab system to shift between EU and national content could be a practical solution. For details, see the [presentation](#).

Work in groups: how best to address the user's needs?

EB members worked in three groups discussing the main findings of the user tests.

What structure would work best for the users?

- Link well within the website ("related content");
- Information on "getting started" should still be there at the EU level, as people come to YE for this kind of information; other business cycle phases are not so crucial (relevant information could be in "related content");
- Visitors to YE-B are interested in how to open/do business abroad; on doing business in their own country, they have other resources;
- The new structure is confusing, it is not clear where to start; there is an information overload;
- Some common sections like "basic rules" where different topic fit could help structure the information;
- Tagging content, a sitemap, internal search engine would help user find the information they need; the site should be more google-oriented;

What should we do about more technical content?

- Content should not be too complex, one might consider 'structural' 2 levels and add links to external and more specialised sites
- One might also consider adding a third level for those users who wish to know more in depth about the technical topics
- Content should be as simple as possible
- One should have an idea of who will access the portal. Will it be professionals, generalists or experts? A checklist allowing to select the user's profile (starter, generalist, established business, etc.), as in the citizens' section of the portal might help structuring the content of the business section
- Create a separate heading for technical topics
- Work with layers, e.g. one layer on "legal info", one on "technical info"

How to juxtapose the EU and national content without confusing the user?

Current updates have a settled pattern – contributing more would require more effort from the EB. In the context of resource constraints, a question was raised whether national information is useful, or perhaps linking to relevant national sites would be enough. The Commission reminded the EB that the value added is that national content on YE is translated into EN.

We should find out which sections are read most and put more effort into those, both on the EU and national levels. We should also look at the visitors' countries of origin, to better understand who our clients are.

There was not much enthusiasm for the new structure proposal; it was questioned whether tests by 6 users can be considered a representative sample.

Questions and Answers

PL had concerns about profiling – there's a risk that a visitor won't see the content they're interested in because they chose a wrong profile.

UK stressed that any decision that would have resource implications (e.g. provide more content) should be backed up by evidence that there is a need to do so (e.g. web statistics, more tests than just 6 users). The Commission replied that only EU content is concerned at the moment, so there are no implications for the EB. The new approach to EU content

will be thoroughly tested before, if at all, we decide to revamp the national content as well.

IE challenged the division into YE-B and YE-C, as a lot of information overlaps.

CY suggested that, to improve user-friendliness, EB revises the national content with a view of shortening it. But there is no need to change the current structure.

MT suggested having an explanation on the homepage how to navigate YE, given the amount of information available.

IT pointed out that search engine currently works in EN only.

AT disagreed with the proposal to have links to national sites only, as there is no value-added to visitors in this (if they have to search through a national website for the information they need, they can google this information to start with).

AOB

AT suggested that presentations and questions for discussion are sent in advance before the EB meeting, so that EB can better prepare. The Commission could tell in advance what is expected of the meeting. The agenda is not detailed enough to determine what exactly is going to be discussed.

UK added that the more advance notice on the agenda, the more chance of getting an expert in the field to attend (especially on technical issues such as YEST).

Presentations will be e-mailed and uploaded on the online platform, as will the minutes.

The next Editorial Board meeting will be held on the 7 March 2013 in Brussels.

Follow-up of the meeting

EB members are requested to:

- Validate all pending requests launched by YE-C;
- Review the current national Access to Finance content on YE-B with a view to simplifying and shortening it. Links to national single access points on finance should be established based on good practice in some countries;
- CY to provide COM with translation of the title (reference to law) and a two line description for EN version;
- Fill in the survey launched by YE-C as soon as it is online;
- Give feedback with regard to the draft evaluation on their country's score for the 2012 Health Check Report– deadline: 15 January 2013;
- Inform DG MARKT if their country is interested to participate in the YEST-project;
- Install as many links as possible from their national websites to YE;
- Order promotional material for their promotional activities, which is available from <http://europa.eu/youreurope/promo>. A stand and roll-ups, produced by YE-B, can be borrowed for events;
- Share their best practice with regard to promotional activities on the interactive online platform.

The Commission will:

- Upload the complete list with requests sent to the EB-members on the interactive online platform (DG MARKT);
- Contact relevant EB-members to provide or validate content with regard to tax obligation for pensioners and residence formalities and links for sections: Family and Education and Youth (DG MARKT);
- Prepare a sample case based on common problems referred to in YEA that could be used by the EB-members (DG MARKT);
- Submit proposals and requests to update links in selected sections (DG MARKT)
- Upload all presentations, attendance list and minutes of the meeting on the interactive online platform;
- Ensure that the presentations and discussion points for the next meeting are sent well in advance, in order to allow the EB-members to prepare the meeting.

Annex: Participants list