

DG ENVIRONMENT

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY 2014

DG Environment's Communication strategy supports the development and implementation of EU environment policy, raising awareness about the EU as a whole, its values and political priorities and its work to address environmental challenges. These objectives will be reached through the pursuit of the following specific actions:

- To inform and engage different target audiences about the EU's environmental priorities;
- To maintain the positive public perception of the EU's environment policies and activities.

Activities planned for 2014 correspond well with the corporate communication political priorities, in particular contributing to the themes: *Europe for jobs (1)*, *Europe for business (2)*, *Europe for better quality of life (5)* and *Europe as a global player (6)*.

To strengthen the economy's return to more sustainable and resilient growth while halting environmental decline we need to ensure that Europe takes the right steps to exploit the full potential of a resource efficient, green economy. In 2014, the Commission will come forward with an initiative focused on how to unlock the EU's economic potential to be more productive whilst using fewer resources, reducing impacts on ecosystems, and advancing towards a circular economy. This initiative will be the overarching communication priority for 2014 contributing in particular to *Europe for jobs (1)*, *Europe for business (2)* and *Europe for better quality of life (5)*.

Broader outreach activities will also focus on priority areas such as the value of biodiversity and ecosystems, determinants of the quality of life such as air quality, water and safer green chemicals. The new LIFE instrument will be in its first year and the messages will focus on how funds are spent effectively and delivering tangible and coherent benefits on the ground. A significant effort will be made to communicate about the LIFE projects and the results they have achieved so as to ensure their transfer and replicability and to maximise their contribution to policy. Topics that are likely to receive some media attention include shale gas, waste and marine litter, environmental inspections, access to justice in environmental matters, infringements, and work related to the construction and food sectors given their substantial environmental impacts. International efforts will promote the EU's policies e.g. on the post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals, biodiversity, forests, illegal logging, river and marine protection, waste, chemicals, ship recycling and wildlife crime. The international efforts will contribute to *Europe as a global player (6)*.

The expected main results of the planned activities are a higher awareness of the benefits of the EU policies in the environment and an enhanced image of the EU with measurable positive trends in public perception.

The Commission's work programme for 2014 emphasises delivery and implementation as its key themes. These themes will also be considered across all communication efforts to improve implementation of environmental legislation. All activities will be framed in the context of the recently adopted General Union Environment Action Programme to 2020.

To achieve the above objectives, a range of specific activities is planned:

- **Green Week 2014** will focus on this circular economy initiative and will provide a platform for informed stakeholder engagement in Brussels and Member States.
- It will be important for the Commission to maintain its engagement with citizens. This will be pursued in particular via **the Generation Awake campaign** where turning waste into a resource will be a key message as this waste element is an essential part of closing the loop

in a circular economy. The priority will be to engage the public through social media activity. In addition, the **'Nature in Europe'** social media community will be maintained, aiming to raise awareness of how the EU citizens (and the communities in which they live) benefit from biodiversity and natural capital protection policies. Both campaigns serve to show the role of environment policies in shaping the future of the EU.

- **A European Clean-Up Day** will be promoted for 10 May 2014. DG Environment will continue promoting this rather fast-expanding civic movement via our various communication channels: Web, Facebook, Twitter, Green Week etc.
- **The European Business Awards for the Environment** ceremony will take place in autumn 2014. This bi-annual prize showcases projects that combine environmental innovation with improved competitiveness and economic viability.
- DG Environment will work with **Copenhagen, the 2014 European Green Capital**, to promote good examples of green economic development tackling environmental, economic and social concerns which have a high potential for replication around Europe.
- The first edition of the Natura 2000 Awards is planned for May/June 2014. The aim is to raise awareness about the network, recognise excellence in the promotion and management of Natura 2000 sites and to encourage networking and promotion of best practice for nature conservation.
- Past Eurobarometers have shown that nearly all European citizens (95 %) consider protecting the environment to be important to them personally. This concern translates into widespread public support for EU-level policies and funding: on average, 81% of citizens consider that EU legislation is required to protect the environment in their country. **A 2014 Eurobarometer** is planned to see how this has developed.
- **Audio-visual** work will continue to combine traditional VNRs (on Shale gas, and Endocrine Disrupting Substances, for instance) with products carefully tailored to the web and social media, enhancing the DG ENV website and engaging with virtual communities.
- **The Environment website** is one of the main communication tools of DG Environment. In the framework of the EC web rationalisation project, DG Environment would like to improve its pages both in terms of structure and by reducing web content. The online approach is currently being reviewed in order to put the user first and ensure a coherent and high quality user experience.
- **Publications** will focus on supporting the main communication priorities. DG Environment also plans to build on the previous success of its children's publications and to produce additional products for this target audience. Further development of electronic publications, Apps and E-Pubs are also foreseen.