



Communication Strategy 2016-2020

DG ENVIRONMENT



DG ENVIRONMENT COMMUNICATION STRATEGY 2016 – 2020

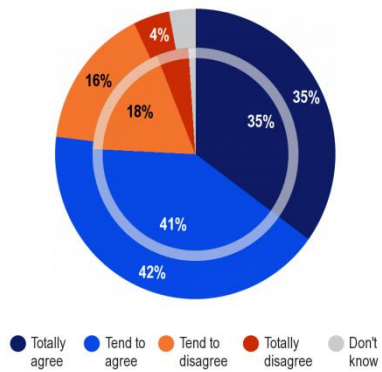
OBJECTIVES

Our **communication activities** support the development and implementation of EU environment policy, raising awareness about the Commission, its values and political priorities, and its efforts to address Europe's challenges.

These activities are intended to **shape an understanding of the environment** and improve knowledge of environmental policies and their importance for green growth, human health and wellbeing. This, in turn, should build **support for EU policies and enhance their implementation, and demonstrate the clear EU added value**. The main objectives are to:

- **Inform and engage** a variety of target audiences about the EU's environmental priorities;
- Make people **aware** that EU environment policy brings a wide range of benefits across the society and the economy by showcasing results;
- Maintain the current **positive public perception** of the EU's environment policies.
- **Present the global role of Europe** as one of the world's standard setters on environment.

Environmental issues have a direct effect on your daily life



Inner pie : EB75.2 Apr/May 2011
Outer pie : EB81.3 Apr/May 2014

EU28



Agenda 2030, the ten priorities of President Juncker, the General Union Environment Action Programme to 2020 (7th EAP), and Commissioner Vella's commitment to address outstanding gaps by concentrating on three focus areas (Green Growth, Connecting with European Citizens and Making it Happen) constitute the framework for our communication

strategy for this mandate.¹ Annual communication activities are decided during the preparation of the annual work programme. They are aligned with the political priorities, agenda and narrative of the College in keeping with Control Standard 12 on Communication and Information.²



Living well, within
the limits of our planet
7th Environment Action Programme

FOCUS AREAS

Following DG ENV's Strategic Plan 2016-2020, our communication activities can usefully be clustered according to the three focus areas. It should be kept in mind, however, that most communication activities may fit under several focus areas depending on the message to be highlighted.³

Green Growth



Rapid progress towards greater resource efficiency in particular through the transition from a linear to a circular economy model is perhaps the single most important contribution the EU can make to realising the jobs and sustainable growth aspirations. The implementation of the Circular Economy Package up to 2020 offers the opportunity to communicate on its different elements such as waste prevention, increasing

¹ The Communication Strategy follows from and complements DG Environment's Strategic Plan 2016-2020.

² This approach is also consistent with recommendations of the 2014 horizontal assessment of DG Environment external communication activities.

³ Nature is a case in point - actions on natural capital and restoration efforts fit under Green Growth, whereas actions to communicate about the EU's role in nature protection and the inherent value of nature fall under the Connecting with Citizens strand. EU action on waste is further case which falls both under Green Growth and Making it Work.

recycling and improving waste management more broadly, eco-innovation, sustainable product policy, plastics, waste, and green finance. The fundamental importance for the economy of ecosystem services provided by nature, and the competitiveness gains due to the innovation push coming from standard setting under EU environmental rules will also be an important element of communication actions under this focus area. Communication under this focus area supports the Commission's General Objective 1, A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment.

Connecting with European Citizens

Under this priority communication activities will aim to show how environment policy contributes to the health and wellbeing of citizens, and that the EU is working for citizens on the ground, thus capitalising on the high level of support that environment policy enjoys among citizens. Communication on air quality, industrial emissions, water and seas, and chemicals and a non-toxic environment, but also nature protection, and in particular Natura 2000 and green infrastructure falls under this category.



As LIFE projects are obliged to communicate about the project and its results, LIFE is one of the greatest assets in getting the message across to citizens that EU action is helping improve their quality of life by conserving nature and improving the environment. There are over 1100 open LIFE projects. They typically spend 5-15% of their budget on communication, addressing primarily their local public and stakeholders, and local media in the language of the citizens, and as fellow citizens.

Making it Happen

The solid body of environmental legislation now in place has not yet rendered the full benefits expected. Likewise, to achieve better environment outcomes in Europe greater buy-in from third countries to ambitious environment policies is often necessary. To 'make it happen', better implementation and enforcement together with strong international outreach thus form Commissioner Vella's third priority. An increasing focus will be on communicating "environment in action". The annual Environment Implementation Review will offer the possibility to raise awareness on the state of implementation in the Member States reviewed. Where possible, a positive outcome-oriented approach will be used, communicating national and regional success stories, (the results of compliance promotion exercises, the availability and use of EU funds for implementing the acquis. However, for policy areas with persistent implementation deficits, such as air quality, raising awareness on the costs of non-implementation should be considered.

Communication to support the international dimension of EU environment policy will demonstrate our efforts with international partners to mitigate pressures on the environment in the EU and abroad, reduce our own footprint, create a level playing field for business domestically and opportunities for our companies abroad. Communication under this focus area supports the Commission General Objective 9, A Stronger global actor. The implementation process of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be a multiannual and cross-cutting theme, both EU-wide and internationally.



APPROACH, REACH AND TARGETS

Our activities aim to reach a wide range of different target audiences **either directly via our tools or via influencers/multipliers** that can reinforce our key messages. 95% of citizens considered protecting the environment very or fairly important to them personally (latest Eurobarometer from 2014). As well as the general public, environmental issues touch a wide number of other stakeholder groups. Businesses, including SMEs, are increasingly concerned about the environment. According to a Eurobarometer published December 2015, SMEs are now **more likely to say that the environment is a top priority** for their company (39%, +11 percentage points from 2013).

The target audiences, the messages and the communication channels/tools are carefully selected and customised for each activity linked to each priority. The general public will not be targeted directly, but only via multipliers.

We seek to promote simple and positive messages and solutions to environmental problems rather than stressing their overwhelming negativity. These solutions include, for example, promoting action in areas not traditionally considered within the remit of environment, and stressing the advantages of solid environmental policy, and its implementation, such as economic benefits, job creation, better health and quality of life. Successful messaging often involves a human angle, showing how everyone is concerned and has a part to play.

WORKING WITH OTHERS

We will regularly, at least once every two months, update information on our communication actions in DG COMM's SharePoint planning tool. Consultation on issues where significant financial resources are involved will be carried out.

We will step up our **efforts to seek synergies with other DGs**, e.g. DG COMM and Representations, with DG MARE on marine issues and blue growth, DG GROW for the implementation of the Circular Economy Package, External Action Service for wildlife crime, DG CLIMA as regards our contribution to reaching the climate targets and the mutual supportiveness of environment and climate policies, DG FISMA regarding green financing, DG RTD on innovation – to share both content and reach new target audiences.

DG ENV will also seek synergies and complementarity by working with others e.g. EU institutions, Member States for example via the Green Spiders, the IMPEL network and various stakeholders. The close co-operation with both the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME) and the European Environment Agency in Copenhagen will continue.

COMMUNICATION TOOLS

- *Press and media work*: press material for key policy proposals, LTTs, Op-eds, interviews, seminars (e.g. for NL journalists during the Presidency), and audio-visual products to strengthen uptake on TV and the web. Where appropriate, external services will be used to promote multi-media packages to target specific countries, and/ or groups.
- *Web*: DG ENV's website is one of the most visited of the Commission. It will undergo a complete overhaul under the Digital Transformation Programme as of mid-2016. Reflecting the high popularity with users "Environment" has been selected as one of the 15 key themes. Web clips on key policy will be produced to complement the pages.
- *Social media* activities through accounts on Facebook and Twitter: Social media covers a wide range of different online tools and websites. The common link between them is a possibility to interact with other visitors and online platforms, which allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content. DG ENV and the Cabinet run several accounts on different social media platforms. The objectives of using these accounts are: to disseminate key Commission messages to informed stakeholders, journalists,

environmental organisations and EU citizens, to encourage dialogue on key issues particularly during major DG ENV events, and to increase traffic to DG ENV's websites.

- *The Environment for Europeans Magazine*, online and printed. In addition to information on new initiatives it will more strongly reflect the priority of implementation, and its benefits. Social media promotion will be carried out in specific countries depending on topics.
- *Publications* to support the main communication priorities, with an increasing focus on electronic publications, Apps and E-Pubs.

We monitor and evaluate all major communication activities on a regular basis in order to ensure their effectiveness.