



## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology

Cooperation  
Stakeholders

Brussels, 27 September 2012

### **Digital Champions meeting, Sofia, 19-20 September 2012**

#### **Summary:**

Digital Champions met in Sofia on 19-20 September 2012, at the invitation of Gergana Passy, Bulgaria's Digital Champion with support from European Commission. On 19 September, Digital Champions met with the Commission and had an operational discussion over dinner. On 20 September, they met the Commissioner and discussed the conclusions set out below.

During the meeting on 19 September 2012, Digital Champions had an operational exchange of views on different steps being taken to develop Digital Champion plans, identification and involvement of resources (financial and human) to help implement the plans. Linda Corugedo Steneberg, Director Cooperation, DG CNECT chaired the meeting.

Paul-André Baran (Romania) is focusing on improving access to internet and getting citizens online. He is working with the government to develop priorities. He is also working on a project to help farmers find new markets via the web for their products.

Tineke Netelenbos (Netherlands) has established a very good relationship with the government and is now developing new projects in Digital inclusion and e-government.

Gergana Passy (Bulgaria) has been organising the Digital Agenda conference with the government. She is focussed on developing free wi-fi hotspots in public places across Bulgaria and promoting the development of IT start-ups.

Ales Spectic (Slovenia) is working on financing a start-up incubator and has started a project on elderly inclusion. He would like to discuss ways to fundraise in order to pay for support staff to help him meet his Digital Champion obligations – which are keeping him busy.

Giles Babinet (France) is spending time understanding what the new government is doing in terms of the implementation of the Digital Agenda. He would like to focus on education, and push for open data and less restrictive fiscal measures which are stopping the ability for IT start-ups to develop in France. He also invited Champions to collaborate to populate a Natura 2000 open source database describing European flora and fauna.

Jan Gulliksen (Sweden) is setting up his team within the Digitisation Commission . He is very interested in how EU funding could help Digital Champion activities. He has

experience in developing FP projects and wonders whether Digital Champions could get fund together out of Horizon 2020 or the new CEF.

István Erényi (Hungary) is developing digital literacy programmes, in particular for children and elderly populations. He is also trying to develop links with stakeholders who can help implement activities. He welcomed the Commission paper on this point.

Wlodek Marcinski (Poland) explained the different initiatives the government was undertaking to implement the Digital Agenda. He wanted to understand better what the role of the Digital Champion should be in comparison to the role of DAE High Level Group representative. He sees his role as a coordinator of all the different activities on-going in Poland.

Björn Ottersten (Luxembourg) is new to the group. He is working with his government to identify the issues that are needed to be tackled in Luxembourg. He is particularly interested in internet safety.

Linda Liukas (Finland) is also new to the Group. She would like to focus on getting more girls to develop IT skills. In particular, she wants to promote the teaching of coding/programming in schools.

Roberto Sambuco (Italy) is also new to the Group. He explained the on-going work of the government to reform the Digital Agenda in Italy.

Linda Corugedo Steneberg (European Commission) explained that for the Commission, the Champions role was to promote the Digital Agenda for Europe in their country. Champions could start a national debate in order to get more people, business and governments digital.

The Commission is aware of the difficulty for some Champions to exercise their mandate due to lack of resource and will continue to explore ways to support them.

LCS set out the Commission's work on policy proposals such as European Cyber security strategy, cloud computing and Connecting Europe Facility (CEF).

She added that DG Connect's new stakeholders Unit is there to help Champions. In addition, they would be delighted if Champions helped to identify new groups of stakeholders – in order to go beyond the usual Brussels suspects and 'engage the unengaged'. Champions could also call upon the resources of Commission representations to help do their work.

LCS also emphasized the work that DG Connect is doing to 'go local' and hoped that Champions could take advantage of these activities.

The Commission is involved in multi-stakeholder discussions like the IGF at international level. (Paul-Andre Baran is going to Baku). We are also involved in the WCIT. Cooperation there would be great.

Like the Champions, the Commission also works with industry. It would be useful to share best practice on how to work with industry, get them mobilised and in some cases, how to manage funding from industry and potential conflict of interest.

In the discussion, the following conclusions were agreed to:

- Champions will send short examples of best practice to publicise on the DG Connect Digital Champion webpage.

- The Commission will explore the idea of having President Barroso send a follow-up letter<sup>1</sup> to member states in February 2013 which could set out progress made by Champions.
- Digital Champions would make contact with national Commission representations – which can provide additional support to the Champions. Linda Corugedo Steneberg committed to raise this point with DG COMM.
- A virtual discussion group would be set up via email and "linkedin" for Champions to connect.
- Digital Champions welcomed the opportunity to network together. The next meeting should be held in Brussels, before the end of the year and include networking time.
- They are exploring the idea of working on specific topics together. For most Digital Champions present the priority issues to focus on are: education, start-ups and open data.

On 20 September 2012, Champions met with Commissioner Kroes. She thanked Gergana Passy for hosting the meeting and organising the conference. She welcomed the positive developments described by the Champions and encouraged them to further connect and work together.

Gergana Passy, the Bulgarian Digital Champion organised a programme of activities for the Champions including meetings with a local start-up ICT entrepreneurs and a visit to a local school to understand how children were being introduced to ICT.

Digital Champions also attended the "Regional Conference on the Digital Agenda for Europe DAE: Reality or still a challenge". Linda Luikus, the Finnish Digital Champion, spoke in a panel session on education.

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<sup>1</sup> President Barroso wrote to member states about the need for a Digital Champion on 14 February 2012

**Participants:****Digital Champions:**

- Paul-André Baran (Romania)
- Tineke Netelenbos (NL)
- Gilles Babinet (France)
- Jan Gulliksen (Sweden)
- Ales Spetic (Slovenia)
- Gergana Passy (Bulgaria)
- István Erényi (Hungary),
- Wlodek Marcinski (Poland)
- Björn Ottersten (Luxembourg)
- Linda Liukas (Finland)
- Roberto Sambuco (Italy) (on 20 September 2012)

**Commission:**

- Commissioner Kroes (on 20 September 2012)
- Linda Corugedo Steneberg
- Antoaneta Angelova-Krasteva
- Josephine Wood
- Madalina Mocanu

**Apologies:**

- Philip Micallef (Malta)
- Lars Frelle-Petersen (Denmark)
- Peter Pellegrini (Slovakia)
- Martha Lane Fox (UK)
- Kestutis Juškevičius (Lithuania)
- Wlodek Marcinski (Poland)
- António Murta (Portugal)
- Ondrej Felix (Czech Republic)

**Digital Champions meeting**

**Agenda**

**Working dinner 19 September 2012**

**Location: Residence "Lozenets", Sofia, Bulgaria**

- 1. Welcome from Gergana Passy, Bulgarian Digital Champion**
  
- 2 Welcome from Linda Corugedo Steneberg, European Commission, Director**
  
- 3. Planning for 2012 -2013: Exchange of views on different steps being taken to develop Digital Champion plans, identification and involvement of resources (financial and human) to help implement the plans**
  
- 4. Update and discussion on Going Local activities and how Going Local can help the Champions work**
  
- 5. Any other business**

Josephine Wood

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