

About the Green Spider Network



The members of the Green Spider Network (GSN) are communication officers from national environmental ministries and agencies in Europe. GSN is a forum for sharing information, ideas and best practices. It also provides a platform for coordinating ways in which European environmental policies can most effectively be communicated to target groups. Established in 1995, the network now has over 50 members representing 30 countries. DG Environment uses the network as a channel for involving national institutions in its own communication activities.

Visit the Green Spider website at
www.ec.europa.eu/environment/networks/greenspider/index_en.htm.

Hildegard Kaiser, President of the GSN (2011-2012)

Hildegard Kaiser of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment discusses how the Ministry and GSN collaborate on environmental initiatives.



How has Germany's Federal Environment Ministry utilised GSN resources and best practices?

Hildegard: We can all benefit by participating in the Green Spider Network through the transfer of knowledge and direct communication. For instance, beekeeping in an official building located in the center of a major capital city – this was an unthinkable idea until we attended last year's presentation at the Green Spider Network Annual Meeting at the European Environmental Agency (EEA) in Copenhagen. Now we are planning to introduce a beehive in the garden of our new ministry building to support the rise of urban farming and the Ministry's environmental communication goals.

What does the GSN hope to accomplish at the upcoming Green Week 2012 conference?

Hildegard: I am proud to be the longest serving member of GSN. At Green Week, we hope to share a variety of ideas from different European member countries. Germany is also looking forward to presenting its best practices in the field of water education. We know that water is one of the most important resources in the world, so we want to show people how they can participate and what they can do to help preserve water resources. Water protection policies in Germany focus primarily on maintaining or re-establishing the ecological balance of water bodies, guaranteeing drinking water supplies at a high level and providing long-term safeguards for all other water uses benefiting the general public.

What's New with Resource Efficiency?

Using natural resources more efficiently benefits the environment and creates economic opportunities for companies and workers. In September 2011, the European Commission adopted the 'Roadmap for a Resource-Efficient Europe' to provide a framework for leading the continent towards a sustainable and resource-efficient economy by 2020.

To support the goals of Europe 2020, the Commission has launched 'Generation Awake'. The campaign encourages consumers to "wake up" to the consequences of unsustainable use of resources due to a growing population and the risk of scarcities. 'Generation Awake's' interactive website displays real-life examples, and advice on how to consume differently from 3D-animated characters Impulse Inga, Routine Robbie and Chubby Charlie.

'Generation Awake's' target audience will soon

be introduced to a new animated character, Water Maniac Walter. The water campaign will be launched during Green Week and feature viral videos, a new 'Generation Awake' homepage and an updated consumption guide in 23 languages. Visitors will be able to take an animated tour of a typical bathroom with

Water Maniac Walter where they can learn tips on sustainable direct water use.

'Generation Awake' plans to launch a video competition and additional web content on the impact of indirect water use during the 2nd half of 2012. Public relations events will also take place in four target countries to educate the public on water's role in achieving a resource-efficient Europe.

Visit 'Generation Awake' at
www.generationawake.eu/en and
www.facebook.com/GenerationAwake.



2012 EU Water Initiatives

As water scarcity and droughts become increasingly common throughout Europe, EU water policy strives to ensure Europeans have access to clean and adequate water supplies. The European Commission recognises water as fundamental to the survival of humans, animals and plant life.

Following the precedent set by the 2000 Water Framework Directive (WFD), the Commission has declared the protection, restoration and management of clean water resources across Europe as a priority for 2012. Several initiatives are ongoing that support Europe's efforts to address challenges such as water abstraction and pollution due to agriculture and energy production. The 'Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water' is one such communication scheduled for release by the end of this year.

The Blueprint expands on the EU's water

policy response, and includes an analysis of WFD's river basin management plans. It will also review the 2007 water scarcity and drought policy, evaluate the threat of climate change and human activities on water resources, and conduct a gap analysis of EU freshwater policy. These recommendations will align closely with the EU's 2020 strategy and the Commission's Resource Efficiency Roadmap. As the water milestone for the Roadmap, 'Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water' will be an important communication tool for driving water policy and EU actions until the year 2050.

View a short summary of the Blueprint's development process, timing and main objectives at http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/pdf/blueprint_leaflet.pdf.

Read the 2000 Water Framework Directive at www.ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-framework/index_en.html.

Ulla Ala-Ketola of the Finnish team that won the GSN 2011 best practice competition speaks about their award-winning initiative and successes from the campaign.



Describe the Finnish National Teleworking Day campaign.

Ulla: We launched the National Teleworking Day, and challenged

both businesses and citizens to join the campaign. Participants were able to register on the campaign website. The website featured real-time information including the hours, kilometres and carbon emissions saved while commuting. In one day, we saved 386,555 kilometres, 8,286 hours and 50 tonnes of carbon emissions!

How did you use traditional media tools with social media to create a teleworking community?

Ulla: We used our networks to look for companies that had solved challenges related to telework, and to communicate with people who felt that telework was

a significant part of their daily routine. We shared these stories on the website and in social media. For the media, we actively offered examples on forerunner companies and interviewees who had an interesting "story of their own". This encouraged people to share their own experiences on Facebook.

Do you plan to organise another National Teleworking Day in 2012 and have there been any modifications to the original campaign?

Ulla: In 2012, the National Teleworking Day will be organised on September 21st. The Office for the Government as Employer will be our new partner for the 2012 campaign. Moreover, the Government as Employer will encourage all Finnish public administration organisations to seek ways to promote telework, which will undoubtedly increase teleworking in Finland.

Upcoming Environmental Events

Green Week – May 22-25, 2012 (Brussels, Belgium)

Green Week is the biggest annual conference on environmental policy in Europe. The 12th edition of Green Week 'Every Drop Counts: The Water Challenge' will bring together thousands of participants during some 40 sessions on water.
Website: www.ec.europa.eu/environment/greenweek/

Rio+20 – June 20-22, 2012 (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)

Rio+20 will examine the green economy,

poverty eradication, and the institutional framework for sustainable development. Initiatives such as the 'Gen '92' European youth video competition will be held in recognition of the Rio summit's 20th anniversary.
Website: www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/index.html

The 11th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the CBD – October 8-19, 2012 (Hyderabad, India)

The COP acts as the governing body of the Convention on Biological Diversity and helps implement the Convention's objectives around biological diversity and sustainability.
Website: www.cbd.int/cop/

EU Presidency Communications

As EU Member States take turns in presiding over the Council of the European Union, national environmental authorities become involved in communicating their country's priorities and initiatives for their EU presidency. It is a unique opportunity for communication officers to be at the heart of the European environmental agenda during their country's six-month term. From January 1st to June 30th, Denmark presides over the Council to help develop work programmes and facilitate dialogue in the EU.

Sune Bové, Senior Advisor of Press & Communication at the Danish Nature Agency, gives his thoughts on the Danish EU presidency.



What goals do you hope to accomplish during this presidency?

Sune: The primary goal is to ensure growth and job creation through improved competitiveness and resource efficiency. This approach should be the point of departure for the Rio+20 Conference and the elaboration of a new Environmental Action Programme that can contribute to the Europe 2020 Strategy.

This approach will also guide the Informal Environment Ministers Meeting in April 2012 where the working sessions will concern: resource efficiency, priorities for a focused 7th Environmental Action Programme, Rio+20 and a working lunch on the climate.

How are the Danish presidency's environmental priorities aligned with the EU's 2012 focus on water?

Sune: They are aligned perfectly!

Conserving water resources is high on the agenda – both on a European and global level. The Rio declaration is very clear on the need to act regarding sustainable development and equal access to clean water. At the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in June, the presidency hopes that we can agree on how to handle this crisis by developing specific goals and concrete actions on increasing water efficiency and improving wastewater treatment throughout the world.

What communication initiatives would you like to share with the GSN during the Danish presidential term?

Sune: Water is a priority in our communication right now. So is the need for ensuring openness and transparency in the European Council's work. We are also hosting a main event and smaller celebrations nationwide to commemorate 20 years with Natura2000 and LIFE.

GSN 2011 Successes and Outlook for 2012

The Green Spider Network (GSN) meets to discuss best practice and communication opportunities that allow members to better share, access and use information. During 2011, the GSN gained new members, released five Newsflash newsletters and presented the Communication Initiative of the Year Award at its 2011 Annual Meeting's best practice competition in Copenhagen, Denmark.

The meeting highlighted notable environmental campaigns and projects happening across Europe, and ways in which the GSN can collaborate with companies, governments and the general public. It was also a chance for members to meet and greet new observers who joined the GSN in 2011.

Information and Communication Assistant Ewa Lindkvist works in the DG Environment's



communication unit and currently manages the European Commission's relationship with the GSN. Ewa remarks that, "Environmental policy can only ever be as good as its implementation; and good networking is the gateway to successful implementation. That's where the Green Spider Network comes into its own. By facilitating the exchange of information and cooperation between Member States, and reporting back on awareness-raising issues on the ground, the Green Spiders have a vital role to play in boosting the implementation agenda".

This year, the GSN hosts its 2012 Annual Meeting in Berlin, Germany from September 26th to 28th. The meeting will be an opportunity for members to once again come together to network and share knowledge on how to better increase public awareness and education on environmental issues in Europe.

EECN Secretariat

Assistance is provided through the EECN secretariat, currently run by the French company BIO Intelligence Service. Apart from practical support to the network, the Secretariat actively disseminates best practices to a wider public through the EECN Newsflash, and the EECN and Green Spider Network websites.

Subscribe to the EECN Newsflash

The EECN Newsflash covers environmental communication and awareness-raising issues and initiatives in Europe. The Newsflash is released every two months and distributed to more than 350 subscribers in and outside Europe. Recent topics have included the celebration of LIFE's 20th anniversary and a feature on the 2011 winner of the European Green Capital Award.

If you wish to subscribe to the EECN Newsflash, send a request to the EECN Secretariat at EECN_Secretariat@biois.com.

View past issues of the EECN Newsflash at www.ec.europa.eu/environment/networks/news_en.htm.

The Green Spider Network



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