



**COMMUNICATION PLAN**  
**First version communication plan for the**  
**EU Platform on Coexistence Between**  
**People and Large Carnivores**

June 2015



## **COMMUNICATION PLAN**

### **First Version**

This plan was drafted for the Platform members with the assistance of adelphi Consult GmbH and Callisto, as part of the services provided to DG Environment of the European Commission for Service Contract No. ENV.B.3/SER/2014/0036. It does not necessarily reflect the official view of the European Commission.

Visit the platform at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/carnivores/coexistence\\_platform.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/carnivores/coexistence_platform.htm)

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# 1. Background and objectives

This document provides the first step in development of a communication plan for the EU Platform on Coexistence Between People and Large Carnivores (referred to as the Platform from now on). The intention of this first version is to elaborate messages for the Platform to communicate to interested parties on the EU level and to their own members. The aim is that these EU-level actors will also transmit messages to those working on or affected by coexistence issues in the Member States.

Platform Members are expected to actively contribute to development of the plan by ensuring that it reflects their common views and to implementing it. They will use existing communication channels to transmit Platform messages and encourage a broader discussion of them by stakeholders and the general public.

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## 1.1 Situation Analysis

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### Background

By the mid-twentieth century, the numbers of large carnivores in Europe had reached a historical low point and the future of wolves, bears, wolverine and lynx seemed bleak. In recent decades, numbers have begun to recover. The latest assessment (Chapron *et al.* 2014) of the population status of each species shows that large carnivores are present across mainland Europe (with the exception of the Benelux countries and Denmark) and stable or increasing populations exist across one third of the continent.

The reasons for the recovery include protective legislation, supportive public opinion and an increase in suitable habitat. The results of the above-mentioned paper suggest that large carnivores do not need pure wild land and that coexistence with humans in agricultural and peri-urban areas is possible. Legislation includes the EU Habitats Directive which applies to all countries within the EU. All European countries are also parties to the Bern Convention which provides broader protection both within and outside the EU.

Management of large carnivores in conservation terms alone however is not simple. They range over large areas meaning that management in individual protected areas or even on the Member State level is likely to be ineffective (Linnell *et al.* 2008)<sup>1</sup>. Threats to large carnivores include fragmentation of habitat through infrastructure development; disturbance; lack of tolerance leading to hunting and poaching; forest and prey management. For certain populations, which are small and remain highly threatened, these problems are amplified and any mortality can have a disproportionately large impact (Linnell 2013)<sup>2</sup>.

Once political, social and economic questions are taken into account, the situation becomes even more complex. Governance structures are not in place to manage large carnivores

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<sup>1</sup> Linnell, J., V. Salvatori, L. Boitani, *et al.* (2008) Guidelines for Population Level Management Plans for Large Carnivores. Large Carnivore Initiative for Europe for DG Environment.

<sup>2</sup> Linnell, J. (2013) From conflict to coexistence? Insights from multi-disciplinary research into the relationships between people, large carnivores and institutions. Large Carnivore Initiative for Europe for DG Environment.

across borders (Blanco *et al.* 2012)<sup>3</sup>. As numbers have increased, especially in areas where populations were previously low or extinct, socio-economic conflicts with humans have increased and there is a lack of agreement between different interest groups about how large carnivores affect the lives of people coexisting with them and the best solutions to situations of conflict.

## Response

The European Commission has recognised that in order for conservation of large carnivores in the EU to be successful, the stakeholders most affected by them must be involved in decision-making. For this reason, the European Commission has funded a number of projects on large carnivores and has organised several stakeholder workshops. The first workshop took place in January 2013. It showed that while viewpoints were not as extremely polarised as many thought, there were differences in views particularly between conservationist and livestock managers and hunters on certain issues. These included what the future distribution of large carnivores should be and their current impact on rural lives and livelihoods. At the second stakeholder workshop in December 2013, the process towards establishing a regular exchange platform on large carnivores was started.

In June 2014, the then EU Environment Commissioner Janez Potočnik launched the EU Platform on Coexistence between People and Large Carnivores at a high level meeting with the eight organisations who have signed up: CIC – The International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation; COPA-COGECA – European Farmers and European Agri-cooperatives; ELO - European Landowners' Organization; EUROPARC Federation; FACE – The European Federation of Associations for Hunting & Conservation; Joint representative of Finnish and Swedish reindeer herders; IUCN – The International Union for Conservation of Nature, European Union Representative Office; and WWF – World Wide Fund for Nature, European Policy Office. In order to become a member of the Platform, these organisations signed an agreement<sup>4</sup> which is described in more detail below.

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## 1.2 EU platform on Coexistence between People and Large Carnivores

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The mission of the Platform is:

“to promote ways and means to minimize, and wherever possible find solutions to, conflicts between human interests and the presence of large carnivore species, by exchanging knowledge and by working together in an open-ended, constructive and mutually respectful way.”

Platform members have agreed a number of key principles:

1. Working within the EU legal framework: The EU's Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) is the overarching legal instrument for the conservation and sustainable management of Large Carnivore species at a favourable conservation status in the EU.

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<sup>3</sup> Blanco, J. *et al.* (2012) Towards a population level approach for the management of large carnivores in Europe. Challenges and opportunities. Large Carnivore Initiative for Europe for DG Environment.

<sup>4</sup> Agreement to participate in the EU Platform on Coexistence between People and Large Carnivores : [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/carnivores/pdf/Agreement\\_LC\\_Platform.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/carnivores/pdf/Agreement_LC_Platform.pdf)

2. Ensuring the necessary knowledge base: Any management of large carnivores must be determined on the basis of sound scientific evidence using best available and reliable data.
3. Recognition of socio-economic and cultural considerations and concerns: Human societies have the right to use their natural resources and preserve cultural heritage in a sustainable way within multifunctional landscapes, of which large carnivores are an integral part. The contribution of economic activities to the values of those landscapes has to be recognised. The need to ensure public safety should also be recognised.
4. Solutions to conflicts through constructive dialogue among stakeholders: Finding solutions arising from conflicts with large carnivores and facilitating human-large carnivore coexistence is best achieved through constructive dialogue among key stakeholders at local, national and EU levels. These solutions should be adapted to local and regional conditions.
5. Engagement in trans-boundary cooperation: The vast majority of the populations of large carnivore species in the EU have ranges that cross national borders. Therefore national solutions will not work in isolation without meaningful stakeholder dialogue involving trans-boundary cooperation within the EU, and where appropriate, with neighbouring countries, taking into account, inter alia, the Guidelines for Population Level Management Plans for Large Carnivores.

They have also agreed ways of working together:

- Sharing their experiences and expertise in addressing the challenges of human and large carnivore coexistence;
- Engaging in dialogue for consensus seeking and accepting that solutions may at times involve compromise;
- Expressing willingness to transfer and test those examples of good practice
- Listening to, and discussing other stakeholders' experiences and views;
- Being open to accept examples of good practices for successful coexistence of humans and large carnivores
- Ensuring their capacity to fully engage in the work of the platform.

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### 1.3 Communication efforts to date

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The Platform has now been established for a year and have set up a process for issuing joint press releases on issues of common interest. A Platform flyer to promote the Platform's activities has also been agreed. This communication Plan provides the next step in agreeing joint messages.

The European Commission and individual Platform members have also worked both individually and together on communicating messages about large carnivores. Members should use the forum of the Platform to promote their own activities on large carnivores to build up a shared forum for information. This will allow the Platform to establish itself as a go-to source of information for recent activities regarding large carnivores.

## 2. Targets

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### 2.1 Objectives

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Platform members agreeing to work with one another and the European Commission is an important achievement in itself and puts us on the track towards an establishment of an open dialogue about coexistence of Large Carnivores with humans in the EU. Nonetheless, there is still work to do to ensure that the stakeholders represented by the Member bodies are fully included in and accept the outcomes of the work of the Platform. Some members have experienced criticism from their own members for joining the Platform. While in some cases this may reflect deep-seated and strongly held views on large carnivores which are more difficult to overcome, in many cases, it may be due to a misunderstanding about what the Platform is attempting to do. In these cases, communications about the Platform's work are likely to give the highest returns.

A key aim of the communication plan is therefore to encourage a broader acceptance of the Platform's agreement amongst the membership of member organisations (stakeholders affected by carnivores on the ground). The plan will therefore aim to build upon the Platform agreement using the mission and principles as a basis for its key messages. In addition, the plan will aim to establish the means to promote the Platform's work programme and share the successes of working together. In particular, this should focus on practical means to enhance opportunities for coexistence between people and large carnivores on the ground.

In this way, the Platform should facilitate a two-way exchange of information: stakeholders with positive messages about how to resolve conflict with large carnivores will act as ambassadors in their area for change. Their messages will be passed to their representative organisations on the Platform who can then amplify the message, spreading it to members of the Platform but also passing it back through their own membership to stakeholders in other localities who may face very similar issues.

In order for the Communication Plan to work, all Platform members need to be actively involved in development of messages and their transmission through their communication channels. The following cross-cutting objectives have been identified. Communications coming from the Platform should aim to:

- Establish a clear sense of what the Platform agreement is, who it involves and why they are working together;
- Create a sense of ownership and a feeling that their voices are heard for all actors and establish a sense of pride in the work they are carrying out together;
- Ensure that the Platform resource centre (website) is regarded as a reliable source of unbiased information which accurately represents the views of all stakeholders
- Promote best practice examples on the website which are used by stakeholders.



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## 2.2 Target audiences

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The Platform members are responsible for deploying messages through their networks. As a starting point, EU actors and Platform members own member organisations will largely be targeted by Platform communications. Message transmission should be a two-way process with Platform members receiving information from their membership about the situation according to particular interest groups or in particular locations, discussing these issues as a group and communicating the results of their work together.

### Multipliers

The multipliers will be the main target of Platform messages. Since the Platform communicates in English and does not have the resources to translate all messages, they are reliant on transmitting message to their members and those active on the EU level. Multipliers include the following:

- Member organisations of Platform Members;
- Policy makers (EU and national) responsible for decisions on large carnivores;
- National administrators responsible for large carnivore management;
- Scientists and NGOs working on large carnivores on an EU and national level;
- The media (mainstream and specialist).

### End users

The end users are the final target of communication activities: those directly affected by large carnivores in their locality as well as the wider general public. These can be subdivided in a number of ways e.g. geographically (areas with carnivores and areas without); urban-rural public; employment. It should be noted that there is no assumption that all within a particular group will think in the same way and have the same opinions regarding large carnivores. Indeed many individuals may belong to more than one category in a particular area.

Nonetheless, since the main communication channels are provided by the Platform members, it will be possible to target messages at their members and their members' members who are largely divided by employment / interest. Messages may also be differentiated by geographic location. We have therefore followed this approach below.

Target audiences can be broadly divided as follows:

- the general public
- rural people in areas with large carnivores
  - more specifically
    - farmers, livestock producers;
    - reindeer herders;
    - hunters;
    - foresters;
    - landowners;
    - conservation managers working on the ground, local NGOs;
    - those involved in infrastructure projects affecting large carnivores;
    - national / regional policy makers and administrators.

### 3. Communication strategy

#### 3.1 Communication SWOT analysis

The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of communication about large carnivores by the Platform are described below.

**Table 1. SWOT analysis of the Large Carnivore Platform**

Strengths of working together	Weaknesses of working together
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members have agreed to work together – necessary to move forward work on the coexistence between people and large carnivores</li> <li>• Knowledgeable expert networks available with good positive examples of work on large carnivores</li> <li>• Networks of ambassadors from all stakeholder groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members may have difficulties agreeing to meaningful messages</li> <li>• Members may not all contribute to the distribution of messages and provision of positive examples – danger of appearing biased</li> <li>• It may be difficult to distinguish between facts and the viewpoints of different interest groups</li> </ul>
Opportunities provided by working on large carnivores	Threats caused by working on large carnivores
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large carnivores are a charismatic species – they attract attention including from the media</li> <li>• Large carnivores can be a source of cultural pride and innovative economic opportunity</li> <li>• The opportunity of promoting messages about large carnivores can be used to attract attention and mobilise resources to tackle other issues in rural areas and look at potential solutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direction taken by media difficult to control – sensationalism</li> <li>• Large carnivores can be a source of social and economic problems and the ensuing conflicts together with other pressures on rural communities may hinder transmission of messages on good practice.</li> <li>• Large carnivores may be used by different interest groups as a scape goat or symbol for issues that have little to do with the animals themselves</li> </ul>

In order to ensure the weaknesses do not prove to be serious and the threats are not realised, it is important that members of the Platform are fully engaged with communication efforts and an agreed process is followed before messages are communicated.

#### 3.2 Strategic guiding ideas

The main narrative of the plan is around establishing a better understanding of the Platform and promoting its work. The following strategic guiding ideas are relevant. These cross a

number of areas including ways of working together and more practical means of communication.

Strategic guiding idea	Exploration
<b>Ways of working together</b>	
Different interest groups working together on large carnivore issues is desirable	It is clear that if different interests do not work together, views will remain polarised and progress on coexistence will remain slow. Collaborative projects should be highlighted on every governance level from the EU to the local.
The views of all interest groups will be considered seriously	Unless all groups believe that their viewpoints are valued, they are unlikely to participate willingly in initiatives on coexistence. While viewpoints may in some cases be polarised, every interest group must be given the opportunity to share their views and experiences.
Messages need to come from the Platform members	The Platform will achieve nothing if stakeholders do not believe that the messages are coming from its members. They need to take an active part in developing and disseminating them.
Messages should come from the closest source to the target audience	Geographically closer sources to target audiences are likely to be more trusted. For example, a livestock breeder is more likely to trust his or her local branch of a farming union or local well-known figures than a more remote umbrella organisation in Brussels.
Large carnivores should not be used as scapegoats for other problems or as political symbols	Many other problems in rural areas can be projected on to large carnivores. Equally large carnivores are valued more highly by conservationists because they are charismatic and have a symbolic status. Communications from the Platform should focus on the real benefits and problems caused by large carnivores portraying large carnivores as they really are – wild animals.
Small steps forward should be welcomed	It should be recognised that the signed agreement itself is a great achievement and that reaching a common understanding on some issues will take longer. So long as the Platform members continue to actively discuss the issues faced by stakeholders, the Platform is achieving something.
<b>Ways of communication</b>	
Differentiation of	The Platform can target messages most easily at the

<p>messages for different target groups</p>	<p>EU and Member State level through EU and national media and communications with their members. In order to interact on the local level, a more specialised approach needs to be taken approaching member organisations of the Platform Members and encouraging them to communicate with their regional offices.</p> <p>The following end users can be targeted to some extent at least by Platform members: farmers, livestock producers, reindeer herders; hunters; foresters; landowners; conservation managers working on the ground.</p> <p>The following groups will be more difficult to target in this way: those involved in infrastructure projects affecting large carnivores; local administrators; rural people in areas with large carnivores; and the wider general public.</p>
<p>Division of awareness raising into phases.</p>	<p>It is important that time is allowed for discussion within Member Organisations. It is suggested that awareness raising is divided into the following distinct phases:</p> <p>Phase 1: Preparation and agreement of the communication plan</p> <p>Phase 2: Awareness raising about the Platform and existence of the agreement</p> <p>Phase 3: Awareness raising about the more difficult aspects of the agreement principles</p> <p>Phase 4: Sharing practical measures aiding working together and coexistence (following examples given by stakeholders)</p> <p>Phase 5: Awareness raising on objectives / goals and achievements</p> <p>Phase 6: Evaluation</p>
<p>Messages brought to life through action</p>	<p>Key messages will only be useful if they are linked to real actions on the ground. The benefits of working together need to be demonstrated e.g. through seeking funding opportunities for joint projects demonstrating how conflicts can be solved.</p>
<p>Communication tone</p>	<p>The main aim of the plan is to demonstrate the benefits of working together. Good news stories should therefore be prioritised and disagreements between members should not be articulated through Platform communication.</p>
<p>Media mix</p>	<p>A mixture of on and off-line media should be used in the</p>

	<p>communication plan. This can include the platform website, leaflet, mass media (TV, radio, newspapers), social media, members general mailings, specific mailings to particular member states / problem areas. It is important that linkages between the different medias are highlighted as appropriate (e.g. always refer back to the Platform website).</p>
<p>Initiation of messages and sign off</p>	<p>In order for the plan to be successful, it cannot be stressed enough that Platform members have to play the key role. If messages are not seen to come from the Members, the chances of them being accepted by the members' membership or the stakeholders on the ground is much diminished.</p> <p>The European Commission also has a key role to play in communications particularly where linkages need to be made to other sectors or communications are directed to Member State and local administrations.</p> <p>Messages need to be agreed between Platform members and the Commission before they are publicised.</p>

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### 3.3 Developing key messages

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In the early stages of the process, the Platform members agreed that the communication plan should develop messages based on the principles of the Agreement on the Platform. These principles have therefore been rephrased as "aspirational statements". They show the situation that the Platform should hope to reach should the agreement be widely accepted and actions undertaken to translate these principles to concrete action by their membership.

The right hand column is an attempt to kick-off the process of developing key messages. These messages are by no means complete and it is likely that some Platform members will contest some of them. They should be taken as a means of starting a discussion between members on what they can and cannot countenance at this stage in joint communications.

Not all key messages are not suitable for all stakeholders. During the process of developing them further, the stakeholder groups for whom they are most relevant need to be identified.

Aspirational statement	Further exploration and potential messages
<b>Stakeholders accept and work within the EU legal framework.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conserving large carnivores is part of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 and an objective of the Habitats Directive to which all EU member states have committed themselves to implement. This implies that the presence of</li> </ul>

	<p>large carnivores in the human-dominated landscapes of the EU will be constant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The EU Habitats Directive has certain margins of flexibility which can allow management to be tailored to national/regional circumstances. If a broad participation/involvement of all relevant stakeholders is sought on large carnivore management from an early stage, it is more likely to be successful than if policy is imposed from the top down without consultation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Large carnivore management is based on sound science</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research on carnivore numbers and locations indicate that modern European landscapes offer suitable space for large carnivores. Conservation of large carnivores does not require pure wilderness but is compatible with other land uses.</li> <li>• The range and size of large carnivore populations are not static but are likely to develop and change over time. This means that the conflicts and their solutions will also possibly need to change over time.</li> <li>• Scientific methods are tools that can aid management but concrete answers to every question cannot be expected through science. Value judgements also have implications for management decisions.</li> <li>• In order for all interests to have a sound understanding of the implications of scientific inquiry, both continued scientific research into carnivores and awareness raising e.g. in local communities and schools are important.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Socio-economic and cultural considerations and concerns are recognised</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large carnivores can cause a range of economic and social conflicts including predation of livestock, competition for prey and destruction of property. For some groups they are perceived as a threat to their way of life.</li> <li>• Large carnivores can bring benefits to people including more diverse landscapes, tourism benefits and other ecosystem services. They are part of the natural fauna of Europe. They also have a symbolic value to many people as well as a worth in their own right (intrinsic value).</li> <li>• Mutual understanding / compromise is needed from all Platform Members and the interest groups that they represent.</li> <li>• Case studies taken from diverse localities can highlight means to prevent, manage or reduce conflicts. Solutions to conflicts (both modern and traditional) are out there and need to be better communicated.</li> <li>• Rural communities including livestock herders,</li> </ul>

	<p>farmers and hunters may need various types of support (technical, exchange of knowledge, structural, financial) in order to work towards neutralising and removing the root causes of conflicts. EU funding mechanisms exist which can be used to facilitate conservation and conflict reduction or elimination.</p>
<p><b>Constructive dialogue between stakeholders is supported.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The European Commission is working towards fostering dialogue. It values and listens to the views and experiences of a range of stakeholders.</li> <li>• The Platform offers a means of promoting dialogue / mutual understanding and making compromises not only at the EU level among the Platform Members but also between their members and the stakeholders active in the field, by facilitating dialogue and encouraging cooperation.</li> <li>• Coordination is needed on the range of governance levels from local to the European scale. Feedback between the different governance levels and different interest groups should be dynamic in both directions and not about “winning” or “losing” the argument i.e. about who is right or wrong.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Transboundary cooperation for large carnivore management is in place.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A large scale population approach is needed to coordinate diverse local measures within a larger frame. The Guidelines for Population Level Management Plans for Large Carnivores offers useful advice/recommendations on how to coordinate the biological management of transboundary Large Carnivores populations.</li> <li>• The Key Actions for Large Carnivore Populations document contains further recommendations about what could be done at the different levels, including the population level. Connectivity of populations is needed for long term biological viability.</li> <li>• Coordination is needed on the political level by ensuring that jurisdictional bodies sharing a population work together.</li> <li>• While agreement is needed on a large scale, there still needs to be scope for adaptation to local conditions in a large-scale plan.</li> <li>• Cooperation needs not only to be transboundary but cross-sectorial. Policies related to agriculture, forestry, transport energy, tourism and even education and research need to be coordinated for successful action on large carnivore conservation and / or coexistence with humans.</li> </ul>





## 4. Communication instruments

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### 4.1 Channels of communication

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Below a number of channels which could be targeted by the Platform members themselves have been identified. Platform members should also encourage membership to identify channels for further communication.

It is important that communications are cross-referenced e.g. printed materials should refer back to the website and the website should link to press releases distributed by the Platform.

#### **Platform website**

The website will be developed as the main source of information about the Platform including case studies and Frequently Asked Questions which can be consulted by a wide range of interests.

#### **Case studies**

While the case studies will form a part of the resource centre of the Platform (the website), they should be considered separately. They have additional potential for awareness raising in that the act of gathering them itself provides an opportunity for links with multipliers and even end users.

#### **Flyer**

A flyer describing the Platform and its agreement is planned. This will be a means of introducing stakeholders in different member states to the Platform and its work at events, etc. For this reason, the flyer will be in every EU language.

#### **Events**

A plenary meeting and two workshops are planned in the Platform's first year. For logistical reasons, the workshops are likely to be linked to other events organised by Platform members. It is important however, that they focus on questions of importance to the Platform and its work and are branded as being organised by the Platform members with the engagement of all of the members.

#### **Mailing to members / members websites**

Most of the Platform members have websites, newsletters, social media presences which can be utilised to distribute messages from the Platform. It is likely that these will initially reach multipliers who can then distribute messages further to end users.

#### **Mass Media (newspaper articles, radio, TV programmes, social media)**

The Platform may decide that certain messages need wider distribution and may target particular mass media sources or social media as appropriate. It is most likely that local and specialist press will be targeted most successfully through multipliers (such as members own membership).

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## 4.2 Differentiated targeting

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As laid out in the strategic guiding ideas, communication methods are multifaceted and different interests need to be approached in different ways. The table below indicates the means by which multipliers and end users can be targeted.

Channel	Multipliers	End Users
Platform website	X	
Case studies	X	(X)
Print materials	X	(X)
Platform events	X	X
Radio / TV / Newspaper (EU)	X	
Radio / TV / Newspaper (National)	X	X
Radio / TV / Newspaper (Local)		X
Specialised press	X	X
Social media	X	(X)
Mailings from interest groups	X	X

### Targeting multipliers

The Platform is likely to mainly communicate through multipliers rather than directly with end users. This is easier as they are more likely to be aware of EU level actions and pay attention to EU level media sources.

Members have particular responsibility for communicating with their own membership in the different Member States. They should themselves identify the best means to do this (whether through their websites, newsletters or Annual General Meetings). They should work on identifying geographic localities where communication is particularly urgent and concentrate efforts on reaching the media there.

### Targeting end users

End users will not be targeted directly through the Platform resource centre and EU-level communication. Language barriers alone will prevent this as well as the remote nature of the information source. The most relevant sources for farmers, livestock producers, reindeer herders, hunters, foresters, landowners and conservation managers working on the local

level are likely on the broadest level to be similar: national and particularly local press, TV, to some extent social media and events in their area. Specialist press will be important and will differ between the different interests groups. The Platform members also have an important role to play in encouraging mailings from their member organisations with relevant content.

More difficult to reach groups include the general public who will only be reached through mass media (newspapers, TV, radio on the national or local level). Those involved in infrastructure projects which potentially impact carnivores are also difficult to reach and a specialised approach would be needed if these are regarded as an important target group for example by identifying umbrella bodies and specialist press and communicating with them.

### **Geographic targeting**

Particular messages may be identified as being especially relevant in particular geographic locations whereas others will be relevant for all stakeholders. It is important that targeting of each message is considered early, before it is distributed and the appropriate channel of communication identified.

## 5. Communication process

### Agreement of messages

It is important that a process is established for agreeing Platform messages. Communications can be proposed by all Platform members. The Platform chairs have responsibility for ensuring that all Platform members have agreed a message before it is more widely distributed. In order to do this, time needs to be built into the process as Members need to consult their own members and discuss internally. However, this should not be used as a delaying tactic for preventing distribution of messages. Set times are proposed below. These however, should not be set in stone but agreed as appropriate according to the message to be distributed. In the case of very uncontroversial content, shorter times can be envisaged. In the case of long reports, longer times may be necessary. If a message has a particular deadline (e.g. for an event) members should be prepared to take that into account.

The following workflow is proposed:

- Message proposed by Platform Member / European Commission
- Message sent to all Platform Members
- Members have 2 weeks (time to be discussed) for internal consultation on message
- Members send comments to Platform chairs (ELO and European Commission)
- Comments are compared and message adjusted if needed
- Final message sent to Platform Members
- Members have up to 1 week (time to be discussed) for internal consultation on message except in the case that serious changes have been proposed in which case more time should be given. For minimal changes a day or two should suffice.
- Platform chairs sign off final message
- Message sent out through identified channels (website, news release, members' bulletins, etc.)

### Platform identity

Messages coming from the Platform should clearly be identified as such. So far, no logo has been adopted by the Platform but consideration could be given to doing so in future.

## 6. Timeplan

The table below gives a first overview of the suggested time plan. Key events should be taken into consideration, in particular the plenary meeting which takes place in June. The workshops will also act as key awareness raising opportunities. Other events which have the potential to be used to raise awareness should be identified. These could for example, include Green Week and the Natura 2000 Award Ceremony as well as events organised by the Platform Members.

Communications roughly divide into communications regarding the existence of the Platform and its aims (the main focus up to the plenary meeting) and communication on the content of the agreement (the main focus for the second half of the year). It is likely that there will be overlap between the different phases. Some messages will probably be agreed much more easily than others. Where agreement is difficult, this should not act as a barrier to communication on areas in which agreement has already been reached.

Case studies will be gathered over the course of the project. Promotion of them may be carried out in phases depending on the topic to which they pertain, the member state, how well tested they are, etc.

The timetable should be refined and updated over the course of the project to allow coordination with workshops, political events and release of new information on carnivores.

Phase	Description	Estimate timing
1	Preparation of the communication plan and Platform flyer	February-June
Plenary meeting – 2. June 2015		
2	Awareness raising about the Platform and existence of the agreement	June-November
3	Awareness raising about the more difficult aspects of the agreement principles (key messages that need more detailed discussion e.g. socio-economic aspects)	September-November
4	Sharing practical measures aiding working together and coexistence (following examples given by stakeholders)	June-November
5	Awareness raising on objectives / goals and achievements	June-November
5	Evaluation	November-December

## 7. Evaluation and review of the communication plan

In any communication plan, it is important to include an evaluation of how successful the communication activities have been and adjustment to improve success. In this case, both the success of the overall communication plan and the success of the individual channels of communication will be evaluated.

In this first iteration, some parts of the current plan are not yet very developed and further input is needed from the Platform members as to their priorities. In order to ensure that the Platform is working from an up-to-date document, the plan will be reviewed (after major project milestones) to update it with the developments in the Platform work plan which have occurred.

In order to assess the likely effectiveness of communication activities, it is suggested that the contractors, DG Environment and the Platform members log the messages distributed and how they are included in the wider press. This will include:

- Updates, news items etc. on the Platform website
- Number of hits on the Platform website
- Online press coverage (monitored e.g. through use of google alerts)
- Number of likes / comments on DG Env social media posts related to carnivores
- Feedback from stakeholders (solicited at Platform events).

This information together with copies of press articles (where available online) will be collected together in a media overview document to be included in the contractors' final report.