Europass Communications Toolkit

Guidelines

December 2019

1   Introduction

This Europass Communications Toolkit is provided by the European Commission for National Europass Centres, and other stakeholders, to support effective collaboration and communication of the launch of the new Europass platform.

This first draft of the toolkit will be updated in the lead up to the public launch of the new Europass platform (tentatively scheduled for end May 2020).

The purpose of the toolkit is to support a collaborative approach to communication, and to ensure that we communicate as one brand, while ensuring flexibility to communicate in a way that relates to local audiences.

1.1   What is included in the Europass Communications Toolkit?

The toolkit contains:

Strategic guidelines for using the toolkit (Section 2)

Guidelines for using digital templates for the following communication products (section 3):

- Poster
- Bookmark
- Rollup
- Business card
- Ad-boxes
- Campaign signature

These specific products have been chosen because they are some of the more effective 'printables' in recent times.

See the attached **style guide** for the details on use of colours, font and shapes for each digital template.

Draft texts including sample press releases, and other content, will be added to the toolkit in early 2020.

1.2   Why this approach?

Europass is an existing popular brand with millions of users who have used it in a specific way. To take advantage of the existing popularity that Europass enjoys, a good communication plan is important. Europass's value is connected to its presence in the memory of users. If people remember Europass, they will use it when the need arises.

The templates provide the basic essentials for consistent communication such as a standard visual style and mood.

A project that targets EU wide audiences that encompass many cultures, age groups, digital literacy levels, requires extra effort to ensure that the Europass is communicated as a single brand albeit with national priorities and circumstances.

Promotional material that follows a single design principle and fundamental key messages will help achieve a brand identity and brand value without compromising on connecting at the local levels. Your role, as a promoter and multiplier, is to express and message in your language and in the style that your community needs as you understand them the best.

Europass, as a tool that benefits individuals, should reach that level while holding on to its European identity. This toolkit is also an economical approach as it can be fit for purpose and printed as the need arises. This document provides guidelines on how to use the promotional tool kit in an optimal way based on communication principles and best practices.

2   Strategic guidelines

Here are a few guidelines to help use the toolkit in an efficient and effective manner. These are not strict instructions but rather a support document.

2.1   Build your messages

A number of key communication messages for the new Europass will be circulated in January 2020. These messages contain aim to demonstrate both added value and emotion.

For example, if the key message is: **Showcase all your achievements on Europass**

The emotion attached to it is: **Pride**

The added value here is: you will be able to **present all your achievements, in whichever setting you've obtained them** - be it formal, informal or non-formal.

The messages are provided as inspiration for national centres and stakeholders to define suitable messages for your national context. One particular recommendation is to include statistics or other factual information within key messages.

The Commission will also use these messages in EU level promotion activities.

2.2   Identify added values to highlight

Europass offers many benefits such as:

- Users can capture all dimensions of their life related to learning, career and more
- Europass is free and available in 29 languages
- Europass helps users' achievements to be understood across the EU
- Users will be able to self-assess and reflect on their skills
- Europass is interoperable with other education, training and labour market tools
- Users can receive, store and share Europass digital credentials

Choose the most relevant for your national context or in each specific communication opportunity and the target audience you are promoting Europass to. Highlighting and repeating this particular benefit/added-value is a time-tested successful method of promotions.

2.3 Select relevant products

Choose the right product for the right moment. For example:

When you **participate in an event** that attracts job seekers: Europass business cards to distribute to interested individuals;

If you have **a stand at an event**: Print out the rollups and posters to brand your stand; or

If you are at a **small workshop**: you can distribute the bookmarks and business cards to encourage people to visit the Europass website.

2.4 Choose the right channel

Choose the right channel for your product. A high percentage of young people are on social media. All the communication products that are provided in the tool could be printed or used online on your webpages, for a tweet or for Instagram. Use a digital version of the poster with a tweet or as an Instagram post to reach them.

Ad boxes can be used for promotion in popular online media outlets in your country or for print media depending on the audience segment you want to reach. All the visuals can also be used on social media on your national Europass website or webpages. You can create quick original images with a little bit of creativity and brandish it with the campaign signature to highlight the Europass brand before publishing it on twitter, facebook to Instagram.

Even the most effective message can end up being useless when used on the wrong channel.

2.5 Repeat

Repetition of messages is not only a good thing, but it is also a very effective strategy to gain attention when used optimally.

You can use the same messages on the various promo material by just tweaking them to suit the product.

Take time to build, define and optimise your messages. Instead of trying to cover all the key messages or added values, choose wisely for your specific audiences, the national context, and the communication opportunity.

3   Guidelines for using digital templates

Standard digital templates for a number of communication products (poster, bookmark, rollup, business card, ad-boxes, campaign signature) are provided in the attached style guide. Some elements of the visual will be fixed and some will be editable.

Please refer to the style guide for the details on use of colours, font and shapes for each digital template.

Visual Identity

The new Europass will draw its brand identity from the use of colours and the brand name with a deliberate use of specific colours and shapes.

The EU flag with the label Europass together (font style: NotoSans semi-bold) will be used instead of a logo. This can be used in two different versions (see attached **Style Guide**).

The colour pallete has also been elaborated with specifications on the gradient variations that can be used.

Another design element that adds value to the brand identity is the use of the "disruptive" shape and slants in various ways in all Europass-related products – the website, social media visuals, promotional toolkit and videos. These designs are inspired by the new Europass homepage and presented in the style guide. See 'Graphic Elements' in the **Style Guide**.

Poster

A poster will be seen by people for a few seconds only, so make it count. The poster is only effective if at least one of the elements can be recalled easily.

Do	Do not
• Add only very essential elements such as the message and your contact details • Draft simple, crisp and positive messages that will stand out. Identify one effective keyword for each message for your poster. For example, **job, free, easy to use** • Europass- the brand name should be the most prominent element	• Get too creative with the message • Cram in too much information • Use over-decorative fonts • Over-shadow the brand name with the other elements that you may add • Use jargon

Bookmark

Bookmarks are a good alternative to flyers as they are useful and need not be thrown away. They are compact and convenient to carry. They can be distributed to a wide range of audiences and contain the most relevant information for the relevant audience. Bookmarks can also be used as tickets to events you may organise or a voucher for a Europass competition at a promotion event.

Do

- Branding should be prominent
- Add information rather than a key message
- Modify and use it as a ticket by adding a number and the specific event details
- Use it as a voucher to make give-aways more interesting and effective

Business Card

Business cards are very effective in face-to-face settings, workshops, and conferences as they are compact and cost-effective.

You can always carry a reserve around and hand one out every time you talk about Europass to potential users or stakeholders. Give more than one to people who you would identify as multipliers or influencers.

Do	Do not
- Minimal information – just the Europass URL and if needed your name and centre's address can go a long way - Use them to encourage potential users to visit the new Europass	- Do not cram personal contact details as this serves as a compact alternative to a flyer. The URL to the platform and the name Europass should suffice - Don't add any communications messages on this card. A simple call to action such as "Visit Europass" with the URL is more effective

Roll-ups

Roll-up banners are the ideal way to communicate your brand message to an audience in a professional and creative way. A roll-up can be used for presentation and display at fairs, events or at the office. It is an excellent tool for communicating a message at an exhibition or fair.

Do

- Highlight a key message
- Add a call to action, e.g. "Visit" or "Try" Europass to find a great volunteering opportunity!
- Add additional information such as interesting adjectives if needed but ensure that 80 percent of your banner should be visual rather than text
- Print in high-quality
- Place it in a strategic location
- Use large size text

Campaign signature

This is a branding element used to identify all communication products that belong to the new Europass communication campaign. The campaign signature will include the URL to Europass and the hashtag.

Do	Do not
Use for social media visuals that you create for Europass;	Although it is an essential element for all of Europass promotional element, it should not be the most prominent;
Use it on giveaways that you may produce;	It is a signature and not a logo
You could add it to emails, articles, newsletters or content that you draft for Europass	Don't add any other content to the signature.

3.1.1 Sample texts (to be shared in early 2020)

The Commission will provide sample texts for promoting Europass among the media, such as a draft press release or article on Europass. The media is always on the look-out for news and texts will be shaped in a way that it can pique the interest of journalists for you to then add the local context.

But the more important aspect of this dimension of communication is to build relationships with local media. Try to contact the press and invite them to events that you organise for example, so they are made aware of the new Europass and consider including them in the news around the big launch. Journalists are also pleased if you can send them ready-to-use content. So the draft press-release and articles will be a base for you to build your own texts that will match requirements of the local media.

You can also use these drafts as an inspiration to write your content for your website. Here are some tips for good web writing:

➢ **Scannability**: highlight words that you want your reader to see when they just scan over the text. Which terms stand out for you after you close this document?
➢ Use **hyperlinks** with anchor text: You do not have to explain all the terms in your text, if it is already present in a good credible source, link it to that page. Use sensible text that will explain to you your user, where they will get to when they click on that link rather than click here or read more. Example: Read more information on some best practices for web writing.
➢ **The first paragraph** is the most important: Write the most important information first, treating it almost like a news article. Focus on that point which is most important for the reader to know. Unlike usual writing where you have a general introduction and then you get into specifics, web pages should have the specifics first and then launch into details, so if the reader is interested to know more, they can scroll on.
➢ Use **headings and sub-headings (H1, H2, H3....)** to divide long texts and provide meaningful headings rather than creative ones.
➢ **Use short** sentences and **simple** language. Jargon should be linked to a glossary or other credible web pages.
➢ Identify 2 -3 **keywords**, when you are writing about a specific topic, try to imagine what an average user (or a majority of users) may be looking for in order to get this information and fit these words into your text organically (do not force them in or stuff with keywords). The keyword should be placed in the page title, first paragraph and if possible somewhere else in the text. This will support the findability of content on search engines.
➢ **Use lists** (bullet or numbered) rather than a long sentence listing many points.

4 Using Social media

Twitter

The target audience segment is 18-49 years old with good digital skills[1]. 70% have some higher education and the twitter community is increasing in Europe each year. Twitter is being used increasingly to market and communicate with customers in the EU[2].

Basic guidelines to manage a professional Twitter account

✓ Draft tweets in simple language, use keywords as hashtags if relevant;

✓ Use visual elements with every tweet. It could be a photo, a gif or short videos. Most high engagement tweets have a visual element. You can create visuals and simple videos using supporting online tools such as canva[3] or biteable[4]. Example: a sample video made in 10 minutes with biteable: https://biteable.com/watch/europass-sample-video-2225261;

✓ Use emojis - they are a great way to convey emotion and shorten your text for tweets. However, inform yourself about ambiguous emojis[5] before using them so you do not convey the wrong message.

✓ Shorten links using bit.ly or other similar tools to save characters;

✓ Use the right hashtags. Apart from the quintessential #Europass, think about creative ways of integrating relevant and trending hashtags within your tweets to boost visibility. For example #MondayMotivation, #lookingforwork or #WednesdayWisdom. You can also search for the most trending hashtag if relevant try to integrate it creatively within the tweet;

✓ Retweet interesting tweets that you come across in the context of Europass related topics;

✓ Tweet at least 1 or 2 times a day. You can schedule them in advance if you have a well-planned editorial calendar;

✓ Identify active tweeps (your followers) who engage often, interact with them, like and share their good tweets, @mention them on your tweets if they have many followers;

✓ Repeat, retweet reinforce! Repeating your message or retweeting earlier tweets is actually a good practice in the twitter world as the time relevance is measured in minutes and seconds;

✓ Create lists of influencers and multipliers you want to monitor and engage with. Use twitter management tools to be alert and responsive to the trends in your twitter community; and

✓ Use Social media management tools to keep yourself updated and in line with fellow

---

[1] https://www.omnicoreagency.com/twitter-statistics/
[2] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Social_media_-_statistics_on_the_use_by_enterprises
[3] https://www.canva.com/, Last accessed on 09/04/019
[4] https://app.biteable.com/, Last accessed on 09/04/019
[5] https://emojipedia.org/people/, Last accessed on 09/04/019

Europass accounts (other national chapters and the main account). Example: Tweetdeck, Hootsuite, crowd booster, union metrics and so on;

✓ Listen to the numbers. Twitter analytics tells a lot about what works and how to improve your tweets. Pay attention to specific tweet metrics and monthly reports.

Facebook

Facebook reaches an audience segment that may overlap with the twitter community but has a wider age group reach and some different useful characteristics. The audience demographic ranges from 13-65+ and includes those with school education up to those with higher education.

Better collaboration with other national accounts is crucial to create a stronger community. The communication working group is moving in the right direction by changing the account to a Facebook page which will provide better statistical insights of the audience. Some additional measures like creating a watch list of national Europass Facebook accounts will assist better cooperation and sharing of information and best practices.

Basic guidelines to manage a Facebook page

✓ Although Facebook allows long posts, it is best to keep it brief but they can be longer and have more details than tweets;

✓ Visual elements are also a big plus for Facebook posts. Images, videos, and GIFs can be reused between Twitter and Facebook;

✓ Language should be simpler than twitter and suited to the wide range of audience age groups;

✓ Draft posts so it can be shared on Twitter and Instagram with minor tweaks;

✓ Use interactive posts like polls or questions;

✓ Regular posts are important on Facebook but 1 post per day is already a good amount as time is relatively slower on FB than on twitter;

✓ Facebook has some nice paid perks like boosting posts which are low cost and effective;

✓ Use page insights to identify the strengths and weaknesses of your posts and adapt accordingly;

✓ Follow and add all national Europass accounts to be able to share content and repost;

✓ Pay attention to the time slots to post on the page. Time optimisation is important for all social media posts;

✓ Be informed about the latest Facebook newsfeed algorithm;

✓ Schedule posts in advance;

✓ Use appropriate profile and cover photos that define the Europass brand;

✓ Be responsive;

✓ Use Call to Action button to drive traffic to the new Europass.

Instagram

Instagram is an excellent platform to communicate with multilingual audiences that the new Europass caters to. The use of Instagram as a communicative tool holds endless possibilities. Although it is a younger audience group that uses Instagram, its popularity is increasing with a wide spectrum of audiences. Telling stories with images and videos is appealing to a variety of people and this trend should be utilised to its fullest extent. This channel is a good platform to experiment with user-generated testimonials or such content to tell stories.

Basic guidelines to manage an Instagram account

✓ Use images creatively, filters labels, fun but relevant captions - try and experiment with the possibilities on the app;

✓ Create instastories to engage with audiences. Simple stories with a creative twist are the secret to popular stories. For example a short video with snapshots of an expert workshop or events that the Europass team participates in;

✓ Optimize posts according to your users' most active time slots;

✓ Use hashtags and location tags to boost visibility;

✓ Plan and schedule your Instagram stories;

✓ Measure the performance of the stories and posts.