EC VISITORS' CENTRE

'VIRTUAL' VISITS

Frequently Asked Questions

'Physical' visits to the Experience Europe Visitors' Centre have been postponed until a later date. The EC Visitors' Centre is offering 'virtual' visits, and has prepared some FAQs on the procedures to follow when requesting a virtual visit to the European Commission, or when speaking.

What is a virtual visit?
A 'virtual' visit to the European Commission (EC) is a videoconference between designated speakers organised by the EC, and a group (e.g. students, journalists etc.).
Virtual visits allow groups to participate in a visit, from wherever they are, eliminating the current barriers of accessibility, providing a new level of communication.

How does it work?
The person requesting a virtual visit (Group Leader) registers his/her request on-line on the Visitors' Centre website. The Group Leader is the Contact person between the group and the responsible visit organiser, who is normally also the 'host' of the visit.

Is it necessary to respect the deadline of 10 weeks in advance, when requesting a visit?
During this particular period, it is not necessary to respect the 10-week deadline for requests. When introducing your visit request on the website, you can by-pass the automatic 'warning' message by introducing a 'fictitious' date. Your actual preferred date should be indicated under the tab '*Details and Motivation'.*

What is maximum/minimum number of participants?
There is no real limit. However, virtual visits with groups of 10-20 have proved more interactive.

What is the maximum duration of visit and number of speakers?
Ideally, a virtual visit should not last more than 2 hours. This could be, for instance, 2 presentations of 30 minutes each, leaving with ample time for questions and answers, and maybe a break in between speakers. This general recommendation does not exclude tailor-made solutions, such as an option to spread the program over 2 days, with a 2-hour program each day.

Which application should be used for the videoconference?
The European Commission currently uses WebEx.

Do I need a WebEx account to participate in a meeting?
The participants are not required to have an account. The Visitors' Centre (host) will send the Group Leader an invitation to participate, by email, in advance. The Group leader, in turn, will forward this email 'invitation' to all the participants. Participants simply click the link 'Join The Meeting', in the email, to initiate the visit. See YouTube video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fE5FnEUKtaE

Do I need to have a WebEx account to be a Speaker in the virtual visits?
No. The Visitors' Centre (host) will send the Speaker an invitation to participate, by email, in advance. The Speaker simply clicks the link 'Join the Meeting' to initiate the visit.

How does a group prepare in advance for the actual visit?
The Visitors' Centre visit organiser will test the connection with the Speakers and the Group leader prior to the visit. Group leaders, in turn, should also do a test with their group's participants.

Is there a way to learn more about WebEx, in advance?
There are many videos about WebEx on YouTube from which to choose.

What about data protection and privacy?
Just like a 'physical' visit to the EC, we take data protection and participants' privacy seriously. For this reason, participants are informed in advance, as part of the invitation, of the possibility of screenshots being taken during the visit for communication purposes. Participants can therefore avoid this, in case they do not agree, by muting their camera. At the beginning of the meeting, the same message is repeated orally. Participants that do not want to be "screen-shot" can switch off their cameras and contribute nevertheless with full audio interventions (if they so wish).

And a little feedback from the virtual visits organisers of the Visitors' Centre...

To Participants
- participants will be informed by visit organiser about the technical details; microphones should be muted to improve the quality of the connection
- cameras can remain switched on, for better visual interaction, unless poor quality connection/privacy reasons
- participants will be informed about the "raise hands" tool and the possibility of sending messages via 'chat'

To Speakers
- speakers can ask for questions to be sent in advance, to help them prepare their PPT
- test in advance, the best way to share your PPT on screen, with visit organiser
- PPT can also be sent in advance to participants, if speaker so wishes, to help prepare for the visit
- the dress code is smart casual
- neutral, uncluttered 'background' behind the speaker, which is visible to participants, is recommended