New ESS v1.0 release note

Wednesday, 1 August 2018

1 WHAT IS NEW

The **Europa Search Service** (**ESS**) is the **centralised European Commission search engine** that enables users to find public information on a particular subject published on EUROPA websites without having to know in advance which specific EU website or department is hosting the information.

ESS is continuously improved based on user needs, the latest developments and best practice in search engine optimisation (SEO). This release introduces some major changes and improvements to the search engine, including a full redesign, new and improved infrastructure, social media content, faster indexation, a new API (for full control of the indexed/rendered content) and new features, such as 'related documents'.

2 INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADE

The ESS is released on a completely new infrastructure based on multiple highly configurable and scalable virtual machines.

The new infrastructure improves the performance of the service in two ways:

- **index time**: only 1 day from publication by the webmaster to availability in the search engine
- **query time**: results are returned in under 2 seconds.

3 FEATURES UPGRADE

3.1 New ESS API module

The new ESS API component was designed to offer better control of the data entered into the engine and better configuration of the additional meta-information associated with this data, such as relevance, language and classification.

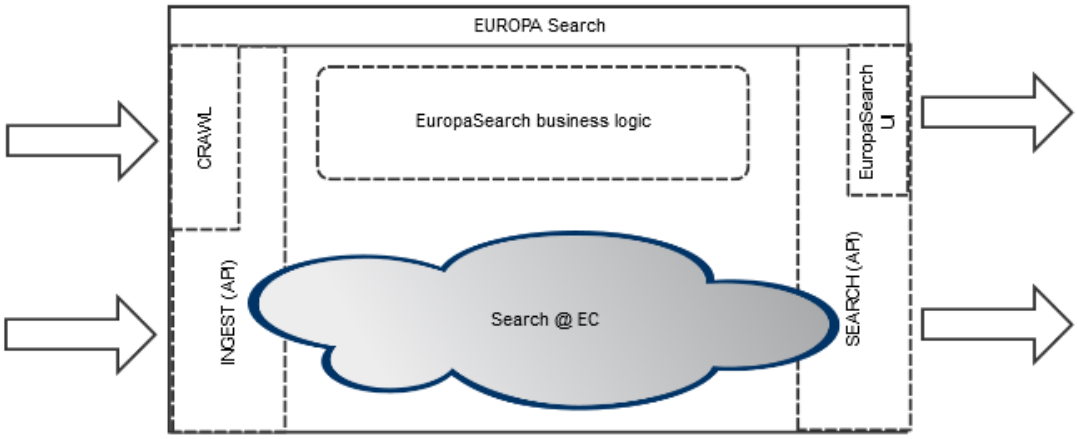
The ESS API is a **platform agnostic** component that overlays the engine backend. More specifically, the content management system (CMS) or websites will always communicate with the engine through the ES API layer which then sends the incoming request to the engine in the backend. The engine could be any product on the market, e.g. an HPE search, Elastic search or Solr solution. The webmaster will always interact with the ES API without needing to adapt the search functionality based on the

backend engine technology used. The end result is that content can be entered and made available to users faster than with the old version.

The ESS API also allows Create, Read, Update, and Delete (CRUD) data operations.

It is a Representational State Transfer (REST) service that aims to:

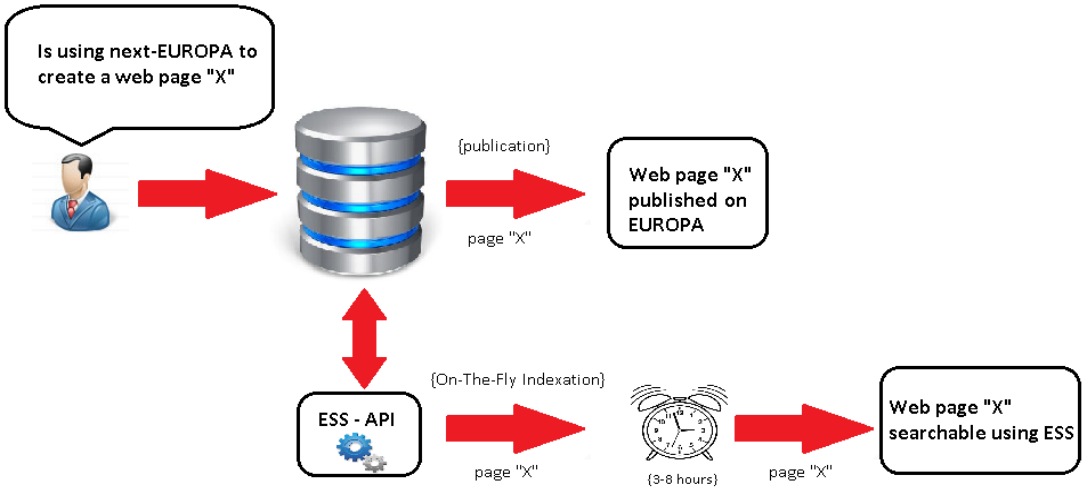
- improve/speed up the way data is indexed into the ES system (push-based approach or 'on-the-fly indexation'). With this approach, index time is reduced to 1 hour
- provide different ways to get results from the ES system. For example, through the API it is possible to:
    - obtain raw results which can then be incorporated into the layout of that specific website
    - present the results through a centralised solution that currently uses the official and standard EC/EU templates available on the IPG website.



Once the ES API is integrated into the Europa platform (to become available with Drupal 8 roll-out), the webmasters will be able to push web content in a more optimised way to the search repository, as well as display the results within the site using the ES API.

3.2 On-the-fly indexation

The new API, once integrated into the website's backend, is able to automatically index the published web content.
The figure below summarises how the API should operate in relation to Europa platform:



3.3 New design

The ESS user interface (UI) has been redesigned to comply with the official and standard EC/EU templates available on the IPG website: COMMISSION TEMPLATE or INTERINSTITUTIONAL TEMPLATE.

3.4 Social media integration

Content coming from Twitter is now indexed and is part of the search results. Facebook results are not currently being indexed due to privacy changes triggered by the Facebook–Cambridge Analytica data scandal which means ESS social media components cannot index content coming from that platform.

3.5 Thematic customisation for DGs not yet using EWCMS

For DGs not yet under Europa CMS, this offers the freedom to define specialised/multi-layer areas of interest that will enhance their web presence under the EUROPA search service.

In agreement with DG COMM, DGs can define this extra information within their web pages or through file-system documents (e.g. PDF, OFFICE suite). Then the ESS will automatically process this data and make it available for the ESS implementation of the specific DG.

3.6 Compatibility

All site-level searches in the ES system will also run in the new environment by pointing to the new URL put in place for ESS. In addition, the new system supports both **http** and **https** protocols. Based on your site's definition, you have available four options:

- http://ec.europa.eu/search
- https://ec.europa.eu/search
- http://europa.eu/search
- https://europa.eu/search

For further information and more detailed instructions please contact COMM EUROPA MANAGEMENT.

3.7 Related Documents v1.0

This feature shows documents that conceptually match the text of each individual search result.

After performing a search query, related documents appear under the 'Related docs' dropdown beneath each result.

4 WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

The following redirections will be put in place on 27 August 2018:

OLD URL	NEW URL
http://ec.europa.eu/geninfo/query	http://ec.europa.eu/search
http://europa.eu/geninfo/query	http://europa.eu/search

This will be followed by decommissioning of the old infrastructure. Therefore, **all websites must be using the new ESS by 27 August 2018**.

The action you need to take depends on the way your website uses search:

1. Sites using the Europa Search at global level

Please update on your site the URL value in the searchbox code so that the new environment can be queried. Follow the table below based on the domain where your site is located:

OLD URL	NEW URL
http://ec.europa.eu/geninfo/query	http://ec.europa.eu/search
http://europa.eu/geninfo/query	http://europa.eu/search

2. Sites using the Europa Search as restricted search

Please update on your site the URL value in the searchbox code so that the new environment can be queried. All the parameters declared inside the searchbox form

(for the tags <input>, etc.) should remain. To update the URL, follow the table below based on the domain where your site is located:

OLD URL	NEW URL
http://ec.europa.eu/geninfo/query	http://ec.europa.eu/search
http://europa.eu/geninfo/query	http://europa.eu/search

Please contact COMM EUROPA MANAGEMENT if none of the above scenarios apply to your site.

5 FUTURE PLANS

- Achieve 1-day latency on indexing and use latest HPE components in order to improve performance and offer more powerful functionalities.
- Enable indexation of content coming from Facebook and see if any of the other platforms available in the 'Social Networks' page of the European Union site can be used.
- ES API integration into the Next-Europa platform.
- Autosuggestion – offer text suggestions when entering keywords/terms in search box. A specific database model will store the indexed document titles which will then be used by the feature.
- Related Documents v2.0 – provide dynamically-proposed results based on similar searches performed by other web visitors on the same topic or using related document links.