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**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

Communicating Europe in Partnership

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Introduction

The debate on Europe must be taken beyond the institutions to the people at large. It is only with a properly conceived, adequately resourced and democratically executed communications policy that this will become possible.

It is precisely with this goal in mind that the Commission decided to reform its approach to communication and to put communication with the citizens at centre stage. Three key communication policy documents have set the framework for substantial improvements in existing communication activities and prepared the scene to launch new ideas, including the White Paper on a European Communication Policy which aimed at strengthening the EU's emphasis on communication work and proposed a new, more citizen-centred and decentralised approach¹.

The Commission is now proposing a European Communication Policy to consolidate the reforms of the Commission's internal structures of communication launched under the Action Plan²; to give continuity to the dialogue with citizens initiated by Plan D³; and to translate the expectations formulated during the consultation process on the White Paper into action⁴.

The Communication on "Communicating Europe in Partnership" uses the results of the above initiatives to consolidate current activities and to formulate a set of concrete proposals which should serve as the basis of an enhanced European Communication Policy. It sets out the aims and the main fields of action for an integrated and forward-looking EU communication policy, including citizen-oriented policy content based on listening and public consultation as well as strengthening a partnership approach with other EU institutions and bodies and Member States and involving them in the process of communicating European issues.

The Commission therefore proposes to act in three interconnected ways:

- Reinforcing its communication activities by providing clear information, adapted to national, regional and local contexts, and by promoting active European citizenship;
- Developing a European Public Sphere by reinforcing cross-border communication on European policy and by promoting structures that can strengthen European political debate and its media coverage;
- Reinforcing partnerships and coordination among the EU institutions and bodies and Member States.

¹ Progress reports on the Action Plan, Plan D and the White Paper are part of this Impact Assessment.

² See Annex I.

³ See Annex II.

⁴ See Annex III.

The proposals made are pragmatic steps on the way. Actions proposed in the communication reflect the suggestions flowing from the White Paper as well as the subsequent public consultation and stakeholder conferences held in 2006 and 2007. They build on synergy with other Commission initiatives, including those promoting transparency and openness, a Europe close to the citizen, active European citizenship, and European culture.

Finally, the communication makes preliminary proposals on the institutional framework best suited to taking forward this policy in a coherent manner, proposing the setting up of an Inter-institutional Agreement (IIA). The Commission and all other institutions will maintain their institutional prerogatives, and communication on EU issues will benefit from reinforced synergies.

1. SECTION 1

1.1. Procedural issues and consultation of interested parties

During a period lasting from the publication of the White Paper until January 2007 (30 September 2006 for web-consultation) individuals and institutions were able to comment on and discuss the main ideas put forward in the five chapters of the White Paper. By 30 September 2006 the Commission received over 550 contributions. The majority of the responses came from individuals (423), with 139 comments made by institutional actors, including 18 Member States, regional and local authorities, municipalities and the EU institutions. All the texts given free for publication (313) have been made public on the dedicated website http://ec.europa.eu/communication_white_paper. The stakeholder conferences were covering all chapters of the White Paper and were held in cooperation with other EU institutions and specific interest groups. Overall, most contributions from both the web-consultation and the stakeholder conferences translated into practical recommendations for the Commission to put into its forthcoming communication strategy. In addition, the White Paper provided for a series of public opinion surveys, with a view to complementing the opinions expressed in the public consultation and comparing them with the results of the polls.

1.2. Institutional procedure

An Inter-Service Group was established, and the draft communication with its annexes was discussed extensively on a number of occasions. In addition, several rounds of discussion were held with the relevant services in bilateral meetings, and also in the Commission's External Communication Network (ECN).

1.3. Opinion of the Impact Assessment Board

A draft Impact assessment was submitted to the Impact Assessment Board on 17 April 2007. The comments DG COMM received from the IAB have been all taken into account, and on 15 May 2007 the IAB issued its final opinion (enclosed).

1.4. Data used

The data used in the Impact Assessment comes from the two Flash Eurobarometer surveys of November 2006, on-line public consultation and the four stakeholder conferences.

2. SECTION 2

2.1. Problem definition

The main problem is lack of knowledge of the European Union, very often due to limited commitment of the EU institutions and Member States. This fact stays in clear contrast with growing information needs of the citizens provided with information of insufficient quality and quantity.

In consequence, active participation of citizens in European affairs is low and support for the European Union has deteriorated steadily in the recent past. While most people acknowledge the global importance of the Union, the majority of Europeans do not feel that the EU has a significant impact on their lives in that 42% perceive significant personal effect, while 54% do not share this impression.

(1) Levels of political participation vary from country to country in the Union. Obviously, different patterns can be observed concerning how citizens in specific Member States express their opinions. In European democracies, for the majority of citizens, political participation is confined to voting in elections, especially local or national elections: 77% of Europeans claim to vote in their national elections. In comparison, the actual turnout of the 2004 European Parliament elections remained at 45,6%. Other forms of political participation in Europe are of marginal interest. In each EU Member State, where three out of 10 Europeans signed a petition, and only a quarter contacted a politician or government official. During the past three years, only one of every five EU citizens took part in a public demonstration. Only 8% reported some work associated with political parties or activist groups, while 16% claimed they are active in some other organisation with a political agenda. About 8% of Europeans, of at least 21 years of age, do not participate in politics at all.

(2) The heart of the issue in regard to EU level participation, besides the fact that there is only moderate interest in participating in politics of any kind, seems to lie in the logistics. 78% percent of European citizens are not sure about the structure of the EU and uncertain as to whom they could turn to if they had an issue or concern. They do not know who is making the decisions. For two-thirds of Europeans, it is unclear personally who represents them in the European Parliament (66%).

(3) Nevertheless, more than eight out of every ten Europeans feel that it is important to be informed about European issues (only 18% of citizens say it is not important). On the other hand, even though close to two thirds of Europeans think that available information on the EU is useful and interesting, almost as many people find it insufficient and only half of them find it understandable.

However, European dimension clearly lacks in national debates. Citizens expect governments to help them understand what the EU represents and how it impacts their lives. In 25 Member States, the plurality of citizens (36%) hold the national government responsible for informing them about what the EU is doing and how this affects their daily life (EP 14% and Commission 7%). Three-quarters of the EU citizens believe that their government should provide more and better information on EU matters (73%).

The same applies to the media. Almost two-thirds of Europeans share the view that the EU-related information provided by the national media is "too little" (62%). Only about a quarter of European citizens think that the information they receive is just about the right

volume. A small proportion of the EU population (5%) say they receive excessive information about the EU.

3. SECTION 3

3.1. Objectives

The central objective is to empower citizens to be better informed on the European Union in order to voice their opinions on European affairs. To this end, the Commission will reinforce its communication activities by providing information adapted to national, regional and local contexts, promoting active European citizenship and contributing to the development of a European public sphere.

Internally, the Commission aims at effective and integrated action of all its services and strives for a full mobilization of available resources in a coherent manner so as to achieve the best possible impact.

Externally, the Commission, while fully retaining its institutional prerogatives, intends to work in close partnership with the other EU institutions, Member States and all interested stakeholders and multipliers around selected annual communication priorities.

Individual action will be targeted at the most appropriate specific groups. For example, action in the field of promoting active citizenship will focus on general public, especially on young people, schools and civil society. Action by the Spokesmen Service will focus on journalists and activities of the Pilot Information Network's (PIN) on decision-makers.

4. SECTION 4

4.1. Policy options

Currently the Commission's communication activities are based on the Commission's institutional prerogatives which constitute the "legal base" for the execution of the budget.

The White Paper suggested two measures to guide information and communication activities on European issues and engage all actors in a common commitment: a Charter or Code of Conduct on Communication. From their part, Member States, the European Parliament and civil society have called for future communication action to be anchored in a more structural framework. In the result of the "Communicating Europe Together" conference in Berlin the following options emerged:

- Continue as in the past on the basis of the Commission's prerogative powers;
- Set up an Inter-institutional agreement (based on the existing prerogatives);
- Set up a community programme based on a legal base;
 - With reference to Article 308;
 - With reference to Articles 308 + 151;

- In the event the text on the Constitutional Treaty were to be reopened for negotiation a specific article on information and communication policy could be introduced.

5. SECTION 5

COMPARING OPTIONS

5.1. Institutional framework for communication

5.1.1. *Charter or code of conduct on communication*

The White Paper suggested two measures to guide information and communication activities on European issues and engage all actors in a common commitment: a Charter or Code of Conduct on Communication. During the public consultation the idea of a Code of Conduct has been discarded by most stakeholders. On the other hand, a Charter has been found not ambitious enough as an aim of communication policy.

5.1.2. *Maintaining institutional prerogatives*

Currently, EU communication policy is not anchored in any treaty and all communication activities are based on Article 49 of the Financial Regulation. The EU-Institutions must all maintain their autonomy and prerogatives to communicate in their own way. But there is also considerable room for them to work together as partners in promoting debate and discussion on Europe. Up to now it has been difficult to work around a common message and to develop a real trans-national debate.

Key actors of this debate must be structurally provided with adequate information in order to organise activities, meetings and events simultaneously in different Member States. That is why a closer collaboration between the EU-Institutions and bodies and the Member States is crucial. However, an overview of the communication initiatives on EU issues in Member States exemplifies that, although numerous and broadly focused, action is planned only ad hoc and reflects short-term, mostly national, priorities, while neglecting general information on the European Union. Financing of EU communication is very often limited and comes in a rather uncoordinated way. The visibility of such communication activities is therefore limited.

5.1.3. *Setting up an Inter-institutional Agreement (IIA)*

To enhance the current situation where EU communication activities of various actors are uncoordinated an Inter-institutional Agreement (IIA) could provide an appropriate institutional framework for better cooperation on the EU communication process, while respecting the autonomy of the EU institutions and bodies and Member States. The IIA would anchor the political commitment of the EU institutions and bodies and Member States to take the responsibility to inform and communicate with citizens on EU matters. Such a political agreement would highlight the main principles and rights to be respected in communicating Europe, ensure synergy and define modalities of cooperation among the partners involved, ensuring proper monitoring and political accountability.

This option has got clear support from the European Parliament (Report Herrero) and the Commission services and has been developed in close cooperation with the SG, SJ and DG BUDG.

5.1.4. Setting up a Community programme on communication

A possibility was explored of setting up a programme on communication based on Article 308 or 308 and 151. In theory, such a programme would be complementary to the actions that fall under the prerogatives of the EU institutions and Member States. However, for various reasons, this concept was discarded by the European Parliament and a number of services. In the prevailing opinion, with communication budget implemented under the institutional prerogatives, a legal programme would have no advantages. Even if objectives of such a programme were welcomed, a need for a less formal instrument was expressed.

5.1.5. Inserting a specific article on communication in a new treaty

A specific article on information and communication policy could be introduced and serve as a specific legal base for a future programme on communication. In such a case the programme would encompass a wide range of tools falling under the responsibility of DG COMM and not only focus on support for specific action as proposed currently. However, this option has been discarded due to the character of the ongoing "Reform Treaty" process.

5.2. Value added of an IIA

The added value of an IIA will be reflected in the following aspects:

- Establishing a structured dialogue between the Commission, Parliament and Member States on communication activities and priorities
- Steering the communication process on a multi-annual basis,
- Strengthening the commitment of all interested Member States and institutions,
- Enhancing visibility of communication activities of all actors.

5.3. Empowering citizens

There is a public desire for a more open debate, where citizens have the right to express opinions and be heard. On the other hand, the European Union needs to develop appropriate structures, means and competences to fulfil its obligation to ensure that adequate information is available.

5.3.1. Going local

The experience of the implementation of the Action Plan and Plan D has proved that "going local" is essential for providing appropriate information and engaging citizens in a European debate. The pilot project reinforcing eleven of the Commission's Representations in the Member States and four of their regional antennas with additional staff has enabled a step change in the number and quality of their activities in promoting debate, discussion and engagement on European issues within national political cultures.

It will also be the case of the European Public Spaces, created in the common premises of the Commission and the European Parliament. Limited additional resources would be necessary to carry out the project from 2008, the second year of the pilot phase. This pilot phase would allow the selected locations to anchor a citizen-oriented communication approach, attract new audiences and create a new visual image – in particular targeted at the younger generation. The main effort should come from the reorganisation of existing allocations. The Commission would ensure that the necessary

budgetary and financial means are available for the pilot phase (as regards the Representations). The activities planned in 2007 will all be financed with existing resources. In 2008, a supplementary 0,8 million have been already earmarked. Further resources would proceed from retargeting existing resources. As regards staffing levels, the total number would remain at current levels. In addition, the European Public Spaces should be equipped with proper facilities. Common features would include a conference centre, an information office, an art exhibition area and a reading area.

Following the conclusions from Berlin, the communication will address the issue of networks. The role of Commission networks at national, regional or local levels is not to convey top-down messages, but to facilitate access to information and improve the conditions for communication. Closer coordinated action between these centres will enhance the Commission's capacity to communicate as this type of horizontal communication, i.e. the exchange of views and experiences within (and between) social groups, professions, sectors, regional or local actors can usefully complement the vertical (top down) information flow.

5.3.2. Active European citizenship

Education and training for active citizenship is the responsibility of the Member States. In 10 Member States, peoples' rights and duties as European citizens are part of the school curriculum, and in 20 Member States, the history of European integration is included. The Commission already supports civic education on European citizenship through the "Europe for Citizens", the "Fundamental Rights and Citizenship" and other programmes which promote an active European citizenship and encourage greater participation in the EU's democratic life.

Competence to understand and contribute to policy decisions at European level differs from the competence to participate in local or national politics. The White Paper underlined the role of existing European programmes which provide educational and training opportunities and create fora for public discussion. Also connecting the citizens and public institutions by making the EU more responsive, open and accessible was found essential for communication. During the public consultation, and particularly at the stakeholder conference with civil society in Bergamo, these ideas have been confirmed and developed.

5.4. Developing a European Public Sphere

Many of the political decisions that have a significant impact on the day to day lives of Europeans are being taken at European level. If EU policy-making is to have a broad democratic legitimacy, then communication and debate about it needs to go beyond national boundaries. This was recognised in the Laeken Declaration, in which the European Heads of State launched the constitutional process, and which underlined the need "to develop a European public area" to ensure democracy, transparency and efficiency of the Union.

There are many obstacles to the development of such a European public sphere, including those of culture, language and history. European elections, which could otherwise be the political expression of a European public sphere, have until now, remained largely second order national elections. Therefore, cross-border communication channels are required to promote debate and dialogue on issues of common concern according to a European agenda responding to the work of the Commission, the Parliament and the Council.

The Commission can make its contribution to developing these channels through proposals to develop the work of European political parties and involving national Parliaments in European issues, through its work with different media, and by improving its ability to listen and respond to cross-border public opinion.

5.4.1. The political dimension

National and European political parties, and their elected representatives, are in a privileged position to raise European issues in national debates and to contribute to creating cross-border public debates across Europe. In recent years, there have been a number of high-profile examples of public interest in European policy issues generated by party political and electoral divisions over them (for example, the Constitution, enlargement, Services Directive). The Commission will support this process, and is backed by Article 191 of the Treaty and by the Regulation on European Political Parties.

To support initiatives by the European Parliament to organise debates between European and national politicians, the Commission will create the Pilot Information Networks (PINs).

The media and information services

75% of Europeans look for information on TV. Two-thirds of them believe that EU-related information provided by the national media is insufficient. As it was clearly stated at the stakeholder conference in Helsinki, the Commission obviously has no intention to become a broadcaster and is fully committed to political neutrality in providing information. But it acknowledges the need for providing citizens with information, education and entertainment on Europe, as a public service mission, and will pursue its efforts to achieve greater and more sustainable coverage of EU affairs on existing audiovisual channels, and to encourage the networking of broadcasters at European level. The current communication is only announcing the issue and the Commission will put forward strategy papers to better respond to challenges related to new media technologies towards the end of 2007 and early next year.

5.4.2. Understanding European Public Opinion

The regular measurement of public opinion is central to the process of listening to what Europeans think about and what they want from Europe. It helps to analyse public expectations in various policy fields, to assess the impact of policies and to identify public concerns and misperceptions in order to improve policy-making as well as communication. Following the public consultation process, the Commission will implement several innovations in the methods used by the Eurobarometer, improve its consultation mechanisms and promote the Europe Direct Contact Centre as the main entry point for citizens seeking information on the European Union.

5.5. Reinforcing the partnership approach

National governments have a central role in communicating their policies to the citizens. Polling results show that citizens expect their national government to be mainly responsible for informing them about what the EU is doing and how this affects their daily life. Governments are also considered to be the number one responsible for taking into account people's opinions on the EU. More than two thirds of European citizens prefer to contact national services in matters regulated at the EU-level. The Commission can and should, however, provide valuable support. Close cooperation on many

communication related issues already exists between the Commission and Member States.

Clear support emerged from the consultation on the White Paper for wider partnerships between the EU-Institutions and Member States at national, regional and local level. On this basis, the Commission will seek to strengthen its partnership with actors at all levels. Partnerships with Member States were established already in the framework of PRINCE, particularly for campaigns on the introduction of the Euro, and materialised mainly in the form of partnership agreements between the Commission and a Member State. This agreement also provided for an association of the European Parliament representative. Regarding the Euro, this system was followed in 12 of the 15 Member States, the level of funding depending on the commonly agreed communication actions. The Community funds were to serve as lever for the mobilisation of much larger sums coming from the Member States. The “management partnership” will become the main tool for joint initiatives between the EU and Member States. This approach will enhance on a voluntary basis the coordination of communication activities on EU issues, create synergies by pooling human and financial resources and avoid overlaps. It will also help to adapt communication to local circumstances and to link it up to national political agendas (such as elections, major national events, and specific interests).

6. SECTION 6

6.1. Analysis of impacts

The new approach proposes a qualitative shift towards decentralisation of EU communication activities, reinforced dialogue with key stakeholders and a citizen-centred communication, with a view to strengthening public participation at European level. Consequently, actions should have impact on a large number of EU citizens.

The central objective of the communication is to empower citizens to voice their opinions on European affairs. European citizens have a right to accurate and relevant information on the functioning of the EU and its policies at all levels, through the medium and in the official language of their choice. They should be able to access and use this information to influence EU decisions.

In this regard, the initiative shall have a major impact on the increase of citizen awareness and knowledge of the European Union as well as citizen participation in EU matters. Further to this, the involvement of stakeholders in policy consultation will be encouraged in order to improve the policy-making process. Partnerships and coordination among key actors at all levels: EU institutions, Member States, civil society organisations, media and networks shall be reinforced. All actors and stakeholders will be treated with due respect for their diversity and autonomy.

The implementation of the proposed measures will positively affect public institutions and administrations, as the citizens' right to accurate and relevant information on the functioning of the EU and its policies creates a series of obligations for the Commission, and the EU, to listen and communicate effectively and democratically. Therefore, the individual's rights and relations with the public administration will be strengthened. Also the "going local" approach shall enhance public relations with EU institutions at regional and local level, particularly as it will obviously enhance the Commission's capacity to

deliver on linguistic diversity in the EU context. In the consequence, the public will be better informed about EU issues and their access to information eased.

Last but not least, all action proposed follows the principle of media independency and do not create any hindrances to media pluralism and freedom of expression.

6.2. Duration of the action and of the financial impact

The actions are planned for the period 2007-2013. During this period, the financial impact will not require to review the budget programming for Title 16 on the Heading 3b of the Financial Perspective as it is envisaged in the PDB 2008.

6.3. Summary of resources

The resources remain within the framework of the multi-annual financial programming, as established in documents SEC(2007) 500 and SEC(2007) 530.

7. SECTION 7

7.1. Monitoring and evaluation

The internal operational reporting system in place for existing activities will be extended to the new actions⁵.

Efficient evaluation of the impact of the communication policy could be done twofold:

- Through regular reports to the College by the Commissioner responsible for communication, done on a two-year-basis and focusing on the implementation of the described proposals measured via impact indicators;

On a political level:

- Through debate in the Inter-institutional Group of Information (IGI);
- Through a yearly political debate in the European Parliament plenary, as suggested in the Herrero Report of 16 November 2006.

The Inter-institutional Agreement will be monitored according to the procedure set in the agreement itself.

Concerning the European Public Spaces, a final assessment of this initiative will be made at the end of 2008. However, before that, it will be necessary to measure progress at regular intervals. It is therefore proposed that a first intermediate assessment will take place in September 2007, in time for input into the programming of 2008 activities by EP Information Offices and EC Representations. A further meeting would be organised in January 2008, once the annual management plans have been approved and the budgetary situation is clear to all actors.

⁵ For a set of 33 impact indicators see Annex IV.

ANNEX I

PROGRESS REPORT – "ACTION PLAN TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATING EUROPE"

1. BACKGROUND

The **main objective** of the *Action Plan to Improve Communicating Europe*⁶ was to ensure that the European Commission communicates more effectively about European issues and that all its departments adopt a modern, professional approach to communication.

With 50 concrete measures to be implemented throughout the Commission, the Action Plan represented the first step in a **new communication approach** based on the principles of **listening, communicating and connecting by going local**.

The Action Plan is being implemented in parallel with other Commission initiatives in the field of communication, in particular it dovetails with the *Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate*⁷)

2. IMPLEMENTING THE ACTION PLAN: MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

Less than two years after the Action Plan was launched, 48 of its 50 measures (see technical Annex with progress to date) have already been successfully achieved or are making good progress **according to the initial roadmap**.

2.1. Political commitment and ownership

- Since 2006, the College adopts annual **communication priorities** reflecting both the Commission's **political priorities** and the results of analysis of public opinion research and of media monitoring in Europe. Communication priorities have in fact become part of the Commission's strategic documents: the Annual Policy Strategy (APS) and the Commission's Legislative and Work Programme (CLWP). Focusing on these priorities enables the Commission to better plan and allocate communication resources, thus resulting in maximising our communication efforts. The most recent example was the promotion of the 10th of January package of energy and climate change, on which sustained communication is clearly contributing to developing support for the measures proposed by the Commission. It helps to engage key stakeholder groups within the EU in delivering the package and to secure broader international agreement, while at the same time it also demonstrates the added value of joint action on energy and climate change.
- Commissioners are getting progressively involved in communication activities beyond their own portfolio. The College regularly discusses communication issues and increasingly acknowledges the role of communication in policy formulation. It also considers planning of communication activities as a key element for political success.

⁶ SEC(2005) 985, 20.7.2005.

⁷ COM(2005) 494, 13.10.2005.

2.2. Increased coherence of the Commission's communication actions

- Of course the Commission continues to communicate with the public on all areas of EU policy, while concentrating its communication efforts and resources on key priorities. **Enhanced internal coordination** is yielding better communication results: recent examples of successful campaigns such as on roaming or on the wine reform demonstrated the fundamental role of planning and coordination among services.
- In this context, the **External Communication Network (ECN)** and the **Planning Ahead** group play a key role, respectively on general coordination and on exchange of best practices as well as on planning and coordination of medium term communication activities. Concerning communication priorities, this function is fulfilled by **project teams** made up of staff from DG COMM and from DGs responsible for the policy area concerned.
- Communication plans agreed between DG COMM and other DGs both on long term communication priorities and on medium term issues discussed at Planning Ahead, are based on the so-called "**catalogue**" listing communication services and tools available in DG COMM to assist the overall Commission communication efforts.
- All priority communication plans foresee **monitoring and impact evaluation** and in some cases, such as the "Single Market Review", an "ex-ante evaluation" will also help us to prepare the communication campaign.
- The above efforts are completed by those aiming at making staff more professional through more **training** on communication techniques and strategies. A specific communication on using "**staff as Ambassadors**" by providing them with guidance on speaking to the public or the media has just been adopted by the Commission⁸. Communication professionals will be recruited soon following the publication of a competition by EPSO – the staff recruitment office – in February 2007.
- Among other measures to improve communication to the public it is worth highlighting the inclusion of a "**citizen's summary**" for the Commission's strategic initiatives, explaining in plain language the tangible personal and societal benefits of these initiatives for the citizen.

2.3. Better use of tools

- In order to ensure the most efficient use of tools, including external expertise, an inventory of existing framework contracts in the information and communication field within the Commission has already been completed. On this basis a new **framework contract for integrated communication services** (covering all aspects of a communication campaign) is being finalised by DG COMM and will be available to all Commission services towards the end of this year.
- Our **audiovisual services** have been improved and promoted through the launch of a new AV portal.. Our **AV services** are producing more diverse content and seeking to cover EU activities to meet the requirements of an evolving market. The **EbS** (Europe

⁸ SEC(2007) 912, 4.7.2007.

by Satellite) news service is working at its full capacity with regards to existing resources **New audio and video formats** are being experimented and a dedicated channel (EUTube) was successfully launched on YouTube, the largest video sharing website in the world, in order to increase the visibility of the Commission on the internet and to distribute more widely its audiovisual material.

- Discussions are under way to appoint an overall editor for our **Europa web portal** as well as on giving it a true corporate image and having a satisfactory search engine. In addition, the EU news pages have been redesigned, as have the entry pages of the Commission Representation websites. Lastly, the new Commission homepage, introduced in 2007, features citizen-friendly current affairs articles in 22 languages and has attracted many more visitors as in 2006.
- We are also increasingly using new internet practices such as blogs, podcasting and e-polling in order to ensure that the use of internet is becoming more interactive: in 2006, as part of Plan D, we launched the "**Debate Europe**" site where people from across the EU exchange their views on European issues in 22 languages. The website, which registered over 1,300.000 hits, won the *European eDemocracy Award* last year.
- The impact of communication tools is progressively being used: an assessment of the communication impact of the EUROPE *DIRECT* information networks will be launched in late 2007. Meantime cooperation between the Europe Direct Contact Centre (EDCC) and other citizen information desks is growing. Currently formal agreements between DG COMM and DG's RTD and TRADE are in place whereby the EDCC has become the "front office" for citizens' enquiries on RTD and Trade matters. Similar agreements are being developed with other DG's and services.

2.4. The new role of DG Communication

- DG COMM adapted its mission statement and organisation chart to maximise delivery on the communication agenda and to assist other DGs on their communication efforts. Further fine tuning is necessary.
- The **Spokesperson's Service (SPP)** continues its pro-active media strategy. It improved both its strategic approach on **short term planning** through new agendas (News Ahead, Top News), increased coordination with Representations in the Member States and a more efficient **rebuttal function** through the initiative 'Helping the media get it right'. A coherent **crisis management** strategy is equally being developed and progressively implemented.
- There is now a greater focus in all communication activities on **going local**. Commission **Representations** in the Member States have played a key role in this new, decentralised approach, with an increased role both on the "listening" (more and better intelligence) and on the "communicating" (increased role vis-à-vis national and regional media and stakeholders) ends. Their increased capacity has been repeatedly appreciated by Commissioners and Commission staff.
- Key to this success was the pilot project which gave eleven Representations 50 additional staff, enabling "**pilot Representations**" to work more effectively with civil society, institutional partners and the business community, while continued to give

valuable support to Commissioners, the Spokesperson's Service and the DGs. As a result, last year these offices organised more than 830 seminars, issued over 4000 press releases, held hundreds of press conferences and helped arrange more than 370 visits by Commissioners. They also played a crucial role in establishing a dialogue on the way European policies affect different regions of the EU.

2.5. Adapting our means to our goals

- A first assessment (**screening**) of communication tools and resources within the Commission was already launched in 2006. This exercise has now been re-launched under the leadership of the SG and carried out by a working group composed of DG COMM, DG ADMIN, DG BUDG and the SG. It is due to be completed before the end of 2007 and should provide us with new guidelines on how to increase the efficiency and impact of communication actions.

3. CONCLUSION

- The implementation of the Action Plan is well under way and is gradually helping to change the communication culture within the Commission. Most Commissioners and services consider now **communication** as a **key element of policy formulation**. In parallel, better planning and enhanced coordination, including through actions at local level by Representations, have already begun to show good results in terms of reaching out to the citizens.
- Efforts still need to be made however to ensure that communication activities are given proper resources to ensure their success. One of the main achievements of the Action Plan is better planning. The selection of communication priorities and increased coordination between the different Commission services will ensure a more efficient use of resources, and will be instrumental to achieve the objectives of the Action Plan. To communicate successfully, the **Commission needs to act coherently**. An increased cooperation with the other institutions should also play a useful role in the overall communication efforts.

TECHNICAL ANNEX TO THE PROGRESS REPORT ON THE

Action Plan⁹

Implementation State of play July 2007

Action	Leading service Deadline	Steps taken / State of play / Comments	Further progress
<p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p>a) A regular point on “Communication” will figure on the Commission agenda.</p> <p>b) Commissioners will debrief the press about the outcome of Commission meetings.</p> <p>c) The programming of the College agenda will take into account communication aspects.</p>	<p>Commissioners + Director General</p> <p>SPP</p> <p>SPP</p> <p>By 2005</p>	<p>a) Action implemented</p> <p>b) Action implemented Press conferences systematically organised by Commissioners on key decisions adopted by the Commission.</p> <p>c) Action implemented</p>	

⁹ SEC(2005) 985.

<p style="text-align: center;">2</p> <p>A medium to long term communication agenda will be drawn up as a calendar of priorities</p>	<p>A.2</p> <p>By 2005</p>	<p>From 2007 and onwards, a more systematic approach has been implemented, whereby the College adopts its communication priorities, on the basis of established criteria and in line with the general political objectives, before the end of each year.</p> <p>Communication priorities for 2007 and 2008 have been incorporated to the Commission's APS and Legislative Work Programme</p>	<p>The College has identified 7 Communication priorities for 2008.</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p>a) Communication units in all Dgs will be involved from the start in the preparation of policy proposals</p> <p>b) The Delegations in third countries will be closely associated through the RIC.</p> <p>c) Spokespersons will agree guidelines for co-operation with the Dgs they cover in order to tailor the approach to the respective topical area and administrative environment based on a model established by DG COMM</p>	<p>SECGEN + all Dgs (through ECN)</p> <p>RELEX</p> <p>A.2 + SPP</p>	<p>a) Action implemented since second half 2006. Previously it was not systematic, on an ad hoc basis. Presentation by C. Sørensen to DGs and to ECN on July 6 and on 19 October 2006.</p> <p>b) In progress</p> <p>c) Action implemented. An overview of existing modus operandi between SPP and Information & Communication Units in DGs has been completed. Written guidelines have been adopted.</p>	<p>a) Follow up through ECN</p> <p>c)</p>
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	By 2005		
<p>4</p> <p>New mandate for the External Communication Network (ECN)</p> <p>(Communication units of all DGs)</p>	<p>A.2 + Dir. C</p> <p>By 2005</p>	<p>ECN has been revamped and a new mandate has been adopted. Since March 2005 it meets regularly (every two months on average)..</p> <p>Two ECN working groups (on communication tools and networks have been set up and have been meeting regularly) while WG 1 is now the Planning ahead interservice group and staff issues are now dealt with in the context of the ICN.</p>	
<p>5</p> <p>a) Streamlining Commission services' names and acronyms under a single presentation</p> <p>b) feasibility study to progressively streamline contact centres and information relays under a single umbrella.</p>	<p>DG COMM</p> <p>B.2 + C.2</p> <p>During 2007</p>	<p>COMM C2 has received the results of a Qualitative study commissioned at the end of 2005 (first, but not only one of its kind to be undertaken in this context); the purpose of this study was to collect the public's opinion about EU contact centres and info points, in particular expectations of potential users, preferences for physical contact points or telephone/internet services etc. In addition COMM/C2 is cooperating with a number of DG's in order for the Europe Direct Contact Centre to become a single front office for citizens' enquiries addressed to the Commission.</p> <p>A feasibility study to streamline contact centres and information relays under a single umbrella will be launched. The tender was published on 6th June 2007 and work is due to start in September 2007 and finish in March 2008.</p>	Results presented to WG 2.
6			

<p>a) Publicising consultations through “Your voice in Europe” web portal.</p> <p>b) Use and improve existing tools to collect feedback</p>	<p>SECGEN.B + C.2 + DG MARKT</p> <p>By June 2006</p>	<p>a) Action implemented, but the site “Your Voice” will be improved</p> <p>b) Action implemented. See also Actions 37 and 38</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">7</p> <p>a) Layperson’s Summaries</p> <p>b) Planning of communication activities should also be included in the roadmap, drawn up for Work Programme items</p> <p>c) Communication will be well integrated in the DGs’ Annual Management Plans</p>	<p>SECGEN +A.2</p> <p>SECGEN</p> <p>SECGEN</p> <p>By 2005</p>	<p>a) Action implemented on a pilot basis. Following consultations with SecGen and the Legal Service, new proposal under scrutiny. The Layman Summary would be produced by the services together with the Press Release and published on an internet page, accessible via the Commission Home Page, with direct link to Prelex.</p> <p>b) Action implemented</p> <p>c) Action implemented</p>	<p>A joint DG COMM / SEC.GEN note of March 2007 to other Commission services launched a pilot scheme where a summary is prepared for the 27 strategic initiatives in the 2007 Work Programme. The purpose of the pilot will be to identify what the summary should look like, who is best placed to produce the summary, and at what stage in the process of policy development it should be produced. The note provides guidelines as to how layperson's summaries should be drafted. "Layperson's summary" has been renamed "citizen's summary"</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">12</p> <p>Recruitment of communication specialists</p>	<p>D.2 + ADMIN + EPSO</p> <p>By 2007</p>	<p>Competition to recruit communication experts is on-going . EPSO has launched a call for applications specifically targeted to communication professionals. This was published on 28 02.2007</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">13</p> <p>a) DG PRESS renamed DG COMM. b) New mission statement c) New strategic function.</p>	<p>By 2005</p>	<p>Action implemented</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">14</p> <p>Creating a planning and coordination function</p>	<p>A.2</p> <p>By 2005</p>	<p>Action implemented with support of C2. See also Actions 2 and 19</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">15</p> <p>Creating a research and analysis function</p>	<p>A.3</p> <p>By 2005</p>	<p>Action implemented.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">16</p> <p>a) Use of focus groups in surveys. b) Adapt Eurobarometer to provide useful data on the priorities</p>	<p>A.4</p> <p>A.4 + + SPP</p>	<p>a) Action implemented.</p> <p>b) Action implemented.</p>	

<p>identified.</p> <p>c) Create a specific analytical tool to transform the flow of information from the media into qualitative and quantitative information and feed-back</p> <p>d) create a database of TV channels, written press, internet sites and other media outlets.</p>	<p>A.4 + D.4 + A.3</p> <p>Dir. C</p> <p>By December 2007</p>	<p>c) In progress. A call for tender is be launched in the second half of 2007; the terms of reference are being finalised.</p> <p>d) For a database of TVs, service contract (MAVISE) has been signed in December 2006 and will became operational in December 2007. Nothing is currently foreseen for the other media due to lack of resources.</p>	<p>d) DG COMM C to propose a method for the written press and the other media.</p>
<p>17</p> <p>a) Assess the impact of communication activities</p> <p>b) Create working group within the Evaluation Network</p>	<p>A.3 + D.1 + DG BUDG</p> <p>By 2007</p>	<p>The evaluation of the communication activities has started in the case of the Single Market Review. An ex-ante evaluation is intended to contribute to the preparation of the communication campaign activities, an ex-post evaluation will monitor the impact on the public opinion after the end of campaign. The lack of impact assessment has been pointed out in comments of most DGs on the draft Communication following-up on the White Paper.</p>	<p>Project teams can undertake an ex-ante evaluation of their communications strategies which is performed by an external consultant. Following a campaign, ex-posts evaluations are foreseen with the help of external consultants.</p>
<p>18</p> <p>a) improve quality and reduce quantity of press releases</p>	<p>SPP</p>	<p>a) Action implemented</p>	

b) story-led news agenda	By 2005	b) Action implemented. <u>'Top News'</u> is story-led agenda produced by SPP for the attention of the media (AV media in particular) which is also used by a wider public. It is issued every Friday and is available on the Commission's virtual press room under 'upcoming news, as well as via the Rapid data base See also Action 19	
<p style="text-align: center;">19</p> Short- to medium-term news agenda	SPP + A.2 + C.1 By 2005	<p>A "Planning" group in COMM has been established. Three tools have been set up: "<u>News Ahead</u>" is an internal strategic media planning tool prepared by the SPP on a weekly basis for the coming 6 weeks (time horizon currently being prolonged to include Commission planning for further 6 weeks). This tool is designed to facilitate the Commission's news management and the organisation of key Commission press events. An online EU Affairs Events Calendar has been developed and should be operational before the end of 2007 for external useage.</p> <p>The Planning Ahead group has resumed work.</p> <p>Other planning tools include the participation of SPP in HEBDO and the coordination work between SPP and SecGen on the Commission's weekly agenda. Action implemented.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">20</p> Rebuttal function	SPP By 2005	SPP has prepared draft guidelines on rebuttal 'Helping the Media getting it Right'. These take on board comments from DG COMM services and the Representations and were discussed at the July meeting of the ECN. They will be made available Commission-wide in September 2007.	

<p style="text-align: center;">21</p> <p>Clear picture of national audiences</p>	<p>A.3 + B.1</p> <p>By June 2006</p>	<p>A3 produces a quarterly “Listening Report” together with the Reps. In the pilot Reps, the listening function has been improved by devoting press officers to the regional and local press.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">22</p> <p>Better coverage of national languages</p>	<p>C.2 + DGT</p> <p>By 2007</p>	<p>In progress. DGT set up a unit dealing with Web Translation (of crucial importance for Europa), and is reinforcing translation capacities in Representations. C.2 and DGT are developing a coherent multilingual Europa coverage. The EbS services are now able to offer further language versions of its live services. (See also Action 50).</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">23</p> <p>Priority for Commissioners’ visits in MS</p>	<p>A.2 + B.1</p> <p>By 2005</p>	<p>Action implemented, within the limits of the Reps capacities. In the pilot Reps, contacts with the regional and local press have been improved.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">24</p> <p>Reps as spokespersons in MS</p>	<p>B.1 + SPP</p> <p>By 2005</p>	<p>Action implemented as in Action 23 above. Moreover, the daily 10 o’clock meetings provide coordination and enable Reps to know the latest lines to take and to speak on behalf of the Commission</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">25</p> <p>Reps to:</p> <p>a) adapt communication plans to priorities</p> <p>b) assess impact of own activities</p> <p>c) develop own communication activities through budget allocated to this effect</p> <p>d) cooperate with celebrities as</p>	<p>B.1 + A.2</p> <p>B.1 + A.3 + D.5</p> <p>B.1 + D.3</p>	<p>a) Representations systematically adopt communication plans according to the changing priorities of the communications agenda.</p> <p>b) A system of 18 performance indicators was set up and made operational for DG COMM, including Reps. An online system will be implemented in 2007 to enable reporting and monitoring against such indicators on the one hand and programming and planning on the other hand.</p> <p>c) In good progress. Reps will explain communication actions in their AMP 2007; actions in the Reps will be negotiated with Dgs based on the “catalogue” of services.</p> <p>d) First concept paper prepared by DG COMM in March 2006..</p>	

“ambassadors”		Action not implemented.	
<p style="text-align: center;">26</p> Reps to manage and run information relays and networks	B.1 + B.2	EU-15: the responsibility of managing the operational grants of the Europe Direct network lies with the Reps since 1/1/2005. EU-10: for 5 MS, responsibility was transferred in 2006; for the remaining 5, the transfer has taken place since January 2007. (see B2 changes)	
<p style="text-align: center;">27</p> Reps to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) adapt and manage tools b) set up coordination teams with MS for co-financed actions c) benefit from simplified procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> B.1 + C.2 B.1 B.1 + D.4 By June 2006 	<p>a) and b) The measures recommended are in process of implementation, for example , migration of Representations’ websites and appropriate partnerships with Member States. The German model of management partnership will be applied in other Member States and as an alternative to the "Grand Centres" after their phasing out. See also Action 43.</p> <p>c) A helpdesk function has been set up in headquarters to help Reps with contract and grant award procedures. Standard documents are produced and put at the disposal of Reps according to their needs. Documents have been further simplified taking into account new rules set up after reviewing Modex</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">28</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Rotation of Heads of Rep and other staff b) Reintegration of officials in DG 	D.2 + B.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Action implemented. b) Action implemented. c) A flexible structure based on regional LSAs already exists, whereby the local IT staff can be replaced by contract agents on an 	

of origin c) set up of regional and local LSAs	D.2 + B.1 + D.5 By June 2006	<i>ad hoc</i> basis and as needed	
29 Assessment of communication means and contracts	Dir. D By Dec. 2006	Action completed: Inventory of all existing framework contracts within the Commission carried out and published on the DG COMM intranet. Action implemented. Also see Actions 31 and 49.	Follow-up: permanent update required: action ECN WGroup2 : Communication tools
30 Productions of tools based on impact assessment	ECN WG 2 + Dir. C By Dec. 2006	Assessment of the situation underway. Ongoing market analysis permits to adapt the use of the central communication tools.	ECN WG 2, which is chaired by Dir. C, ongoing assessment of situation in cooperation with D.1.
31 Global framework contract	Dir C + D.4 By June 2006	In steady progress. The areas identified as not covered by any existing contract (see action 29) will be included into a new contract on integrated communication services. The ToR has been finalised, in consultation with other Dgs. The tender has been launched and the deadline for submission of proposals is 23 July. A first global Framework Contracts should be signed and active in the course of November 2007 and involve three different communications' agencies. Two further framework contracts should be signed in early 2008 for the supply of promotional material and for the purchase of advertising space.	
32 Support mechanism for pan-	D.4 + D.3 + A.2	In progress. See Action 31 as it also contains a pan-European aspect. A call for proposals is currently underway for projects to stimulate debate on the future of Europe. Success story: The	

European projects	By 2007	celebrations of the Treaty of Rome anniversary are a good example of pan-European project.	
33 Cooperation with AV professional associations	C.1 By June 2006	Action implemented within deadline and now part of standard practice	
34 a) Promote AV products b) Launch new AV portal c) New programme formats d) “Informal meetings” on EbS	C.1 By 2005	a) Action implemented b) Action implemented c) Action implemented d) Series of TV programmes with FI Prime Minister and Foreign Minister during FI Presidency, to increase transparency and dialogue with journalists.	
35 Take AV needs into account	C.1 By 2005	Work in steady progress	

<p style="text-align: center;">36</p> <p>a) EUROPA Editor</p> <p>b) Redesign EU News and Newsletter</p> <p>c) Redesign the entry pages of Reps</p> <p>d) Put the Reps' sites as entry points on the Commission's Home Page</p>	<p>C.2</p> <p>By 2005</p>	<p>a) Discussions underway in Dir C to agree on the best formula. An alternative solution to the 2 Editors (Europa and Publications) is under discussion and will be submitted shortly in the context of the Europa vision document.</p> <p>b) This action has been implemented</p> <p>c) In progress - the migration of all 25 sites into the new WCMS should be completed end of 2007.</p> <p>d) The discussion on possible options is still underway. Access to the Reps websites already available in new version of COMM's intranet.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">37</p> <p>Best technical services for EUROPA</p>	<p>C.2 + D.5</p> <p>By June 2006</p>	<p>In progress. <i>Protocol d'accord</i> between COMM and DIGIT was signed in July 2006 and renewed in June 2007. Technical work is proceeding. New blog, e-polling and debate software available and implemented.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">38</p> <p>Flexible technical platform for internet services</p>	<p>C.2 + D.5 + DIGIT + SCIC</p> <p>By 2007</p>	<p>In progress, same as Action 37 above. SCIC is now contributing to this work and is currently drawing up plans for off-the-shelf web streaming software.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">39</p> <p>a) Publications editor</p> <p>b) Decentralised production & delivery system</p>	<p>C.2 + OPOCE</p> <p>By Dec. 2006</p>	<p>a) Discussions underway in Dir C to agree on the best formula. An alternative solution to the 2 Editors (Europa and Publications) is under discussion and will be submitted shortly in context of the Europa vision document. Collaboration is being developed with OPOCE and REPs to improve the coherence of the Commission's publications and meet local needs respectively.</p> <p>b) Extensive evaluation of publications carried out in 2006; first 2 pilot projects of localisation for the production of both brochures</p>	

		and web pages ongoing; re: delivery, follow-up with OPOCE ongoing.	
40 OPOCE delivery system used by all DGs	OPOCE + SECGEN By June 2006	Action implemented. See also Action 39	
41 Europe Direct call centre to: a) become a one-stop-shop for citizens and include the other institutions b) pursue marketing campaign c) reinforce feedback analysis	C.2 By 2007	a) and b) While negotiations regarding inter institutional cooperation are not progressing currently, a number of new, promising initiatives involving various DGs and Community programmes are under way ; Co-operation is being developed with DG REGIO and TRADE and DG INFSO. Success story: Following agreement with DG RTD, the Contact Centre is used as a single entry point for questions relating to the 7 th FP for R&D. DG RTD is broadly promoting the Contact Centre in this context. At the end of 2005 several Repts subcontracted various activities in view to promote both the contact centre and the ED network. Results are so far modest. It is planned to convene a meeting with MS call centres in late 2007 in order to discuss synergies.. c) C.2 and A.3 cooperate with a view to systematically include the questions received by the contact centre into the feedback analysis. A new feedback corner is also foreseen in the new ED site that has been launched on 22 nd November 2006. A contribution to the July issue of "ears to the ground" will provide an overview of question from individual Member States.	
42 Assessment of communication impact of information relays	B.2 + D.1 By 2009	External evaluation of the EDCs launched for report Summer 2007. Broader assessment needs to be launched in 2007 to be ready around Easter 2008 – nb EUROPE DIRECT relay network comes up for renewal at the end of 2008.	Launch assessment late 2007

<p style="text-align: center;">46</p> <p>a) Strengthening the journalist training programme</p> <p>b) Regular information exchange with editors</p> <p>c) Priority selection of trainee journalists for traineeships in headquarters</p>	<p>A.4 + SPP</p> <p>SPP</p> <p>Dir. D + A.4</p> <p>By Dec 2006</p>	<p>a) A new framework contract for journalists training has been signed at the end of 2006 for a period of 4 years altogether.</p> <p>b) The President speaks more frequently to editors and the individual spokes have generally increased their focus on editors</p> <p>c) Ongoing. Dir D to investigate with ADMIN how to improve access of journalism/media/PR students to blue book</p>	<p>c) COMM Dir D to report by Autumn</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">47</p> <p>Events as part of the communication agenda</p>	<p>A.2 + ECN + SCIC</p> <p>By June 2006</p>	<p>The inclusion of events as part of the communication agenda is encouraged and monitored through the ECN, Planning Ahead and Project Teams. Coordination among services has been streamlined.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">48</p> <p>a) Reinforcement of pilot Reps</p> <p>b) Evaluation of the exercise</p>	<p>DG COMM + SG + DG BUDG</p> <p>A.4 + B.1 + SPP</p>	<p>a) Action implemented – Pilot Reps reinforced with 50 staff since Dec 2005. Extension for 2007 already agreed.</p> <p>b)</p> <p>-Regular scoreboard monitoring ongoing.</p> <p>-Evaluation of survey regarding perception of Pilot Representations performance completed by COMM.A.4.</p> <p>- Final draft complete assessment of the exercise provided by COMM.B.1 in November 2006.</p>	

<p style="text-align: center;">49</p> <p>Qualitative and quantitative screening of resources</p>	<p>Dir D</p> <p>By Dec 2005</p>	<p>Possible outsourcing of analysis being considered. EP is also doing its own analysis, triggered by COBU. DGCOMM/D has provided a qualitative and qualitative assessment of Communication in the Commission (Screening report) in November 2006.</p>	<p>A screening exercise aimed at supporting discussions on resource allocation is undertaken by an inter-DG group involving DG BUDG, ADMIN and SG supported by an external consultant. The results of the screening of communication resources will be available on 15 November 2007.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">50</p> <p>Reallocation of resources and new APS for 2007 according to results of Action 49</p>	<p>D.1 + D.3 + SECGEN + DG BUDG</p>	<p>Multilingualism operation launched, whereby DGT is reinforcing all EUR-15 Reprs with approx 40 additional staff.</p>	

ANNEX II

Progress Report Plan D

1. INTRODUCTION

In response to the call for a period of reflection by the European Council in **June 2005**¹⁰, the **Commission adopted *Plan D*** for Dialogue, Democracy and Debate on 13 October 2005.¹¹ Its aim was to encourage Member States **to organise a broad public debate on the future of the European Union** involving citizens, civil society, social partners, national Parliaments and political parties, with the support of the EU institutions.

The Commission, in coordination with the other EU institutions and bodies, recommended and, in some cases, supported financially a series of measures designed to

- Stimulate a wider public debate
- Promote citizens' participation in the democratic process
- Use tools to generate a dialogue on EU policies

Thirteen actions were carried out to implement Plan D. The main results of these actions so far are summarised in a table (see annex 1).

2. FIRST STAGE OF THE REFLECTION PERIOD – KEY RESULTS

A **first assessment** of the initial period of reflection was presented to the **June 2006 European Council**¹². It concluded that most of the 13 actions launched under *Plan D* were being successful.

The leading vehicles of these actions are the **trans-national European citizens projects** co-funded by the Commission for a total amount of 4.5 million Euro. Three are EU-wide¹³ and three involve several Member States¹⁴. Most of these projects are well under way and the Commission received very positive feedback on the quality and intensity of the debates (see annex 2). The aim of these projects is to enable people from the different national public spheres to connect with each other and with the decision-makers who make up the European

¹⁰ Declaration by the Heads of State or Government of the Member States of the European Union on the Ratification of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, European Council 16-17 June 2005; para 4.

¹¹ COM(2005) 494, 13.10.2005.

¹² COM(2006) 212, 10.5.2006.

¹³ Speak Up Europe (European Movement), Tomorrow's Europe (Notre Europe) and European Citizens' consultations (Fondation Roi Baudoin), see annexed table.

¹⁴ Our Europe-Our Debate-Our Consultation (European House), Radio Web Europe (Cenasca) and Our message to Europe (Deutsche Gesellschaft), see annexed table.

public sphere. Right now, thousands of people from all walks of life are taking an active part in this **first wave** of projects.

Besides these projects, a large number of **Citizens' Fora** events took place in the majority of our Member States. A dedicated website: "**Debate Europe**" was launched in March 2006 to foster the European debate, which won the **European eDemocracy Award** for 2006. **Regional Stakeholder Fora** were organised by the European Economic and Social Committee in several Member States. A large number of **Commissioners' visits** took place in the Member States and Commissioners attended more than a 100 meetings with national parliaments in 2006. The EUROPE DIRECT centres organised a large number of **regional and local debates with citizens**. Specific Eurobarometer surveys were carried out on the Future of Europe. Targeted focus groups were established, and efforts were made by the Council to ensure greater openness, as well as by the EP and the Commission to increase voter participation in the next European elections.

3. SECOND STAGE OF THE REFLECTION PERIOD - SHARPENING THE FOCUS

In June 2006 the European Council acknowledged the Commission's contribution to the reflection period in the context of Plan D, and noted that the EU's commitment to becoming more democratic, transparent and effective goes beyond the period of reflection. It also noted that a "reinforced dialogue with the citizens required adequate means and commitment"¹⁵ and **recommended that the period of reflection should be prolonged into 2007**.

The Commission responded to this call in **November 2006** by drawing lessons from the first year of reflection in an information note entitled "**Plan D – Wider and Deeper Debate on Europe**"¹⁶. Its aim was to take stock of Plan D, and to put forward new proposals.

The commitment was renewed to the thirteen actions, but it was decided to:

- Focus more on regional and local civil society initiatives targeting youth and women, since these target groups had not been sufficiently involved in the debates
- Develop a network of European public spaces
- Relaunch the debate on the Internet, and to
- Target better the Eurobarometer surveys

Among these actions, a special emphasis was put on launching a **second wave** of Plan D citizens' projects focusing on the regional and local levels. Therefore, on 15 May 2007, a **decentralised call for proposals for civil society** initiatives targeting women and youth was launched for a total amount of € 2 100 000.

A wide range of activities were carried out in the framework relating to the EU@50 celebrations in 2007, which also generated considerable debate on EU issues in the Plan D framework.

¹⁵ Presidency Conclusions, European Council, 15-16 June 2006; cf. para 3.

¹⁶ SEC(2006) 1553.

In addition, a pilot project was launched in three locations to develop a network of **European Public Spaces**, meeting places for Europeans, providing information and documentation, hosting exhibitions, films, debates, forums and lectures and offering training and seminars on European issues. The goal is to open them up to new audiences by using new communication formats and focusing on culture, civil society education and politics.

Building on the successful experience of the discussion Forum "Debate/Europe" in 2006, the Commission **Representations** in the Member States decided to further develop their **own websites** in order to improve their reach to local citizens.

Some of the questions of the special Eurobarometer have been integrated into the standard Eurobarometer, under the heading "institutional settlement". A qualitative Eurobarometer survey will be carried out in 2007 on the same subject.

4. OUTLOOK FOR 2008 AND BEYOND

- The period of reflection came to an end with the agreement reached in the June 2007 European Summit on a Reform Treaty. A new phase has begun where the Plan D instruments and citizen's feedback can play an important role.
- A communication strategy should be designed to communicate the main rationale behind the reform process and the results that it will ensure for the citizens in many areas. It shall be modulated taking into account the differences in the Member States' public opinions as well as in the ratification procedures. It shall be drawn up in close co-operation with the other European Institutions and the Member States.
- This strategy will make propositions on how to continue and reinforce a number of initiatives that were started under the label of Plan D (democracy, dialogue, debate) and that have proven successful reinforcing the trust in the EU institutions.
- The Commission is organising a **Plan D citizens' projects concluding Conference** in Lisbon early December 2007 to draw on the experience gained so far and to decide on the way forward. It will also explore ways of gearing Plan D operations in 2008 and 2009 **to increase voter participation in the June 2009 European elections**. In that context, a new call for proposals could be launched for 2008 .

TABLE 1

THE 13 ACTIONS OF PLAN D – STATE OF PLAY

ACTION	RESULT
<p>1. Provide support for European citizens projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2006 a first wave of six transnational projects were launched, co-funded by the Commission for a total amount of 4.5 million Euro. Three of the projects are EU27-wide: <i>Speak Up Europe</i> (European Movement), <i>Tomorrow's Europe</i> (Notre Europe) and <i>European Citizens' consultations</i> (Fondation Roi Baudoin). The three remaining ones involve four or five Member States: <i>Our Europe-Our Debate-Our Consultation</i> (European House), <i>Radio Web Europe</i> (Cenasca,) and <i>Our message to Europe</i> (Deutsche Gesellschaft,). Commission Vice-President Margot Wallström participated in the kick-off event or mid-term press conferences of some of the projects. A concluding conference is scheduled for 7-9 December in Lisbon. http://www.notre-europe.eu/ www.european-citizens-consultations.eu/ www.europeanmovement.org/ www.deutsche-gesellschaft-ev.de http://www.cenasca.cisl.it/entra.htm www.europeanhouse.hu/e/ • On 15 May 2007, a decentralised call for proposals was launched by 14 Commission Representations (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France-Paris, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Malta, Portugal, Spain - Madrid ,Barcelona - the Netherlands and the United Kingdom) which will result in a second wave of projects. In this framework the Commission will co-finance events organised by civil society organisations targeting primarily women and youth for a total amount of € 2 100 000. • Citizens' Fora (European Parliament): The kick-off event took place in Vienna in December 2005. 37 pilot fora were set up in 2006 in 10 Member States (Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia and Sweden). Altogether, 5 000 citizens participated directly in those fora and many others did so indirectly when some of those fora were broadcasted. The pilot phase was a huge success. Moreover, 59 similar and/or complementary events were organised in Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Latvia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia and in the United Kingdom to debate about the future of Europe. So far in 2007, more than 35 Citizens' Fora have already been organised.
<p>2. Create Internet debates</p>	<p>A dedicated Website: “Debate Europe” was launched on 27 March 2006. On 10 October 2006, the “Debate</p>

	Europe” website won the <i>European eDemocracy Award</i> for 2006. Participation in the debate came from all over the EU and beyond- the highest number of visits have come from China, followed by France and Poland. In recent months, the site has also received a lot of visitors from Romania. The three main themes for debate are Europe's economic and social development, feelings towards Europe and the Union's tasks and Europe's borders and its role in the world. The Representations in the Member States participated actively in the moderation of the site. A new design for the site is being conceived, with new software. On the content side, there will be 10 more concrete topics. The revamped web site will go on line in the Autumn. The Representations will again be asked to participate actively in the moderation of the new site.
3. Create European Round Table for Democracy	Regional Stakeholder Fora are being organised by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) – “ <i>Bridging the gap</i> ”. Three successful events have already taken place so far (Brussels in November 2005 , Budapest in June 2006 and Malta in July 2006) and one more is due to take place in Dublin in October 2007 . The EESC is also organising a seminar on "Communicating Europe focusing on the media.
4. Visits by Commissioners to Member States	More than 900 Commissioners visits to the Member States have taken place between 2006 and 2007, most of them in the framework of Plan D; i.e. going beyond the capitals to the regions, involving contacts with national parliaments and citizens, business and union leaders, members of the civil society students, regional and local authorities and taking part in media events. Some of these Plan D visits have followed the "priority visits" pattern, involving the national Commissioner, the Vice-President and/or the President of the Commission (Czech Republic, Slovenia, France, Latvia, Lithuania, Denmark).
5. Commissioners availability to national parliaments	In 2006, Commissioners attended more than 100 meetings with national parliaments . In the first half of 2007, Commissioners took part in more than 50 meetings with national parliaments . Moreover, cooperation with the national parliaments has been enhanced by inter- parliamentary meetings in which the Commission took an active part (e.g. 11-12 June, 3 rd joint parliamentary meeting on the future of Europe, the celebrations of the 50 th anniversary of the treaties of Rome, etc.)
6. Representations open to the public	EC Representations organise monthly/weekly open door operations with press briefings, conferences, and thematic presentations. As a further step in this direction, in three of them (Madrid, Tallinn and Dublin) a pilot project was launched to develop a network of European Public Spaces.
7. Utilising the Europe Direct	The EUROPE DIRECT centres organised local debates with citizens together with the Commission

Centres for regional events	Representations. 270 such events and seminars took place from January to May 2007. Together with the Representations, ED relays have already organised almost 1 000 events to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Rome Treaties. In the months to come, further actions will follow.
8. Promote more effective consultation	<p>A consultation process linked to the White paper on Communication launched by the College in 2006 has been going on for seven months. By the end of June 2007, 7 423 individual and 109 institutional contributions had been received.</p> <p>The consultation linked to the Green Paper on European Transparency (concerning lobbying activities, feedback on the Commission minimum standards for consultation and transparency on the EU funds beneficiaries) ended in August 2006. 160 contributions were received. In May 2007, the Commission adopted a Communication on the follow up to the Green Paper. As a result of this, a new voluntary register for interest groups representatives is being created and will be launched in spring 2008, thus reinforcing the Commission's consultation standards.</p>
9. Produce specific Eurobarometer on the <i>Future of Europe</i>	Two Flash Eurobarometers on "EU communication and the citizens" were carried out in the Autumn of 2006, targeting the general public and the decision makers. The results of these polls were published at the beginning of July. A special Eurobarometer survey was carried out in 2006 on the future of Europe. Some of the questions raised by this survey have now been integrated into the standard Eurobarometer, under the heading "institutional settlement". A qualitative Eurobarometer survey will be carried out in 2007 on the same subject.
10. Establish targeted focus groups	<p>An example of focus groups is the "Spring Day for Europe" initiative, where activities are organised in schools with the aim of encouraging debate, discussion and reflection on the EU principles, achievements and future among young people aged 7-17. In 2006, 7 500 schools registered and in 2007, almost 5.000 schools. Activities were tailored to primary and secondary schools. A series of chat sessions took place with representatives of the EU institutions , including MEPs and other elected representatives.</p> <p>In the context of the EU@50 events, a youth summit on "Your Europe-Your Future" was organised in Rome on 24-25 March, with 200 young people from all 27 Member States. A Rome Youth Declaration was adopted and transmitted to the Presidency and the EU institutions.</p> <p>The focus group approach is used systematically by the Commission in the context of the new generation of Eurobarometer surveys. The EC Representations and the Member States also use the focus group approach to</p>

	consult citizens on the future of Europe (e.g. deliberative poll operation by the Commission Representation in Budapest in autumn 2007 in partnership with the Hungarian government).
11. Ensure greater openness	The Council has opened up more meetings to the public. Commission proposals are regularly transmitted to national parliaments since 2006 and the national parliament's opinions are processed by the Commission. Open lists on Committees and grants were made available to the public on the central Web portal of the Commission: http://ec.europa.eu/public_contracts/index_en.htm
12. Increased voter participation	The European Parliament is leading on this action and the Commission stands ready to assist this effort . An Inter-Institutional Technical group was created in 2006 to facilitate cooperation between the Commission, Council, European Parliament, Committee of Regions and Economic and Social Committee around this and other Plan D actions. The European Parliament has finalised a survey with national Parliaments on “ <i>how to improve participation at elections</i> ”.
13. European Goodwill Ambassadors	Although a draft set of criteria had been prepared by DG COMM in early 2006, this action has not reached sufficient maturity so far. However, certain Goodwill ambassadors' initiatives were launched in the framework of the German Presidency activities, in particular the EU Project Days initiative (where celebrities go and visit schools). Similar initiatives of this type could be further developed under future presidencies.

TECHNICAL ANNEX

PROGRESS REACHED BY THE TRANSNATIONAL PLAN D CITIZENS' PROJECTS SO FAR

1. **"EUROPEAN CITIZENS CONSULTATIONS" – CO-ORDINATOR: KING BAUDOIN FOUNDATION. AMOUNT OF THE PROJECT: EUR 2.715.376,60. GRANT FROM EU BUDGET EUR 1.895.751,95 (69.82% FROM TOTAL)**

Project Results: The European Citizens' Consultations were officially launched in October 2006 in Brussels with the participation of VP Wallström and DG Claus Sorensen. The Consultations led to a **Pan European discussion** and established a model for EU-level participative democracy in the future, combining professional facilitation and modern technology.

The three issues which matter most to the citizens consulted were **family and social welfare, immigration and the EU's role in the world and energy and the environment.**

This project entered its **final phase**. Representatives from all 27 Member states gathered in Brussels on 9-10 May to synthesize the national Citizens' Perspectives into a single concluding document entitled 'The European Citizens' Perspectives on the Future of Europe'. VP Wallström explained to them how their conclusions could enrich current EU actions and initiatives.

June 6th marked the official launch of **the follow-up process**. A handful of selected citizens joined a panel of decision-makers for a policy dialogue organised in cooperation with the European Policy Centre (EPC). The panel members engaged in an in-depth discussion with the audience and journalists about the policy implications of the conclusions of the project, which will also be evaluated by a team of experts.

The results of the European Consultation report, "Citizens Perspectives on the Future of Europe", were presented to VP Wallström and DG COMM. While they show areas of agreement and disagreement between the national panels, the choice of topics and the outcome of the national consultations suggest that Europe's citizens clearly recognize the need for European responses to issues which cannot be dealt with at the national level alone. They also confirm that citizens are interested in concrete results, not by the mechanics (who does what).

Another follow-up event will be organised in Brussels by partner organisation ECAS (European Citizens' Action Service) on 20 September. It will focus on the perspectives for citizen participation.

In the Member States, various follow-up events are taking up the discussion on the future of the EU and on the three main concerns which emerged from the project, in the form of local debates, regional citizen fora, conferences, media discussions, seminars, handbooks etc.

2. **"TOMORROW'S EUROPE" CO-ORDINATOR: NOTRE EUROPE. AMOUNT OF THE PROJECT: EUR 1.352.500. GRANT FROM EU BUDGET: EUR 849.500 (62.81% FROM TOTAL)**

Project results: a poll with a sample of 3 500 citizens took place in August and a second poll with the same sample will be carried out during a deliberative polling exercise which will take place in Brussels on 12-14 October. All the sessions of this exercise will be filmed.

3. **"SPEAK UP EUROPE" – CO- ORDINATOR: EUROPEAN MOVEMENT. AMOUNT OF THE PROJECT: EUR 1,039,310.63, GRANT FROM EU BUDGET: EUR 719.375.70 (69.82% FROM TOTAL)**

Project Results: The main objective of the project is to stimulate and facilitate debates about the current work of the EU and about its future challenges. The specific objectives are: increasing the level of knowledge about the achievements of the EU in the past 50 years, localise the debate about Europe and Europeanize the national public spheres, encourage active participation in debates about the EU; extensively collect opinions on various topics related to the EU; create synergies at national and local level and show the trans-national dimension of EU citizenship, thus contributing to the establishment of the European public sphere.

The scope is pan-European. The project manager and its partners have conceived a campaign based on decentralized activities and containing 3 main elements:

On line: national websites and a central website: <http://www.speakupeurope.eu>

Audiovisual: The animation "What has Europe ever done for us": <http://www.whathaseuropedone.eu/>

Interactive: series of local and national public events. The topics to be debated were chosen at national level, in complete autonomy, by the national partners.

The campaign was launched on the 23rd of November 2006 and will run all the way until the end of 2007. To date, numerous debates have taken place in 14 of the EU Member States. The main topics debated and discussed to date are: The Constitution; citizen involvement, energy and climate change, external relations, enlargement, social Europe. An overwhelming majority of debates showed that citizens want more EU commitment in the field of environment. Environmental protection, global warming, climate change and social policy are among the most important areas where citizens expect more action from the EU. Economic development is viewed as another important task the EU should pursue more actively. When asked which policies the EU could handle more efficiently than national governments, many citizens mentioned foreign policy, immigration and security issues, environment and energy policy. The majority think that the EU should acquire new competences but they almost unanimously agree that enlargement has increased the need for further institutional reform.

4. "OUR EUROPE, OUR DEBATE, OUR CONTRIBUTION" – CO- COORDINATOR: EUROPEAN HOUSE (BUDAPEST) AMOUNT OF THE PROJECT: EUR 364.000, GRANT FROM EU BUDGET EUR 254.500 (69.92% OF TOTAL AMOUNT)

Project results: The project aims at promoting direct dialogue between citizens, NGOs and EU and national institutions on a day-to-day basis, in Austria, Italy, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia. On a transnational level, two stakeholders' fora have been organised so far. The second one took place in Budapest on 22-23 June 2007 and came up with a set of 35 proposals (e.g. accept and appreciate the diversity of individuals and countries, develop mutual respect and tolerance; encourage civil society representatives to stand for European elections in 2009; give a greater say to the citizens on the Reformed Treaty). The first of two international bus tours, with participants from all five countries, took place from 30 June to 4 July. At each stop, a Europa labyrinth was displayed. The opinions collected during the bus tours will be presented to the EU decision-makers in Brussels in November 2007.

5. RADIO WEB EUROPE – CO- ORDINATOR: CENASCA CISL (ITALY) MOUNT OF THE PROJECT: EUR 794.475,03, GRANT FROM EU BUDGET EUR 556.132,50 (70% OF TOTAL AMOUNT)

Project results: Radio Web Europe is a partnership of 8 organisations from 7 Member States: CENASCA CISL (IT), co-ordinator of the Project; CABA (PT); CECE (ES); CESFOR (IT); MPRC (LT); Project Office (AT); Townfield Training (UK); UHM (MT). The project aims at involving young people and promoting their participation in the debate on the future of Europe through thematic focus groups, workshops and a multimedia website. The climax of this project will be a final transnational conference initially planned in December 2007 but which will have to be brought forward in view of the concluding event for all six projects due to take place in Lisbon at the end of November/beginning of December 2007. Two thematic focus groups were held in each of the countries involved in January and February 2007. In March, the website was put on line in English and Italian. Currently, the website contains 62 multimedia products which can be uploaded, related to the topics selected for debate. Two workshops per country are now being set up to discuss on the basis of the website content and of the conclusions of the focus groups debates (enlargement, mobility, the constitution, languages, immigration, the role of the EU in the world, youth and education, civil society, sustainable development, research and innovation, growth and jobs, the future of Europe).

6. OUR MESSAGE TO EUROPE – CO- ORDINATOR: DEUTSCHE GESELLSCHAFT (GERMANY) AMOUNT OF THE PROJECT: EUR 358.000,00, GRANT FROM EU BUDGET EUR 250.000,00 (69,83% OF TOTAL AMOUNT)

Project results: This project is being implemented in co-operation with local partners from Germany, Austria, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Poland. Since October 2006, nearly 4000 people have taken part in 70 intensive dialogue/debating events on European issues (54 in Germany, 4 in Austria, 4 in Slovakia, 4 in the Czech Republic and 4 in Poland). At 20 of these events, people had the opportunity to address their individual message in front of a camera. Opinion polls on citizens' concerns have been carried out in all five countries. The filmed interviews and the results of the opinion polls will be published in the coming weeks and disseminated to national and EU decision-makers.

ANNEX III

Progress report on the White Paper on a European Communication Policy

Introduction

The European Commission adopted the White Paper on a European Communication Policy on 1 February 2006 with the aim to strengthen the EU's emphasis on communication work and propose a new, more citizen-centred and decentralised approach.

The White Paper complemented other Commission initiatives in the field of communication. In 2005 the Commission set out an Action Plan to improve the way it communicates with citizens and launched 'Plan D' to involve citizens in a wide-ranging discussion on the European Union.

According to the White Paper, communication should become a policy in its own right and be based on a dialogue between the citizens and the policy-makers as well as among the citizens themselves. These debates should eventually result in the development of a European Public Sphere, where Europeans could address issues of common interest in parallel to the discussions already ongoing in the Member States. Thus citizens would achieve stronger influence on the decision-making process at the EU level.

A particular role of partnerships with key actors in the field of communication lies at the heart of all the chapters of the White Paper. The EU institutions, national, regional and local authorities in the Member States as well as civil society, political parties and others have been asked to support these efforts and contribute their ideas on how best to work together to enhance the public debate in Europe.

1. THE FIVE CHAPTERS OF THE WHITE PAPER

Defining common principles

The right to information and freedom of expression being at the heart of democracy in Europe, the White Paper proposed that references to these principles included in the EU Treaty and in the European Charter of Fundamental Rights, must be the starting point in a process aimed at defining common principles and a shared vision for an EU Communication Policy.

Empowering citizens

As any successful EU communication policy must centre on citizens' needs, the EU should focus on providing tools and facilities that will give as many people as possible access to information and the opportunity to make their voices heard. To "empower citizens", the EU needs to improve civic education; connect people with each other; as well as strengthen the relationship between citizens and institutions.

Working with the media and new technologies

With media coverage of European issues remaining limited and fragmented, the White Paper aimed to involve the media more effectively in communicating Europe, to provide the media with more and better material, and focused on exploiting information potential of new technologies such as the Internet.

Understanding European public opinion

As a constant effort is needed to improve the quality and the significance of Eurobarometer, the White Paper proposed a re-assessment of the methodology with a view to responding to the need to have a broader and deeper understanding of trends in European public opinion.

Doing the job together

With the national level remaining the primary entry point into any political activity, the White Paper underlined the need for a partnership approach between all the key actors: EU institutions, Member States, regional and local level authorities, political parties and civil society organisations, to ensure a robust European debate.

2. SUMMARY OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESS AND THE STAKEHOLDER CONFERENCES

During a period lasting from the publication of the White Paper until January 2007 individuals and institutions were able to comment on and discuss the main ideas put forward in the five chapters of the White Paper. Overall, this has proved to be a positive experience, and most contributions translated into practical recommendations for the Commission to put into its forthcoming communication strategy.

2.1 Number of contributions to the public consultation

By 30 September 2006 the Commission received over 550 contributions. The majority of the responses came from individuals (423), with 139 comments made by institutional actors, including 18 Member States, regional and local authorities, municipalities and the EU institutions. All the texts given free for publication (313) have been made public on the dedicated website http://ec.europa.eu/communication_white_paper.

2.2 Geographical and topical coverage of the consultation

A vast majority of the contributions (80%) came from EU-15, with only 6% from EU-10 and 14% from other countries or of unknown origin. Per country, most comments came from France (94), Belgium (76), and Germany (52) as well as Italy and the United Kingdom (46 each). Concerning the topics, general comments (24%) topped a rather balanced structure of answers, with all chapters ranging from 12-16%.

2.3 Overview of the public consultation

The following chapter gives a succinct summary of the consultation. A detailed summary of the stakeholder consultation has been enclosed in Annex.

2.3.1 Defining common principles

A charter on communication was found a welcomed idea (NGOs), helpful reference point (Council) and useful guidelines (EL, LU, PT). The principles were said to be universally

accepted (EIC Cyprus). The Committee of the Regions declared itself ready to make its own contribution.

However, the suggestion also attracted negative views. It was said to have no added value and overlap with already established principles (Council, UK, IE) and be a poor substitute for a legal base (EESC). Member States referred to a charter as a not feasible tool (AT, LV, SE) and declared having own principles and standards in place (NL, EE), while journalists' associations saw in a charter the Commission's attempt to control the media (EBU, EFJ).

2.3.2 Empowering citizens

This chapter attracted prevailing positive opinions highlighting in particular the importance of promoting multilingualism and direct dialogue with citizens (LV, LU), as well as the idea of having regular debates on policy issues in national parliaments (EP). The Committee of the Regions stressed the link between communication and active citizenship. Other issues of importance included boosting civic education and information networks (IT, LV, LU, HU, NL, PT, SK), mobility programs (CR, IT, LT) and "personalizing" European politics (DE). Better cooperation between the Representation and Member States (CR, UK) and open and transparent institutions (AT, UK, EE) were also taken up.

The non-governmental actors underlined the role of civic education. Apart from this, there was broad support for developing libraries and information centres at local level and boosting the visitors', exchange and citizenship programs as well as training for officials. Another need is the simplification of financial procedures for projects at regional and local level.

2.3.3 Working with the media and new technologies

Mixed feelings were expressed about integrity and independence of the media and the underestimated impact of mass media (EP, EESC). Some journalists' associations (API) saw the Commission proposals as a danger for the independence of editorial policy whereas others saw a need for the EU to provide more background material and more training of journalists (EFJ, EBU). Also the role of the Europe by Satellite (EbS) was a point of concern. While a number of Member States called for upgrading the service (CZ, EL, PT, LU, SK), a few underlined the leading role of mass media and referred to the EbS as marginal (EE) or causing unfair competition (Schleswig-Holstein). The non-governmental actors stressed a need to put emphasis on regional and local media while enhancing commitment of public bodies and ensuring better training for journalists (also EP, CoR, CR, EL, LV, LU, SK). While some Member States pleaded for improvement of websites and stronger use of new technologies (Council, AT, FI), other actors claimed their role is overestimated and complained about the EU not giving enough role and resources for local information relays.

2.3.4 Understanding the European public opinion

Positive reactions concerned developing the Eurobarometer as a tool (Council, EP, CR, EL, LU, NL, AT, PT) and the idea of having a network of experts on public opinion (Council, EL, LV, PT, SK). On the contrary, an Observatory for Public Opinion met negative reactions from the EU-Institutions, Member States and non-governmental actors (Council, EP, EESC, EL, LT, LV, LU, AT, PT, SK, and EE). The Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) criticized too much importance given to opinion polling.

2.3.5 Doing the job together

The proposal under this chapter met positive reactions from the EU-Institutions for providing guidelines for shared activities (Council); focusing on re-evaluation of the Inter-Institutional Group on Information (IGI) and of the PRINCE programme as well as for calling for an enhanced role for political parties and Ombudsman (EP) and promoting multilevel governance (CoR).

Member States and civil society welcomed decentralisation and support for local actors (CR, DE, EL, LV, UK, IE, a number of NGOs); stronger role for the Representations (CR, HU, FI, IE); promoting joint initiatives (CR, DE, IT, HU, SK) and also multilevel governance (LU, AT, NGOs).

The negative perception was expressed with regard to lacking funds (LV, HU) as well as complicated co-financing procedures (Council) and bureaucracy (CR, DE, EL, AT). A number of Member States considered the Commission wanted to limit its responsibility (LV, HU, FI). Non-governmental actors complained about the perception of communication as a separate policy and lacking coordination.

2.4 Overview of the stakeholder conferences

The stakeholder conferences were covering all chapters and were held in cooperation with other EU institutions and specific interest groups. They have provided valuable input for future action and were highlighted by the active support of the host countries.

2.4.1 Understanding European Public Opinion

The first conference was held on 27 October 2006 in Madrid and covered the "Understanding European Public Opinion" chapter of the White Paper. Main participants included public opinion research institutes, academics, representatives of national governments and the EU institutions, MEPs as well as the media.

The conference resulted in an initiative to develop new forms of co-operation between the EU institutions and Member States in order to better understand and anticipate trends in European public opinion, as well as to generate potential co-operation among pollsters, national governments, EU institutions and the academic world with a view to creating a network of national experts in public opinion research.

In particular, the conference suggested that opinion polls are an effective tool for stimulating democratic processes within society. They enable the EU-Institutions to identify the needs of the citizens, help them understand their votes and are also an important way of political participation for those who do not vote. Therefore there is a need for deeper and more sophisticated opinion polls analysis. More qualitative research and better analysis of existing quantitative data could be done to accomplish this, while a wider dissemination of Eurobarometer results as well as new research instruments should be developed.

The conference discussed broadening the scope of questions, defining broader clientele for the surveys, improving the coverage of topics in the questionnaires and the secondary use of raw data. Concerning a network of experts in public opinion research there was a consensus on the creation of such a network in order to exchange best practices, develop synergies and assist the EU on methodological issues. The participants suggested that a bottom up approach when setting up such a structure will favour local knowledge, give more opportunities for local

contextualisation and comparisons and flexibility for analysis of factors that influence political views. However, the idea of an Observatory of European public opinion raised a number of questions, including its mission and format, status (advisory board or independent from the Commission) and links with EU-Institutions, Member States, public organisations and civil society.

2.4.2 Empowering citizens

A European Civil Society Forum "Empower" was held in Bergamo on 9-10 November 2006 and brought together up to 300 participants representing civil society networks and NGOs active in the fields of consumer protection, culture, development, education, environment, health, human rights, justice and home affairs, research, and social affairs.

The forum gave concrete suggestions concerning the development of a European public sphere where people can learn about European politics and European political issues and exercise their European political rights. The practical recommendations especially focused on four fields of action through which a European public sphere can be developed, including civic education, connecting citizens with each other and connecting citizens with public institutions. Further to this, the forum highlighted new ideas on the use of the Internet and new technologies.

The top-down construction of Europe is not sufficient anymore. A community of values – and not just a common market – is necessary to face the challenges of globalisation. Citizens want and must be involved in the construction of Europe, and not remain a passive audience. Therefore EU communication should focus on key European values, such as fundamental and civic rights, sustainable development and well being society for all, participatory and direct democracy.

In this context, civic education is crucial for enabling people to exercise their political and civic rights and to become active in the public sphere. Without a basic knowledge on the European Union and its institutions citizens cannot exercise democracy. Part of civic education is also the non-formal education which allows citizens to get engaged and learn from their experiences. As such civic education should not be confined to teaching school pupils about EU institutions and policies, but should help people of all ages to improve their skills and get involved.

Citizen-to-citizen dialogue needs civil society as a structure and vehicle, especially across borders in order for people to convene together despite language and other barriers. Even though citizens are already connected via many exchange schemes and networks, these schemes and networks need wider recognition, support and a higher profile. Civil society's participation is fundamental to successful policy making and it needs to be facilitated through structured mechanisms. NGOs want to get involved at an early stage – not when the outlines and objectives of the policy have already been drawn up. Three main challenges arise: ensuring access to a plurality of organisations; increasing awareness of participation opportunities and involving national NGOs in the decision-making process.

Finally, the new information society era increasingly transforms both our thinking and practices on the road to more active citizenship, and the way we approach civic involvement, the impact of civil society organisations and governance. Communication has always been a prerequisite for democracy, and ICTs can offer new modes of communication, collaboration and exchange across nations and regions.

2.4.3 Working with the media and new technologies

The conference "Europe in Vision" on 4-5 December 2006 in Helsinki brought together professionals from some of Europe's best-known broadcast media, as well as journalists and editors from the world of new and on-line media. Officials from the European institutions and a number of academics in media communication also took part.

TV, radio and the internet reach large audiences and allow broad access to information for Europeans. In terms of communication impact the media are unequalled for their ability to connect the EU with its citizens. As the challenge for the EU institutions is to make European activities more attractive to TV viewers and radio listeners and directly relevant to people daily life, the objective of the conference was to find out how the European Union could help broadcasters to report European affairs.

As the result of the conference the Commission got valuable suggestions of concrete steps to take. They include easing access to EU information, improving the coverage of European affairs, and better mutual understanding of needs and demands to adjust the provision of audiovisual products and services.

There was great support for the creation of a network of EU-supported community television services, where citizen journalists and others would share programming every day. Concerning the sensitive issue of EU funding for European broadcasters, several broadcasters acknowledged that such a funding in no way affected their editorial independence. But the question of "issue placement", where EU-funded broadcasters make programmes about subjects they would not otherwise cover was raised as a potential problem.

The conference also looked at new ways of delivering news – be they websites, online video services, mobile telephones or other new devices – and found that the use of new technology should not affect the quality of the news. Sound journalistic values should remain at the heart of reporting, whatever the media used to transmit reports. In line with this, the conference dealt with the rise of non-professional commentators, often referred to as "citizen journalists" and "bloggers". There was general agreement that all voices need to be heard in the debate on Europe's future. But it was also stressed that amateurs' work should not be confused with that of professional journalists, who should always respect strict rules on reporting such as balance, impartiality and accuracy.

Finally, the conference examined the need to provide better training on EU-affairs for journalists, concluding that training must come from independent bodies, such as journalism schools and not from the EU-Institutions themselves. The same applies to EU officials.

2.4.4 Doing the job together

The "Communicating Europe Together" conference on 18-19 January 2007 in Berlin attracted 300 participants who discussed how to extend existing - and initiate new - partnerships between the European Institutions, Member States, local and regional authorities, political parties and non-governmental organisations and how best to connect and communicate with citizens. The conference highlighted already successful examples of best practice and aimed at strengthening structures of targeted cooperation between all actors in the field of public communication.

The working conclusions of the conference included important initiatives focusing on creating synergies between EU and national communication objectives and agendas; setting up

practical working partnerships between the European and national levels; as well as "going local" – ensuring that European issues are discussed at regional and local level.

In particular, the conference suggested that setting the timetable for communication activities should be subject to a synchronising procedure. It should be avoided that Member States set totally different priorities than the EU. Political leadership and will are indispensable to do away with still existing negative reflexes distorting the trans-national debate. The Representations in Member States need to follow national and regional agendas with a view to better coordinating the agenda setting process. Existing partnerships between the Commission and national, regional and local bodies should be used to that end. The same process should be applied as regards the European Parliament.

New forms of partnership need to be developed between the EU-Institutions, Member States and civil society. Regional authorities should ensure that European issues are a regular part of the regional political debate. Local authorities could work more closely with the Europe Direct relays and help give publicity to the Europe Direct call centre. Partnerships of all types should include a system for monitoring progress and measuring the impact of communication effort.

At regional and local level, closer links between the communication systems of the different levels of governance in Europe, the Brussels-network of media correspondents and their counterparts on the ground should be developed. Local and regional media should be trained and given the opportunity to present the impact of the European integration process to their audiences. The development of instruments for regional press agencies designed to better communicate European issues and the launching of training programmes for public officials should be promoted. Information on European issues has to be adapted to the regional and local realities. Better account should be taken of information requirements of elected representatives on the regional and local level. Candidates in local and regional elections campaigns should be encouraged to include European issues into their programmes during election campaigns and should be provided with the necessary information. Finally, simple and decentralised financing instruments should be reinforced in order to support small NGOs who run activities aiming at directly informing European citizens.

The Berlin conference also addressed the question of the legal framework for communication policy. Four concrete options were suggested for consideration: a citizens' charter on communication, an inter-institutional agreement between the Commission, Council and Parliament, a legal base upon Article 308 and Article 151 of the Treaty and, finally, a specific article on information and communication policy to be inserted in the Constitutional Treaty as the most ambitious solution.

3. PUBLIC OPINION SURVEYS

The White Paper provided for a series of public opinion surveys, with a view to complementing the opinions expressed in the public consultation and comparing them with the results of the polls. Therefore two Flash Eurobarometer surveys were designed to test perceptions regarding some of the major initiatives contained in the White Paper and its underlying concepts: the chances of a dialogue between European institutions and the citizens of the Union and the Commission's role in facilitating it.

Taking account of the different approaches to communication by the public at large and important multipliers, the surveys had two components: Eurobarometer asked a sample of

European citizens (25,000) as well as European decision-makers (CEOs of large enterprises; chief editors in national media; members of national assemblies/national parliaments; high ranking officials in state administrations; and leaders of trade unions and professional associations) for their opinion on the EU's communication policy.

4. THE WAY AHEAD

The communication on "Communicating Europe in Partnership" sets out the preconditions for a successful communication policy including citizen-oriented policy content based on listening and consultation and a partnership approach with major political, economic and social actors in Member States. It highlights best practices and existing action at Commission level and consolidates them to develop better synergies. The Commission's communication activities must be resourced and organised in such a way as to address matching demographic, national and local concerns, and to convey information through the channels citizens prefer in the language they can understand. In this regard, the focus is on the role of the media and the Internet as well as on the tools for providing European information at regional and local level. A concrete proposal has been developed for an inter-institutional agreement on communication in order to facilitate the commitment of all actors, mainly the EU-Institutions and Member States, around a number of communication priorities each year.

ANNEX IV

Monitoring of impact: 33 impact indicators

- Number of articles in written press,
- Number of readers achieved,
- Number of emissions in the audiovisual media,
- Number of audience reached,
- Number of persons involved in actions within the framework of Plan D,
- Level of satisfaction of participants in Plan D events,
- Number of persons reached by symbolic actions,
- Hits on IntraComm for "Top media stories",
- Hits on IntraComm "Sources Say",
- Satisfaction survey "10 o'clock note",
- Satisfaction survey Summary of "Flash reports",
- Satisfaction survey "Trends note",
- Satisfaction survey Listening report "Ears to the ground",
- Number of participants at seminars for journalists,
- Level of satisfaction of participants at the seminars for journalists,
- Number of personal contacts for relays,
- Number of events organised by the relays,
- Number of relays' publications,
- Number of questions received by e-mail,
- Number of questions received by telephone,
- Number of contributions in the audiovisual media,
- Number of audience reached,
- Number of films, videos and photos used by media,
- Level of satisfaction of the users of the EUROPA website,
- Total number of visits of the EUROPA website,
- Total number of unique visitors of the EUROPA website,
- Total number of visits of SCAD plus,
- Total number of unique visitors of SCAD plus,
- Level of satisfaction of the Members of the College,
- Number of events organised at the occasion of a visit of a Member of the College in a Member State,
- Number of participants in events organised at the occasion of a visit of a Member of the College in a Member State,
- Number of participants at thematic events,
- Level of satisfaction of the participants.