



Brussels, 15 May 2007  
SG C2 JK/ec D(2007) 4378

## Opinion

**Title**                    **Impact Assessment on the follow-up to the White Paper on a European Communication Policy "Communicating Europe"**

**(draft version of 12 April 2007)**

**Lead DG**                **DG Communication**

### **1) Impact Assessment Board Opinion**

#### **(A) Context**

The IA relates to a Communication which follows up on the White Paper on a European Communication Policy, adopted by the Commission on 1 February 2006, with the aim of strengthening the EU's communication work, moving towards a more citizen-centred and decentralised approach.

#### **(B) Positive aspects**

In developing the policy proposal a series of consultations with various stakeholders have been carried out. Additionally, results of targeted Eurobarometer surveys have been used.

#### **(C) Main recommendations for improvements**

*The recommendations below are listed in order of descending importance. Some more technical comments have been transmitted directly to the author DG.*

**General recommendation: The IA report needs to better demonstrate the value added of a better co-ordination of communication activities of various actors. The role of a new Community Programme vis-à-vis other programmes, including those at national level, should be clarified.**

**(1) The range of policy options analysed should be broadened.** The Policy Options section does not look at alternatives to a Community Programme, but simply lists the actions envisaged as part of that programme. This part of the IA requires further work to examine alternatives such as intensifying existing actions, increased voluntary coordination of Member State activities, etc.

**(2) The objectives and actions should better correspond to the main problems.** The IA needs to clarify what the main problem is (lack of support for the EU; lack of knowledge among the citizens about how the EU institutions work; lack of information making it difficult to make informed decisions?) and better demonstrate that the proposed actions will have a direct and positive impact. The two first general policy objectives (p.5/6) "strengthening EU's place in national debates" and "making EU more present on TV, etc." could be merged into one, as the latter appears to be the key means to achieve the objective of the former. It needs to be clarified what actions will be focused on what stakeholder groups.

**(3) Meeting of the minimal requirements of the ex-ante evaluation in the sense of the Financial Regulation should be clarified.** According the Impact Assessment guidelines, an IA report can be accepted as an ex-ante evaluation, as long as it properly addresses all items listed in Article 21(1) of the Implementing Rules. Unless an ex-ante evaluation will be carried out separately, the following elements need particular attention in the IA report, before it can be considered as fulfilling the minimum ex-ante requirements:

- The cost-effectiveness of all options
- Value added of EU budget expenditure
- The amounts involved in the medium and long term should be estimated
- The risks, including fraud.

The IA should also estimate what the budgetary impacts of the proposed changes will be. It should also be clarified whether the proposed programme is intended to replace the PRINCE programme. Finally, the budgetary allocations should be put in context (such as % of the total foreseen expenditure).

**(D) Procedure and presentation**

A formal steering group has not been established. However, the respective sections of the forthcoming communication have been discussed with the relevant services in a series of bilateral meetings and in the Commission's External Communication Network (ECN).

**2) IAB scrutiny process**

Reference number	2007/COMM/005, CLWP 2007 (strategic initiative)
Author DG	COMM
External expertise used	No
Date of adoption of Opinion	15 May 2007