



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 21 March 2013

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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

from:	General Secretariat of the Council
to:	Delegations
Subject:	Outcome of proceedings of the Working Party on Information on 7 March 2013

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda set out in document CM 1824/13 was adopted with the following changes:

- the following items were added under '4. Any Other Business':
 - = Information from the General Secretariat of the Council on two new confirmatory applications (04/c/01/13 and 05/c/01/13)
 - = Information from the Chair on the organisation of a meeting of the Working Party on Information with the presence of representatives of the archives of EU Ministries of Foreign Affairs on 16 May 2013
 - = Information from the Chair on the state of play of the proposal for a Council regulation amending Regulation N° 354/83 on the deposit of historical archives
 - = Press study seminar (Brussels, 6 March 2013)

2. Communication / information policy

a. Cooperation in the development of online information and communication instruments: the web portal “Europe around the corner”

The European Commission (DG COMM) presented the state of play of the web platform "Europe around the Corner" being set up as agreed by the institutions at the IGI meeting on 6 June 2012.

This initiative aims to set up a single-entry portal built through an open source approach, with a view to serve as a new transparency instrument to inform citizens about EU-funded projects. The project consists of a user-friendly digital map which would drive users to national web portals (ideally, one single national entry per MS).

The institutions agreed within the IGI on a joint effort to have this platform up and running by the beginning of 2014, as it could be a valuable tool to enhance communication with citizens and raise their awareness and interest in view of the 2014 European elections. To this end, delegations were invited to reply to a questionnaire launched by European Commission through the General Secretariat of the Council to identify already existing national websites which inform about beneficiaries of EU funding.

Initially "Europe around the Corner" is expected to provide information on projects financed by the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund. In the future, the platform could cover additional domains (agricultural, maritime, research and technology funding) in line with provisions contained in new legislation being currently negotiated.

In reply to the CZ, the IE and IT delegation, the European Commission's representative indicated that the European Commission will take due note of the information in the Member States' replies to the questionnaire and confirmed that contacts will soon be established and reinforced with the national authorities responsible for the websites already identified. The European Commission indicated that it will do its utmost to promote synergies and, where possible, suggest adaptations to facilitate interconnection with the "Europe around the Corner" portal.

The Chair suggested to organise a meeting at expert level with the competent services from the Member States, the European Commission and the European Parliament to tackle all practical aspects related to the setting up of the portal, with a view to report back to the WPI on the outstanding questions and possible solutions.

"Eurozone portal"

The Chair presented the Eurozone webpage set up by the General Secretariat of the Council within the institutional website. This portal aims to provide up-to-date information on the role, functioning and policy areas of the Eurogroup, as well as texts adopted by the Council which have relevance for the Euro area and latest news in this domain.

Delegations were asked to consult the Council's website and provide comments on layout and content of this new webpage.

Communication strategy in the field of regional policy

The European Commission outlined the DG's communication strategy of DG REGIO for 2013 focusing on:

- Key messages (preparing for 2014-2020; investing in the Europe 2020 objectives, etc.)
- Key audiences (stakeholders, media, multipliers, communication officers of Managing Authorities, European Commission's Representations, etc.)
- Key activities (among others, an evaluation study of good practices in the Member States; a Eurobarometer on the EU's regional policy; key conferences; Euronews-related features; a photo competition being launched through Facebook; online collaboration with partners and stakeholders via the "RegioNetwork").

In line with the same principles of transparency inspiring the abovementioned "Europe around the Corner" platform, the European Commission's representative from DG REGIO also made reference to a website containing a digital map which provides direct links to the lists of beneficiaries of the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund

(http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/country/commu/beneficiaries/index_en.htm)

In reply to a request made by the BE delegation, the European Commission will circulate the list of MS' authorities connected through the "RegioNetwork".

3. Transparency / access to documents

a. Confirmatory application No 03/c/01/13

The General Secretariat of the Council presented the application and explained the approach taken in the draft reply contained in document 6632/13. While some delegations indicated that they would like to see a reference to relevant case law made in the draft reply, the Chair concluded to leave the text unchanged, since the inclusion of such a reference would - in any event - not change the position taken by these delegations.

The draft reply will be submitted to Coreper on 13 March 2013 and subsequently to the Council on 18 March 2013 for adoption.

4. Any Other Business

a. Joint WPI/Club of Venice seminar "Public communication in the evolving media landscape: adapt or resist?" (Brussels, 22 March 2013)

The event will be hosted in the Council's premises (press conference room) in Brussels. The main objective of the seminar, on the basis of concrete feedback from public communicators and from independent specialists (academics, consultants, analysts), is to share views on the increasing impact of new interactive media on government and institutional communication strategies focusing on the promotion of a more effective interactive approach with the stakeholders.

The seminar will focus on the following aspects:

- the new world of a multi-facet communication (social media, new applications, increasing need for quick interaction, monitoring and evaluation) which increasingly requires a multi-tasking approach, new behavioural standards, training, transparency and consistency;
- the political/conceptual aspects and organisational implications, with communication officers outlining how their governments and institutions are reflecting on the adaptation of their strategies and structures to the new media landscape.

The General Secretariat of the Council circulated a draft programme outlining scope and objectives of the seminar. WPI delegates were invited to register on line through the dedicated website (<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/publicom>).

b. Europe Direct information Centres (EDICs): annual general meeting (Brussels, 18-19 March 2013)

The European Commission (DG COMM) gave an overview of the programme of the event, which hosts the traditional annual exchange of best practice among the officials in charge of the Europe Direct centres.

The first day of the event will be attended by the EP's and European Commission's Vice-Presidents responsible for communication, who will introduce an interactive session on how to "Restoring citizens' confidence in the EU" followed by a panel discussion on "The future of the EU in the current context of the crisis".

The second day will be based on "conversation sessions" focusing on engagement with citizens, and on "network meetings" with the Director-Generals for Communication from the three institutions addressing the participants.

c. Next meeting of the Interinstitutional Group on Information (IGI)

The Chair informed delegations that the next meeting of the IGI will take place on 15 May 2013 in the European Commission's premises. The agenda will focus in particular on the European Parliament's communication strategy in view of the 2014 European elections.

The Council's position on the different discussion items will be defined within the WPI in one of its next meetings in April.

d. Organisation of a Working Party meeting with the presence of representatives of the archives of the EU Ministries of Foreign Affairs on 16 May 2013

The Chair informed the Working party of the intention to organise a full day meeting on 16 May and to invite representatives of the archives of the MFA to join the meeting in the afternoon.

The meeting will have a specific focus and will address, i.a., the following issues:

- the European Integration Database;
- the "Blue Guide", which is the practical guide to Ministries and EU institutions.

The Chair invited the members of the Working Party to circulate the information to the relevant colleagues and to communicate to the General Secretariat of the Council the name of the participants for the afternoon meeting.

e. Confirmatory applications N° 04/c/01/13 and N° 05/c/01/13

The Chair informed the Working Party of these two applications. The two applications had arrived only shortly before the meeting, and it had thus not been possible to prepare a draft reply in time for discussion today. Therefore and because of the upcoming Easter break, the General Secretariat will launch a written consultation by e-mail on 11 March. It intends subsequently submit the two confirmatory applications to Coreper on 20 March and to the Council on 21 March for adoption.

f. Proposal for a Council Regulation amending Regulation (EEC/Euratom) No 354/83, as regards the deposit of the historical archives of the institutions at the European University in Florence

The Chair informed the Working Party on the state of play of the dossier. Following the agreement on the text by the Working Party after its meeting on 25 February 2013, the College of the European Commission had now also agreed to the text set out in document 6524/13. After revision by the lawyer/linguists, the final text will be submitted to Coreper and Council.

g. Press study seminar (Brussels, 6 March 2013)

The General Secretariat of the Council recalled the informal event, which was attended by the spokespersons of the Member States Permanent Representations, outlining the methodology and preliminary findings of a study carried out on "Trends in the Brussels press corps".

In the Chair's view, understanding the dynamics regarding size, composition and developments of the Brussels Press Corps remains an important issue notably with a view to endeavour to understand the dynamics and strive to increasingly provide better services to the journalists. A reflection will be carried out on the possible follow-up, with a view to sharing comments with key stakeholders (e.g. the European Parliament, the European Commission, API) and coming back to this subject in one of the next WPI meetings.
