



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Brussels, 19 July 2013**

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### **OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS**

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from: General Secretariat of the Council  
to: Delegations

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Subject: Outcome of proceedings of the Working Party on Information on 12 July 2013

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- 1. Adoption of the agenda**
- 2. Transparency / access to documents**
  - a. Confirmatory reply, in the light of the General Court's ruling in case 63/10, to the confirmatory application made by Mr Jurasinovic on 23 October 2009 (No 26/c/02/09)**

The Council Legal Service explained that the Council has to comply with the General Court's ruling of last 3 October 2012 which partially annulled the Council's decision of 7 December 2009, regarding a request for access to documents, in so far as the applicant was refused access to the correspondence in relation to the Gotovina case between the Council and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and to the documents other than the reports drawn up by the European Community's surveillance mission, annexed to that correspondence.,.

The General Secretariat of the Council (GSC) has therefore proceeded to the re-examination of the documents concerned and, following consultations between the GSC and the ICTY, the latter also consented to the release of 18 documents concerned, excluding any reports annexed. Consultations with the ICTY are ongoing on the remaining documents, which would be made the subject of a subsequent confirmatory application. .

Delegations were given until Monday 15 July COB to indicate their positions with respect to the draft reply to Mr Jurasinovic contained in doc. 11935/13, after which the General Secretariat would list the item on the agenda's of Coreper of 18 July and Council of 22 July 2013.

### 3. Communication / information policy

#### a. Lithuanian Presidency, second semester 2013

The Spokesperson for the EU presidency outlined the Lithuanian Presidency's communication strategy focusing on priorities ("Credible Europe": restore confidence in EU economy, "Growing Europe": boost employment and competitiveness and "Open Europe": strengthen openness and security), stakeholders (wide public, multipliers, specific target groups), early preparation, concrete implementation, emphasizing on "engaging the public".

The Presidency launched its website: <http://www.eu2013.lt/en/> which provides information in four languages: LT, EN, FR and DE. It will also be very active on the social networks: Twitter (@EU2013LT and @EU2013LTpress), Facebook ([www.facebook.com/eu2013LT](http://www.facebook.com/eu2013LT)) and Youtube (<http://www.youtube.com/eu2013LT>).

#### b. Communication strategy in the field of employment

The European Commission (DG EMPL) presented its communication plans and work programme for the second half of 2013 and beyond.

The European Commission's representative focused, among others, on:

- the Annual Growth Survey carried out in the context of the European Growth Semester
- the communication efforts on the implementation of the Social Investment Package (SIP) and the creation of effective partnership between governments and civil society;
- employment, which will remain at the forefront of the Commission's communication effort, in particular on the Youth Guarantee and Youth Employment Initiative. In this context, references were made to the Member States agreement to earmark € 6 billion investment for the YEI to have funds available in 2014-2016, i.e. during the first two years of the next MFF instead of being spread over the entire MFF seven-year duration; and to the reform of EURES (the European network of public labour organisations promoting labour mobility, apprenticeships and traineeships);
- communication on the connexion between the different funds (e.g. the European Social Fund - ESF) and policy guidance and recommendations. It is important to communicate on concrete examples of what the funds have achieved in a way adapted to the different national audiences. In this context, the Commission is launching an audiovisual campaign consisting of short videoclips sharing short stories to explain the general public (and especially to young people and to the eldest) how the ESF has contributed positively to citizens' life;
- communication on working conditions (occupational health and safety of labor law), especially with regard to the on-going evaluation process of EU legislation in this area.

The German delegation outlined the communication activities carried out by the Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs. The German representative presented a multi-faceted range of initiatives: a campaign to inform and mobilize professional workers and enterprises (with the informative website also used as a data basis for regional networks (<http://www.fachkraefte-offensive.de>), a multilingual website reaching out to international professionals interested in taking up employment in Germany (<http://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/>), a citizens' helpline and a best practice on line campaign ("The job of my life"- <http://www.thejobofmylife.de/en/>). He also mentioned special events such as the Round Table on Youth Employment in Europe organised in Berlin on 3 July 2013 and the "Day of the Job Centres" ("Tag der Jobcenter 2013") which focused on strategies to support long-term unemployed people.

The Spanish delegation outlined a communication campaign, co-financed by the European Social Fund (total budget allocated : €3,5M, of which €2.4M from the government and €1.1M from the ESF), launched to promote the Government's strategy for entrepreneurship and youth employment 2013-2016. The strategy encompasses **100 measures**, classified according to their impact and their timing, aiming to integrate young people in the labour market. The Spanish representative showed a video clip (<http://www.empleo.gob.es/es/estrategia-empleo-juven/videos/video.htm>) which opened up the campaign to the general public.

The Chair invited delegations and the Commission to follow-up broadening exchange of information, enhancing cooperation and seeking synergies to communicate effectively and coherently on this domain.

### **c. Draft communication budget 2014**

The Commission's DG COMM representative indicated that the main reason underpinning the severe cuts proposed to the communication budget lines was the need to stay within the MFF ceilings. This required an average reduction of 20% of the overall budget for communication.

For 2014 the Commission consequently decided :

- as a general approach, to reduce the number of budget lines in Chapter 16 and increase their flexibility which would foster the "going local" activities carried out by its representations in the Member States;
- instead of operating an overall cut to all Chapter 16 headings, which in its view would cripple the whole budget implementation, to pinpoint the areas judged inefficient such as:
  - = the "multimedia actions" (new budget line 16 03 01 02 - former 16 02 02), with regard to the radio network "Euranet" and the online tool "Presseurop" that currently disseminates breaking news of the European press (35% cut);
  - = the new budget line 16 03 01 04 denominated "Communication of the Commission Representations, including partnership actions" which includes the former lines 16 03 02 01 "Communication of the Commission Representations" and 16 03 04 "Going Local-Communicating Europe in Partnership (CEP)", opting for discontinuing the Management Partnership framework to the advantage of other forms of cooperation (45% cut);

= line 16 02 01 “Europe for Citizens” (1<sup>st</sup> year figures of the new seven-year programme) (20% cut).

Several delegations (CZ, D, F, IT, LT, LV, H, AT, PL and SI) expressed their concern about the Commission's approach. Their comments can be summarised as follows:

- the Commission’s decision to dismantle management partnership agreements (MPAs) was taken without prior consultation with its partners (Member States and EP);
- it is not clear on which basis the Commission did not deem management partnership agreement cost-effective, since all national evaluations, which were carried out by external bodies, have so far shown positive results;
- the Commission makes no longer reference to the political Declaration "Communicating Europe in Partnership" subscribed by the three Institutions in October 2008, which marked the beginning of a reinforced interinstitutional cooperation in the field of communication. That key-reference always appeared in the previous annual draft budget within the statements of expense, to provide evidence of a renewed and increased partnership approach;
- financial resources allocated by the Commission to the eighteen MPA's currently implemented are absolutely needed as they enabled Member States to organise a wide variety of information activities focusing on the EU. This appears even more necessary in the current budget constraints caused by the financial crisis and taking into account the need to contrast increasing Euroscepticism and raise citizens’ awareness in view of the 2014 European elections. If those allocations were to be reduced drastically, Member States would be obliged to reduce “communicating Europe” events to an absolute minimum or, in certain cases, discontinue all sorts of projects;
- there is a need to know what would be the breakdown of the new specific budget line 16 03 01 04, namely what percentage of the € 10.7M will be earmarked to partnership agreements, and what would be the impact of the Commission's decision on the bilateral MPAs still in force and the ones under renewal;
- delegations wondered why more budget resources have been allocated to budget line 16 03 01 04 (information outlets – Europe Direct), and why has the Commission chosen to cut drastically operational expenses instead of opting for horizontal cuts including administration costs of all Chapter 16 headings.

The European Parliament representative warned that the EP Committees concerned (AFCO, CULTURE, LIBE and BUDGET) will enter reservations and remarks since the Commission’s cuts in the abovementioned budget lines fall short of the expectations (as reminded by some delegations, partnership agreements were meant, among others, to contribute to the implementation of the communication strategy to raise citizen’s interest and awareness in view of the European elections in 2014).

Furthermore, the EP representative underlined that, before submitting its proposal to discontinue MPAs and reduce drastically the related financial resources, the Commission should have discussed its new approach, which deviated from the spirit of the Joint Declaration, at political level within the Interinstitutional Group on Information (IGI).

The European Commission representative reiterated that the Commission had no other choice but to propose cuts in budget lines which, according to this Institution, referred to activities deemed inefficient. Moreover, he stated that:

- regardless of the extent of the budget cuts, the future framework will be different and the communication budget will be managed by the Commission's representations;
- in this new age of communication there is a need to increasingly focus on modern and cost-effective ways to work, namely on on-line activities and social media;
- the Commission will make the best possible use of the merged line concerned, having regard to the fact that it will manage the communication budget under its own responsibility;
- alternative forms of partnerships (such as "strategic" or "one-off") could be envisaged - for instance, it will always be possible to set up a communication plan, but the budget execution will remain to the Commission;
- the ongoing MPAs will be put an end in 2014, although in some MS the trend was very positive and increasingly developing (for instance, in Sweden a 2nd Intermediary Body has freshly been appointed, while there was only one IB in the other MS)
- the breakdown of the new budget line 16 03 01 04 cannot be defined and its implementation will be decided "on a case by case basis";
- the horizontal evaluation of partnerships initially foreseen for March 2013 will be carried out before the end of the year;
- with regard to the budget allocated to information outlets (e.g. Europe Direct centers), the Commission representative explained that these outlets are cost-effective, which explains why they will not be subject to budget cuts and, on the contrary, to a certain extent will be reinforced.

At the end of the debate, the Chair :

- suggested WPI delegations to consult their counterparts of the Council Budget Committee to verify the state of play of the Council's examination of the relevant Chapter of the draft budget;
- informed delegations that this issue will be on the agenda of the next WPI meeting scheduled on 13 September 2013
- suggested that the Interinstitutional Group on Information (IGI) should take up the matter at its next meeting foreseen in autumn;
- invited the Commission to 1) plan in advance on how it will communicate the proposed budget cuts in the Member States; 2) consider the possible impact of its decision to discontinue MPAs on the communication framework of the Member States concerned, taking into account that they had put in place ad hoc administrative structures to implement those multi-annual agreements; 3) provide evidence of the cost-effectiveness of the Europe Direct centres.

#### 4. Any Other Business

##### a. Confirmatory applications 14/c/01/13 made by Mr O'Huiginn and 15/c/01/13 made by Mr Hillebrandt

The General Secretariat informed the Working Party about these two confirmatory applications. As they were received last week only, it had not been possible to prepare the draft replies in time for examination at this meeting. Therefore, an email consultation of delegations will be launched, so that the draft replies can be submitted to Coreper on 18 July and the Council on 22 July 2013.

##### b. Case T-303/13 (Miettinen v. Council)

The Council Legal Service informed the Working Party about the action brought before the General Court by Mr Samuli Miettinen seeking the annulment of the Council's decision of 21 March 2013 to refuse full public access to document 15309/12.

The access to this document, an opinion of the Council Legal Service relating to the Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the fight against fraud to the Union's financial interests by means of criminal law, was partially refused pursuant to the second indent of Article 4(2) (protection of legal advice) and to the first subparagraph of Article 4(3) (protection of the Council's decision-making process) of Regulation N° 1049/2001. However, the Council did grant partial access to those parts of the requested document (i.e. paragraphs 1-4) which were not covered by any exceptions under Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

The Council must lodge a statement of defence within two months of the date on which the application was notified to it.

##### c. Follow-up to the 2013 communication strategy in the field of internal market

The European Commission (DG MARKT) outlined the initiatives foreseen in the context of the "Single Market Month" which will take place from 23 September to 16 October 2013. To connect EU citizens and small and medium enterprises (SME) with policy-making, opportunities and rights in the EU's Single Market, online debates (one per week, focusing on one of four pre-selected themes : work/set up a business, social rights, banks and buying/selling/communicating on-line) will take place in the 24 EU languages in all MS. The aim is to collect a set of 80 to 120 "ideas to change Europe" throughout a direct consultation process. A summary of all debates will be delivered in a televised closing debate on 23 October.

The Commission representative invited delegations to mobilise local and national authorities and existing communication networks to foster participation in the preparatory phase and interaction online. To this effect, a ready-to-use "info" package with detailed and practical information is at the disposal of Member States.

**d. EuroPCom (European Conference on Public Communication), Brussels, 16-17 October 2013**

The Committee of the Regions informed delegations on the preliminary programme of the 4<sup>th</sup> EuroPCom conference ([www.cor.europa.eu/europcom](http://www.cor.europa.eu/europcom)) and asked the WPI members to inform the relevant stakeholders in the Member States. It also invited delegations to formulate suggestions for MS' contributions to the thematic panels and with regard to the annexed exhibition. Deadline to suggest speakers: 20 August 2013.

**e. Groups of visitors to the Permanent Representations - cooperation with the General Secretariat of the Council**

The General Secretariat of the Council (GSC) reminded delegations that, in order to explore possible synergies between various visits services and further improve the quality of the Council's Visits Service, DG F's Public Relations Unit has circulated a questionnaire to the WPI members (titulaires) to complement its statistics with information on visitors' groups to the MS' Permanent Representations in Brussels. Delegations' replies will enable the GSC Visits Service to deepen cooperation with MS in this area. Deadline to reply: 21 July 2013.

**f. GSC On-line redesign project**

The Chair gave an overview of the objectives and the first steps on the redesign project undertaken by the General Secretariat of the Council. The aims are to build a technically modern platform, acquire and develop a new content management system (CMS), invest in the development of digital communication, foster multilingualism and ensure consistency. The end of the project is foreseen for mid-2014. The Chair asked Member States to cooperate with the GSC on this project by, among others, sharing knowledge and best practice, encouraging public authorities responsible for national websites to provide hyperlinks to the Council's web pages and sharing user statistics.