



Brussels, 7 April 2017
(OR. en)

8142/17

INF 72
API 55

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council
On: 6 April 2017
To: Delegations
Subject: Working Party on Information

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted as set out in CM 2195/17.

Upon the request of the Dutch delegation the issue of the implementation of paragraph 39 of the IIA was added under AOB.

2. Transparency

a) **Mandatory register**

- Information by the General Secretariat of the Council

5151/17 JUR 9 INST 5 POLGEN 3 AG 1

The Working Party on Information was informed about the state of play of the discussions in the General Affairs Group (GAG) which will continue on the 21st April 2017 when the possible way forward will be discussed.

b) Ombudsman

- i) Own-initiative inquiry OI/2/2017/AB by the European Ombudsman concerning access to documents relating to Council preparatory bodies when discussing draft EU legislative acts

7420/17 API 28 INF 40 OMBUDS 4 JUR 133 INST 131

The General Secretariat informed delegations that the European Ombudsman sent a letter to open an own-initiative inquiry concerning access to documents relating to Council preparatory bodies when discussing draft EU legislative acts on 10 March 2017 and that she is expecting a reply within 3 months.

Delegations were informed that a draft reply to this letter will be on the agenda of the next meeting of the WPI on 11 May.

- ii) Letter from the Ombudsman concerning Public Information on the UK's withdrawal from the EU (SI/3/2017/KR)

7772/17 INF 58 API 45 OMBUDS 5 JUR 162

The General Secretariat informed delegations that the European Ombudsman sent a letter concerning Public Information on the UK's withdrawal from the EU (SI/3/2017/KR).

A draft reply to this letter will be prepared in due time.

c) Annual Report on Access to documents 2016

- Presentation by the General Secretariat of the Council

7709/17 INF 54 API 41 JUR 168

The General Secretariat presented the draft annual report on access to documents for 2016. The annual report for 2016 will follow the new format of the preceding year, which combines a shorter text with publication of information on requests for access as open data. The draft report also briefly summarises case-law and decisions taken by the European Ombudsman regarding the implementation of the access to documents rules by the Council.

The Chair informed delegations that a final version of the report would be submitted for agreement to the WPI at its next meeting on 11 May. The Report would then be submitted as a I/A item to COREPER / Council for approval on 17 and 22 May, respectively.

d) Open Data

- Presentation by the General Secretariat of the Council

The General Secretariat made a short demonstration of the new search engine for the voting results dataset. This search engine will be available to the public on the Council's website during the month of April.

Users will be able to browse this dataset and search for votes using different fields, such as by date of adoption, by Council, by type of act, by inter-institutional number and by policy, among others.

e) Questionnaire on Member States' legislation on transparency and access to documents

- Presentation by the General Secretariat of the Council

7780/17 INF 59 API 46

The Chair confirmed that the document containing a compilation of Member States' replies to the questionnaire will be available soon.

f) Confirmatory applications

i) For discussion

07/c/01/17

7634/17 INF 45 API 32

7635/17 INF 46 API 33

Delegations approved the draft reply concerning the confirmatory application number 07/c/01/17 (7635/17). The General Secretariat informed delegations that the written procedure would be launched at the latest on 7 April.

ii) For information

06/c/01/17 (7606/17 INF 42 API 29)

08/c/02/17 (7637/17 INF 48 API 35)

09/c/01/17 (7654/17 INF 51 API 38)

10/c/01/17 (7753/17 INF 55 API 42)

The General Secretariat informed delegations about the new confirmatory applications received by the Council.

g) Informal Inter-institutional Forum on Access to documents

– Information by the General Secretariat of the Council

The General Secretariat gave a very brief description of the informal gathering of several institutions and bodies of the EU to discuss the implementation of Regulation 1049/2001 on access to documents.

3. **Any Other Business (Transparency)**

The Dutch delegation requested a state of play in the implementation of paragraph 39 of the IIA.

The General Secretariat replied that an inter-institutional meeting at the technical level will be organised later in April and that feed-back on this issue would be given in WPI on 11 May.

4. **Communication / Information Policy**

a) **Refugee and migration crisis: communication aspects (focus on the countries of origin and transit)**

The Commission (DG HOME) updated delegations on progress made with the Migrant Information web Portal (MIP) <http://infomigrants.net> which was launched in March.

Delegations are invited to share comments and suggestions through a questionnaire circulated through the Integrated Political Crisis Response arrangements (IPCR) platform.

The portal aims to provide reliable information to migrants and refugees coming from the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa, Afghanistan and Pakistan, to contrast misinformation circulated by smugglers and traffickers. The information is in French, English and Arabic, produced by journalist teams, and it will also include links to institutional, EU and NGOs' networks sharing information on laws, administrative procedures, medical care, etc.

A monthly monitoring and evaluation process is being coordinated by the Open University (UK) and a final evaluation report is expected by the end of 2017.

The General Secretariat (DG Justice and Home Affairs) referred to the November 2015 Council conclusions tasking the Commission to elaborate an information strategy in this field; reiterated that 2016 marked a record number of migrants reaching European shores and EU's efforts to prevent further waves and assure prompt humanitarian intervention.

The General Secretariat (DG Foreign Affairs, Enlargement and Civil Protection) presented the IPCR mechanism and recalled its connecting and monitoring role in crises' management. It also functions as a central hub for MS' and institutions' exchange of data on the information strategy on migration. Delegations are encouraged to join the crisis communicators' network (CCN) within this platform.

The Presidency welcomed the Commission and the Council's feedback and asked the Commission to share the results of the ongoing evaluations of the migration portal with the WPI.

Moreover, the Presidency informed delegations on the upcoming seminar "The Refugees and Migration Crisis: a Crucial Test for Public Communicators", organised by the Club of Venice with the Maltese authorities on 19 May 2017 in Sliema, Malta and encouraged delegations to join the CCN.

Delegations welcomed the inclusion of this item on the WPI agenda and focused on the following issues:

- the objectivity of content in the platform;
- the composition and the role of the editorial team;
- the need to expand the MS' presence in the CCN and extend access to it to international organizations and civil society players.

The Commission agreed to sharing the results of the evaluation reports with the WPI . It also indicated that the consortium of European media which carries out the project will also spread the information through radio channels.

The Chairman concluded that the WPI is ready to pursue reflection and analysis as needed and highlighted the need to increase cooperation with the EEAS, the institutions and Member States to enhance communication in the targeted areas.

b) 60th anniversary of the Rome Treaties: communication activities

The Commission (DG COMM) presented its activities in this field. It also reiterated that its five reflection documents, announced as a follow-up to the White Paper, will be adopted between the end of April and the end of June 2017.

FR outlined the main events organised in the context of the celebrations and the support of the national platform "*Touteurope.eu*" in the framework of the strategic partnership signed with the Commission in 2014.

IT thanked Member States for their input to their questionnaire regarding the communication of events organised EU-wide. It expressed its satisfaction with the celebrations in Rome as well other activities. IT underlined that March 25th was just the starting point and stressed the need for a communication follow-up, in particular with regard to the social dimension of Europe.

The European Parliament praised the cooperative inter-institutional approach during the celebrations and agreed with the need for closer links, given the upcoming discussions on the future of Europe and with a view to the future EP elections. In this context, he also referred to the collaborative on line platform "My House of European History" launched between 30 and 31 March, which already counts a half million visits and aims to create a sense of shared values.

The EESC was pleased with the positive outcome of the 60th anniversary's celebrations and recalled the recent communication activities focused on the young generation.

The Maltese presidency welcomed the good cooperation shown during the celebrations and called for an increasingly united inter-institutional approach.

The Chair thanked the institutions and delegations for the fruitful exchange of feedback and views on possible follow-up actions and invited the WPI members to enhance cooperation also by availing themselves to informal contacts.

5. Any Other Business (Communication-information policy)

a) WPI organisational details

FR asked that the WPI agenda and preparatory documents be circulated more in advance. This would facilitate consultations with the capitals and exchange of the necessary feedback and advice, in order to better prepare delegations' position for the debate.

The Chair took note of the French delegation's request and promised to deal with it in the context of a broader re-organization, which will require a) a longer-term agenda planning, to be seen in cooperation with the Presidency; b) the circulation of all written presentations and contributions at least 24 hours before the WPI meeting concerned.
