



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Brussels, 20 June 2014
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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
Subject: Working Party on Information on 13 June 2014

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted as set out in document CM 3117/1/14 REV1. The following item has been added to point 4 (Any Other Business): "e) Activities in the margin of the European Council, 26-27 June 2014".

The NL delegation asked to add an extra item under point 4. Due to the short notice of this request, it was agreed to include the item at the agenda of the next WPI meeting in July.

2. Transparency / access to documents

a) Confirmatory application No 14/c/01/14

Docs. 9997/14

9998/14

The General Secretariat of the Council presented the application and explained the approach proposed in the draft reply (doc. 9998/14), i.e. to confirm the decision taken by the GSC, at the initial stage, to refuse access to the requested documents, pursuant to Article 4 (1) (a), first and third indent, of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 (protection of the public interest with regard to public security and international relations).

It was considered that release to the public of the information contained in these documents which relate to the internal security and political situation in the Sahel region would harm the public interest with regard to international relations.

In addition, disclosure of the documents related to EUCAP SAHEL Niger and EUTM Mali would be detrimental to the effectiveness of the on-going missions in a difficult environment and would put public security, including the personal safety of the personnel on the ground, at serious risk.

No comments from delegations, but due to the late transmission of the draft reply, delegations may indicate their position by Monday 16 June 2014 at 12:00.

It is envisaged to submit the draft reply to COREPER II on 18 June 2014 and subsequently to the Council (GAC) on 24 June 2014.

b) Confirmatory application No 15/c/14

Docs 10075/14

10076/14

The General Secretariat of the Council presented the application and explained the approach proposed in the draft reply (doc. 10076/14), i.e. full access may be granted to the document requested without any prejudice to future decisions on other similar documents related to the same files.

As mentioned above, due to the late transmission of the draft reply, delegations may indicate their position by Monday 16 June 2014 at 12:00.

It is envisaged to submit the draft reply to COREPER II on 18 June 2014 and subsequently to the Council (GAC) on 24 June 2014.

c) **Confirmatory application No 26/c/02/09 - New partial reply following the judgment of the General Court in Case T-63/10**

Doc. 8714/1/14 REV1

The Council Legal Service presented the draft reply and explained the context.

Following the judgment of the General Court in Case T-63/10 whereby the Court partially annulled the Council's decision relating to confirmatory application 26/c/02/09, the Council has to take the necessary measures to comply with that judgment.

Accordingly, on 22 July 2013, the Council already decided to release 18 documents to the applicant. Following consultations with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, a new partial draft reply concerning further 19 documents has been drawn up and is set out in doc. 8714/1/14 REV1.

Consultations with the Tribunal on a very limited number of documents still remain pending. A decision on possible release of these documents can therefore only be taken following completion of these consultations.

Due to the late transmission of the draft reply and the substantive number of documents concerned, the Chair indicated that the deadline for delegations to indicate their position would be extended to Friday 27 June 2014. Relevant documents would be available for consultation until Thursday 26 June 2014. These documents were also available for examination in the meeting room.

It is envisaged to submit the draft reply to COREPER II on 3 July 2014 and subsequently to the Council (ECOFIN) on 8 July 2014.

3. Communication / information policy

a) European Year for Development (EYD) 2015 - joint communication activities (Member States and Institutions)

The Commission's DG DEVCO representative presented the European Year for Development 2015 outlining its objectives (to inform citizens, to foster their direct involvement and active interest in development policy and to raise awareness of the benefits of EU development cooperation) and focusing on Member States' involvement in the EYD 2015 communication strategy.

As provided for in Article 4 of the Decision No 472/2014/EU of the EP and the Council on the designation of the Year (), the implementation will be based on the following key actions:

- the appointment of National Coordinators (NC), who are expected to hold their first meeting in early September 2014;
- the establishment of National Work Programmes (NWP) by 1 September 2014;
- coordinated actions with stakeholders:
- work to achieve EYD 2015 strategic goals together with all interested national authorities, fostering interministerial dialogue and joint cooperation;
- identify national “goodwill ambassadors” who can bring added value in promoting the Year.

In this context, the Commission's representative also underlined, among others, the need to:

- take due account of the very broad audience and liaise with the press and "independent stakeholders" (multipliers);
- pinpoint mobilising events or moments which could be labelled "EYD2015";
- the use of the hashtag #EYD2015 on social media.

The Chair informed the WPI that 20 delegations have so far replied to the questionnaire sent by the General Secretariat of the Council before the WPI meeting, which focused on progress made on the above implementing steps and, moreover, on past campaigns on the development policies and on the identification of major events or mobilising on Member States' feedback. The replies to the questionnaire are being shared with DG DEVCO to facilitate its future contacts with the national authorities.

The Latvian delegation informed that the opening event of EYD 2015, which is expected to have high political presence and media attention, will be taking place in Riga on 8 January 2015 at the same time as the visit of the newly appointment College of Commissioners. Another important event which will be labelled "EYD2015" is the High Level "Conference on Gender and Development" which will be organized with the Commission in the first quarter of 2015. Goodwill ambassadors for different target groups will be nominated in cooperation with stakeholders.

The Polish delegation explained that preparations for the EYD 2015 at national level are already ongoing in this Member State. The National Coordinator has been nominated and an ongoing brainstorming phase will enable to identify the "goodwill ambassadors".

The Italian delegation reiterated that the Expo 2015 in Milan will be the major event to raise awareness of the EYD 2015 and engage the "global audience" on all the major development issues, starting from food and nutrition security. The six months of the Expo will coincide with the negotiations on the new global development agenda post 2015. In total about 20 events are planned.

The Lithuanian delegation asked details on the financial aspects (how much funding each Member State could receive).

In reply to a number of questions raised by delegations (NL, BE, LT) and the Chair, the Commission's DG DEVCO representative:

- reiterated that the target audience is the general public, with focus on young people. However, to reach out to all citizens, it is necessary to work together with all stakeholders;
- informed that the guidelines for drafting the National Work Programmes will be sent to delegations within short, and that a technical meeting with the appointed National Coordinators will be organised in Autumn;
- indicated that the Commission will organise special events at the margins of the Milan Expo, such as Kapuscinski lectures on food safety and nutrition;
- in reply to the Chair's question, explained that the national work programme is a precondition for funding. However, no Member State is obliged to take part in the European Year of Development;
- Financing on a central level is foreseen for certain central things, the rest is the responsibility of the Member States. The amount of funding for Member States will range from 80.000 € to 600.000 € on the basis of a set of criteria such as country's population, cost of living, basic amount – privileging Member States without a longstanding tradition in development cooperation.

In reply to a question raised by the Finnish delegation, the General Secretariat of the Council reassured delegations on scope and objectives of the questionnaire circulated before the WPI meeting:

- to bring added value to the implementation of the EYD's communication strategy by pooling national resources from all relevant services;
- to encourage joint cooperation among communication specialists in the preparation of the national work programmes (which, as foreseen also in Article 3 of the above Decision, have a strong communication component);
- to help identify events of high media impact which could contribute to spreading EYD's core messages.

The Chair concluded the discussion by inviting the Commission DG DEVCO to come back to the WPI later during the year for an update on the EYD 2015 communication strategy.

b) Communication strategy on the Digital Agenda for Europe: state of play

The European Commission DG CONNECT representative illustrated the main elements of the communication strategy on the Digital Agenda for Europe, of which the main objectives are:

- to revamp it in order to operate a "cultural change", not only external but also within the institutions, stressing the need to move to 100% digital and mainstream communication;
- to boost information share and interaction through the social media, adopting a "community approach";
- to carry out appropriate surveys in order to test work in progress consistently;
- to increasingly develop a culture of "content creators" (training implications, mind change within the EU officials);
- to revamp and dynamize the website of the Digital Agenda for Europe, strengthening also its social media component;

- to develop worldwide connections and platforms aiming to facilitate the acquisition of skills (Digital Skills and Jobs);
- to enhance an internal culture of inter-service and inter-DG collaboration;
- to increase cooperation with Member States by implementing a 3-year going-local plan, foster participation of young people in a wide variety of national activities and special Digital Agenda events, reinforce ties within the existing High Level Group, and encourage national "coalitions" of key players who could boost implementation.

In this context, the Commission's representative drew attention to the fact that:

- (well-promising trend) 23 Member States have already developed a DigitalAgenda of their own;
- today's digital communication strategies are increasingly focusing on quality rather than on quantity. This is also the Commission's approach (after a revision/rationalisation of its websites, around 5.000 webpages were kept, while 95.000 (95%) have been removed);
- the next Europa website will be on the Open Source "Drupal"; that will therefore allow editing by all actors involved (no longer an exclusive domain of IT and tech professionals), with consequent time- and money savings. 25% of the officials of DG Connect have already written content on the website. All the content is tagged and is possible to incorporate it on the social media;
- the social media itself is no longer treated with a security-risk attitude, but the necessity for engaging in it is being recognised as fundamental from a communication point of view.

At the moment it is difficult for DG CONNECT to make any future promises or plans, since further developments will be studied once the new Commissioner is in place.

EURES website has been difficult to manage, a "grand coalition" of ICT companies is looked for in order to take over the management).

In reply to a question on interconnectivity among services and DGs raised by the General Secretariat of the Council, the European Commission representative indicated that DG CONNECT is already working together with other Commission DG's (e.g. with DG RTD in the context of Horizon 2020) to find the right approach to set up a single website where different DGs could bring in and edit own content (the open source platform approach makes this possible). DG CONNECT is also considering collaboration with other existing platforms with DG ENTR and DG EMPL (EURES).

4. Any Other Business

a) Complaint 689/2014/BEH to the European Ombudsman

– Information by the General Secretariat of the Council

Doc. 10769/14

The General Secretariat of the Council informed delegations of the letter sent by the European Ombudsman, dated 12 May 2014, concerning complaint No 689/2014/BEH.

The above-mentioned complaint concerns the Council's reply to confirmatory application No 02/c/01/14 by which the Council confirmed partial access to documents 10858/07 and 10858/07 COR 1 setting out an outcome of proceedings of the Foreign Relations Counsellors "Sanctions" formation Working Party (RELEX Sanctions) of 13 June 2007.

The Ombudsman asks the Council to be able to inspect the above-mentioned documents.

The letter authorising the European Ombudsman to inspect the documents will be submitted to the COREPER for approval.

The General Secretariat will furthermore draft an opinion on the allegations contained in the complaint which will be submitted to the Working Party for information at a later stage.

b) State of play on:

- **the new visual identity for the Council 'family'**
- **Council 'family' websites: online redesign project**

The General Secretariat of the Council gave a brief overview of the characteristics and main principles of the new graphic charter supporting the renovated logo. The new visual identity will apply to the entire "Council family": the European Council and its President; the Euro Summit and its President; the Council of the EU and its Presidency (with specific provisions for co-branding with the rotating Presidency); the Eurogroup and its President, and the GSC as supporting administration. It will be rolled-out progressively as of 1 July 2014.

Moreover, the General Secretariat of the Council provided an update of the online redesign project, highlighting some of the major improvements of the new website, focussing on mobile aspects, on the new automated translated workflow and enhanced content display and filtering options. In reply to a question raised by the Italian delegation, the GSC representative explained that, until present, users have been involved in the development and information architecture phases. Usability tests have not taken place yet but will be organised very shortly.

The Chair highlighted the efforts being made by the GSC on these projects which aim to enhance transparency, facilitate content accessibility and increase user-friendliness.

c) Calendar of WPI meetings in the 2nd semester 2014

The Italian delegation circulated and commented briefly on the calendar of WPI meetings and related events foreseen in the 2nd semester 2014. Attention was drawn to the WPI full-day meeting foreseen on 17 October (which might, in principle, include an enlarged session extended to communication experts to develop a Presidency's communication priority which is under consideration) and to the Club of Venice plenary meeting foreseen in Rome on 13-14 November 2014.

Moreover, referring to the outcome of the WPI meeting held on 25 April 2014 ⁽¹⁾, the Italian delegation asked what follow-up actions are foreseen with regard to delegations' replies to the three questions raised by the Chair on the future of communicating Europe in partnership in the field of communication (partnerships agreements as bilateral issue or horizontal issue; usefulness of the communication priorities exercise for 2015; need to revisit the Joint Declaration of 22 October 2008). This delegation, supported by the FR, LV and PL delegations, asked the Chair to consider adding this item on the agenda of the next WPI meeting. The Chair took note of this request and will keep the WPI informed about its possible follow-up.

d) Club of Venice plenary meeting, Riga, 5-6 June 2014

The Latvian delegation briefed the WPI on the conclusions of this meeting, which had a high attendance of around 60 participants from 23 countries, all EU institutions and bodies and was introduced by the Latvian Foreign Affairs Minister, Edgars Rinkēvičs.

The main issues tackled were:

- the European elections 2014: lessons learned and future challenges; grounds for re-designing the EU identity, re-launch the European project and share common values, with focus on the role of public communicators. The participants debated on how the discussion on communicating European values should continue, and it was mentioned that the WPI is a good forum to develop this issue;
- strategic communication in times of political unrest and economic crisis (orientations for 2014 and beyond: focus on storytelling, value creation and the importance of evaluation in the communication process);
- updates on the implementation of governmental communication plans, with focus on training and professionalization, Open Government and branding.

⁽¹⁾ doc. 9384/14.

e) **Activities in the margin of the European Council, 26-27 June 2014**

The General Secretariat of the Council gave a short update of the logistical arrangements being put in place for the next European Council meeting, in particular on the events foreseen in Ypres on Thursday 26 June (1st day of the European Council, dedicated to commemoration of WWI): a ceremony at M nin Gate with inauguration of the M nin Gate Gardens, followed by a family photo and dinner at the City Hall; installation of a small press centre, with limited press access (main press centre will remain in the Justus Lipsius building, with live broadcast of all ceremonies).

On Friday 27 June, the European Council will meet as usual in Brussels in the Justus Lipsius building. The programme is expected to start with the signature of association agreements with Moldavia and Georgia and follow-up on the EU-Ukraine association agreement. Main items on the agenda: freedom, security and justice, European Semester, climate change and energy and the nomination of the new president of the European Commission.
