



Council of the  
European Union

063356/EU XXV. GP  
Eingelangt am 24/04/15

Brussels, 24 April 2015  
(OR. en)

8299/15

API 39  
INF 72

## OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Working Party on Information on 17 April 2015

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### 1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted as set out in document CM 2146/15.

### 2. Communication / Information Policy

#### a) Communication aspects of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) - follow-up to the WPI meeting on 17 October 2014

The Commission, DG TRADE, outlined the main findings of delegations' replies to the questionnaire on MS' TTIP-related communication activities.

From the information provided by national authorities it emerges, among others, that on line information flow is increasing and that the intensity of meetings with civil society varies very much from one MS to another.

DG TRADE underlined that an effective communication strategy in this field can be implemented only in partnership with the Member States, ideally building the joint approach on three planks:

- explain the project itself (its economic and strategic value) clearly and openly;
- de-centralize the dialogue, reaching out and engaging with the local communities;
- feed the mainstream debate with "daily life" cases, elaborating on the possible concrete benefits.

The Commission confirmed that it will draw up a synthesis report as soon as it processes the feedback received in the last few days and the outstanding replies. It also informed delegations of a new brochure being translated into all the EU languages and invited them to avail of the material accessible through the dedicated web platform.

Delegations' interventions by FR, UK, DE, EL, CZ, DK and EE focused on the need to:

- enhance communication towards SMEs;
- develop social networking activities;
- increase relations with NGOs, enhancing the already existing dedicated platforms;
- pursue the transparency efforts;
- respond to multilingualism needs;
- expand interinstitutional dialogue;
- capitalize/learn lessons from the recent ECI exercise.

The Commission informed of the Trade Policy Day which will be celebrated on 23 June 2015 with a public event open to institutions and NGO's representatives, in presence of Commissioner Malmström. It also announced a new Commission's policy paper, not only focused on the TTIP but more broadly on policy recommendations and orientations on External Trade, foreseen in the 3rd quarter 2015.

Concluding the debate, the Chairman stressed the need for institutions and MS to work together on this issue in order to communicate effectively, in parallel to achieving a balanced trade agreement.

The Chairman also indicated that the WPI looks forward to the Commission's synthesis report and to pursuing the discussions and ongoing work, taking into account the issues raised by delegations. It finally informed the WPI that this topic will also be on the informal agenda of the national communication directors (Club of Venice) meeting in Vienna on 11-12 June.

#### **b) Eastern neighbourhood: communication aspects**

The PEC's Spokesperson, recalled the Vilnius summit in November 2013 and the conclusions on external relations adopted by the European Council on 20 March 2015 <sup>1</sup> with regard to the Eastern Partnership goals. His contribution focused on the EU/Ukraine summit on 27 April 2015, on the Eastern Partnership Summit foreseen in Riga on 21-22 May 2015 and on the Strategic Communication implications.

In particular, the PEC's Spokesperson indicated that, at the Riga EaP summit, the EU is expected to confirm its commitment to support the Eastern neighbour countries, assisting them in a tailor-made way to reinforce their capacity building, strengthen their resilience and facilitate recovery.

He also mentioned that, in order to enhance co-operation, a joint reflection is needed on how to pool efforts between EU institutions and Member States in order to communicate effectively in this field in a coordinated and coherent manner. Accordingly, the preparation of the Action Plan and the setting up of a communication experts' team in line with the European Council conclusions are priorities to be implemented swiftly.

The EEAS' representatives (HRVP's Spokesperson and the StratCom Division) shared the PEC Spokesperson's views.

With regard in particular to the EaP summit, the EEAS specified that it provides a great opportunity to pass a very strong message to all the authorities of the Eastern neighbourhood and beyond. Therefore there is a need to manage communication expectations, working on a concrete narrative which would explain the concrete achievements through partnership.

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<sup>1</sup> EUCO 11/15.

In this context, the EEAS' representatives and the representative from the Commission DG NEAR recalled the comprehensive information being produced for the event while the LV Presidency focused on the organisation of a media event and to the relevant information in the dedicated website <sup>2</sup>. DG NEAR also announced two additional side events being organised in the framework of the summit (a business forum and a civil society forum).

As regards StratCom, in particular the Action Plan and the communication team requested by the European Council, the EEAS expressed the view that these measures represent a joint institutions/MS undertaking which will require strong inter-institutional cooperation in order to give it the right shape from the outset.

The EEAS' representatives stressed the need to set up the communication experts' team and make it soon operational, to challenge the disinformation gap through a qualitative approach, defend the EU's credibility and promote its common values. Networking will be crucial. The communication activities should include, among others, a comprehensive analysis of media monitoring and mapping.

In this context, the Latvian Presidency circulated a questionnaire aiming to collect MS' feedback on media monitoring activities and products and share views on initiatives they consider relevant in this context<sup>3</sup>.

Delegations' interventions (LT, S, FR, LV, DK, EE) drew attention to the need to:

- be ready to address the communication challenges expected in the run up of the Riga summit;
- instil key elements of Riga's outcome into the StratCom plans;
- have clear roles defined within the communication expert team;
- develop a clear and concrete narrative;

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<sup>2</sup> <https://eu2015.lv/events/political-meetings/eastern-partnership-summit-2015-05-21>

<sup>3</sup> 8137/2015 INF 68.

- support not only media, but also communication development in the EaP countries;
- strengthen relations with civil society;
- ensure coherence and exchange of feedback among all the key players.

Concluding the debate, the Chairman:

- invited delegations to reply to the Presidency's questionnaire within the deadline (5 May);
- underlined that, given the complexity of the issue, all parties involved should strengthen coordination mechanisms and networking mechanisms, stepping up collective efforts to pursue the communication strategy;
- indicated that, since there is a clear need of a coordinated effort, the WPI envisages to have this topic on its agenda at its next two meetings under the current semester (8 May and 19 June), with the participation of the EEAS and the Commission.

### 3. Transparency / access to documents

- a) **Thirteenth annual report of the Council on the implementation of Regulation (EU) No 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents**

**Doc 6725/1/15 REV 1**  
+ **COR 1 (en)**

Following the presentation of the report at the WPI meeting of 17 March 2015, no comments were received by the General Secretariat or raised at the meeting.

Consequently, the draft report will be listed on the agenda of COREPER II on 13 May in view of its adoption by the Council (General Affairs) on 19 May 2015.

**b) Pilot Project of the Council on Open Data : Voting results database**  
**- Information from the GSC**  
**Doc 7534/15 INF 52 API 34**

The General Secretariat of the Council presented to the WPI the Pilot project of the Council on Open Data: Voting results dataset available at the Council's website and at the EU Open Data Portal. The dataset contains all Council votes on legislative acts since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty on 1 December 2009. It can be downloaded in bulk, parsed using an API and browsed using the dataset structure.

An evaluation of the pilot project will be conducted after 6 months and results will be presented to the WPI in November or December 2015.

In reply to IT, the General Secretariat of the Council explained that the information contained in the open data voting results dataset corresponds to the official voting results already published in pdf format in the Council's website (for example, in the minutes of the Council) but which is now published in machine readable format, according to open data standards.

#### **4. Any Other Business**

**a) EU institutions' Open Day, Brussels, 9 May 2015**

The General Secretariat of the Council outlined the activities foreseen in the Council's premises on the occasion of the EU's Open Day. Its intervention focused in particular on the organisation of an "inter-generational debate" which will enable young Europeans to meet relatives and colleagues of the EU's "founding fathers". This initiative, organised with the support of the European Youth Forum and endowed with a video being released on that occasion, will enable visitors to discover how those "pioneers" personalities shaped the Union and to listen to the stories "behind the scenes" of the first days of the European project.

The European Parliament DG COMM and the Commission DG COMM gave a short overview of the activities planned by those institutions. The Parliament will focus on the European Year for Development 2015, with the discovery of a "Development Village" in the Esplanade in presence of UN representatives and Nana Moskouri. The Commission foresees close connections with the Milan EXPO 2015 ( a Citizens' Dialogue in Milan as well as a similar event in Brussels, centred on the development policy, and a Bread Fair in Rond Point Schuman).

**b) Non-paper on enhancing transparency in the EU from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, The Netherlands, Slovenia and Sweden**

The DK delegation informed the WPI that, in view of the discussions on a new Interinstitutional Agreement (IIA) on Better Law Making, a non-paper on enhancing transparency in the EU on behalf of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, The Netherlands, Slovenia and Sweden had been distributed to all Member States via the Antici network.

With the understanding that discussions on the new IIA take place at Antici and Coreper level, the Chairman acknowledged that WPI might consider to raise a number of horizontal transparency issues and contribute to the discussions held in other Council bodies on these issues.

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