



Brussels, 20 February 2018  
(OR. en)

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## OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

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From: General Secretariat of the Council  
On: 13 February 2018  
To: Delegations  
Subject: Working Party on Information

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### 1. Adoption of the agenda

The WPI approved the agenda in CM 1511/1/18 REV 1, with an additional AOB item.

### 2. Communication / Information policy

#### a) European Parliament's institutional communication strategy for the 2019 elections (doc. WK 13585/2017)

The European Parliament's representative highlighted the importance of the elections and the need to reach previously passive audiences and non-voters.

He also underlined the importance of a public debate on the future of Europe and informed the WPI that the European Parliament started inviting Member State Prime Ministers to join discussions in the EP plenary.

The European Parliament's representative indicated that cooperation with the Member States will be crucial. There is a need to liaise with national election bodies to understand political issues, legal nuances and restrictions in the registration phase. The European Parliament will also seek Member States' collaboration to identify possible channels for free media advertising and facilitate cross-links with other initiatives.

The European Parliament is preparing a vast data-base with all the EU achievements in the last five years, at national and local level, as a resource for MEPs, candidates and all stakeholders in their outreach.

The Commission's representative stressed the need to proactively involve citizens in the process of shaping Europe's future.

He referred to the ongoing collaboration with other institutions through ad hoc working groups and outlined the Commission's resources and instruments on the ground (representations, Europe Direct centres, documentation centres, the citizens' dialogues and strategic partnerships with Member States). Furthermore, he stressed the need for joint efforts to counter disinformation timely and effectively.

The Commission is also envisaging to launch a new corporate campaign to explain how the EU can help boost the economies of rural areas.

The Presidency shared the European Parliament's objectives to increase public awareness about the importance of the European Parliament elections and the voter turnout and drew delegations' attention to the following main challenges:

- participation: According to the last post-election study of the European Parliament, the main reasons for not voting reflect a disenchantment with politics in general;
- substance of the campaigns: The European Parliament election campaigns are quite often dominated by national topics rather than by EU policies;
- the need to neutralize fake news;
- coherent information about when and how to vote in the Member States.

The exchange of views with delegations' (MT, D, NL, SI, IT and B) focused on :

- regional targeting and the expected cooperation between the European Parliament and the Member States to align the media campaign accordingly;
- if and how the European Parliament "Spitzenkandidaten" (leading candidate) theme will be addressed in the information campaign;
- the timeline;
- the content of the European Parliament's announced data base;
- the organisation of cooperation with the national authorities on joint projects foreseen by the European Parliament.

The Parliament underlined that its communication campaign aims to encourage citizens to vote by better explaining the benefits of the EU and that the eight priorities of the campaign correspond to the main areas identified in the Eurobarometer as being of highest importance to EU citizens. The European Parliament representative indicated that the "Spitzenkandidaten" approach of the European Parliament will also be part of its campaign.

The implementation of the European Parliament's campaign should officially start in May 2018 (one year before the elections) and the budget allocated is 30 Mio €

The Commission confirmed that it will support the European Parliament's communication campaign and invited MS to use the information material it produced.

**b) Migration policy developments: communication implications**  
(docs. WK 1580/2018 and WK 1584/2018)

The Presidency underlined that "Security and Stability in a Stronger and United Europe" is one of its main priorities and referred to the informal meeting of ministers for justice and home affairs held in Sofia on 25-26 January 2018.

The Presidency highlighted the importance of information campaigns in the countries of origin and along the migratory routes, but also in the Member States, using both social and mainstream media and building on the diaspora communities' testimonials. It also stressed the need for communication efforts of Member States and Institutions to be synchronized.

The European Commission's presentation covered the following elements:

- the main findings of the Open University's evaluation report on the web platform [www.infomigrants.net](http://www.infomigrants.net);
- an awareness-raising campaign in Afghanistan to be carried out until June 2018;
- a call for proposals (budget foreseen: 5.5 Mio € within the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund - AMIF) to support awareness-raising and information campaigns on the risks of irregular migrations in selected countries;
- the publication of a factsheets compilation.

Comments and questions by delegations focused on :

- the need for cooperation with the EEAS;
- ongoing national debates and Member States' engagement in this field;
- the key role for social media in informing target audiences and countering disinformation produced on line by traffickers and smugglers, and the necessary political sensibility for actions to be carried out in third countries;
- the editorial content of the portal.

The Commission's representative confirmed ongoing strong cooperation with the EEAS and underlined that the initiatives undertaken are under constant risk monitoring.

### 3. Any Other Business

#### a. **European Ombudsman case OI/2/2017/TE (Transparency of the Council legislative process)**

The Chairman drew delegations' attention to the European Ombudsman's press release 2/2018 of 13 February 2018, which refers to Ombudsman's recommendation following her inquiry on case OI/2/2017/TE.

#### b. **Club of Venice seminar "Open Government and Open Data: New Horizons for Communication and Public Access to Information" - Luxembourg, 8-9 March 2018 (doc. WK 1586/2018)**

The Luxembourg delegation presented the programme of the event, highlighting the relevance for the EU's and its Member States' efforts to:

- increase transparency and accountability, thus helping to counter disinformation;
  - foster the re-use of the information published in digital format.
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