



**Brussels, 8 May 2019
(OR. en)**

9169/19

**API 50
INF 128**

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council
On: 30 April 2019
To: Delegations
Subject: Working Party on Information

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda in **CM 2582/19** was adopted.

2. Communication / Information policy

- a) Presentation by Director-General Pia Ahrenkilde-Hansen (DG COMM Commission) - Communicating Europe: Communication on how to make the Union more united, stronger and more democratic in communication terms**
- Discussion

Pia Ahrenkilde-Hansen, Director-General of DG COMM, presented the Commission's contribution to the Informal meeting of heads of state or government taking place in Sibiu on 9 May. The Commission communication is entitled "Europe in May 2019 - Preparing for a more democratic Union in an increasingly uncertain world" and was adopted by the Commission on 30 April 2019.

Key points of the presentation were:

- The institutions and the member states need to demonstrate unity and act together for common goals. Only a strong and united Europe will be able to have influence on world events.
- Policy and communication are the two sides of the same coin. Europe's unique communication challenge is how to communicate effectively across a whole continent in times of increasing fragmentation and disinformation. Communication must be integrated from the start in policymaking.
- Five dimensions of the EU strategic agenda are
 - Protective Europe: building genuine European Security Union, moving towards European Defence union
 - Competitive Europe: focusing research and innovation, modernising and fully implementing single market and deepening Economic and Monetary Union
 - Fair Europe: reaching further fairness in Europe delivering on the European Pillar of Social Rights and working with the member states to achieve social inclusion
 - Sustainable Europe: implementing sustainability objectives, fighting climate change and reverse environmental degradation, transition towards a more resource-efficient circular economy by promoting green growth
 - Influential Europe: Europe needs to lead in the world through consistent and strong support for a multilateral, rules-based global order, with the United Nations.
- Five recommendations of the Commission to EU leaders in Sibiu are the following:
 - recognise that the communicating Europe is a joint responsibility
 - increase engagement and interaction with citizens on EU policies and issues
 - ensure EU institutions work more closely on corporate communication campaigns based on shared values (one message, one voice, one logo)
 - join forces to counter disinformation with facts
 - promote teaching and learning about the EU at all levels.

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissions-contribution-informal-eu27-leaders-meeting-sibiu-romania_en

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-19-2309_en.htm

b) Presentation by the European Parliament: Fighting disinformation before the European Parliament elections (this point was discussed in the presence of the representatives of the European Parliament)

- Exchange of views

Marjory van den Broeke, Deputy Spokesperson of the European Parliament, gave a presentation on the EP's efforts to counter disinformation.

Key points of the presentation were:

- Debunking disinformation (to counter false or manipulated information that has malicious or commercial interests) has its limits, and institutional communicators need to balance the interest of debunking with that of not contributing to the spread of disinformation.
- Prevention is crucial, through access to credible facts (studies, press releases), positive narratives (What EU does for you, seminars, videos, etc.), awareness-raising, and by being trusted by the media as credible source of information.
- The EP has created a special task force on disinformation, a new system for early detection for quick reaction, and a new media monitoring system in cooperation with the Joint Research Centre, and cooperates closely with the Commission.
- Christian Mangold, Director DG COMM of the European Parliament, briefly informed the delegations about the EP's efforts to have Facebook's new ad policy reversed or amended. This new policy requires all EU advertisers, including EU institutions, to be established and authorised in every member state where they want to run ads ahead of the European elections.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/en/stay-informed/information-offices-in-the-member-states>

www.what-europe-does-for-me.eu (mobile version Citizens App)

c) Presentation by the EEAS: Implementation of the Action Plan against Disinformation - results achieved and next steps

- Exchange of views

Lutz Güllner, Head of the Strategic Communications Division of the European External Action Service, informed the delegations about the state of play of the implementation of the Action Plan (AP).

Key points of the presentation were:

- Definition of disinformation from the Foreign Policy perspective: intentional, coordinated, with political or commercial aim and not necessarily wrong but manipulated information.
- The Rapid Alert System (RAS) was created in cooperation with the member states. RAS was launched on 15 March with points of contact as a network of specialists in all member states.
- On 29 April, member states reviewed the implementation of RAS, and the system will be gradually developed over the coming years.
- Secondary objective of RAS is to create contacts and communities for awareness raising, especially before the elections to the European Parliament.
- The Romanian Presidency of the Council is currently conducting a mapping exercise concerning the actions undertaken at member states level to combat disinformation.

d) Possible construction of a Presidency web portal by the General Secretariat of the Council for future Council Presidencies

- Presentation and first exchange of views

Key points of the presentation by the GSC were:

- As part of its current tasks, the GSC provides strategic advice and training to the presidencies' web teams.
- In response to informal requests submitted to the GSC, to analyse the possibility of building and hosting the unique website for the Council presidency, the GSC has prepared and presented an outline of the service offer.

- The offer is based on the concept of a single, unique website for the presidencies, which would be highly connected to - but would never overlap - the Council website.
- The new presidency website would be created by the GSC using a common template which would be partially customisable to meet the specific requirements of each of the rotating presidencies. The GSC would create an 'empty' website, with an information architecture, navigation, labels and ready-to-use content types. The 'empty' website would be populated with content created, published, updated and translated independently by the presidencies' teams. The presidencies would retain full control and responsibility for the content featured on this website.
- The service offer is divided into technical and editorial parts.
- The GSC estimates it would need 14 months to build the website. Throughout the process, the project team would report to a steering board chaired by the GSC and composed of GSC staff and representatives of the relevant presidencies.
- The service would be offered on a voluntary basis to the presidencies. The investment would be entirely covered by the GSC.

In their initial reactions to this presentation delegations were generally very positive about this possible service offer. Delegations were invited to respond by 25 May to an online questionnaire, which will allow the GSC to measure the level of interest in the initiative. The results of the questionnaire will be used to determine the next steps.

3. Transparency

a) Annual Report on Access to documents 2018

- Presentation by the General Secretariat of the Council

7916/19 INF 75 API 31

The General Secretariat presented the draft of the seventeenth annual report of the Council on the implementation of Regulation (EC) 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 for 2018.

After a brief session of questions and answers, delegations agreed on the draft report as it stands (7916/19).

The Chair informed delegations that the report would be submitted for agreement as a I/A item to COREPER / Council for approval on 15 and 22 May, respectively.

4. Any other business (communication)

The UK delegation informed the meeting about its planned activities on the occasion of Media Freedom Day on Friday 3 May and invited other delegations to join in these.

The GSC gave a short presentation on social media activities and cooperation with delegations during the Open Day of the Council, on 4 May.
