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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Delegations

Subject: Working Party on Information (Communication) - 18 November 2021

Delegations will find attached the outcome of proceedings of the Working Party on Information (Communication) on 18 November 2021.

Outcome of proceedings

Working Party on Information (Communication) of 18 November 2021

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted as set out in document CM 5342/2021 REV1.

2. Evaluation of the Communicators Portal

- *Exchange of views*

The Chair briefly introduced the topic, reminding the origins of the Portal and its launch from October 2020 (presentation from the WPI meeting of 6 October available as WK 10728/2020). She then asked delegates to reply to the questions sent in advance on the use and objectives (How do you use the information on the Portal on the upcoming communication products from the EU? How many times have you (or other users from your country) used the Portal to download and reuse communication materials? Do you find that five connections per Member State are sufficient for your needs?), usefulness (How does the Portal help you in your work? Are the topics covered enough or would you like to see others? Is the frequency of posting sufficient, in your view? Are the shared materials relevant to your work?) and usability (How would you describe your experience of the Portal, in terms of access and log in, navigation, performance, facility of finding the information you need? Do you have any suggestions for improvement?) of the platform.

Most of the delegates present said that they consider the Portal to be very useful, although the uptake of materials/frequency of access varies considerably from one Member State to another. In a majority of cases, the Portal is used mainly by communicators in the Capitals, but for some it is the opposite, with those in Permanent Representations accessing it more frequently. For many, five connections are enough, at least for the time being, while some expressed a desire to have more. In case the scope of the portal is expanded and/or the diversity of covered topics is increased, some considered that the number of connections available would likely have to be increased.

In terms of topics covered, Covid-19 was almost unanimously cited as very relevant, with some mentions of the Conference on the Future of Europe as a topic of interest. There was a general consensus that the scope of the platform could be expanded to other topics. The types of materials that were mentioned as useful were the weekly editorial plans, videos, social media assets and press releases. Several delegations specifically pointed at the weekly email summarising links to the portal and other assets as being particularly useful. The materials available on the Portal were often used for inspiration, but were rarely directly posted as such on national channels, because of incompatibility with national visual lines and graphic constraints.

The vast majority of delegates pointed out that the complex login process to the Portal is a major problem, and it prevents some users from accessing the platform more frequently. Otherwise, once the platform is accessed, navigation and usability were not identified as problematic.

The Commission also intervened, stressing the importance of feed-back on the usefulness of the Portal, especially regarding topics to be covered. They expressed the need for more information in this respect, and more quantitative data on use and reach of specific communication materials. They re-iterated their readiness to give support to Member States regarding communication assets, including on the Portal.

The Chair recalled the context that underpinned the choice of the technical solution for the Portal and explained the constraints related to available statistics, which due to the restriction of connections cannot show the actual reach of materials. She concluded, summarising the interventions of MS, and encouraging delegations to send further feed-back in writing. She mentioned that a reflection process is ongoing, and delegates will be kept informed.

3. The use of social media influencers in public communication

- Information from the GSC and exchange of views

The Chair introduced this point as a new topic that has a lot of potential, but also some associated risks. She mentioned that the GSC does not have a political message to convey, providing only fact-based communication, hence the complexity of working with such a multiplier audience.

Next Oana Dutescu, Head of the Outreach and Engagement Unit and Maciej Bury, Head of the Digital Communication Unit at the GSC, presented the experience of the GSC in working with influencers, as part of long-standing efforts to reach new audiences, especially young ones. Firstly, there was a preparatory workshop organised in the beginning of the year to identify influencers to work with. As a next step, the GSC organised a pilot event on the World Environment Day to test working with influencers, with positive feed-back from everyone involved. At the end of the presentation, the speakers outlined the benefits and challenges of collaborating with influencers, and concluded that such a collaboration is worth pursuing despite the identified risks.

The Chair then gave the floor to delegations, asking them to share their experience in working with this type of multiplier audience.

Several delegations intervened on this point, sharing their experience and giving some suggestions for the way forward. Working with influencers took place especially in the context of Covid-19 safety measures and vaccination. Campaigns were successful especially in terms of reaching social bubbles that are usually not reached by government messaging. It was pointed out that this type of communication should complement rather than replace traditional channels. An open question remains on how to approach influencers for less straightforward topics.

The Commission intervened to say that they are working on internal guidelines on working with influencers, which might be also shared with delegations. They will revert on this, once the document is finalised.

The Chair summarised interventions from MS, directly replying to some suggestions. She encouraged delegates to get in touch bilaterally with the institutions, but also between themselves, in order to exchange experiences. She mentioned the importance of national advice on which influencers to choose from each country. It was noted that the GSC will continue exploring pilot collaborations in this area.

4. AOB

- The green strand of the NextGenerationEU communication campaign

Information from the Commission

The Commission summarised the results of the NextGenerationEU communication campaign so far, and presented the green strand of this campaign, including the collaboration with UEFA (presentation available as [WK 14090/2021](#)).

- **Conference on the Future of Europe**

Information on upcoming intervention to the informal meeting of members of the General Affairs Group

The Chair informed delegates about an upcoming informal meeting of the General Affairs Group dedicated to communication on the Conference of Europe, taking place on 30 November, where Reijo Kemppinen, Director-General of Communication and Information at the GSC, was invited to attend.
