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DIRECTORATE-GENERAL COMMUNICATION

Communication Actions

Brussels,
DG COMM D(2011)

NOTE TO THE MEMBERS OF FORUM EUROPA AND THE INTERNET EDITORS NETWORK

Subject: EUROPA – “Tour d’horizon”

Dear all,

DG COMM’s EUROPA Site unit conducted a user satisfaction survey in May and subsequently interviews with several DGs regarding the performance of corporate web applications and services. Many comments were made. However, there appeared to be one common need: the need for more and better communication.

This by far non-exhaustive information note aims to give you a snapshot of our unit’s plans and activities that may be of relevance to you. Although our main information relays – apart from the various collaborative spaces and the IPG – are the Forum Europa, Internet Editors and Social Media Networks, my impression is that not all members always attend and therefore the information flow is compromised.

1. The future of EUROPA

Did you know that EUROPA contains more than 460 websites, 7.8 million web pages and attracts each month 40 million visits and 109 million page views? Thanks to your input an electronic inventory of websites was launched in February. We are currently finalising an analysis report based on the inventory. It will be presented as soon as it is ready.

This report will be an important building block to analyse further the characteristics of Commission websites to make the institution’s online communication better, more coherent and cost-effective whilst supporting the Commission’s policy priorities.

It is my wish to discuss together with you the future of the EUROPA site. I therefore invite you to join the workshop on 21 September in the morning (the invitation was issued on the Forum Europa collaborative space). It will be organised on the premises of the Commission Representation in Belgium, Rue Archimède 73. Initially, it was planned to organise the Forum EUROPA back-to-back with the workshop. However, the Presidency of the Forum decided to hold it on 22 September to enable you to attend a training session on social media that DG HR organises on 21 September in the afternoon.

2. Management of websites and user testing

You may know that the EUROPA Website Unit is also in charge of the day to day management of a number of websites, such as the sites of President Barroso, VP Reding, the EU website of EUROPA as well as the Commission’s top level pages.

Commission européenne, B-1000 Bruxelles / Europese Commissie, B-1000 Brussel - Belgium. Telephone: +32 22991111. Office: BERL. Telephone: direct line +32 22951718.

Following an in-depth user analysis, we plan to put online an improved version of the EU Press Room, before the end of the year. The new version aims at rationalising the presence of news at the inter-institutional level, at increasing usability and accessibility and at promoting further a EUROPA corporate image.

Following the complete re-launch and rationalisation of the EU Basics section of europa.eu in May, we are currently overhauling the EU policy pages on EUROPA. We are continuing our work to improve all sections of europa.eu based on the extensive user research we carry out. We have implemented page level and site level feedback surveys and we organise regular user testing on the site.

Furthermore, the project to translate the static parts of all Commissioner sites into 3 + 1 languages is progressing according to plan in close collaboration with webmasters, Cabinets and DG T. We plan to complete the project before the end of the year.

Usability and user testing

The unit regularly organises user tests on our own sites, particularly on the europa.eu site. Observers are welcome to attend these sessions to see how the tests are set up and run.

We have also made our feedback surveys available in all languages for DGs to use. We have plans in the pipeline to organise a number of training seminars on usability and user testing.

3. Technical projects and helpdesk services

As you know, Unit COMM.A.5 operates corporate information systems, i.e. the Corporate Web Content Management System (CWCMS), EUROPA Analytics and EUROPA Search. Furthermore, we are in charge of the Flexible Platform for Information Services (FPFIS).

CWCMS

The CWCMS v3 is being used by 23 DGs, 6 are migrating. With nearly 800,000 resources within its repository, the CWCMS is a major tool in constant progression for the production of static EUROPA sites. The current version of the application operates with a web publication interface called "Web publisher" that will be supported by its vendor until 2014. Hence the need to put into operation - by that date at the latest - the new generation CWCMS v4. The project has already started. DG COMM together with DG DIGIT will launch the user needs analysis soon. It goes without saying that the webmasters and internet editors will be closely involved and kept regularly informed.

EUROPA Analytics

I am fully aware of the performance issues linked to the system and the service we provide. Short term measures have already been taken. One support person was added, a simplified interface ("Kiosk") was launched in July and its second generation is planned for November. In parallel, the company supplying the tool (SAS) has conducted a comprehensive analysis backed-up by customer interviews. We will discuss the results internally in September.

EUROPA Analytics can only work if your websites are properly configured in the system. Therefore please critically review your configuration frequently. If you have questions please contact us through the mailbox COMM EUROPA MANAGEMENT.

EUROPA Search

Please see the minutes of the Forum Europa meeting of 22 June.

FPFIS

The Flexible Platform for Internet Services (FPFIS) enables webmasters to respond promptly to requests for modern Web 2.0 tools, whilst avoiding the development of a plethora of tools for the same communication task. The Internet Services delivered in the EUROPA Flexible Platform are based on tools widely used on the Internet, they will be used “out-of-the-box”.

This project provides several tools and widgets based on open source software and commercial solutions. The objective is to complement and enrich websites produced with CWCMS Documentum or other production systems with interactive functionalities.

The FPFIS is a complete service that includes the management, maintenance and update of the technical platform and existing services; implementation of new instances (e.g. new blogs, forums, etc.); a helpdesk and the evaluation, selection and installation of new easy-to implement services.

The FPFIS offers the following interactive corporate tools to all DGs: Blogs, Forums, e-voting polls, feedback form, Flexible rating system, RSS – Syndication, Video Flash player, phpList newsletters, Bookmarking and sharing, Fusion Maps, Open Street Maps and Fusion Charts. Expected new tools comprise a photo-video competition, installation of an URL shortener tool, visitor like/dislike page rating, events submission and a FlipBook on the web.

Helpdesk

The user satisfaction with our helpdesk services following the survey in May was positive. Over the summer, several DG web teams as well as helpdesk staff were interviewed and provided additional feedback. This exercise brought to light a number of issues that we are currently analysing and prioritising. Adequate steps will be taken to address them.

4. Training

I am aware of the “administrative habit” to invite people to register for trainings and then programme them months after the enrolment. We have addressed this issue for EUROPA Analytics by scheduling courses upfront between August and October both in Brussels and Luxembourg (see annex). You may enrol according to your needs. We are trying to do the same for the CWCMS.

DG COMM's social media team is, by the way, preparing a training scheme for the Social Media Network members.

5. Support to DGs - Information Providers Guide (IPG)

I encourage you and your colleagues to use the IPG as guidance as well as instrument to facilitate your work.

On a more critical note, I remember having seen several comments from newcomers who responded to our satisfaction survey in May. They claimed not to know what the IPG was. Please make sure that you inform, mentor and coach newcomers into their new job.

6. Social Media

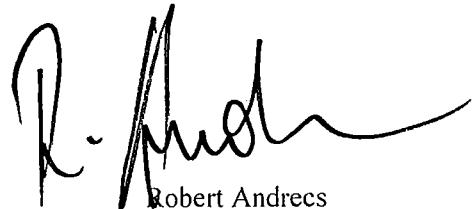
The Social Media Network (SMN) was set up to support political communication and the professionalisation of social media use in the Commission.

The SMN had its kick-off meeting on 3 May 2011 and a second working meeting – related to the MFF launch – on 27 June 2011. The third meeting will take place on 17 and 18 November.

You may have noticed that the guidelines for all staff have been adopted. They were published as Administrative Notice N° 34-2011 on 19 August 2011. Practical guidance for the management of official social media accounts is under preparation.

Finally, I would like to draw your attention to a very interesting Eurobarometer Flash on user language preferences online. The analytical report is available at: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_313_en.pdf

Many thanks to all of you for the good cooperation and feedback to the satisfaction survey and the various interviews. I am also very grateful to our partners DG T and DG DIGIT for their support. Particular thanks go to the Presidents of the Forum EUROPA, Annika BORTIN (ESTAT) and Sergio AMARO (EPSO).



Robert Andrecs

Annex 1: Useful information

Copies: Presidents of the Forum EUROPA, Webmasters in Representations

Annex 1 – Useful information

Forthcoming events

21 September (morning)

Brainstorming workshop of Forum EUROPA/Internet Editors on the future of EUROPA
<http://myintracomm-collab.ec.europa.eu/networks/EuropaForum/default.aspx>

22 September (afternoon)

Joint meeting of Forum EUROPA and Internet Editors

<http://myintracomm-collab.ec.europa.eu/networks/EuropaForum/Lists/Calendar/calendar.aspx>

17-18 November

Social Media Network back-to-back with REP's Press Officer meeting.

Reminder - Useful information sources

1. IPG

IPG – Homepage:

http://ec.europa.eu/ipg/index_en.htm

http://www.cc.cec/home/europa-info/index_en.htm

EUROPA Analytics:

http://www.cc.cec/home/europa-info/services/statistics/list_of_statistics/index_en.htm

CWCMS:

http://ec.europa.eu/ipg/tools/wcm/index_en.htm

FPFIS:

http://ec.europa.eu/ipg/services/interactive_services/index_en.htm

2. Networks

Forum EUROPA:

http://ec.europa.eu/ipg/basics/management/committees/forum_europa/index_en.htm

Internet Editors Network:

http://ec.europa.eu/ipg/basics/management/committees/internet-editors/index_en.htm

Social Media Network:

http://www.cc.cec/home/dgserv/comm/helping_you_communicate/fiches/smn_en.htm

Social Media Guidelines for all staff

<http://www.cc.cec/wikis/display/SMGG/EC+staff+social+media+guidelines>

Trainings: Europa Analytics – First steps through the reporting environment

Date and time	Place	Description of course content	Target audience	Link to Syslog
20/09/2011 am	BXL-MADO 02/06	Give a general overview of the tool, to help understand the philosophy.	Europa webmasters and web-managers, and other persons deeply interested to analysing the web-sites.	http://www.cc.cec/di/syslog_formation/catalogue/catalogue.cfm?arg_cou_id=121623
20/09/2011 pm	BXL-MADO 02/06	At the end of the training the users are able to adapt the system and particularly customise the generic reports according their needs.		
18/10/2011 9m	LUX-JMO A-1/1			
25/09/2011 am	BXL-MADO 02/07			
25/09/2011 pm	BXL-MADO 02/07			

Commission européenne, B-1000 Bruxelles / Europese Commissie, B-1000 Brussel - Belgium. Telephone: +32 22991111.
Office: BERI. Telephone: direct line +32 22951718.

<http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication>
E-mail: Sixtine.Bouygues@ec.europa.eu
Questions about the EU? Call the free number 00800 67891011

24/01/2012	BXL	
21/02/2012	LUX	
06/03/2012	BXL	
22/05/2012	BXL	