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## ANNEX

### **A citizens' summary**

#### **Communicating Europe through audiovisual media SEC(2008)506/2, 24.4.2008**

##### **1. WHY THIS INITIATIVE?**

One of the factors currently undermining genuine citizens' information and debate on the European Union is the very limited coverage of EU information in the audiovisual media. Most Europeans are interested in news about the European Union<sup>1</sup>. Figures indicate that they would prefer to receive this information on their favourite TV and radio channels. However, the EU-related information provided by national audiovisual media currently still takes up less than 10% of the time allocated to national news.

To address this deficit, the European Commission proposes concrete actions to provide more information on European issues to the citizens through the audio-visual media.

##### **2. WHAT IS THE AIM?**

The overall aim of this initiative is to increase coverage of EU affairs by the audiovisual media and thus help people to engage in a properly informed and democratic debate on EU policies.

Building on the Commission's existing tools and taking into account its limited financial and human resources, the audiovisual strategy has three main aims:

- First, to facilitate a greater coverage of EU affairs on existing and new audiovisual platforms by supplying media professionals with free of charge quality information and raw audiovisual material.
- Second, to encourage audiovisual media professionals to create and take part in European audiovisual networks which will join resources to create and broadcast EU-content information, while retaining full editorial independence.
- Third, to increase the Commission's own production and dissemination of videos and documentaries to illustrate or explain EU policies.

##### **3. WHAT ARE THE ACTIONS?**

Overall, the Commission will take the following concrete actions to achieve these aims:

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<sup>1</sup> 64% according to the Eurobarometer of March 2007

- Increase the news content of the existing EU satellite channel Europe by Satellite – EbS – and double its capacity;
- Continue to support the existing European radio network, currently consisting of 16 radio stations which cooperate to produce and broadcast EU-content information, extending its reach and languages coverage;
- Prepare a similar TV network in 2009-2010 in order to help broadcasters supply more information about the EU on European screens;
- Reinforce the role of the Commission's audio-visual library and audio-visual portal ([http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/home/index\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/home/index_en.cfm)) which is equally accessible to the professional broadcast media and citizens at large;
- Increase its production of informative audio-visual content and improve its distribution via different technological platforms, such as EUTube (<http://www.youtube.com/eutube>);
- Support the launch of the EuroNews service in Arabic, due to start broadcasting in July 2008;
- Launch an on-line EU events calendar that would allow media and any other interested person to access videos, facts and figures on any given EU event, months in advance.

#### **4. WHY ARE THESE ACTIONS USEFUL FOR THE CITIZENS?**

The citizens have the right to know what EU leaders are proposing and to engage in a democratic debate with them. However, studies have shown that European citizens are not very well informed about the EU although most of them are interested in news about the EU. Furthermore, TV and radio channels remain the preferred medium of information for most people.

By supporting co-operation and exchange between broadcasters and offering free-of-charge audio-visual material on major EU events, the Commission is trying to bridge this gap and contribute to better information for citizens.