

EN

EN

EN



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 21 Dec. 07
SEC(2007)1742

COMMUNICATION TO THE COMMISSION

**Communicating about Europe via the Internet
Engaging the citizens**

SEC (2007)1742

COMMUNICATION TO THE COMMISSION

Communicating about Europe via the Internet Engaging the citizens

1. Introduction

2. The Internet: a tool for involvement

2.1. Internet trends

2.2. A political/democratic tool

3. EUROPA: a strategy for improvement

3.1 State of play and challenges

3.2 Recent achievements and proposals for change

3.2.1. Governance

3.2.2. Editorial content

3.2.3. Technical issues

4. Beyond EUROPA

5. Resources

ANNEXES

1. Introduction

The European Commission has been involved in the Internet since an early stage. The EUROPA website was launched in February 1995 at the G7 ministerial meeting on the information society organised by the Commission in Brussels and quickly became the main reference point for information on the EU and on its activities and policies. In 2001, the Commission adopted the EUROPA II Communication,¹ which gave the Internet a central place in communication activities under the e-Commission programme.

Since then, the Internet has come to play an increasingly important role in the daily lives of EU citizens. With over 50% of the EU population now connected, the Internet has become an increasingly important method of communication and exchange of ideas. That, in turn, has led to new opportunities for governments, public bodies and politicians to communicate with the people and to enhance the democratic process: the potential for reaching the public through the Internet is almost limitless. It has also created new outlets for people to express their opinions and to feed into the democratic process.

Now the time has come for the Commission to launch a new Internet strategy, to respond to those changes and to embrace the Internet culture and online communications opportunities. The challenge is twofold: first, the Commission needs to overhaul the EUROPA site; second, it needs to encourage interest in EU affairs on other websites with a view to broadening the debate on the European Union.

The present strategy is a follow-up to the Commission's recent Communication "Communicating Europe in partnership"² It is one of many ways of helping to ensure that the citizen's right to be informed on EU issues becomes a reality.

The Internet can help EU institutions to understand public opinion by supporting a genuinely European public debate, with common themes, discussed openly and in real time by people from different countries who recognise each other as EU citizens with a legitimate stake in the debate. The Commission needs to speed up its awareness of issues and respond if necessary and appropriate.

¹ Communication by the President to the Commission in agreement with Vice-President Neil Kinnock and Erkki Liikanen: Towards the e-Commission (EUROPA 2nd generation), C(2001) 1753, 06/072001.

² "Communicating Europe in Partnership", adopted by the Commission on 3 October 2007 (COM(2007) 568).

2. The Internet: a tool for involvement

2.1. Internet trends

Today's Internet users engage in a wide variety of activities: they share information, news and opinion, join forces to develop Internet tools and software, test new designs, download and upload music and films, etc. Recent research by Nielsen Net Ratings,³ an Internet media and market research company, has found that British users spend most of their Internet time sending instant messages, on member community sites, and using e-mail accounts. Another recent study⁴ indicates that 60% of Internet users in the EU are read or write blogs, listen to podcasts, use Really Simple Syndication (RSS) newsfeeds,⁵ or take part in online debates.

Those studies illustrate how the Internet has moved from being purely a source of information to become a tool for two-way communication and interaction. The Internet has the power to bring people closer. Pure information websites and e-mail tools have been losing out because they are too static. The most successful websites tend to be those that offer maximum participation/involvement and interactivity, known as "Web 2.0" sites. Well-known Web 2.0 features are blogs, "wikis", pod-casting, file sharing, on-demand video, open-source software, and RSS web feeds.

But the Internet should not be a "no rule" zone. Users are responsible for the data and content they put on the Internet. Building on "collective intelligence", Web 2.0 contains an element of self-regulation : the more people use a particular website, the more it is scrutinised, allowing for corrections and improvements, and the more popular it becomes.

2.2. A political/democratic tool

Governments are beginning to engage in real two-way communication on the Internet as a more direct form of democracy. The latest Commission report on e-participation⁶ shows that a number of Member States have taken initiatives to involve citizens directly in decision-making processes. At local level in particular, citizens are increasingly able to have their say through online consultation and interaction.

The Internet can provide the driving force in moving away from over-burdensome bureaucracy to a truly citizen-oriented approach. Citizens' portals in Denmark, Estonia France, Ireland, Sweden and the UK⁷ are good examples of this.

The Internet also alters the social and media environment in which governments operate. It is a powerful means of enabling citizens and interested groups to disseminate information and views, spread awareness, organise action and put pressure on decision-makers. In that regard,

³ Nielsen//NetRatings, NetView UK, home and work data, including applications, June 2007.

⁴ "Europeans Have Adopted Social Computing Differently", by Mary Beth Kemp with Jaap Favier, Josh Bernoff, Michèle Bouquet, Olesia Klevchuk, for Forrester.com, 11/06/2007.

⁵ Wikipedia defines RSS as a family of [web](#) formats used to publish frequently updated content such as [blog](#) entries, news headlines or [podcasts](#), which makes it possible for people to keep up with their favourite web sites in an automated manner that is easier than checking them manually.

⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/egovernment/policy/eparticipation/docs/national_eparticipation_initiatives.pdf.

⁷ <http://www.borger.dk>; <http://www.service-public.fr>; <http://www.citizensinformation.ie/categories>
<http://www.sverige.se>; <http://www.direct.gov.uk>; <http://www.neti.ee>

the Internet will make it easier for people to mobilise interest around the new “Citizens’ Initiative” foreseen in the Treaty of Lisbon.

These developments reflect the increasing importance of social networks on the Internet. For example, studies into electronic campaigning in France in the run-up to the referendum on the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe in 2005 suggest that the absence of the “establishment” in the Internet debate may have contributed to the “no” vote⁸. Many political parties have now realised that the Internet can no longer be neglected in terms of public relations and campaign activities; and to shape the political agenda and public opinion. Some politicians have their own blogs and interact directly with their "community". In the current US election campaign, candidates are active in all major Web 2.0 sites: for example, YouTube (with its dedicated channel YouChoose⁹) and MySpace have become important fundraising and publicity vehicles.

The Internet is also an alternative means of expression for journalists, who are able to address the wider public free from editorial censure. For example, for many Brussels-based journalists working for newspapers that allocate only limited space to EU-related issues, the Internet offers an alternative outlet. Their blogs and political news websites can contribute to media pluralism. We are now seeing the increasing emergence of the "citizen-journalist". People can, for instance, record European Commissioners' contribution to local debates and upload those debates onto the Internet (by audio or audiovisual means) for European and world-wide availability/distribution.

3. EUROPA: a strategy for improvement

3.1. State of play and challenges

The EUROPA website

The EU’s EUROPA website is one of the largest information repositories in the world, containing over six million documents. It has 500 000 daily visitors, including lawyers, academics, journalists, students, researchers, NGOs, the business community, professional organisations, public servants and other interested citizens. EUROPA covers all of the EU institutions, agencies and other entities. The Commission's website is a subsection of the EUROPA site.

The Commission manages the EUROPA site on behalf of all EU institutions and agencies. The top level of the site includes general information in all 23 official EU languages about the EU (history, policies, and institutions). It also hosts intern-institutional sites, such as Eur-Lex (legislation), TED (public procurement), "Who’s who" in the EU administration, and the EU Bookshop (publications).

The vast majority of Commission resources on the Internet are dedicated to audiences within the EU, but the Internet operates globally, and debate takes place within many cultural contexts and in many different languages. Nearly all of the 130 Commission Delegations around the world have their own websites, providing at least basic information about the EU in local languages (larger Delegations generally provide more comprehensive information).

⁸ Service d’information du Gouvernement, Veille Internet, présentation.

⁹ <http://www.youtube.com/youchoose>.

Objectives

In broad terms, the objectives of the EUROPA website are to:

- respond to the needs of people with a broad and/or professional interest in EU affairs;
- help people looking for a particular service, or for information on their rights or EU policies;
- communicate the views of the Commission to the widest possible audience;
- allow people to express and exchange their views and opinions throughout Europe;
- help create a sense of European community as a supplement to the national sphere.

Issues and opportunities

Competition for online attention is fierce, and websites dedicated to specific subjects are generally only visited by users with a prior active interest in them. The EUROPA site is not yet sufficiently well known to the majority of EU citizens.

The Commission already offers a limited number of genuinely interactive services. For example, the Interactive Policy Making website played a pioneering role since 2002, and further steps in two-way online communication were taken with the online discussion forum "Debate Europe", and the blogs run by a number of Commissioners and Heads of Commission Representations. In addition, the Commission has recently created the "EUTube" channel on YouTube. The result in each case has been to attract a new audience that has taken an interest in engaging in interactive debate.

The imminent (2008) launch of the Pilot Information Networks (PINs) project will bring the European debate closer to the national parliaments and will create communities of European, national and regional parliamentarians, journalists and other European opinion-makers to share information and knowledge on the EU and its policies.

Despite its successes, however, the EUROPA site remains overly confined to large-scale one-way information dissemination. There is little interactivity or cooperation/joint action among users, who find it difficult to navigate, due, in particular, to the volume of documents available, the fact that information is often presented from an organisational viewpoint rather than from the user's perspective, and the considerable number of Commission departmental sites and sub-sites .

The key challenge would be to restructure and improve EUROPA such that it attracts traffic and becomes a crossroads for the Internet, where users can browse easily through significant volumes of linked/themed content, create content, and participate in discussion and debate. In that light, the Commission needs to address governance, editorial content and quality; and technical support and development.

3.2. Recent achievements and proposals for change

3.2.1. Governance

Main issues to be addressed

The governance structure of 2001, as established by the EUROPA II communication,¹⁰ faces a number of problems. In particular:

- the Steering and Editorial Committee lacks authority to decide and impose the editorial line of EUROPA across all Commission departments;
- the goals set out in the EUROPA II communication, particularly those related to the web portals, have only been partially achieved;
- the EUROPA II Committees¹¹ have become isolated from the External Communications Network (ECN)¹².

This has led over the years to a proliferation of websites and sub-sites without clear editorial consistency or “corporate” identity.

The lack of decision-making authority on the part of the Steering and Editorial Committee was recognised in the Commission’s Communication Action Plan in 2005, which proposed appointing an Editor for the EUROPA site. After a number of exploratory meetings of the EUROPA Steering Committee, the ECN, and a special *ad hoc* group of Directors General, a new governance structure has been agreed in which the need for an Editor has been confirmed and a consensus reached on setting up a network of Internet correspondents.

An important step towards establishing a single “corporate” identity (visual identity and editorial consistency) has recently been taken with the agreement of all of the Commission Directorates-General (DGs) to a common web banner design. That agreement now forms part of the new Information Providers Guide (IPG), which is due to be published shortly. The IPG sets out the editorial, presentational and technical rules that a website must comply with (which include the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) guidelines to make sites accessible to disabled persons). It describes in detail the site production process and the tools and services available. The IPG will be refined as new editorial and technical decisions are taken.

Further proposals for change

We need a management structure in which decision-making is transparent and efficient.

- The ECN, chaired by DG COMM, will be overseeing central internet services provided to line DGs to ensure they give maximum added value

¹⁰ Communication by the President to the Commission in agreement with Vice-President Neil Kinnock and Erkki Liikanen: Towards the e-Commission (EUROPA 2nd generation), C(2001) 1753, 06/072001

¹¹ Steering Committee, responsible for overall coordination; Editorial Committee, responsible for editorial coordination; Infrastructure and Services Committee, responsible for technical coordination

¹² Network of heads of communication units in the DGs

- A “EUROPA Editor” will be responsible for the day-to-day management of EUROPA (i.e. interinstitutional web portal and Commission corporate sites and pages) from an editorial standpoint. He/she will ensure editorial, linguistic and graphical consistency and projection of a coherent political image/identity. He/she will be appointed from within DG Communication.
- The Editor will be assisted and supported by a EUROPA editorial committee. The committee will also give guidelines to line DGs how to effectively present their content on the internet, including advice on comprehensive multimedia packages. It will be chaired by the Editor. It will be composed of experts nominated on a permanent basis from SPP, SG, DGT, OPOCE, INFOS, RELEX¹³ and DIGIT. It will be complemented when appropriate and/or required by Internet editors from the individual DGs and Representations, and/or representatives of project teams.
- All DGs and Representations will designate a permanent Internet Editor, to act as the direct and sole interface between the EUROPA Editor, the editorial committee and the communication units of the individual DGs and Representations.
- A technical committee, chaired by DIGIT, will monitor developments in internet technology and formulate technical solutions to meet functional needs for a modern and powerful Internet platform. It will be composed of permanent members of COMM, OPOCE, INFOS, SCIC, DGT, and will be complemented by one or more representatives of the webmasters.

The mandate and responsibilities of the EUROPA Editor, the editorial committee, the Internet Editors and the technical committee are described in detail in Annex III

This new management structure for EUROPA will be put in place by January 2008.
Adherence to the updated Information Providers Guide will be made mandatory for new sites on EUROPA as from 1 January 2008.

3.2.2. Editorial content

Recent initiatives and achievements

The Commission has already begun to redesign its homepage, which now provides daily current affairs articles in a clear and simple style in the 23 official EU languages. The top navigation structure of the Commission’s website has been adapted to put less emphasis on internal organisational issues, and more on subjects of importance to EU citizens (as indicated in opinion polls, surveys and research findings). A number of DGs have also improved the material they make available online.

In parallel, a more structured approach to the Internet communication strategies of the Commission Representations has been put in place, with a view to harmonising their approach and offering a common package of services. The changeover began in 2005 and is due to be completed by the end of 2007. Representations will now have to embrace the Internet fully in to the way they translate, filter, complement and adapt central messages to local

¹³ INFOS and RELEX are permanent members given that they are responsible for cross-DG portals.

circumstances and reality. In this context of "going local", partnerships with information multipliers/re-users are important.

We have also started upgrading the websites of the Commission Delegations around the world, combining a minimum amount of centrally-directed content and the introduction of central hosting with significant local customisation.

Finally, with a view to providing information for the general public in the top layers of the EUROPA website in 23 languages, and delivering a website that provides services to citizens in a language they can understand, DG Translation has created a web translation unit.

Further proposals for change

1. Restructuring of the EUROPA site

First, the content available on the EUROPA and Commission websites should be restructured to make it easier for users to find what they are looking for. More focus will be given to a thematic and a user's perspective, rather than that of the institutions. Content should follow the inverted pyramid approach,¹⁴. EUROPA and the Commission corporate pages and sites will therefore be geared to the general user and thematic entries in order to respond to people's concerns and will be independent of the organisational structure of the institutions. . Next layers will focus on specialised information and specific audiences.¹⁵ The new structure should be build to give each type of user the fastest possible access to the most relevant information.

2. Multilingualism and translation

Secondly, pages will be translated in line with the Commission's communication priorities and the selection of languages at each site requires a coherent approach linked to the intended target audience. and will be described in a "language policy statement" (language disclaimer),. As resources are limited, trade-offs between the amount of information published, the number of languages in which information is available, broadening the audience, and maintaining up-to-date information appear inevitable and will require a coherent approach.

3. Increased interactivity

Thirdly, discussion forums will be better run and followed-up. The renewed Debate Europe forum website that will be launched early 2008 will be the first to implement this principle: debates will focus more on the Commission's communication priorities, and genuine interactivity will be achieved with the regular involvement of Commissioners and senior Commission officials.

¹⁴ See annex II

¹⁵ A user survey to assess the usability, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and utility of the EUROPA website has recently been launched. It will give further indications on how exactly the content of the site needs to be restructured and how users would like to interact with the Commission. The first results will be available in mid-November 2007 and the final results by January 2008. A detailed plan for the restructuring of the Commission site will then be developed and implemented through the new governance structure. (Evaluation of the EUROPA Website, by Ernst & Young, under contract (BUDGET/06/PO/01/lot003/spec.contract n°1))

A pilot project will test new interactive applications (current and popular practices on the Internet are the rating¹⁶ and provision of user contributions to websites and texts, known as “wikis”¹⁷) on a limited number of webpages. Users will be able to rate those webpages by such criteria as readability and absence of jargon, and make suggestions. That could open up new avenues for a dynamic consultation process, and may be particularly relevant at the very early stages of thinking on new EU policies. A proper disclaimer and moderation policy will be indicated in order to clarify to the citizen the type and level of editorial review applied.

The potential of cross-media communication – combining Internet, radio, TV, print, video, music and mobile services – will be explored and exploited where appropriate, via a consistent editorial policy.

Taking the results of the user survey into account, the new structure will be in place by the end of 2008 or beginning of 2009.

Pilot projects to test new interactive applications will be launched in early 2008 at a limited number of pages and sites.

Better animation and follow-up of discussion forums will be foreseen, beginning with the re-launch of the Debate Europe site early 2008.

3.2.3. Technical issues

Recent initiatives and achievements

The best possible technical services are needed for the EUROPA website. Several initiatives have been launched in that regard.

A Corporate Web Content Management System (CWCMS) has been developed in order to: better organise and structure the content on the EUROPA site; facilitate re-use of content; facilitate multilingual management; and enhance the publication process by making it easier for non-specialists to create web content.

Although this CWCMS has met the first three objectives, it has been less successful in enhancing the publication process. That has been due, in particular, to the complicated nature of the user interface, to the fact that it is limited to generating static pages, and to a lack of training. The webmaster community has re-examined the WCM situation and has produced a report¹⁸ that describes their requirements for the management of web content.

Secondly, despite the improvements that have been made to the EUROPA search engine, experience and study show that it will be difficult, if not impossible, to set up a search facility within the existing structure of the site that can compete with widely-used Internet search technology such as that used by Google or Yahoo. Classic search technologies, as used by the

¹⁶ Users help determine site content and popularise items by discovering, selecting, sharing and discussing the news, videos and podcasts that appeal to them.

¹⁷ Wikis consist of collaborative writing by a large number of volunteers. Some wiki projects are overseen by an editor or editorial team, but the majority are free from editorial review/control.

¹⁸ Corporate Web Content Management (CWCMS) User Group - Summary of the discussions held during the meetings of 22/02, 09/03, 29/03, 19/04, 02/05, 11/05, 23/05 and 08/06/2007 (document dated 12/06/2007)

EUROPA site, work well in a very structured environment, but they perform poorly in a relatively unstructured environment, such as the Internet, where queries are often vague and limited to simple, short terms. EUROPA is not the only official website with search engine difficulties¹⁹. The size and complex structure of the EUROPA site require a search function that can cater for the imprecise and general queries that the public tends to use when searching on the Internet. DIGIT is currently looking for a search engine that is suitable for EUROPA.

Thirdly, in 2006, a first step was taken towards speedier adoption of new Internet technology, with the creation of the "flexible platform", a pilot service developed and managed by DIGIT (in addition to its main duties and functions). That service is currently used for hosting blogs, e-polling and discussion forums.

Further proposals for change

The Commission needs to be better equipped to handle the technical challenges posed by the Internet. We will set out to develop a set of tools and services to make it easy to create, operate and maintain a modern and attractive website. This "Internet Toolbox" will include:

- a Web Content Management System for the creation and management of at least the corporate sites and pages following the specifications set out in the report of the WCM user group. It will include all necessary features for multi-platform publishing;
- a flexible structure for the rapid adoption of new interactive services with widely used, open source software and/or software developed by the Commission in-house;
- a full-service package for web streaming and web conferencing²⁰. This will include a powerful structure that has enough storage space and bandwidth to respond to the ever growing demand in this area, and the associated logistical support for organising web events;
- a state-of-the-art set of tools to be installed on webmasters' workstations;
- help from external specialists where necessary, through dedicated framework contracts;
- the best possible search assistance for visitors to the EUROPA site. Agreements will be entered into with market leaders in Internet search tools. Further guidance will be offered to users by making the web assistance service currently used by Europe Direct available from all levels of the EUROPA website.

The implementation of technical changes will be carried out by the technical committee and should be managed on an operational daily basis by DIGIT, through a dedicated web team. Development of new tools envisaged by web teams in DGs must be notified to the technical committee in order to identify synergies that can stimulate the creation of new corporate tools

¹⁹ For example, the UK: Government on the Internet: progress in delivering information and services online – Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General HC 529 Session 2006-2007 13 July 2007.

²⁰ The "Advanced technological platform for multilingual communication" project was started by DG SCIC to establish the tools and infrastructure needed to offer a professional service in this area. An intermediate report to Commissioner Orban was produced in July 2007.

that can be integrated in the Internet Toolbox. This will ensure the best possible use of resources available for technical development.

A detailed description of the Internet Toolbox is set out in Annex IV.

The building-up of the Internet Toolbox will be ensured gradually during the course of 2008 and fully by January 2009. It will be upgraded continuously to adapt to further technological evolution.

4. Beyond EUROPA

The Internet hosts a huge range of discussions each day, with discussion forums and blogs on all kinds of topics, and online versions of newspapers and TV channels now give users the opportunity to comment online on news, opinion pieces, articles, and editorials.

Many of the topics discussed on the Internet are of interest to the Commission: climate change, energy, research, science, information technology, immigration, social affairs, economics and globalisation, to name but a few. The EU itself is also a frequent topic of discussion, sometimes eurosceptic-driven.

While the Commission is a frequent player in conferences and discussions in the physical environment, it is comparatively absent from the online environment, its online activities being largely limited to the EUROPA website. The level of interactivity on the EUROPA site is very low, and the Commission's Internet-based policy consultations tend to be static and do not attract sufficient attention from users.

Recent initiatives and achievements

The recent creation of the dedicated EUTube channel on YouTube²¹ has been a first, and successful, step in giving the Commission a higher profile in the Internet environment. EUTube has successfully reached out to a new audience and stimulated lively debate on the EU and the Commission's policies and activities.

Another move has been to make initial contact with some of the most active websites dealing with EU issues, with a view to exploring possible Web partnerships and developing a network of civil society and private and public sector websites that promote contact with or between European citizens and stimulate debate on EU policy issues.

Further proposals for change

First, the Commission will launch a study to pinpoint leading websites with a focus on European affairs and will, with a view to establishing networking arrangements, organise regular stakeholder meetings and add links on the EUROPA site (with disclaimers) to other sites that users may be interested in visiting.

Secondly, the Commission will step up the way it monitors debate on the Internet with a view to identifying key opinion-makers and issues of public interest. By listening and learning, the Commission will be in a position to identify emerging and existing trends and to

²¹ <http://www.youtube.com/EUTube>.

communicate better. Monitoring could be built, for example, on the European Media Monitoring operation run by the JRC.

Thirdly, the recent change to the Commission's rules and procedures for allowing its staff to speak in public on professional matters will be extended to include participation in blogs and online debates. With due regard for the principles of loyalty and impartiality, staff – and in particular Commission spokespersons and the information and communication units of the various DGs – are now empowered to explain EU policies and help rectify mistakes, and to redress negative publicity or speculation surrounding the EU and its activities (with relevant disclaimers). Training in Internet communication skills will be developed to cover this change.

Before mid-2008, a study will be launched to map out leading websites with a European focus and regular stakeholder meetings will be organised.

To allow the Commission to identify key issues of public interest and emerging trends, a long-term internet monitoring system will be put in place in 2008.

5. Resources

The Internet seems set to become more and more important as a cost-effective means of communicating with citizens across Europe and further afield, and especially with selected target groups.

The challenge for the Commission as a whole is to ensure that its Internet activities and communications contain attractive content and use state-of-the-art technology. To achieve this within a resource neutral scenario, as required by the conclusions of the screening report (SEC(2007)530), maximum synergy must be sought through combination and sharing of Internet skills and developments.

Many DGs have already begun to reallocate communication resources. Spending on offline publications has decreased, although it typically remains the most significant communications expense for many DGs. Spending on Internet communication remains modest, but has generally increased in recent years.

DGs should continue to encourage this shift of communication resources to the Internet, concentrating on editorial content (by designating Internet editors) rather than on technical functions. The development of technical solutions by teams of web experts across DG's should therefore be encouraged. This should be reflected in job descriptions, mission statements and management plans right across the Commission DGs should also encourage staff other than internet specialists, including Spokespersons, to become more involved in Internet communication.

The Commission will provide appropriate training to support all staff involved on a full-time or regular basis in Internet communication. This training will not only look at technical or editorial skills, but even more so at content analysis and statistical analysis of public opinions on the internet. The Commission will also ensure that competitions for staff recruitment support the Commission's efforts to give Internet communication a high priority.

Decisions on resource allocation will follow the procedures in force in the European Commission (such as strategic planning and programming) taking into consideration the input provided by the ECN when relevant.

The proposal can be implemented within the existing multi-annual financial programme (SEC(2007)500).

Producing attractive content and keeping up with the latest state-of-the-art technology requires a further shift of available communications resources to content development and the availability of collective Internet tools and intelligence shared by all DGs.

6. Conclusions

The modern and successful EUROPA website will go a long way towards keeping citizens informed on the EU's activities and policies, and enabling them to participate and share their opinions on those issues. While the Internet is not – particularly in the light of the digital divide and language barriers – a panacea for more participation in EU democracy, a well-defined and well-executed Internet strategy can still make a key contribution.

The EUROPA website will first and foremost acquire a streamlined governance structure and improved content and tools to help it adapt to new challenges and opportunities in the online environment.

- The governance structure will ensure editorial, linguistic and graphical consistency and projection of a coherent political image/identity.
- The structure and content of the EUROPA website and Commission corporate sites and pages will focus more on the user's perspective, rather than that of the Institutions. Results of the user survey into account will be taken into account.
- The role users can play in improving the content on the EUROPA site and participating in early stages of thinking on new EU policies will be studied.
- Due attention will be paid to the level of multilingualism of each website. . The selection of languages at each site requires a coherent approach linked to the intended target audience, and will be described in a "language policy statement".
- The potential of cross-media communication will be explored and exploited where appropriate, via a consistent editorial policy.
- An Internet Toolbox containing a set of reliable tools and services for a modern and attractive website will be developed and made available to the web teams. It will be upgraded continuously to adapt to further technological evolution.

Beyond EUROPA, the Commission must have more impact on the way EU matters are handled on other sites.

- A study will be launched to map out leading websites with a European focus and regular stakeholder meetings will be organised.
- A long-term internet monitoring system will be put in place To allow the Commission to identify key issues of public interest and emerging trends.

All these actions to produce attractive content and keeping up with the latest state-of-the-art technology requires a further need to shift available communications resources to content development, the availability of collective Internet tools and appropriate training on internet communication.

Yearly implementation plans will be established and reported to the ECN.

ANNEX I: GLOSSARY AND WEB 2.0 CHARACTERISTICS

GLOSSARY

EUROPA: Stricto sensu, EUROPA is the European Union's web portal accessible via the address <http://europa.eu>. It is managed by the European Commission (DG COMM) in coordination with all EU institutions. It is composed of a homepage and a number of general information sites directly accessible from it. It gives access to the own sites of the EU Institutions.

The European Commission's own website is hosted at the address <http://ec.europa.eu>. Is is composed of

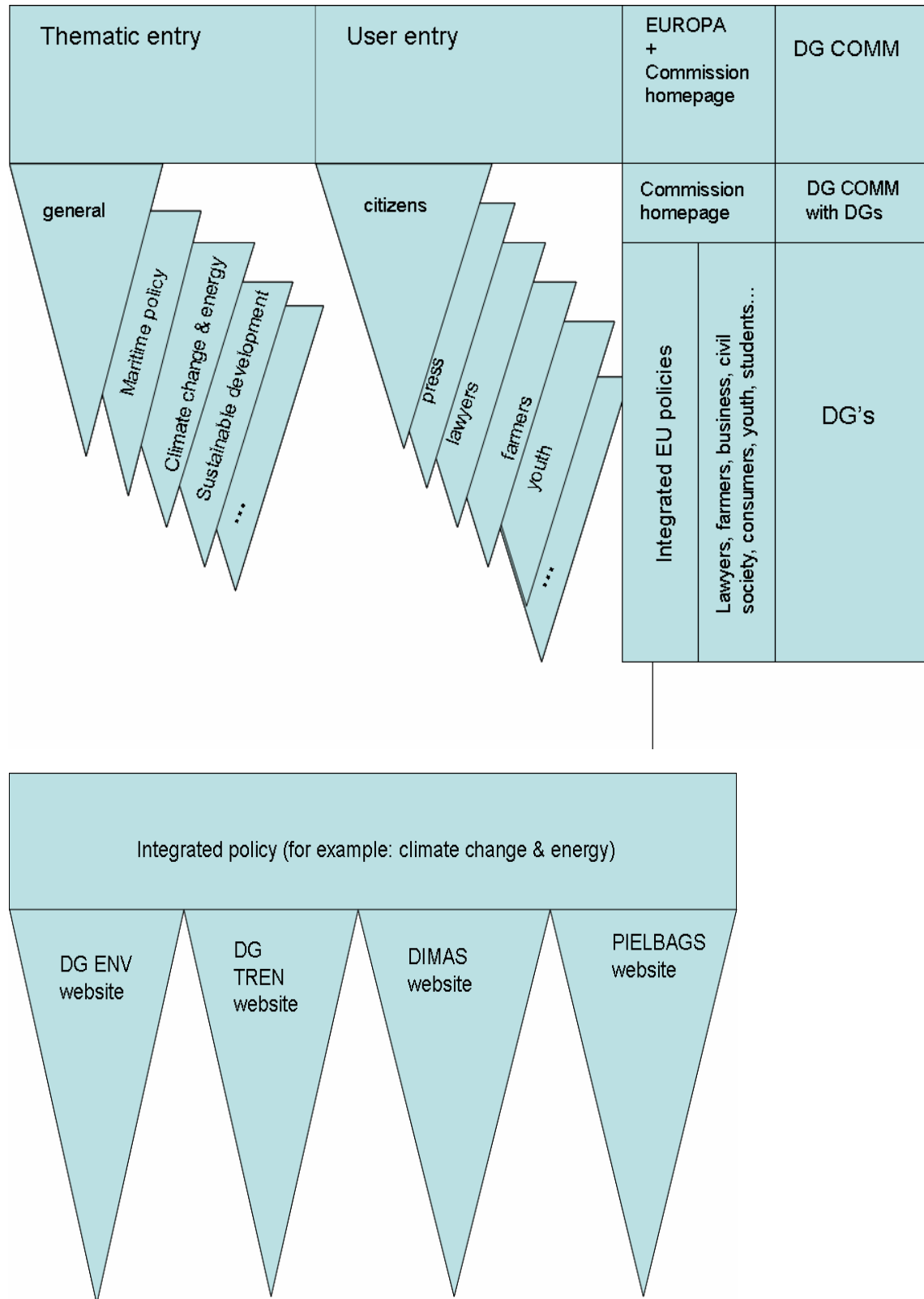
- the corporate sites: the Commission's homepage and a number of sites and pages covering general information or horizontal/cross-cutting issues and policies. They guide each type of user in the fastest possible way to the detailed information that is most relevant for him. DG COMM has direct responsibility for those pages.
- the specialised websites and portals, under the responsibility of the line DGs, addressing their specific stakeholders. Line DGs are bound to respect the common corporate 'look and feel' of the Commission pages.

WCM: Web Content Management refers to any system that manages in a structured way content that will be made available on a web-enabled device (PC, PDA, mobile phone, etc). To achieve this goal, a WCM system clearly separates presentation and content. It allows information providers to produce web pages without having to care about technical formatting details. The system is able to dynamically and automatically assemble basic pieces of content into well-formatted web pages

CWCMS: A Corporate Web Content Management System is a WCM that is used on a corporate wide basis.

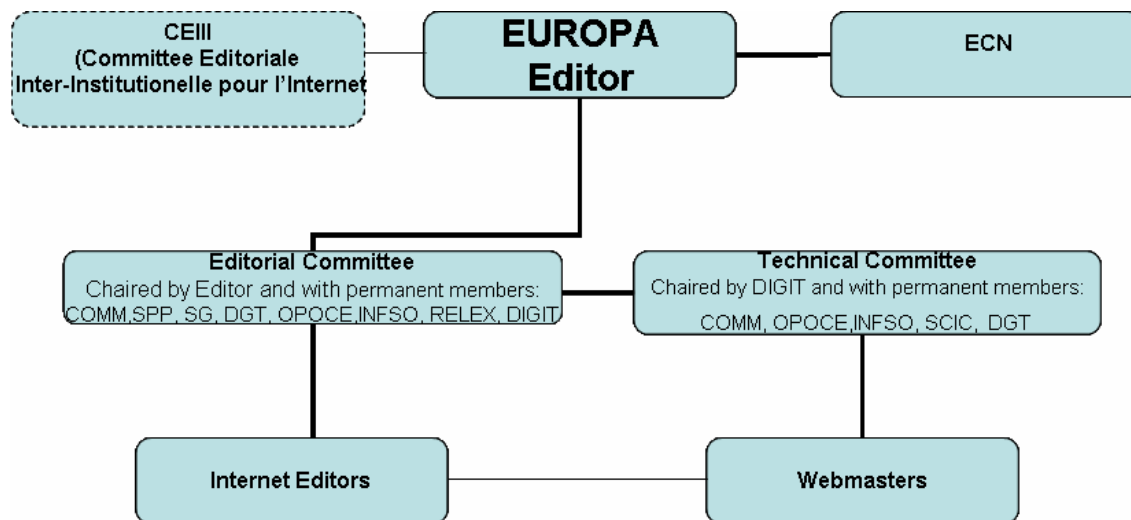
ANNEX II

SCHEMATIC OUTLINE OF THE INVERTED PYRAMID STRUCTURE.



ANNEX III

EDITORIAL MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE AND MANDATES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE EUROPA WEBSITE



Mandate & Responsibilities of the ECN

- Endorse the vision and general orientations proposed by the Editor for Europa and the Commission's websites.
- Monitoring central internet services provided to line DGs and giving feedback on efficiency and added value.
- Proposing options/solutions for the structure of sites and wider technological developments and tools
- Raising and maintaining awareness of senior management as to the importance of Internet communication.
- Overseeing the provision of training for internet communication (editorial, technical skills and research).

Mandate & Responsibilities of the Editor

- Defining the vision for EUROPA and Commission websites.
- Day-to-day operational management of EUROPA and Commission sites and pages to ensure editorial, linguistic and graphical consistency of corporate sites and pages and projection of a coherent image/identity.
- Strategic and operational planning (short, medium and long term), including identifying the annual resource needs, on the basis of input from DGs and following consultation with DG DIGIT.
- Ensuring compliance and quality control with respect to the IPG.

- Communicating and marketing internet activities and how they affect the development of a European public sphere.
- Mediating and ensuring cooperation between DGs.

Mandate & Responsibilities of the Editorial Committee

The editorial committee, chaired by the Editor, is composed of permanent members of SPP, SG, DGT, OPOCE, INFISO & RELEX and DIGIT and complemented (where required and/or on their own request) by the Internet Editors of DGs, Representations or by representatives of relevant project teams.

- Assisting and supporting the Editor to ensure editorial and graphical consistency on corporate sites and pages.
- Providing line DGs with guidelines on how to effectively present their content on the internet, including advice on comprehensive multimedia packages.
- Defining functional needs for the development/delivery of internet tools.
- Recommending the level of multilingualism of individual websites and their subsites.

Mandate & Responsibilities of the Internet Editors

- Cooperating with the EUROPA Editor and the editorial committee to ensure editorial and graphical consistency, through, amongst others, the proper implementation of the IPG.
- Providing and managing editorial content on the line DGs'/Representations' webpages, in particular at the citizen-oriented pages.
- Participating in blogs and online debates, including providing responses and rebuttals where appropriate.

Mandate & Responsibilities of the Technical Committee

The technical committee, chaired by DIGIT, is composed of permanent members of COMM, OPOCE, INFISO, SCIC, DGT, and the chairman of the Webmaster Forum.

- Monitoring developments in internet technology and formulating technical solutions to meet functional needs as defined by the Editorial committee, including the transition from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 (and other web trends) and the use of Open Source solutions.
- Overseeing the delivery of technical solutions by web experts across DG's (coordinated and animated by DIGIT).
- Keeping an inventory of all existing and planned web applications and tools developed by web teams in individual DGs that can be re-used by all webmasters
- Updating the technical chapters of the IPG.

Mandate & Responsibilities of the Webmasters

- Assisting the Internet Editors on all technical matters.

- Creating and maintaining websites that comply with the Information Providers Guide.
- Making proposals to the technical committee regarding the acquisition and/or development of new tools; notifying the technical committee of all planned developments; helping to develop and package corporate tools.

ANNEX IV

INTERNET TOOLBOX

An Internet Toolbox will be made available to webmasters for use in creating state-of-the-art websites. The following table gives an overview of the tools that are required and a time-plan for making them available. The list is not exhaustive and will be updated regularly in line with technical developments.

Category	Description	Availability
Content Management and Collaboration	User-friendly Web Content Management System	2009 - Q2
	Powerful Search Engine	2008 – Q2
	Wiki	2008 – Q1
	Collaboration workspace	available
Multimedia	Multi-platform Webstreaming	2008 – Q2
	Multi-platform Webconferencing	2008 – Q2
	Multi-platform Video viewer	2008 – Q2
	Geographical interface	2008 – Q3
	Image and video repository	2008 – Q3
Interactive services	Feedback form	2008 – Q1
	Blog	available
	Discussion forum	available
	e-Polling	available
	Online survey	available
Syndication tools	User-friendly mailing lists	2008 – Q1
	News alerts and notifications	2009 - Q2
	RSS feeds	available
	Multi-device publication	2009 – Q2
Transaction services	Event registration	2008 – Q4
	e-Tendering	2009
	e-Procurement	2009

Category	Description	Availability
Workstation tools	HTML editor	available
	XML/XSL editor	available
	Graphical design tool	available
	Audio editing tool	2008 – Q1
	Video editing tool	2008 – Q1
	Flash animation editing tool	2008 – Q1
	Quality control tools	2008 – Q1