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NOTE

From :	General Secretariat
To :	Delegations
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Subject :	EU common communication priorities for 2012

INTRODUCTION

1. According to the political declaration on "Communicating Europe in Partnership" ¹ signed by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on 22 October 2008, the EU institutions are due to identify a number of common communication priorities " *following their internal procedures and complementing, where appropriate, Member States' strategic views and efforts in this field, taking into account citizens' expectations*".
2. The Council has repeatedly underlined that the interinstitutional communication themes should correspond with the citizens' interests and expectations and, to this end, flexibility should be maintained to ensure that the related information campaigns have the necessary national, regional and local connotation.
3. With regard to 2012, the European Commission envisages to formulate its proposals concerning the communication topics when President Barroso pronounces his speech on the state of the Union (traditionally in September).

¹ OJ C 13 of 20.1.2009, p. 3

4. For the sake of adequate advance planning, and in order to ensure that Members States' views are properly reflected, the Chairman of the Working Party on Information (WPI) deemed it opportune to invite delegations to express themselves already at this stage, the aim being to take due account of Member States' concrete suggestions ahead of the next meeting of the Interinstitutional Group of Information (IGI) foreseen on 7 June 2011.
5. Delegations' written contributions are at Annex I.

COMMON ORIENTATIONS

6. From delegations' suggestions it broadly appears that the citizens are mainly concerned by key issues which may be crucial factors of stability for the members of the Union:
 - a. development of the internal market and competitiveness challenges (in the framework of the promotion of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, in line with the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy and the cooperation in the field of economic governance): communication on expectations and planned enhancing measures;
 - b. environmental sustainability (energy safety, climate, waters protection): communication on urgent and crucial questions raised by the recent natural disasters and dramatic consequences with regard to energy and nuclear safety, organising prevention and risk assessment measures, and climate policy instruments (sustainable measure to face with longstanding crucial issues and also emerging challenges such as water management);
 - c. immigration and demographic challenges: free movement of persons is one of the main achievements of the acquis. This must be preserved, but at the same time MS are concerned with the recent migration flows in the light of the instability and upheaval in a number of third countries of the Mediterranean. Communication on this topic would aim to inform the EU citizens on the need to seek convergence on immigration measures, while fostering a sustainable socio-economic recovery of the third countries concerned and reinforcing the cooperation in the control of the EU's external borders'. This priority topic also takes on board the voice raised by several delegations with regard to the need to communicate a coherent European Neighbourhood Policy.

THE WAY AHEAD

7. Effectiveness in the implementation of the communication priorities will depend on advance planning and on the degree of cooperation between Member States and EU institutions. In particular:
 - a. the communication strategies on the common priorities ought to be coherent and sufficiently flexible to reflect and adapt the information campaigns and one shot communication projects to the national scenarios and to changing realities.
 - b. many of the abovementioned information activities can be organized by means of the existing partnership agreements (as it is already the case).
 - c. The three main topics identified by the majority of delegations are going to influence the debate for the years to come. Consequently, having regard to their impact as core issues of communication on the EU, if the institutions agree, the multi-annual perspective already chosen for 2010-2011 may also apply for 2012-2013, subject to a revision clause to cover a shift of priorities at the end of each year, if deemed necessary.
8. According to the common practice, delegations' orientations stemming from their written replies and ensuing from the debate within the WPI will serve as a basis for the intervention of the representative of the Council's Presidency at the next meeting of the Interinstitutional Group on Information (IGI) in Strasbourg on 7 June 2011.
9. While awaiting the position of the other institutions with regard to the possible common communication topics, Member States' feedback will contribute to the development of the WPI's agenda, as it will enable delegations to enrich the debate and enhance the exchange of best practice on pan-European, macro-regional and trans-regional communication priorities. To this end, the WPI could, among others:
 - a. envisage to meet in enlarged configuration, extended to communication experts;
 - b. invite the EP and the Commission to exchange more feedback on the preparation and the implementation of their information campaigns;
 - c. examine the relevant communication lines of the community budget linked to the communication priorities identified by the Member States.

2012 COMMUNICATION PRIORITIES
MEMBER STATES' CONTRIBUTIONS

BELGIUM

Belgium proposes the following common communication priorities for **2012** and will, in its communication, focus on the different levels (federal, regional and local) with the aim to better reach citizens:

- **Economic governance** : growth, jobs, reform strategies (EU 2020 Strategy), fiscal consolidation, climate and energy (transformation to green economy)
Communicating the aims and the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy and highlighting in particular measures related to enhancing skills, education and employment, competitiveness,
- Communicating the benefits of the **Single Market** and the rights derived there - from both from the economic point of view (free movement of goods, services and capital) as well as the social/educational point of view (free movement of persons for work, study etc. in other EU Member States).
- A more coherent **European external policy, the EU neighbourhood policy** ensuring deeper relations with all our neighbouring countries. The **European External Action Service** has opened new opportunities for coordinated EU actions.
- **JHA - Europe and migration**

BULGARIA

- **energy security, including safety of nuclear plants**
- **securing EU frontiers**
- **Competitiveness**

Changes/additions still possible.

CZECH REPUBLIC

The Czech Republic suggests that European institutions choose "***Competitiveness and the internal market***" as a priority communication theme for 2012. European institutions should communicate and explain how the EU internal market contributes to the improvement of the European economy and its competitiveness in the global market.

Background of the proposal:

Many people lack any daily experience with the EU. In their minds, the idea of European integration is often associated with remote and impersonal Brussels' bureaucratic machinery. They perceive European institutions as too abstract, faraway and unknown for the ordinary people. The result is declining participation in the European Parliament elections and a growing perception of democratic deficit within the European Union.

According to the Eurobarometer study [Internal Market: Awareness, Perceptions, Impacts](#), conducted in August 2009, one of the most positive ideas connected with the EU is considered the freedom of movement, followed by the fact that the EU is a borderless area. On the other hand, the most common negative association is excessive bureaucracy and the view that the EU is a remote and virtually unknown organization, largely irrelevant to everyday life.

The Eurobarometer study also found out that most consumers and business representatives were not familiar with the term "internal market" and thought that it referred to the respective national market. When provided with the definition of the term, the most frequent positive association was free movement of goods. However, citizens in most Member States did not have sufficient knowledge of the four freedoms and they were able to name only free movement of goods and people.

Key points:

1. The entire European Union was, in varying degrees, affected by the financial crisis followed by a recession. Many people have directly experienced decline of their living standards or a loss of a job. The EU 2020 Strategy shows that in 2009, GDP fell by 4 %, while industrial production had dropped to its 1990's levels and the number of unemployed reached 23 million. That equals 10 % of the EU's working population. The future prospect of one's economic status is therefore important for every citizen of the EU.
2. Currently, there are far-reaching changes underway in the global economy and the prerequisites for international market success are constantly increasing. If Europe wants to keep pace with the rapidly growing dynamic economies, such as the BRIC countries, and maintain the living standards of its citizens, it must constantly strengthen its economic competitiveness.

3. The internal market is a fundamental precondition for the enhancement of European competitiveness. The deepening of the four freedoms has benefited citizens and businesses of the EU Member States. A functioning internal market significantly helps to achieve higher economic growth, living standards and more significant position for Europe internationally.
4. In 2010, the EU adopted the Europe 2020 strategy, which aims to recover the economy from the crisis and prepare it for the next decade, which the European Union can not afford to lose. The success of the Strategy depends to a large extent on whether European citizens learn about its priorities and adopt its goals as their own.
5. In April 2011, the Commission published a final version of the *Single Market Act* (COM (2011) 206) for public consultation. It contains 12 recommendations to be implemented by the end of 2012. Their target is to contribute to removing of barriers and simplification of the operation of the internal market affected by the crisis, as well as to improve consumer confidence.

Final recommendations:

To improve European Union's image, it is desirable that Europeans understand the benefits which European integration brings them in their daily life. A fully functional Internal Market and its four freedoms are one of these benefits.

It is important for the citizens to be directly and sufficiently informed about the EU initiatives improving the functioning of the internal market and enhancing competitiveness. Then they will understand the beneficial impacts of European integration on their every-day lives.

DENMARK

Denmark is currently in the process of defining the priorities for the Danish Presidency in 2012. Obviously the communication priorities will correspond with the political priorities of the Presidency and Denmark would like a further dialogue on this issue at a later stage. At the present stage some of the important issues of 2012 could be (excluding the CFSP area and other areas not falling under the remit of the national Presidencies):

1. **Restoring the economy and creating growth** (relaunching the Single Market, financial sector reform, better economic governance)
2. **Reform of major EU policies** (reaching the 2020 objectives and boosting competitiveness through reform of EU programs, such as CAP, Structural Funds, Research, etc. MFF)
3. **Green growth** (energy, climate, environment, the green sector as growth engine etc.)
4. **The EU in daily lives** (justice and home affairs, internal policies, enlargement/the neighborhood, etc.).

ESTONIA

Estonian suggestion for 2012 communication priorities:

- **internal market**. Only one priority, but considered the most important.

SPAIN

Education and youth employment in Europe. Actions envisaged will aim at informing the European youth about the possibilities that the EU offers them for their professional development while making available to institutions and government concerns and needs of youth.

ITALY

Beyond the three inter-institutional multi-annual priorities also mentioned in DG Kemppinen's message, the key policy items on which the communication efforts of the Department for EU policies will be focussed in 2012 include:

1. **Single Market** – in particular, its completion in the sectors of services, financial markets and energy, through all forms of support for it (EU direct funds, networks etc.) in order to demonstrate clearly its concrete benefits and its impact on citizens' daily life
2. **Immigration** – in order to promote solidarity, social cohesion and European fundamental rights, while taking due account of MS integration capacities

In addition, we wish to stress the **EU training in schools** (for teachers and students) as a strategic means to strengthen the European citizenship and promote the opportunities offered by the EU.

CYPRUS

- **Europe for its citizens**
- **Coherent implementation of EU policies** in Member States
- **Climate change**
- **European Neighbourhood Policy** in the Southern Mediterranean region

EU communication priorities for 2012 (CY Presidency year) have not yet been finalized. May come back with some additional suggestions.

LATVIA

- Using EU opportunities for Latvia's **economic growth and development in the context of next EU budget after 2013**;
- Reducing **climate change** impact and promoting energoefficiency;
- **2012 - European Year** of generation solidarity and active ageing;
- **Latvia's Presidency** of the EU Council in 2015.

LITHUANIA

- ***Member countries and the EU institutions working together***

After the implementation of the Lisbon treaty the Union has faced numerous challenges. Different formats (including Euro zone summits) were invoked to tackle them; some proposals (Pact for Competitiveness) were put on the table by the member states; the discussion on the *community method* continued vibrantly. **European External Action Service** has opened the new opportunities for the coordinated EU actions.

EU citizens have followed all this with a great interest but sometimes they felt being a bit lost in this dynamic process of change. Therefore we propose to build on the current priority dedicated to **the Lisbon Treaty (Making the Lisbon Treaty work for citizens)** and to highlight the fruitful collaboration between the EU institutions and the national actors. We find it important to demonstrate the ability of the Union to accumulate the best initiatives and efforts of all possible players for the sake of the EU citizens.

Additionally, our analysis show that the topics related to the completion of the **internal market**, especially fighting the bottlenecks and other obstacles to growth could be the relevant themes the next year. Increasing **nuclear safety** could serve as an interesting angle to present the very concrete EU actions.

LUXEMBOURG

- **Internal market/competitiveness**
- **EU 2020/growth/education**
- **JHA Immigration/EU frontiers**
- **Consumers' rights**

HUNGARY

Hungary recommends that the priorities should include the following elements:

1. A Comprehensive Response to the Economic Crisis: Economic governance and European Semester

The current economic crisis resulted in grave problems such as high unemployment rates, high state debts – these are all issues which affect the daily life of citizens.

Facing this, the EU set up priorities such as re-establishing confidence, sustainable development , promoting the transition to a green economy and the growth of employment and competitiveness by the increase of budgetary discipline, extension of economic supervision, establishment of a permanent crisis management framework and strengthening of institutions. The efficient operation of the new economic political coordination will be aided by the European Semester exercise.

These coordination mechanisms are necessary to give a comprehensive response to the problems of the economic crisis.

HU suggests to broaden the theme internal market development and competitiveness challenges to the 'comprehensive response to the economic crisis' by including economic governance to foster the development of communication strategies facing both the realities of a changing world and the rules that govern it. This broader approach will allow us to better explain to the citizens what the EU has to offer to them.

2. Active Citizenship

The global economic crisis has drawn attention to the fact that democracies can only function effectively if their citizens are able to make responsible decisions, solve problems in a constructive way, and take steps for the well-being of themselves and their families.

Active citizenship - including such areas of active citizenship education as financial literacy and entrepreneurial skills in a lifelong perspective - deserves to be treated as a priority topic, as there has been expressed willingness from MSs to strengthen European cooperation in this field.

Assessing priority to active citizenship could also contribute to informing the young generations and assisting them in becoming well-prepared, conscientious, responsible and active citizens of the European Union. Synergies enabled by adopting this priority could also improve the availability of high quality communication tools, materials, and methods as well as improved projects, programmes, and initiatives, bringing a definite added value to European knowledge and citizenship.

3. Immigration and Demographic Challenges

Eight MSs of the EU already have declining populations. Immigration is the only factor that prevents statistics from indicating demographic decline in several other Member States. From an employment perspective, the active EU population will start declining already in 2013-2014. Statistics clearly show that Europe is the only continent where the population will decrease over the next 40 years. Europe is losing in the demographic race of major civilisations. As Commissioner Barnier put it in a speech at the Humboldt University on May 9, 2011, the first challenge Europe faces is that of demography and mobility.

Increasing competitiveness of Europe internationally is clearly related to reversing demographic trends. This challenge is of such importance, complexity and urgency, that the issue should be handled as a priority. *Demographic trends, therefore, put immigration issues into a broader perspective which should be highlighted in the communication priorities as well.*

As important policy choices (including family policies, measures enabling the social inclusion of the vulnerable population) with direct impact on the well-being of European citizens lie ahead, this is an area where awareness of European citizens should be increased.

Hungary also agrees with the proposal based on suggestions from delegations concerning dealing with **environmental stability as a communication priority**.

In this respect:

- the importance of the green economy as an essential part of the response to the economic crisis
- the role of environmental sustainability in the next financial perspective, greening of the development policy
- connections between green growth and environmental protection
- communication of the interdependence of environmental sustainability and growth potential of the EU

should be emphasized.

Furthermore, enhancing energy security and tackling climate change are cornerstones to the future competitiveness and stability of the European economy and can strengthen the social and economic well being of the EU citizens, and thus should be communicated accordingly.

MALTA

- **Citizens' and Consumers' rights:** Communicating the rights of citizens and consumers emerging from the EU treaties, legislation and other initiatives.
- **Environment:** Informing the public of the need for standardised environmental rules across the EU and the benefits emerging there-from; and informing the public and the economic players of the implementation and transposition of EU Directives and legislation and their implications for the public and the industry.
- **Single Market:** Communicating the benefits of the Single Market and the rights derived there-from both from the economic point of view (free movement of goods, services and capital) as well as the social/educational point of view (free movement of persons for work, study etc. in other EU Member States).
- **Funding:** Providing information on the opportunities available and the stories of successful EU-funded projects.
- **EU 2020 Strategy:** Communicating the aims and the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy and highlighting in particular measures related to enhancing skills, education and employment, competitiveness, the importance of achieving the climate and energy targets necessary for ensuring a healthy environment, and the digital agenda.

- **Active ageing and intergenerational solidarity:** Informing the general public on the subject given that **2012** has been designated as the Year for Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity.
- **Immigration:** Informing the public on developments at an EU-level with regards to patrolling the European Union's external borders and controlling the inflow of illegal immigrants. This includes providing information on the benefits resulting from FRONTEX missions, EU joint funding for patrol missions and assets, and solidarity mechanisms such as the Malta resettlement pilot project.

AUSTRIA

A **flexible approach** is of course needed, as the EU might still have to communicate on economic recovery or even crisis in 2012. More communication needs might also arise from the EU's (military) role in the southern neighborhood. Thus we need the flexibility to **adapt common communication priorities**.

When it comes to concrete proposals, Austria thinks that

- Europe and migration

would be a suitable common communication priority for 2012. Even though each Member State faces different migration challenges, this topic is for sure on top of the communication agenda in Member States in 2012.

Austria thinks there should only be **a very limited number** of common communication priorities in 2012.

Austria also wants to point out that not only common communication priorities matter but also **the means to communicate** effectively. Austria will in this respect focus very much on the **local and regional level** to better reach citizens.

POLAND

1. Europeans – active citizens

Until now most of the communication strategies have been aimed at presenting the various activities of the EU institutions, notably in the context of the decision-making process.

We suggest reversing this trend for the purpose of presenting to the citizens the tangible instruments which enable them to have an actual influence on the directions of the EU activities, including the work of the EU institutions.

The proposed activities should:

- present the measures to date and the new instruments (such as elections for the European Parliament, public hearings, lobbying, European Citizens' Initiative, etc.) and related legal regulations;
- present examples of applying these measures and good practices in this regard;
- promote the entities applying these instruments and their activities;
- encourage citizens to use the existing possibilities and thus benefit from active European citizenship.

The aim of these activities should be:

- to improve the citizens' knowledge of the existing mechanisms enabling their participation in the work of the EU institutions;
- to increase the public sense of sharing responsibility for the functioning of the EU;
- to raise the level of involvement of the citizens in the EU activities.

2. European Union – supportive neighbour

The European Union and its Member States carry out a wide range of activities in co-operation with and for the benefit of the neighbouring countries. Recent events in the international arena, for example in North Africa, demonstrate that co-operation and support for the neighbouring states is desirable and even necessary. Poland has been one of initiators and authors of the Eastern Partnership initiative aimed at supporting development and democratization of the countries covered by the project.

In this context the information, education and promotion activities presenting the EU as an organization working actively with the neighbouring countries and supporting their development are well justified. Suggested activities include:

- presenting the existing mechanisms of co-operation and the achievements to date in this area;
- presenting the opportunities for citizens' and NGOs' participation in implementing the existing instruments as well as training of NGOs' representatives on the ways of realizing their initiatives.

The aim of these activities should be:

- to make local communities and organizations more active in organising co-operation with the communities of the neighbouring states;
- to establish among the EU citizens the image of the European Union as an organisation working actively in favour of approximation and closer co-operation with the neighbours and supporting the democratization and development of the neighbouring states.

PORTUGAL

- Internal market/competitiveness
- EU 2020
- Budget/MFF
- Europe for Citizens.

ROMANIA

- **EU 2020/Growth**
- **Internal Market/Competitiveness**
- **Common Agricultural Policy after 2013**
- **Protection of the European waters** (priority linked with the climate change and increasing occurrence of floods and dryness as well as with the objectives of the two existing macro-regional strategies for the Baltic Sea region and for the Danube region)
- **Securing EU Frontiers**
- **Renewable energy**
- **EU Neighbourhood Policy**
- **Visa Waiver Programme for all EU Member States**

Changes/additions still possible.

SLOVAK REPUBLIC

1. Support of **education** for better participation of the graduates in the European and national labour markets (*priority linked with one of the Europe 2020 Strategy objectives*).
2. Support for **democratic values** (*in connection with the situation in Libya, Belarus, and Cuba...*).
3. Protection of the **European waters** (*priority linked with the climate change and increasing occurrence of floods and dryness as well as with the objectives of the two existing macro-regional strategies for the Baltic Sea region and for the Danube region*).

SLOVENIA

1. **Reform of major EU policies** - reaching the 2020 objectives and boosting competitiveness through reform of EU programs, such as budget and new financial perspective, which includes CAP, structural funds, research etc. While it is important that national and EU budgets support goals of Europe 2020 Strategy.
2. **Europe and migration** – in order to promote solidarity, social cohesion and European fundamental rights.
3. **Environment** – Reducing **climate change** impact and promoting energy-efficiency, **nuclear safety** and biodiversity.
4. **Enlargement** – Croatia is concluding negotiations and there are other candidate countries so the next enlargement is not far away.

FINLAND

Finland would like to support the three issues identified as communication priorities in this information note: development of the internal market and competitiveness challenges, environmental sustainability and immigration.

We would like to complement the first issue, namely the development of the internal market and competitiveness challenges, with the following ideas that have been promoted by several member states, including Finland:

- **Single Market** - in particular building a Digital Single Market. Europe's main competitive advantage is its internal market. However, instead of having a single European set of rules in the digital economy, we have 27 different national systems. The strongest growth will be based on new ways that exploit information technology, with digital services. Hereby, building a Digital Single Market is a necessity. It would provide better framework conditions for European companies. We need common European rules and harmonising legislation in different areas of the digital economy.
- All communication should support EU's efforts to get out of the **financial and economic crisis**.
- It is essential to take the objectives of **Europe2020** into account when designing the EU **Budget**.

Finland is currently in the process of defining a Government Program for a new Government. The EU communication priorities will correspond with the political priorities of Finland. Finland would like to continue the dialogue on this issue at a later stage.

SWEDEN

These are the key policy items on which the EU Coordination Secretariat will focus its work during 2012:

- **restoring the economy and creating growth,**
- **Europe 2020 Strategy,**
- **the next financial framework of the European Union,**
- **energy, climate and environment,**
- **external relations: enlargement, the Eastern Partnership, European External Action Service,**
- **the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region,**
- **asylum and immigration**

These seven different items should be understood as suggestions for possible common communications priorities for 2012.

Nevertheless, Sweden believes that there should only be a very limited number of common communication priorities in 2012.

The Lisbon Treaty introduces a new form of public participation in European Union policy shaping, the **European citizens' initiative**. In accordance with the Regulation, it will be possible to launch the first European Citizens' Initiatives from 1 April 2012. Sweden believes that this new instrument should be presented to the citizens, so as to enable their participation in the work of the EU institutions.

UNITED KINGDOM

1. **Generating secure & sustainable growth**
 2. **Delivering added value for EU taxpayers** (focussing on areas where EU enhances activities of MS, reform agenda & getting most from EU budget)
 3. **Transforming Europe's Partnership with our neighbours** (focussing on reform of ENP and response to Arab Spring).
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Common communication priorities
identified since the adoption of the
Political declaration "Communicating Europe in Partnership"

<u>YEAR (S)</u>	<u>THEMES</u>
<u>2009</u>	a. The European elections b. Energy and climate change c. The 20th anniversary of the democratic change in Central and Eastern Europe ensuing from the fall of the Iron curtain d. Europe's response to the financial crisis and the economic slowdown
<u>2010-2011</u>	a. Driving the economic recovery and mobilising new sources of growth b. Climate action and energy c. Making the Lisbon Treaty work for citizens.
