



INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION PLAN 2012

European Commission
DG Regional Policy



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1. POLICY CONTEXT AND COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

1.1. DG REGIO communication objectives

In 2012 DG REGIO's Information and Communication strategy will be strongly influenced by the debate on Cohesion Policy after 2013 which will continue until final adoption of the legislative package by the Council and the European Parliament. One important priority is consequently to continue **communicating on and explaining the Commission's proposal on Cohesion Policy 2014-2020** presented in October 2011, i.e. how it will affect regions and cities and how it will be implemented on the ground. It will be important to maintain dialogue and links with stakeholders, including the civil society organisations and social partners, during the entire process of shaping the future policy.

Communication also needs to focus on **demonstrating the main strengths and successes of EU Cohesion Policy, in particular with regard to how it contributes to the Europe 2020 Strategy** (smart, sustainable and inclusive growth) and how this can be further enhanced after 2013. Cohesion policy is the main source of EU investment for the strategy and makes a significant contribution to growth and prosperity and promotes balanced development across the Union. Through its strong principle of partnership and decentralised implementation system cohesion policy has great potential to promote the integration of the Europe 2020 strategy in policy and funding decisions at regional and local level.

Evidence of results of the policy will provide important arguments to the debate on the future. **Communicating how Cohesion Policy is implemented on the ground** in the current period, in particular through giving visibility to projects and highlighting good practice and concrete results will therefore also be of utmost importance. The discussions on the scope and level of ambition of cohesion policy after 2013 will most likely be influenced by the still on-going global economic crisis. In view of this it will be essential to demonstrate the added value of EU Cohesion Policy and the real benefits it brings to EU citizens, for example by helping regions to emerge stronger from the crisis.

Communication activities in 2012 should help to achieve the three objectives outlined above.

1.2. European Commission communication priorities

Communicating directly with the public is a primary concern for the European Commission. This is based on **three strategic principles** which constitute the basic foundation for the communication activities of DG REGIO:

- *Listening to citizens and ensuring their views and concerns are taken into account;*
- *Explaining how EU policies affect their everyday lives;*
- *Connecting with people by 'going local', addressing them in their national or local settings, through their preferred media.*

The Commission's communication priorities for 2012 will be based on the **Commission Work Programme for 2012** which is built on the main political priorities for the EU set out by President Barroso. It translates the political priorities into concrete actions.

The European Commission is determined to use the coming year to address the economic crisis. The steps being taken in the autumn 2011 show the priority the Commission gives to promoting growth and jobs. Acting in the short term, while at the same time building the basis for longer term sustainable growth and jobs, will help the EU find an exit from the crisis

which will leave it stronger, more able to face the demands of global competition, to tap the sources of growth for the future and deliver a successful social market economy.

Overarching objectives for the Work Programme 2012 are:

- *Building a Europe of stability and responsibility*
- *Building a Union of sustainable growth and solidarity*
- *Giving the EU an effective voice in the wider world*
- *Smart regulation and effective implementation*

Cohesion policy mainly targets the growth and solidarity objective, while at the same time also contributing to the others, including impacting on the wider world through the policy dialogue on regional policy with key emerging countries.

2. EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION ON EU REGIONAL POLICY

2.1. General argumentation supporting EU cohesion policy

Economic, social and territorial cohesion is an expression of solidarity between the Member States and regions of the European Union. The origins of economic and social cohesion go back to the Treaty of Rome where a reference is made in the preamble to reducing regional disparities. Cohesion policy is a solidarity policy, with funding heavily concentrated on the poorer regions helping them to catch up.

However, cohesion policy is most of all a strategic cross-sectoral investment policy contributing to aggregate growth and well-being. It is of benefit to all regions both through direct investments and indirect trade benefits, and reflects joined-up thinking and brings different sectors together under national or regional development plans. Cohesion policy is a structural medium/long-term policy for supporting regional economies, and is crucial for helping regions to exit stronger from the crisis.

By targeting all regions the overall competitiveness of the EU is expected to increase. The aim is to stimulate the creation of smart and sustainable growth for all citizens thereby also generating new jobs throughout the EU. This is why a smaller portion of cohesion policy funding also supports more prosperous regions, mainly to boost their innovation capacity.

Cohesion Policy will continue to contribute significantly to the priorities of the Europe 2020 Strategy, i.e. smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. It is the major source of EU investment in the strategy and contributes to the Flagship initiatives where possible and relevant. By involving all regions cohesion policy helps mobilising regional and local actors, thereby creating a wider ownership of the objectives and targets of the EU priorities, which is a pre-condition for successful implementation.

2.2. A shared responsibility with Member States and regions

The responsibility to communicate on cohesion/regional policy is shared between the European Commission and the Member States and regions. The managing authorities of the operational programmes are responsible for informing potential applicants about the programmes and their funding opportunities and specific conditions. They also have the main responsibility for informing the wider public about the outcomes and results of the projects and programmes. It is thus of utmost importance to give due visibility to projects, for example when projects are concluded or in the context of inaugurations of infrastructure investments co-funded by EU cohesion policy. Here the geographical units have an important role to play to support and encourage the managing authorities. Monitoring committee

meetings and annual meetings with programmes provide good platforms for discussing information and communication issues.

DG REGIO will continue coordinating the INFORM network of communication officers responsible for the implementation of communication plans of the programmes in all Member States and regions. The communication officers are important channels for information to both stakeholders and the wider public. Two meetings per year will be organised offering discussion and networking opportunities as well as a platform to exchange information and good practice.

In 2012, the future information and publicity requirements will continue to be discussed with the network with a view to ensuring best possible visibility of the policy in the next funding period. In the meantime, work to improve the visibility of EU regional policy will continue, notably as regards websites with Lists of Beneficiaries where improvements will be sought on a voluntary basis (e.g. regular updates, adding photos and project summaries, etc.). Efforts will also have to be made to encourage INFORM members to become actively involved in the network discussion group on communication related topics established on the networking platform RegioNetwork 2020.

2.3. Telling the story

External communication activities will be influenced by a number of messages which together tell the story of EU cohesion/regional policy:

- Cohesion policy fosters solidarity. It addresses the different needs of all European regions, reducing inequalities between more and less competitive areas, between urban and rural areas, between populated and sparse areas, and in geographically remote areas.
- Cohesion policy invests at local and regional level, helping companies to become more competitive, and funding training programmes for their staff. It provides resources for road and railways, water supply and waste treatment systems, and energy saving projects and encourages greater cooperation between regions in different countries.
- Two thirds of Europe's trade is within the EU. Regions benefitting from higher levels of EU support for investment often import their goods and services from companies in the more competitive regions. EU cohesion policy helps all regions to benefit from the Single market and to underpin the consensus in favouring of free movement of labour and capital, goods and services.
- Regional policy benefits all of Europe. It promotes growth and supports the shift to a more innovative and knowledge based economy, particularly in those regions which need to catch up.
- Over the past decade, regional policy has delivered at least a million jobs, more than 7,000 km of railways, clean drinking water for 20 million people and, in the newer Member States, five per cent higher income per head since they joined.

REGIONAL POLICY - FROM 2014

- From 2014, the targeting of regional policy will be reinforced. The policy will make an important contribution to Europe's long-term aims for smart and sustainable growth and jobs (the Europe 2020 Strategy).
- In the face of the economic crisis, more has to be done without an increase in the budget. That means a policy which is both more ambitious and more effective, with stronger governance and a streamlined delivery system to reduce bureaucracy for beneficiaries by a quarter.

- Resources need to be concentrated. Clearer objectives will lead to more impact and even better results. By spending more effectively more can be achieved with the same resources.
- There should be stronger involvement of partners in the design and management of programmes, and greater opportunities for cities and local communities to play an active part.
- Because of its recognised EU added-value, more resources are proposed for cooperation across borders, between Member States and between regions.
- Investment in new sectors is needed to keep Europe more competitive. In line with the Europe 2020 priorities, there will be a greater concentration of funds on small business development, innovation, renewable energy and energy efficiency.

REGIONAL POLICY FROM 2014 - MORE RIGOROUS

- To ensure that the money is spent more wisely, there will be much more focus on objectives and results, with a greater emphasis throughout on evaluation and performance-monitoring.
- More resources will be diverted to those programmes where there has been proper preparation for effective investment.
- Performance will be rewarded and serious failure sanctioned.

REGIONAL POLICY FROM 2014 - FAIR FOR ALL

- The policy approach is not “one-size-fits-all”. Regions will continue to develop investment strategies adapted to their specific needs, helping them fulfill their potential to deliver growth and jobs.
- A better combination of different EU funds at all levels will help to ensure synergies between regional and sectoral policies.
- Through a new “transitional” category for those who are in the range of 75–90 per cent of EU income will help to avoid an unequal treatment of similar regions.

2.4. Target audiences

Messages need to be selected and tailored according to the target audience. Actions are mainly addressed to the stakeholders and the regional media, with some actions targeted to the wider public. To feed the political debate on Cohesion Policy, a wider audience of decision-makers needs to be targeted.

Stakeholders: The audience of "stakeholders" concerns experts involved in the management and development of EU Cohesion Policy. They either work for public national or regional authorities involved in the management of the Structural and Cohesion Funds, regional development agencies, or are members of monitoring committees or project partners. They can also be members or officials of other national or EU institutions and organisations such as parliaments and governments at various levels, political parties or regional lobby organisations. Civil society organisations and social partners are important stakeholders which deserve specific attention.

Main actions to reach stakeholders:

- Various information tools produced to explain the legislative proposals for 2014-2020 (leaflet, standard powerpoint presentation, factsheets, animated clip etc.);

- The "Inforegio" website;
- The networking tool RegioNetwork 2020, including online discussions with the Commissioner;
- Annual meetings and monitoring committee meetings;
- Meetings hosted by the Commissioner with regional office representatives;
- Annual meeting with Social Partners;
- Annual meeting with Civil Society Organisations/NGOs;
- RegioFlash electronic newsletter;
- 2 meetings a year with the INFORM network of communication officers;
- "Train the trainers" seminars with Managing and Certifying Authorities;
- RfEC conference in June 2012;
- The RegioStars Awards;
- 8-11 October 2012: OPEN DAYS (European Week of Regions and Cities);
- Various publications, e.g. the Panorama Magazine, thematic guides, information material on cohesion policy 2014-2020.
- Presentations to stakeholders and visiting groups

Wider public: Regional Policy is one of the EU policy areas with highest potential to reach out to the citizens as the policy is translated into concrete projects on the ground, after having been selected by regions themselves. Reaching the wider public is the main responsibility of the managing authorities in the Member States and regions, but DG REGIO will also carry out actions targeting the wider public.

The Inforegio website provides general and specific information, including on funding possibilities and projects. It is essential to inform on how EU taxpayers' money is being used and to communicate how citizens are benefitting from the policy and the projects, for example by telling stories about people involved in projects or benefitting from the results of projects. Some work is done by the managing authorities through the information and publicity requirements of the regulations, or the European Transparency Initiative which obliges them to publish information on financial beneficiaries. However, since the level of awareness and the effectiveness of the communication activities varies from Member State to Member State, it is important that the Commission should continue to play an active role in providing basic information about Regional Policy across the EU.

The full range of information and communication tools will be mobilised to achieve this objective. It is particularly important to ensure presence of DG REGIO staff at various regional events as this will also contribute to communicating that the European Commission is a committed partner in the field of regional development. The initiative "Staff as ambassadors of regional policy" is thus an important support tool for this.

The wider public is also reached through cooperation with the Commission Representations and the network of Europe Direct Information Centres.

DG REGIO will continue to answer the numerous questions received directly from the citizens, which contribute to making the policy better understood.

A specific category among the wider public is youth, and to reach them more innovative tools need to be explored. First steps taken by DG REGIO include the development of a cohesion policy game "UNI!" to be used in schools (so far only available in French).

Media: Journalists working for regional and national media constitute a third target audience. Beyond the immediate media response through the Commissioner's spokesperson and the information relayed via the Commission's Representations in the Member States, services provided directly by DG REGIO for this audience concern the provision of media packages and advisory notes on events in their country or region, information on OPEN DAYS local

seminars, and the coordination of related news together with the Commission's representations.

In the context of programme monitoring committee meetings press conferences are sometimes organised with the presence of DG REGIO staff. The informal technical briefings held during OPEN DAYS by DG REGIO's desk officers on the state of play of cohesion policy programmes in each member state is usually very well received. This practice could be extended to other events/seminars, and desk officers should be provided with the necessary training and support to be able to manage media contacts.

Getting attention from regional journalists is challenging as they are generally not specialised on regional policy. In order to generate their interest it is therefore essential to improve their knowledge. This is usually best done at the regional level by the operational programmes. In 2010 DG REGIO organised training seminars for journalists in some Member States in cooperation with concerned Commission Representation Offices. As experiences of this are very positive another 2-3 seminars will be organised in 2012.

Academia: For many years, DG REGIO has had extensive ties with the academic community. These links are well developed with the OECD and the Regional Studies Association (RSA). Academics have provided valuable input into the policy through studies and reports commissioned by DG REGIO.

DG REGIO should make a concerted effort to reach out to those academics more sceptical of the policy by engaging them in various policy debates. Actions could include:

- Publication of regular contributions from DG REGIO (Working Papers and Regional Focus) in selected research journals;
- Publication of signed articles by academics/experts in the Panorama Magazine;
- In-house debates for DG REGIO and other Commission staff or seminars in Brussels (inviting representatives from the managing authorities and Permanent Representations) with invited experts from OECD/World Bank to discuss the policy;
- Continuation of OPEN DAYS University (8-11 October 2012);
- Use academics/experts which have study/report contracts with DG REGIO to provide third-party opinion articles in selected newspapers.

In addition, EU regional policy enhances the image and reputation of the Union in **third countries** where many emerging countries regard it as a model for their own policies.

2.5. Tools and actions for external communication

When reaching out to the target audiences it is essential not only to select the most appropriate information tools or products, but also to pay due attention to dissemination.

Priority actions in 2012

- Communication tools supporting the legislative proposals 2014-2020
- OPEN DAYS 2012 (10th anniversary)
- Regions for Economic Change conference (5th anniversary)
- RegioStars awards 2012 (5th anniversary)
- Work closely with managing authorities to visualise results of projects
- Social media – develop further use
- Euronews – production and broadcasting of an 8-minute monthly magazine on cohesion policy

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Explore ways to publish data extracted from SFC and Infoview on Info regio in a regularly updated and accessible format |
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Web communication

The website "Info regio", which receives over 250 000 visits each month, is one of DG REGIO's most important communication tools for reaching the target audiences. In 2011 new content was developed and a major overhaul of Info regio was done. Work will continue in 2012.

DG REGIO also maintains the Commissioner's website and the RegioNetwork 2020 platform. These sites are regularly updated and developed through new services and additional pages.

In order to ensure coherent communication and efficient use of resources, any Units in DG REGIO who manage projects that involve the creation of a website must inform and consult DG REGIO/B1 from the beginning of the project.

Priorities for 2012:

- Regular updating, including adapting existing pages and adding new ones, with specific attention to information about the Commission's legislative proposals for cohesion policy post-2013;
- Set up new web pages for the public consultation for the Common Strategic framework.
- Further improvement of the 'information sources' section of Info regio and in presentation of videos;
- Upgrading of the digital library and migration of DG REGIO's photos to the Commission's audiovisual library;
- Development of a searchable database of publications, other documents and videos;
- Study the possibility of developing a single interface to manage content stored in the various databases that underpin the Info regio site (projects, programmes, photos, videos, documents);
- Explore ways to publish data extracted from SFC and Infoview (absorption rates, allocation of funding by thematic priority etc) on Info regio in a regularly updated and accessible format;
- Geo-referenced information (maps): Improve the publication of spatial data and interactive maps on the Info regio website;
- Deletion and/or archiving of outdated content from previous programming periods;
- Preparation for new website 2014-2020;
- Further development of the website of the Commissioner;
- Review and update the OPEN DAYS website, taking into account users' needs;
- Adapting the Conference Management System (registrations for the Open Days);
- More intensive and targeted use of RegioFlash (e-mail alerts) to inform stakeholders;
- Migration of mailing lists to 20,000 subscribers of e-mail alerts to the DIGIT Data Centre.

Press and Media

The press team in the Communication Unit works closely with the Commissioner's spokesperson to keep the media (both the Brussels-based accredited press and regional and national media in the Member States) up to date on key developments and achievements of cohesion policy. The team will continue to provide timely responses to press enquiries, draft press releases, organise press conferences, and prepare press interviews and speaking points. General and op-ed articles will continue to be produced in response to requests, depending on available resources.

Priorities for 2012:

- Media programmes for invited journalists will be organised in conjunction with the major DG REGIO annual events. In 2012 this includes the Urban Forum, the Regions for Economic Change conference and the RegioStars awards ceremony, the Forum for outermost regions and OPEN DAYS;
- In line with overall Commission policy, the team will continue to produce a limited number of press releases published in Brussels and reinforce other dissemination channels i.e. publication of press releases through the Commission Representation offices in conjunction with e.g. the Commissioner's regional visits or launches of major projects;
- A series of media seminars ('technical briefings') in selected Member States will take place in close cooperation with DG COMM and the Commission Representations: a further 2 - 3 seminars could be planned aiming to provide journalists with a practical overview on how cohesion policy works, and an opportunity to hear about structural funds programmes in their country (e.g. around the Cerdanya cross-border hospital, tbc).

Publications

In addition to updates of publications required by the regulations (publications supporting management of the Structural Funds) and the RegioFlash messages sent in electronic format only, several other publications are planned. Priority will be given to publications which support communication on the proposals on cohesion policy 2014-2020 and/or are included in the list of planned publications in this plan (available in Annex 1).

A survey made in May 2011 provided an overall positive appreciation of the Panorama magazine. However, a number of improvements will be considered as of Panorama 40 (Winter 2011). In particular, respondents wished more focus on projects and the involvement of practitioners and others from outside DG REGIO.

The number of subscribers to the mailing list is now about 20 000.

In 2012 a graphic charter at European Commission level, including a specific logo for the Commission, will be implemented. This will have an impact on the visual identity of all information and communication tools, and means that DG REGIO's graphic charter will have to be modified. No other logos than the EU flag and the new Commission logo will be allowed.

Priorities for 2012:

- Publications related to the legislative proposals for cohesion policy post-2013, including publications related to the Commission Communication on the Common Strategic Framework, and the dissemination of fact sheets and an animated video clip.

Events

Two recurrent major events are the highlights of the events' programme of DG Regional Policy. In 2012 the 10th anniversary of the OPEN DAYS and the 5th anniversary of the Regions for Economic Change conference, including the RegioStars awards, will be celebrated. OPEN DAYS is the largest cohesion policy event in Europe attracting 5,000-6,000 participants annually (In addition to this local events are organised throughout Europe.). Based on the positive experiences in 2011 the number of seminars should not exceed 100-110. More attention will be paid to increasing the attractiveness of all RegioStars 2013 finalists for journalists, for example by organising the project workshops with all candidates during OPEN DAYS 2012.

Depending on priorities and available resources, other events will be organised or supported as well. Support of events held by stakeholders or other EU institutions can only be granted in the form of services such as stands, documentation and publicity on the web. A list of events is included in Annex 1.

Priorities for 2012:

- OPEN DAYS 2012
- The Regions for Economic Change conference
- The RegioStars awards

Multimedia products

In addition to video clips featuring projects co-financed by our funds, DG REGIO will continue with the production of 'thematic' clips which compile project examples around a specific initiative or a thematic priority.

Presentation of video productions on Inforegio is being improved, by regrouping them in a single entry page. Given the numbers of project clips received from external sources (mostly managing authorities) this new page also presents links to those clips.

Regarding material to be used in exhibitions stands and other events, the trend already initiated to develop new, more attractive products, will be continued

Priorities for 2012:

- Video: production of around 10-15 short clips on ERDF-funded projects, RegioStars awards, thematic priorities etc, highlighting as much as possible testimonies from regional politicians and/or project beneficiaries;
- Increased mediatisation of DG REGIO's audiovisual products;
- Continued integration of existing and future AV material into DG COMM's AV library and into an online DG REGIO "AV platform", and increase the presence of DG REGIO's clips on YouTube and other social media;
- Further integration of links to clips on ERDF funded projects produced by third parties into the Inforegio website;
- Further development of new and creative multimedia tools for their use on Inforegio, exhibition stands and other events;
- Further cooperation with Euronews with the aim of developing and broadcasting an 8-minute monthly "magazine" on cohesion policy as of September 2012.

RegioNetwork 2020

Since its launch in October 2010, RegioNetwork has grown into a lively online community of over 2000 users. The web chats with the Commissioner that took place in March and October 2011 proved particularly popular.

Despite this encouraging progress, there are a number of challenges that need to be overcome in order to transform the site into a productive platform that can support the development and implementation of EU regional policy:

- Usability of the site and performance issues
- Stimulating interaction and dialogue
- Expectations that the Commission will play a leading role
- Changing habits and overcoming resistance to change

Priorities for 2012:

Improving the usability of the site, playing a more active role in discussions, and linking the use of the site to the DG's strategic priorities: preparing EU Cohesion Policy 2014-2020;

supporting the implementation e.g. of the EU strategies for the Baltic Sea and Danube Regions; urban development, information and communication, evaluation, smart specialisation ..

Social media

Social media can help to disseminate messages about EU regional policy, build relationships, stimulate interaction, collect feedback, drive traffic to our websites and establish 2-way communication with our target audiences.

Priorities for 2012:

- Develop the @EU_Regional account on Twitter (news, events, project examples...)
- Promote EU regional policy on the European Commission's main Facebook page, in cooperation with DG COMM (photos, videos, events, possible organisation of a photo competition, webchat on EU regional policy etc)
- Share images of projects and events on photo-sharing website Flickr, following the positive experience during the 2011 Open Days (adding contextual information and links for further information)
- Reach out to influential bloggers who write about EU affairs, regional policy and related topics such as open data (for example by inviting them to media seminars organised with the Commission Representations, as well as the Open Days media programme)
- Work with the INFORM network to ensure coordination and synergy between social media activities at the EU and regional level, making links between the social media accounts that have been set up by several EU regional policy managing authorities, programmes and projects
- Make greater use of social media monitoring tools to identify other online forums where people are talking about EU regional policy and related issues

European Commission Representation offices

DG REGIO will continue its efforts to co-ordinate communication initiatives with each of the Commission Representation offices. In the past greater efforts have been made to involve the Commission representation offices in communicating our main messages and in targeting regional media, e.g. by inviting them to different events. Further efforts will be made to use the channels offered by the Representations. Key moments in the year will notably be the debate on the Commission's legislative proposals for cohesion policy post-2013 and the RegioStars finalists.

3. DG REGIO INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Internal communication is a strategic function of our DG and is essential for staff engagement in order (1) to maximise efficiency and effectiveness of daily work, and (2) to mobilise staff for an enhanced communication effort towards citizens and stakeholders, but also to increase the motivation and commitment of staff and boost team spirit.

The working group on Knowledge Management and Internal Communication, set in the context of DG REGIO's Human Resources Strategy, has confirmed the importance of internal communication, reviewed the existing tools and made a number of recommendations for improving top-down, bottom-up and horizontal communication within the DG.

Available internal communication tools include DG REGIO's intranet MyRegio, training sessions, general presentations, the library and internal networks. The Desk Officers Group plays an important role for enhancing information exchange within the DG and capacity

building on issues related to programme implementation and interpretation of the regulatory framework.

Internal communication and external communication must be linked. Internally communicated messages should equip staff to communicate effectively with their counterparts in the regions. Messages on European cohesion policy thus need to be translated into simple and accessible language.

Priorities for internal communication in 2012:

Continuous development of MyRegio

DG REGIO's intranet is an important tool to facilitate internal communication, knowledge management, staff motivation and efficiency.

The migration of MyRegio to the Commission's new corporate portal, MyIntracomm will be concluded during the first half of 2012. This migration requires a significant investment of resources by DG REGIO.B1, in cooperation with DG REGIO.A4 and the DG's web correspondents. Until the migration is complete it will be necessary to keep the current intranet updated.

The migration to MyIntracomm should make it easier and quicker to edit content on the intranet, as well as introducing the possibility for users to find what they are looking for more easily using the search engine. DG REGIO has also created a collaborative space in the "Working Together" section of MyIntracomm that will give the DG's working groups, networks and Units access to the standard collaborative features of Sharepoint (shared calendar, meeting workspaces, shared documents, versioning, discussion forums, announcements etc.). Making full use of these and other collaborative tools will require a culture change in the DG that should be accompanied by appropriate training and coaching.

The Information and Communication unit will continue to provide support and advice to DG REGIO's network of web editors, in order to ensure that colleagues from across the DG are equipped to play an active role in communicating about the progress and the results of the work of their units via MyRegio.

The in-house capacity to produce short videos for dissemination via MyRegio will continue to be developed. The objective is to produce two videos per month on average for internal communication purposes.

Modern online communication tools (video blogs, discussion forums, live webchats) might help senior management to engage directly with staff and provide a useful complement to internal communication via hierarchical structures.

Staff as ambassadors of regional policy

As the Commission's greatest asset, staff has a significant impact on how the Commission is perceived. This is why it is important that DG REGIO staff is well-informed and trained to be able to act as ambassadors for regional policy and the EU in general, either in their daily contacts with various people or in their role as desk officers. Desk officers, as the Commission's representative in the regions, are faced with many kinds of situations (representing the Commission at monitoring committee meetings, speaking at conferences, meeting media etc.) and questions when visiting different regions. In view of this training sessions to help desk officers answer some of the questions they might face, covering all different aspects of public presentation skills and including 'hot topics' which often get raised in presentations, will be repeated in 2012.

In cooperation with DG EMPL an important Negotiators Training programme was started at the end of 2011 and will continue throughout 2012. The purpose is to prepare staff for the negotiations with the Member States on the new generation of programmes with the ultimate aim of achieving a better overall quality of programming, i.e. increased effectiveness of EU funding. The training programme will include a presentation and explanation of the proposed legislative package, general and horizontal issues, thematic issues, negotiation skills, in-depth negotiations preparations and country workshops.

Internal thematic networks

In DG REGIO three internal thematic networks are established: Regio Network for Innovation - RN4I (smart growth), Sustainable Development Network - SDNET (sustainable growth) and Social Cohesion Network - SoCoNET (inclusive growth).

Each network is run by a team (DG REGIO.D2) organising regular meetings and maintaining a webpage for each network. These networks connect knowledge and people inside, and to a certain extent also outside, DG REGIO in a very practical and open way, and are also useful for gathering and sharing data, good practice examples, etc.

Human resources communication

Plans for 2012 include setting up of communication campaigns relating to the implementation of the Human Resources Strategy and the revised Appraisal and Promotion System, as well as the design and printing of a DG REGIO specific ethics guide "Ethics and You".

4. EVALUATION

We will continue undertaking regular evaluations of our communication actions. DG REGIO, notably the geographical units, will make use of the results of the Eurobarometer survey of 2010 in our efforts to improve external communication.

In May 2011, a survey was launched on the Inforegio Panorama magazine. Outcomes of this survey have been discussed at the Directors' meeting and will result in some improvements in the forthcoming issues.

In 2012 the following actions are planned:

- Evaluations of our events, in particular the Regions for Economic Change conference and the OPEN DAYS;
- An evaluation of the new intranet (end 2012);
- RegioNetwork 2020: Evaluation of experiences so far, including a user survey;
- Internal evaluation of the use of social media (end 2012).

ANNEX 1 - 2012 MAJOR COMMUNICATION ACTIONS

1. Events

Calendar of major events requiring involvement of DG REGIO.B1 and framework contracts

Date - 2012	Location	Type of Event	Resp. Unit
February			
16 February	Brussels	Urban Forum	C2
May			
May (tbc)		3 rd Annual Forum – EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region	E1
May/June	Copenhagen	Commissioner Hahn meeting with Mayors of EU capitals	C2+B1
June			
14-15 June	Brussels	RfEC conference	D2 + B1
14 June	Brussels	REGIOSTARS award ceremony	D2 + B1
July			
2-3 July	Brussels	Forum for Outermost Regions	B2
October			
8-11 October	Brussels	OPEN DAYS	B1
	Bavaria	1 st Annual Forum - EU Strategy for the Danube Region	E1
Timing to be defined			
		Information seminar on community led local development	C2+B1
Spring	Poland	INFORM network conference	B1
Late autumn	Paris	Joint INFORM/INIO networks conference	B1
November (tbc)	Metz	RURBAN Regional Workshop	

Indicative list of other events involving DG REGIO¹ (involvement of REGIO.B1 and framework contracts not confirmed)

Date/2012	Location	Type of Event	Resp. Unit
January			
30-31 Jan.	Bucharest	EU Strategy for the Danube Region - Meeting with Priority Area coordinators and National Contact Points	E1
January	Brussels	Presentation of results of the Expert Evaluation Network	C4
February			
Feb.		Meeting with operational programmes in the Danube region	E1
Feb.		Meeting with operational programmes in the Baltic Sea region	E1
8 Feb (tbc)	Slovakia	Follow-up of High Level Event on Marginalizes Roma Communities in 2011: bilateral meetings with stakeholders	F3
March			
13 March (tbc)	Slovakia	Follow-up of High Level Event on Marginalizes Roma Communities in 2011: Plenary meeting	F3
May			
May	Brussels	PEACE event	E4
May/June		Joint conference with DK Presidency to launch the "Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities"	C2
May/June	Brussels	Technical meeting with Audit Authorities	J1
June			

¹ REGIO's involvement can be limited to sending speakers and/or information stand or publications.

Date/2012	Location	Type of Event	Resp. Unit
June	All over Europe	"ETC Day" organised in cooperation with INTERACT	E1,E2
June	(Seville or in a RUP)	Seminar to launch a S3 Platform for the outermost regions	B2
September			
3 or 7 Sept	Azores	Annual conference for the Presidents of the Outermost regions	B2
Sept/Oct	Vilnius	Homologues meeting with Audit Authorities	J1

Other potential events for which dates have not been confirmed yet:

- A major event related to the Common Strategic Framework together with DG EMPL, DG AGRI and DG MARE (C1);
- Seminar on preparations for 2014-2020 for cross-border cooperation programmes in cooperation with INTERACT (E2);
- Annual event for all cross-border cooperation programmes (E2);
- Good practice seminar with information officers from Slovak managing authorities (F3 + Commission Representation in Bratislava);

Stands will be placed at the following events:

- 16/2: Urban forum FORUM, Brussels
- May (date tbc): Open doors of the European institutions, Brussels
- May (tbc): Annual Forum - EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region
- 14-15 June: Regions for Economic Change + Regio Stars Award, Brussels
- 2-3 July: 2nd Forum for Outermost Europe, Brussels
- 8-11 October: OPEN DAYS 10 years, Brussels
- October: 1st Annual Forum - EU Strategy for the Danube Region, Bavaria, Germany

2. List of publications planned in 2012

Demands for other publications will be dealt with, depending on the workload, by the communication and information unit on a case by case basis.

Electronic publications:

- RegioFlash: electronic newsletter with latest information about EU regional policy sent to 20,000 subscribers (DG REGIO.B1)
- Electronic Newsletter for the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region: A newsletter informing a wide range of stakeholders about the on-going implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. The newsletter includes information about results, upcoming events and opportunities created by the strategy and has already more than 5000 subscribers.(DG REGIO.E1)
- Electronic Newsletter for the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (DG REGIO.E1)
- Web-based publications of studies and guides related to smart and sustainable growth (DG REGIO.D2)
- Open Days Flash Info: weekly from early September until the end of OPEN DAYS
- Series of methodological and policy guidance tools for managing authorities to help them prepare programmes for 2014-2020: S³ family of guides covering smart and sustainable growth and social innovation. (Mainly web-based publications, limited printing)

Paper publications:

- Publications related to the legislative proposals for cohesion policy post-2013, for example completion of a series of factsheets
- 8th Progress report on Cohesion
- RegioStars 2012 brochure
- Information leaflet on the implications of the UN Convention on the rights of people with disabilities (tbc)
- Communication on the strategy for the outermost regions

Quarterly Panorama magazine:

- Panorama 41 (Spring 2012): "Financial instruments" as main theme
- Panorama 42 (Summer 2012): Theme to be decided: *any suggestion at this stage?*
- Panorama 43 (Autumn 2012): Theme to be decided: *any suggestion at this stage?*
- Panorama 44 (Winter 2012): Theme to be decided: *any suggestion at this stage?*

Other:

- An EN version of the UNI! game

3. Other communication actions planned in 2012

Actions in addition to those mentioned in section 2.5 and the lists of events and publications above.

- Commission Communication on the Common Strategic Framework: Press releases, powerpoint presentations, specific website on Inforegio, posting of contributions to consultation on the web, Staff Working Document on the results of the public consultations, develop targeted communication messages (units C1, B1)
- A video on urban development (C2, B1)
- Actions related to the 10th anniversary of the Solidarity Fund (possibly: seminar during OPEN DAYS, video clip etc.)
- Targeted dissemination of the publication "European Territorial cooperation-Building Bridges Between People" and the video and poster (E1,E2,B1)
- Actions in relation to the adoption of a Commission Communication on the future strategy for the outermost regions, including a press conference with Commissioner Hahn (B2, B1)

If resources allow the following actions will also be implemented:

- Actions in relation to the Court of Auditors' Annual Report (J1, B1)
- Local development: website (C2, B1), and information and communication material developed jointly with DG AGRI, DG EMPL and DG MARE on community led local development in practice (C2, B1)
- Increase communication on the added value of macro-regional strategies (benefits of approach and concrete results) (E1)
- Increase visibility for established EGTCs (E1)
- Dissemination of the results of the study "Tendances démographiques et flux migratoires dans les RUP" (B2, B1)
- Actions in relation to the "Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities"

ANNEX 2 - 2011 RESULTS

The outcome of the information and communication strategy and actions for 2011 can be summarised as follows:

Media

- 14 press releases and 3 memos published in Brussels; 18 press releases published through the representations in the Member States.
- 4 press conferences organised in Brussels in the context of the Cohesion Forum, the RegioStars awards ceremony, the presentation of the new regulations and the Open Days and numerous press conferences were organised in the Member States.
- 328 journalists (mostly from the regional media) attended conferences organised in Brussels by DG REGIO (91 for the Cohesion Forum; 220 for OPEN DAYS; 17 for the RegioStars awards ceremony); For the Cohesion Forum, an estimated 82 articles were collected from print, online press and news agencies, 5 AV reports from radio and television. 42 reports were published or broadcast on RegioStars. Open Days 2011 were covered in 20 Member States: 118 online portal mentions, 92 mentions in newspapers, 12 in newswires, 8 in web-TV/TV and 8 in radio (provisional figures).
- Approx. 30 articles (mainly signed by the Commissioner) drafted on a range of subjects both proactively (e.g. on new regulations) and in response to requests received from various media outlets. These elicited broad coverage in national and regional press throughout Europe.

Events

- **About 9,500** participants were counted in the 16 conferences or seminars organised or co-organised by the DG. The 5th Cohesion Forum (975 participants), the Regions for Economic Change conference (523 participants) and the OPEN DAYS were the biggest events organised in 2011, the latter with 5,700 participants in 110 seminars.

Events 2011	Date	Participants
5th Cohesion Forum, Brussels, Belgium	31 Jan - 1 Feb	975
What future for Cohesion Policy" – An Academic and Policy Debate (Regional Studies association RSA), Bled, Slovenia	16-18 March	180
JESSICA 4 NWP, Brussels, Belgium	31 March	120
Future of Cohesion Policy – Budapest, Hungary	31 March – 1 April	150
Smart Specialisation in the Baltic Sea Region, Malmö, Sweden	5-6 April	130
Impact Evaluation Summer School, Balaton, Hungary	16-20 May	60
Seminar for the Regional offices, Brussels, Belgium	17 May	195
INFORM VII network meeting, Sofia, Bulgaria	17-18 May	120
JEREMIE 5NWP, Brussels, Belgium	20 May	120
HLE on Roma inclusion, Bratislava and Kosice, Slovakia	23-25 May	400
Regions for Economic Change, Brussels, Belgium	23-24 June	523
JESSICA 5 NWP, Brussels, Belgium	28 June	120
9 th Open Days, Brussels, Belgium	10-13 Oct.	5 683
3 rd Annual JEREMIE and JESSICA Conference, Warsaw, Poland	27-28 Oct	(423)
INFORM VIII network meeting	7-8 Dec	(120)
Seminar for the Regional offices, Brussels, Belgium	15 December	(195)
Total number of participants		9.514

- DG REGIO had **stands** at 14 different major conferences or events:

Events 2011 with DG REGIO stands		Date
Cohesion Forum	Brussels	31 Jan-1Feb
Future of Cohesion Policy	Budapest	31 March/ 1 April
Smart Specialisation in the Baltic Sea Region	Malmö	4/6 April
Journée Portes Ouvertes	Brussels	7 May
Jeremy 5 NWP conference	Brussels	20 May
RfEC conference	Brussels	24-25 June
Conference: "Evidence based cohesion policy"	Gdansk	7-8 July
Open Days	Brussels	10-13 Oct
Annual Stakeholder Forum for the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region	Gdansk	24-26 Oct
Conference "Instruments for territorial development"	Warsaw	24-25 Oct
JESSICA and JEREMIE conference	Warsaw	27-28 Oct
Europe Direct AGM	Malta	7-8 Nov
Conference "Convergence in France"	La Réunion	21-23 Nov
Impact Evaluation Seminar	Warsaw	12 Dec

Websites

- In the period November 2010-October 2011, the Inforegio website was visited by 1.700.000 different visitors who generated 3.45 million visits and 8.5 million page views.
- During 2011, DG REGIO's webteam made over 2000 updates and improvements to the DG's websites (Inforegio, Open Days, Commissioner's website, RegioNetwork 2020, MyRegio intranet). The webteam receives on average 40-50 requests for updates per week (more during peak periods such as the Open Days, the RegioStars awards etc...).
- The Inforegio website was revamped in mid-2011. The improvements to the site include:
 - Clearer navigation and organisation of content
 - Effective search engine (Google Custom Search)
 - Updated content presenting regional policy in a clear and accessible way
 - More content in 22 languages
 - Presentation of videos on regional policy classified by theme, country etc...
 - More modern design
- Over 200 new project examples have been added to the project database on the Inforegio website.

Electronic and paper publications

- The existing **mailing list database** has 20,000 subscribers of which 14049 are part of a public list and 5 982 of a more targeted list.
- 26 different RegioFlashes (e-mail alerts) were sent until the end of November 2011, i.e. on average every two weeks 4 editions of Panorama magazine

Publications in 2011

- 2 Working Papers
- 3 Regional Focus
- Brochure 'Regional Policy for smart growth in Europe 2020'
- Brochure 'Regional Policy contributing to sustainable growth in Europe'
- 31 country specific posters in national languages
- Urban Atlas

- Brochure 'Regional Integration and Development – The EU-Brazil Dialogue on Regional Policy'
- Brochure 'Regional Policy and the EU – A comparative perspective'
- Urban report – "Cities of tomorrow"
- Leaflet on Roma
- OPEN DAYS Info Flash
- A book "Territorial cooperation – Building bridges between people" which was published in October in English and in December in French and German.
- Brochure "Errors in Cohesion Policy"
- 7th progress report
- Brochure 'European code of good conduct for microcredit provision'
- RegioStars 2011 Brochure
- Game UNI! for children aged 10+

Multimedia

- With regard to multimedia products, many **exhibition panels, posters and banners** in various languages were produced for different events, including the Regions for Economic Change conference, the RegioStars Awards ceremony, and OPEN DAYS 2011. Further visuals were designed for Regio's umbrella stands, incl. on the new regulations on cohesion policy.
- The **Digital Library** was updated with photo shoots of ERDF projects in Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, UK, Germany, Czech Republic, Hungary, France, Luxembourg and Romania. Several events, including OPEN DAYS 2011 and 'Regions for Economic Change - RegioStars', had film and/or photo coverage.
- **Video clips** were made for the 'Regions for Economic Change' conference (including 4 clips for the RegioStars Awards winners (Madeira and the Azores in Portugal, Amsterdam in the Netherlands, Northern Mid Sweden, Wales in the UK), OPEN DAYS, Territorial Cooperation, ERDF projects in Hungary/Romania, France/Luxembourg/Germany and Germany/Czech Republic, as well as 12 'testimonies' (1-minute clips featuring citizens who have benefited, directly or indirectly, from ERDF funding in their region.) Videos produced on the occasion of OPEN DAYS 2011 were actively distributed to the audiovisual media via a multimedia platform especially designed for the occasion.
- **Euronews**: Dissemination of adapted video clips on the 2011 RegioStars Awards winners during a 3-months long campaign.

Information centre/ library/ visiting groups

- In the period January-October, approximately 2,249 **information requests** were answered and roughly 120,352 **documents** were sent on demand;
- Between January-October, there were 99 new book purchases for the **Infoforegio Library** as well as 506 book loans;

Social media

- By October 2011 around 1800 people and organisations (including regions, cities, cohesion programmes, Commission Representations, journalists, bloggers) were following the @EU_Regional account on **Twitter**. More than 500 tweets about the legislative proposals for 2014-2020 were posted by different organisations and individuals. There was a similar volume of tweets during the 2011 OPEN DAYS.

- The account created on the photo-sharing website, **Flickr**, for the 2011 Open Day had a strong impact, with over 1000 photos uploaded and more than 40,000 views of these photos during the week of the OPEN DAYS.
- Through DG REGIO's cooperation with COMM relevant information about EU regional policy has been published on the Commission's **Facebook** page, as well as the Facebook pages of the Commission's Representations, and appropriate audiovisual content on EU regional policy has been published on the Commission's EUTube channel on **Youtube**.

Cooperation with Commission Representations

- Support from Representations for the Commissioner's visits in the Member States (in particular his contacts with the media)
- OPEN DAYS 2011 and RegioStars awards: Commission Representations helped disseminate information on these two events and provided coverage on their websites. They also suggested some names of journalists to invite.
- First steps have been taken as regards cooperation on social media (i.e. the Representation in Spain re-tweets most of our announcements).
- Unit B1 worked in close cooperation with the Representation in Belgium to promote the UNI! game (fairs, presentation, ...)

Internal communication

- During 2011, the webteam has continued to update the current MyRegio intranet as well as preparing for the migration of the DG's intranet to MyIntracomm. DG REGIO has also begun to use the collaborative possibilities offered by the Working Together section of MyIntracomm (based on Microsoft Sharepoint).
- Daily press reviews have been compiled and made available via mailing list and on MyRegio.
- In 2011 the Regio video team produced 16 internal videos/ video clips.
- Internal training was given on events organisations, information tools, the information and communication plan 2011, the information and publicity requirements on regional policy, and how to communicate cohesion policy to the wider public.