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**THE COMMISSION'S INFORMATION
AND COMMUNICATION POLICY :
EXTERNAL INFORMATION**

Communication to the Commission

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The Commission is asked to approve the attached paper, including the draft decision at point VI, thereby instructing its services, coordinated by the Steering Committee, to implement an expanded external information strategy.

SUMMARY AND PROPOSED DECISION

The Community has always been a major world player, and the Union, in the post-Maastricht context, will be called upon to play a yet more important world role. The new approach to information and communication, approved by the Commission on June 30, 1993 (SEC(93)916/9), has therefore to cover "external information" - that is information towards countries outside the Community, and more generally the promotion of a positive EC image there. This will require both greater cost-effectiveness in the use of the very modest funds currently available to be achieved by greater coordination and clearer targeting, and a progressive increase through a combination of redeployment and new resources to be requested through the normal procedures.

In 1990 the Commission already approved a first expansion of its external information work (SEC(90)149/2). The concerns set out in that paper remain largely valid today, and its implementation is still more necessary.

This Communication recommends that a higher priority be given to external information and communication as an instrument of the Union's external relations policy, calls for greater coordination in this area between Commission services and with Member States, and invites the Commission to approve a global but selective information and communication strategy and to instruct its services to implement that decision, together with its administrative and budgetary consequences, under the coordination of the new information and communication Steering Committee.

**EXTERNAL INFORMATION AND
COMMUNICATION POLICY**

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ANNEX : Report on Implementation of the 1990 Commission Decision

I. OBJECTIVES

External information and communication must be conceived to serve the external policy aims of the European Union. It must build up a recognizable EU profile ("corporate image") and illustrate the Union's vocation and particular nature, and the European values it stands for, values based on peace, democracy, prosperity and social justice. It must respond to specific concerns and the constantly increasing demand for information about European Union policies and actions. Third-country leaders, media and public expect the Commission and its Delegations to be able to provide full information on the whole range of the Union's policy matters and activities, political and economic.

II. STRATEGY

A global but selective strategy⁽¹⁾ is necessary to permit the Commission to carry out a level of information and communication activity commensurate with the Union's enhanced world role. It must be conceived as a function of external policy objectives, taking proper account of the nature and closeness of the Union's relations with the different regions or countries, of its strategic interests, and of the overall international situation.

It must be targeted in order to take appropriate account of both the wide differences in demand for (and level of) information in different parts of the world, and the Union's differing policy objectives.

Regional information and communication strategies will be prepared, taking into account past experience based on the earlier strategies agreed in 1990 and 1991 (see annex, page 3). They will take account of changed and changing priorities and define the specific objectives and key messages for each region, country or group of countries, and the principal target audiences within them. The range of information and communication means will be used - work with local media and other relays, seminars, exhibitions, publications, videos, etc. - depending on local circumstances.

A distinction must be made between information needs in Europe and elsewhere:

- Many third countries in Europe are today potential EU members and their people therefore potential EU citizens. They will come to need the same type and degree of information as present EU citizens. This is already so for those EFTA countries which are now negotiating for membership, and will become so for other countries.
- Elsewhere - though needs vary enormously, between North America and Africa for example - our effort has to be essentially targeted at opinion formers, primarily in the media, and decision takers, supported by appropriate general promotional actions aimed to project a positive overall image of the Union.

(1) This was called for in the 1990 Communication on external information (SEC(90) 649/2), but lack of resources made its implementation largely impossible.

However, if the Union is to implement an external information and communication strategy capable of supporting its enhanced external policy aspirations, a significant and sustained effort in terms of both staff and operational budgets is essential over the coming years.

1. Staff and Infrastructure.

The Steering Committee must agree a plan for the progressive strengthening and equipment of Delegation press and information sections, to be implemented progressively.

Delegations in enlargement countries

When a candidate country becomes a member country, a representative office will be established in each, based on the existing Delegation. In the case of Austria, Sweden, Finland and Norway this process of change should begin as soon as referendum results are known, by providing in each Delegation a first "A" post for an information specialist, plus the appropriate local staff and equipment.

Other Delegations

Existing information sections must be strengthened, and new ones created at a more modest level, as resources become available. A basic minimum provision of information material is essential for all Delegations, even in the smallest countries.

Within each Delegation a senior official should be specifically designated to take charge of information (on a full-time or part-time basis depending on local needs and possibilities), and to supervise the locally recruited information staff. The aim remains progressively to provide all Delegations with an information unit composed of a minimum of 2 local agents (press/information officer; and documentalist), supervised by a senior staff member.

Full SPIs operate only within the Washington Delegation (with a sub-office in New York) and the Tokyo Delegation. Given the evident importance of maintaining a significant information operation in these two countries - the Community's two principal global partners but economic competitors - these privileged services will be maintained.

The Moscow Delegation is a special case, where the progressive establishment of an information section similar in size to the Tokyo SPI is appropriate.

Brussels services

A modest increase in staff is essential if the Delegations are to receive the service they need.

Requests for posts will be put forward through the normal procedures for redeployment and/or new posts, as appropriate.

2. Information budgets⁽¹⁾

The aim must be significantly to increase the funds available for external information and communication work over the coming 3 to 4

(1) Annex, point 6. summarises the development of the external information budgets since 1990.

2. calls for a global but selective information strategy adapted to regional needs, and instructs its services, coordinated by the Information and communication Steering Committee, to define and implement that strategy and to request through the normal annual budgetary and administrative procedures the appropriate resources adapted to the objectives of this Communication; It endorses the principle that funds from all cooperation and assistance programmes be used to make those programmes better known.

3. notes the report (annex) on progress since its 1990 decision to proceed with the selective expansion of its information and communication work in third countries, and in particular that - with the exception of one or two regions - resource restrictions have not allowed that expansion to take place.

REPORT
ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 1990
COMMISSION DECISION ON
EXTERNAL INFORMATION⁽¹⁾

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(1) SEC (90) 649/2

1. INTRODUCTION

The Commission approved on May 22, 1990⁽¹⁾ a Communication from Vice-Presidents Andriessen and Marin and Messrs. Matutes and Dondelinger, on information concerning third countries and took the following decision:

"The Commission:

- i) approves the Communication from Vice-Presidents Andriessen and Marin, Messrs. Matutes and Dondelinger on information and communication policy and work towards third countries and the guidelines that it sets out for making such activity an essential tool in the pursuit of the Community's goals in the conduct of its relations with third countries.
- ii) particularly endorses the option put forward in the Communication of a selective expansion of its information and communication work in third countries;
- iii) adopts the specific proposals set out in the revised third country public affairs programme in Chapter 6 of the Communication, notably: the priorities for initial further development; the extension of regional SPI services; the medium-term plan for resource increase (1990-1992).
- iv) instructs DG X-ICC and Spokesman's Service, with DGs I, VIII, IX and the Secretariat General to establish a Steering Committee to pilot the expansion process in the general context of the Priority Information Programme;
- v) further instructs DGs I, VIII and X, together with DGs IX and XIX to implement the administrative and budgetary consequences set out in the Communication;
- vi) instructs the Steering Committee, under the coordinating authority of Mr Dondelinger, to report by January 31 1991 on progress in implementation of this decision."

The objectives and nature of the information actions required were clearly set out in the Communication:

"The Community's external information policy and effort must serve its external policy aims, including trade policy. It must therefore be targeted at key audiences, both hostile and friendly, presently or potentially, according to their weight in hindering or helping specific Community aims in given policy areas according to region or country. It must also illustrate the vocation and particular nature of the Community, the values and choice of society - values of pluralist democracy and human solidarity - that it stands for. Community Europe must have a recognisable profile and be accepted and understood as a partner in its own right - "Europe: world partner".

The effective projection of that recognisable profile ("corporate image" in commercial terms) is important in terms of industry, technology and trade too; it has a clear role in creating a climate of general opinion more receptive to the trade promotion efforts of the Community and the Member States. Indeed, "selling Europe" can have major and positive export spin-off.

(1) SEC(90) 649/2; SEC (90) Min 1013

The Committee agreed in 1991 on the following initial list of priority Delegations, based on proposals from DGs I and VIII:

Delegations in which an information unit should be created urgently
Priority lists in the areas of responsibility of:

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. <u>Mr. Andriessen</u> ⁽¹⁾ | 2. <u>Mr. Matutes</u> ⁽¹⁾ | 3. <u>Mr. Marin</u> ⁽¹⁾ |
| 1.1 Moscow | 2.1 Jakarta | 3.1 Nairobi |
| 1.2 Budapest | 2.2 Montevideo | 3.2 Harare |
| 1.3 Warsaw | 2.3 Rabat | 3.3 Abidjan |
| 1.4 Prague | 2.4 Buenos Aires | 3.4 Barbados |
| 1.5 Sofia | 2.5 Ryad | 3.5 Addis Abeba |
| 1.6 Bucharest | | 3.6 Libreville |

The intention was, as a first step, to provide each Delegation with two local agents (a press officer and a documentalist), a library/documentation room, and the necessary technical equipment, beginning in 1992.

Unfortunately, budget constraints have made significant progress impossible, although some Heads of Delegation - faced with ever-increasing information pressures - have been able to use for information work posts intended for other purposes. The situation remains highly unsatisfactory.

On training in the information field, DG X has arranged programmes in Brussels for a number of locally recruited staff from Delegations, and provides general advice to Delegation staff, either on appointment or later. Regrettably the plans to develop regular information training courses for Delegation staff have made little progress, again because of budget difficulties.

4. BACK-UP SERVICES

As indicated in the report of July 1991⁽²⁾ "the expanded information role of the Delegations requires increased back-up services from Brussels." Many of the services supplied by DGX to its Offices inside and outside the Community are being progressively extended to Delegations (starting with those in Europe), and additional services developed as the human and financial resources become available. This includes in particular DG X's ECCO service (European Community Communications Office, which ensures fast document transmission to DGX offices), the supply of general information publications, background briefs and promotional material, and help with the production of publications for specific countries or regions. "Euro Service", a new DG X service providing a twice weekly major article sent by fax to the Offices for use in their magazines etc., is gradually being extended to the Delegations. The existing monthly article service for ACP Delegations continues, and one for Latin America has been developed.

(1) Responsibilities as at time of decision in 1991

(2) E/749/91

Latin America

DG X and DG I agreed at the end of 1992 to up-grade the information effort for Latin America, and to renew the mechanisms for carrying it out. Information work in that region had previously be directed through the press and information Service (SPI) in Caracas, established there when that city was home to the only Delegation in Latin America. From March 1, 1993 the SPI was abolished. The Delegations, now 9 in number, are responsible for day-to-day press and information operations (as elsewhere in the world), while the DG X External Information Unit looks after general coordination, supervision and financial management, plus the implementation of a number of Brussels-based information actions which concern all or most of Latin America. The DG X budget for Latin America is 650,000 ECU this year. To that DG I has added a further 420,000 ECU, for which it remains financially responsible but has asked DG X to take charge of operational management and supervision.

Mediterranean and Middle East

As a result of the discussions in the 1991 External Information Steering Committee on a regional information strategy in relation to the Arab countries, it was decided by DG X and DG I to set up a special Arab information cell, to be financed jointly by the 2 services. For practical reasons relating to availability of office space this was located in DG I. After both services left the Berlaymont in 1992, and because of staffing limitations in DG X, actions in this area are now run essentially by DG I, though still supported by a financial contribution from DG X. It is hoped that a rationalisation of this situation will come about following the imminent reorganisation of DG X, but working relations between the two services remain excellent.

ACP

DG X has had a "development information" unit for many years, located for the whole of that time within DG VIII. This has given the assurance of the closest cooperation. The DG X unit is responsible for general information to the ACP countries (financed by DG X) and for information about development problems and policies (financed by DG X and DG VIII). It also works closely with DG VIII on the implementation of the cultural chapter of the Lomé Convention, and in the areas of human rights and press freedom. The reorganisation of DG X will involve a modified distribution of tasks between the 2 services, but the excellent working relations will certainly be maintained.

and one may assume that at least half of its budget goes for external information. In 1993 ECHO spent some 400,000 ECU on information and communication activities, though these concerned both member countries and third countries.

The combined external information resources available from DGs X, I, VIII and ECHO have begun to increase significantly over the past 2 to 3 years, though they still remain modest compared with the challenge to be met.

7. THIRD COUNTRY AGREEMENTS

The 1990 Communication envisaged the need for information exchange and cultural cooperation to be covered in future third country agreements. This was already the case for the Lomé IV convention, and since 1990 appropriate articles have been included in the Association Agreements signed with Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania, in the cooperation agreements with Mexico, Chile, Uruguay and Paraguay, and in the negotiating mandates for cooperation agreements with ASEAN, Brazil and Macao, and for partnership agreements with the states of the CIS. The overall strategy papers on relations with Asia and Latin America, with the Mediterranean region and with Turkey also make reference to the need for exchange of information.

8. CONCLUSIONS

In 1991 modest progress was made in implementing the selective expansion of external information called for by the Commission. However, the budget restrictions in 1992 - both operational budget (with the exception of the CEEC and CIS) and staff and equipment budgets - brought significant progress to a stop. 1993 has seen some progress again, but that progress will remain halting and unsatisfactory until and unless adequate resources can be provided.