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5 May 1998 A4-0115/98

## REPORT

on the information and communication policy in the European Union

Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and the Media

Rapporteur: Mr Peter Pex

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Following the request of the Conference of Committee Chairmen, at the sitting of 18 July 1997 the President of Parliament announced that the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and the Media had been authorized to submit a report on the information and communication policy in the European Union and that the Committee on Budgets (1 October 1997), the Committee on Legal Affairs and Citizens' Rights (19 November 1997) and the Institutional Affairs Committee (5 November 1997) had been asked for their opinions.

At its meeting of 2 July 1997 the committee appointed Mr. Pex rapporteur.

It considered the draft report at its meetings of 21 January, 5 February, 17 and 18 March and 21, 22 and 23 April 1998.

At the last meeting it adopted the motion for a resolution unanimously.

The following took part in the vote: Hawlicek, acting chairman; Banotti, Barzanti (for Augias), De Esteban Martin (for Fontana), Günther (for Escudero), Heinisch, Kerr, Kristoffersen (for Fontaine), Mouskouri, Pack, Perry and Whitehead (for Tongue).

The opinions of the Committee on Budgets, the Committee on Legal Affairs and Citizens' Rights and the Committee on Institutional Affairs are attached.

The report was tabled on 5 May 1998.

The deadline for tabling amendments will be indicated in the draft agenda for the part-session at which the report is to be considered.

**A.**  
**MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION**

Resolution on the information and communication policy in the European Union

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolution of 14 July 1993 ( ) on the information policy of the European Union,
  - having regard to Rule 148 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and the Media and the opinions of the Committee on Budgets, the Committee on Legal Affairs and Citizens' Rights and the Committee on Institutional Affairs (A4-0115/98),
  - having regard to the 17th declaration on information made by the Member States in the annex to the Treaty on European Union,
  - having regard to its resolution of 10 December 1996 on the participation of citizens and social players in the European Union's institutional system,( ),
  - having regard to its resolution of 19 November 1997 on the Amsterdam Treaty,( ),
- A. whereas, a genuine information and communication policy at the level of the European institutions must promote the objectives assigned to the European Union by the Treaties and awaken European citizens to the cause of European integration; whereas it must be based on the principle of direct dialogue with citizens,
- B. whereas the communication policy of the European Institutions urgently needs adaptation, a higher profile and greater effectiveness as a 'conditio sine qua non' for obtaining the support of most European citizens for the integration process,
- C. whereas, in view of the great events approaching the EU in the coming months, measures aimed at information and communication with citizens urgently need

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( ) on the information policy of the European Union, (A3-0238/93) OJ C 268, 17.9.1993, p. 192

(<sup>b</sup>) (A4-0338/96) OJ C 20, 20.1.1997, p.31

(<sup>c</sup>) See Minutes of the sitting of 19.11.1997

to be adapted and stepped up in order to increase awareness of the achievements and advantages of the Union and foster public support for the forthcoming stages of the integration process,

- D. whereas the average participation in the elections to the European Parliament has fallen from 65.9% in 1979 to 58.5% in 1994 and whereas an increased participation in the elections in 1999 is absolutely essential, given the growing powers of the European Parliament (extension of co-decision powers) and the importance of the political agenda (revision of the treaties, single currency, reform of the agricultural and cohesion policies, financing of the Union, enlargement),
- E. whereas participation in the European elections is hampered by an incomplete and/or negative picture of the European Parliament in the media and public opinion and whereas that can only be changed structurally through complete openness and transparency with regard to the operation of the institution,
- F. whereas greater involvement by Members of the European Parliament in communication measures on the ground would help to increase public awareness of Parliament and bolster public interest in participating in the 1999 European elections,
- G. whereas the forthcoming of the European elections in June 1999, the information campaign of the Amsterdam Treaty and the realisation of Economic and Monetary Union, force the Union to an intensified communication with the citizens,
- H. whereas information campaigns cannot consist in developing unilaterally and exclusively a specific opinion on a proposal which does not meet with unanimous agreement,
- I. whereas large sections of the population, and in particular the least favoured, are either poorly or inadequately informed about the action and the establishment of the Union; whereas in these groups there are negative feelings about Europe and whereas they should be a priority target group in any new communications policy,
- J. whereas the negative feelings are strengthened by the dramatic level of unemployment and social exclusion, the lack of prospects for the future, the problems concerning the security of citizens and the negative experience of the role of the EU in the world; whereas these negative feelings lead to new forms of nationalism and intolerance, whereby the European project is called into question,

- K. whereas surveys have shown that women and young people in particular are very sceptical about the European Union,
- L. whereas the complex and opaque decision-making procedures in the European Union are not such as to facilitate communication with the citizens and whereas even the best communication strategies do little to counteract it,
- M. whereas the information and communication policy should be consistent and effective; for this purpose, it should be geared to the realities, demands and, even, constraints which characterize the European Union and the modern-day world; to this end, it should be provided with a body that can give it appropriate strategy guidelines, ensuring that the messages conveyed are clear, unambiguous and easily accessible.
- N. whereas the Commission and the European Parliament have both common and separate objectives for communication and whereas, depending on requirements, a common or individual communication policy must be developed; whereas however, this intensified cooperation should leave each institution sufficient autonomy to maintain the profile of its own roles and responsibilities,
- O. whereas good communication starts with clear use of language, including in the treaties, legislative texts, communications, reports, etc.; whereas each European institution must always take this into account,
- P. recognizing that, in order to bring the Union closer to the people, it is essential for them to be able to use their own language and whereas, therefore, a proper information and communication policy should take due account of the multilingualism which is an integral part of the EU,
- Q. whereas the transparency of funding, the plurality of opinions and objectivity are essential guarantees of the credibility of any information policy,
- R. whereas the European Union's information policy cannot make up for the lack of transparency and democracy in the institutions and decision-making procedures; whereas the complexity and non-transparency of procedures constitutes an unsurmountable obstacle to communication between the institutions and citizens; regrets the ineffectiveness of the provisions adopted in Amsterdam to remedy this state of affairs,
- S. whereas the enlargement of the European Union and the problems raised by the proposals made by the Commission in the 'Agenda 2000' will create an additional

demand on information in both the Member states of the Union and the candidate member countries,

- T. whereas, in this context, it is the job of Parliament - more than any other institution - to give its backing, as an Assembly made up of representatives who are directly elected by the general public, to the decisions taken by the Assembly and its constituent bodies in the course of the parliamentary term,
- U. whereas the definition of a better European communication policy must take into account the new instruments offered by the information society, the possibility of inter-active use of these instruments and the development of an electronic democracy,
- V. whereas the impending change to digital is likely to reinforce television's primacy as a source of information to the citizen,
- W. whereas information and communication activities should not be considered as a policy by themselves but a support for the Union policies and thus, the Union should finance methods and instruments in relation to their purpose,
- X. whereas the following factors contributed to the lack of success of the European communication policy:
- insufficient financial means,
  - insufficient human resources, both quantitatively and qualitatively speaking,
  - lack of co-ordination between the EU institutions,
  - lack of co-ordination within the different institutions,
  - insufficient decentralisation towards the level of the Member States,
  - insufficient co-operation between the EU institutions and the Member States,
  - lack of common strategy,
  - too much information, not enough communication,
  - policy is too budget driven and is not sufficiently driven by the fact that communication should be the number one priority in the policy of European integration,
  - lack of use of the new media outlets,
  - execution of information policy is not sufficiently citizen orientated,
  - either structural or occasional lack of transparency and openness in the institutions,
  - absence of a clear policy on relations with the media,
  - failure to take sufficient account of the social dimension of European integration,

- failure to take sufficient account of the need for citizens to participate in European integration,
  - information on the European Union's activities is too often couched in incomprehensible language which is a barrier to public interest and understanding,
- Y. whereas the information programme for European citizens (PRINCE), developed at the initiative of Parliament, creates a new system involving Parliament, the Commission and the governments of the Member States and the current experiment should be continually assessed,
- Z. having regard to the experience acquired over the last two years as regards the coordination of information policy by the interinstitutional working party in the context of PRINCE,
- AA. whereas an effective information policy must reach out to all social structures; whereas it should not be confined to European or national administrative and political structures and whereas it must involve local authorities, civil society and education,
- AB. whereas active and pluralist information is an element of the democratic debate in Europe and on Europe; whereas it must reflect the diversity of the opinions expressed in the European Union; whereas it must not be confined to presenting a 'single point of view' on Europe; whereas it must not eliminate opposition between institutions or between political forces,
- AC. whereas in this context close contacts with the regional media play an important role in view of the wide coverage, in particular through radio and the printed media,
- AD. whereas the Committee of the Regions should also be involved in the regional communication and distribution of information,
- AE. whereas interinstitutional cooperation with regard to information on Europe was initiated by the Budgetary Authority in the framework of the 1995, 1996 and 1997 budgetary procedures; whereas in particular a Working Party on Information Measures was set up under the 1996 budget; whereas this structure was confirmed by the adoption of the 1997 budget, under which a Working Party on Ongoing Information Activities and a Working Party on Priority Information Measures were set up; whereas this structure has been continued in the 1998 budget,



AF. whereas through this report interinstitutional cooperation on European information should be developed and clarified, in the framework of the Working Party on Ongoing Information Activities.

A. Concerning the European Commission:

1. Considers that the Commission must ensure co-ordination between General Direction X and the other general Directions;
2. Considers that the Commission must make better use of the audio-visual possibilities and satellite services (EBS);
3. Points out the need to implement the use of multimedia applications both in public and private places and at home, with a view to improving the dissemination of information on Europe through these interactive services;
4. Recommends that the Commission carry out information work in schools and stresses the need for its publications to be appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupils concerned, while respecting the plurality of views on and proposals for European integration;
5. Stresses the need in general to match the information made available more closely to the main target groups such as the press, educational establishments, industry and private citizens;
6. Suggests that the Commission carry out thorough feasibility studies on European communication policy in order to ensure that European citizens are provided with quality information, targeted where possible, which reflects their concerns and gives them a positive image of the European Union; in this context, specific campaigns aimed in particular at young people, women or those in a precarious situation in society would be particularly welcome;
7. Believes that the use and the diffusion of the polls made by the Eurobarometer, mainly the polls concerning specific targets and periodic flash should be implemented with the aim of helping the information policy and the evaluation of the EU common policies;
8. Calls on the Commission, in accordance with the guidelines set out by the Milan European Council, to take the necessary initiatives to ensure, in cooperation with the governments of the Member States, the general celebration throughout the Union of Europe Day on 9 May;
9. Suggests the Commission should create specific information for decision makers;

10. Considers that all information programmes and initiatives need to be regularly assessed for efficiency and cost effectiveness;
  11. Considers that, with regard to support and action programmes, the selection of projects should be more transparent and the reasons for the choice should be clearer to those who submit the projects;
  12. Calls on the Commission in all its official documents, wherever possible, to use simple and clear language, and also for it to submit as soon as possible a proposal enabling the fundamental right of public access to legislative documents to be implemented;
  13. Recalls that, in order to use the financial resources allocated to information more efficiently and effectively, both institutions have agreed on basic common principles which are:
    - decentralization;
    - interinstitutional co-operation;
    - mobility and rotation of staff at external offices;
    - intensifying contacts with citizens;
    - value for money.
- B. Concerning the co-operation between Parliament and the Commission:
14. Respects the autonomy of the separate institutions given their respective institutional roles and responsibilities, while emphasising that co-ordination should take place and, where appropriate, activities should be integrated;
  15. Calls on the Commission and Parliament to move, as rapidly as possible, towards the combined use, wherever possible, of the infrastructure of inter alia the audiovisual services and the press centres of the European Parliament and the Commission in order to achieve the maximum effectiveness and efficiency of these activities;

16. Calls on the Commission, in order to ensure such cooperation, to submit by 30 September 1998, pursuant to the relevant Treaty provisions, a legislative proposal which taking into account the following guidelines:
- within the framework of the Working Party on Ongoing Information Activities, the establishment of regular coordination meetings between the Vice-President of Parliament with responsibility for information, the chairmen of Parliament's committees on Budgets and Culture and the Director-General of Parliament's DG III and the Commissioner with responsibility for information the Director-General of the Commission's DG X;
  - the Working Party on Ongoing Information Activities is to be responsible for the co-ordination of the information and communication activities of the European Commission and the European Parliament as well as the follow-up of the combined activities of both institutions. The Working Party is to meet at least once every three months, assess the activities on a regular basis, propose the appropriate guidelines for their development and report to Parliament;
  - all communication activities directed towards the general public, concerning general information on the functioning of the institutions and the contents of policies adopted, shall be executed, whenever possible, as a joint operation of the European Parliament and the Commission;
  - all communication activities directed towards the press and those concerning activities of the two institutions as regards their specific institutional responsibilities, will be executed - as at present - by the separate information departments of the two institutions; however, both institutions commit themselves to inform each other of their respective initiatives. In the various information campaigns and seminars organized by the 'European Union Houses' in the Member States MEP's should be encouraged to participate;
  - the Commission and the European Parliament to recognise the need for co-ordination of all communication activities;
  - the activities of DG X and DG III will be executed in a decentralised way whenever possible and appropriate, i.e. at the level of the offices in the Member States, using, where appropriate, the various official languages in the Member States, as well as via the network of the different centres (Info

Points, CDE, Carrefours ruraux, etc).The budget for decentralized actions should be increased on a percentage basis yearly;

- it is necessary to house together the national and regional offices of the Commission and the European Parliament with the aim of building 'European Union Houses' in all the Member States at national and eventually at regional level, and to permit the use of the facilities of these 'Houses' by organizations dealing with matters of European integration;
- the 'European Union Houses' facilitates 'one stop shopping' for the European citizen seeking information on EU activities, and detailed information on the execution of the specific responsibilities of both institutions. The 'European Union Houses' should be easily accessible and visible to the public;
- Parliament and the Commission must examine, in the framework of the Working Party on Ongoing Information Activities, the possibility of developing initiatives in new media outlets: a good example of a common initiative is the proposal made by the European Parliament on the 'memoires audiovisuelles de l'Europe';
- Parliament and the Commission must promote, in the framework of the Working Party on Ongoing Information Activities, the production of television programmes about the activities of the European Institutions which could be broadcasted by Euronews and other broadcasting media. Some joint audiovisual actions should be envisaged as it would be less costly and more efficient, and also of great symbolic importance;
- Parliament and the Commission must consider, in the framework of the Working Party on Ongoing Information Activities, a better use of EBS (Europe by Satellite) by journalists, broadcasting organisations and NGO's; in particular, it should consider facilitating a public service network perceived as credible and independent, able to reach a significant proportion of the European viewing audience and to emulate, in Europe, the success of C-Span in the United States. EBS might supply third parties with equipment to receive its programmes;
- it is necessary for Parliament and the Commission to encourage, in the framework of the Working Party on Ongoing Information Activities, the development of the audio-visual sector, through local and regional channels and cooperation with European organisations as the EBU (European Broadcasting Union), the international press agencies, through

the production of EP audio-visual and radio programmes, as well as through the use of the Internet and CD-ROM in the framework of the 'CIVIS' structure created by the DG III of the European Parliament and containing the WEB Europarl, the Electronic Mail Europe and the 'chat';

- the decentralised and local presence of the EU institutions close to the citizens should be strengthened by allocating increased and adequate resources to networks such as the Europe Info Points, if necessary by reconsidering the amount of the budget dedicated to the national European Union Houses in the capitals of the member states; a detailed breakdown of the information policy budget, including all decentralised actions will be provided to the Working Party on Ongoing Information Activities, and be publicly available;

17. Stresses the need to involve the others EU institutions, mainly the Council but also the Committee of the Regions, in the co-operation between Parliament and the Commission;

C. Concerning the European Parliament:

18. Considers that the Parliament, as the budget authority, should investigate the appropriate amount of funds necessary to realise an information policy in conformity with its targets;

19. Considers that in its own decision-making process the European Parliament should have maximum transparency as its starting point and that it must repeatedly urge the other institutions to take maximum transparency into account;

20. With reference to the initiatives which have already been undertaken and the results obtained in recent years through Parliament's attempts to increase its profile and assert its political, legislative and budgetary role, considers that these efforts must be intensified in the coming months with particular regard to the practical implementation of Parliament's new powers as laid down in the Amsterdam Treaty, and also to the 1999 European elections;

21. Considers that the visitor groups are an excellent means of coming closer to the citizens.

Regards it appropriate to study where improvements can be made in the quality of the reception and the programmes given to them and thus improve the effectiveness of the expenses made for visitor groups;

22. Considers that Parliament should hold an annual debate on the policy pursued by its own services on the basis of a strategic concept, a debate based on a report by the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and the Media;
23. Recommends that the existing arrangements for refunding to broadcasting organisations the costs of using facilities (Satellite and microwaves links) should be simplified for reports concerning Parliament;
24. Believing it to be important that the work of the European Parliament be brought close to the citizen in particular by television, notes that the members of the European Parliament can use audio-visual facilities during part-sessions in Strasbourg and Brussels and also during Committee meetings in Brussels;
25. Considers that the Members of the European Parliament must have access to appropriate information materials (video cassettes, brochures, maps etc.) when they are asked to lecture on the European Union or a specific topic of European policy;
26. Stresses that it is essential that the information budget in 1999, to promote European values and democracy during the year dedicated to the European elections and to promote participation in that year's European elections, be increased;
27. Calls on Parliament and its Members wherever possible to use simple and clear language in all official documents;
28. Considers that negative and/or incomplete reporting in the media is not counteracted through defensive measures such as the 'fiche d'alerte' system but that such reporting must be anticipated by greater transparency, in relation to both the internal and external environment, in all aspects of Parliament's activities;
29. Considers that Parliament has nothing to hide and that therefore a professional but flexible relationship must be developed with the media and with journalists on the basis of maximum openness, taking into account, however, the right to privacy of Members and political groups;

D. Concerning the budgetary aspects

30. Underlines its responsibilities as budgetary authority for the use of the common funding in relation with the Union's political priorities; welcomes the initiatives taken so far to get closer to the citizen, through close monitoring of communication and information actions;

31. Recommends that, during the 1999 budgetary procedure, the two institutions should agree an action programme and a global financial envelope for support activities of the Union's priority policies, and for support to encourage citizens' participation in the European Parliament elections in 1999;
32. Calls on Parliament's Bureau to take any measures necessary to follow up the recommendations in this report;
33. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

## **B.** **EXPLANATORY STATEMENT**

### **1. Introduction**

#### 1.1 General introduction

European Citizens are in general not very enthusiastic about the development of European integration. One of the major reasons seems to be a lack of communication with Brussels and Strasbourg and a lack of information about targets and means by the European Institutions.

Lack of information gives the opportunity of negative messages by those who are against strengthening European integration. The difficulties raised during the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty showed that the lack of commitment of the European citizens became deeper and the distance between the European Union and the citizens gradually became greater. It was clear that the main problem was: what is structurally wrong in the European Union? But it was also clear that the communication policy of the European institutions has to be improved.

In fact, the continuity of European integration is dependent on the legitimacy the process gets from public opinion. Therefore an urgent adaptation and intensification of the communication policy of the European Institutions is a 'conditio sine qua non' for further development of the integration process as a whole and the acceptability of new items such as enlargement of the Union, EMU, the completion of the internal market and Mediterranean policy.

These items and problems concerning the security of the citizens, the negative experience of the role of the European Union in the world and, namely, the dramatic level of unemployment and social exclusion underlines the necessity of informing the citizens about the European construction and to strengthening the consensus on the new steps that this construction has to make in the near future.

#### 1.2 A new Euro-political reality and a new media reality

The definition of an efficient information and communication policy of the European Institutions must take into account the main important elements of the new Euro-political reality and the new media reality.

Concerning the new Euro-political reality we can see a trend characterised by changes from technical issues to popular matters, from intensive involvement of European élites



to a gradual involvement of the mass electorates, from centralised to decentralised approach.

Concerning the new media reality we can see a trend characterised by changes from stable media patterns to fast growth and innovation, from single media to multi-media, from allocution to consultation media and from policy focus to information services.

To strengthen the European information and communication policy, the Institutions of European Union, namely the Commission and the Parliament, must make a better use of this new media reality.

### 1.3 Definition of information and communication

The European Parliament has expressed its views on a number of occasions in the past on the 'Community information policy'. It is preferable to make use of the term 'communication policy' which ensure a better communication between the citizens and the European institutions, leaving the term 'information policy' only where the limited task of bringing the news to the citizens is concerned. One of the important tasks of the European institutions is to make stronger the relationship between the citizens and the Union and to ensure a development of the information policy to all, and a real communication policy avoiding the risk that the information will become in propaganda.

The definition of a better European communication policy must take into account the new instruments offered by the information society, the possibility of inter-active use of these instruments, the development of a new concept of the democracy with the direct participation of the citizens through the NGO's and the associations engaged in the fields of the civil society.

In this framework the European Institutions must take into account the consequence of the development of the 'electronic democracy'.

All the activities concerning the information and communication policy must be aimed at service to the citizens, not at the values of the Institution and its participants, with these two basic principles:

- a. prevent information from becoming propaganda;
- b. brings citizens and the Institutions closer together.

### 1.4 Purpose of this draft report

This draft report describes the outlines of what has to be done in the area of communication policy. Its purpose is to prepare the position of the European Parliament concerning the guidelines of a new communication policy that must start with the budget of the year 1999: this budget will take into account the main important and new elements of the European integration, mainly the forthcoming European elections in June 1999, the new relationship between the European Parliament and the Commission that will be elected on the basis of the rules established in the Amsterdam Treaty, the discussions concerning the enlargement of the Union, the Agenda 2000 and the next revision of the treaties.

The draft report will contain conclusions on:

- a. how to go on with the communication policy;
- b. how to set the budget;
- c. how to build a deeper, strict and efficient co-operation in the field of the communication policy between the European Parliament and the Commission;
- d. how to use the new media outlets, and the existing instruments such as Euronews, EBS and the collaboration with the other TV Channels;
- e. how to use the existing networks established by the Commission in the member countries and the associations and the NGO's of the civil society that are an important instrument to multiply the relationship with the citizens.

#### 1.5 Suggestions and objectives formulated in the past

The budget rapporteurs of 1996, 1997 and 1998 have formulated some suggestions to improve the communication policy:

- a. decentralisation
- b. interinstitutional co-operation
- c. mobility and rotation of staff at external offices
- d. intensifying contact with citizens
- e. value for money

In particular the European Parliament adopted for the budget 1998 some conclusions based on the proposals made by the Culture Committee (Morgan Opinion). In this opinion the Culture Committee proposed that a substantial proportion of the increased appropriation on line B3-300 - 'general information and communication work' - be placed in the reserve so as to allow DGX further time to reorganise and re-prioritise its information and communication strategy and to take on board fully the position of the European Parliament on EU information and communication policy, based on the own initiative report of the Culture Committee.

## 2. Communication policy in general

### 2.1 Parliament's policy in the past (Oostlander Report)

The last time the European Parliament adopted a global vision on communication policy was on 17 September 1993 by adopting the Oostlander report ( ).

The recommendations which were made in this report on communication policy are still valuable. In short they can be summarised as follows;

- a. communication must embrace the whole policy making process;
- b. the three institutions of the Union each play a specific role in the decision making process, but the three form one union;
- c. services of the Institutions have to co-ordinate their organisational activities in information plans;
- d. communication policy must be pursued in a highly professional manner and with a strong commitment and political leadership;
- e. house together the national offices of the Commission and the Parliament;
- f. to make use of public libraries and modern media;
- g. support Euronews.

In the opinion made by the Culture Committee for the 1998 budget it is suggested that the Euronews subsidy be replaced by an information contract in 1998 so as to enable the EU to utilise Euronews as a fully fledged instrument of its information policy.

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(<sup>1</sup>) Arie Oostlander, Information Policy, A3-0238/93, 14.7.1993

### 2.2 Evaluation of the development of the communication policy after the Oostlander report

After the adoption of the Oostlander report, the European institutions and in particular the European Parliament and the Commission began to apply the proposals made by the Parliament in September 1993.

Concerning the role of the information services of the Parliament and the Commission, these institutions began to strengthen their co-operation, and in particular housing together some national offices in the Member Countries.

The Parliament moved the Press and Audio-visual departments based in Luxembourg to Brussels; the national offices of the Parliament made available for Members a Report on

their publications and on the extent of their contacts with MEP's, the public, the press, local authorities, national authorities and Non Governmental Organisations.

To use the new technologies on the information and communication, the Parliament has created a new structure, named CIVIS, with some telecommunication outlets on the World Wide Web (Europarl) an electronic mail for the citizens and a 'chat' giving the possibility for a direct dialogue with the citizens.

The Commission has increased the role and the number of information offices at local and regional level on the lines of the 'EURO INFO CENTER' and in the context of the network concerning the non-institutional information bodies as the 'Centres de documentation européenne', or the 'Carrefours ruraux', or the 'Chaires Jean Monnet', or the 'Info Points', etc.. More and more, the public libraries are used as an appropriate structure for informing the public. Many programmes of the Commission use the new Media as multimedia systems and a comprehensive data-bank containing information on European Union is now available for an increasing number of Organizations and citizens.

### **3. Conclusions**

Nevertheless, unfortunately not much has been done with the majority of the Oostlander conclusions.

One must conclude that in general the information and communication policy has not been very successful. This was shown by the turnout of the European elections in 1994, the reaction on the Euro and the reaction to the IGC. The Union has created a lot of disappointment and negativism with the population. There is more Eurosceptism than ever before.

The following factors have contributed to the lack of success of the communication policy:

1. insufficient financial means;
2. insufficient human resources, both quantitatively and qualitatively speaking;
3. lack of co-ordination between the community institutions;
4. lack of co-ordination within the different institutions;
5. not enough decentralisation towards the level of the member states;
6. not enough co-operation between the community institutions and the member states;
7. lack of common strategy;
8. too much information, not enough communication;
9. information activities are not sufficiently citizen orientated;

10. policy is too much budget-driven, and not enough driven by the fact that communication should be the number one priority in the policy of European integration;
11. lack of use of the new media outlets.

The new guidelines of the communication policy have to be based on the analysis of these points and on the choice of new means to solve these problems.

Amongst the new means to solve these problems, the report proposes strengthening the co-operation of the Parliament and the Commission, on the basis of the Working Party on Ongoing Information Activities.

The report proposes that all communication activities directed towards the general public, concerning general information of the functioning of the institutions and the contents of policies adopted, shall be executed, whenever possible, as a joint operation of the European Parliament and the Commission. On the contrary all communication activities directed to the press and those concerning activities of the two institutions concerning their specific institutional responsibilities, will be executed - as at present - by the separate Information Departments of the two institutions.

The report stresses the need to involve the other EU institutions, mainly the Council of the European Union in the co-operation concerning the information and communication policy.

Finally the report points out the importance and the necessity of increasing the European Parliament information budget in 1999 to promote European values and democracy during the year dedicated to the European elections.

3 March 1998

## **OPINION**

(Article 147 of the Rule)

for the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and the Media

on the information and communication policy of the European Union (Rapport Pex)

Committee on Budgets

Draftsman: Mr Stanislaw Tillich

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### **Procedure**

At its meeting of 23 September 1997, the Committee on Budgets appointed Mr. Tillich draftsman.

It considered the draft opinion at its meetings of 25-26 February 1998.

At this last meeting, it adopted the following conclusions by 13 votes to 7, with 9 abstentions.

The following took part in the vote: Samland, Chairman; Giansily, vice-chairman; Tillich, vice-chairman and draftsman; Bardong, Böge, Brinkhorst, Colom I Naval, Dankert, Dührkop Dührkop, Fabra Vallés, Haug, Imaz San Miguel, Jöns (for Ghilardotti), Kaklamani, Krehl, Laignel, Miranda, Müller, Pex (for McCartin), Pronk (for Elles), Rübigen (for Bourlanges), Seppänen, Tappin, Theato, Tomlinson, Viola (for Garriga Polledo), Virrankoski, Waidelich, Walter (for Bösch), Wynn.

### ***Basic principles***

1. The public debate at the time of the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty showed the wide gulf between the reality of the developing Community and the public perception of it. This turned the attention of personalities in the Community institutions to the new challenges, that had to be faced in the Union and had to be properly communicated to different groups and to the general public. As elected representatives of the citizens, Members of Parliament recognised very early that the information policy then implemented and financed by the Union had to be revised. This policy had to ensure that the role and decisions of the Union were understood and broadly supported by different

publics. These publics had to feel that the institutions of the Union were approachable, and open to dialogue. Thus with the changes, new priorities had to be set, new instruments of communication used, and old ones extended, or abandoned, and new methods of work adopted.

2. Over these years, the amount set aside in the Union's budget for information and communication work, defined in a very limited way as items in chapter B3-30 excluding the Media programme to promote the audiovisual industry, has increased enormously. In 1992 all relevant items in that chapter totalled ECU 34.93m. In 1994, these totalled ECU 47.5m. In 1998 ECU 102.53m were voted for similar items, including the PRINCE programme that was introduced in 1996. The increase of 300 per cent over the seven years represents an average yearly increase of over 40 per cent.
3. From the rapporteur's point of view, information is not a policy by itself, but a support for the other policies developed by the Union and therefore should receive sufficient means for the effective communication of the policies, and thus to increase the effectiveness of the application of such policies. The objective is not simply to increase those funds or human resources, but to make better use of such resources by improving the quality of the message, and communicating the accurate image of the Union, its institutions, and their activities.
4. The Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and the Media is addressing the contents of the policy in its report, the first on this issue since 1993, just before the Treaty of European Union came into force. The Committee on Budgets is concerned to ensure better value for money, using budgetary means provided by the financial rules such as the reserve, establishing clearer operational guidelines through interinstitutional working groups at the highest level, trying to reduce duplication and high fixed costs in these activities, and insisting on better evaluation and reporting.
5. Parliament has agreed new guidelines for information policy, according to five principles which were to be applied in cooperation by the Commission and the Parliament:
  - a) decentralization;
  - b) interinstitutional co-operation;
  - c) mobility and rotation of staff at external offices;
  - d) intensifying contact with citizens;
  - e) value for money.

***Clearer operational guidelines and closer supervision***

6. In 1996, 1997 and 1998 respectively, the Parliament entered credits in reserve on both lines B3-300: *General information and communication work concerning the European Union* and B3-306: *Prince*. The funding has been released by the Budgetary Authority after the two committees had had the opportunity to debate about the fulfilment of the conditions stated in the amendments.

Mecu	1996		1997		1998	
	CA	PA	CA	PA	CA	PA
B3-300: <i>General information and communication work concerning the European Union</i>						
- on the line	41,000	40,000	33,550	32,850	32,520	28,520
- in the reserve			11,000	10,000	8,130	7,130
B3-306: <i>Prince</i>						
- on the line	15,000	15,000	30,000	30,000	27,000	23,500
- in the reserve	35,000	35,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	10,000

7. The budget rapporteurs over these years have proposed that the appropriations should be placed in reserve with a view:
- to improving monitoring by the European Parliament of the use of Community funds and to achieving greater compliance with the political priorities contained in the budgetary remarks;
  - to better programming of implementation: this has been the case when, thanks to a particular concentration of means, Parliament determined the funding for three information campaigns (PRINCE), and obtained results more in line with the political guidelines;
  - to giving more power to the relevant committees, thus improving parliamentary control not only on the quantity but also on the quality of the expenditure.
8. The rapporteur notes the close interest of the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and the Media in the development of this policy since then. He notes that the Commission has started to reorganize its information strategy along the lines indicated by Parliament, particularly through a restructuring of DG X, in order to improve operational efficiency. The new structure has been presented by the Director General of DG X to the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and the Media and to the Committee on Budgets. Both agreed that some progress had been made and consequently the transfer requests of funding out of reserve were accepted.
9. To ensure that its political priorities are taken into account, Parliament created an Advisory Working Group of senior representatives of Parliament and the Commission, which assists the Commission in its tasks. Members report back to their own committees on the outcome of the work done by the Advisory Working Group. This group has been considered as very helpful by both institutions.

#### **A European Information System**

10. In 1998, the Parliament adopted the following remarks in the budget, on the line B3-300:  
*'A minimum of 30 % of the appropriation entered against this article is intended for coordinating the information activities implemented by the European Union at an interinstitutional level, in order to set up a European Information System with a view to*



*better value for money and communication with citizens according to guidelines to be drawn up in the framework of an interinstitutional dialogue at the highest level of the European Parliament and the Commission'.*

11. Following to the meeting on this matter between the Presidents of the two institutions which took place on 19 November 1997, the Commission (DG X) and the Parliament (DG III) produced a common draft report on the reinforcement of the interinstitutional cooperation in the field of information and communication. The rapporteur welcomes this common approach which seems to lay down for the first time concrete operational actions, and not only coordination of bilateral projects. He is convinced that this new stage could not have been possible prior to the restructuring of DG X.
12. This new co-operation is envisaged at both the centralized and decentralized levels. Among centralised actions are included audiovisual, publications, visitors, public events, exhibitions, polls, relations with citizens and libraries. As far as external offices are concerned, the report takes on clearly for the first time the establishment of the new Union's Houses which are a symbolic but important step towards the merging of these offices, although the identity and the responsibilities of each Institution is to be presented clearly to citizens.
13. However, the report does not specify the savings to be made or those already realized. Nor does it indicate how the establishment plans have been rationalized, through mobility and redeployment, as requested in Working Document N° 4 of the 1998 budget procedure.
14. While it is up to the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and the Media to appreciate the contents and the foreseeable outcomes of this cooperation and these synergies, the draftsman of the Committee on Budgets stresses that all these efforts should increase value for money. That means seeking economies of scale in rents, staffing and administrative expenditure, reducing the fixed costs element in these activities. These economies should clearly appear in order to liberate more funds for the operational activities of information and communication suggested by the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and the Media report.
15. In setting up the European Information System, the institutions should not create a new policy but provide the taxpayer and other citizens with the knowledge on the policies implemented by the Union, through instruments that provide good value for money. The European Information System should:
  - be identified as the link between the Union as a whole and its citizens, encouraging continued dialogue;
  - be highly decentralized to the regional and local level, and based on the relays and other local structures throughout Europe, including in the applicant countries;
  - be able to adapt the messages to the political priorities of the Union (EMU, Agenda 2000) with flexibility;
  - become the visible support of the activities run by the institutions avoiding duplication (publications, polls, external offices, documentation, exhibitions, etc.) and seeking complementarity (public events, press products, etc.).

16. Your draftsman must express his appreciation of the way that the Europa Internet site has been set up and managed so far. He is aware of the high level of interest in this interinstitutional site, from all corners of the world. While the links between Parliament's Europarl site and the Europa server show certain shortcomings, he welcomes the extensive use of electronic communications through this medium.

#### **PRINCE**

17. Three campaigns have been financed under the new programme in 1996 and 1997: 'Citizens First' has terminated and only the 'Euro' campaign and 'Building Europe Together' will continue in '98. Thanks to the use of the reserve and to the follow up of the interinstitutional working party, the Parliament has been able to reorientate the management and the contents of these campaigns through the initiative taken initially at the budgetary level.
18. In 1998, the remarks entered in the budget have emphasized the need to diversify the initial themes of the campaigns:
  - the 'Euro' will include the dimension of employment and its relation to the single currency;
  - the 'Building Europe Together' campaign will take over the reactions of the European Parliament to the Amsterdam Treaty, as well as the themes which European citizens, according to the polls, are most interested in and concerned with, such as consumer, environmental or cultural issues.
19. The campaigns are still pilot actions since they have no legal base. The rapporteur is not in favour of introducing a legal base because he considers these actions not as permanent ones, but only as temporary supports to accompany an exceptional period in the process building Europe together. The follow-up to such specific information campaigns once ended should be covered by the general information work and financed under line B3-300, if necessary with a reduced combined budget.

#### **Euronews**

20. The budgetary remarks in the 1998 budget split Community funding for Euronews into two lines B3-300 and B3-306, thus indicating the Parliament's decision to replace the subsidy to Euronews by an information contract. After a debate in both the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and the Media and the Committee on Budgets, Parliament clearly decided to use the TV's unique multilingual competencies as a tool of information through a real partnership. Out of the total amount of ECU 3.25m, ECU 2.0m will come from B3-300 and ECU 1.25m will come from B3-306.
21. The rapporteur asks the Commission to present an evaluation of cost/benefit before the first reading of the 1999 procedure in order to determine the added value of this partnership in terms of quantity and quality for the Community and for its citizens.

This evaluation should examine the items in the report that the Commission has recently submitted.

## **Conclusions**

22. In line with the guidelines set down by Parliament in the past three years, aiming to improve the flow and quality of information for the citizens about the Community, through promoting a real dialogue, the process is beginning to show positive results. Having set these guidelines, Parliament needs now to follow up the new measures, according to its supervisory, budgetary and control powers, granted by the treaties, which its calling requires it to exert with particular care in this field, given its own specific responsibility towards the citizens of Europe.
23. The Committee on Budgets requests that the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and the Media insert in its report the following amendments which sum up the previous remarks:

### **Amendment 1**

After the seventh indent, add new indent

whereas information and communication activities should not be considered as a policy by themselves but a support for the Union policies and thus, the Union should finance methods and instruments in relation to their purpose;

### **Amendment 2**

Eighth indent to read:

Whereas the following factors have recently contributed to the unsatisfactory results of the European Union's information and communication policy:

(11 words deleted)

- inadequate use of the existing (human and financial) resources available, due to management weaknesses and insufficient direction,
- unsatisfactory co-ordination between and within the EU institutions, and between the EU institutions and the Member States
- insufficient decentralisation down to Member States, regions and localities,
- until recently, lack of a common agreed strategy,
- too great an emphasis on quantity of information rather than on quality of communication,
- inadequate evaluation and monitoring on value for money
- slow use of the new media outlets,
- implementation not sufficiently citizen orientated.

### **Amendment 3**

Add a new paragraph before paragraph 1

0. considers that information on the Union should not be targeted towards the Commission, but towards European policies.

**Amendment 4**

Modify paragraph 1 as follows:

1. considers that the Commission must ensure co-ordination between Directorate General X and the other Directorates General within the resources available;

**Amendment 5**

Modify paragraph 2 as follows:

2. considers that the Commission must (8 words deleted) demonstrate the costs/benefit outcome from the use of satellite services (EBS);

**Amendment 6**

Add new paragraph 6a.

- 6a. recalls that, in order to use the financial resources allocated to information more efficiently and effectively, both institutions have agreed on basic common principles which are:
- decentralisation;
  - interinstitutional co-operation;
  - mobility and rotation of staff at external offices;
  - intensifying contacts with citizens;
  - value for money.

**Amendment 7**

Modify paragraph 7 as follows:

7. points out that strengthened co-ordination, and (4 words deleted) an integration of the activities and financial means of both the Commission and the Parliament - in so much as their institutional responsibilities are not negatively influenced - must be established while respecting the individual roles and responsibilities of each Institution; asks the Member States to support these common principles.

**Amendment 8**

Add new paragraph 7a.

- therefore requests that a common organisation be established, replacing DG X (Commission) and DG III (European Parliament), with officials of both institutions, under one Director General, with a common establishment plan to conduct common activities as listed below; in order to ensure institutional autonomy on political questions, it will include two antennae, one for the Parliament and one for the Commission, under the political authority of the institutions' Presidents; it is to be set in place before the end of 1998, at both centralised (in a common building, wherever possible in Brussels) and decentralised levels (European Union Houses in the Member States),

- the common structure, identified as the European Information System, will be responsible for the activities mentioned in the common report elaborated by DG X (Commission) and DG III (Parliament), namely:

- Audiovisual and media
- Visitors
- Publications
- Public events
- Exhibitions
- Opinion polls
- Relations with citizens
- Libraries and public documentation centres

**Amendment 9**

Replace para 8 as follows:

8. Considers that, in order to ensure such cooperation, the appointment of the Director General of the common organisation should be made by the Presidents of the two institutions, who will lay down guidelines for the work of the organisation.

**Amendment 10**

Modify paragraph 10 as follows:

10. considers that Parliament, as the budget authority, should decide the appropriate level of annual funding necessary to accomplish a successful information policy in conformity with its targets while respecting annual budgetary constraints;

**Amendment 11**

Modify paragraph 14 as follows:

14. recommends that the existing arrangements for refunding to broadcasting organisations the costs of using facilities (Satellite and microwaves links) should be clarified and submitted to budgetary evaluation in reports to the budgetary authority;

**Amendment 12**

Add a new subtitle and new paragraph after paragraph 16

D. Concerning the budgetary aspects

16a. underlines its responsibilities as budgetary authority for the use of the common funding in relation with the Union's political priorities; welcomes the initiatives taken so far to get closer to the citizen, through close monitoring of communication and information actions;

**Amendment 13**

Add a new paragraph after paragraph 16a

16b. agrees to reserve the appropriation entered against the relevant budgetary lines in order to create a European Information System, with a view to obtaining better value for money and more effective communication with citizens, within interinstitutional guidelines, so as to attain in the medium term full integration of the information services;

**Amendment 14**

Add a new paragraph after paragraph 16c

16d. recommends that, during the 1999 budgetary procedure, the two institutions should agree an action programme and a global financial envelope for support activities of the Union's priority policies, and for support to encourage citizens' participation in the European Parliament elections in 1999; this action programme will be run in synergy through the European Information System.

17 March 1998

**OPINION**  
(Rule 147)

for the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and the Media

on the own-initiative report on information and communication policy in the European Union  
(PEX report)

Committee on Legal Affairs and Citizens' Rights

Draftsman: Mr Willy De Clercq

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**PROCEDURE**

At its meeting of 25, 26 and 27 November 1997 the Committee on Legal Affairs and Citizens' Rights appointed Mr De Clercq draftsman.

It considered the draft opinion at its meetings of 2 and 3 February 1998 and 24, 25 and 26 February 1998 and 16 and 17 March 1998.

At the last meeting the committee approved the conclusions unanimously.

The following were present for the vote: De Clercq, chairman and draftsman; Malangré, vice-chairman; Añoveros Trias de Bes, C. Casini, Cassidy, Cot, Gebhardt, Medina Ortega, Mosiek-Urbahn, Pex, Ullmann and Verde i Aldea.

**INTRODUCTION**

1. Information and communication policy within the European Union is a subject which has regularly been discussed by the main EU institutions, including the European Parliament. On each occasion, the aim has been to adopt a new approach or adjust the policy to new circumstances and needs arising from the gradual integration of the European Union. Our committee is interested in this latest report for two specific reasons, closely linked with the integration process: first, institutional developments within the European Union and, secondly, Parliament's role in this new institutional set-up.

2. Your draftsman believes that it is not the responsibility of our committee to enter into the details of the present or future shape of the Community institutions' information and communication policy for the years to come. This would go beyond its terms of reference. However, its role should be to lay down certain principles deriving from the treaties and institutional developments. Compliance with these principles would, in our opinion, help to make the information and communication policy - whatever its substance may be - more coherent and effective since it would relate more closely to the present situation of the European Union.

## II. WHY THE NEED FOR AN INFORMATION POLICY

3. The European Union's basic texts and objectives imply the need to inform European public opinion of EU activities. More than any other international organization, the European Union - especially the European Community, which constitutes the first pillar of the structure as a whole - has a direct impact on the lives of ordinary citizens. In this connection, the TEU preamble states the Member States' 'attachment to the principles of liberty, democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and of the rule of law' and their determination 'to promote economic and social progress for their peoples'. Its task is precisely 'to organize, in a manner demonstrating consistency and solidarity, relations between the Member States and between their peoples' (see Article A), and this means that the Union has a responsibility towards the peoples of Europe. In the more specific context of the European Community, its capacity to adopt directly applicable legislation which has direct implications for individuals makes the Community more relevant to the citizen, who thereby becomes a subject of Community law, and, at the same time, is a perfect expression of an indissoluble link between Community matters and the citizen.

4. At the same time, this link and the resulting complex relations create a legitimate need in the institutions of the European Union for explanation and clarification of the action taken. This leads, at least, to a duty to provide information which is expressed - in a rather incomplete manner at the present stage - in Declaration No 17 on the right of access to information (more specifically on the decision-making process), annexed to the final act of the TEU.

5. This duty to provide information on the decision-making process, intended as an obligation vis-à-vis ordinary citizens, is still at the embryonic stage. It is still one of the areas affected by what is commonly referred to as the 'democratic deficit'. On the other hand, the need to remedy this problem has reinforced efforts to endow the European Union with a genuine information and communication policy vis-à-vis citizens. This is a means of establishing a dialogue between the Union institutions and citizens of Member States. We shall look more closely at this policy and outline a number of principles which can help to make it more coherent and effective.

## III. CONDITIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A COHERENT INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION POLICY

6. The main principles on which 'Community information policy' should be based are expressed in the resolution adopted by the European Parliament on 17 September 1993 as part of the report drawn up by Mr Oostlander (A3-0238/93)(

). This resolution sets out two major aspects of the policy: first, information policy in the wide sense covered by the media and aimed at the general public and, secondly, 'targeted' information providing practical details.

( ) This resolution sets out two major aspects of the policy: first, information policy in the wide sense covered by the media and aimed at the general public and, secondly, 'targeted' information providing practical details.  
( ) OJ C 268, 4.10.1993, pp. 192-196.

(<sup>1</sup>) Paragraph 4 of resolution of 17 September 1993, OJ C 268, 4.10.1993, p. 194.



7. The resolution of 17 September 1993 contains the broad lines of a policy which was intended to remedy the lack of information due essentially to a particularly complex decision-making process and the rather opaque workings of the institutions(). These policy guidelines include the following points:

- the policy should address all citizens - not just those involved on a professional basis - in establishing a direct dialogue();
- it should give a clear and objective picture of the values of the Union and explain in plain and simple terms the objectives being pursued();
- an effective information and communication policy will not be achieved 'without the cooperation of national, regional and local bases'();
- the Commission should organize its communication policy in such a way as to 'establish intensive contacts between communication services and policy-makers', and ensure that communication services are 'placed under political management so that a dialogue is engaged with individual citizens, which should extend to preparatory stages' (of Community legislation or the political process of integration)();
- when the Commission is drawing up and implementing decisions it should 'put across in its information to the general public the political aims formulated by the European Parliament and the Council for the relevant decisions'();
- 'the external [information] offices must comply with the guidelines laid down by Parliament or the Commission' but should, on the other hand, 'have sufficient freedom of policy to be able to respond to cultural diversity in Member states'().

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(<sup>1</sup>). These policy guidelines include the following points: Ibidem, recital D.

(<sup>2</sup>) Ibidem, recitals G and H.

(<sup>3</sup>) Ibidem, recital G.

(<sup>4</sup>) Ibidem, recital J.

(<sup>5</sup>) Ibidem, paragraph 11.

(<sup>6</sup>) Ibidem, paragraph 12.

(<sup>7</sup>) Ibidem, paragraph 24.

8. Clearly, these guidelines, especially the last few, highlight the major problem of management of such a policy and the need for coordination between the institutions. It is basically about how people view the message put across by the European Union and its institutions(

) . While it is true that Europe does not 'speak with one voice' and coordination between each of the institutions and between them and Member states is inadequate( ) , it must also be said that the Union is founded on the principle 'In uno plures'( ) and that due account must therefore be taken of its diversity.

9. The report of a working party chaired by your draftsman( ) highlighted the information and communications policy's lack of strategy guidelines and the implications thereof. In the same context, an internal European Parliament report pointed out that 'there is no message which is clear and consistent' ( ) and concluded that 'the whole information policy, general responsibility for which is held by the Commission, must be rethought from the ground up and we must finally make a start on giving Parliament a policy which is clear and consistent' ( ) .

10. Difficulties are in fact being experienced in determining who is to convey this 'common message' and who is to be responsible for laying down the 'strategy guidelines' which the Union so badly needs. However, this problem is also inherent to the EU's institutional set-up, which is extremely complex, comprising bodies that carry out very different tasks according to the roles assigned to them, and which has constantly evolved over the last few decades. Parliament, which initially only had consultative assembly status, is now a body directly elected by universal suffrage and involved as a co-legislator in the decision-making process; other examples include the Committee of the Regions and the European Central Bank, which is to be set up at the beginning of the third phase of economic and monetary union. These developments contribute to reinforcing integration, with a new allocation of responsibilities and greater institutional specialization. In short, the former European Economic Community is developing, through the European Union, towards a more sophisticated and more complex system, in which each institution will pursue the common objective while at the same time taking its own share of responsibility.

11. This means that any information activity should be conducted jointly, on behalf of all the institutions. The Commission, as a supranational body and guardian of the treaties, should

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( ) . While it is true that Europe does not 'speak with one voice' and coordination between each of the institutions and between them and Member states is inadequate( ) see Reflections on the European Community's information and communication policy, report of the group of experts chaired by Mr Willy De Clercq, March 1993.

( ) , it must also be said that the Union is founded on the principle 'In uno plures'( ) Ibidem, page 4.

( ) and that due account must therefore be taken of its diversity.) Ibidem, page 15.

( ) highlighted the information and communications policy's lack of strategy guidelines and the implications thereof. In the same context, an internal European Parliament report pointed out that 'there is no message which is clear and consistent' ( ) see footnote 11.

( ) and concluded that 'the whole information policy, general responsibility for which is held by the Commission, must be rethought from the ground up and we must finally make a start on giving Parliament a policy which is clear and consistent' ( ) see 'An information policy for the European Parliament', Report to the Bureau by Mr G. Anastassopoulos, 21 March 1995, PE 188.290/BUR/rev., p. 4.

(<sup>1</sup>) Ibidem, p. 5.

logically be required in this context to play a leading role in information policy. It should in fact have responsibility for providing information on the broad lines of Community policy, and the implementation, effects and impact thereof on each of the Member States and their respective citizens. It should have a vital role to play in conducting and implementing information policy.

12. However, as regards the task of determining the thrust and details of the communication and information policy, a different approach is required in view of the system's institutional diversity: in this context, the other bodies - in particular, Parliament - should act in synergy with the Commission to ensure that their specific roles and, especially, their institutional powers as set out in the Treaties, are respected.

13. Your rapporteur therefore believes that, for the sake of the efficient operation and future development of the Union, and to be fair to European citizens and guarantee transparency, due account of this complexity and diversity must be taken in EU communication policy. If the message is to get through, it must be expressed in clear and simple terms. However, if it is also to be understood, it must reflect the reality of the situation to which it refers.

#### **IV. CONCLUSIONS**

14. The Committee on Legal Affairs and Citizens' Rights calls on the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and the Media to include the following conclusions in its motion for a resolution:

A. A genuine information and communication policy at the level of the European institutions must promote the objectives assigned to the European Union by the Treaties and awaken European citizens to the cause of European integration; it must be based on the principle of direct dialogue with citizens.

B. It is vitally important that communication with the citizen be given a human face and, on this basis, to spell out the impact of Union policies on day-to-day life, as well as on the future of Europe as a whole.

C. This policy should be consistent and effective; for this purpose, it should be geared to the realities, demands and, even, constraints which characterize the European Union and the modern-day world; to this end, it should be provided with a body that can give it appropriate strategy guidelines, ensuring that the messages conveyed are clear, unambiguous and easily accessible.

D. In line with the single institutional framework on which the European Union is based - pursuant to Article C of the TEU - the Commission, as a supranational body and guardian of the treaties, should, in relation to this body, be required to play a leading role in information and communication policy. It should continue to play a vital role in conducting and implementing this policy (see page 4, paragraphs 11 and 12).

E. A consistent and realistic information and communication policy must, however, reflect the Union's real image: a union characterized by common objectives, common policies, other forms of institutional cooperation and, in particular, increasing diversity resulting directly from the progress made on the road to European integration.

Commented [COMMENT3]:  
NOAM

F. This diversity and its impact on interinstitutional relations should be taken into account to ensure that the institutional powers of the various Union bodies are respected and also that information and communication policy is understood by citizens and, in more general terms, to give it greater credibility.

G. The European Parliament, in particular, has a specific role to play and to defend within the European Union: its responsibilities derive directly from the Treaties, under which it is given a significant degree of autonomy. It should play the role assigned to it, independently or in synergy with the Commission, with respect to establishing the broad lines and overall formulation of EU information and communication policy (see page 4, paragraph 12).

H. That information and communication policy will be strengthened by the transparency of the European decision-making process as laid down in the Treaty of Amsterdam. It is therefore essential for the Commission to submit as soon as possible a proposal enabling the fundamental right of public access to legislative documents to be implemented.

26 February 1998

**OPINION**  
(Rule 147)

for the Committee on Institutional Affairs

on the information and communication policy in the European Union (report by Mr Pex)

Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and the Media

Draftsman: Mrs Dury

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**PROCEDURE**

At its meeting of 26 January 1998, the Committee on Institutional Affairs appointed Mrs Dury draftsman.

It considered the draft opinion at its meetings of 25-26 January, 3-4 February and 25-26 February 1998.

At the last meeting it adopted the following conclusions by 21 votes to 3, with 5 abstentions.

The following were present for the vote: De Giovanni, chairman; Corbett, vice-chairman (for Dury, draftsman); Anastassopoulos, Barros Moura, Blokland (for Berthu), Bonde, Cardona, D'Andrea, Dell'Alba (for Saint-Pierre), B. Donnelly, Duhamel, Frischenschlager, Gutierrez Diaz (for Puerta), Herman, Herzog, Izquierdo Rojo, Lenz (for Brok), Manzella, Mendez de Vigo, Neyts, Pex (for Salafraanca pursuant to Rule 138(2)), Rack, Schäfer, Schlechter, Schleicher (for Maij-Weggen), Schörling (for Aglietta), Sjöstedt, Spaak, Spiers, Tsatsos and Voggenhuber.

The Committee on Institutional Affairs calls on the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and the Media, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following amendments in its report:

Amendment 1

Second, third and fourth citation (new)

- having regard to the reports and notes drawn up by Vice-President Anastassopoulos and the Secretary-General and adopted by the Bureau of Parliament on 13 March 1995, 14 February 1996, 9 and 12 June 1997 and 14 January 1998,
- having regard to its resolution of 10 December 1996 on the participation of citizens and social players in the European Union's institutional system,
- having regard to its resolution of 19 November 1996 on the Amsterdam Treaty,

Amendment 2

Second citation (new)

- having regard to the joint report by the European Commission (DG X) and the European Parliament (DG III) on strengthening interinstitutional cooperation in the sphere of information and communication,

Amendment 3

Sixth Recital a, b and c (new)

- whereas the information programme for European citizens (PRINCE), developed at the initiative of Parliament, creates a new system involving Parliament, the Commission and the governments of the Member States and the current experiment should be continually assessed,
- having regard to the experience acquired over the last two years as regards the coordination of information policy by the interinstitutional working party in the context of PRINCE,
- having regard to the new guidelines on information and communication adopted by the Presidents of Parliament and the Commission at the meeting of..., which were followed by the signing, by the Directors-General for Information of the two institutions, of a programme to strengthen interinstitutional cooperation,

Amendment 4

Sixth Recital d (new)

- whereas the European Union's information policy cannot make up for the lack of transparency and democracy in the institutions and decision-making procedures; whereas the complexity and non-transparency of procedures constitutes an unsurmountable obstacle to communication between the institutions and citizens; regrets the ineffectiveness of the provisions adopted in Amsterdam to remedy this state of affairs,

Amendment 5

Sixth Recital e (new)

- whereas an effective information policy must reach out to all social structures; it should not be confined to European or national administrative and political structures; it must involve local authorities, civil society and education,

Amendment 6

Sixth Recital f (new)

- whereas active and pluralist information is an element of the democratic debate in Europe and on Europe; whereas it must reflect the diversity of the opinions expressed in the European Union; whereas it must not be confined to presenting a 'single point of view' on Europe; whereas it must not eliminate opposition between institutions or between political forces,

Amendment 7

Sixth Recital g (new)

- whereas it is inevitable that each institution will have its own objectives in the context of an information policy; whereas, for example, it would have been impossible to arrive at an artificially unified position for the Commission and Parliament when the debates on the investiture of the Commission or the work of the Committee of Inquiry into 'mad cow disease' were being held,

Amendment 8

Sixth Recital h (new)

- whereas the difference in objectives, strategies and points of view between the institutions does not prevent the coordination of actions, collaboration between information offices and the sharing of certain resources,

Amendment 9

Paragraph 5a (new)

- 5a. Calls on the Commission, in accordance with the guidelines set out by the Milan European Council, to take the necessary initiatives to ensure, in cooperation with the governments of the Member States, the general celebration throughout the Union of Europe Day on 9 May;

Amendment 10

Paragraph 8, first indent

- European Information Board (EIB) is established, composed of the Commissioners responsible for information, the budget and economic and monetary affairs (the euro being a priority for information over the next four years), the Director-General of DG X, the Vice-President of the European Parliament responsible for information, the chairmen of the Budget, Economic and Monetary Affairs, Culture and Institutional Affairs committees and the Subcommittee on Monetary Affairs of the European Parliament and the Director-General of DG III of the European Parliament;

Amendment 11

Paragraph 8, second indent

- with a view to implementing coordinated information and communication activities for the two institutions, in accordance with the policy guidelines laid down by the EIB, the Directors-General of information and communication of the Parliament and the Commission will closely coordinate the activity of their respective services, while respecting the institutional competences laid down by the Treaty, the Financial Regulation, the statutory rules of the European public service and the principles already established in the existing cooperation agreements: these principles are coherence (no duplication) and complementarity, decentralization and partnership with the governmental or regional, local and educational authorities and the non-governmental organizations as is necessary; they may have certain common services (library, technical services) or create Europe Houses, while respecting the necessary autonomy of the institutions;

Amendment 12

Paragraph 8, third indent

- the EIB is responsible for the coordination of the information and communication activities of the Parliament and the Commission; it shall regularly evaluate them and make the necessary proposals for their further development;

Amendment 13

Paragraph 8, fourth indent a (new)

- a distinction will be made between information and communication activities on Commission proposals, which relate to its powers of initiative, and those which relate to Union policies, which relate to its executive powers;

Amendment 14

Paragraph 8, fifth indent

- all communication activities directed towards the press and those concerning activities of the two institutions concerning their specific institutional responsibilities, will be executed - as at present - by the separate information departments of the two institutions; however, both institutions shall be required to provide reciprocal information about these initiatives;



Amendment 15

Paragraph 8a (new)

- 8a. Considers that Members of Parliament must be entitled to participate directly and on a more systematic basis in the various information campaigns organized by the Commission and the European Parliament offices in the Member States, in order to present the European Parliament's viewpoint;

Amendment 16

Paragraph 8b (new)

- 8b. Calls on the Commission to provide an annual summary of the participation by Members of the European Parliament in seminars and information campaigns headed up and funded by the European Commission and the European Parliament Offices in the Member States;

Amendment 17

Paragraph 10a (new)

- 10a. Points out that information and communication come under the general responsibilities of the President of Parliament who is responsible for representing the institution in public;

Amendment 18

Paragraph 11

11. Calls on the Conference of Presidents to examine, pursuant to Rule 141 of the Rules of Procedure, the appropriateness of setting up a subcommittee on information within the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and the Media;