



Information and Communication Plan 2008

02 June 2008

Content

	page
1 Introduction	2
2 Conceptual and legal background	3
3 Communication priorities 2008-2010	4
4 Target groups	7
5 Methods: cooperation and networking on communicating EU Cohesion Policy	8
6 Internal communication	8
7 Resources and indicative budget in 2008	9
8 Evaluation programme	10

Attachments:

1. 2008-2010 Calendar of major communication activities	11
2. Action plan by tools and services	13
3. 2007 Results	17

1 Introduction

Modern public policy needs to be implemented in a transparent and comprehensible manner, so that its costs and benefits are visible to and understood by those who pay and those who benefit. This applies both to national public expenditure and to European public expenditure. In the framework of the latter, transparency is a particularly important issue for European cohesion and regional policy, which accounts for over one-third of the Community budget. A key part of the drive to improve transparency and understanding is through actions in the field of information and communications.

This note sets out an Information and Communication Plan, containing a strategy and the actions for efforts in this field by the Regional Policy Directorate-General. DG REGIO is responsible for two of the three instruments of EU Cohesion Policy, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund, for the policy's overall coordination and development, as well as for the regional and cross-border components of the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA), the EU Solidarity Fund and the coordination vis-à-vis Outermost regions.

The document describes for 2008 and subsequent years the objectives, priorities, actions, services and tools which can contribute to the improved visibility of EU Cohesion Policy and to the development of a European public sphere.

Reflecting the shared nature of the management of the policy, working together in a framework of multi-level governance is essential to successful communications. It should be recalled that the new regulatory framework contains publicity rules to be followed by the Member States which, in accordance with the subsidiarity principle, recognise that efficient communication requires the involvement of the regional level. The rules establish minimum requirements and common standards in which all partners work together in order to achieve a high level of public awareness, to keep the policy's stakeholders up-to-date, to attract high quality project applications and thus to contribute to the best possible visibility, understanding and impact of EU investment. Accordingly, a key action, around which this plan is conceived, is the successful implementation by the managing authorities of the communication and information regulatory framework for 2007-2013.

As well as informing on current actions, communication on EU Cohesion Policy needs to have a more proactive dimension in future. This document therefore starts from a perspective on the years 2008-2010, which will be the period of implementation of the new programmes and of reflection on the policy design for after 2013. The priorities and actions are mainly addressed to the stakeholders, the general public, and the regional media. In addition, to feed the political debate on Cohesion Policy, a wider audience of decision-makers needs to be targeted, for which the strategy and actions are only partly reflected here. But in this respect, a major effort to support the Commissioner in the different policy fora will continue to be a core task of the DG, including the Information and Communications Unit.

In 2008 and beyond, the agenda for EU Cohesion and Regional Policy is principally as follows:

- to launch successfully the 455 new programmes of the period 2007-2013, of which 316 are co-financed by the ERDF and Cohesion Fund, 120 by the ESF and 19 concern regional and cross-border IPA programmes;
- to ensure timely absorption and closure of the programmes and projects of the 2000-2006 period;

- to begin a public consultation on "territorial cohesion" through a Green Paper as of autumn 2008;
- to present the impact of the 2000-2006 period through a series of evaluation studies, culminating in a synthesis report at the end of 2009;
- to continue the reflection on policy's future, post-2013, in view of the Fifth Cohesion Report due to be published in autumn 2010 and the Commission's legislative proposals to be adopted in 2010/11.

2 Conceptual and legal background

This document is based on the 2008 Annual Management Plan of the Regional Policy DG¹ which highlights the following priorities in terms of informing and communicating:

- A policy that works: Communicating EU Regional Policy and its role of as an instrument contributing to the modernisation of the Union's economy and the Lisbon strategy for growth and more and better jobs;
- Communicating together: Coordinate and exchange good practice with Member States and regions in communicating Cohesion Policy;
- Making the difference: Highlight the quality of programmes and projects which are co-financed by EU Regional Policy instruments through the identification and spread of good practice;
- A policy for tomorrow: Contribute to the process of reflection on the future of EU Regional and Cohesion Policy.

In addition, the DG will intensify its efforts to effectively pool the information provided by Member States and regions and to "communicate together" the policy's achievements while involving at the same time other DGs and services, EU institutions, interested bodies and regional media.

As for previous years, this Information and Communication Plan goes beyond an annual perspective, thus laying down a communication strategy for the years 2008-2010. It takes account of the efforts made in the context of the "European Transparency Initiative"² and the Commission's Communications on "Communicating Europe in Partnership"³ and on "Plan D"⁴ (for Democracy, Dialogue, Debate), both defining how a "European public sphere" could be developed.

EU Cohesion Policy's legal provisions for information and communication activities are laid down in article 69 of Regulation 1083/2006⁵ dealing with the cohesion instruments' general rules and in articles 2-10 of Regulation 1828/2006⁶ which define implementation issues in more detail. These specific obligations and provisions need to be seen in the light of the new transparency requirements, which have been

¹ Published at: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/regional_policy/document/amp2008_en.pdf

² COM (2006) 194 final

³ http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/wallstrom/communicating/policy/index_en.htm

⁴ COM (2005) 494 final

⁵ Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999, published in the Official Journal of the EU L 210 on 31 July 2006

⁶ Commission Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006 of 8 December 2006 setting out rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Regional Development Fund, published in the Official Journal of the EU L 371 on 27 December 2006

reflected in the Council's revised Financial Regulation 1995/2006⁷ stipulating the publication of the beneficiaries of EU interventions which are commonly managed with Member States. The new information and publicity rules concern:

- the adoption of communication plans for every Operational Programme containing the following obligatory elements: a strategy, the definition of target groups, the planning of information and communication measures, an indicative budget, naming of the responsible departments by the managing authorities, and actions to assess the communication plan;
- the definition of minimum requirements for the managing authorities and the final beneficiaries for informing the general public such as one major information activity when the programme starts and one each year of its subsequent implementation, the publication of a list of final beneficiaries by the managing authority, and the setting-up of billboards and plaques on project sites with lower cost thresholds than in the past;
- networking between Member States and regions on information and communication actions with the aim of better integration of these and mutual learning from good practices.

The follow-up on these legal requirements and their impact as well as the exchange of experience in communicating EU Cohesion Policy will be one of the major priorities in 2008 and beyond. The animation of a network between Member States and regions, publications, events and evaluations will be the major tool in this respect.

3 Communication priorities 2008-2010

The Information and Communication Plan's overall objective is to put all information and communication aspects into a common framework in order to ensure their coherence, efficiency and the best possible impact. For the years 2008-2010, the following three communication priorities will be addressed:

(A) Enhancing the visibility of the EU Cohesion and Regional Policy including its results and impact

EU Cohesion Policy is a policy of results and impact on people's lives through support for hundreds of programmes and thousands of projects in Europe's regions. It is, in addition, a major tool to implement the growth and jobs Union's agenda. Communicating these widely to the general public, stakeholders and regional media is first and foremost the objective of this plan which itself forms part of a wider concept of "communicating together" with Member States, regions and other EU institutions and bodies. In 2008 and beyond, full access to information on all funded projects and final beneficiaries of EU Structural and Cohesion Funds will be provided for by Member States and regions. A single access at European level of the relevant sources will be prepared by the Regional Policy DG. Another major activity is the annual "Regions for Economic Change" event in March each year on the occasion of which the "RegioStars" for good practice in regional development will be awarded. On the results and impact of the period 2000-2006, the publication of a series of evaluations is scheduled during 2009 including two dissemination/debate events in

⁷ Council Regulation (EC, EURATOM) No 1995/2006 of 13 December 2006 amending Regulation (EC, EURATOM) No 1605/2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities, published in the Official Journal of the EU L 390 on 30 December 2006

2009 and a major stakeholder event in Brussels early in 2010. Communicating on governance including efficient audit and financial control of Cohesion Policy interventions will form an additional priority. Finally, the publications' and events' programme of the Regional Policy DG will continue to evolve and adapt where necessary.

- Messages: "A policy that works and delivers added value"
- Target groups: General public, regional media, stakeholders
- Major action by the regions and Member States: implementation of the communication plans of the programmes (which implies a close follow-up by the geographical units in the Directorate General)
- Major actions by the Commission: Access to information on all funded projects and final beneficiaries as of autumn 2008; communication on the results of negotiations including a press conference on 14/05; production of a series of new audiovisual media including video clips on specific issues and projects; "Regions for Economic Change" and "RegioStars" in March each year; publication and events on the evaluation of the 2000-2006 period, press conferences on major documents/events and on selected themes (environment, energy and SMEs), seminar with managing authorities on efficient audit on 10 June 2008 and publication of a fact-sheet on sound financial control; regular high-level meetings with selected third countries and international organisations
- Results: web and paper publications; events, new Panorama magazine in 2009
- Impact: Increased level of public awareness of general public, stakeholders and media.

(B) Communicating on territorial cohesion in EU Cohesion Policy

The draft "Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union" stipulates that the EU should pursue "territorial" cohesion in addition to economic and social cohesion. In September 2008, the European Commission will table a Green Paper to be presented during a launch event in October and to be followed by a public consultation in order to begin the discussion on priorities and methods for the practical implementation territorial cohesion. Its development can build upon a number of previous initiatives at Member States' level such as the "European Spatial Development Perspective" agreed in 1999 and the "Territorial Agenda of the European Union" adopted by the Ministers responsible for Urban Development and Territorial Cohesion on 24 and 25 May 2007 in Leipzig. In addition, the territorial dimension will play an important role when it comes to the adoption of the "EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region" by the Commission and the Council in the first half of 2009. The Regional Policy DG will contribute to a number of regional stakeholder conferences scheduled between September 2008 and January 2009 to facilitate a broad discussion of the strategy. Other activities in this respect concern the communication on the programmes under the European Territorial Cooperation objective, enhanced visibility for the networking programmes, in particular as regards the ESPON 2013 programme, and successful implementation of further "European Groupings on Territorial Cooperation". Finally, the Commission will report at the beginning of 2008 on the public consultation on the Outermost regions.

- Message: "Geography matters for a balanced development of and in Europe's regions"
- Target groups: Stakeholders
- Major actions: Green Paper "Territorial Cohesion" launch event on 6 October and subsequent public debate; series of regional stakeholder events between September 2008 and spring 2009; Commission Communication on the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region in May 2009
- Results: Paper and web publications, contribution to events
- Impact: Level of public awareness on the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

(C) Communicating the debate on the policy's future

Reflections on the future of EU Cohesion Policy began with the publication of the Fourth Cohesion Report of 2007 and the Cohesion Forum held in Brussels on 27 and 28 September 2007. This launched the public consultation on major conceptual and operational aspects. The Fifth Cohesion Report in autumn 2010 will present an outline of the policy's design post-2013. In the meantime, major steps in the debate on the future will include the publication of the Fifth and Sixth Progress Reports in 2008 and 2009, as well as the publication of an analytical paper on regions in 2020 by the end of 2008 and of an orientation paper in spring 2009.

- Message: "EU Cohesion Policy at the service of tomorrow's Europe"
- Target groups: Stakeholders, general public
- Major actions: Commission (Progress) Reports on Cohesion in 2008, 2009 and 2010, events, begin of a series of publications on methodology issues (through the web and the new design of our quarterly magazine Panorama)
- Results: debate on the future including active involvement of stakeholders
- Impact: Level of awareness and activity among stakeholders, media and the general public.

4 Target groups

Throughout this Information and Communication Plan, a distinction is made between three major audiences with partly different needs: general public, stakeholders and regional media:

- **General public:** The "general public" audience comprises European citizens interested in the way EU Cohesion and Regional Policy works. Services and publications at their disposal concern the "Info regio" website where they can find general and specific information and where they are guided to find out more about funding possibilities and projects in their region or city.
- **Stakeholders:** The audience of "stakeholders" concerns experts involved in the management and development of EU Cohesion and Regional Policy. By their organisational affiliation, they either work for public national or regional authorities involved in the management of the Structural and Cohesion Funds including

regional development agencies, social partner organisations or monitoring committees. They can as well be members or officials of other national or EU institutions and organisations such as parliaments, political parties or regional lobby organisations. Finally, one specific stakeholder audience consists of the group of communication officers responsible for the application of the publicity rules within the operational programmes in all Member States and regions. For this audience, the information has to be more in-depth - be it on the application of administrative rules or as regards up-to-date statistical information. As far as possible, relevant information will be made available for them through specific pages of the "Info regio" website. Another aspect of stakeholders concerns the national governments, which are normally addressed via the regional stakeholders.

- **Regional media:** Journalists working for regional (and national, especially in less regionalised Member States) media constitute a third target group. For them, interventions by EU Cohesion and Regional Policy in their region or city often are the most concrete footprint of the EU. Beyond the immediate media response (through the Commissioner's spokesperson), services for this audience concern the provision of media packages and advisory notes on events in their country or region, information on local seminars such as the ones accompanying the OPEN DAYS in October each year, and the coordination of related news together with the Commission's representations

In addition, we have two more specific target groups:

- **Academia:** they have a more academic link with EU Cohesion Policy be it as lecturers, researchers or students of regional and EU studies.
- **Interested parties outside the European Union:** Governments and international organisations increasingly express an interest in methodologies and organisation of EU Cohesion Policy. A structured dialogue is being followed with China, Russia and Brazil.

5 Methods: cooperation and networking on communicating EU Cohesion Policy

As described above, the follow-up on the Member States' and regions' communication plans and the implementation of minimum requirements will be accompanied by several networking activities on communication issues. Based on article 10 of Regulation 1828/2006, a network of officials responsible at national level for the implementation of communication arrangements for ERDF and Cohesion Fund programmes (INFORM) will be installed in June 2008. The purpose of the network is to share experience and identify ways of improving the quality of communication activities, to raise awareness for the benefits of Community interventions among the potential beneficiaries and the general public, and to improve the visibility of EU funded projects. Suggested priority themes include the promotion of easy-to-use and transparent access of final beneficiaries' data, to facilitate coordination between national and regional networks and the Commission's representations in the Member States, to highlight the achievements of EU Cohesion Policy through the identification of success stories and good practice, and to work

together on media activities. In spring 2009, the Regional Policy DG will ensure the coordination of the future outcomes of INFORM's work with the activities of DG Communication and DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. The existing communication platform⁸ providing related news and documents will be further developed. Finally, possibilities to coordinate and cooperate with other Directorates-General, the Commission's representations in the Member States and the EU institutions will be enhanced.

- Message: "Communicating EU Cohesion Policy together"
- Target group: General public, stakeholders, in particular communication officers in Member States and regions, regional media
- Major actions: Follow-up on Member States' communication activities (with a major role for the operational units of the Directorate-General), animation of the INFORM network, OPEN DAYS, coordination with other EU institutions
- Results: Enhanced identification of good practice, publications of the INFORM network, "RegioStars" media award in March 2009
- Impact: Increased level of public awareness of general public and media; enhanced quality of communication activities in Member States and regions.

6 Internal Communication

ERDF and Cohesion Fund programmes produce a wealth of information and knowledge existing on different approaches in regional development. Through internal communication, the management and availability of this knowledge can be made more efficient. All staff of the Directorate General can act as ambassadors of Cohesion policy. Based on an internal communication strategy to be implemented by the Regional Policy DG, internal communication tools such as the intranet will be modernised and made more attractive for decentralised use.

7 Resources and indicative budget in 2008

For the development, implementation and evaluation of this plan, DG Regional Policy has the following resources at its disposal:

- All operational units in their contacts with managing authorities (monitoring committees, annual meetings, visits of the Commissioner, etc.)
- The information and communication unit B.1 with a staff of 26, 5 of which are "Administrators" (AD)⁹, 15 "Assistants" (AST) and 6 Contractual Agents (CA);
- A maximum annual budget for commitments of about EUR 8.1 million (in 2008) which is managed through four framework contracts with external companies.

⁸ See: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/country/commu/index_en.htm

⁹ Two additional posts for "Administrators" are dedicated to "relations with third countries".

In order to fulfil the different tasks and functions, staff is allocated as follows:

- Management and communication strategy: 2 AD, 3 AST, 1 AC
- Information and Communication: 3 AD, 12 AST, 5 AC
of which:
 - Publications and internet: 1 AD, 3 AST, 3 AC
 - Events and stands: 1 AD, 3 AST
 - Publicity requirements, cooperation with Member States and regions: 1 AD, 1 AST
 - Internal communication: 1 AST
 - Distribution, information requests, library and visitors: 4 AST, 2 AC

The indicative annual budget for commitments is split as follows:

Design and production of information products (Including translations, web development etc.)	EUR 3,100,000
Diffusion, stock and print of publications	EUR 1,700,000
Mailing lists	EUR 500,000
Events and stands	EUR 2,550,000
Evaluation of Information actions	EUR 250,000
Total	EUR 8,100,000

8 Evaluation programme

Evaluating the performance of this Information and Communication strategy and activities forms an integral part of this plan and is subject to an on-going evaluation programme carried out by an external contractor. The aim is to generate knowledge and advice on the impact of activities and to develop the strategy further in search of the best value for the available resources. A basic set of result indicators is used to generate regularly output data.

The evaluation programme includes perception surveys of different target groups as regards events, publications and internet sources. The methods used concern online surveys, interview series with stakeholders and special Eurobarometer surveys. As regards the latter, a survey on the policy's perception by the general public carried out early in 2008 will provide the baseline for future research¹⁰.

On an annual basis, priorities for studies, surveys and other activities are defined, carried out and the results are fed back into the information and communication activities. In addition, the management of the DG will be informed about the results at

¹⁰ See Eurobarometer Flash report No 234 "Citizens' Perceptions of EU Regional Policy", February 2008; published at: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/flash_arch_en.htm

least once a year. Summaries of results will be made public including a corporate design of those publications.

Priority actions 2008:

- General public: Eurobarometer Flash No 234 on Regional Policy (February 2008)
- Evaluation of national/regional communication plans (June 2008)
- Autumn 2008: "Inforegio" website user survey
- Events: follow-up surveys through interactive online tools (IPM) for major events
- Media: In-depth study on media coverage (August-October)
- Strategy: in-house seminar on strategic communication by DG REGIO and by Member States (November)

Indicators:

Number of evaluation reports and distribution (copies/downloads from website)

ANNEXES

2008-2010 Calendar of major communication activities

2008

Date	
	February
25/26	Second Annual Regions for Economic Change conference, Brussels, including the first the RegioStars Awards
	March
07	Eurobarometer Survey on awareness of EU Regional Policy
15	Panorama Magazine No 25 (Sustainable development and climate change)
	April
	May
08	Information seminar for regional offices, Brussels
14/15	Conference Outermost Regions of the EU, Brussels
	June
10	Conference on Audit and Control, Brussels
10	Urban Audit seminar, Brussels
15	Panorama Magazine No 26 (1988-2008: 20 Years of EU Cohesion Policy)
17	INFORM meeting (EU network on communication on the Structural Funds), Brussels
17	5 th Progress Report on Cohesion (Commission Communication)
19	Conference on the "European Grouping on Territorial Cooperation" in cooperation with the Committee of the Regions, Brussels
24	EU Cohesion Policy - The first 20 Years, Brussels
26/27	Expo Zaragossa
	July
	September
tbc	EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, stakeholder conference in Stockholm
15	Panorama Magazine No 27 (IPA and enlargement)
23	Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion (Commission Communication)
	October
06-09	European Week of Regions and Cities – OPEN DAYS 2008, Brussels, including the launch of the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion on 6 October
	November
tbc	Information seminar for regional offices, Brussels
30 (until 2 Dec)	EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, stakeholder conference in Copenhagen/Malmö
tbc	INFORM meeting (EU network on communication on the Structural Funds), Brussels
	December
15	Panorama Magazine No 28 (Territorial Cohesion)

2009

Date	
	January
tbc	EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, stakeholder conference in Rostock
	February
tbc	Conference on Urban-Rural Policies, Brussels
tbc	Reflections on the policy's future: Orientation Paper
	March
18/19	3 rd Annual Regions for Economic Change conference, Brussels, including the 2 nd RegioStars Awards, Brussels
15	Panorama Magazine No 29 (Baltic Sea Region Strategy)
	April
tbc	Information seminar for regional offices, Brussels
	May
tbc	Conference in Brussels on regions in a the world
tbc	EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (Commission Communication)
	June
tbc	INFORM meeting (EU network on communication on the Structural Funds), Brussels
tbc	6th Progress Report on Cohesion (Commission Communication)
15	Panorama Magazine No 30 (theme tbc)
	July
	September
15	Panorama Magazine No 31 (theme tbc)
	October
05-08	European Week of Regions and Cities – OPEN DAYS 2009, Brussels
tbc	Dissemination/debate seminars on the results of the ex-post evaluation 2000-2006
	November
tbc	Information seminar for regional offices, Brussels
tbc	INFORM meeting (EU network on communication on the Structural Funds), Brussels
	December
15	Panorama Magazine No 32 (theme tbc)

2010

Date	
	February
tbc	Event for stakeholders on the ex-post evaluation 2000-2006
	March
tbc	4 th Annual Regions for Economic Change conference, Brussels, including the 3 rd RegioStars Awards
15	Panorama Magazine No 33 (theme tbc)
	April
	Strategic Report by the Commission summarising the national reports
tbc	Information seminar for regional offices, Brussels
	May
15	Panorama Magazine No 34 (theme tbc)
	June
tbc	INFORM meeting (EU network on communication on the Structural Funds), Brussels
tbc	Fifth Cohesion Forum
	July
	September
15	Panorama Magazine No 35 (theme tbc)
	October
tbc	5 th Cohesion Report (Commission Communication), including guidelines on the future
04-07	European Week of Regions and Cities – OPEN DAYS 2009, Brussels
	November
tbc	Information seminar for regional offices, Brussels
	December
15	Panorama Magazine No 36 (theme tbc)

Action plan by tools and services

(1) Paper publications and distribution

The monthly "Inforegio" newsletter, a magazine ("Panorama") published four times a year, several annual reports and the Commission's Communications, for which the Regional Policy DG is responsible for, form the priorities of the publications' programme.

Periodicals

- Newsletter Inforegio (every month in 22 languages) - replace paper by e-version (in parallel: update of mailing list);
- Panorama magazines No 25 "Sustainable development and climate change"; published 15 March 2008, No 26 "1988-2008: EU Cohesion Policy, the first 20 years", 15 June 2008), No 27 "The Instrument for Pre-Accession and Enlargement", 15 September 2008; No 28 "Territorial Cohesion", 15 December 2008; No 29 "The EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy", 15 March 2009 (paper: FR/EN/DE, web: 22 languages) - review content and design and make the production more interactive while involving contribution from stakeholders and colleagues of the Regional Policy DG;
- Annual reports (EN: Structural Funds, the Cohesion Fund and the EU Solidarity Fund) October-December

Special publications:

- Conference brochure "Regions for Economic Change" including a synthesis of the RegioStars candidates (12 pages, EN/FR/DE) for 25/26 February 2008
- REGIO Stars brochure (EN, 12 or 16 pages) for March 2008
- Conference proceedings "Regions for Economic Change"/REGIO Stars (EN, 28 pages) May
- Fact sheet on "Audit and Control", June
- 5th Progress Report on Economic and Social Cohesion (Communication to be adopted on 17 June; paper publication in EN/FR/DE (about 28 pages), other languages tbc
- Green Paper on territorial cohesion (Communication to be adopted on 23 September; paper publication in EN/FR/DE, about 28 pages;
- New series of REGIO Working Papers on economic analysis and reviews electronic publication in EN only, abstracts to be published in the revised Panorama magazine (autumn 2008)
- Brochure on good practices in urban development, publication in EN, about 40 pages
- Guide on Evaluation ("Evalsed"), EN, 1 volume of about 150 pages, date tbc
- Guide on Cost Benefit Analysis, of approximately 250 pages
- Maps of cross-border programmes; "Transnational Cooperation programmes", EN (plano and folded);

Indicators:

Number of paper publications (pages, language versions) published and distributed; number of recipients on mailing lists; level of satisfaction with paper publications.

(2) Websites

The website "Inforegio", Commissioner Danuta Hübner's website, and the one of the Regional Policy DG, are the ones managed by the information and communication unit. They are updated on a daily basis and constantly developed through new services and additional pages. In 2008, the priority is on updating the "Inforegio" website through new databases on the 2007-2013 programmes as well as several new pages.

Priority projects for 2008

- "ERDF and Cohesion Fund Programmes 2007-2013": publish database including clickable map and a revised concept for national/regional entry pages
- "Managing authorities" and "project" databases: new format to be applied;
- Page "Final beneficiaries": website summarising the publication of all final beneficiaries lists by the national/regional/managing authorities
- "Homepage": review production and language regime in order to cover 22 languages
- "Thematic pages": publish revised pages including data retrieved on "expenditure by categories"
- Page "Order REGIO publications": Update page including larger numbers for classrooms/events through OPOCE

Other existing or new pages

- Updates: "Glossary"; "Information and Publicity"; "Events"; "Presentations" ; "Financial engineering"
- New pages: "Frequently Asked Questions"; "European Territorial Cooperation" including pages on the "Green paper on Territorial Cohesion" and the "EU Baltic Sea Strategy"
- Conference Management System: update in view of 2007 feed-back (June 2008)

Indicators:

Number of single visits and page visits; level of users' satisfaction with content and services.

(3) Audiovisual media

The production of audiovisual media concerns updates of the existing digital online library of photos, the production of videos (online and on DVD), the production of CDs as well as the one of stands and panels for priority events and exhibitions.

Priority projects for 2008

- Photo production: digital library to be updated
- Video: production of 20-30 short clips for presentation online
- Integration of existing AV material through an online "AV platform"

- DVD: regrouping existing and new material
- New version of the CD "Cohesion Policy 2007-13"
- Stands: Production and use of umbrella stands and larger stands for priority events

Indicators:

Number of audiovisual products and their distribution (copies distributed/downloads of videos/photos from database/stands set up)

(4) Events

The events' programme of the Regional Policy DG concerns two recurrent major events in spring each year ("Regions for Economic Change" conference) and in the second week of October ("OPEN DAYS"). Depending on priorities, other events will be organised or supported as well. Support of events held by stakeholders or other EU institutions can only be granted in the form of services such as stands, documentation and publicity on the web.

Priority events 2008

- 25/26 February: Regions for Economic Change/RegioStars (Charlemagne building; 500 participants; 9 workshops; awards ceremony)
- 14/15 May: Conference on the Outermost Regions, Brussels (Charlemagne building, 200 participants)
- 10 June: Conference on Audit and Control (Charlemagne building, 500 participants)
- 10 June: Urban Audit (thematic seminar; 200 participants)
- 19 June: European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (thematic seminar in cooperation with the Committee of the Regions; 400 participants)
- 06 October: Launch event on the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion (in the context of the Opening Session of the OPEN DAYS, Charlemagne building, 500 participants)
- 06-09 October: OPEN DAYS 2008: (Charlemagne, CoR etc. in cooperation with the CoR, the EP, regions/cities and other organisations)

Other events

- Two seminars for Brussels regional offices (08 May and November)
- July: Zaragoza Expo 2008 (stand and seminars on "water and sustainable development" to be organised together with DGs Agriculture, Environment and Research)
- Two expert seminars on urban-rural development

Indicators:

Number of events and stand organised/supported and participants/visitors; downloads from conference websites; satisfaction surveys and reports on events.

(5) Cooperation and networking with Member States

Priorities for the development of cooperation and networking arrangements with the ERDF "networking" programmes (INTERREG IVC; URBACT; ESPON; INTERACT), the Member States (INFORM network), other DGs (Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities; Communication) and the Commission's representations and relays are listed below.

Priority projects for 2008

- Annual meetings and monitoring committees (operational units)
- 8 May and November: meetings with regional offices
- 17 June and November: Meetings of the INFORM network
- By June: Follow-up on communication plans (evaluation)
- 16 June: Meeting the ERDF "networking" programmes on communication activities such as web/publications; conferences etc.
- 07 October: Common seminar with DG Employment on "Communicating EU Cohesion Policy"
- Ongoing: Develop agreements on "Communicating together" with Commission representations.
- Update of website "information and publicity" (22 languages for the basics)
- In-depth study of communication plans and actions for all Member States

Indicators:

Number of meetings and participants of the INFORM network and outcome produced; number of national networks and agreements with representations; result of evaluations

(6) Relations with the public

Priority projects for 2008

- Answer questions from the citizens
- Make presentations to groups of visitors

2007 Results

The outcome of the information and communication strategy and actions for 2007 can be summarized as follows:

- the Commissioner's **press releases increased by about 33% in 2007** (from 150 to 200) including those accompanying the adoption of Operational Programmes;
- about **350 journalists** (+200) from regional media attended **briefing seminars** in the context of REGIO conferences in Brussels and the Portuguese Presidency;
- the regular **publications** produced – the monthly newsletter INFOREGIO and the Panorama Magazines - were distributed to a mailing list with **about 49,900 recipients** (+5% compared to 2006); ;
- **8,900 participants (+80%)** were counted in the 5 (+3) conferences organised by the DG which also sent information stands to 21 (+2) events held other organisations and associations addressing about 40,000 visitors (+14.3%) in total. The 4th Cohesion Forum in September (800 participants) and the OPEN DAYS in October were the biggest events organised in 2007, the latter involving 5,500 participants and 700 speakers in 150 seminars. In January and March, two more conferences of the "Regions for Economic Change" series were held (1,000 participants in total) and in November the conference on the new requirements when communicating cohesion policy was organised in cooperation with DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and DG Communication. In addition, DG REGIO co-organised together with other DGs and the German Presidency other conferences involving 1,500 participants. In May, the DG co-organised a launch event in Hof together with the German Presidency on a number of National Strategic Reference Frameworks (600 participants) and a conference in Brussels on "rural development and the information society" in cooperation with DG Agriculture and rural development and DG Information society. The DG contributed to several other seminars or meetings in the Member States (including one 'road show' in Warmia-Mazursky) and staff spoke at numerous conferences and seminars in and outside Brussels;
- more than **3.5 million visits** were counted on our website INFOREGIO with about **9 million web pages viewed** which seems to be at the 2006 level; the major 2006 project concerned the new layout and navigation for the website including 22 languages now based on information for the period 2007-13. Pages' updates were done throughout the year; ,
- **157 group visits** (+5.3%) with **over 2,400 visitors** (+20%) were welcomed to the DG's information centre. About 3,580 external information requests (+23.5%) were answered and roughly 231,000 (+21.6%) documents were sent on demand;
- **293 officials from managing authorities** (+12%) have access to the electronic platform for exchange of experiences on publicity actions (Circa platform); the Inform network mailing list comprises around 170 communication officers from all Member States;
- as regards **audiovisual products**, many exhibition panels in various languages were produced on the key themes highlighted by "Regions for Economic Change" and other events. One photo shoot was made of projects in Slovenia in preparation for their presidency. Film clips were made during regional visits of the

Commissioner and at a number of projects relevant to the year's conference themes. These were published as stock shots for the press and EbS, as film clips for use by the media at our own conferences and in proceedings of the events, and as very short edited clips for use by Euronews and as conference scene setters. They were issued on tape, DVD and the internet and were widely distributed on the occasion of the "Regions for Economic Change" conferences in January and March, the launch event during the German Presidency in May and the 4th Cohesion Forum in September. For the latter event, a CD with the 2007-13 regulations, power point presentations and other material was produced as well.