Communicating Europe in partnership. Political declaration

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PURPOSE: to reinforce cooperation between the EU institutions and the Member States in the area of communication regarding the Union, inter alia by annual identification of common communication priorities.

ACT: Communicating Partnership in Europe.

CONTENT: the European Parliament, the Council and Commission adopted the text of a political statement entitled "Communicating Europe in partnership". The statement follows upon the Commission White Paper on a European communication policy, submitted in February 2006, and the communication "Communicating Europe in partnership", presented by the Commission in October 2007.

It is intended to reinforce cooperation between the EU institutions and Member States in the area of communication regarding the Union, inter alia, by annual identification of common communication priorities.

1) Principles: the European Parliament, Council and the European Commission wish to encourage the convergence of views on the communication priorities of the European Union as a whole, to promote the added value of an EU approach to communication on European issues, to facilitate exchanges of information and best practices and develop synergies between the Institutions when carrying out communication relating to these priorities, as well as to facilitate cooperation among the Institutions and Member States where appropriate. They recognise that communicating on the European Union requires a **political commitment of EU Institutions and Member States**, and that Member States have their responsibility to communicate with citizens about the EU.

They believe that information and communication activities on European issues should give everyone access to fair and diverse information about the EU and enable citizens to exercise their right to express their views and to participate actively in the public debate on EU issues. The three Institutions promote the respect of multilingualism and cultural diversity when implementing information and communication actions.

2) A partnership approach: expanding on the partnership approach, the statement notes that the three institutions recognise the importance of addressing the communication challenge on

EU issues in partnership between Member States and the EU institutions. They wish to develop synergies with national, regional and local authorities as well as with representatives of civil society. They would like for that purpose to foster a **pragmatic partnership approach**, and recall the key role of the **Inter-institutional Group on Information (IGI)** serving as a high-level framework for the Institutions to encourage political debate on EU-related information and communication activities in order to foster synergy and complementarity. The IGI will meet twice a year.

3) A framework for working together: the Institutions intend to cooperate on the following basis:

- whilst respecting the individual responsibility of each EU institution and Member State for its own communication strategy and priorities, the three Institutions will, in the framework of the IGI, identify yearly a limited number of common communication priorities;
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these priorities will be based on communication priorities identified by the EU Institutions and bodies following their internal procedures and complementing, where appropriate, Member States' strategic efforts in this field, taking into account citizens' expectations;

- the three Institutions and the Member States will endeavour to promote appropriate support for communication on the priorities identified;
- the services responsible for communication in Member States and EU institutions should liaise with each other to ensure successful implementation of the common communication priorities, as well as other activities linked to EU communication, if need be on the basis of appropriate administrative arrangements;
- the Institutions and Member States are invited to exchange information on other EU related communication activities, in particular on sectoral communication activities envisaged by the Institutions and bodies, when they result in information campaigns in Member States;
- lastly, the Commission is invited to report back at the beginning of each year to the other EU Institutions on the main achievements of the implementation of the common communication priorities of the previous year.

This political declaration was signed on 22 October 2008.