



REPORT

Co-ordination Meeting with EDC Correspondents from the Representations, and representatives from the EDC network

23 May 2007

This report, summarising the contents of the Co-ordination Meeting with EDC Correspondents from the Representations, and representatives from the EDC network, which was held in Brussels on 23 May 2007, is intended for use as a reference document by the participants in the meeting.

All accounts of contributions made by the speakers and participants to the meeting are based on the spoken text of their presentations. The possibility of misinterpretation can therefore not be excluded, although every care was taken to ensure the accuracy of the summaries. The views expressed in this document are not necessarily those of the European Commission.

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Agenda



EUROPEAN DOCUMENTATION CENTRES

Coordination meeting for the Representations' EDC correspondents and national EDC coordinators

23 May 2007

**Venue: Borchette Conference Centre,
Meeting room 3A
Rue Froissart 36, 1040 Brussels**

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| 09h00 – 09h15 | Registration of participants |
| 09h15 – 09h30 | Welcome |
| 09h30 – 10h00 | Communication between the EDCs, Commission services and the Helpdesk
Moderator: Mauno Hänninen /DG COMM/B.2 |
| 10h00 –10h30 | Communicating between the EDCs and reaching out to general public, example from Hungary
Presentation Kinga Kollar, The Commission Representation in Hungary |
| 10h30-10h45 | Coffee break |
| 10h45-11h30 | Cooperation projects of the EDC network in France
Presentation: Cathy Simon-Bloch, Ecole nationale d'administration, Strasbourg |
| 11h30-12h30 | Documentation distribution – how to make the supply meet the demand?
Moderator: Monique Dejeans, Publications Office |
| 12h30 – 14h00 | Lunch break |
| 14h00-16h00 | Cooperation between the EDCs on the national level - Examples from Italy and the United Kingdom
Presentation: Tiziana Dassi, Università Commerciale L. Bocconi, Milano and Margaret Watson, Bodleian Law Library, Oxford |
| 16h00 | Visit to the Commission Central Library, Av. Van Maerlaent |

Welcome

Paavo Palk, Head of Unit Communication Relays and Networks, DG Communication, European Commission

Mr Palk welcomed participants to the EDC coordination meeting by giving a short historical overview of the development of the network of EDC coordinators. While the concept of national coordinators of the EDCs existed since the 1990s and the first meeting had taken place in 1998, the latest meeting of coordinators had taken place in 2003. Since then, the new EDC agreement had allowed for harmonisation and clarification of the rules of the agreement between the EDCs and DG Comm and new centres had been opened, including the EuI network outside the EU managed by DG Relex. He stressed that the coordination meeting offered the opportunity to share experiences of national cooperation and concluded by announcing the Specific Training Seminar for EDCs which would follow the next two days. He presented the team at DG COMM B/2 responsible for the EDC network: Mauno Hänninen as the EDC coordinator, and Eva Sobova.

Communication between the EDCs, Commission services and the Helpdesk

Mauno Hänninen, EDC coordinator, Communication Relays and Networks, DG Communication, European Commission

Mauno Hänninen distinguished between 2 different levels of communication: the communication between EDCs and DG COMM, and the communication with the Helpdesk.

The communication between EDCs and DG COMM

The information flows from DG COMM to the EDC network is generally channelled through the Commission Representations. The most efficient channel for DG COMM to communicate a message to the EDC network was examined, i.e. whether it should involve the Commission Representations exclusively or it should simply consist of a message sent to all the individual EDCs and/or through the national coordinators. It was agreed that the national coordinators have a major role to play in the communication.

Different scenarios were singled out, depending on the nature of the message: a message can be sent to all the EDCs when it deals with a situation affecting the EDCs in a similar way (the EDC survey or distribution of materials), whereas messages where the content differs according to the each country – request for a training seminar, for instance - should pass through the Representations. It was agreed that in both scenarios it was particularly useful to put the national coordinators in copy.

Mr. Hänninen admitted that there was some room for improvement in the way the external EDC evaluation was communicated to the network.

Communication with the Helpdesk

Mauno Hänninen introduced the Helpdesk, underlining that two contractors are assisting DG COMM B/2 in supporting the ED network: the College of Europe, on the one hand, is responsible for the provision of support services (organisation of training seminars, meetings, and information services), and European Dynamics, on the other hand, deals with the design, the hosting, and the maintenance of the ED Intranet.

The contractor responsible for the ED Intranet did not set up a first level user support, therefore the technical assistance related to the access to the intranet was dealt with initially by DG COMM and now it was taken care by the College of Europe (mainly via the 'access to the intranet' button on the Intranet homepage).

The major communication platform with the Helpdesk is the Intranet, mainly through the Question and Answers service, except when personal information about access codes to the intranet need to be communicated; in that case, the "access to the intranet" button should be used. The Helpdesk also sets up specific email addresses related to the different events it organises, to deal with questions related to a specific event. Although a direct telephone number to reach the Helpdesk does not feature in their contract specifications, which some participants regretted, members of the Helpdesk team at the College of Europe do take up personal contact in specific cases - when replying to emails or contacting some network members in specific cases about the newsletter, or in view of the organisation of an AGM, etc.

A delegate from the Commission Representation in Latvia regretted that the officials working at the Commission Representations were not able to use their Commission access codes to enter the EUROPE DIRECT Intranet. Mauno Hänninen explained that the situation was due to compatibility problems between the two systems.

A delegate from a Greek EDC noted that it would be particularly useful that DG COMM provides guidelines to the national coordinators about their role.

The ensuing discussion focused on the content of the contractual agreements with the EDCs and on their mission.

The representative of the Commission Representation in Lithuania enquired about the provision included in the EDC contractual agreements stating that 'reaching out to the general public' was mandatory for the EDCs. Mauno Hänninen acknowledged that in the absence of financial support by the Commission to perform such a task, it was very difficult for the Commission to impose a full enforcement of this provision of the contract, and that it had been so far very much left to the individual initiative of each EDC.

The delegate from the EDC in Cyprus raised the issue of the different support provided by the Commission to the ED Relays and the EDCs and expressed concerns about the future of the EDC network, which does not benefit from any direct financial support. Mauno Hänninen reminded that the financial support provided to the Relays depends on Commission procurement rules, involving a heavy selection and grant management procedure, whereas the EDC network implies a lighter management for the Commission and lighter and more flexible mechanisms for the EDCs as well.

A delegate from a Spanish EDC expressed her concerns about the fact that the EDC network was not managed by DG EAC any more, whereas the librarians working for the EDCs are education specialists. Mauno Hänninen reported the efforts to be further implemented by DG COMM to tighten the links with DG EAC and DG Research.

Communicating between the EDCs and reaching out to the general public, the example of Hungary

Kinga Kollar, EUROPE DIRECT Correspondent, Commission Representation in Hungary

Ms Kollar, EDC network co-ordinator from the EC representation in Budapest introduced the network of 12 EDCs in Hungary, which are based at universities and in the Hungarian parliament. She explained that coordination and support between the EC Representation in Budapest and the EDC network were based on regular communication through email lists, press lists and the forwarding of relevant information. In addition, there is a yearly EDC meeting and EDC are invited to other network meetings and events. The Representation also finances new uniform signposts for the EDCs. Ms Kollar continued by identifying the more traditional activities of the Hungarian EDCs, such as specialized library services, cataloguing and the provision of bibliography and link collections as well as internet research guides and research material for students and teachers. She added examples of pro-active communication activities by the Hungarian EDCs, such as promotion campaigns, exhibitions, an EU quiz website, a competition for students, contacts with the university radio station, articles in the specialized press, conferences, public lectures, participation in open days, visits, book presentations, traineeships, newsletters, specialized training courses for librarians and information specialists and training sessions on how to use EU information sources and the EDC library with the award of academic credits. Ms Kollar stressed that these

activities depended on local facilities and personal initiative by EDC staff and that they were not financially supported by the Commission.

She emphasised the fact that the role of EDCs as centres of guidance on how to find and use EU information was becoming increasingly important. In her conclusion she raised the question whether the EDCs should rather reach out to the general public or remain targeted to students and academia, whether they should function as specialized libraries or as centres of excellence, and whether they should be digital information providers or traditional libraries. This question, which concerns the future of the EDCs, provoked lively debate. While participants were interested in promoting communication activities, they stressed that a lack of funding of EDCs by the European Commission limited the EDCs' possibilities to reach out to the general public. They suggested composing a reflection paper on the status and future of the EDCs which would also be sent to EDC host structures.

Cooperation projects of the EDC network in France

Cathy Simon-Bloch, EDC of the Ecole Nationale d'Administration in Strasbourg

Cathy Simon-Bloch, one of the two national coordinators for the EDC network in France, first provided a short overview of the network of 48 EDCs in France. She explained that the management of the EDC represented only part of the work of most members, and that the staff turnover in the EDCs was very high. This human resources situation requires, in her view, effective communication and networking at the national level.

Cathy Simon-Bloch described the cooperation undertaken at national level in France, highlighting several communication tools:

- The annual meeting of the French EDCs, with a new formula focusing on the exchange of experiences and practical sessions focused on the daily work of the EDCs (presentation of the intranet, workshops, publications).
- A discussion list, used to disseminate information, look for documents, share and brainstorm about their work.
- Documents produced for the network: mainly a 'vademecum' and useful information for all the EDCs (including contact points, databases and other valuable information sources).
- A leaflet presenting the EDC network in France, the final version of which is still in preparation. The leaflet has been supported by the Commission Representation and was based also on the input from the network members.

Documentation distribution – how to make the supply meet demand?

Monique Déjeans, EU Publications Office

Ms Déjeans presented OPOCE, the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, as an interinstitutional service provider tasked with publishing official EU publications. She stressed that contrary to a traditional publisher, OPOCE did not select the content of these publications, but merely processed and disseminated it. The selection of the content is undertaken by around 150 author services, comprising the different Directorate-Generals of the European Commission and other bodies and agencies of the European Union.

These author services decide on their publication programmes, target audience and dissemination policy depending on their own budget. Ms Déjeans noted that her team was responsible for execution of centralised dissemination of publications to the EDCs and could not make decisions on behalf of the

author services. Although OPOCE had therefore limited leverage in providing publications on topics and languages EDCs may require, she offered to try to help the EDCs to solve their problems related to the distribution of documents. Ms Déjeans introduced EU bookshop and its bulk order facility and explained how EDCs can lodge their complaints per email. In conclusion, she clarified that the all EDCs in the EU were managed by DG Communication, while those in candidate countries depended on DG Enlargement and the Euls outside the EU on DG Relex. The discussion following Ms Déjeans' presentation focussed on the quality, appropriateness and serial numbering of the documents they receive.

Before the continuation of the meeting, Mauno Hänninen made a short presentation of the ED Intranet, reminding the present delegates on how to edit and update their personal information. He also recalled the possibility to send a request about the change of the username/password to access the Intranet. He announced that the General Training Seminar in June, targeted newcomers in the network, would include a training session on the Intranet.

Cooperation between EDCs at the national level – examples from Italy and the United Kingdom

Margaret Watson, Bodleian Law Library, Oxford and Tiziana Dassi, Università Commerciale L. Bocconi, Milano

Two other inspiring examples of cooperation at national level were presented by the national coordinators in the UK and Italy.

Margaret Watson started by outlining the motives for the setting-up of the cooperation at national level. She underlined the existing feeling of isolation among the members, and the need for them to liaise in order to bridge the gaps in both human and financial resources. It also turned out to be rewarding and enjoyable, in her view.

The cooperation emerged in the 1970s, when the 'northern group of EDCs' started to organise meetings, to launch several initiatives, and to invite representatives of the Commission to EDC-related discussions. From that initiative the Association of EDC Librarians emerged, which later transformed itself into the European Information Association. This association has later followed an independent path.

The two existing cooperation vectors are the formal EDC networking, and the wider unofficial cooperation mainly through the European Information Association. The distinction between both channels can become blurred in some cases. Key activities of the cooperation are national network meetings, publications, training seminars, emails lists and discussion forums ('Eurodoc', launched in 1993, and the distribution list of the EIA 'Eurotalk'). Websites (notably the main EDC website hosted by the UK Rep) the 'Infoeuropa' newsletter, and person-to-person networking were identified as alternative valid forms of cooperation.

Ms. Watson provided a successful example of cooperation through the transfer of the collections from the Westminster Public library to the Reference British Library with provision of in-house training for the staff of the library on managing the collections. For the future, Ms Watson recommended to make even more use of the UK website, and of online tools such as blogs, discussion forums, and finally to increase support and encouragement to new EDCs.

Concluding her presentation, Margaret Watson was pleased to note the renewed interest from the Commission towards the EDC network, which is increasingly positioning itself not only as a repository of information but also as a network of expertise and guidance. Since the quality of the services provided by EDCs depends largely on the quality of its Librarians, the cooperation between them in that respect is essential.

Tiziana Dassi, National coordinator of the Italian EDCs, introduced the Italian experience regarding EDC coordination.

The Italian EDC network comprises 46 EDCs, mostly based in universities. Cooperation is based on a national coordinator, a deputy national coordinator, and a coordination group composed of 5 EDCs. Ms Dassi described the activities of the Italian EDCs network, presenting first the national website, then a discussion list, and finally the joint projects between EDCs and Relays.

The Italian EDC website (<http://www.cdeita.it>) was launched in June 2000 and has been updated and further developed in March 2006. Edited and regularly updated by the above-mentioned coordination group of 5 EDCs, it aims at providing information on EU policies, events, and publications to the network, but also to citizens and the general public.

The discussion list created in May 1999 gathers about 100 subscribers and allows for sharing of information and documents.

The Italian EDCs jointly implemented a project named '50 anni d'Europa insieme/50 years of Europe together', under the coordination of the Università Commerciale L. Bocconi, Milano. It consisted of a series of seminars on the Treaties organised in 26 cities all over Italy and a website on the project. It was accompanied by promotional material (poster, folder celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Treaty, and a notebook). The project was organised by the EDCs in partnership with the Representation of the European Commission in Italy, and received financing from some Universities and other EDC host institutions.

Finally, Ms Dassi identified some best practices at local level, and concluded by assuring that cooperation between EDCs was the way to achieve better results, undertake important projects, offer better services to a greater number of citizens, and create personalised services at the local level. Outlining some ideas for the next future, she insisted on the need for the Italian EDC network to take part in joint projects from the planning stage and not only at the end of the process, to better promote their role in their host institutions, and to develop specific services for their University-based public.

Visit to the Commission Central Library

At the Central Library of the European Commission, library staff introduced participants to the new ECLAS catalogue of the Central Library. The key features of the catalogue include an inter-library loan service, an alert service by subject, full-text publications and an ECLAS thesaurus. Moreover, library staff emphasised that they were available to reply to emails on questions regarding (electronic) access to EU documents, EU documents on a specific topic and the collection in general, access to the Central Library and help with search in the ECLAS catalogue. A guided tour of the collections of the Central Library rounded off the EDC coordination meeting.

Annex I: List of Participants

EDC	country	first name	name	E-MAIL
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