



# **Evaluation of performance of EU Info Centres in the Enlargement and Neighbourhood regions (2011-2017)**

## **Synthesis Report Annex 3:**

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**Evaluation of performance of  
EU Info Centres in the Enlargement and  
Neighbourhood regions  
(2011-2017)**

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*The opinions expressed in this document represent the authors' points of view  
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## Introduction

This document is Annex 3 of the Synthesis Report on *The Evaluation of performance of EU Info Centres in the Enlargement and Neighbourhood regions (2011-2017)*. It presents 10 country notes, which were drafted following field missions in each of the case study countries.

The field phase was the **third phase of the evaluation**. It involved conducting fieldwork in the seven IPA beneficiaries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey) and three neighbourhood countries (Armenia, Tunisia and the Ukraine).

Two members of the evaluation team visited each country. The objective of the field phase was to gather further evidence to complete the answers to the evaluation questions and enable the evaluation team to validate / reject preliminary answers to the evaluation questions as well as build a firmer evidence base from which conclusions can be drawn.

Although some representatives at the EU Delegation and partner organisations were likely to be able to provide some longer-term perspectives, it was difficult to find people who were able to provide reliable insights into the whole 2011 – 2017 period. Therefore, much of the evidence gathered during the field phase related to the current or very recent situation.

By going to the countries, the team could deepen its understanding of the context and environment of the EU Info Centres and other communication activities in the neighbourhood region. This type of contextual understanding is very important as many of the effects generated by communication activities are intangible and are highly influenced by the contextual setting. It can also be difficult to engage with target groups and stakeholders at a distance and these limitations were overcome by organising face-to-face meetings when in the field.

The field missions took place in two stages. The **first stage** focused on the **IPA beneficiaries**. The fieldwork in the beneficiaries was launched on 11 November 2018 and it was closed at the end of the first week of December 2018. The fieldwork schedule was as follows:

**Table 1: Field work schedule: first stage**

Week commencing	IPA beneficiary
11 November 2018	Turkey
18 November 2018	Albania, North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina
25 November 2018	Serbia and Kosovo
2 December 2018	Montenegro

The fieldwork to the **neighbourhood countries** took place in the **second stage** and was launched on 1 April 2019 and it was closed on 18 April 2019. The fieldwork schedule was as follows:

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\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

**Table 2: Field work schedule: second stage**

Week commencing	IPA beneficiary
1 April 2019	Tunisia and Ukraine
15 April 2019	Armenia

There were **methodological advantages** to conducting the fieldwork in two stages. Firstly, it enabled the evaluation team to have sufficient time to prepare the findings from the enlargement region and to consider how to fine-tune the approach for the neighbourhood region field phase.

There were four main elements to **each beneficiary visit** in the enlargement region, as follows:

1. Visits to the EU Info Centres;
2. Meetings with EU Delegation staff;
3. Individual interviews / group meetings with representatives of:
  - a. Partner organisations
  - b. Member State embassies
  - c. EU programmes
  - d. Government; and
4. Focus group / interviews with young people (students).

The fieldwork in the case study for the **neighbourhood countries** focussed on the following main activities:

1. Meetings with EU Delegation staff;
2. Interviews with EU Delegation communication contractors
3. Interviews with target groups of the EU Delegations' communication activities, including civil society organisations, young people, EU Young Ambassadors, representatives of the media
4. Individual interviews with representatives of ongoing country-specific communication activities and projects (including OPEN Neighbourhood Programme, EU Info Centres, if applicable, as in Ukraine and those involved with the former EU Info Centre in Armenia); and
5. Individual interviews with communication partners (e.g. international organisation) / embassies.

The exact list of interviewees was agreed with the respective EU Delegation in advance of the field mission and related to interviewees availability and willingness to part in the evaluation process. The output of the fieldwork was the identification of field-phase findings in relation to each evaluation question, together with conclusions and recommendations at country level. These are presented in the individual case study reports, which are provided in this Annex.

# Albania

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This case study country note provides information on the field mission to Albania in November 2018, as part of the evaluation of EU Info Centres in the Western Balkans and Turkey. The note presents key findings from interviews with EU Delegation staff, partners, EU programmes, a media representative and five students, as indicated in the table below. The evidence gathered during this mission will be integrated with findings from other field missions and triangulated with findings also on hypotheses from other sources of evidence. The results will be presented in the evaluation Synthesis Report.

With regards to challenges and mitigation strategies during the field mission: the only significant challenge related to the focus group with journalists, where several journalists cancelled at the last minute or simply did not attend. This was mitigated by additional desk research into the media environment. It also led the evaluation team to contact more students to ensure a sufficient number of students attended the focus group the following day. This was worthwhile, as many students who had confirmed did not attend while the “last minute” attendees reached did. The evaluation team were unable to reach the IPA coordinator for an interview.

<b>IPA beneficiary visited</b>	Albania
<b>Dates of field visit</b>	19 – 21 November
<b>Evaluators responsible</b>	Emma Godfrey Biserka Ivanovic Sarkanovic
<b>EU Info Centre / Point visited</b>	Europe House in Tirana Boulevard "Martyrs of the Nation", Congress Palace, Tirana, Albania
<b>EU Delegation staff interviewed</b>	Head of Cooperation Deputy Head of Finance / Contracts Communication coordinator
<b>Interviews with EU programmes / beneficiary government</b>	Municipalities for Europe
<b>Interviews with partners and projects</b>	<u>Partners:</u> German Embassy in Albania, Italian Embassy in Albania, Netherlands Embassy in Albania, UNDP in Albania, Albanian Telegraphic Agency, European University in Tirana, Albanian National Training and Technical Assistance Resource Centre—ANTTARC
<b>Focus group with students</b>	Five students from Tirana University <sup>1</sup>

“Europe House” (as the EU Info Centre is known) is located in the Palace of Congress on the main boulevard “Martyrs of the Nation” in Tirana city centre. However, Europe House has a side entrance to the building,

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<sup>1</sup> Students from Tirana University, from the Faculties of Economics, Business Administration and Public Administration in the age from 18 to 21 took part in a focus group.

which is not visible from the main street, but which still has a relatively grand entrance with European flags. Europe House is walking-distance from the Delegation. As staff frequently attend Europe House events, being in close proximity to EUD is an important criterion for setting up Info Centres, as this reduces the amount of staff time wasted through travelling.



Once inside, Europe House (several rooms inside the Palace<sup>2</sup>) is not very clearly signposted and EU branding is minimal, although there was a small stand in the corridor for leaflets in both English and Albanian on the EU enlargement package and 60 years since the treaty of Rome. There is a formal conference room, which can accommodate up to 100 people and a training room with capacity for 20 people, the latter is currently used for spill-over storage for Delegation materials, suggesting that it is not currently serving a training or meeting room purpose.



All stakeholders consulted – the EUD, the contractor, various partners - were of the view that facilities are not ideal for visitors (or staff), nor does the space allow for the full implementation of the ToR<sup>3</sup>. The ToR foresee a space which attracts drop in visitors<sup>4</sup>. The current premises are not considered fit for this purpose, partly because some of the ToR are not followed, but more importantly because the premises are not optimal for having people drop in from the street. Indeed, the contractor confirmed they do not have many walk ins (in fact the data shared shows walk in visitors ranged from a low of 10 (in July 2018) to a high of 91 (in October 2018)). As mentioned, the entrance is some way from the main street and this means people would need to

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<sup>2</sup> The total space is 200 sqm

<sup>3</sup> In addition, it does not allow for all elements of the ToR to be met (for example providing a cafeteria.), while there is also the additional temporary challenge of on-going works. Once the works are complete there will continue to be disruption and noise from performances in the same building, which is not ideal when Europe House hosts events (especially if there is protocol involved).

<sup>4</sup> For example it specifies there should be access to functional computers, newspapers and journals.



go out of their way to enter the building. A more optimal space to fulfil the ToR would be somewhere visitors see when they walk past, with high footfall and where the space itself has the specified facilities which are conducive to attracting passers-by to enter and stay/hang out (i.e. cafeteria, material to browse). Based on a shared assessment that the current venue is sub-optimal, and discussions between the EUD and contractor, the current contractor is actively looking to relocate in spring 2019<sup>5</sup>.

## 2. CONTEXT IN ALBANIA

### 2.1 Country specific context

Albania has a population of 3.2 million people, with 28% of the population less than 18 years old.<sup>6</sup> Albania has deep-rooted corruption and serious issues with organized crime. Unemployment is high (particularly for young people, just over a third of people aged 15 – 24 years were without work in Albania in 2016<sup>7</sup> and living conditions are poor. In some municipalities, running water is only available at certain times in the day, as explained by interviewees. Interviews also explained government officials are not routinely paid, as municipalities struggle with cash flow. According to interviewees many leave Albania for a better life in the EU, especially young Albanians. The result is a very high number of applications for asylum in the EU member states<sup>8</sup>. The “brain drain” phenomenon is significant.

The country was identified as a potential candidate for EU membership during the Thessaloniki European Council summit in June 2003, submitted its formal application for EU membership in 2009 and was awarded candidate status by the EU in June 2014<sup>9</sup>. In October 2018, the European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs voted on the Resolution on Albania. The country must fulfil the five key conditions to open the accession negotiation process with the EU:

- 1) fight against organized crime and corruption
- 2) fight against drugs
- 3) reform of the judiciary
- 4) public administration reform, and
- 5) protection of human rights, including minorities rights and property rights.<sup>10</sup>

European integration is one of the major priorities of the governing programme 2017-2021. In May 2018, the Prime Minister Edi Rama signed and endorsed the 2018-2020 National Plan for European Integration.<sup>11</sup> The plan includes short-term and medium-term measures up until 2020, with the ultimate goal that Albania fully aligns its legislation with and meets the standard set out in the EU acquis. However, as explained by stakeholders in country, the Albanian political landscape is divided. This was suggested to be exacerbated by fragmented pro government and pro opposition media, which undermine “dialogue”. A 2018 joint research project between Reporters Without Borders and the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network in Albania, showed that the Albanian media scene is “*highly concentrated in the hands of few major owners, who have*

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<sup>5</sup> Another space, which is more open plan and much bigger than the current one (approximately 600 sqm), has already been identified and is being actively pursued by the contractor, in close collaboration with the EUD. This new venue is even closer to the EUD and is considered to a more inviting space (given the drawbacks of the current venue and the layout of the new venue).

<sup>6</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/a-cultural-strategy-for-albania-implanting-the-cultural-bug/1680794665>

<sup>7</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Enlargement\\_countries\\_-\\_labour\\_market\\_statistics#Employment\\_rates](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Enlargement_countries_-_labour_market_statistics#Employment_rates)

<sup>8</sup> As reported by the Independent Balkan New Agency, Eurostat released statistics showing 1 in 2 Albanians who migrate apply for asylum in the EU. <https://balkan.eu.com/eurostat-1-in-2-albanians-who-migrate-apply-for-asylum-in-the-eu/>

<sup>9</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/albania\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/albania_en)

<sup>10</sup> <https://exit.al/en/2018/10/12/european-parliament-negotiations-with-albania-will-open-only-when-the-five-conditions-are-met/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://punetegashtme.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/vkm-nr-246-date-9-5-2018-2-plani-kombetar-per-integrimin-evropian-2018-2020.pdf>



*strong political affiliations, and control more than half of the audience share and nearly 90% of the market share*<sup>12</sup>. The report also highlights journalist intimidation and self-censorship. According to the Union of Albanian journalists, 45 journalists of different media sought asylum in the EU and US in 2017 -2018<sup>13</sup>.

A further issue relates to limited resources within the media. A well-informed interviewee explained that there is just one journalist for Albanian media based in Brussels. Linked to the lack of resource, according to interlocutors in the EUD, the quality of reporting was described as poor. This is also highlighted in the EU Delegation's 2017 Information and Communication Forward Plan. For example, if the EUD releases a statement, the media have been found to copy paste without adding additional analysis. The lack of professional reporting standards in the areas of communication / media, represents a significant challenge to the EUD. In fact, the EUD was subjected to an aggressive defamatory campaign, with fake news about EUD work and Ambassador's statements. This campaign targeted the former Head of Delegation and was reported to be driven by radical segments of pro-opposition online media.

According to stakeholders consulted in country, in terms of media consumption habits, traditional media are still important particularly TV, but social media is increasingly popular as a news source, particularly among the young. This feedback reinforces the need for the current mixed-channel approach, incorporating a focus on both traditional and social media.

## 2.2 Strategic communication

In addition to the challenges posed by the media landscape, the EUD's strategic approach to communication needs to take account of public opinion and views on EU investment. EU accession is seen as the most important political process after the fall of communism and establishment of the democratic government. Public opinion on **accession** to the EU is positive, but interviewees suggested that this is not necessarily due to an understanding of the process. Indeed, because there is a consensus that accession to the EU would benefit Albania<sup>14</sup>, there is a lack of real, meaningful political debate on the issue – this is one of the few areas where the political parties agree.

Within Albania, interviewees reported the EU is viewed by the public, civil society and government as the most **important partner**, one which is pushing for critical reforms. Similarly, reportedly the Delegation of European Union (EUD) is viewed positively by both the government and public, and its role in pushing the government into uncomfortable but important directions was recognised. In fact, the EU's involvement was reported to lend credibility to government action and, therefore, it is important (for the Albanian government) to be seen to be engaging with the EU.

However, according to officials in the EUD, the scale of **EU investment and its purpose are not well-understood** among the public. This is an area where more communication is considered necessary. Many stakeholders were of the view that the public believe that Albania will become a member sooner than is realistically possible, so the Delegation is actively trying to change this perception. Within the EUD, there is the view that an approach which is based more around public diplomacy would be beneficial, as it would accentuate aspects of the EU which are accessible to audiences.

According to the EUD, at regional level, beneficiaries and local authorities have been empowered to collaborate in communication about the EU's investment through the "**Municipalities for Europe**" project<sup>15</sup>, which is one of the EU-funded projects out of four currently implemented with municipalities in Albania (Esere, Star, ReLOAD are jointly implemented with the UNDP). According to stakeholders consulted, many Albanians go to municipalities to get basic information. In every municipal office in Albania, there is now an EU corner, which serve (informally) as a mini "EU info centres". The objective is to provide information to the

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.mom-rsf.org/en/countries/albania/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://exit.al/en/2018/09/05/journalists-flee-hostile-climate-of-albania/>

<sup>14</sup> "91 per cent of the population is in favour of Albania joining the EU and 87% of Albanians saying that EU integration is important to them personally", EU Delegation Information and Communication Forward Plan, 2017

<sup>15</sup> Please see more at: [https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/albania/16325/eu-strengthens-its-support-local-governance-albania\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/albania/16325/eu-strengthens-its-support-local-governance-albania_en)

general public (students, SMEs, farmers etc.) on for instance how to apply for funding<sup>16</sup>. This is a huge asset for Europe House, especially now that the two regional info centres (Vlora and Shkodra) are closed. At the same time it represents a model that could be replicated in other countries to consolidate EU regional/local-level communication.

Leading from the above, current **target groups** for communication activities are wide-ranging according to the EUD and contractor, reflecting the widespread need for more information about the EU, better understanding of the accession process and ultimately more public awareness about the EU, its policies and values. In addition, there is the need for information about the EU to ensure an informed public debate on integration into the EU, its benefits and challenges, in terms of country reform effort and EU support. There is a relatively long list of groups that are identified as being targets for EU communication, as follows: the general Albanian public, government and public institutions, media and civil society, researchers, academic circles and think tanks, youth, university and school students, the business community, women, older people and pensioners, and other stakeholders, e.g. EU-funded Projects Managers. Given the finite nature of resources, this raises questions regarding such an ambitious scope and the extent that the Delegation and Europe House in its current form, is able to support EUD communication, towards these groups, in a targeted and meaningful way.

The Ambassador is keen on public debates on TV, outreach activities which include travelling outside of the capital, he is also a regular user of Twitter. Europe House staff provide support by organising visits in the field, utilising EU desks in municipalities where established, alongside the various events, updating the EUD's website and social media presence. These activities are all reflected in the Intervention Logic that was prepared by the evaluation team to illustrate the logic between EU Info Centre (Europe House) objectives and resources, and outputs, outcomes and intended impacts.

## 2.3 Management and organisation

Findings during the field phase confirmed earlier interviews with the Delegation and contractor during the desk phase of evaluation. The main issues continue to relate to contract management, which was described as burdensome by both the contractor and the EU Delegation; the level of human resources in EUD and the lengthy internal approval process, which are contributing factors to this situation. Solutions to boost EUD human resources for communication work have included, using external contractors for communication work and incorporating a communication role for the Team Leader of the Political, Economic and Information Section<sup>17</sup>, but the fundamental issue remains that the Delegation is stretched. Communication work needs to be closely managed even when it is outsourced, and this requires resources. All communication plans and content (campaigns, events, messages) need to be approved by the EUD. This allows EUD confidence that Europe House staff are conveying accurate messages, with the correct tone, but there is a balance to be struck as the timeframe for approval is typically 3 to 4 weeks, which is considered too long from the contractors' point of view and implies that it is difficult for Europe House staff to support responsive communication, for example in relation stories / issues that break in the media.

The Delegation staff and partner organisations interviewed during the field mission emphasised the dearth of high-quality communication professionals in Albania as a further underlying barrier making outsourcing of communication challenging. There did not appear to be any obvious solutions to these issues within the current EUD set up, although it would be worth exploring whether there are any quicker 'short cuts' to approving content to increase the efficiency of current management processes. While the contractor is reported to be delivering against its objectives, managing their work is taking up more than a half of the

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<sup>16</sup> There is no data on how well-known the desks are in their municipalities but during 2018, the Albania Council of Ministers took a decision to institutionalise these desks and upgrade them. This happened without the EU intervention and shows the high profile buy as the state is interested in funds and programmes and wants to improve absorption of funds.

<sup>17</sup> but this individual doesn't have a professional communication background as this would not typically be in the position job description.

weekly working hours of the Information and Communication Officer. This burden is high for an already under-resourced team. This underlines the importance of ensuring that there are sufficient and appropriate resources available within Delegations to manage EU Info Centres.

In the face of these constraints, over the past years, the EUD has consolidated and grown the budget for communication work. Where the EUD had small individual contracts previously (e.g. Europe week activities, debates, publications etc.), these have been grouped into bigger contracts with broader aims, as with the current info centre contract, which has a budget of 1.5 million EUR. The current ToR, developed by the EUD (in consultation with other EUDs in the region rather than guidance from head-quarters<sup>18</sup>) concern only one EU info centre “Europe House” in Tirana. The support to the two additional info centres, which were located in Shkodra and Vlora has been discontinued. The reasoning behind their discontinuation was to prevent a concentration of activities in just two regional locations and encourage more regional events in different locations and to develop collaboration with the municipalities.

EUD is satisfied with the current contractor’s performance and there is some leeway granted in judging performance as the contractor was new. According to those consulted (within the EUD and from the contractor), the contractor has so far respected and followed the ToR requirements wherever possible<sup>19</sup>. No significant issues were reported with regards to the type of contract<sup>20</sup>.

The first year of the current contract, the current contractor, who was a new contractor, needed to establish itself in country. The first year was seemingly challenging because there was a lot of additional work<sup>21</sup> due to the arrival of a new Ambassador in September 2018 and a backlog of activities to be delivered, due to the break in contractors. During this first year, there was a predominantly reactive approach to delivery for this reason. However, looking ahead to this year and the more streamlined approach, the EUD hopes for more creativity and a more proactive approach from the contractor, as well as (even) higher quality deliverables and more strategic communication insights. The lead time for new contractors is a factor, which has been identified in other IPA beneficiaries, and needs to be taken into account in the establishment of any new Info Centres in the neighbourhood region.

No problems were identified with regards to the frequency of contacts between the contractor and the Delegation. The contractor, a private company which previously managed the EUIC in Kosovo, is in direct and daily communication (via WhatsApp and emails) with the EUD. In the words of the EUD staff, they work as “one team” with the contractor. Depending on the activities, the contractor consults either the political or operational section within the EUD, or both, and has weekly meetings with the EUD. The contractor provides weekly plans and a monthly calendar of events, with events planned for the following three months. Reporting requirements consist of:

- Three reports every year for feedback (NB. since there are weekly meetings the feedback is more on-going than structured).
- Monthly reports, which provide collated figures for social media, visitors, projects, etc.
- A weekly social media report on total followers, new followers and numbers of posts per platform, best performing posts and audience insights<sup>22</sup>, which provides insights for the EUD to improve its communication over time (i.e. by indicating what posts are most successful / what messages work).

There is a variable approach to monitoring and gathering monitoring data on reach and outcomes, the approach depends on the event or the media used. If the event is informal, Europe House staff gather information on the number of participants and may also gather informal feedback, verbally. Feedback forms were also sometimes used but not systematically<sup>23</sup>. Although the evaluators were informed that from 2019 a

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<sup>18</sup> There was no suggestion that guidance from headquarters was requested but nor was it issued.

<sup>19</sup> There were some minor exceptions where the ToR required elements which the contractor could not deliver – such as those relating to the facilities in the premises itself.

<sup>20</sup> Some minor issues were mentioned with specific deliverables, such as prizes for competitions which were reported to be not possible within the contract despite featuring in the ToR.

<sup>21</sup> (promotional events to inaugurate the new Ambassador)

<sup>22</sup> Samples of these reports were shared with the evaluation team (refer to table in country note introduction)

<sup>23</sup> The EUD provided an example of a feedback form (see annex – Questionnaire from EU info Comm Day).

systematic approach was planned and event participants will be asked to feedback on three things: 1) What did you like? 2) What can be improved? 3) What other suggestions do you have? These questions are not considered to allow for meaningful data to be collected on the extent to which participants have understood the messages and / or whether the expected outcomes have been achieved.

Based on the evidence gathered, it also appears there is no standardised template for Europe House submission of aggregated data to EUD. Usually the contractor does not provide feedback data in an aggregated format. Collected feedback forms are provided to EUD together with a succinct summary table. However, for social media monitoring, whilst EUD did not define a specific reporting format, a format has been developed and refined over time. Data collected on social media is detailed and specific (i.e. data is presented for each individual social media post, as well as an aggregated total for the week).

There are no targets set for Europe House performance and this makes it difficult to assess whether there are improvements over time, for example in relation to satisfaction levels. This type of data could also be used to facilitate comparisons between contractors over time and to encourage higher performance levels.

## **2.4 Other actors communicating on the EU**

Partner organisations consulted confirmed the complementarity of the work done by Europe House with their own communication objectives. For example, EU Member State embassies shared the view that there was a need to communicate clearly on the accession process and confirmed this was one of their main communication objectives. Partner organisations were keen on the idea and the possibility for Europe House to act as a “hub” for communication on accession (although they were not suggesting this had already been achieved). They were also positive about the opportunities for joint actions where relevant. Examples given of relevant collaboration included Europe Week and cultural diplomacy activities (like outdoor cinemas / film screenings / book club events, etc.). Steps had been taken to seek out synergies with partners, for example holding a meeting with EU Member State embassies, however this is perhaps something that could be repeated and approached as an on-going / regular process of collaboration.

Notwithstanding the above concerns regarding the closure of regional EUICs; the “Municipalities for Europe project” is an example of good practice as a mechanism for outreach to rural and more remote communities. The EU-funded project, which includes “EU corners” in municipal offices where EU brochures are displayed and information provided and any questions about the EU are answered, is an example of a strong bottom-up approach to developing knowledge of the EU and improving capacity around EU in local areas for citizens. Speaking with the project coordinator showed that, again, from the experience to date and the nature of the queries received, target groups are interested in what the EU can do for them (i.e. work and travel abroad).

- Feedback on communication needs

Multiple stakeholders suggested that people are interested in the EU (for the opportunities they assume it will provide) but they do not understand the EU institutions, or accession process. The danger is that increasingly the public who support accession see it as an ever-receding prospect: *“Most Albanians want to join the EU but there is also EU fatigue – we are behind Macedonia for example.”*<sup>24</sup> leading to accession fatigue.

Indeed, five students consulted were positive about EU accession, but they saw it as far away (in their view, the best-case scenario would see accession in 2023 and worst-case scenario not even in a 10 years’ time from now), due to the multitude of problems the country has (e.g. crime, corruption, weak economy).

The EU is seen as bringing benefits (i.e. in their view joining the EU would develop country’s economy, it would mean more opportunities to live and work abroad). But trying to gauge their understanding of the process indicated there was less (very little) comprehension of what reforms need to be undertaken to make accession possible. They were not very well informed about the accession processes, for example they assumed accession meant joining the Euro.

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<sup>24</sup> Interview with a journalist, Nov 19, 2018

Interestingly, the view of the journalist (which echoed the view of senior staff in the EUD) was that to improve communication (and dispel fatigue) on EU issues to the public and media, the messages coming from the EUD should be firm and clearer. In his view, the language used remains too technical and too diplomatic. The EUD should not be afraid of “*saying it how it is*”<sup>25</sup>. This tough approach was taken by the US Ambassador and (according to different stakeholders) it works.

- Feedback on “Europe House” as a brand / known entity

“Europe House” was known among target groups consulted. For instance, the students had heard of Europe House through friends, although most had not visited the space before.

Some stakeholders consulted (i.e. local partners) had experience of working with the previous contractor but had not yet been approached by the new contractor in the past year. Some aspects were reported to have worked well with the previous contractor (such as engagement between the contractor and university to inform students of opportunities to study or work abroad).

- Feedback on added value of Europe House

The added value of Europe House as a free and neutral space<sup>26</sup> for events for target groups and users was referred to by multiple stakeholders consulted in country. One NGO with limited resources for events cited the importance of “*a projector and white wall, great photographer and everything in one place*”).

There was concern about the closure of regional EUICs among several stakeholders consulted and some hesitation about the suitability of the current Tirana venue for protocol activities (because of the on-going construction surrounding the venue, and the fact that it is “a bit hidden”). It was also described as “grand and formal but not very welcoming”. The tendency for the government to concentrate activity in the capital, the fact that there are not many CSOs outside of Tirana which have enough capacity to provide expertise or advice on the EU means that there are limited activities relating to the EU and EU visibility is low outside the capital.

## 2.5 Assessing the Intervention Logic

Europe House and EUD staff confirmed the accuracy of the intervention logic for the 2017 period, but emphasised subsequent changes to the approach / activities supported. The most significant change being the closure of the two-regional EUICs and other changes to streamline the approach. Looking ahead, working with Member States is an under-developed area which could be exploited further, particularly in line with the emphasis on public (including cultural) diplomacy field. There is scope for the EUD to continue its leading facilitation role, to allow Member States to utilise the Europe House space and coordinate activities further. The main additional insights uncovered in the field related to the assumptions (which are similar to constraints), which must hold and the real or perceived risks (synonymous with challenges or barriers), as follows:

- Interest for EU membership among the general public and specific target groups very high
- Government remains strongly committed to EU and introduces necessary reforms without delay
- Multipliers in country must have the necessary expertise and be viable in technical and financial terms
- EUD has sufficient resources to manage contract optimally
- Euro-scepticism among opinion shapers and media analysts following uncertain deadline for the opening of the negotiations and fatigue (risk of Albania becoming a “little Turkey”!)
- No opposition to enlargement means there is no real engagement on the topic by political parties - it is seen as a right and not something that the country needs to make changes to achieve!
- Partners (un)willing to work together

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Civil society or interest groups tend to be competitive and Europe House can play a role here by providing neutral ground to come together. Indeed, having the Europe House logo on the invitations can actually help reach actors that would have not otherwise come to an event (because they would perceive it as being hosted by a “competitor” and/or because the EU brand gives more credibility to an event).

- Quality of journalism and communication - more outputs but no resources, intimidation of journalists, concentrated ownership of media, and manipulation of public discourse, fake news

The below intervention logic is intended to represent the activities of Europe House in Albania, taking into account the feedback that has been gathered from a variety of stakeholders. It is too early to assess the extent to which expected outcomes have been achieved, but the feedback gathered suggests that the activities implemented (if implemented well) should contribute to the intended outcomes.



## Reconstructed Intervention Logic for Albania

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Desired outcomes	Desired impacts
<b>Personnel</b> EUD – 2 FT staff members: Manager & Info/Communication Officer  <u>Europe House: 7 staff members:</u> <b>4 key experts</b> (1 Team Leader, 1 PR and Events Manager and 2 Public Information Officers) <b>3 non-key experts</b> (1 Help Desk Officer, 1 Social Media Expert and 1 Website Master)	<b>Management:</b> Running of Europe House. Welcoming visitors, advising & informing; dissemination & display  <b>Events:</b> organising Europe Day and monthly events per month, including press conferences and Europe House visibility events. Technical assistance to EUD. Photographic services.  <b>IT:</b> Manage, update and contribute to EUD and Europe House websites, relevant social media, Q&A database and monthly EUD newsletter	The EU Delegation is successfully assisted in implementing its information and communication strategies.  Coordinated programmes of events are delivered which create EU-activity hubs, integrating other EU-actors: MS embassies, EU programmes, municipalities, and engaging target groups from across Albania.	The knowledge and understanding of EU policies, objectives, priorities, institution, programmes and perspectives are increased among the population at large, as well as the myths and misconceptions on the EU accession process are dispelled.  Awareness of the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) is increased in the country through success stories on concrete projects.  Synergies with multipliers and other interested parties are increased for the provision of the information on the EU and the EU integration process.	<b>Better understanding of EU</b> Albanians have a higher level of understanding the EU's policies and programmes  <b>More knowledge of EU integration</b> Albanians are more informed about Albania's EU integration process
<b>Contractual</b> ToR, service contract, €1.5 million budget  <b>Content</b> From partners/ projects  <b>Process</b> Weekly meetings with EUD  <b>Premises</b> Standalone offices in Tirana	<b>Promotion &amp; dissemination</b> audio-visual products Leaflets, posters, brochures Other products, e.g. folders; pens, bags, notebooks, USBs, etc.  <b>Media reviews:</b> morning briefings; daily reviews; press clippings  <b>Synergies</b> with multipliers & interested parties on EU information provision	EU messages and information are covered via on traditional print and TV and the EU presence on social media continues to grow with new followers, via different social media platforms.  Synergies build through new partnerships with Ministries, Tirana University, Municipalities, Albanian Football Federation, and CSOs		
Target groups		Assumptions/ risks		
<b>Frequent target groups (survey)</b>  Young people aged 16-25 & aged over 25 (not retired), students Government & local institutions employees, politicians, Jobseekers, potential beneficiaries Journalists IO's, NGOs, Civil Society Women groups, Cultural associations	<b>Target groups (reported in TOR)</b>  General Albanian public Government and public institutions Media and civil Society Researchers, academic circles and think tanks Youth/ university / school students Business Community Women Older people and pensioners Other stakeholders, e.g. EU-funded Projects Managers	<u>Assumptions</u> Interest for EU membership among the general public and specific target groups remains to be very high Government remains strongly committed to EU and introduces necessary reforms without delay Political consensus on integration with EU maintained EU information providers (CSOs, educational institutions, media) willing / able to mobilise resources to foster discussion on EU Multipliers in country lack the necessary expertise and are not viable in technical and financial terms EUD has sufficient resources to manage contract optimally  <u>Risks</u> Increased Euro-scepticism among opinion shapers and media analysts following uncertain deadline for the opening of the negotiations and fatigue (risk of Albania becoming a "little Turkey") Conflicting messages to target groups due to overlapping activities with other donors' and Albanian government No opposition to enlargement means no real engagement on the topic by political parties - it is seen as a right and not something that the country needs to make changes to achieve! Partners (un)willing to work together Quality of journalism and communication - resources, intimidation of journalists, concentrated ownership of media and manipulation of public discourse, fake news		



### 3. EVALUATION FINDINGS IN ALBANIA

**EQ1. To what extent have the objectives of the EUICs been defined considering the specific needs of the target audience in the IPA beneficiaries and contribute to the objectives set in the EU framework on strategic communication in the enlargement region?**

#### Relevant Judgement Criteria

- Specific target group communication needs have been well defined and the EUICs' objectives clearly focus on these needs.

Neither the EUD, nor the contractor had conducted in-depth research into specific target group communication needs prior to the time of the field visit. However, during the field visit, EUD confirmed that it had contracted an external provider to conduct focus groups to gather information on the views of the public to enable better targeting and messaging. This research was due to commence when the evaluators were in country.

One of the hypotheses from the desk phase, was that it would be possible to place greater focus on research into how to tailor target group needs and that the option of fewer target groups should be explored. Under the new approach for Europe House planned for 2019, there will be fewer events, but events and activities will be more tailored to different target groups and align with themes of EU support. It is planned to tailor messages to target groups on the basis of the research, which was planned for the end of 2018. This confirms that the EUD's thinking and strategic vision is in-line with the hypothesis from the desk review. However, a focus on fewer target groups is not part of the vision and the cost implications of a focus on fewer target groups has not been defined. Given that resources are stretched, and the breadth of groups targets is so wide-ranging, there would be value determining priority groups to avoid the budget being spread too thinly with reduced effect.

Interviews in the field confirmed hypotheses in relation to objectives. The EUD would benefit from a common concept linked to a long-term vision because this would help to guide choices about priorities and the main goals that Europe House is seeking to achieve. With this as a starting point, Europe House would still need to better define which specific communication needs it is seeking to address by developing a better understanding of the local / national situation and challenges, which are particular to Albania. A review of monitoring data conducted during the visit (for example, visitors to events, social media followers, etc.) shows that it would add value if Europe House was set more specific and measurable indicators. In addition, there was no evidence to confirm processes are in place to analyse the data currently collected against the EU's strategic communication objectives. It appears the collection of monitoring data serves to confirm what activities have taken place and their reach rather than to confirm communication performance for example across different activities and / or years.

The monitoring data seen is not sufficiently systematic or targeted at gathering data on messaging to allow for an assessment of whether the activities supported are contributing to the EU's strategic communication objectives and target group needs. The exception to this is social media, where the contractor is providing weekly analysis of the posts published and thereby gathering the necessary information to assess whether the messages reach and resonate with the target groups (i.e. by looking at reposts and / or views, etc.).

**EQ2. To what extent have the objectives of the EUICs been achieved?**

#### Relevant Judgement Criteria

- Extent that the outputs of the communication activities implemented by the EUICs have produced the expected outcomes, which contributed to the achievement of the set objectives.
- Extent to which the quantitative and qualitative effects of the outputs and outcomes of EUICs' activities can be deemed to have contributed to the achievement of the set objectives.
- Extent to which other factors influenced the achievement of the outcomes.

- Extent that the communication tools used by the EUICs were appropriate for each target audience.
- Extent that the EU Delegations' use of other communication tools (e.g. social media) could have had a higher outreach to different categories of the target audience.

At the time of the field visit, the current contractor had been managing Europe House and associated communication activities for (just) eleven months. During the field mission, the evaluation team could, therefore, only assess the extent to which the contractor is on the road to achieving the objectives set (which are presented in the intervention logic<sup>27</sup>), and whether activities are in line with objectives. The main source of data is the feedback gathered from the EUD and the contractor themselves. According to the EUD, the activities delivered to date were reported to be in line with expected outcomes (in terms of higher visibility of the EU, information about the accession process, coverage in electronic and print media, among others) and were considered to contribute to the objectives set. The fact that this year marks a change in direction, with a refocusing of activity also shows the capacity to make changes to the communication approach, including rebalancing budgets on fewer, more thematic activities with higher impact, which confirms the validity of the desk review hypothesis that this is an option, which can be pursued by the Delegations.

The monitoring data shared with the evaluation team, which include visitor statistics, event participation lists, social media activity reports, among others, confirms that the communication activities so far have been in line with the outputs defined in the ToR. Evidence collected by EUD and Europe House confirms that outputs have contributed to an increase in the volume of information about the EU, its policies, values and funding through events organised at Europe House in Tirana and around the country<sup>28</sup>. The development networks with partners and multipliers was also evident from discussions with partner organisations (e.g. UNDP and others) and in monitoring data<sup>29</sup>.

Factors that may limit the achievement of outcomes include those risks and barriers outlined above, for instance the risk of Euro-scepticism among opinion shapers and media analysts following uncertain deadline for the opening of the negotiations and fatigue (risk of Albania becoming a "little Turkey"). This risk was cited by multiple stakeholders and is considered to pose a long-term threat to achieving better understanding of the process itself and benefits, as target groups become less interested in the debates and in receiving information on accession. Other factors also relate to the external context in which Europe House and the EUD work, including whether partners are willing to work together when they see each other as competitors, and a lack lustre environment for debate – for instance media self-censorship, political parties not debating EU membership (as its benefits are taken as a given).

There was positive feedback from the EUD on the channels used, particularly the use of social media, which was widely confirmed to be a relevant channel (and one widely used by partner organisations as well). Weekly social media reports (and posts themselves) demonstrate a professional approach is taken to social media<sup>30</sup> and confirm that the contractor tracks the number of new followers on a monthly basis. The October 2018 monthly report confirms 1,798,156 followers via social media.

There was no evidence that other communication tools could have a higher outreach than the ones used.

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<sup>27</sup> Recalled here: the overall objective is to increase the level of information and public awareness of the Albanian population about the European Union, its policies and programmes, about their impact on citizens' daily lives, and about the accession process and about EU membership. To do so, the contractor must provide clear and accessible information and provide assistance to the EUD

<sup>28</sup> For example, confirmed by "Event report for Europe Week Activities (May 2018)" and Monthly Report – October 2018 (both included in annex).

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Two weekly social media reports were shared with the team – their comprehensive coverage, as well as the content itself is deemed professional (by the evaluators). Two examples can be accessed here:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VOhgV9sHPxFTpHRiRMd46xAsC\\_hrVdf0/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VOhgV9sHPxFTpHRiRMd46xAsC_hrVdf0/view) and

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1o2-wNZq6ji3EPevrDv7LqO4msr1JxPc2;>

**EQ3. To what extent the organisation and management of the EUICs have been conducive to an efficient, effective and sustainable implementation of the communication activities?**

**Relevant Judgement Criteria**

- The management of EUICs through service contracts is conducive to an efficient, effective and sustainable implementation of communication activities.
- The different EUICs and Info Points / Corners set up in an IPA beneficiary have worked together in an efficient and effective manner to reach the target audience and achieve the set objectives in that particular beneficiary.
- The system setup for monitoring the EUICs' activities functioned at regular intervals and was capable of collecting data and detecting problems (indicators were appropriately designed to measure the progress in relation to the baseline situation and the effectiveness and of the targets, and extent that targets were set realistically).
- Extent that the use of financing and management mechanisms could have provided better cost-effectiveness.
- The physical location of the EUICs in the IPA beneficiaries has facilitated the implementation of planned communication activities and the achievement of planned effects on the target audience.

During the interviews conducted and based on the information shared, some issues were raised in relation to financial and contractual aspects of the organisation and management of communication activities, which suggest that there is some scope for improvement in relation to the organisation, and management of the info centre. Our findings are as follows:

- The current process for management of incidental expenditure was assessed by both the EUD and Europe House to be burdensome (every single incidental expense needs to be approved and this is time-consuming). Since there have been no irregularities, it seems reasonable to conclude this could indeed be simplified.
- Having a service contract is not practical for some expenses. In the view of those consulted, renovation, prizes cannot be covered by the current contract (and would need to be covered somehow). This suggests other contracts may be needed to complement the service contract where necessary for effective delivery.

As the EU Info Points in Shkodra and Vlora had been closed, prior to the field mission, it was not possible to verify the effectiveness of communication with these Info Points and the Europe House in Tirana in situ.

In terms of the set-up for monitoring, our findings are as follows:

- The current arrangements for reporting ensure that EUD is well informed about activities planned and implemented by Europe House at least on a weekly basis, with weekly, written reports, and on an on-going, daily basis, for example through WhatsApp. The questionnaire presented in the Annex also confirms how Europe House staff aim to capture insights / inputs from other EU-funded projects, as do the monthly report<sup>31</sup> and the report Europe Week<sup>32</sup>.
- It is difficult to define composite benchmarks for communication activities, which integrate the contribution made by different channels and tools. However, although EUD did not set specific targets or indicators in the ToR data monitoring, the contractor tracked a wide range of indicators, as follows:
  - People reached via events, people reached via social media
  - Numbers of events
  - Numbers of social media posts
  - Profiles of organisation participants and contributors to Europe House events, for example MS embassies, government ministries, universities, cultural organisations, etc.
  - Number of visitors to Europe House

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<sup>31</sup> An example monthly report for October 2018 is provided in annex.

<sup>32</sup> In annex

In addition, the contractor provides some analysis of progress against baselines by comparing social media analytics on a month-by-month basis. For example, the October 2018 report confirms the number of new followers that month was up by 3,609, which represented a 51% increase.

Our findings vis-à-vis possibilities for more cost-effective contracts were as follows:

- Longer contracts or the possibility to extend contracts based on strong performance, would be an improvement. Ideally, this would mean contracts that run for 18 months, extendable to up to 24 months. After that period an evaluation of the contractor's performance and a contract renewed.
- The EU financial procedures (as described in PRAG)<sup>33</sup> allow for the hybrid of the global price and fee-based contracts. If deliverables are well drafted it would make sense to do a global price contract but fee based contracts remain the preferred option, as it is almost impossible to define the deliverables in advance.

There are several aspects in relation to the significance of the physical location of Europe House. Whilst the two regional info centres have recently been closed, this has not prevented the Europe House contractor from running 25 different events at 18 different locations throughout Albania during Europe Week. Nor did it prevent the contractor from turning these events into hub-type activities, which integrated participation of ambassadors from MS embassies, different government Ministries for example Ministry of Culture and Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, municipalities, a national museum, and EU-funded projects. Another aspect relating to the physical location of Europe House relates to the host premises. Whilst this has allowed events to be held, as planned, the evaluators observed, and stakeholders confirmed, that the facilities were sub-optimal (as outlined in the introduction). Whilst there are plans to relocate Europe House, this finding points to the need to define a minimum set of requirements / key characteristics that are most conducive to promotional activities.

- **EQ4. To what extent the EUICs have contributed to raising public awareness about the EU, its policies and values, EU funding and on the enlargement process in the IPA beneficiaries?**

#### Relevant Judgement Criteria

- Extent that target groups of EUIC communication activities in the IPA beneficiaries are more aware of the EU, its policies and values, EU funding and the enlargement process.
- Extent that EUICs reach new audiences with EU messages about EU policies and values, EU funding and on the enlargement process that would not be reached by EU Delegations, or EU-funded projects.

As mentioned under EQ1, the current contractor had been delivering services for just under a year at the time of the field visit, which means it is too early to make an assessment on their contribution to raising public awareness about the EU. Also, the current approach to monitoring, which can be considered to be relatively thorough based on the evaluators' assessment of the current monitoring and reporting templates, focusses on the collection of quantitative data. The contractor tracks levels of reach and participation via events, social and traditional media, including TV on a monthly basis and provides detailed event reports, which also report on communication indicators.

The collection of qualitative data, for example feedback and opinions on levels of satisfaction, increases of awareness and information are not collected with the same level of consistency as those relating to quantitative data. This type of data can be more time-consuming and therefore costly to collect and also there is no requirement for this from EUD. Therefore, it was not possible to make an evidence-based assessment of whether the activities are contributing to raising public awareness about the EU and its values, EU funding and the enlargement process on the basis of monitoring data, although feedback from stakeholders who participated in Europe House events considered that this was the case.

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<sup>33</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/prag/document.do?nodeNumber=1>

The Europe House contractor gathers data on new followers (which equates to new audiences) and looking at reach and impact of messages (for example looking at reposts and shares). The October 2018 report confirms an 51% increase in new followers from the previous month. However, although the contractor is able to track new audiences on the Europe House social media accounts, it is not possible to assess the extent that these new followers are new to EU messages as they may be informed through other channels such as the media or other partners, including EUD, EU-funded projects or even the Albanian government. There is currently no targets set / the ToR do not set the ambition for Europe House to extend the reach of its activities to specific new audiences although outreach is considered to be part of Europe House activities.

During the field mission, the evaluators reviewed the communication materials that were on display inside Europe House. The use of messages on EU policies, programmes on the Europe House website was also verified during the desk phase of this evaluation. On this basis, it is possible to confirm that the Europe House contractor is disseminating messages, which are relevant to the goal of raising public awareness of the EU.

- **EQ5i. To what extent the activities carried out by the EU Info Centres have been coherent, complementary and coordinated with those carried out via other EU programmes and by other partners (e.g. Member States, IFIs, international organisations) active in communicating re. EU policies & values, EU funding and the enlargement process in the enlargement region?**

#### **Judgement Criteria**

- EUICs and Info Points liaise in a regular and planned way (either directly or via the EU Delegation) to share intelligence, identify synergies and opportunities to work together with other EU policy / programme communicators in the region.
- Extent that it is possible to identify other relevant opportunities to improve coordination to develop a more joined-up approach.

As there are no active Info Points in Albania, the first Judgement Criteria is not relevant to the field mission.

On the second Judgement Criteria, the fieldwork found that there is evidence of complementarity of Europe House with activities of partner organisations interviewed and EU projects funded, but that there was still scope for improvement.

In terms of how the “Municipalities for Europe” project engages with Europe House, there is scope for improvement. There is an absence of a systematic approach to cooperation between Europe House and the “Municipalities for Europe” project. Utilisation of the staff and network in the municipality from the “EU corner” desks is on an ad-hoc basis, for example when the Ambassador pays a visit to a municipality or when there are activities on a project taking place in municipalities. This could be made more regular. Interestingly, while there would also be room for engagement of the EU MS embassies in the project, for the time being the embassies have no appetite for this kind of engagement and / or may be lacking the budget to travel outside of the capital.

Similarly, engagement with other partners (such as MS embassies) was not always systematic or regular enough, with some embassy contacts not receiving regular updates on Europe House activities (i.e. the mailing list for events was not necessarily being used or did not contain an updated list of contacts). One NGO representative believed a newsletter would be a good way to improve joint planning.

Indeed, all partners consulted voiced their readiness to work more with the Europe House and with the EUD. The main issues were their own agendas, lack of budgets and absence of a strong engine to coordinate and organise activities and keep all parties on the same page.

**EQ5ii. To what extent the EU Info Centres can contribute to the development and implementation of a joined-up Public Diplomacy (cf. EU Global Strategy) and act as hubs for EU-related initiatives taking place at the local level (i.e. both EU and non-EU funded)?**

**Relevant Judgement Criteria**

- Extent that EUICs, Info Points and staff of EU Delegations responsible for public diplomacy collaborate on joint initiatives or coordinate their initiatives.
- Extent to which EUICs and Info Points support and are a focal point of activities (EU and non-EU funded) to reach public diplomacy target groups.

As there are no active Info Points in Albania, the scope of the Judgement Criteria is EUIC for this field mission.

In terms of the extent to which Europe House and the EUD collaborate on public diplomacy initiatives, the field visit confirmed that there is intense and regular communication on all messaging, including those relating to public diplomacy. The EUD confirmed that from 2019 onwards, the approach to communication (implemented by the contractor) would be more focused on public diplomacy issues. This suggests that the EUD considers the contractor can be a vehicle for delivery and pursuit of public diplomacy objectives.

Based on the information gathered during the field visit, there was no evidence to indicate an explicit clear, agreed concept of Europe House as a hub / focal point of activity. However, there was a desire for the space to be used as a hub for EU-related activity, as expressed by partner organisations. Despite this, Europe-week activities in particular provide examples of the capacity for Europe House to organise hub-type activities, which group together the participation of a wide range of communication actors, including national and regional government, other EU projects, MS embassies, CSOs, universities, etc. The extent that this format of coordination could be extended to include a wider range of events will relate to the level of resources available to EUD and Europe House to support communication. The capacity of partner communicator organisations (such as those listed) to take advantage of a hub-type approach also relates to their own capacity levels.

An interesting finding from this assessment is that the notion of hub does not necessarily need to relate to a fixed physical structure, the essence of the hub concept relates instead to the coordination and integration of communication efforts by different EU communicators and partners.

**EQ6. What is the additional value resulting from the communication activities carried out by the EU Info Centres compared to what could have been achieved by the IPA beneficiaries at national or regional levels?**

**Relevant Judgement Criteria**

- Extent that the reach and engagement of target groups by EUICs with EU messages on policies and values, funding and the enlargement process is greater and more effective than the benefits for target groups at national or regional level that IPA beneficiaries do or could achieve.
- Extent that IPA beneficiary communicators convey the desired messages on EU policies and values, funding and on the enlargement process.

Europe House monitoring data confirms reach and engagement of target groups. Feedback and evidence from the contractor and EUD demonstrate regular communication of messages relating to EU policies and values, EU funding and the enlargement process. It is not possible to quantify the reach and engagement of the Albanian population using national or regional government data. Therefore, analysis of the first Judgement Criteria above is based on feedback and observations.

Drawing on insights gathered in country, it was evident that IPA beneficiaries at national / regional level have different objectives to the EUD. A priori, the government would have an incentive to exaggerate progress made in relation to efforts to meet accession criteria, as this would reflect well on the government. As such, there is clearly value in having the EUD (and Europe House) communicating on the necessary steps to be taken for accession and to remain in control of those messages, especially when these messages need to be

tough and challenge the status quo / those in power as is the case in Albania (as explained in “context in Albania”).

Also, both EUD and the Albanian government share the goal of supporting the accession of Albania to the EU. As partners in this process, it is important that both EUD and the Albanian government are visible in communicating about the EU in Albania.

Evidence on reach and engagement of target groups provides a snapshot of visitors who asked for information on the accession process (but not whether the information met their requirements).



## 4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALBANIA

### *Conclusions for Albania*

- The organisation and activities carried by Europe House can be considered to add significant value to the EU Delegation's efforts to support communication about the EU policies, values and the accession process, not least due to the resource constraints facing the EUD and the evident need for an EU voice on the accession process to combat the low quality of information available from other sources.
- Whilst there is a new contractor in place, which makes it difficult to assess whether any outcomes have been achieved in the current contract period, Europe Week 2018 provides an example of a strong communication performance with the organisation of hub-type activities, which bring together and integrate the efforts of a wide range of different communication partners. With events organised in 18 locations across Albania, Europe Week confirms the outreach capacity of Europe House, suggest that the close of the two Info Points does not limit this type of outreach and suggests that the hub concept does not necessarily need to be linked to a physical location. Similarly, exploiting synergies with other on-going EU-funded projects, such as the "Municipalities for Europe", demonstrates potential for outreach in more remote locations even without an EU Info Point.
- The term Europe House is purely a name, and is not currently a clearly defined concept at present. Europe House currently carries out the same types of activities as other EU Info Centres in the Western Balkans. However, unlike some other Info Centres, there are low or no expectations of providing services to spontaneous visitors in the current venue. Europe House is in practice an event and communication coordination centre and staff provide communication support to the EU Delegation, as well as using the venue for events.
- There are plans for a more prominent and visible street-front location. If these elements are implemented, it is possible that the Europe House concept may start to become more clearly a meeting place which provides information about the EU.
- The physical attributes of host EU Info Centre premises have an impact on what can be expected of an Info Centre. In Albania, not being visible to passers-by is considered to limit footfall, at the same time the available space is not currently adapted to receive visitors. This is recognised and there are plans for a new space. At the same time, this points to a need to define a list of requirements / optimal characteristics for Info Centres.
- There are significant challenges to communicate about the EU accession process. While there is widespread support for accession, there is increasingly fatigue, little understanding of the process and some false expectations, which need to be managed. This confirms the need for clear communication on the process and the role of both the Albanian government and the EU on the process.
- The importance of communication from the EU is underlined by the levels of corruption and polarised positions in the political environment, mistrust in the government and the contrasting positive perception of the Delegation and the EU Ambassador in general. There are many risks, which make the work of the EUD and Europe House / the contractor difficult. The risks include capacity issues (i.e. resources for and quality of communication / journalism profession can be variable / low), competition among partners with the same goals, which prevents collaboration, and the media landscape is increasingly compromised by fake news and self-censorship (due to intimidation). These risks limit what can be expected from communication activities.
- Although Europe House was known among the sample of target groups and users, feedback on the "new" contractor (who is running the current contract), suggests that Europe House has been preoccupied with an intense programme including ad-hoc activities relating to the inauguration of the new Ambassador and has not been able to proactively reach out to partners based on those met during the field visit. As such, there is scope for further collaboration in the next years of delivery.

- There are plans to improve the added value of Europe House, including a new approach to outreach, including activities in remote regions. However, as the contractor had only been operating for 11 months at the time of the field mission there was a corresponding limited level of evidence to confirm performance. Nevertheless, it was already clear that the current venue is not fit-for-purpose because it does not allow Europe House to meet the requirements set in the ToR.
- The activities delivered by Europe House were considered to be coherent with and complementary to the activities of partners and other EU funded projects. For instance, partners confirmed their communication objectives were similarly around improving awareness of the EU, informing the public about the accession process. However, there was scope for more regular and systematic engagement to ensure the maximum possible reach and impact of messages through an increasingly joined-up approach whether the appetite for collaboration permits.
- Whilst Info Centres extend the scope of EUD communication within a given country, the example in Albania confirms that significant resources are required to manage these contracts, including managing and signing off on content and message, which is time consuming and implies a need for communication expertise. In Albania, the fundamental issue is the under-resourced EUD (re. dealing with Communication issues) which causes delays.

### ***Recommendations for Albania***

Based on the findings from the fieldwork, taking into account the objectives as outlined in the ToR, current state of affairs and also a larger frame in terms of opportunities that can work as multipliers we propose the following recommendations:

- Given the widespread agreement that the current venue is sub-optimal, to maximise the added value of Europe House in Tirana, its planned relocation to a more amenable venue close to the EUD should be pursued without delay.
- There is a continued need to counter-balance the government tendency to focus on events and activities in the capital as well as the concentration of organisations and capacity in the capital with efforts to reach target groups in remote regions / and use EU-funded project to fill a gap in communication / develop understanding about the EU in more remote locations (e.g. Municipalities for Europe).
- It is recommended that the change in approach (to refocus efforts on fewer campaigns and themes of EU support) be combined with more systematic engagement with stakeholders to maximise their involvement and potential synergies. This would need to be supported by more proactive and regular, structured outreach to partners, supported by an updated contact list.
- There is scope for more lesson learning and sharing of best practice in the region, for example in terms of how to strengthen contractual procedures to reduce burden and maximise utility for the EUD especially since an underlying issue is that the EUD has very limited resource (i.e. few staff) for dealing with Communication activities compared to others in the region.

## 5. ANNEXES – EXAMPLES OF MONITORING DATA / COLLECTION

### Feedback form

#### QUESTIONNAIRE ON COMMUNICATION & VISIBILITY OF EU FUNDED-PROJECTS

21 June at 10:00 – Europe House

This questionnaire aims to improve the cooperation between EU Delegation, Europe House and EU-funded projects. Your answers and suggestions are important to help us improve our joint efforts to increase the level of information and public awareness of the Albanian population.

##### A) EU Debates

Can you suggest topics / themes for EU Debates?

Topics / Themes	Potential Panelists

##### B) EU Masterclasses

Can you suggest topics / themes for EU Masterclasses?

Topics / Themes	Potential Trainers

##### C) EU Book Club

Can you suggest books or authors for the EU Book Club series?

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##### D) EU Cinema Nights

Can you suggest movies to be included on EU Cinema Nights?

Movies	Themes / Topics

##### E) Success Stories

Can you suggest individuals who can be invited for the Success stories events?

Individuals	Area of Success Story

##### F) EU Village – Second Edition

What can be done differently this time?

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What city do you suggest for the organisation of the EU Village second edition?

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### **G) Campaigns**

What topics / themes do you suggest for organisation of campaigns in the future?

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### **H) Cooperation with Europe House team**

How do you see the cooperation between Europe House and your project?

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How can we improve the cooperation between Europe House and your project?

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### **Closing**

Thank you very much for your time.

Your answers remain confidential and for internal use of Europe House and EU Delegation only.

### **Event report for Europe Week Activities (May 2018)**



20180517 Europe  
Week 2018 Report.p

### **Monthly Report – October 2018**



201810 Monthly  
Report Oct 2018 Eur

# Bosnia and Herzegovina

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This case study country note provides information on the field mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina in November 2018, as part of the evaluation of EU Info Centres in the Western Balkans and Turkey. The note presents key findings from interviews with EU Delegation staff, EUIC and EUIP staff, representatives of EU programmes and beneficiary government, other donors, MS embassies and cultural institutes, students and visitors of the EUIC/EUIP. It was not possible to conduct on the spot interviews with walk-in visitors as there were no visitors during the time of the visit. The evidence gathered during this mission will be integrated with findings from other field missions and triangulated with findings from other sources of evidence. The results will be presented in the evaluation Synthesis Report.

The main challenge during the field mission were the limitations of the monitoring data available. The findings from the desk review was completed by the sampled monitoring data by the contractor team met during the field mission. Overall, there is no monitoring system with clear indicators, the evidence base was therefore thin. It was mitigated by a large consultation programme involving many different stakeholder categories to gather their feedback and triangulate data on the perceived results. It was also not possible to conduct on the spot interviews with EUIC walk-in visitors as there was none during the field visit.

<b>IPA beneficiary visited</b>	Bosnia and Herzegovina
<b>Dates of field visit</b>	21 – 23 November
<b>Evaluators responsible</b>	Anne-Claire Marangoni Samir Sosevic
<b>EU Info Centres / Points visited</b>	Sarajevo and Mostar
<b>EU Delegation staff interviewed</b>	Head of communication/spokesperson section Head of cooperation section Head of contracts, finance and audit section Programme managers & Press and information officer/ Spokesperson
<b>Group discussion with representatives of EU programmes</b>	Entreprise Europe Network (EEN) Horizon 2020 Creative Europe
<b>Interview with beneficiary government</b>	National IPA Coordinator (NIPAC): Assistant Director, Directorate for European Integration
<b>Group discussion with other donors<sup>34</sup></b>	USAID UNDP Swiss Embassy
<b>Group discussion with EU MS representatives (embassies and cultural institutes)</b>	Italian Embassy, Spanish embassy (cultural office) French cultural institute Hungarian diplomat seconded at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bosnia and Herzegovina (special adviser on EU integration)
<b>Focus group with students</b>	13 participants (held in Sarajevo), including a representative of the Erasmus student network
<b>Focus groups with visitors of the EUIC/EUIP<sup>35</sup></b>	One held in Sarajevo (4 participants) One held in Mostar (4 participants)

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<sup>34</sup> We interviewed a sample of other donors active in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Cooperation between the EU and other donors is decided on an ad hoc basis, depending on the complementarity and synergies between the project each donor implements.

<b>EUIC/Ps</b>	EUIC Project director EUIC Team leader EUIC staff (3 – Event Assistant, PR Officer and Public Information Officer) EUIP Mostar staff (2 – Administration Officer and Communication Officer)
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The EU info centre network in Bosnia and Herzegovina consists of one EU Info Centre in Sarajevo (established in 2014), three Info Points in Banja Luka (established in 2016), Mostar and Brčko, and three Info Corners in Istočno Sarajevo, Tuzla and Zenica (established in 2016). The EUIP act as EU information hubs at local level and complement the work of the Centre by conducting activities most relevant to their audiences. The EUIP should be the main point of contact for local media outlets and other actors/multipliers promoting the EU in their respective areas.

The evaluation team visited the EUIC in Sarajevo and the EUIP in Mostar. Based on the team's observations and the feedback collected from the EUIC team and EUD communication staff, neither location and physical setting are a good fit for the following reasons:

- Challenging access due to security requirements (for the EUIC Sarajevo)
- Little external visibility (for the EUIP Mostar)

The EUIC in Sarajevo is co-located with the EUD/EUSR and the German Embassy. Due to the very strict security rules to access the building, the location is very visitor unfriendly.



Once in the EUD building, just outside of the EUIC, there is a waiting space with shelves and documentation available (for visitors to consult when they wait to be let in the EUIC). Once the visitor goes through the security door, there is also a general visitors' space. The EUIC team considered that it was a good opportunity for any visitor to pick up materials, but there is no monitoring of the number of materials picked up – the EUD Press and Information Officer/Spokesperson indicated that the contractor was tracking the materials produced but not the number of materials disseminated (either at events or materials picked up on the shelves). The EUIC staff maintain the shelves and add/renew materials where relevant. Shelves also display material produced by EU funded projects.



The information materials can also be found when the visitor enters the EUIC, in a library corner (pictured here).

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<sup>35</sup> It was not possible to conduct on the spot interviews with individuals who visit the EU Info Centres because there was no visitor during the field visit. The visitors met in Sarajevo and Mostar had been invited to participate in the focus group discussions.





Overall, the layout of the EUIC Sarajevo is appealing with a clear blue and yellow branding. There is a mural which decorates the space, representing European and BiH's landmarks.



The EUIC inner space consists of a main (conference) room with ca. 50 seats (depending on the audience, more visitors can be seated: for instance, if an event is organised for children, the EUIC can welcome 70 children). The glass walls can be removed to create a larger space into the hall of the building. The space was refurbished relatively recently). At the back of the conference space, there are two offices, one for the Team Leader and one shared by four staff members. The EUIC Sarajevo has regular opening hours.

The EUIP in Mostar is located in a shopping mall and completely invisible from the outside (personal observation of the interviewer) but based on the focus group with users conducted during the field phase, it was found that the location and space are adequate enough and well-situated.

The space of the EUIP Mostar is simple. It consists of one room (ca. 90 square meters), which the EUIP staff views as suitable for the organization of seminars, meetings, trainings. The info point consists of a single room, visible from the hallway of the mall in principle but in practice its identity is lost between the commercial information and advertising of other shops. The layout is not very attractive, the EUIP looks like an office (with a desk, folders). This detail is noted given the importance of layout and appearance in a space, which is intended to attract passers-by. There are various types of brochures, leaflets, publications, most of them in English language (randomly organized). There is also a PC with an access to EU web page for free consultation (placed near the shelves with info materials) as the Terms of Reference for the 2016/383-035 contract.





EUIPs are currently open from 15:00 to 19:00 as per the TOR (which will most probably change in the new phase to 14:00 – 18:00). EUIPs are required to be open every day (working days). The TOR do not specify opening hours, but consultation with the EUIP team indicates that it was expected that the public would be more available in the afternoon and evening after school / work.

In both cases, the number of walk-in visitors is very limited – even more so at the EUIC Sarajevo given the security requirements to access the EUIC. It was not possible to conduct interviews on the spot with visitors (either first-time or regular visitors) during the fieldwork because there were no visitors to the spaces when the evaluation team was there. However, this was mitigated by the gathering the views of visitors who participated in the focus groups, who had heard of the EU before first coming to the EUIC and had some exposure to the EUIC's activities. The EUIC staff considered that lack of drop-in visitors is a limitation relating to the location of the info centre. But the location allows the EUIC, at the same time, to organise an event alongside an official visit at the EU Delegation for instance an official visit.

Overall, interviews reveal that EUIC staff focus more on event organisation / hosting rather than on attracting individual visitors. Unless there are planned actions to increase the number of visitors, the event aspect should probably be given more prominence in the framing of the EUIC. Overall, the number of visitors reported is overestimated (4,367 visitors reported in the Final Report of the 2016/383-035 service contract, covering the period of 1<sup>st</sup> June 2017– 31<sup>st</sup> May 2018). The interviews with the EUIC staff and the EUD communication staff revealed that the figure included event participants and should, therefore, not be considered accurate reporting. The definition of who is reported as “visitor” would help to clarify what activities are concerned (e.g. events organised by the EUIC, events organised by other stakeholders using the EUIC premises).

The ToR requires the Centre to organise different kind of events targeted at different groups: Europe Day, cultural events, open days, joint activities with student organisations and NGOs, lectures/seminars for NGOs, competitions, as well as information sessions/seminars on the EU for media and for potential applicants to EU-funded programmes (e.g. Creative Europe, Horizon 2020). Events can be categorised based on their targets:

- events targeting the general public (e.g. Europe Days, European Mobility Week)
- events targeted a particular group(s) of stakeholders (e.g. researchers at the Researchers' Night; culture operators at cultural events – included cultural events organised by MS and national cultural institutes and supported by the EUIC)

Events can promote a theme (e.g. European Year of Cultural Heritage, climate change) or an EU value (e.g. European film days on cultural diversity) or provide information on EU programmes and funding opportunities (e.g. “EU funding experiences and opportunities They can be recurring events (e.g. Europe Day) or one-off events (e.g. press conference after a Commissioner's visit). The ToR specify the number of events to organise and their frequency (e.g. the EUIC should organise four events a month, each EUIP should organise two a month). Themes reflect EU priorities and serve to promote EU policies in certain fields, and EU-funded projects related to these issues in the country – as for instance the work done around cultural heritage in 2018, which echoed the proclamation of the European Year of Cultural Heritage.

The latest final report available for the contract 2016/383-035 (Management of EU Info Centre and EU Info Points 2017-2018 Bosnia and Herzegovina) also indicates that the 251 events organised were attended by 13,245 participants and reached 17,500 individuals. Reporting is not accurate and likely includes double-

counting. Indeed, EUD and EUIC staff indicated during interviews that the reported number of walk-in visitors in EUIC/EUIPs (4,367) actually “most likely included” also event participants. It was not possible to confirm these numbers as posteriori.

Overall, students, the donors and MS embassies and cultural institutes who participated in the focus group discussions during the field visit outlined that the EUIC space was welcoming and adequate for event organisation. Event organisation features as the primary task of the EUIC as the EUIC team leader reported that half of the EUIC budget was dedicated to the organisation of events and the donors. However, based on interviews with EUD staff, representatives of other EU programmes, other donors and MS representatives, the approach to event organisation is not sufficiently strategic and appears to be project-driven. This view however reflects the confusion which might exist between activities organised by the EUIC and activities organised by EU-funded projects. It was suggested that the identification of themes, a more systemic collaboration between the EUIC, the Cooperation section of the EUD and the development of content across the IPA portfolio could be explored to contribute to the implementation of a longer-term communication and the sustainability of results. This step needs to be taken within the EUD and in turn the EUIC could support the implementation of long-term communication strategy.

Besides event organisation, the EUIC implements several **other communication activities**. In 2018, the EUIC and EUIPs worked on five communication **campaigns**. The “EU funding experiences and opportunities” and “European year of cultural heritage” were labelled as “thematic small-scale campaigns” supported by the organisation of events across the country and online promotion. The EUIC and EUIPs also worked on two large-scale campaigns, the “European mobility week” and “Climate diplomacy week”, and Europe Day (closing with the European film days).

The **Internet (including social media)** is an essential communication channel. The ratio of 98.091 mobile cellular subscriptions per 100 people<sup>36</sup> shows that the use of the Internet and social media is appropriate in Bosnia and Herzegovina. There is one single website for the EUD and EUSR managed, hosted and maintained by the EUIC, but the EUIC has separate Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts. Instagram is taking over the position once occupied by Facebook and is quickly becoming the main social media for young people.

During the focus group with students, the evaluator asked them to comment on the EUIC Facebook page. The students were critical on the most recent publications immediately available on the Facebook page (on the day of the focus group) explaining that the presence seemed to amount to re-posting and sharing EUD posts rather than developing its own content. But beyond the few posts reviewed during the discussion group, the contractor is also developing original social media content.

The EUIC also develops **communication and promotion materials**. The final report of the 2016/383-035 service contract, covering the period between 1 June 2017 to 31 May 2018, mentions that 27,600 promotional materials were produced and close to 18,000 were distributed to public events, with 17,500 people reached by the materials. The EUD confirmed that the materials were distributed by the EU Info Centre and the EU Info Points. But there is no information on a possible dissemination strategy – the EUD Press and Information Officer/Spokesperson indicated that dissemination was event-driven and very often based on ad hoc requests coming from the EUD. There was no information available on the parameters of the dissemination (target, timing, objectives). There was no information available either on the number of materials made available in the different locations, at different activities, or on the number of materials picked up by visitors and activities participants.

The establishment of **EU info corners** (in 2016) in universities, aimed to strengthen the outreach to youth and student organisations. The EUIC provides the documentation/materials for visitors to the EU info corners. Info Corners relay information about the requests for information received on the EU and EU programmes from the visitors, number of visitors and the need for more copies of different materials. The

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<sup>36</sup> <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.CEL.SETS.P2?end=2017&locations=BA&start=2017&view=bar>

EUIC carried out an internal evaluation of the EU info corners<sup>37</sup>, which concluded that EU info corners add value to the communication efforts due to their proximity with one of the primary targets of communication efforts, youth and students (see the internal evaluation report annexed in Annex 1).

The EUD provides the general direction for the activities to be implemented by the EUIC network – as illustrated by the list of activities included in the EUD communication plan. But not all EUD communication activities are delegated to the EUIC network. The EUD/EUSR communication office is a key actor of EU communication in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Overall, the objective is to create synergies between the different activities implemented to enhance the targets / public's exposure to EU affairs. There was a general consensus, during the field visit, recognising that the primary focus was put on events. MS representatives and representatives of other (EU) programmes confirm that events are a privileged communication activity. Given that youth is a primary target of the EUIC network, the second focus of communication activities is social media. However, even if the consultations during the field visit show that the activities are of “good quality”, it is hardly possible to conclude on “how good they are” in the absence of appropriate monitoring (see discussion below).

## 2. CONTEXT

### 2.1. Specific context

Bosnia and Herzegovina is situated in the west part of the Balkan Peninsula. It is divided into the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska and District Brčko. The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is administered via 10 cantons, which are divided into a total of 79 municipalities. The Republika Srpska is comprised of 62 municipalities. The city Brčko is a separate administrative district.

The current population is **3,831,555**<sup>38</sup>. The population is comprised of three main ethnic groups Bosniaks (50.1%), Serbs (30.8%) and Croats (15.4%)<sup>39</sup> and there are three official languages: Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian (Bosnian and Croatian use Latin alphabet, and Serbian use Cyrillic alphabet). The average age of the population is 40 for women and 38 for men<sup>40</sup>.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a potential candidate for EU membership. This status was first defined in June 2003. Since then, there has been progress in several areas, for example visa facilitation and readmission agreements (2008), Interim Agreement on Trade and Trade-related issues (2008). The Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) entered into force on 1 June 2015. Bosnia and Herzegovina submitted its application to join the EU in February 2016.

The current political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is relatively challenging because of a complex web of administrative levels (States, Entities and Cantons). The presence of divergent political alliances at all three administrative levels presents challenges for the implementation of reforms necessary for EU accession.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is at an early stage with public administration reform. A public administration reform strategy is being developed, but there are question marks over when it will be adopted. There is very slow progress in reforms to the judicial system and corruption is widespread. In consequence, the fight against organised crime has had so far quite limited effects. Improvements are also required in relation to the strategic and legal frameworks required for counter-terrorism and human rights. There are number of unresolved murders, political pressure and intimidation towards journalists, a lack of effective implementation of the legislation on the prevention of and protection from gender-based violence. The key challenges to

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<sup>37</sup> Assessment of the EU Info Corners' utility: Management of EU Info Centre and EU Info Points in Bosnia and Herzegovina 2018, Contract no. 2017/394-752. Document made available by the EUIC team during the field visit

<sup>38</sup> [http://www.bhas.ba/tematskibilteni/DEM\\_2013\\_001\\_01-bh.pdf](http://www.bhas.ba/tematskibilteni/DEM_2013_001_01-bh.pdf)

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bk.html>

<sup>40</sup> [http://www.bhas.ba/tematskibilteni/BHB\\_2014\\_001\\_01\\_bh.pdf](http://www.bhas.ba/tematskibilteni/BHB_2014_001_01_bh.pdf)

economic prosperity, include the impact of a fragmented and inefficient public administration on the business environment, and insufficient investment in education and research and development.

## 2.2. Strategic Communication

In that context, the EUD 2017 Communication plan defines the global communication objective as follows: *to raise public awareness about the EU, its policies and values and to ensure an informed public debate on integration into the EU, its benefits and challenges, in terms of country reform effort, the integration process, and EU support.* The political challenges highlighted above create a challenging environment for the EU communication. **Public opinion on accession to the EU appears to be in decline.** Polling carried out in 2018 suggests that 56.5% of the population would support EU accession, if an EU membership referendum was to be held tomorrow (in comparison to 69% in 2017 and 76% in 2016).<sup>41</sup> There are significant differences in public opinion in the different parts of the country. In the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina accession support is at circa 70%; in Republika Srpska it is only 30% and it is circa 75% in the Brčko District. The EUD indicated that the polling data should however be put in perspective. A barometer commissioned by the EUSR in 2017 shows that **68%** of respondents support EU integration.<sup>42</sup> The support came down from 74% in 2016 but the results of the polling are likely to have been affected by the adoption of the amendments to the Excise Law in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was a hot topic at the time the survey was conducted.

Polling shows that the two primary reasons why the population support accession to the EU are the expected improvement of infrastructure (which seems to indicate a recognition of EU assistance to date) and the freedom of movement of people, goods and capital resulting from the accession. The main concern about accession relates to perceptions of higher taxes (as perceived by 66.5% of the respondents). Polling data also confirms that there is a lack of clarity within the population as to the status of Bosnia's accession application. Circa 40% of respondents think that Bosnia and Herzegovina is negotiating EU membership and 36.4% that Bosnia and Herzegovina has applied for the EU membership. The figures hide major differences, as for instance 38% of respondents in Republika Srpska do not know or do not want to answer the question. Respondents identified the politicisation of the process as the greatest obstacle to the integration.

The same polling also shows that the majority of respondents from all parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but mainly in the Federation, believe that youth will benefit the most from EU accession (41.5% overall), as well as students and researchers (17.9%). In relation to topics related to EU integration which they would find relevant in the media, a third of the polling respondents indicate that they are most interested in the impact of EU integration on their everyday life. Other areas of interest are: advantages of the EU integration (24.3%), the possibility of using EU financial assistance (16.9%), integration process-related reforms (16.2%) and integration costs (10.2%).

The poll provides useful information on the most relevant channels for communication about European integration. It asks what the two means of information are that respondents use most when it comes to European integration. The poll confirms that **TV remains the most important channel** in that respect. TV is the first choice in 63.0% of the cases and the second choice in 32.9% of the cases, radio is the second choice at 25.3% while the internet share is respectively 24.8% and 23.4% of the first and second choices.

There are a number of conclusions to draw at this point which frame any communication exercise and (should) feed into the design of the EUIC and implementation choices.

1. Target: as the expected primary beneficiary of EU accession, it seems youth should be the primary target of communication activities. Other segments of the audience are targeted (e.g. researchers are targeted by specific events such as the Researchers' night, Horizon 2020 info days) to provide specific information, as well as the general public overall to support the consolidation of the support for EU accession.

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<sup>41</sup> Public Opinion Survey: Citizens' attitudes towards EU membership integration process (April 2018), document made available by the DEI Head of Communication following the interview

<sup>42</sup> Summary of public opinion data (2017), document shared by the EUD

2. Message: the EU is recognised as the largest donor of funds to Bosnia and Herzegovina (93.8% of the poll respondents). Communication activities should aim to provide information about EU impact on everyday life, focus on concrete realisation that the public can relate to.
3. Channel: for the general public, TV is the most relevant channel, but this is a limitation for the EUIC team. But the cost of getting TV prime time coverage is a limiting factor, based on interviews with EUD communication staff.
4. Challenges: overall, the very complex administrative and political organisation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the multiplication of political communication and the politicisation of the question of EU accession challenge any communication on EU accession. Consultations with partners, Member States representatives and youth outline that the communication space is saturated, that political information is often not considered reliable and that there is a general fatigue with political communication. In addition, feedback also indicates that communication from the Government and national politicians on the EU and EU accession is not consistent. This creates a difficult environment for the EUIC, a fact that both EUD and EUIC staff is aware of (as expressed during the interviews). but this also constitutes an opportunity given that the EUIC is regarded a team of professionals, delivering good quality activities and providing reliable information.

We did not find any formal evidence indicating that polling / surveys informed the design of the EUIC. Interviews with EUIC and EUD staff highlight their awareness that the lack of research is a limitation in the design of the EUIC, to the extent that it also constrains any assessment of the effectiveness of the EUIC (through research before and after any EUIC implementation phase would might provide insights into changes levels of understanding about the EU). The EUIC contract starting in 2019 foresees the implementation of opinion polls at the beginning and at the end of the implementation period, which are expected to provide some evidence in terms of impact of EUIC activities in the future

### **3. ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT**

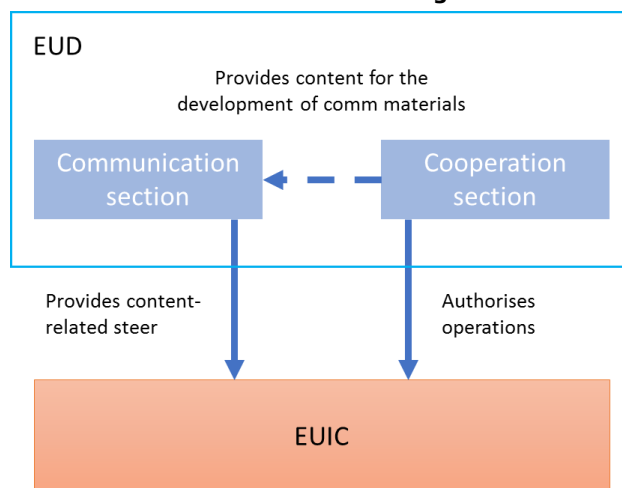
In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Head of the EU Delegation is also the EU Special Representative in the country. The Communication section of the EU Delegation one of the largest in the Western Balkans (9 staff) and supports the political process and the work of the HoD-EUSR. Nevertheless, interviews with EUD staff highlighted some friction areas, which might have an impact on the management of the EUIC, what activities they are implementing and how this is perceived:

- Staff responsible for communication in the EUSR office have large means, the EUSR budget is more than twice the budget of the EUD's information and communication
- Interviewees also perceived that there is a dichotomy between high-level communication done by the EUSR office and lower-level communication done by the EUIC.

In addition, there is also a challenge in the management of the EUIC. The primary contact of the EUIC team at the EUD is the communication officer, who sits with the communication section. However, the communication officer cannot be the authorising officer. This is due to the fact that the communication officer is an EEAS staff (European External Action Service) and only Commission staff can authorise decisions with financial implications and sign off on the use of the EU budget (EEAS staff cannot). In consequence, once the communication officer has given his/her approval, there is a separate project manager to authorise the EUIC operations with financial implications. This project manager is a member of Commission staff and sits with the cooperation section. This arrangement is sub-optimal because communication is not the core activity of the cooperation section, the EUIC-related tasks come in addition to the project manager's cooperation portfolio, and because the arrangement increases the administrative burden for EUD and delays decisions.



**Figure 1: The management of the contract in Bosnia and Herzegovina**



For the last four contractual phases, the EUIC contracts were established on a yearly basis (except contract 2014/352-955, which was for 18 months and a shorter bridge contract in 2018). EUD staff consider that this arrangement was sub-optimal and created unnecessary administrative burden linked to the management of the tendering procedure (the preparation of the TOR at such close intervals requires a high level of resourcing). EUD staff also consider that one year is too short to give the contractor the time to settle and establish the proper relationships for the successful delivery of communication activities. One-year contracts are also less efficient because at the start of any new contract implementation is slower, also there is a disincentive to train the EUIC staff, which creates the risk of loss of institutional memory. Overall, stakeholders agree that it is not a cost-effective solution, especially in comparison to other EUDs in the enlargement region, which implement other arrangements. For this reason, both the EUD and EUIC staff welcome the new arrangement which will be in place from January 2019 (expected) onwards with the signature of a two-year EUIC contract, renewable once for two years. This solution is deemed to be more cost-effective and brings the contractual arrangements into line with the other countries in the Western Balkans.

At the time of the field visit, the EUIC contract in place, titled *Management of EU Info Centre and Info Points 2018 in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, was a seven-month bridge contract to ensure the continuity of activities between the previous contract until the new contract is in place (expected January 2019). The need for a bridge contract itself suggests some unnecessary administrative burden; it is not possible to move smoothly from one contract to another.

Stakeholders' feedback is mixed on pros and cons of global price versus fee-based contracts. Overall, fee-based contracts seem more expensive to manage than global price contracts, which yet should only be used if outputs can clearly be defined ex ante. In the case of the EUIC in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the first three phases were implemented through global price contracts with a view to reduce administrative burden for the EUD and give flexibility. The two latest contracts signed in 2016 and 2017 are fee-based, as is the new contract. EUD staff considers that global price contracts can only be used when outputs are clearly defined. When there is the need to have a flexible situation (e.g. to react to external circumstances and to external opportunities), using fee-based contracts is interesting as it provides flexibility in the contract management while not exposing the contractors at the risk of any unforeseen expenses.

Interviews with EUIC and EUD staff show a good cooperation between the EUIC team and its primary contact at the EUD (the project manager in the communication section). Interviewees described that they were in daily contacts at a very operational level to discuss upcoming events, practical questions related to the logistics, identification of speakers, etc. There are also monthly meetings with the EUD project manager and EUD communication officer for the EUIC.

While there was an internal kick-off meeting for the EUIC and EUIP teams at the start of the current contract to "agree on the general direction" and the intent to organise regular strategic meetings between the teams, this has not been the case as reported by the contractor. Interviews with EUIC and EUIP staff reveal that the

daily communication is focused at the operational level. It aims to iron out details mostly related to particular event organisation. When an EUIP organises an event, which is attended by an EUIC staff, it provides an opportunity to do an operational catch up face-to-face, but the teams are aware that this is not sufficient and that more is needed to ensure all teams feel included. Following the establishment of EU Info Corners (at universities of Istočno Sarajevo, Tuzla and Zenica), the EUIC team is also in close contact with the hosting universities. The EUIC monitors the utilisation of the materials it makes available in the EU Corners to ensure it refills the shelves of the EU Corners where needed.

The monitoring system consists of several elements, based on the sample of templates received during the field visit (see annex), interviews with the EUICN team and our desk review:

- Event monitoring: the EUIC team uses the event concept paper template to define the key features of each event, including objective(s) and expected outputs. An example concept paper “Travel to Europe #T2EU” is available in Annex 2. For this event, the objective is described as follows: *“Promoting youth mobility and enabling young travellers to discuss first-hand experience with more experienced travellers who have travelled across Europe thus widening the engagement of young people and enhancing cultural exchange.”*

The event concept paper also identifies the target groups for the event: *Younger population of Bosnia and Herzegovina (16-28) and Youth Organizations’ Representatives*, but there is no indicator which builds on this targeting. In terms of expected outputs, the information included in the event concept paper can be re-interpreted as quantitative indicators accompanied by targets in general. An excerpt is provided below.

The event concept paper	Corresponding indicator	Target
Activity organised	Nr events organised	Not specified
200+ visitors	Nr event participants	200+
2000 people reached	Nr people reached	2000
Facebook	Nr event pages on Facebook	15
15 x event pages	Nr post-event photos posted on Facebook	4
Min 4 x post-event multiple photos posting: 2000 organic reach, 40 organic likes	Nr organic reach on Facebook	2000
	Nr organic likes on Facebook	40
Instagram	Nr event single photo posting on Instagram	15
15 x event single photo posting: 2500 organic reach, 100 organic likes	Nr organic reach event single-photo posting Instagram	2500
Min 4 x post-event multiple photos posting: 800 organic reach, 40 organic likes	Nr organic likes of event single photo posting Instagram	100
	Nr post-event multiple photos on Instagram	4
	Nr organic reach post event Instagram	800
	Nr organic likes post-event Instagram	40

The monitoring foreseen is purely quantitative. It does not include any qualitative elements, which constitutes an important limitation to assess the results delivered by the activities. The monitoring also seems to mix different levels of results, when setting targets for the number of event participants and the number of people reached (the latter being a higher-level result, which is not under the EUIC’s control, but likely to depend on the multiplying factor in communication).

A comparison between the event concept paper and the subsequent event report (Annex 3), highlights several inconsistencies. The monitoring of social media responses is not based on the indicators, included in the concept paper: the breakdown between the number of event and post event publications has disappeared, as has the breakdown between organic reach or impressions and organic likes. Instead the event report provides information on the “cumulative organic/paid reach”, “reach” and “engagement (reactions, shares, comments)”. Thus, the original targets do not correspond to the reported results, but there is no explanation on the difference, which is a limitation in terms of monitoring the effects of the event.

The event report also includes an “event feedback” section, which provides the EUIC team’s assessment of the event in relation to:



- Observed and evaluated performance of the key speakers (the EUIC team captures its feedback on guest speakers in a separate form, an example from the Travel to Europe event was made available during the field visit – see Annex 4)
- Observed overall reaction to the campaign
- Results from a questionnaire disseminated to all participants.

Using this feedback, the event report reflects on the lessons learned related to the organisation of the event but does not include a discussion of qualitative indicators on the results achieved by the event. Participants' feedback is discussed in very general terms (e.g. did they consider the event was useful, would they participate in future events). It is hardly possible to conclude on the results of the events in terms of raised awareness or better understanding of the participants of EU support to youth mobility.

- Social media monitoring: the EUIC team monitors engagement on social media. The social media analysis (see Annex 5) covers all four social media the EUIC manages: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube. The analysis monitors the number of likes and followers and provides the profile data by gender, age and location, which is useful. However, there is no content analysis or qualitative indicators.
- Dissemination of communication materials: the final report (covering the period 1 June 2017 to 31 May 2018), describes how: 27,600 promotional materials were produced and close to 18,000 were distributed at public events, with 17,500 people reached by the materials. This is no collection of feedback as to target groups interest / perceived added-value of the materials.
- Press coverage: EUIC staff also indicated that they collected press clippings to monitor media coverage of their activities by doing a press clipping. The team did not have access to the press clippings.

In terms of reporting, the TOR requires the EUIC contractor to submit a monthly report (which reportedly consolidates the quantitative data from the social media analysis and the event reports, but no monthly reports were made available to the team), as well as inception and final reports (when the EUIC contracts were longer in the past, the EUIC contractor was also required to prepare 6-monthly interim reports). Overall, monitoring data provides some indications, but it is incomplete because it is mostly based on quantitative data, there is limited target group feedback and because the EUIC contractor does not systematically use a list of pre-defined indicators to structure the monitoring process. This is an important limitation for the assessment of the achievements of the EUIC, which reduces the effectiveness of any lessons learning, which does not appear to be included as a structured process.

The TOR for the new generation of EUIC contract foresee the implementation of opinion polls at the beginning and at the end of the implementation period, which are expected to provide some qualitative evidence in terms of impact of EUIC activities in the future. At the start of the new contract, the first poll will create a baseline for assessing the impact of the EUD and EUIC/EUIP communication activities performed in recent years (including public general awareness of Bosnia and Herzegovina accession process and EU financial assistance). At the end of the contract, another poll will be carried out to evidence the results achieved. The TOR also provides that the contractor should take into "consideration the RCC polling and coordinate preparation of the polls with EUSR in order to avoid overlapping".

However, there can be questions raised over the use of polling in isolation to support a more strategic approach to the EUIC. Whilst polling may be useful to dig into trends relating to levels of awareness, interest and even understanding of the EU, EUICs are not the only sources of information on the EU. Thus it will be difficult to attribute any gains made directly to EUIC and EUIP activities. Also, unless there is a significant financial investment in communication activities to reach large numbers of the population, it is unlikely that a high level of general awareness of the EUIC will be achieved, which may not actually be reflected in the polling data, whereby citizens may think that they have come across EUIC activities, when this is not actually the case.

### **3.1. Partnerships with other donors**

Interviewees outlined that there is a good relationship between the EUIC and EUIPs and various EU programmes (Horizon 2020, Europe for Citizens, Erasmus+, Creative Europe, COSME). The cooperation consists in the provision of information by the EUIC to any person interested on opportunities under the EU

programme and in the redirection of the persons interested to local coordinators, both in the capital and in the rest of the country (e.g. in Banja Luka where there is an EUIP and the Creative Europe desk). MS representatives and representatives of other EU programmes also outlined that the EUIC was primarily associated with the organisation of events or support to event organisation.

The focus group suggested that partnerships between EUIC, EUIPs and other programme, donors, or MS embassies are event driven and aim to support the organisation of a particular event. The representatives participating in the group discussion highlighted that there was scope for a more strategic and joined approach to communication in collaboration with the EUD/EUSR – as the communication around the support provided during and after the floods in Bosnia and Herzegovina highlighted. However, when prompted on the interest to create a common space (for example a type of Europe House) with facilities that all donors could use to organise events, participants indicated that there was little appetite for such a project because they all typically used their own premises. Partners have their own communication capacity constraints.

### **3.2. Assessing the Intervention Logic**

During the desk phase of the evaluation, the evaluation team reconstructed the intervention logic of the EUIC and EUIPs based on the ToR, technical offer and final report for the contract nr. 2016/383-035 (covering the 06/2017-05/2018 period). The first draft of the intervention logic was presented in the Desk Report. The field visit allowed a discussion of the intervention logic with EUD and EUIC staff and to validate the diagram. The revised intervention logic is presented in figure 1. But the interviews with EUIC staff revealed that they were not used to conceive the suite of expected results of the activities they implement in the intervention logic model. This made the discussion on the intervention logic more difficult. Besides, EUIC staff also emphasised that there had been a change in staff working on the bridge contract, which limited their institutional memory and their capacity to comment extensively on the proposed intervention logic.

At input level, the contract provides for the set-up of an EUIC network. It consists of the EU Info Centre in Sarajevo and EU Info Points in Banja Luka, Mostar and Brcko District, as well as 3 EU info corners, which the network maintains. The EUIC serves as the hub of the network and is the primary contact point for the EUD. The EUIPs aim to enable an outreach beyond the capital. The total budget for the network was €512,576 for the bridge contract implemented in 2018 for 2017.

Interviews with EUIC and EUD staff, focus group discussions with MS representatives and other donors, as well as the review of the 2017 EUD Information and Communication Forward Plan highlight a number of risks and assumptions underlying the validity of the intervention logic:

- The fragmentation of political life in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the politicisation of most topics, including the EU integration process, creates a challenging environment. There is a need for an unambiguous message on the EU future of the country and an active engagement of the authorities on the topic;
- Despite a continued interest of the public for EU accession, and in particular for its economic aspects, there is a risk of fatigue on the topic due to high expectations on the timeline of EU accession;
- Even if most people are generally favourable to the EU, opinion is divided within Bosnia and Herzegovina. Not all parts of the country support the EU to the same extent and there is an underlying risk of an adverse campaign eroding support for EU accession and creating a challenging environment;
- The media market is overcrowded, fragmented and potentially subject to contradictory pressures. Media are not yet sufficiently EU-literate to cover and report on the EU accession process;
- Civil society is relatively weak;
- The level of EU literacy among the population is low.

The field visit confirmed that the main target groups are as follows: children, young people, schoolchildren, teachers, students; academics / researchers; NGOs / civil society and youth organisations / student associations. This is partly in line with the ToR, which included additional target groups: media; business community; opinion-makers, think tanks, and rural communities and farmers. There is only anecdotal evidence that some of these other target groups are addressed: for instance, when MS representatives

report that the EUIC mobilises effectively the media community and their journalist network to cover an activity organised; or when representatives of other EU programmes targeting the business community report that the EUIC provides information to the business community and redirect to the relevant EU programmes.

Focus group discussions with students, EUIC visitors and other donors report that communication activities also aim to reach to other segments of the general public (e.g. rural communities, elderly and pensioners). However, discussion groups highlight that the channels used are not appropriate to target these segments of the general public who mainly use traditional media (e.g. TV and radio) which are not used by the EUIC or used to a lesser extent. The ToR also include the general public as a target. It is indeed addressed by certain event formats, open such as Europe Day or the Mobility Week. In addition, interviews with the EUD and with the EUIC staff also indicate that targets groups are considered to be multipliers: once they have participated in communication activities, by the interactions they have with their pairs, colleagues, families, they are expected to carry the EU messages to other publics.

Thus, the revised intervention logic includes three categories of targets: primary, secondary and tertiary to reflect the degree of interaction between the EUIC and any target. The targeting is relatively consistent with that described in the EUD communication plan for 2017. The plan provides that the EUIC targets the general public, university / school students, children, CSOs and activists, media, civil servants, cultural workers and sports communities. The targeting differs depending on which activities are considered.

As discussed above, objectives are relatively aligned between the communication strategy and the EUIC ToR. The global objective in the communication strategy is *to inform different target groups about the EU, its policies and programmes and their impact on citizens' everyday life*. Breaking down the global objective, the communication strategy also lists several other overall objectives to:

- ensure visibility of EU external assistance programmes, their objectives and results on the ground, among specific target groups;
- increase understanding of the implications of the integration process and the long term benefits it brings to citizens;
- familiarise various target groups with the EU accession process;
- raise awareness about the EU among students;
- increase the frequency and quality of media coverage and public debate on EU-related issues; and
- manage expectations about country's EU perspectives.

Stakeholder consultations during the field visit highlighted that these objectives can be re-categorised and the breakdown between levels of objectives can be reconsidered as follows (see also figure 1, the reconstructed intervention logic of the EUIC):

1. At output level, the focus is on the participation in communication activities and the short-term results for the participants – in terms of the public's and target groups' raised understanding and knowledge about the EU, as well as the increased visibility of EU policies, programmes and opportunities (notably for primary target groups)
2. At outcome level, the EUIC is expected to contribute to raising public awareness about the EU and to triggering an informed public debate on EU integration. At this level, it is also important to recognise the support the EUIC provides to the EUD in the implementation of its communication strategy (EU Communication Team, Mission Implementation Report, May-October 2018)
3. The expected impact is in turn twofold, it is to generate a sustained interest in the EU from the public and target groups as well as to support the recognition by the public that the EU is the first donor in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The new ToR (Ref. Ares(2018)4423309 - 28/08/2018) follows a relatively similar approach to objective setting for the new EUIC. The expected impact is further reaching than the impact in figure 1 to the extent that EUIC work is more embedded in the EU integration process. It reads as follows: The overall objective of this contract is to create and maintain the conditions for commitment, ownership and accountability in Bosnia and Herzegovina for continued progress in EU integration.

This wording does not detail what the "conditions" are that will support progress on EU integration, but it is interesting to draw a parallel with the impacts identified in figure 1. The existence of a sustained interest in

the EU and its recognition as the first donor in Bosnia and Herzegovina are interpreted as conditions for continued progress in EU integration.

The expected purpose in the new ToR partially overlap with the outputs described in the intervention logic below. The focus is put on increasing the visibility of the EU and raising knowledge of the EU and EU assistance.

There is some overlap between the expected purpose and the results defined in the new ToR. A “higher level of visibility and increased understanding” of the EU and EU assistance is listed under both purpose and results. The intervention logic presented below identifies these as expected outputs (based on the indicators suggested in the event concept paper template seen, see annex).

The figure on the following pages reconstructs the intervention logic of the EUIC in Bosnia and Herzegovina, based on the available documentation, including the Terms of Reference, Technical offer and Final report for the 2016/383-035 contract<sup>43</sup>, and feedback received from stakeholders and organisations consulted in country.

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<sup>43</sup> The contract covers the period from June 2017 to May 2018.

**Figure 1: Revised reconstructed Intervention Logic updated using findings from the field mission**

Inputs		Activities	Outputs	Desired outcomes	Desired impacts
<b>Personnel</b> EUD/EUSR – Communication section (9 staff members) EUICN: 7 staff members: <b>1 key experts</b> (1 Team Leader) <b>7 non-key experts</b> (1 Events and PR Officer, 1 Public Information Officer, 1 Web master 1 Administrator/Events Assistant, 3 EUIP Communication Officers  <b>Contractual</b> Terms of Reference 12-month service contract, €599,930 budget  <b>Content</b> From partners/ projects, to be investigated  <b>Process</b> Cooperation on weekly basis, monthly coordination meetings, every 6 months with all EU information structures.  <b>Premises</b> EU Information Centre office at the EUD in Sarajevo, 3 EU standalone Information Points in Banja Luka, Mostar and Brcko District  <b>Collaboration</b> Maintenance of 3 info corners Maintenance of mutually beneficial relationships with other donors, other EU programmes, MS (incl. cultural institutes)		<b>Coordination of the EUICN and maintenance of EU Info Corners</b>  <b>Events:</b> Public events Targeted events  <b>Media support:</b> 4 information sessions/seminars on EU  <b>Promotion and dissemination:</b> Preparation and dissemination of materials (brochures, EU stories, factsheets, flyers, leaflets, infographics on EU, promotional materials) <sup>2</sup> EU  <b>IT:</b> Manage, update and contribute to EUD and EUIC websites, relevant social media, database and monthly EUD newsletter, monthly statistics	Events are well attended and participation in communication activities is good  Targets of communication activities engage on EU topics in social media  Raised Public's and target groups' understanding and knowledge about the EU  Increased visibility of EU policies, programmes and opportunities (notably for primary target groups)	To contribute to raise public awareness about the EU, its policies and values—including awareness of students about the EU  To contribute to trigger an informed public debate on integration into the EU, its benefits and challenges, in terms of country reform effort, the integration process, and EU support To support the EUD in the implementation of its communication strategy	To contribute to generate a sustained interest from the public and target groups for the EU and EU accession process  To support the recognition by the public of the EU as the first donor in Bosnia and Herzegovina
Target groups			Assumptions/Risks		
<b>Primary target groups</b> Children Young people Schoolchildren, teachers, students Academics, researchers		<b>Secondary target groups</b> media; business community; opinion makers, think tanks, and rural communities and farmers  <b>Tertiary target group</b> General public	<b>Assumptions:</b> EU integration remains a priority in the country for the entire Project's duration and Government at all levels continues to be strongly committed to it Commitment of the EU to the accession perspective of Bosnia and Herzegovina is maintained Civil society organisations and the media maintain their interest in discussions on EU related issues and the accession process		

<p>NGOs / civil society Youth organisations / student associations</p>		<p>Media's EU literacy improves overtime to provide an objective and balanced coverage of the EU accession process</p> <p><u>Risks:</u>  Political discourses in some parts of the Country holding EU agenda hostage to particular political interests  Manipulation of public discourse, fake news  Fatigue, deepening lack of interest by wider public target audiences and rise of cynicism, euro-scepticism and negative mythology about the EU  Counter – campaigns from anti EU groups both within the country and in the EU  Major local or international political developments taking precedence over the topics relating to the EU integration, thus overshadowing the EU agenda  Crowding-out of the media and communication environment  Low level of EU literacy among the population</p>
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### 3. EVALUATION FINDINGS

The following sections describe the key findings from interviews with EU Delegation staff, EUIC team, donors, representatives of EU programmes, MS and national cultural institutes representatives, students and EUIC visitors as highlighted in the above table. Evidence has been reviewed, analysed and integrated in line with considerations of their overall relevance to the wider evaluation and the questions set. In the evaluation Synthesis Report, the evidence gathered will be integrated and analysed across to develop clear findings from across the enlargement region.

**EQ1.** To what extent have the **objectives** of the EUICs been defined considering the **specific needs** of the target audience in the IPA beneficiaries and contribute to the objectives set in the **EU framework** on strategic communication in the enlargement region?

- There is alignment between the EUICs' objectives set by EU Delegations and EU strategic communication objectives, and the needs addressed by this framework.
- Specific target group communication needs have been well defined and the EUICs' objectives clearly focus on these needs.

Based on the review of the EUD information and communication forward plan for 2017, the substance of the objectives is relatively aligned between the communication strategy and the EUIC ToR, but the field visit outlines the need to re-think about the level of each objective. The global objective in the communication strategy is *to inform different target groups about the EU, its policies and programmes and their impact on citizens' everyday life*. Breaking down the global objective, the communication strategy also lists several other overall objectives:

- To ensure visibility of EU external assistance programmes, their objectives and results on the ground, among specific target groups.
- To increase the understanding of the implications of the integration process and the long term benefits it brings to citizens.
- To familiarise various target groups with the EU accession process.
- To raise awareness about the EU among students.
- To increase frequency and quality of media coverage and public debate on EU related issues.
- To manage expectations about country's EU perspective.

Stakeholder consultations during the field visit highlighted that these objectives can be re-categorised and the breakdown between levels of objectives reconsidered as follows (see also figure 1, the reconstructed intervention logic of the EUIC):

1. At output/effect level, expectations are to raise the public's and target groups' understanding and knowledge about the EU, as well as to increase the visibility of EU policies, programmes and opportunities (notably for primary target groups)
2. At outcome level, the EUIC is expected to contribute to raising public awareness about the EU and to triggering an informed public debate on EU integration
3. The expected impact is in turn twofold, it is to generate a sustained interest in the EU from the public and target groups as well as to support the recognition by the public that the EU is the first donor in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The 2017 document also provides a breakdown of the expected outputs and outcomes by activity strand, which is explicit about the support provided by the EUIC and details how it fits in and is expected to contribute to the overall communication strategy. However, the evaluation did not find evidence confirming that the objectives set for the EUIC were based on a needs analysis of the target groups. Furthermore, the EUIC team did not undertake a mapping of communication needs to support the design of the activities.

Overall, interviews with EUD and EUIC staff recognise that this is a shortcoming of the design of the communication strategy and activities. Research into the needs of target groups is an expensive exercise. But a focus on fewer target groups would allow the EUIC to focus their research on the needs of these target groups only. In turn, that would support the tailoring of activities to these priority targets. If done at regular intervals (e.g. when the EUIC is retendered), that would also allow to collect evidence on the medium to long-term evolution of the communication needs and landscape in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and feed into the assessment of the results delivered by the EUIC. The new ToR (for the EUIC contract 2019) aims to remedy the situation by introducing the requirement to conduct two opinion polls, one at the beginning of the project – to inform the design of activities – and one at the end of the project – to evidence the results achieved.

But to date, monitoring data is incomplete. Even if the objectives of the communication strategy and the ToR are broadly aligned, it is however not possible to confirm if, and to what extent, the results of the EUIC supports the achievement of the EUD communication objectives. There is no indicator set and used systematically to measure the EUIC's contribution to achieving the EU's strategic communication objectives and meet the target groups' needs (indicator 3).<sup>44</sup> It follows that even if there is a certain alignment between the EUIC objectives and the objectives of the EU framework on strategic communication, it is hardly possible to establish the contribution of the EUIC to the strategic communication objectives.

#### **EQ2.** To what extent have the **objectives** of the EUICs been achieved?

- Extent that the outputs of the communication activities implemented by the EUICs have produced the expected outcomes, which contributed to the achievement of the set objectives.
- Extent to which the quantitative and qualitative effects of the outputs and outcomes of EUICs' activities can be deemed to have contributed to the achievement of the set objectives.
- Extent to which other factors influenced the achievement of the outcomes.
- Extent that the communication tools used by the EUICs were appropriate for each target audience.
- Extent that the EU Delegations' use of other communication tools (e.g. social media) could have had a higher outreach to different categories of the target audience.

In the absence of a comprehensive monitoring system, no monitoring data confirms activities undertaken but there is limited measurement of communication results being achieved, beyond the measurement of simple indicators of engagement, such as numbers of followers on social media. Very limited account is taken of qualitative feedback. In addition, the approach to monitoring relies on quantitative data but data collection is not systematic. There is also evidence of inconsistencies between activity design and post-activity reporting, when the same indicators are not used and when targets have changed.

Overall, external stakeholders' feedback (donors, MS representatives, representatives of EU programmes, students) indicate that the mix of communication tools is appropriate, although it is noted that for efforts to reach pensioners and older people traditional media works best, but the EUIC has insufficient budget for these channels. The EUIC provides information on an ad hoc basis (when it receives a request) through different channels (mostly online) and is thereby meeting demand. Events are an important communication medium used by the EUIC and EUICs for direct interaction with stakeholders, who confirm their interest in the events and that they consider the events to be of good quality events. The increasing importance of the Internet, including social media is reflected in the increasing importance of using the tools. In this respect, the focus group with students highlighted the importance of further improving the content published on social media, to move to a more proactive engagement on these accounts to make EUIC use of these channels

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<sup>44</sup> Field visit in other Western Balkan countries reveal that work is ongoing on the definition of "communication network indicators". However, the EUIC team in Bosnia and Herzegovina did not refer to this initiative.

more effective. There is, however, no comprehensive evidence in the public domain that other stakeholders use social media differently and more effectively. Lastly on the tool mix, the shortcoming systematically noted is the absence of TV. TV is the primary communication channel in Bosnia and Herzegovina. But the costs associated with the development of a TV programme and with securing prime time is a serious obstacle to a larger use of this channel.

Based on the document review and stakeholder consultations, there are two primary factors, which can limit or enhance outcomes. The first factor is the overcrowded communication environment in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The multiplication of media and communicators challenges the existence of a sustained interest from the public for EU-related issues. It is a constraining factor for any communication activities targeting the public. The situation is different for clearly identified target groups (e.g. researchers) who are likely to be interested by very specific information (for instance on grants funded by the EU to support their mobility in the EU).

The second factor is the politicisation of EU news in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This factor may either limit or enhance the outcomes of the communication activities. It is a limiting factor when the politicisation leads to a saturation of communication on the EU and the manipulation of the information. Stakeholder consultation (notably the focus group with students) revealed that there was an underlying sentiment that the information provided by politicians on the EU and EU accession was not reliable. Instead of back-firing at the EUIC (which could be considered as any other communicator), this contributes to strengthen the EUIC and the EUD as the sole provider of reliable and accurate information on the EU and the accession process.

Beyond these two primary factors, interviewees identify other strengths and weaknesses. The communication experience, and (local) network of the EUIC team is praised as it allows them to not only have a good working relationship with the EUD but also to establish fruitful collaborations with partners and multipliers (e.g. universities, schools, MS and other EU programmes). Interviewees also highlight that the EUIC team has a good local footprint, which translates into the possibility to implement activities in the whole of the country (well beyond the capital city). The limiting factors are as follows:

- The location of the EUIC in Sarajevo strongly limits its accessibility
- The EUIC primarily focuses on youth, which leads it to neglect other segments of the population
- The EUIC's approach seems to focus on event organisation in the absence of a more strategic approach to communication
- Too much emphasis maybe given to social media (yet necessary to reach out to youth) at the expense of traditional communication channels (such as TV), which are necessary to reach out to other segments of the general public (such as the elderly and pensioners, rural communities and farmers).

**EQ3.** To what extent **the organisation and management** of the EUICs have been conducive to an efficient, effective and sustainable implementation of the communication activities?

#### Relevant Judgement Criteria

- The management of EUICs through service contracts is conducive to an efficient, effective and sustainable implementation of communication activities.
- The different EUICs and Info Points / Corners set up in an IPA beneficiary have worked together in an efficient and effective manner to reach the target audience and achieve the set objectives in that particular beneficiary.
- The system setup for monitoring the EUICs' activities functioned at regular intervals and was capable of collecting data and detecting problems (indicators were appropriately designed to measure the progress in relation to the baseline situation and the effectiveness and of the targets, and extent that targets were set realistically).
- Extent that the use of financing and management mechanisms could have provided better cost-effectiveness.

- The physical location of the EUICs in the IPA beneficiaries has facilitated the implementation of planned communication activities and the achievement of planned effects on the target audience.

Feedback from the field mission suggests that in principle use of a service contract awarded through an international tender is conducive to an efficient and effective implementation of the EUIC. The use of an international tendering procedure is suggested to be critical to attract the relevant communication expertise, which might not be available locally. The contractor at the time of the field visit also builds on a strong, locally connected team with the necessary local background. Based on interviews, this is an added value of the team which consolidates existing relationships and networks, which in turn may facilitate the implementation of any activities.

In the medium term, there has not been enough continuity in the use of the service contracts. The challenge comes from the management of a series of relatively short-term contracts (from 12 to 18 months). This:

- creates a heavy administrative burden – notably on the EUD for the management of the tender process;
- prevents lessons learned to inform the drafting of the next ToR – when contracts are relatively short, the preparation of the next ToR starts relatively early and there is no opportunity to draw lessons from implementation of the ongoing contract (which has just started);
- risks deteriorating the cost-effectiveness of the contractor, which needs time to settle and to train the team notably;
- creates a perverse incentive not to explore innovate communication tools and channels and the development of content which might have a longer time horizon.

In the future, a key change will be introduced in the management and organisation of the contracts. From 2019 onwards, contracts will be two-year, renewable once. This duration is expected to provide the right balance to give time to a new team to start work and develop its approach and implement it while also keeping the possibility for the EUD to assess the work done and re-tender the contract at regular intervals.

While implementation is expected to also build on the geographical scope of the network and the collaboration between EUIC and Info Points, there is no conclusive evidence on the existence of synergies and enhanced communication effects. Only one interviewee from EUD and one representative from an EU programme highlighted that the Info Points could be considered as the extended arms of the EUIC, allowing for local relays in the provision of information – despite the objective of having an outreach beyond the capital city – and connecting stakeholders (based on the example of one of the EU Info Points located in the same city as the Creative Europe coordinator).

Overall, this discussion relies on the perceptions of stakeholders consulted during the field visit but there is no aggregated quantitative and qualitative monitoring data to systematically evidence the achievement of the results and the cost-effectiveness of the EUIC. The set-up of a comprehensive monitoring system and of consolidated reporting would contribute to the creation of a solid evidence base – which is needed not only to assess the results achieved but also to inform design choices. There is also no substantial evidence of ways to increase the levels of target group reach and engagement without increasing cost.

Lastly, the physical location of the EUIC has mixed reviews. On the one hand its co-location with the EUD means that its accessibility is limited due to security procedures. On the other hand, it also means that it can benefit from (high-level) visits to the EUD, which is a plus for the organisation of events.

- **EQ4.** To what extent the EUICs have contributed to raising public awareness about the EU, its policies and values, EU funding and on the enlargement process in the IPA beneficiaries?

- Extent that target groups of EUIC communication activities in the IPA beneficiaries are more aware of the EU, its policies and values, EU funding and the enlargement process.
- Extent that EUICs reach new audiences with EU messages about EU policies and values, EU funding and on the enlargement process that would not be reached by EU Delegations, or EU-funded projects.

As discussed previously, the limitations of the monitoring system (on both the quantitative and qualitative dimensions) implies that there is no evidence confirming that target groups exposed to EUIC activities and materials are more aware of the EU, its policies and values, EU funding and on the enlargement process. However, the field visit reveals that there is a consensus, within EUD and the communication section in particular, that the EUIC is making a positive contribution to the objective of building the recognition of the EU as the first donor in Bosnia and Herzegovina. General polling data in the country shows that the EU indeed is recognised as the first donor but does not detail the EUIC's contribution. EUD staff also emphasise during the interviews that it would be important to develop SMART objectives and a comprehensive monitoring system to be able to assess the difference between "good communication activities" and "effective communication activities". In their views, it is critical to evidence that communication activities are not only of good quality (well executed) but that they also deliver sustainable results. The importance of making this distinction is echoed by discussion groups with other donors and MS representatives, who report that the EUIC team is professional and that they are known notably to organise good quality events, but that it is not possible to assess the results achieved.

The focus group discussions with donors and MS representatives highlight that there is scope for the EUIC to play the role of facilitator to support the implementation of a more joined up, thematic communication approach. Donors and MS representatives suggested that overarching communication themes could be selected, and donors and MS representatives could all contribute to these themes and the EUIC would play a coordination role in the implementation of the different communication activities under the themes.

Target groups such as youth have also a relatively conservative approach to this question. There is no monitoring data on the EUIC's reach / engagement with messages about the EU. But the feedback received during the field visit indicates that the EUIC is an effective information provider and that overall its communication materials and tools convey relevant information. The focus group discussion with students reiterated the importance of grounding communication materials in everyday life and making sure the target groups can relate to the materials.

**EQ5i.** To what extent the **activities carried out by the EU Info Centres** have been coherent, complementary and **coordinated** with those carried out via other EU programmes and by other partners (e.g. Member States, IFIs, international organisations) **active in communicating re. EU policies & values, EU funding and the enlargement process** in the enlargement region?

- EUICs and Info Points liaise in a regular and planned way (either directly or via the EU Delegation) to share intelligence, identify synergies and opportunities to work together with other EU policy / programme communicators in the region.
- Extent that it is possible to identify other relevant opportunities to improve coordination to develop a more joined-up approach.

There is no systematic approach to the development and implementation of joint actions with other EU policy / programme coordinators in the region. Based on the consultation with a sample of representatives of other EU programmes, the field visit shows that there is a good relationship between the EUIC and other EU programmes, with each side standing ready to help with activity implementation. Coordinators of other EU programmes report that the EUIC team may constitute a first port of call for interested citizens looking for information and that the EUIC is very helpful in redirecting citizens to the programme's contact person. This view is shared by students consulted. This observation applies not only to the EUIC in the capital city but also locally, through the EUICs – as evidenced in particular in Banja Luka where there is an EUIC and where the Creative Europe coordinator is located. But the opposite is not systematically true and EU programmes do not systematically refer to the EUIC on their channels / in their materials.

Overall, examples of complementarities between the EUIC and other EU programmes, MS embassies and cultural institutes and other donors relate to event organisation. Focus group discussion participants provided ad hoc examples of the EUIC identifying a guest speaker, hosting an event and mobilising the media

community in support of activities organised by partners. But there was no example of synergies. There are also no clear ways to improve collaboration. Where it seems that designing and implementing joined, thematic campaigns would be a cost-effective solution in a crowded communication environment, all actors during the group discussions seem concerned that their own communication reflect specific interest and visibility objectives, which makes it hardly possible to determine a win-win strategy for EUD and its partners.

**EQ5ii.** To what extent the EU Info Centres can contribute to the development and implementation of a **joined-up Public Diplomacy** (cf. EU Global Strategy) and act as hubs for EU-related initiatives taking place at the local level (i.e. both EU and non-EU funded)?

- There is alignment between EUIC and Info Point communication activities and messages, and public diplomacy activities and messaging in each IPA beneficiary.
- Extent that EUICs, Info Points and staff of EU Delegations responsible for public diplomacy collaborate on joint initiatives or coordinate their initiatives.
- Extent to which EUICs and Info Points support and are a focal point of activities (EU and non-EU funded) to reach public diplomacy target groups.

There is no evidence from the field mission available on this issue.

**EQ6.** What is the **additional value** resulting from the communication activities carried out by the EU Info Centres compared to what could have been achieved by the IPA beneficiaries at national or regional levels?

- Extent that the reach and engagement of target groups by EUICs with EU messages on policies and values, funding and the enlargement process is greater and more effective than the benefits for target groups at national or regional level that IPA beneficiaries do or could achieve.
- Extent that IPA beneficiary communicators convey the desired messages on EU policies and values, funding and on the enlargement process.

There is no monitoring data to confirm reach and engagement of target groups aside from the number of followers on social media. There are some EUIC monitoring data confirming regular communication of messages relating to EU policies and values, EU funding and the enlargement process. These are quantitative data related to the number of events organised, the number of communication materials produced and social media analytics. But the data does not include qualitative data, which would confirm the quality and usefulness of the messaging, the reception by target groups and the results achieved. Nevertheless, the feedback received during the focus group with students, a primary target group of the EUIC's communication activities, evidences that the EUIC adds value to other communication activities through the provision of quality and reliable information.

## 4. Conclusions and recommendations

### 4.1. Conclusions

- The EUICN is a network of EU information units, consisting of the EU Info Centre in Sarajevo, three EU Info Points and three EU info corners (for which the role of the network is limited to providing documents). The EUIC serves as the hub of the network and is the primary contact point for the EUD. The EUIPs aim to enable an outreach beyond the capital.
- There is a consensus among EU Delegation staff and other donors, programmes and organisations collaborating with the EUIC about the network's positive contribution to raising awareness about EU policies and values, EU funding and the enlargement process, particularly among the primary target



groups and at the local level in Bosnia. Even if the activities implemented are reportedly of good quality, it is difficult to assess the actual quality in terms of communication results achieved.

- There is overall a primary focus on event organisation and the current approach illustrates a one-off approach to communication. This raises questions as to whether to focus more on a communication campaign approach instead of one-off or even event series, which are limited in what they can achieve.
- There is potential for the EUIC to support the implementation of a more strategic approach, whereby activities contribute to achieving longer term communication goals defined by the EUD. For example, communication could focus on a thematic approach defined by the EUD, which could also possibly serve as a hook for partners (such as MS and other donors) to join forces on themes of common interest – recognising that this is a possibility only and that MS and other donors have their own (communication) objectives and agenda. The thematic approach would be implemented through different types of activities, including events, all in relation with the themes selected.
- The relationship between the Delegation and the EUIC is good, but the management arrangements within the EUD could be improved. There is a need for the EUD manager of the EUIC contract should be Commission staff.
- The visibility and accessibility of the EUIC and EUIP location is not suitable if one of the goals of these structures is to attract 'footfall' from the passing, interested public.
- Stakeholders perceive the EUIC as good information-provider, with good networks throughout the country. However, it is not currently possible to properly measure the performance of the EUIC given the absence of a comprehensive monitoring system. The ongoing work on the communication network indicators is likely to address that challenge.
- The EUIC team and the EUD expect social media to be the primary channel to target young people, but feedback suggests that these channels are not being used to achieve the desirable effects: engage young people in discussion on the EU. Rather, content posted on social media reflects a sender-receiver mode. In addition, the EUIC's focus on social media is complemented by the work done through traditional media of the EUSR office.
- There is no evidence on whether and to what extent the communication objectives are achieved. The EUIC does not systematically collect qualitative feedback from the target audience following the different activities implemented, which makes it impossible to establish if participants are satisfied with the events and activities they attend, with the space and materials provided, and the contribution of the EUIC to the achievement of the communication objectives. There are also shortcomings in relation to the quantitative indicators and the collection of data with potential double counting.
- Monitoring is relatively limited and focuses on quantitative evidence. It follows that there is no data on perceptions, the extent to which desired effects are delivered and how views of the EU are evolving. Stakeholders consider that the activities implemented are of good quality but that there is no way of knowing whether they are delivering the expected results.
- The quality of the monitoring data, which is collected is inconsistent. There are different definitions for stakeholder engagement and differences in the approach to monitor engagement. Data seem overestimated: figures reported on event participation and reach do not reflect the quality or intensity of the engagement. Even basic data reported such as the number of walk-in visitors seems to indicate that there is double-counting and that the number of visitors relates to event participants (in the absence of a clear definition of what are "walk-in visitors").

## **4.2. Recommendations**

It is recommended that:

- EUD-EUSR (Communications and Operations in particular) shift from project-based communication (including in cooperation with partners) to strategic, joined up approach based on the identification of themes of common interest.
- EUD develop the EUIC intervention logic and align it fully with its communication strategy.
- DG NEAR develop a performance framework to monitor adequately the realisation of expected results (including the definition of qualitative indicators and data collection tools).
- The EUD and EUIC explore the possibility to develop content for traditional media (e.g. TV) and consider options to work with young people for example as interns to work on social media. The latter could add value to the development of content by the EUIC: where it is not possible to undertake a needs mapping and to test communication materials before they are disseminated for instance, engaging interns could provide a cost-effective solution.
- If the EUIC concept continues to focus on walk-in visitors, EUD and EUIC identify options to relocate the EUIC so that it is more visible to the wider public, this also implies considering ways to engage with passers-by so that they are encouraged to come in and find out more
- EUD and DG NEAR explore options for the EUIC manager (who is a member of EEAS staff) to be integrated in the financial circuit for the management of the contract so that all management tasks related to communication remain within the communication and press section.

## ANNEXES: MONITORING AND REPORTING

This annex presents a sample of reports prepared by the contractor. The reports focus on particular activities implemented by the EUIC and EUIPs and give an indication as to how monitoring data are collected and what monitoring indicators are used:

### 1: Internal evaluation of EU info corners



EU Info corners'  
assessment.pdf

### 2: Event concept paper template



Event concept  
paper.docx

### 3: Event report



Event report.pdf

### 4: Feedback form on speakers participating in events



Key speakers  
feedback.pdf

### 5: Social media analysis



social media  
analysis.docx

## Kosovo

### 1. INTRODUCTION

<b>IPA beneficiary visited</b>	Kosovo*
<b>Dates of field visit</b>	28 – 30 November, 2018
<b>Evaluators responsible</b>	Marion Bywater Biserka Ivanovic Sarkanovic
<b>EU Info Centres</b>	Pristina and North Mitrovica <sup>45</sup>
<b>EU Office/EU SR Delegation staff interviewed</b>	Deputy Head of Delegation Head of Cooperation Section & Team Leader, Human Development Section Procurement Manager, Contracts and Finance Section Communication coordinator responsible for EU Info Centres/Info a Communication Officer/Projects Manager Press & Media Officer Web and Social Media Manager / Outreach Officer Campaign Manager, Press and Info Officer (Seconded National expert) Communications Intern Not available: Head of Communications/Spokesperson (illness); Head of Delegation (travel and other diary commitments)
<b>Interviews with Info Centre staff</b>	Team Leader Campaign Manager Non-key experts responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Events</li> <li>• Web and Social Media</li> <li>• Visitors</li> </ul> Evaluation Team attended launch of Insta Green photo exhibition
<b>Interviews with EU programmes / beneficiary government</b>	Creative Europe Horizon 2020/Holder of Jean Monnet Chair at Pristina University Office of the NIPAC, Ministry of European Integration
<b>Interviews with partners and projects</b>	Advocacy Centre for Democratic Culture British Council (Young Cell Scheme) Embassy of Croatia Embassy of France Embassy of Italy UNDP (Cultural Heritage project) Kosovo Center for Security Studies Kosovo Stability Foundation Zensko Pravo
<b>Focus group with students</b>	1 with 4 students (2 confirmed participants dropped out)

There are two EU Information and Cultural Centres (EUICC): one in Pristina and one in North Mitrovica. The two Centres operate under a single project, with a Team Leader who is based in Pristina. The evaluators visited both EUICCs and held discussions with a range of other stakeholders, including staff of the EU Office

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\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

<sup>45</sup> The new renamed premises of Europe House were opened in Pristina in May 2019, with many activities around Europe Day and the economy campaign happening in May-June; events of EU funded projects and Office organised events (such as civil society consultations) have increased compared to the past, also due to the bigger space and proximity to EU Office. The EUICC in North Mitrovica was also renamed Europe House

in Kosovo, EU programmes, civil society, an academic, Member State Embassies and cultural institutions, and the contractor for the period December 2016-mid-January 2018.<sup>46</sup>

Both Centres have central **street-front locations** and interviewees across all categories interviewed considered that they were well known / visible in their local environment. Despite this, the location and premises of the Centre in **Pristina** at the time of the field mission had some advantages and disadvantages.

Advantages:

- Central, close to the main pedestrian street;
- A location which is separate from the Office, offering an unbureaucratic face of an institution perceived as bureaucratic.
- Open access with no security screening.

Disadvantages:

- Slightly set back from the main pedestrian area, which impacts on its visibility for new visitors;
- A cramped downstairs area and only a small upstairs meeting room (25-30 people and 8-10);
  - Acoustic challenges from the open plan layout. When there are events on the first floor, staff or visitors downstairs have to be careful not to raise their voices;
  - Even if it were envisaged, the entrance space would be too small to have a screen showing the EU-funded videos that are available and suitable for the target groups;<sup>47</sup>
  - Only one of the two meeting rooms has disabled access.



The EUICC in Pristina moved to new premises in April 2019. The **new location** is further away from the Centre, but closer to the EU Office. It will be easy to access for target groups, such as civil society, officials, businesses and students. The already low number of drop-in visitors may fall, but the overall impact of having a larger, better laid out premises will be positive for events. The current Centre is equipped with three computers with Internet connections for use by visitors. These are very little used, and it is thought that one would be enough. Publications and pamphlets on various EU policies and Erasmus+ are available.



The location in **North Mitrovica**, is central, visible and bigger, with a large reception area for drop-in visitors, which is also used for events (25-30 people), and a meeting room for 25-30 people. There are no ramps on the pavements outside for disabled access, though there are no issues once the Centre is accessed.

Finding good locations for the Info Centres in North Mitrovica is difficult. The location was chosen for its size and proximity to the bridge to South Mitrovica, thus offering a better chance of bringing groups from both sides of the divided city together. However, the room that gives on to the street is uninviting. The two computers for visitor use are eight years' old and were purchased as part of the initial EUICC grant contract. There is no video/TV screen showing the videos, which the Office has made for use by TV. Thus, the space is not utilised to its full potential, as it could be more appealing internally and externally with a relatively limited investment in more fittings and furniture and could provide more video material for casual and waiting visitors, again with little expense by re-using existing material.

**Security** is a concern in North Mitrovica. There is a general risk with any ground-floor location in central Mitrovica of being in general caught up in unrest and specifically of being targeted by anti-EU demonstrators if tensions flare up. The evaluation team learned from interviews that the Centre has already been the target of vandalism. There is an efficient alarm system to call the security company but no security guard, and the only exit is via the door onto the street. One civil society organisation confirmed that security concerns will lead them to use the Centre less in future than they did the previous one, which was in a central first-floor

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<sup>46</sup> This contractor and the London-based current contractor had previously been interviewed by phone.

<sup>47</sup> These have been made for TV. In the reception area of the Office, they run on a continuous loop.

location also visited by the evaluation team. because of security concerns. Signage on the outside of the building or on the pavement would improve visibility.

However, overall the new Centre was generally felt by those interviewed to be a significant improvement over the previous first-floor location. In terms of visibility and the space available for events, this is certainly the case.

There are an estimated 70 **walk-in visitors** in Pristina each month according to Info Centre staff and the contractor's Final Report covering the 2017. Visitors' main reasons appear to be to use the Internet and – because of the location in Pristina. However, visitors also ask for information about EU scholarships and grants – above all about Erasmus+, upcoming events, cooperating with the EUICC and for publications. The figure of 70 a month is distorted by the fact that one person (who appears to be a pensioner) spends all day each day in the EUICC reading books and magazines. Because of the location, tourists also come in asking for tourist information on Pristina. The EUICC, quite appropriately, keeps maps of Pristina for this purpose, and on occasion uses this as an information opportunity. The current system of record-keeping does not make it possible to allow for special factors, such as regular repeat visitors (e.g. the pensioner), or those looking for tourist information, and if it proves possible to engage tourists on EU topics as an unintended side-effect.

In Pristina, **walk-in visitors** are asked to sign a form giving the reason for their visit, but the form could be improved to make it quicker to fill in for the visitor and produce more useful information for the EUICC.<sup>48</sup> A copy of the current form is in the Annexes. This could be improved by offering basic categories for visitors to choose from, e.g. Internet, library, tourist information, etc. This would make collation more efficient.

There are fewer walk-in visitors in North Mitrovica (five or six a month according to the contractor's Final Report for 2017). The catchment area is, of course, much smaller. The interests of walk-in visitors are similar to those of the Pristina visitors. In North Mitrovica, collection of visitor numbers reported by the contractor are not a reliable guide as the evaluation team was able to observe that in a small town like Mitrovica, other stakeholders drop in for a chat when they are passing, but this is not recorded. This networking effect is a positive but means that visitor numbers do not fully reflect the overall impact of the Centre.

In this evaluation's initial survey, the Info Centre noted that the walk-in facility is the best channel for reaching the retired, and these are the second biggest group of visitors behind students and journalists. The evaluation team's observations and conversations confirmed that students and journalists are the biggest users of the centre.

There are fewer than 30 **emails** a month. However, as there is no record of responses to queries by emails or visitors, there is no quality control on content. They are, however, mainly enquiries about the use of the space, not requests for information. Civil society stakeholders interviewed by the evaluation team regretted the absence of an online booking system for the use of the space.

**Events** are the predominant activity in both centres. The types of events to be organised by the Centres according to the ToR are:

- Public discussions on EU related matters/policies;
- Cultural events that promote European values (exhibitions, book readings, artistic performances, film screenings, etc.);
- Thematic events corresponding to EU campaigns and activities;
- Master-classes for students by experts on EU-related topics (rule of law, public administration, etc.);
- Competitions targeting youth (photo, writing, design, sports, etc.)

There was a requirement in the ToR in effect in 2017 to organise at least 2 events a month in each Centre. Currently the requirement is at least 3 events, but in practice it is up to 5. The Centres also host and assist with the promotion of events organised by others. In 2017, the number of events organised was:

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<sup>48</sup> There is scope for improving this form by giving visitors a range of categories (+ Other) to tick. This would facilitate collation of results. Use of an electronic form, e.g. on a tablet, would facilitate this further.



- Organised to comply with the Terms of Reference: Pristina (26); North Mitrovica (21) – a total of 47 events and 2201 participants; average per event: 47;
- Hosted: Pristina (75); North Mitrovica (48); a total of 123 events and 4131 participants; average per event: 34.
- Events organised by the EUICC included cultural events (film screenings, a photo exhibition), master classes, workshops and debates, several of which were pegged to international days, e.g. Human Rights, World Water.
- Hosted events include those organised for the Office, such as debates during Climate Week, or that can be considered to be in the public interest, and events organised by civil society or think tanks on a theme relevant to EU priorities, such as corruption or violence against women, or Erasmus+.

If an event in Pristina is organised by the EU Office, an EU programme or project, the separate information and communication services contract described in the introduction and managed by the EU Office covers the equipment, interpretation and headphones, and photographer. Other organisers, e.g. NGOs, have to cover these services themselves, given that such support for all hosted events has a high cost and is not envisaged in the contract. These services are not provided in North Mitrovica, but the staff provide logistics back-up for organisers of events they host.

Media work is the responsibility of the Office, but both Centres work actively to attract **media** (via the website, social media and media advisories) to their events and were considered by civil society stakeholders and implementing partners, to have good networks. The current Team Leader of the EUICC also gives media interviews in connection with events.

One category of typical hosted event is the opening or closing conference or panel debate of an EU project or information sessions on EU funded grants. All EU-funded projects are encouraged to make use of the premises for their events. The communication value of these small events may be questionable. According to EU officials in Brussels and Pristina, the communication plans for these events tend to lack creativity, have already been drawn up by the time the EUICC is asked to make the space available. However, keeping a record of attendance and sharing of organisers' satisfaction surveys could benefit both sides.

**Hosting events** that are **organised on behalf of others** is a major activity for both Centres and is one that is highly valued by all interviewed stakeholders for the visibility it gives them, for the function of the Centres as a hub of EU-related activity, and in the case of North Mitrovica, the only physical face of the EU in that part of Kosovo. They also see it as prestigious for them to be able to use the Centre.

Making the space available to partners is consistent with the ToR, but the EUICCs appear to be devoting considerable effort in supporting planning and implementation of these events without taking a strategic approach which determines whether they serve the objective of the EUICC being a hub and should take priority over other forms of communication, such as outreach, and whether it is always justified to provide this service. Some civil society organisations interviewed acknowledged that use of the Centre is for them a "nice-to-have" because they do not have to pay to use the space. Yet these stakeholders recognised that there is a strong networking effect from using the EUICC as they would otherwise not meet, or not as often. This can be considered an unintended positive effect of the EUICC.

Events are a popular means of obtaining information about the EU. In the *European Awareness Survey*, events organised by the EU Office or the EU Special Representative were seen as the most useful source of information about the EU (26.8%), followed by the Office/EUSR website/social media (24.8%). The EUICCs rank last at 3.8%. Activities at the EUICCs rank behind information through online channels as the most useful way to receive information from the EUICCs: 44% and 36% respective in Pristina and 56% and 20% in North Mitrovica.

The **reporting on events** in 2017 consists of a list of events with no breakdown by Centre (in the case of the self-organised events), by type or target group, or information on numbers attending individual events. Performance is measured on the basis that the activity was "successfully implemented" and events were "successfully completed." There is no systematic collection of satisfaction data at events. The Info Centre considers that oral feedback provides all the information on events that is needed. These are clearly weaknesses that are an obstacle to establishing whether the Centre has complied with the logic of its intervention. There is no reporting on media coverage of events.

The centres have a single **website** in English, Albanian and Serbian. The website, event and blog pages are maintained regularly. There is no reporting data available for the website for 2017 despite a requirement in the ToR to report on the number of visitors to the site. The data is missing from the Final Report and the current contractor is unable to supply it. Data for 2018 shows 8,654 users of whom 8,609 were new users. There are peaks in association with certain events, notably Europe Day. The ratio of new users seems high and suggests that counting started at zero in January 2018, but the contractor is unable to confirm this. Reporting and analysis of the website data is clearly weak, as the current contractor had to request the data from the webmaster, suggesting it was not readily to hand. Reporting solely on visitor numbers is moreover a weak indicator per se and given the fact that many analytics are available free of charge. The *European Awareness Survey* for 2017 indicates that the EUICC website is not highly visible. On the question on how information on the EUICC events is obtained, only 9% of the respondents in Pristina cited the EUICC website and 12% in North Mitrovica, compared to 33% and 44% respectively for the EU Facebook page.

There are no independent EUICC **social media accounts**. The EUICC posts go on the Office Facebook and Twitter accounts. This is seen by the EUICC as an obstacle to live posting from events, sending more frequent pre-event reminders, posting press releases after the event, posting more videos of interviewees of event attendees and artists exhibiting. The EUICC is responsible for collecting social media analytics for the Office. Experts in both Centres also use their personal social media accounts to promote the activities of the EUICC. The Team Leader in Pristina has 4,500 followers on Facebook and 7,500 on Instagram, the Editor/Copy writer has nearly 4,400 followers on Facebook and 1,200 on Instagram. The non-key expert Event Organiser in North Mitrovica has 2,000 followers on Facebook and 800 on Instagram. The Office has 30,000 followers on Facebook and 1,350 on Instagram. The EUICC staff consider that these personal accounts complement Office social media and may help to reach other audiences, which could be tested in a user survey.

Both Centres make available **international news magazines** in English, French, German and Italian for visitors to read, e.g. The Economist, L'Espresso, L'Express. This is a popular feature according to the staff. Pristina also has a library of **books**, which are consulted and borrowed by students, but the cost/benefit of these is questioned by the Centre. There are an estimated 40 readers per month in Pristina. Interviewees from the EUICC and a Member State fully familiar with the Centre suggested that having materials in languages other than English and the languages of Kosovo is important in illustrating the cultural diversity of the EU. The most popular publications are those explaining the basics of the EU, enlargement, and visa rules<sup>49</sup>. Production and distribution numbers are available for **publications and promotional materials**, but there is no distribution strategy, a weakness recognised by the current contractor.

**Videos and feature stories** are produced for the Office to make available to TV channels under formal agreements that they will take these videos, and in the media. The focus group of students and interviews with other stakeholders confirmed that the national TV channel and daily newspapers are still widely watched and read by themselves and their families (both in the conventional sense and online) even if it is recognised that they may be somewhat biased.<sup>50</sup> Exactly 50% of those surveyed in the 2018 Balkan Barometer felt that the media are subject to political influence.<sup>51</sup> The students interviewed all watched international channels as well, e.g. BBC, CNN or German channels.<sup>52</sup> However, the four students had not seen the EU videos on TV and were surprised to learn how much the EU does in Kosovo. As these are students who use the EUICC (encouraged mainly by their university to use the books and attend events), this underscores the case made elsewhere in this report for having video screens within the EUICCs to run videos on a loop as the Office does in its waiting room.

The EUICC also organises **outreach** activities in other cities, notably in universities and schools, and with civil society, largely when opportunities arise. The previous contractor highlighted the need to enhance outreach to take the EU to schools, towns and villages and currently the scope for doing more is recognised.

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<sup>49</sup> Those on visa rules are not produced under the EUICC contract.

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-18328868> tends to confirm this.

<sup>51</sup> <https://www.rcc.int/pubs/66/balkan-barometer-2018-public-opinion-survey>

<sup>52</sup> There is a large Kosovar diaspora in Germany and it is the country of choice for emigration for many Kosovars.

But this appears to be seen as a “nice-to-have” given the pressure of other priorities and the absence of more concrete requirements in the ToR. Stakeholders across a wide range of categories felt that it would be desirable to do more in secondary cities, particularly Prizren, and, if possible, rural areas if budget were available. In the meantime, thematic communication campaigns are already proving a good channel for organising events outside Pristina. In addition, a memorandum of understanding was signed with the Ministry of Education in 2018. This will bring third- and fourth-year secondary school students to the EUICC and complement outreach. Closer cooperation with municipalities is also planned by the current contractor, focusing on projects that have brought benefits to their communities. However, the approach needs to be more strategic, with the Office and the Info Centre jointly discussing needs in relation to EU priorities and drawing up an outreach plan with specific objectives, target groups and milestones. At the same time, the Info Centre, with the support of the Office, should draw up (simple) Intervention Logics for these activities.

The 2018 contracts have a specific budget for **thematic campaigns**. This is EUR 200,000 over two years and has led to an increase of one-third in the financial resources of the Info Centre, and additional staff, as explained in the next paragraph. There have so far been **campaigns on education and the environment**. The next topic is expected to be economic development. The considerations behind the subject choices are that the topics have to be relevant to local audiences not presented as “EU policies”, and that they derive from the Office strategic priorities.

This thematic approach enables the Info Centre to communicate in a more joined-up way on IPA-funded projects, communicating or focus on a range of projects dealing with a single theme, something recognised as important by Office interviewees. As indicated above, there is a dedicated campaign manager (Key Expert – Media and Outreach Campaign Leader) within the Info Centre to handle these thematic campaigns as well as a seconded national expert on the Office staff working with him. Staff in the Cooperation section cooperate in identifying the projects and stories to tell around them.

A range of channels is used. The campaigns are developed in-house by the Info Centre, but an outside agency is used for message testing. Success is measured by social media numbers, in particular, though this will only be useful once it becomes possible to make comparisons across more than one campaign, and the second was only just ending when the evaluation team were in Kosovo.<sup>53</sup> EUICC staff believe that the campaigns have also influenced government policy in both areas, i.e. education and environment, with government awareness of both having been raised. The concept of running thematic campaigns is assessed as working well both by the Office, the EUICC and also by other interviewees. The use of an Olympic athlete and a well-known actor as ambassadors (among others) had been noticed positively by interviewees.

## 2. CONTEXT

### 2.1. Specific context

With a population of 1.8 million, Kosovo has the lowest employment rate in the 18-64 age group in the region<sup>54</sup> (29.1%), with a particularly high rate among women, and it also has the youngest population (28% aged under 15). Interviewees perceive that Kosovo is characterised by particularly high levels of net migration and a desire to emigrate, as Kosovars seek opportunities elsewhere.<sup>5556</sup> This constitutes a brain drain. At the same time, it provides a boost to the economy and the balance of payments from remittances

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<sup>53</sup> Data has been supplied for the period October 2018 to January 2019. The Environment campaign was running from October-December 2018. The number of “likes” grew over the whole period, but the number of shares was erratic. It should be of some concern, however, that some posts were not shared at all. No analysis is available of which posts were most successful.

<sup>54</sup> 2015 Data from Key Figures on Enlargement Countries 2017, Eurostat: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3217494/7774688/KS-GO-16-001-EN-N.pdf/26107237-ec5d-4b1e-87f2-7bac279fb00a>

<sup>55</sup> Net migration was -5,431 in 2017; <http://ask.rks-gov.net/media/4174/estimation-kosovo-population-2017.pdf>.

<sup>56</sup> <https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2018/12/25/brain-drain-important-migration-issue-western-balkans/>

from Kosovars living abroad. The diaspora of Kosovars is particularly large in Albania, Germany and Switzerland.

The capital, Pristina, had an estimated population of almost 212,000 in 2017<sup>57</sup>. The second largest city was Prizren, with an estimated population of nearly 192,000. Freia/Uroševac, the third largest city, has an estimated population of 103,000, while the city of Mitrovica has an estimated population of 82,000, of whom 12,000 live in the northern part of the city. North Mitrovica is the main municipality for the Serb community in Kosovo North. (There are other areas of both northern and southern Kosovo, which are predominantly inhabited by Serbs.)

Kosovo is a **potential candidate** for accession. The perception of stakeholders is that the prospect of accession remains distant though Kosovo and the EU are committed to continuing to work towards it. One of the communication challenges is managing expectations of accession. In the 2018 Balkan Barometer, 40% of respondents thought accession would happen by 2020 and a further 20% picked 2025 as the latest date. 2025 is the earliest possible date according to current European Commission strategy, and perceptions collected by the evaluation team are that this is very optimistic as Kosovo has possibly the farthest to go in the region economically and politically before it can join the EU.<sup>58</sup>

Before Kosovo can become a Member State, it will have to carry out a range of economic and political reforms and **normalise its relations with Serbia**. In its 2018 Communication on Enlargement Policy, the European Commission pointed out that “urgent progress is needed in the EU-facilitated Dialogue towards the full **normalisation of relations between Serbia and Kosovo**, which should result in concluding and implementing a comprehensive, legally binding normalisation agreement.”<sup>59</sup> However, relations remain strained.

During the time the evaluation team was in Kosovo, there were demonstrations in the North Mitrovica municipality in Kosovo north. As a result of the **disruption, all events** in the North Mitrovica Info Centre in the week of 26 November were **cancelled**, and on the date of the evaluation team’s visit, there had been demonstrations prior to the team’s arrival (as there were several days that week) according to interviewees and press reports, while the streets were deserted.

Shortly after the visit, in mid-December 2018, the EU expressed reservations about the way in which legislation had been passed to strengthen the **Kosovo Security Force**,<sup>60</sup> which was inaugurated as the Kosovars Army on 14 December 2018, with potentially negative repercussions for good relations between Kosovo and its neighbours.

One of the other major challenges en route to accession is the eradication of **corruption** as the Commission has acknowledged<sup>61</sup>. The level of corruption in Kosovo, and its impact on the level of public trust in government and the judiciary was also a recurring theme in interviews conducted by the evaluation team. Stakeholders from various categories identified a communication challenge in a risk for the EU that, by being so closely associated with the government because of the amount of assistance, its own image (and the degree of its determination) could suffer unless it uses franker language on the lack of progress on this.

Interviewees also pointed to problems with nepotism, in moving cases through the courts speedily to a fair resolution and running the administration efficiently, even the major obstacle to future accession of

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<sup>57</sup> <http://ask.rks-gov.net/media/4369/statistical-yearbook-2018.pdf>

<sup>58</sup> <https://www.rcc.int/pubs/66/balkan-barometer-2018-public-opinion-survey>

<sup>59</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic And Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 2018; Communication on EU Enlargement Policy; [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20180417\\_strategy\\_paper\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20180417_strategy_paper_en.pdf)

<sup>60</sup> [https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/kosovo/55492/statement-spokesperson-kosovo-security-force\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/kosovo/55492/statement-spokesperson-kosovo-security-force_en)

<sup>61</sup> “Corruption is widespread and remains an issue of concern.” Commission Staff Working Document Kosovo\* 2018 Report Accompanying the document Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 2018 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy; <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20180417-kosovo-report.pdf>

normalisation of relations with Serbia can be overcome. The Commission's 2018 annual assessment<sup>62</sup> of enlargement talks of the politicisation of administration civil service, undue political influence on the judiciary and rule of law institutions, and "slow and inefficient" justice.

An interim stage towards accession is the **European Reform Agenda (ERA)**, which the government of Kosovo and the European Commission launched in November 2016. It is a framework for high-level dialogue on key priorities<sup>63</sup> to build on the entry into force in April 2016 of the EU-Kosovo Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA). That agreement offers Kosovo trade benefits in its relationship with the EU (and vice versa), support with its reforms and provides a framework for political dialogue.<sup>64</sup> The new government appointed in September 2017 committed itself to the implementation of EU-related reforms, but progress to date has been slow<sup>65</sup>.

## 2.2. Strategic communication

The Office's 2017 Information and Communication Forward Plan highlights the difficulties these contextual challenges can pose for EU communication. The Office points out in the forward plan that the challenges which Kosovo is facing in meeting the requirements of the European Reform Agenda and accession, as well as its difficult relations with its neighbours and shortcomings in the electoral processes<sup>66</sup>, can make it **difficult for the Office/EUSR to communicate positive messages**. Communicating on IPA is, moreover, frequently challenging due to mayors being indicted or sentenced for serious crimes.

An irritant for Kosovo in its relations with the EU is the fact that it is the only beneficiary in the Western Balkans and Turkey whose citizens do not enjoy visa-free access to the EU. The ratification of the border/boundary demarcation agreement with Montenegro by the Kosovo Assembly in March 2018 was considered by the EU to have constituted an important achievement and the fulfilment of one of the key criteria for **visa liberalisation**<sup>67</sup>. Subsequently, in July 2018, the Commission confirmed that Kosovo had met the 95 conditions for visa liberalisation<sup>68</sup>. The final two benchmarks that Kosovo had been required to meet related to this boundary agreement with Montenegro and meeting indicators of progress in the fight against corruption.

The Commission's legislative proposal to liberalise visas as a result was adopted by the European Parliament in March 2019<sup>69</sup>, but is still pending in the Council<sup>70</sup>. Some interviewees had (wrongly) hoped that the Council would debate it in December 2018, the more so because they were not optimistic that the Romanian Presidency would make this a priority in its programme for the first half of 2019 as Romania is one of five EU Member States that does not officially recognise Kosovo.

Several interviewees told the evaluation team that public opinion in Kosovo is relatively sensitive to this issue and support for EU accession could be impacted if progress stalls. The commentary on the 2018 Balkan Barometer sees a relationship between the much higher importance attached to freedom to travel in the survey in Kosovo to this issue: "in Kosovo\*, where an overwhelming majority perceive the EU as a good

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<sup>62</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic And Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 2018; Communication on EU Enlargement Policy; [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20180417\\_strategy\\_paper\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20180417_strategy_paper_en.pdf)

<sup>63</sup> [https://www.mei-ks.net/repository/docs/era\\_final.pdf](https://www.mei-ks.net/repository/docs/era_final.pdf)

<sup>64</sup> [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/stabilisation\\_and\\_association\\_agreement\\_eng\\_0.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/stabilisation_and_association_agreement_eng_0.pdf)

<sup>65</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20180417-kosovo-report.pdf>

<sup>66</sup> [https://eeas.europa.eu/election-observation-missions/eom-kosovo-2017/31953/eu-chief-observer-presents-final-report-june-2017-legislative-elections-kosovo-stresses-need\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/election-observation-missions/eom-kosovo-2017/31953/eu-chief-observer-presents-final-report-june-2017-legislative-elections-kosovo-stresses-need_en)

<sup>67</sup> Inter alia: [https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/41780/joint-statement-ratification-border-demarcation-agreement-between-kosovo-and-montenegro\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/41780/joint-statement-ratification-border-demarcation-agreement-between-kosovo-and-montenegro_en) and Commission Staff Working Document Kosovo\* 2018 Report Accompanying the document Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 2018 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy; <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20180417-kosovo-report.pdf>

<sup>68</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/news/visa-liberalisation-commission-confirms-kosovo-fulfils-all-required-benchmarks\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/news/visa-liberalisation-commission-confirms-kosovo-fulfils-all-required-benchmarks_en)

<sup>69</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&mode=XML&reference=A8-2016-0261&language=EN>

<sup>70</sup> [https://oeil.secure.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?reference=2016/0139\(COD\)&l=en](https://oeil.secure.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?reference=2016/0139(COD)&l=en)



thing, more than half of the population (52%) prioritize freedom to travel, largely due to the fact that they are yet to benefit from EU visa liberalisation.”<sup>71</sup> The average for the region as a whole is 29%.

The fact that **visa liberalisation** is the only area in which the Ministry of European Integration **has a specific EU-related communication campaign for the wider public**<sup>72</sup> to explain what the process is illustrates the relatively high level of awareness of this issue<sup>73</sup>.

In surveys<sup>74</sup> carried out for the EU Office under the contract for the EU Info Centre, however, the issue of the inability to travel to the EU without a visa was ranked only seventh out of eleven topics in a list of the most important issues facing Kosovo in 2018. The position in the list was unchanged compared to the two previous years, but it had diminished in relative importance. The **major issue for the population is corruption**.

A major shift over the last three years in these surveys was in the importance attached to **education**. Ranked sixth and fifth of 12 issues in 2016 and 2017, it jumped to second of eleven issues in 2018, overtaking the general economic situation and unemployment. The least important issues in all three years were relations with neighbours (least important) and the environment (second least important).

Levels of **access to the Internet are exceptionally high in Kosovo**, when access by personal computer or mobile phone are taken together. Access to the Internet at home is 89% (2016), the highest in the region and two percentage points higher than in the EU-28<sup>75</sup>, even though only 61.3% have access to a PC at home<sup>76</sup>, suggesting that mobile phones are being shared. This access was reported to be lower for older people in rural regions.

## 2.3. Management and Organisation

When it comes to planning, it is difficult to establish a clear link between the Office Annual Communication Plan, the objectives of the EUICC and the way that communication activities are implemented by the Office and the EUICC. This is because the format of the Office Annual Communication Plan is not set up to provide a chain of logic from the overall and specific objectives of the Plan to the specific objectives/purpose and activities of the EUICCs.

The result has been is that the Info Centre for the time being “an island” in the words of one member of the Office staff not integrated in the work of the Office and staff outside the communication section do not have an “Info Centre reflex”, i.e. do not automatically think about how to use the Info Centre to achieve their objectives, despite the best efforts of the communication team to change this. Office staff do use the EUICC for organising discussions and video screening, info sessions and project events, but having an event centre that the Office can use is not the same as integrated approach to communication in which the Info Centre is seen as an arm of Office rather than an independent entity with its own separate programme. This disconnect was already identified in desk phase when it was suggested that a strategy for communication defined by the Delegation, and clearer guidance on what topics to focus on and more dialogue with the Office would help improve the work of the EUICC. Other constructive feedback and ideas for improvement, include direct contact with EU-funded IPA beneficiaries, and more communication and sharing with national IPA coordinators and national government.

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<sup>71</sup> Balkan Barometer, Regional Cooperation Council: <https://www.rcc.int/pubs/66/balkan-barometer-2018-public-opinion-survey>

<sup>72</sup> <http://visafree-ks.com/v/>

<sup>73</sup> The Ministry also organises **workshops** for stakeholders on **implementation of the SAA** and provides up-to-date information on its website on relations with the EU under the label **EU Perspective for Kosovo**, but this branding is the legacy of a 2010-2014 IPA programme, which carried this name, which is not currently directly funded by the EU. It operates at a lower level with limited government funds.

<sup>74</sup> *European Awareness Survey in Kosovo, 2017*. Not published

<sup>75</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Enlargement\\_countries\\_-\\_information\\_and\\_communication\\_technology\\_statistics](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Enlargement_countries_-_information_and_communication_technology_statistics)

<sup>76</sup>



From the observations of the evaluation team, there is a split of responsibilities within Office for Office Communication, on the one hand, and the EUICCs (at least in the past), on the other, which may have been a contributory factor in this disconnect in addition to the format of the reporting template of the Annual Communication Plan. Staffing changes and the thematic campaigns launched in 2018 have brought a measure of change (and evolution) since the survey was filled in as the campaigns have got under way with close cooperation between the dedicated person responsible in the Office and the campaign manager in the Office.

The other obvious factor is the workload of the Press and Information Team dealing with the EUICC's core business, with time spent on administration which detracts from the ability to utilise to the full the communication expertise of the Office's staff, particularly that of the staff member in charge of EUICCs. As that staff member is the only member of the team working for the Commission, all the work of reporting through the CRIS system falls to her as EEAS staff cannot access CRIS. These difficulties arise above all, however, because DG NEAR is providing a legacy format for reporting that has not kept up with.

Unlike the situation elsewhere in the Western Balkans, the EUICC **budget** does not include communication deliverables (ad hoc translations, interpretation and photo coverage of EU Office events, production of videos, website hosting, visibility items and media monitoring). These are covered by a **second communication contract**, implemented currently by a different contractor. This arrangement has been in place as long as there has been an EUICC and works smoothly. The EUICC itself has had additional budget to run **thematic communication campaigns** since the beginning of 2018. This is within the EUICC budget but is a new kind of activity requiring communication agency skills, which have been brought on board via an additional Key Expert.

When the communication deliverables contract expires in October 2019, it is intended to include these deliverables in the next Info Centre contract, which will run from February 2020. The gap between the two contracts is considered by Office staff to be manageable with sufficient advance planning. Integrating these two contracts (the Info Centre and communication products) plus the thematic campaigns is seen as more efficient, but has downsides, as acknowledged by key interviewees. There is a risk of not finding a contractor with all the right competencies together. It will be important to **adapt the current ToR for the Info Centre**, as they are not sufficiently appropriate for obtaining the expertise communication agencies can offer.

There has historically been a strong emphasis on culture in the work of the Info Centres in Kosovo, which are known as "European Information and Cultural Centres". The emphasis on culture is even greater under the current contract as the Team Leader is a strong advocate for promoting cultural relations between the EU and Kosovo (in both directions as a means of demonstrating that the EU values Kosovo's culture) and has developed good networks from prior and current professional activities. An emphasis on culture in 2018 was also the corollary of it being the European Year of Cultural Heritage.

There was a **change of contractor** in February 2018. Where interviewees perceived a difference between the past and the new contractor, they perceived that the new contractor is more proactive. An increased level of proactivity would be logical as the current contractor is required to organize 50% more events (up from at least 2 a month to at least 3) and has received budget for thematic communication campaigns that is additional to the traditional activities of the Centres. As the perception of change was not as great in north Mitrovica, where the staff have not changed, it is reasonable to suggest that the perception of greater proactivity is not just a reflection of the Centres doing more, but of what can be assessed from evidence and interviews to be more dynamic and better networked leadership.

There are currently two **Key Expert positions**, the Team Leader and the Media and Outreach Campaign Leader. Both positions are part time (200 days per year). The Team Leader has no formal deputy for operational issues. According to the contract, the project director and coordinator based in London and Zagreb respectively provide backstopping support. The Media and Outreach Campaign Leader was created for the contract beginning in January 2018 to handle the thematic campaigns. This structure has shortcomings. On the one hand, there are times when junior staff are left unsupervised in Pristina because the Team Leader is part-time, raising questions about the supervision of junior staff, who are not self-starters – from the albeit necessarily limited observations of the evaluators. On the other hand, the fact that the contractor is not local (and the Team Leader part-time) results in problems in the quality of reporting according to the Office.

Several non-key experts providing support within this contract have been with the Centre for several years. This is the case, on the one hand, of one of the two Event Organiser/Information Officers in Pristina, who has been with the EUICC for eight years and is highly appreciated by civil society for the networks and knowledge she has developed, and, on the other, of the Help Desk/Centre Administrator and Event Organiser/Information Officer in North Mitrovica (five and six years respectively). They are also known for their extensive networks. This continuity is unplanned – and cannot be planned in the current contracting system but is undoubtedly beneficial. The other non-key experts are a Help Desk/Centre Administrator (in Pristina), a Copywriter/Editor (since January 2018 a Digital Media and Publications Copywriter/Editor), and a designer in Pristina.

There are or have been several issues with **finance and contracting**. These relate to accounting for incidentals, who the leaseholders should be, the separation of equipment tendering, staff time sheets and the location of the contractor.

Accounting for incidentals is time-consuming but the issue noted was the initial learning curve under the current contract. The inclusion of the lease of the premises as part of the contract is a major contributor to the time needed to account for incidentals according to Delegation and contractor staff. More than one interviewee in both the Delegation and on contractor staff questioned whether the lease should be held by the EUICC or whether the Office is better placed to manage a lease contract efficiently. The downside of management by the Office would, according to the information given to the evaluation team, be the need to launch a competitive tender procedure for renting space each time the EUICC contract was re-tendered. Continuity in the same location could be lost. This is a finely balanced argument. The **equipment**, on the other hand, is tendered for separately by the Office, giving the EUICC less of a say in what it needs and leading to time lags in supplying the EUICCs' needs.

The contractor is not based in Kosovo, but in London with a coordinator in Zagreb. This also gives rise to problems of **quality control in reporting, and inadequate backstopping capability** according to the information given to the evaluation team. This is a common/frequent problem related to the use of international contractors according to staff in the Office/Delegations, particularly in relation to backstopping, i.e. the ability to draw on additional/alternative expertise if an Expert or non-key Expert is not available for some reason, or a particular type of communication expertise is needed. This appears to be a current issue in Kosovo. This is a risk when contracts are awarded by open tender.

The ToR are, on the whole, flexible enough, although the requirement to produce up to five publications of approximately 30 pages has been found too restrictive by the EUICC, where it is felt that the alternative could be smaller brochures and sponsored social media posts. There appears to be a case for more flexibility with regards to the number of required events per month (at least three per month) during holiday months.

One contractual requirement that appears to be specific to Kosovo is the requirement for experts to provide **reports on their activities every 50 days**. There was no information available as to why this requirement is applied to EUICC staff when it appears to be designed for short-term experts working on more conventional cooperation projects. It was suggested to the evaluation team, however, that in the case of EUICCs, this was an unintended side-effect of a more general rule designed to prevent abuses. In practice, there is an internal 30-day limit in Kosovo, but an exception has been made in the case of the Info Centre to extend this to 50.

One of the non-key experts regarded this requirement as detrimental to a sense of ownership on the part of the staff and a contrast to the situation under the previous contract, when the non-key experts had employment contracts with the contractor. It was also suggested that some non-key experts had withdrawn their applications to work for the Centre because they were not prepared to work on these terms. This is consistent with other sources who reported delays in hiring the non-key experts.

## **2.4. Other EU Communication Actors**

The wider landscape of EU Communication (other than the activities of the Office) comes essentially through the visibility efforts of **EU-funded projects**<sup>77</sup>. When project budgets are approved, inclusion of a communication budget line is compulsory, but the project officers approving them have thematic not communication expertise. They recognise in principle that they should pay more attention to communication, but pressure of work and the need to deliver the project get in the way. Consequently, there is a tendency to focus on compliance with the visibility guidelines and promotion to stakeholders via opening and closing events (often held at the EUICC), a website (which is generally not available once the project is over) and some branding on the project. The thematic campaigns (see above) are a partial remedy but are developed after the event. Some attempts are being made within the Office to improve upfront consultation between staff responsible for communication and information, and to bring together the communication strategies of a few large projects at the outset, but these are in their infancy.

There are exceptions to the general rule that projects tend to feel their communication and visibility obligations have been met with opening and closing conferences, a website and some branding, since the representatives of civil society interviewed and the interviewees at the two implementing partners take a more sophisticated approach to communication, and in the case of the implementing organisations coordinate closely with the Office on their activities. The Confidence Building through Cultural Protection in Kosovo (2016-2017) and Inter-Community Dialogue through Inclusive Cultural Heritage Preservation (2018-2019) projects implemented by UNDP are an example and work closely with the Office and the EUICC. This project communicates, inter alia, with video material showing the difference the project has made to the lives of individuals across the ethnic divide. Nevertheless, these remain stand-alone communication campaigns, not part of a joined-up EU communication landscape.

The ToR provide a non-exhaustive list of **multipliers** with which the Centres could develop synergies. They are: EU Member State representations; Ministry of European Integration; EULEX Mission in Kosovo; EU funded projects such as Media for All, Culture for All, etc.; NGOs and Think tanks; Universities and schools; Main cultural national organisations and institutions (National Gallery, Dokufest film festival, National Theatre, etc.) The Centres work with all of these, but relations are closest with EU Embassies, NGOs/think tanks and the cultural organisations although in practice any synergies relate only to events. Both Centres are used to host events by nearly all the categories of multiplier identified in the ToR, as well as by Erasmus+. The main cultural organisations and institutions with which the Centres cooperate include the Dokufest Film Festival, the Pristina International Film Festival, the National Theatre, the National Museum and the Institut français.

With the exception of the cultural activities, organisation of activities with multipliers is essentially demand-led rather than a conscious fulfilment of the requirement to increase synergies with multipliers, i.e. the importance of working with multipliers is recognised and the Info Centre takes initiatives in this area, but there is no strategy for increasing synergies with multipliers.

**EU Member States** are in principle willing to work more with the Office and the EUICC. They collaborate on Europe Day<sup>78</sup>, the Day of European Languages and Meet the Ambassador activity, as well as on one-off activities, such as the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Treaty of Rome. As the Embassies tend to be small, they tend to wait for the initiative to come from the Office or the EUICC. Of the Embassies met (Croatia, France, Italy), none had even one staff member dedicated full-time to communication.

The initiatives that have been taken so far around “Europe Days”, i.e. Europe Day itself and thematic days, such as the one on language, or initiatives such as Climate Week, and using the EUICC to host meetings with Ambassadors were welcomed by the Member State interviewees. Interviewees also suggested that EUICCs could play more of a role as a hub of information about Member States, including visa and educational opportunities, and tourism. The EUICC hosts information sessions on Erasmus+, but it was

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<sup>77</sup> A visibility challenge specific to Kosovo, which was drawn to our attention as being a real constraint, is the need to footnote every mention of Kosovo. The issue is compounded when the implementing partner is a UN Agency because the UN has footnote wording of its own and both footnotes must be used.

<sup>78</sup> In practice, five days of events.

suggested to the evaluation team that there is scope to do more in providing a one-stop shop for information about both Erasmus+ and the scholarships the Member States offer. This appears to be an idea worth pursuing.

Moreover, there is evidence of demand. In the European Awareness Survey for 2017, more EUICC joint activities with Member States was cited by 50% of respondents, compared to 28% for outreach and online campaigns and 22.2% for cultural events and activities.

**Collaboration with the French Embassy is particularly close** because the Embassy provides access to a database of films with rights clearance that the EUICC can use. France also chairs the EUNIC cluster set up in Kosovo in 2018. They also have the strongest cultural footprint in Kosovo, whereas Germany focuses on language teaching. The German Embassy organises a German Film Week but does not work as closely with the EUICC. The Italian Cultural Institute in Tirana took on responsibility for promoting Italian culture in Kosovo in late 2018 and has the advantage of having a room suitable for screening films for 50-100 people.

The Member State representatives, interviewed by the evaluators, are **aware that it is expected of them to cooperate with the Office and the EUICC on communication and culture, but do not feel under pressure from their respective headquarters to regard this as a priority.**

The final group contributing to this landscape are the **EU programmes and networks**, but there are fewer of these than elsewhere in the region. Kosovo has been participating in Creative Europe Culture since 2018, but stakeholders' main interest lies in the better-budgeted Creative Europe MEDIA. (Kosovo has to modify its legislation on audiovisual services before it can participate in MEDIA programme.) The Enterprise Europe Network is not present in Kosovo and Horizon 2020 activity is very limited despite the contact points' best efforts because Kosovo lags behind other countries in innovation. Consequently, Erasmus+ is currently the main player and uses both Centres for information sessions and to distribute materials.

In summary, all civil society, implementing partners and Member State embassy/cultural institute interviewees saw the EUICCs as playing an important role in complementing the Office as the Office largely communicates with political stakeholders, whereas the EUICCs also reach wider audience. Several of these interviewees saw events organised by the EUICC as directly valuable to them in terms of learning more about the opportunities the EU offers and about what the EU does, i.e. they attend events not targeting them directly.

The availability of the EUICC space to partners is seen as important not just for the convenience (and in some case money-saving) factor, but also because of the EUICC's good networks to attract stakeholder audiences and the media. The EUICC is viewed as a hub for all things EU in both Pristina and North Mitrovica. Nevertheless, there was consensus that that not enough information is available (or if it is available, not sufficiently known) about all the activities of the EU in Kosovo.

## 2.5. Assessing the Intervention Logic

As part of the desk phase of the evaluation, an Intervention Logic was reconstructed. This section provides some reflections on the Intervention Logic reconstructed based on findings from the field mission. The forward communication planning of the Office, which is based on a template supplied by DG NEAR, uses some Intervention Logic terminology (e.g. general and specific objectives, results to be achieved and activities), but does not present them in the form of an Intervention Logic nor does it make it clear how the EUICC fits in each case. The DG NEAR Guidelines on linking planning/programming, monitoring and evaluation<sup>79</sup> do not appear to have been taken into account.

The concept of an Intervention Logic was new to Info Centre staff and they were also unaware of the Office's Communication Plan, so it was not possible to have an in-depth discussion on how the Intervention Logic might be improved or how it related to the working of the Office. EUICC staff did, however, accept that the Intervention Logic the team had reconstructed was an accurate reflection in target groups, activities and

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<sup>79</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/financial\\_assistance/phare/evaluation/2016/20160831-dg-near-guidelines-on-linking-planning-programming-vol-1-v-0.4.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/financial_assistance/phare/evaluation/2016/20160831-dg-near-guidelines-on-linking-planning-programming-vol-1-v-0.4.pdf)

anticipated outcomes of their understanding of the Terms of Reference. In terms of the content of the reconstructed Intervention Logic, the observations of the evaluation team and evidence from interviewees indicated that:

- **Inputs:** include the human and financial resources allocated to the EUICCs, which in 2017 were only those for the operations of the EUICC, not the thematic campaigns or the communication deliverables covered by a separate contract.
- **Activities:** all the required activities are being carried out, i.e. management, IT (websites, social media, etc), events, promotion and dissemination, synergies with multipliers and other stakeholders and a public opinion poll. However, it is not possible to establish a direct relationship between all of the specific objectives of the Office and the contribution of the EUICCs to each objective via the activities of the Office listed in the Forward Communication Plan.
- **Outputs** are being delivered from these activities, but there are no indicators on which an assessment of the quality of the outputs could be based, as there are no baselines (e.g. data from previous years) or targets, and satisfaction surveys are not carried out<sup>80</sup>, so no analysis of the quality of the outputs is possible. In addition, the EUICC results are not defined in the ToR in line with DG NEAR Guidelines (2016). The EUICC ToR, present “Activities” as “expected Results”.
- **Outcomes:** survey data in the Eurobarometer, the Balkan Barometer and the Office’s own annual survey that shows level of awareness and trust in the EU, but it is not possible to establish a direct link with the activities of the EUICC. There is no way of knowing other than through perceptions whether the desired effects in terms of reaching target groups or influencing their sentiments about the EU as this is not measured. The perceptions are that this is the case, particularly in Pristina.

During the field mission, stakeholders familiar with the work of the EUICC, both inside and outside the Office, confirmed their views that all outcomes (specific objectives) are being reached to some extent, i.e. improving and enhancing the accessibility of EU-related information and opportunities, assisting the Office communication, supporting EU-related events and networks, increasing knowledge and understanding, dispelling myths and misconceptions on access, increasing awareness of the IPA and increasing synergies with other relevant entities. This is backed up by levels of awareness of the existence of the EUICC which are high. In the 2017 European Awareness Survey<sup>81</sup>, 13% of respondents felt well informed about the EUICC, 29% felt informed and 25% felt somewhat informed. Moreover, the figures were higher than in the two previous years for which data is provided. However, despite the evidence from the survey and qualitative feedback, there is still a need to define SMART objectives with appropriate **indicators** to allow realistic targets to be set based on past performance.

These results should be treated with some caution. There is generally a survey bias in questions where respondents do not like to admit ignorance. There is also no information in the report on how many people did not answer the question. This is a gap which should be remedied in future surveys.

- **Impact:** in the reconstructed Intervention Logic, four potential impacts are defined. The main vehicles for data collection to confirm possible impacts are the public opinion surveys and media monitoring. Given that the Intervention Logic was reconstructed ex-post, questions included in surveys and the assessment of media monitoring would need to be tailored to allow a better

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<sup>80</sup> Attendance records are kept (see Annex). There is consequently no reason not to report the number of attendees per event, but an opportunity is also lost to collect some basic information, e.g. whether the person is attending an event for the first time, how they heard about the event, how often they attend events at the centre.

<sup>81</sup> Unpublished.



understanding of the extent that the populations expectations for accession can be considered to be realistic based on an improved understanding of the EU role and objectives in Kosovo. Currently, these points are not fully addressed in the survey and the EUICC is not required to monitor the media, even quantitatively (as opposed to qualitatively). However, tracking levels of awareness and understanding would help to fill these gaps.

- **Target groups:** there is broad alignment between categories of target groups listed in the EUICC ToR and the Office Communication Forward Plan. However, the EUICC ToR lists more target groups than the Office's Information and Communication Forward Plan. This is surprising given that the Office Plan should be setting a tailored framework for communication in the beneficiary. It would be more normal to find a longer list in the Communication Forward Plan as being targets for the EU in Kosovo, with responsibility for targeting some shared with or delegated to the EUICC. However, segmentation – particularly in targeting citizens – appears to be weak and this was conceded by some interviewees. There was no sense in interviews of any prioritisation on the basis of need, rather that the needs are so great (and the target groups listed in the ToR and to be found in the Intervention Logic below so many) that virtually any activity can be justified. The reporting framework used by the contractor (e.g. in 2016-2017) does not, moreover, require the EUICCs to relate activities to need. This reflects the fact that the ToR do not require this.

The reconstructed **Intervention Logic** presented below is intended to represent the work of the EU Info Centres set up in Kosovo, taking into account the feedback gathered from a variety of stakeholders. Evidence relating to inputs and activities can be found in Terms of Reference and contractual documents. The reconstructed Intervention Logic shows a close correlation between the ToR and what was carried out in terms of the activities envisaged and the outputs achieved. Quantitative indicators are available to measure the outputs, i.e. the number of visitors (but assessments as to their usefulness are based on interviews as no targets were set or comparisons made to earlier years. The assessments of the effects and outcomes, and the actual objectives are based on interviews taking to account the European Awareness Survey.

Overall, the **assessment of performance** is hampered by lack of baseline data and the fact that no targets are set in the Communication Forward Plan. In practice, the data for very few of the required indicators are collected or the data is open to question. In the report of the previous contractor for 2017, the number of queries is equated with the number of visitors, i.e. 1 visitor = 1 query; the speed or response is not reported, figures on journalists and events are cumulative with no recording of repeat visitors, making it impossible to assess whether new audiences are being reached; the category of perceptions of participants in events in response to questionnaires is left blank, and the website data is missing. The detail on the number of publications distributed is missing from the Final Report (the total is 459 without any breakdown), and the satisfaction rate with publications is given as 'High' based on the (unspecified) number of publications distributions. While lessons are undoubtedly learned, the approach is not structured. This was discussed during the field missions.



## Revised reconstructed Intervention Logic (2017)<sup>82</sup>

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Desired Outcomes	Desired Impacts
<p><b>Personnel</b></p> <p>EU Office - 1 staff: Project Manager/ Info/Communication Officer</p> <p><u>EUIC: - 7 staff:</u>  <b>1 key expert</b>  (1 Team Leader);  <b>6 non-key experts:</b>  3 Information Officers, 1 Publications Copywriter/ Editor, 1 Helpdesk Officer, 1 Designer</p> <p><b>Contractual</b></p> <p>Terms of Reference  12-month service contract  + 1 ½ month extension (addendum),  €285,000 budget includes lease of premises</p> <p><b>Content</b></p> <p>From partners/projects/own initiatives</p> <p><b>Process</b></p> <p>Regular meetings with Office on progress  Participation in meetings of EUNIC cluster</p>	<p><b>Management:</b> Running EU Information and Cultural Centres (2) in Pristina and North Mitrovica. Welcoming visitors, advising &amp; informing; dissemination &amp; display</p> <p><b>IT:</b> Manage, update and contribute to Office and EUICC websites, relevant social media, monthly news blog.</p> <p><b>Events:</b> managing Europe Day and 2+ EU events/month on public discussions; cultural events; thematic events campaigns/activities; Master classes on EU for students</p> <p><b>Promotion/dissemination:</b>  Two publications on key EU assistance programmes; Posters, factsheets, items infographics, cartoons and illustrations; Promotional materials; Purchase of regional and international magazines; Translation and printing of four EU publications</p> <p><b>Synergies</b> with multipliers and other stakeholders, e.g. NGOs, universities, authorities, EU Member States, EU programmes (Erasmus+)</p> <p><b>Public opinion poll</b> on EU awareness</p>	<p><b>An informed public debate on integration into the EU,</b> its benefits and challenges (including visa liberalisation), in terms of country reform effort and EU support</p> <p><b>Enhanced public awareness</b> of achievements of the IPA in Kosovo.</p> <p><b>EU Office</b> assisted in successfully implementing its information and communication strategies, in particular Europe Day, Meet the Ambassadors and Feature Stories (flagship activities in the Forward Communication Plan)</p> <p><b>Increased reach as a result of synergies</b> with multipliers and other interested parties for the provision of the information on the EU and the EU agenda in Kosovo.</p> <p><b>(Largely) effectively and efficiently managed and operated the EU Information Centres</b> and all related information activities</p>	<p><b>Increased knowledge and understanding</b> of EU in the general public (particularly youth, civil society and policymakers) of EU policies, institutions, programmes, objectives, priorities</p> <p><b>Increased levels of trust</b> in the EU and increased/stable desire for accession.</p> <p><b>Increased understanding</b> of the benefits and obligations of accession.</p>	<p><b>A wider understanding</b> of the EU role and objectives in Kosovo, and of EU values and the reasons for subscribing to them</p> <p><b>Well informed and realistic expectations</b> of accession in the general public, particularly younger generations, civil society and policymakers</p>

<sup>82</sup> There was a change of contractor at the beginning of 2018. The situation observed during the field mission varied significantly, notably because of the addition of a budget for thematic campaigns and a second key expert, as well as stronger focus on cultural events and outreach to the cultural community. There was also concrete school outreach plans.

Target groups		Assumptions/Risks
<b>Frequent target groups</b>	<b>Target groups (reported in TOR)</b>	<b>Assumptions</b> Both EU and Kosovo (both national and local authorities) remain committed to EU integration Political and economic stability is maintained  <b>Risks</b> Key stakeholders not maintaining sufficient focus on and interest in the EU agenda Excessive expectations on the part of Kosovo citizens Visa liberalisation process requirements create negative attitudes towards the EU The role of the EU in Kosovo's normalisation dialogue with Serbia is not perceived to be neutral/a force for positive change Deterioration in security situation Unattractive location of EUIC in North Mitrovica (predated move to a more attractive location) Poor interest in visiting EUICCs and participating and/or interested in their events/no new audiences reached
Young people aged 16-25 Students Journalists Civil society Retired people who read/use internet (reported in the online survey, but the evidence for this is weak)	General Public Young people, university and school students Business community Journalists and media, civil society Researchers, academic circles and think tanks Government and public institutions Minority groups, women, disabled people, elderly/pensioners Other stakeholders, e.g. EU Project Managers  <b>Target groups (actual)</b> General public (at time of Europe Day, and in particular youth) University students Journalists and media Civil society Researchers, academic circles and think tanks Cultural institutions Government and public institutions Minority groups, women, people with disabilities, LGBT community – primarily through hosted events	

### 3. EVALUATION FINDINGS

The following sections describe the key findings by evaluation question and judgement criteria from interviews with EU Office staff, EUICC staff, implementing partners, EU programmes, Member States and cultural institutions, and students. As per the evaluation questions matrix defined for the evaluation, the field mission is not intended to provide evidence in relation to all the evaluation questions and judgement criteria. Final answers to the evaluation questions will be drafted drawing on analysis of different sources and provided in the Synthesis Report.

Information in relation to hypotheses to be tested is integrated into the section, where relevant. Many of these hypotheses require feedback to be aggregated across the available evidence and in practice did not prove to be relevant to the specific on the ground situations investigated. This was largely because interviewees were not able to think about the issues raised in a strategic way and could not confirm or disprove the range of hypotheses presented.

**EQ1.** To what extent have the **objectives** of the EUICs been defined considering the **specific needs** of the target audience in the IPA beneficiaries and contribute to the objectives set in the **EU framework** on strategic communication in the enlargement region?

- Specific target group communication needs have been well defined and the EUICCs' objectives clearly focus on these needs.

In Kosovo, EUICCs have not been required to place a specific focus on researching target group needs. However, this is evolving. It is recognised that target groups have been too broadly defined ("the public") and that in specifying specific groups, that too many have been listed for the list to be realistic, and that more segmentation and prioritisation is desirable. There are positives in message testing, particularly of the new campaigns, lessons being learned from the results of the annual European Awareness Survey, and the thematic campaigns being developed since the beginning of 2018. However, there is more use that could be made of that survey by disaggregating data and by adapting some of the questions. There is also only a limited understanding that there are simple tools for collecting feedback through event satisfaction surveys, analysis of publication distribution patterns, visitor interests or social media posts or surveys, which would improve the understanding of needs.

**EQ2.** To what extent have the **objectives** of the EUICs been achieved?

- Extent that the outputs of the communication activities implemented by the EUICCs have produced the expected outcomes, which contributed to the achievement of the set objectives.
- Extent to which the quantitative and qualitative effects of the outputs and outcomes of EUICCs' activities can be deemed to have contributed to the achievement of the set objectives.
- Extent to which other factors influenced the achievement of the outcomes.
- Extent that the communication tools used by the EUICCs were appropriate for each target audience.
- Extent that the EU Office's use of other communication tools (e.g. social media) could have had a higher outreach to different categories of the target audience.

Without it being possible to establish a direct relationship between the outputs and the outcomes, the EUICCs' activities are producing the expected outputs and it is reasonable to assume that this is leading to, or at least contributing to, the expected outcomes, and thus to improving the quality of information, the level of understanding about the role of the EU and about accession, and to more positive perceptions in the groups most targeted, i.e. youth, media and civil society.

It will always be difficult to establish this kind of causal link where the expected outcomes are so broad, but more could be done to underpin the likelihood of the link by full compliance with the monitoring requirements of the terms of reference, analysing the data available on a systematic rather than an empirical basis, establishing targets based on year-on-year performance, and as mentioned above, using simple tools to measure outcomes, such as event or other types of surveys (paper or online).

There is a general focus on events, including hosted events. This is a successful activity, but the logistics and promotion associated with hosted events is time-consuming and takes staff time. The hosting is in line with the Terms of Reference. It brings benefits as the EUICCs are seen as a hub of EU-related activity in both Pristina and North Mitrovica. It also provides a locus for networking on the part of civil society involved in EU projects and fulfils the requirements of the Terms of Reference of building synergies with multipliers, albeit not in a structured fashion. In addition, there is a risk of organising events on demand becoming the easy option and taking resources away from outreach, particularly in the absence, on the one hand, of any measurement of attendance, satisfaction or new audiences reached, or on the other of a formal outreach plan which identifies target groups and appropriate channels.

A range of factors influence the achievement of outcomes:

- Despite its best efforts and good relations between the Office and the EUICCs, the Office does not have the resources it needs to provide the EUICCs with sufficient guidance on its expectations and to develop an integrated approach where the Office and the EUICC operate as one;
- The EUICCs' at times find themselves operating in an environment where relations between the EU and Kosovo are strained. This is also true for the Centre in North Mitrovica at times of heightened tension between Kosovo and Serbia, and the EU and Serbia;
- The EUICC in Pristina has been constrained by limitations in its infrastructure. The move in April 2019 will create the ability to host larger events and offer more interactive services.
- The provision of information on the EU-funded projects independent of the projects' own communication and visibility strategies has suffered in the past from difficulties for Office communication staff and EUICCs in obtaining information on projects, and in particular concrete results which can be packaged as success stories. There has been a lack of understanding by project officers and many implementing partners of what communicators need. Efforts made within the Office to improve this situation and the use of thematic campaigns to cluster information on projects are bearing fruit, although both the Office and EUICCs could benefit from EU-funded projects improving their communication strategies and then developing synergies with the EUICCs in deploying those.

**EQ3.** To what extent **the organisation and management** of the EUICCs have been conducive to an efficient, effective and sustainable implementation of the communication activities?

- The management of EUICCs through service contracts is conducive to an efficient, effective and sustainable implementation of communication activities.
- The EUICCs and Info Points / Corners set up in an IPA beneficiary have worked together in an efficient and effective manner to reach the target audience and achieve the set objectives in that particular beneficiary.
- The system setup for monitoring the EUICCs' activities functioned at regular intervals and was capable of collecting data and detecting problems (indicators were appropriately designed to measure the progress in relation to the baseline situation and the effectiveness and of the targets, and extent that

targets were set realistically).

- Extent that the use of financing and management mechanisms could have provided better cost-effectiveness.
- The physical location of the EUICs in the IPA beneficiaries has facilitated the implementation of planned communication activities and the achievement of planned effects on the target audience.

The use of service contracts as such is appropriate, but the use of one-year or bridging contracts (e.g. for six weeks between late 2017 and late January 2018), is not conducive to continuity in communication. The move to a two-year contract (renewable for up to four) is positive.

The two EUICCs cooperate closely in planning and exchange of information, and maximising opportunities for efficiency in taking opportunities to show the same films or use the same speakers despite having distinct ethnic and linguistic target groups.

Monitoring systems are weak. No baselines and no targets are set. Indicators are quantitative (numbers of events to be organised, number of publications to produce) and unrelated to analysis of need or demand, or are very limited, e.g. website analytics requirements are limited to reporting on the number of visitors. The Office is not following up on the indicators that are available.

Financing mechanisms are appropriate, but the time lag between occupying premises and the equipment for new premises becoming available (because this is contracted for separately) is detrimental to the image of the EUICCs and their effectiveness. Moving to new premises obviously occurs infrequently, but this problem has affected both EUICCs recently.

Too much of the administrative and managerial burden is placed on the Kosovo-based Team Leader, who is not full time. This has led to problems in reporting quality, both in the case of the Kosovo-based contractor in 2017 and the current London-based contractor. Backstopping works better when the contractor is not an international consultancy. The administrative burden also under-utilises the communication skills of the Team Leader, just as the administrative burden on the Office staff member responsible for EUICCs underutilises her communication expertise. A provision on providing timesheets of EUICC every 50 days is an irritant for staff, who do not understand the reason for it.

The effectiveness of EUICC operations is hampered by the planning format of the Office (in line with the requirement of DG NEAR) as it is not possible to establish a clear relationship between the Forward Communication Plans of the Office and the Terms of Reference of the EUICCs, or a relationship between needs, expected results, the indicators or the target groups in one and the other. There is dialogue and cooperation, but this planning disconnect is an obstacle to an integrated approach.

The physical locations of both EUICCs are appropriate, including the new premises to which the EUICC in North Mitrovica moved in 2018 and the EUICC in Pristina moved in April 2019.<sup>83</sup> Disabled access from the street is limited in North Mitrovica and was sub-optimal at the previous location in Pristina despite ramps having been built internally where it was feasible. Only time will tell whether security concerns about the location in North Mitrovica chosen for its accessibility for both ethnic communities are justified and have affected the ability to communicate effectively. Both centres are accessible to any casual visitors who want to ask questions or use the facilities (though there are few) and are suited to hosting events and acting as an EU hub.

**EQ4.** To what extent the EUICCs have contributed **to raising public awareness** about the EU, its policies and values, EU funding and on the enlargement process in the IPA beneficiaries?

- Extent that target groups of EUICC communication activities in the IPA beneficiaries are more aware of the EU, its policies and values, EU funding and the enlargement process.

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<sup>83</sup> Based on knowledge of the new location in Pristina as described to us.

- Extent that EUICCs reach new audiences with EU messages about EU policies and values, EU funding and on the enlargement process that would not be reached by EU Delegations, or EU-funded projects.

As a first step in raising awareness of the EU, its policies and values, the annual survey carried out by the Office under the EUICC contract shows high levels of awareness of the EUICCs in the populations of Pristina and North Mitrovica, although there are shortcomings in the presentation of the data. Qualitative evidence that EUICC communication activities have raised the awareness of target groups is strong in civil society and in the limited number of students and visitors it was possible to interview. The EUICCs carry out a range of events on a variety of topics, and these are often linked to events, which will increase their resonance, such as European or international 'Days' or 'Weeks'. The consensus view of these is positive. The current contractor is reaching out to new audiences in culture and education. In addition, the thematic campaigns being run with additional budget since 2018 are increasing awareness-raising and effectiveness on the basis of qualitative data<sup>84</sup>.

However, the extent of this awareness-raising is difficult to assess without numbers of attendance at specific events, analysis of success factors, satisfaction surveys of events and publications/analysis of distribution data, or website data.<sup>85</sup> Without this data it is not possible to say whether new audiences have been reached. A dedicated outreach plan to set objectives and priorities would be helpful in ensuring that new audiences are reached in a structured fashion.

**EQ5i.** To what extent the **activities carried out by the EU Info Centres** have been coherent, complementary and **coordinated** with those carried out via other EU programmes and by other partners (e.g. Member States, IFIs, international organisations) **active in communicating re. EU policies & values, EU funding and the enlargement process** in the enlargement region?

- EUICCs liaise in a regular and planned way (either directly or via the EU Office) to share intelligence, identify synergies and opportunities to work together with other EU policy / programme communicators in the region.
- Extent that it is possible to identify other relevant opportunities to improve coordination to develop a more joined-up approach.

The main policies and programmes present in Kosovo are Erasmus+, Horizon 2020 and Creative Europe (Culture), but Kosovo has only been participating in Creative Europe since early 2018. EUICCs liaise closely with Erasmus+, including in presentations in cities where there is not an EUICC. There is no plan as such. The EUICCs are also the location of choice for the events of implementing partners and grant beneficiaries in civil society. It is likely to be used more in the new, larger premises in Pristina. This is based on monthly plans approved by the Office, but the approach to developing synergies is more opportunistic than planned. Given the small size of both Pristina and North Mitrovica, it is likely that most opportunities are exploited, but there is nevertheless scope for this process to be more structured. Horizon 2020 is an exception to the liaison, but it has a very specific target group. As the Enterprise Europe Network is not present in Kosovo, there are potential opportunities to fill this gap vis-à-vis SMEs, which are acknowledged, but have not yet been acted on.

<sup>84</sup> Social media data requested but not yet available.

<sup>85</sup> Website data for 2017 is not available. Data for 2018 shows high numbers of new visitors, but the data suggests that the counter was set at zero at the beginning of the year. The EUICC is not able to say whether this is the case or not.



**EQ5ii.** To what extent the EU Info Centres can contribute to the development and implementation of a **joined-up Public Diplomacy** (cf. EU Global Strategy) and act as hubs for EU-related initiatives taking place at the local level (i.e. both EU and non-EU funded)?

- There is alignment between EUICC communication activities and messages, and public diplomacy activities and messaging in each IPA beneficiary.
- Extent that EUICCs and staff of EU Office responsible for public diplomacy collaborate on joint initiatives or coordinate their initiatives.
- Extent to which EUICC support and are a focal point of activities (EU and non-EU funded) to reach public diplomacy target groups.

EUICC communication activities and messages are distinct from public diplomacy activities and messaging. This distinction is particularly important in a beneficiary like Kosovo with a difficult political environment. Campaign messaging is, moreover, validated by the Office, as are web and social media content. The EUICC in Pristina is also important for the Office in organising Office-inspired public diplomacy events around Europe Day. The EUICCs host public diplomacy events for EU and non-EU funded activities, and help with promotion. In both cases, this is a purely logistical function although the EUICCs provide ideas to the Office for Europe Day activities.

The EUICCs provide a location for some Member State events, such as film screenings, but Member States less automatically turn to EUICCs as the location of choice than civil society does, in part because they have locations of their own and in part because the relations are not as close. The EUICCs do host “Meet the Ambassador” sessions, which are a flagship activity of the Office.

**EQ6.** What is the **additional value** resulting from the communication activities carried out by the EU Info Centres compared to what could have been achieved by the IPA beneficiaries at national or regional levels?

- Extent that the reach and engagement of target groups by EUICs with EU messages on policies and values, funding and the enlargement process is greater and more effective than the benefits for target groups at national or regional level than IPA beneficiaries do or could achieve.
- Extent that IPA beneficiary communicators convey the desired messages on EU policies and values, funding and on the enlargement process.

Official communication on the EU is extremely limited in Kosovo. It is restricted to press releases, e.g. on ministerial meetings or formal aspects of implementation of the European Reform Agenda and providing information on the process of moving towards visa liberalisation. Provision of information on the EU, its policies and value, is, therefore, left to the Office, EU-funded projects and the EUICCs. It is unlikely that national or regional authorities will play a larger role in the near future unless the EU makes a significant investment not just in monetary terms, but in capacity-building and training on providing information on the issues of greatest interest, i.e. grants and scholarships.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 4.1. Conclusions

- The model of two EUICCs is appropriate in that there is an obvious political case for a centre in north Mitrovica despite the small population catchment. It is likely that there would be a case for an EUICC at least in Prizren if it fitted any criteria which might be adopted in future for a more systematic approach to siting of info centres in the enlargement region.
- There is currently no scope for working with Info Points collaborating with local entities, such as municipalities, since it would require a heavy investment in capacity-building and an appetite on the part of the authorities for which there is no evidence.
- The Office's Forward Communication Plan and the Terms of Reference are not well aligned. The main reason is the template provided for the Office, which does not lend itself to establishing a clear chain of logic from one to the other.
- The EUICCs are working effectively to provide information on EU policies, enlargement and values, the general objective of the Office. There is sound qualitative data on this, but it cannot be substantiated beyond this because of weaknesses in objective-setting and data collection.
- Information on EU policies as such is of little interest to most target groups but is provided appropriately on demand. The demand from or interest for target groups is in the impact of projects, the opportunities of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, including grants and educational opportunities, and the EUICCs correctly focus on these and on concrete examples that target groups can relate to.
- The qualitative data suggests that a rebalancing between events and outreach would bring effectiveness and efficiency benefits. This can only be substantively ascertained by better planning processes and data collection.
- It is not possible to draw conclusions on the effectiveness of the website or social media because data is not collected, or where collected, is not analysed for lessons to be learned.
- The qualitative information on publications, e.g. overstocking of certain publications and staff perceptions of a mismatch between supply and demand in relation to topics, suggests inappropriate priorities and the absence of a distribution strategy is a clear weakness.
- The target groups as defined are too broadly, but there is a sensible de facto focus on young people, civil society and working with EU-funded projects and programmes, notably Erasmus+.
- As the Enterprise Europe Network is not represented in Kosovo, there is a gap in the provision of information to SMEs, which the EUICC does not currently fill.
- There is a demand for information about Europe in the broader sense, i.e. about individual Member States, e.g. funding and scholarship opportunities by Member States, where there is scope for closer cooperation with Member States in bundling information. The *Meet the Ambassadors* activity is a good practice which could be replicable elsewhere in the region.
- Thematic campaigns appear to be a successful approach to telling the story of the EU presence in Kosovo in terms the population can relate to, but shortcoming in the dialogue between project officers and communicators (in the Office and the EUICCs) have been an obstacle to optimisation despite improvements.

## 4.2. Recommendations

- Consider Prizren a priority for an additional centre if it meets any new criteria for EUICs across the region, taking into account not just its size, but the fact that it can be a major hub for cultural diplomacy;
- When any new EUICC is established or an existing EUICC changes location, ensure that equipment is available immediately and that there is full disabled access;
- Upgrade the equipment of the existing EUICCs so that video material and/or EBS is showing at all times (and measure the impact of this), and that interactive tools (maps, games) are standard equipment;
- Review the disabled access of the existing locations to ensure they set an example in line with the requirements of the EU Disability Strategy to promote the rights of people with disabilities in the EU's External Action;<sup>86</sup>
- Identify ways of relieving the administrative burden on the member of Office staff responsible for EUICCs and the EUICC Team Leader so that the communication skills and expertise of both can be better utilised;
- On the basis of a redesigned planning format provided by DG NEAR, establish a clear relationship between the Office Forward Communication Plan and the EUICC Terms of Reference in the interests of a more integrated approach to communication, building on the efforts already bearing fruit to improve the communication content of project planning;
- Train EUICC staff in the preparation of Intervention Logics, including Intervention Logics for individual activities;
- Include in the European Awareness Survey data on the number of non-respondents to the question on awareness of the existence of the EUICCs;
- Define the extent to which SMEs should be a target group for the EUICC in the absence of the European Enterprise Network;
- Review existing forms (e.g. visitor logs) for ways of making them more user-friendly and at the same facilitate collation of the data.
- Take immediate steps to ensure existing reporting requirements are complied with in relation to:
  - Attendance at individual events;
  - Number of events outside Kosovo.
  - Satisfaction with events and materials;
  - Website and social media "visitors";
  - Number of queries, speed of response;
  - Media analysis;

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<sup>86</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0636:FIN:en:PDF>

- Number of publications and information materials produced and delivered;
  - Impact of media and outreach campaigns.
- Take immediate steps to ensure that all reporting includes qualitative analysis, lessons learned, and measures taken in the light of this.
- Review the planning process in order to:
    - Establish an outreach plan;
    - Establish a synergies plan for working with multipliers (including Member States, NGOs/think tanks, implementing partners), establishing within this, formal criteria for hosting events and the ancillary services to be provided;
    - Establish additional, more specific website and social media analytic requirements;
    - Establish a distribution strategy for publications;
    - Establish baselines and set year-on-year targets for all indicators;
    - Introduce the use of efficient, low-cost online surveys and tools to measure effectiveness.
- Assess the success of the *Meet the Ambassadors* initiative as one possibly suitable for replication elsewhere.
- Once data from the thematic campaigns is available, consider the lessons that could be learned for similar campaigns elsewhere within the region.

## **5. ANNEXES**

### **5.1. EUICC Visitor Log**



Visitors log (1).doc

### **5.2. Example event attendance list EUICC**



Attendance list EUICC  
(1).docx

# Montenegro

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This case study country note provides information on the field mission to Montenegro in December 2018, as part of the evaluation of EU Info Centres in the Western Balkans and Turkey. The note presents key findings from interviews with EU Delegation staff, partners, EU programmes, journalists and students as highlighted in the below table. Evidence has been reviewed, analysed and integrated in line with considerations of their overall relevance to the wider evaluation and the questions set. In the evaluation Synthesis Report, the evidence gathered will be integrated and analysed across all beneficiaries to develop clear findings from across the enlargement region.

In terms of following the approach defined for the field mission, it was not possible to harvest monitoring templates for example in relation to participant or event logs, or to understand the more detailed profile of centre users as this information is not systematically collected. It was also not possible to speak to individual passers-by who might visit the Centre as there were none with the evaluation team visited. However, the evaluation team was able to meet with some of the external organisations (listed below) who make use of the EU Info Centre to either attend events hosted by the Centre or to host their own events.

<b>IPA beneficiary visited</b>	Montenegro
<b>Dates of field visit</b>	6-7 December
<b>Evaluators responsible</b>	Marion Bywater Biserka Ivanovic Sarkanovic
<b>EU Info Centres</b>	Team Leader Public Relations and Event Manager Public Information and Communication Officers.
<b>EU Delegation staff interviewed</b>	Head of Delegation Head of Finance Communication coordinator Information Manager Head of Political Head of Cooperation
<b>Interviews with EU programmes / beneficiary government</b>	Creative Europe Programme, Ministry of Culture Erasmus+ National Contact Point for Horizon 2020 Office of the NIPAC
<b>Interviews with partners and projects</b>	Embassy of France/French Institute Embassy of Bulgaria Embassy of Croatia Embassy of Slovenia UNDP Museums and galleries of Nikšić Centre for Birds Protection Centre for consumer protection MANS SOS Telefon MMI Roditelji; LGBT Kinoteka
<b>Meetings with journalists</b>	Centre for investigative journalism Dan daily newspapers in hard copy Radio Television of Montenegro (RTCG) Syndicate of Media
<b>Focus group with students</b>	8 students

There is one Info Centre in Montenegro, which is located on the fringes of the city centre in an area where it is easy to park, but where there is not much natural footfall. Its location is well known to stakeholders, but it



cannot be seen from the nearby street where there is footfall because it is at right angles to the street where the Centre is located. The Centre is poorly signposted. As the below photo shows, although there is some EU branding, there is no name on the outside of the Info Centre and the opaque glass prevents any passers-by from understanding what is inside. There is potential to become more visible from the nearby street, following the example of others in the same building, who have additional external signage outside the building. However, the Delegation has plans to improve the visibility of the Centre under the new contractor.

The **visibility to the general public** in the broad sense of the word beyond footfall is questionable. While drop-in visitors and email enquiries on EU issues are not the only way to obtain information from the Centre, there were only 13 of the former in 2018 and none of the latter.<sup>87</sup> This data is not reported on but was obtained through interviews.<sup>88</sup>



The Centre covers two floors, with the reception desk and a generous space used for exhibitions and events at street level. A meeting room for some 30-40 people is on the lower floor, as are the staff offices. There is no disabled access to the lower floor and the stair access is difficult for anyone with mobility problems. The office has to be closed temporarily (or at least is) if the staff member in charge of the reception desk<sup>89</sup> needs to carry out work in the downstairs store room, which she is also responsible for managing.

There are no video screens or similar interactive equipment for casual or waiting visitors, although there would be no space constraints.

There were no drop-in visitors and no events during the time the team was there. The upper street-level floor was being used as a 'stop' on a treasure hunt for young people that was being organised as part of an IPA project. There were desks at which project representatives were providing explanations to teams of four or five students arriving every 15 minutes or so. There was no integration of this activities with the other information services provided by the EUIC, e.g. the EUIC could have made leaflets on Erasmus+ available.

The broader visibility of the Centre is measured in annual surveys by the Delegation.<sup>90</sup> In 2018, only 3.7% of the respondents said that they had heard of activities of the Centre in the previous year. However, this may understate the visibility of the Centre as such because 14.9% had heard of an EU event for civil society and 10.7% of a Europe Day event. The Centre ranked equally with the Delegation as the place to go for information on EU funding (5.4% in each case). Of those who have themselves initiated a search for information on scholarships in the EU, 41.6% have used the Info Centre<sup>91</sup>, behind the website of the government of Montenegro (53.6%) and the website of the Delegation (56%).

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<sup>87</sup> No data is available on drop-in visitors in 2017; the zero email enquiry figure is also applicable from the opening of the Centre onwards. The speculative explanation provided for the zero email enquiry was that inquiries come via social media instead, but the evaluation team did not find this convincing and no records are kept.

<sup>88</sup> Emails are received but relate to use of the space.

<sup>89</sup> Indicative of the fact that the importance of fittings is overlooked in more than one Centre is the fact that the reception desk is designed for someone to stand behind it. If the person sits, it looks from the street as if there is no one at the desk. This is often the case since the number of drop-in visitors is low does not justify standing behind the desk.

<sup>90</sup> *Informing citizens on European integration and the process of Montenegro's accession to the EU, 2018*; unpublished

<sup>91</sup> The question does not specify the website, but the context suggests that is meant. The figure for the Info Centre Facebook page is 4.8%.

**Events** are a major focus. Indeed, the perception of one expert of the Info Centre was of “running a Conference Centre”. The ToR requires the Centre to organise different kinds of events to promote the European Union, its values, policies and EU-funded projects. This includes providing logistical support to events it hosts. The 2016 ToR, for the period 2017, contain no targets for the number of events to be held. The 2017 ToR, for 2018, require the organisation of up to 180 events, and two per month that are EUIC-driven. Of the 267 events in 2017, 27 were EUIC-driven<sup>92</sup>. There were 167 hosted events in 2018, compared to 29 EUIC-driven events and 10 with Member State embassies<sup>93</sup>. Total attendees at events were 16,853 in 2017 and 17,626 in 2018, but there is limited data on participant profiles. Around 4,500 attend the European Film Days in Podgorica and around the country and several thousand attend events organised during Europe Week (5,600 in 2018). Records are kept of attendance per event, type of audience, and whether media were a specific target or present. There is no information on age or profession of visitor, and there is no documented feedback or analysis of success factors.

Many events are originated by **IPA projects**, thus reaching an audience of officials and stakeholders. Some are originated by EU **Member State embassies**. In 2017, this included the Bulgarian, Estonian, German, Italian, Nordic Embassies (for a Nordic film festival), and eleven embassies for a European Film Festival. Only the German Embassy used the Centre more than once, organising four events in total.

The representatives of the embassies of Croatia, France, Germany and Slovenia the team met were highly appreciative of the existence of the space and the logistics support provided by the staff of the Centre, including in promoting their events and extending the reach of their promotion through the Info Centre’s social media. The fact that the use of the space is free was recognised by other stakeholders as a significant incentive to using it, but they also praised the efficiency of the service provided and regarded it as a prestigious location at which to organise events, which therefore conveyed prestige on them by association.

Not all events are open to the public, as the Centre also hosts IPA project steering group meetings. This is driven (i) by a perception of a need to use the space because it is available<sup>94</sup>, but the logistics involved are inevitably taking up staff time to some extent, when this is not part of the Centre’s core business, which according to the Terms of Reference is to organise “public events”, and (ii) by the lack of a suitable meeting room in the Delegation<sup>95</sup>. De facto, the space is being used as **an extension of the Delegation**. Info Centre staff did not question this activity and it is provided for in the Terms of Reference as is organisation of events for embassies, but the evaluation team were made aware that the Delegation is considering whether this – and the use by international organisations and Embassies – is appropriate, or at least to the current extent and on the current terms.

While the users are highly appreciative of this service, further analysis appears reasonable to understand more precisely the uses to which the Centre is being put and the extent to which this does in fact take time away from activities specifically called for in the ToR. As such the hub and networking function appears to be effective based on the feedback collected by the evaluation team from users, but the lack of data is an obstacle at present to taking substantiated decisions.

Indeed, the Final Report for 2018, which reflects three years of experience on the part of the contractor notes that: “The number of these events is quite demanding, preparation takes a lot of time, as each of them differs and requires focus on many details. If the number of these events could be lowered, EUIC could have more time to dedicate to other events, like more cooperation with others.”<sup>96</sup> It is not possible to say that the ratio of 6-to-1 between hosted events and EUIC-driven events is wrong, but it seems sufficiently striking to warrant further study.

There was no thematic approach in 2017 to communication on IPA projects, which would of course be likely to go beyond the mere organisation of events. Stakeholders outside the Delegation who are familiar with the

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<sup>92</sup> There were 200 events in January-November 2018.

<sup>93</sup> Figures are exclusive of the film screening.

<sup>94</sup> Based on the team’s assessment on the basis of interviews.

<sup>95</sup> Based on interviews with the Delegation.

<sup>96</sup> Annex 3a.

work of the Centre and understand communication needs in the EU saw that as a gap. The exception was the Environmental Awareness Campaign: Be a Champion (discussed below) but organised by the Delegation.

Assessing the list of events in 2018, the absence of links with European and international “days” seems surprising. The exceptions are Europe Day, World Day of Roma, International Coastal Clean Up Day and International Human Rights Day.

The Centre works actively to attract **media** (via the website, social media and media advisories) to their events and other activities and is considered by the Delegation and stakeholders interviewed to have good networks. The media interviewed, who were directly or indirectly (through training) beneficiaries of the EU-funded EU Media Professionalism Programme were highly complimentary about the Centre’s media work and responsiveness, but nevertheless somewhat critical of the bureaucratic language in which the Delegation and the Centre communicate. The media interviewed had a good grasp of accession issues, so this is an indication of effectiveness of the EU-funded media professionalisation project.

There is a single **website** for the centre, but it has independent **social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram**. The social media following of the EUIC has been growing steadily and the EUIC Facebook account has more followers than that of the Delegation<sup>97</sup>. While the Final Report for 2018 recommends merging the two Facebook accounts on the grounds of overlap and would be technically straightforward, the reasons for the overlap would merit further explanation if it means that both are reaching civil society and the media, for example, and that target groups such as students or young people are not being reached. A survey on the Facebook pages would be one way of measuring whether the audience prefers the EU to be speaking with a single voice in Montenegro and perceives differences in the role of and type of information coming from each.

**Use of the Internet and social media is clearly appropriate** in the light of what the evaluation team were told by a number of stakeholders and by students, and is borne out by the statistics on mobile phone penetration, a key factor in social media use: mobile phone penetration is the highest in the region, with more than 1,600 subscriptions per 1,000 inhabitants.<sup>98</sup> This is higher than the EU-28 rate of 1,300. 68% of households had access to the Internet in 2018, and four-fifths of the population were accessing the Internet at least once a week. Not only was this by a significant margin the highest figure in the region, but it was also higher than in the EU-28.

Production numbers and titles are available for **publications and promotional materials in line with the requirements of the Terms of Reference, i.e. in 2017 of one** publication and to be printed in 500 copies and 700 T-Shirts, 500 baseball caps, 200 leaflets, 300 posters and 1000 pens, but no information is recorded on how these are distributed. This is a clear gap in the reporting requirements which means that it is not possible to assess demand.

The Centre also supports **campaigns**. There was a one-off “Be a Champion” campaign in 2017 organised by the EU Delegation in conjunction with the National Parks of Montenegro with funding of EUR 130,000 in support of one of the Delegation’s specific objectives, which deals exclusively with environmental awareness. Apart from social media promotion (supported by a video), the campaign used billboard advertising to reach a wider public, as the EUIC has done for some other events. (The EUIC handles the media buying for events like this.) The aim of the campaign was to raise public awareness about responsible waste disposal and the need to reduce the use of plastic bags. Billboards were placed in 80 locations in the central and northern parts of Montenegro. In addition to the billboards, 20 permanent boards located around Lake Skadar National Park remind citizens to throw away their waste in the right place. The campaign messages “Be a champion! Throw litter in the right place!” were promoted by members of the national basketball and handball teams.

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<sup>97</sup> As of early April 2019.

<sup>98</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Enlargement\\_countries\\_-\\_information\\_and\\_communication\\_technology\\_statistics#Mobile\\_phone\\_subscriptions](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Enlargement_countries_-_information_and_communication_technology_statistics#Mobile_phone_subscriptions)

A survey was carried out after the campaign which showed that 51.8% had heard of the campaign slogans, 80.1% of these reacted positively to them, 68.5% were positive about the use of members of the national baseball team to promote the campaign.<sup>99</sup> TV and radio were the most successful channels: 68.7% of respondents who were aware of the campaign got their information from TV or radio. Facebook (0.6%) and billboards (0.9%) were the least well ranked sources of information. The survey did not measure changes in behaviour as a result of the campaign.

This was followed up with a campaign in 2018 against single-use plastic: “Ready to Change? Beat Plastic Pollution!”, again in coordination with the Delegation, and again using television commercials and billboard advertising. With the support of the EU Info Centre the EU Delegation joined two global clean-up actions: “Let’s Do It, Montenegro” and “International Coastal Clean-up”, as part of an effort to combat plastic pollution.

The campaign cooperated with EU Embassies who together with volunteers cleaned up Virpazar, a small historical settlement on Lake Skadar. Delegation staff cleaned up a beach on the coast. This campaign was spoken highly of by those interviewed by the evaluation team, who were familiar with the campaign – including civil society and Embassy representatives. Data on the 2018 campaign show a clear impact on Facebook and Twitter activity around the time of the campaign.

With regards to **outreach**: the EUIC has no systematic plan. Outreach activities are largely limited to Europe Week and the Film Festival, which tours a number of cities. In 2018, there were 13 film activities attended by 7,000 people. Three of the 12 events organised during Europe Week were outside Podgorica – one in Nikšić and two in Tivat.

There is a particular question in relation to the Film Festival whether it would be more effective if the Delegation or EUIC could obtain access to more recent films from some EU Member States, who only make old films available.<sup>100</sup> Outside Podgorica, audiences tend to be in the range of 20-30 people. However, the Delegation confirmed in April 2019, that significant progress had been made in the meantime on obtaining better films.

## 2. CONTEXT

### 2.1. Specific context

With a population of 620,000 in 2011 Montenegro is by far the smallest of the enlargement countries.<sup>101</sup> The population is one of the youngest in the Western Balkans, with nearly 20% of the population under 15 in 2015, on a par with Albania, but a much lower percentage than in Kosovo.

The capital, Podgorica, has a population of nearly 185,000. The second largest city is Nikšić, with a population of 72,000. All other cities have populations below 50,000. The population density of 45 per square kilometre is the lowest in the enlargement region.

Per capita GDP of EUR 5,800 in 2016 is the highest in the western Balkans. The activity rate of 68.5% of the population was the third highest in the enlargement region. The gap between the activity rates for women and men is the lowest in the region, and very close to that of the EU. The employment rate is the second highest in the region after Serbia (56.7%). Unemployment in 2015 was the third lowest in the region (17.5%), behind Albania and Turkey.

Montenegro is a **candidate** for accession. In 2006 Montenegro's parliament declared independence from the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro. A Stabilisation and Association Agreement was concluded in 2007.

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<sup>99</sup> Most of the other answers were “Don’t know”, i.e. 29.5%.

<sup>100</sup> It was not clear to interviewees why that is, but it is likely, based on our knowledge of the audiovisual sector, that there are problems obtaining rights in Montenegro or the cost of dubbing or sub-titling more recent films for small audiences is prohibitive. The evaluation team has been informed since its visit that some progress has been made on this issue.

<sup>101</sup> Data in this section from Data from *Key Figures on Enlargement Countries 2017*, Eurostat: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3217494/7774688/KS-GO-16-001-EN-N.pdf/26107237-ec5d-4b1e-87f2-7bac279fb00a>



In 2008, Montenegro applied for EU membership. Although the EU-Montenegro Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) was signed in 2007, it did not come into force until 2010<sup>102</sup>. At the meeting of the SAA Council in June 2018, the Council noted that Montenegro needs to make more progress on fiscal sustainability, to control public debt, to improve the business and investment environment, to diversify the economy and to boost the productivity and competitiveness of its economy.<sup>103</sup>

At the time the SAA came into effect, Montenegro was a potential candidate for accession. After the Commission in 2010 issued a favourable opinion on the application for membership that Montenegro had lodged in 2008, nevertheless identifying 7 key priorities that would need to be addressed for negotiations to begin, the Council granted Montenegro candidate status. In December 2011, the Council launched the accession process and negotiations were opened on 29 June 2012.

To date 32 negotiating chapters have been opened, of which 3 have been provisionally closed – Science and Research, Education and Culture, and External Relations. Montenegro continues to broadly implement the Stabilisation and Association Agreement and the meetings of the joint bodies under the agreement have taken place at regular intervals.

**The most recent development in the negotiations** on the accession of Montenegro was the opening of negotiations on Chapter 27, Environment and Climate Change, on 7 December 2018. This was the 32<sup>nd</sup> chapter to be opened for Montenegro. Only Chapter 8, Competition policy, remains to be opened.<sup>104</sup>

Even though Montenegro appears from this to be making good progress on accession, closure of chapters is of course a better measure of progress. Moreover, the will to pass the necessary supporting legislation to implement the *acquis*, enforce the rule of law and ensure democratic institutions are functioning are critical. The dismissal in June 2018 of the Director-General of the state broadcaster was seen as a setback in terms of freedom of the media.

Thus, progress towards accession can appear on the surface, looked at solely in terms of the number of chapters opened, to be greater than it is with the result that expectations management is a key part of communication on future accession in Montenegro. This is acknowledged in the Delegation's Communication Plan for 2017 and was confirmed by the interviews held by the evaluation team. This is true not only of discussions with the Delegation staff, but also of the student focus groups, where participants perceived that the government of Montenegro may be raising expectations too high that Montenegro will accede in 2025. This is the earliest possible date rather than the actual date based on the Commission's Western Balkans strategy of February 2018.<sup>105</sup> The high expectations are confirmed by the 2018 Balkan Barometer in which 53% of respondents indicated that they expect Montenegro to accede by 2025 at the latest.<sup>106</sup>

If expectations are not managed successfully or if there is a major setback to accession, then rising euro-scepticism is a risk. There is a risk in that case that the population would perceive the EU being obstructionist even if in practice it were the result of a failure on the part of the Montenegrin government to move fast enough on the fine print of legislation or because of blemishes on its democratic credentials. That could pose a risk to the long-term prospects of accession when it is put to a referendum. As the ToR of the EUIC point out and was confirmed in conversations with the Delegation and stakeholders, euro-scepticism could also come from perceptions of disunity in the EU or successful anti-EU campaigning by opposition groups, although neither factor appears to be having a major impact at present based on survey data and conversations during the field mission.

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<http://ec.europa.eu/world/agreements/prepareCreateTreatiesWorkspace/treatiesGeneralData.do?step=0&redirect=true&treatyId=7281>

<sup>103</sup> <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2018/06/25/joint-statement-following-the-ninth-meeting-of-the-stabilisation-and-association-council-between-the-eu-and-montenegro/>

<sup>104</sup> <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2018/12/10/twelfth-meeting-of-the-accession-conference-with-montenegro-at-ministerial-level-brussels-10-december-2018/>

<sup>105</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans; [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/communication-credible-enlargement-perspective-western-balkans\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/communication-credible-enlargement-perspective-western-balkans_en.pdf)

<sup>106</sup> <https://www.rcc.int/pubs/66/balkan-barometer-2018-public-opinion-survey>

However, the risk is relatively low at the moment, as the annual survey carried out by the Delegation in 2018 showed that 65% of those polled personally support accession, a figure that has been rising steadily over the last five years,<sup>107</sup> higher in fact than the figure from the Balkan Barometer for 2018 cited above of 53% thinking accession would be a good thing for their economy.<sup>108109</sup>

## 2.2. Strategic communication

A particular feature of government communication on the EU in Montenegro is the Strategy for Informing the Public about the European Union and Membership Preparations 2014-2018 of the Government of Montenegro. This is supported by an EU-funded project implemented by UNDP, EU4Me, which is officially known as Communicating EU accession and EU assistance in Montenegro II which runs from 2017-2019. UNDP staff are embedded within the government to implement EU4Me. UNDP contributes EUR 24,000 to the total budget of EUR 324,000. Until February 2018, this Programme came under the auspices of the Ministry of European Integration. This Ministry was then abolished and the programme now comes under the Office of European Integration within the Prime Minister's Office. The civil servants who originally dealt with the programme have been replaced; UNDP staff remain the same.

EU4Me is the successor programme to EU Support for Montenegro's Accession, which ran from 2012- 2015. Target groups are broken down by two results areas, which distinguish between communication to citizens and to stakeholders. They are:

- Citizens: Domestic: 1 Multipliers (shapers of public opinion) 2 Youth 3 Sensitive groups (including women) International: 1. Public opinion shapers and decision-makers 2. General public in EU Member-States.
- Stakeholders: 1 Government ministries' PR departments 2 Operational and Consultative Bodies 3 Negotiating structure 4 Local self-governments 5 IPA structures 6 The media 7 Non-governmental organisations

The communication focuses on explaining accession and IPA, using the full range of conventional communication tools – events, videos (including on TV), a website, social media, promotional materials, training for journalists. There is an increasing emphasis on telling human stories. Coordination with the Delegation is close and the Info Centre hosts some events. Broadly speaking, however, the EU4Me programmes seeks to preserve its own identity as a government-owned programme according to government officials and experts interviewed.

The EUIC is essentially a vehicle to support EU Delegation communication. The Delegation's Communication Plan lists activities by specific objective, and by each of the Action Plans (on Strategic Communication and on the Visibility of EU Funds). The EUIC is mentioned as a hub of EU-related information and activities in relation to the Action Plan on Strategic Communication and as a host of project press conferences in relation to the Action Plan on Visibility. In addition, the Plan states that all campaigns relating to promotion of an event at the EUIC or a similar activity, i.e. social media is pegged.

However, it is not possible in the case of many of the flagship activities listed in the Communication Plan to understand the role the EUIC plays in supporting these relative to initiating them. The Delegation's Plan does not include a description of the EUIC's' main activities by objective even though these are foreseen in the EUIC ToR. Given the role played by the EUIC in supporting Delegation communication, it should be expected that the Delegation Communication Plan, would make a specific reference the EUIC and the way that it is intended to contribute to meeting objectives. The most striking example of the **absence of coherence** between the Communication Plan and the EUIC ToR is in relation to Europe Day. Europe Day is mentioned only in the category of social media campaigns in the Communication Plan but is actually a major element in EUIC ToR – and in practice a major activity from the perspective of the Delegation with activities

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<sup>107</sup> *Informing citizens on European integration and the process of Montenegro's accession to the EU*; unpublished.

<sup>108</sup> <https://www.rcc.int/pubs/66/balkan-barometer-2018-public-opinion-survey>

<sup>109</sup> The difference in wording of the question may account for the difference.



spread over several days. The visitor groups to Brussels and support to the environmental campaign are other examples, where the EUIC role is not clear in the Communication Plan.

### 2.3. Organisation and management

The Info Centre in Montenegro was opened in 2014. Ecorys was the contractor in 2016, 2017 and 2018. The leadership of the EUIC in the period 2016-2018 appears to have been focused on formal compliance with the Terms of Reference rather than creativity, though this finding must be tempered by the positive view of civil society and Embassies of the event work. There was a change of contractor from January 2019<sup>110</sup>. The change of contractor was expected according to key interviewees in the Delegation to be beneficial in at least three ways: the incoming company has more experience in PR and communication, it is hoped that the Team Leader will be more dynamic, and it will be an opportunity to put more emphasis on culture. However, there were also fears that there will be a learning curve and loss of knowledge as a result of the switch,<sup>111</sup> that the new contractor had submitted a low offer in order to win the contract and might lack the local knowledge a local contractor would have.<sup>112</sup>

The evaluation team understands that the expectation on the part of the Delegation that the new contractor will be more flexible and creative is being met. However, more analytical reporting requirements, a requirement to report year-on-year trends systematically, measurements of the extent to which the supply of publications and promotional materials reflects demand and the use of low-cost survey tools or focus groups to obtain feedback would make it easier in future to assess qualitative improvements.

The **relationship** between the Delegation and the EUIC is good but was, according to Delegation staff interviewed, characterised under the previous contractor (who handed over to a new contractor in January 2019) by a lack **trust** in the EUIC to work autonomously and be proactive in putting forward ideas. Web and social media posts were all approved upfront, for example, and this was sometimes a source of delay in putting out timely information because of the pressures on the Delegation's own workload.

The team in place at the time of the interviews consisted of four Key Experts, the Team Leader, the Public Relations and Event Manager, two Public Information and Communication Officers, and nine non-key experts. Some of the non-key experts were part time. Some of the non-key experts' time is spent providing media monitoring services directly for the Delegation.

The imminence of a change of contractor was a barrier for the field mission. Even those staff who thought they might be hired as non-key experts by the new contractor did not have confirmation and were engaged in difficult negotiations over pay and conditions, which in some cases (but not all) appeared to affect their morale. Others lacked motivation because they knew they would have to find new jobs and had not yet done so. As a result, some were disinclined to be particularly forthcoming in interviews. A further barrier to obtaining comprehensive information was the institutional memory of some Delegation staff interviewed, in particular the contracted press officer dealing regularly with the EUIC had only been in the position for 18 months and the task manager responsible for the EUIC had only been in the position for 4 months.

The wider landscape of EU Communication (other than the activities of the Delegation) comes essentially through the visibility efforts of **EU-funded projects**. When project budgets are approved, inclusion of a communication budget line is compulsory, but the project officers approving them have thematic not communication expertise. Delegation staff recognise in principle that they should pay more attention to communication, but pressure of work and the need to deliver the project get in the way. Consequently, they tend to focus on compliance with the visibility guidelines and promotion to stakeholders via opening and closing events, and a website (which is generally not available once the project is over). The events are often held at the EUIC, but are stand-alone, when there is potential for a more themed or strategic approach to events, and to reaching new audiences, including audiences outside Podgorica. This assessment of the

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<sup>110</sup> Pomillio Blum took over in January 2019.

<sup>111</sup> Similar considerations apply in other beneficiaries whenever there is a change of contractor.

<sup>112</sup> Similar considerations apply elsewhere. This is a function of open tendering.

undervaluing of the communication potential of projects is one which came up frequently in interviews with a wide range of stakeholders.

A suggestion made to the evaluation team was that **removing the communication budget from IPA projects and pooling funds would be more effective and efficient**. This could then also cover projects implemented by implementing partners under indirect management who are not always assiduous in complying with rules on EU visibility.

## 2.4. Other actors communicating on the EU

The main **EU programmes** in Montenegro are Creative Europe (Culture and MEDIA), Enterprise Europe Network, Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020. Creative Europe, Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020 programme representatives were available for interviews. All three use the EUIC for information sessions and exchange information with EUICs within their own communication strategies, but acknowledged that there is scope for them to work in a more joined-up fashion with the EUIC, working together in planning events and event calendars, and on maximising outreach, rather than just seeing the EUIC as a somewhere to hold events. They would expect the EUIC to take the lead on this.

**EU Embassies** use the EUIC for their own events and those who the evaluation team met appreciated this service. All four Embassies (Bulgaria, France Germany and Slovenia) are small. One or other of the following factors were mentioned: no suitable meetings rooms, no budget to rent facilities, no communication staff, no capacity to communicate on social media. The German Embassy does not have a social media account. Consequently, the promotion work that the EUIC handles for their events is particularly welcome. Even for Embassies with social media accounts, the EUIC extends their reach, particularly with young people. Events at which the Ambassador speaks are among the best attended according to the data in the Final Report for 2018.

## 2.5. Assessing the Intervention Logic

As part of the desk phase of the evaluation, an Intervention Logic was reconstructed to show the results chain from inputs to activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts. Intervention logics can help to provide a deeper understanding of how an intervention is working.

The Information and Communication Forward Plan of the EU Delegation, which is based on a template supplied by DG NEAR, uses some Intervention Logic terminology (e.g. general and specific objectives, results to be achieved and activities), but does not present them in the form of an Intervention Logic nor does it make it clear how the EUIC fits in each case. The general objective and a range of specific objectives from which to choose are provided by DG NEAR.

The field mission provided an opportunity to understand whether this chain of results approach is reflected in Info Centre implementation.

In terms of the content of the Intervention Logic:

- All the required activities are being carried out, i.e. management, IT (websites, social media, etc), events, media reviews, promotion and dissemination, EU visitors' programme, opinion poll, training for journalists and for CSO beneficiaries of EU-funded projects. However, as indicated above, there are shortcomings in the reporting. It is not possible to distinguish visitors by category or degree of satisfaction with events, or whether new audiences were reached. There is information on supply of publications and promotional materials, but not on how the targets were set relative to demand or on distribution. The quantitative evidence to document this is clearly presented in the contractor's Final Report, and there was no suggestion on the part of Delegation or EUIC staff that they were not complying.
- Outputs are being delivered from these activities, but there are few targets as indicated above, but there are no baselines (e.g. data from previous years even though the same contractor was in place from 2016-2018 so comparable data should be available) and feedback is not documented. While the EUIC is clearly disseminating information about the EU, its policies, value and funding, there is therefore no way of measuring other than through perceptions of those interviewed by the

evaluation team as to the increase in volume and quality of this, or the debate with target groups, networks with partners and multipliers, enhanced media coverage or increased awareness of the benefits of enlargement and EU support.

- There is no way of knowing other than through perceptions whether the desired effects in terms of reaching target groups or influencing their sentiments about the EU are being achieved as this is not measured. The perceptions are that this is the case, but above all in southern Montenegro<sup>113</sup>, but as indicated there is no systematic collection of feedback.
- Stakeholders perceive that all outcomes (specific objectives) are being reached to some extent, i.e. to provide objective, clear and accessible information on the EU and accession, organising various activities and events to support the media's understanding of the EU and accession, and efficiently manage and implement activities of the centre. Stakeholders spoke particularly highly of the media work and the support to event organisation.

There are several additional insights that can be identified when comparing the Intervention Logic as derived from the ToR and the team's observations of what happens in practice:

- There is nothing in the ToR for 2017 which requires the EUIC to develop synergies with EU MS Embassies and EU programmes. However, this is a Delegation expectation and the Info Centre cooperates with MS Embassies and EU programmes closely, though not always synergistically, i.e. events are organised that are hosted by them, but there is no programming along thematic or other lines.
- The Intervention Logic as derived from the ToR expect that the EUIC will be a visitor and contact centre, but this is not the case as the Info Centre is very event-focused. This, therefore, does not figure in the reconstructed Intervention Logic;
- There is no expectation of reaching new audiences in the ToR and this, therefore, does not figure in the Intervention Logic, nor is it regarded as important in practice.

The formulation of the **objectives** is judged by the evaluation team on the basis of the findings from the field mission to be appropriate except that they do not sufficiently reflect the importance attached on the ground to conveying the values elements of the global objective. It is not possible to reconstitute the chain of logic from the general objective to practice on the ground.

Having broad objectives allows the EUD to take a tactical approach to communication and means that activities can be adapted to the needs and conditions of the situation, albeit staffing levels make that challenging in practice. The objectives could be 'SMARTer' if baselines and targets were used to measure trends, and match supply to demand. Performance assessment would be possible if feedback were collected regularly, and explanations for variations in performance were documented. That would avoid the need to rely wholly on qualitative assessments and tick-box compliance with quantitative values as described above.

The purpose, results (outputs) and activities (scope of work) are defined in the ToR but lack a clear definition of Outputs complicates the assessment of EUIC performance either by EUIC key experts or by Delegation staff themselves as there has been no definition at the outset of how that performance should look.

The assessment of performance of EUIC is hampered by **a lack of precision in the indicators** set out in the ToR of the Communication Plan. They lack baselines and targets, even though comparable data for earlier years is available, in particular for events with and without media, and the film festival, all of which show a rising trend. The number of Facebook followers has gone from 3,553 in December 2016 to 5,190 in December 2018. The reporting does not analyse the year-on-year changes or the reasons why, for example, certain social media posts have been more successful than others. Conversations with EUIC staff during the

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<sup>113</sup> Northern Montenegro is mountainous and the logistics are more difficult.

field mission suggests that collection of the data – and not all requirements of the ToR are met, e.g. in relation to the quality of impact of a range of activities – is seen as a tick-box exercise rather than one from which to learn. As pointed out elsewhere, there is no requirement for feedback surveys from events and none are collected.

On **target groups**: there is broad alignment between categories of groups listed in the EUIC ToR and the EUD Information and Communication Forward Plan. Only five **target groups** are mentioned in the Delegation Communication plan, the general population, journalists, university students, farmers and municipalities. Segmentation – particularly in targeting citizens – appears to be weak and not based on needs assessment. The category ‘general population/public’ is not usually considered to be a target group in communication terms. Moreover, the EUIC ToR lists more target groups than the Delegation Plan. This is surprising given that the Delegation Plan should be setting the framework for communication in the beneficiary. This could be appropriate in a given year if it were the result of a reflection on prioritisation, but this does not appear to be the case. Delegation officials acknowledged that the ToR were a copy-paste from previous years.<sup>114</sup>

Additional target groups for the EUIC include the academic and business communities, central government, civil society and school children. The absence of farmers in the EUIC list seems surprising given the importance of this target group to the Delegation. A campaign on grants for farmers is a flagship activity for the Delegation and Delegation officials also highlighted the importance of information for farmers in interviews with the fieldwork team. A possible gap in the target groups suggested from within the Delegation is the elderly because there will be a referendum on accession and there is a risk that they will not see it as beneficial to them. However, at the current levels of support for accession and with such a young population, it is hard to see them tipping the balance in any referendum. The evaluation team assumes that the attitudes of different target groups will be monitored as the time approaches.

The reporting framework used by the contractor (e.g. in 2016 and 2017) and which is a derivative of the format of the ToR does not help as there is no requirement on the EUIC to provide evidence of need in designing any activities or focusing on a particular target group.

The reconstructed intervention logic which is presented below is intended to represent the EU Info Centre in Montenegro, taking into account the feedback gathered from a variety of stakeholders. Evidence relating to inputs and activities can be found represented in Terms of Reference and contractual documents. The elements listed under outputs, effects, outcomes and impacts are the evaluation team’s interpretation of how the network is operating on the ground based on the relatively limited evidence that it was possible to access during the field mission.

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<sup>114</sup> An issue known to affect other Delegations as well. Generally, this occurs because of pressure of work.

### Reconstructed Intervention Logic (primarily based on ToR and performance for 2017)

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Desired Outcomes	Desired Impacts
<p><b>Personnel</b>  <u>EUD – 1 staff:</u>  Coordinator/Press &amp; Information Officer</p> <p><u>EU Info Centre: 11 staff</u>  <b>4 key experts</b> (1 Team Leader, 1 PR &amp; Events Manager, 2 Public Information Officers)  <b>7 non-key experts</b> (1 Help Desk Officer, 1 Website and Social Media Officer, 2 Media Monitoring Officers, Photographer, 1 Senior filmmaker, 1 Graphic Designer)</p> <p><b>Contractual</b>  Terms of Reference  12-month service contract  €449,545 budget  Supply contract (equipment)  €11,931  12-month lease contract</p> <p><b>Content</b>  From partners/ projects/own initiative</p> <p><b>Process</b>  Coordination meetings with EUD: weekly and ad hoc meetings</p> <p><b>Premises</b>  Rental agreement for location relatively close to the EU Delegation</p>	<p><b>Efficiently manage and implement all activities</b> of the EU Info Centre (EUIC) in Podgorica</p> <p><b>Events:</b> support and organise EUIC-driven and public events, Europe Week and Film Week, translation services at events, cultural festival, focus on environment</p> <p>Visits to <b>municipalities</b> (4)</p> <p><b>Develop synergies</b> with <b>EU Embassies</b> and <b>EU Programmes</b></p> <p><b>Media reviews:</b> media and press coverage and monitoring (for EU Delegation)</p> <p><b>Training</b> for journalists</p> <p><b>IT:</b> launch of two new web pages and web hosting, social media management and updating</p> <p><b>Promotion/dissemination:</b> promotional materials, Graphic design and illustration services, photography services, drafting services, Audio-visuals: animated TV clip with info graphics for use in television; video production, and media buying; production of giveaways for EUD (an activity not in ToR);</p> <p><b>EU Visitor programme:</b></p>	<p>Centre is physically <b>visible</b> and well known to target groups</p> <p>Centre is a <b>hub</b> for information and communication activities of the Delegation, as a source of information on the EU and of <b>quality debate</b> on Montenegro's relations with the EU</p> <p>Centre reaches out <b>beyond Podgorica</b>, particularly through film festival but also to municipalities</p> <p><b>Joined-up communication</b> with EU Embassies and EU programmes</p> <p>More and better <b>reporting and EU visibility</b> in Montenegrin media</p> <p><b>Greater visibility</b> on line and in social media</p> <p><b>Quality promotional, audiovisual and written materials</b> meeting an identified need</p> <p><b>Visitor groups to Brussels and trainees</b> report high levels of satisfaction</p>	<p><b>Increased public and stakeholder awareness, knowledge and understanding</b> of Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) programmes, the Stabilisation and Association Agreement and the Accession negotiations</p> <p><b>Realistic expectations</b> on part of Montenegrins on timing and implications of Accession</p> <p><b>Increased and improved access to objective and clear information</b> by different stakeholders on the EU, its policies, assistance programmes and values</p> <p><b>Better informed public debate</b> on integration into the EU, its benefits and challenges, in terms of country reform effort and EU support</p> <p><b>Higher quality media reporting</b></p>	<p>Continuing and increasing support for EU accession based on a broad understanding of EU policies and values, and realistic expectations.</p>

	<p>launch</p> <p><b>Training:</b> training and advice for major EU-funded projects</p> <p><b>Opinion poll</b></p>			
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Target groups		Assumptions	Risks
<p><b>Frequent target groups (survey)</b></p> <p>Politicians Governmental/ local institutions employees Schoolchildren, teachers University students Academics/ Researchers Journalists Youth groups/ associations New target groups with little or no awareness of the EU</p>	<p><b>Target groups (reported in TOR)</b> Academic circles, including researchers Business community Central and local public administration Citizens Civil society Governmental and local municipalities institutions and organisations Journalists Media directors and editors National and regional media Small/ medium enterprises Students and school children</p> <p><b>Target groups (actual)</b> Academic circles, including researchers Central and local public administration (primarily central) Civil society Governmental and local municipalities (primarily government) Journalists Media directors and editors National and regional media Students General public for Film Festival &amp; Europe Week</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EU accession remains a priority goal for Montenegro and there is political consensus on this</li> <li>• The EU maintains financial support at current or increased levels</li> <li>• The media covers accession professionally and understands the reasons and the benefits of closer integration with the EU</li> <li>• Public remains strongly committed to European integration/EU membership</li> <li>• Appropriate facilities are available for the EUIC to carry out planned activities successfully. Montenegro maintains good relations with its neighbours.</li> </ul>	<p>Possible increase in euro-scepticism as a result of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• any delay in Accession negotiations, particularly from any misunderstandings if delays comes from failure to follow up with the internal reforms needed to fulfil the requirements of Accession;</li> <li>• counter-campaign from circles opposed to EU integration, including or picked up by anti-EU media</li> <li>• perceptions that the EU is not a successful enterprise due to its internal political disputes</li> </ul>





### 3. FINDINGS ON EVALUATION QUESTIONS

In reading this section, it should be borne in mind that it refers to the EUIC activities in the period 2016-2018, when there was a single contractor and a continuum in the planning and activities. The performance of the EUIC under that contractor cannot be taken as a proxy for the performance of the current contractor.

Information in relation to hypotheses tested is integrated into the section, where relevant. Many of these hypotheses require feedback to be aggregated across the available evidence and in practice did not prove to be relevant to the specific on the ground situations investigated. This was largely because interviewees were not able to think about the issues raised in a strategic way and could not confirm or disprove the range of hypotheses presented.

**EQ1.** To what extent have the **objectives** of the EUIC been defined considering the **specific needs** of the target audience in the IPA beneficiaries and contribute to the objectives set in the **EU framework** on strategic communication in the enlargement region?

- Specific target group communication needs have been well defined and the EUIC's objectives clearly focus on these needs.

The purpose of the EUIC, as defined in the Terms of Reference, includes providing information “to a wider audience and specific target groups.” The target groups are: Governmental and local municipal institutions and organisations; Central and local public administration; Civil Society (NGO Community, Branch Chambers, Employers Unions, Trade Unions, etc.); Economic operators including small/medium enterprises; National and local media; Media directors and editors; Journalists; Academic circles, including researchers, students; School children; Citizens.

Target groups have therefore been very broadly defined, with no prioritisation. Because there has been a focus on events at the EUIC (with Europe Week and the Film Festival being the main exceptions), the target groups have largely been reached only in Podgorica and only at the premises of the EUIC. Municipalities have not had much attention and the evaluation team notes greater emphasis on this group in the Terms of Reference of the current contractor.

The EUIC has not been required to place a specific focus on researching target group needs or justifying the choice of a particular activity for a particular target group, since virtually any activity could be considered to fit the target group. The Delegation places some importance on reaching the farming community, which is not reflected in the activities of the EUIC. However, targeting is evolving, but this shift applied during the period under review to the thematic campaigns run by the Delegation with the support of the EUIC. These carried out upfront and ex-post research. No use has been made of simple tools for collecting feedback to understand target group needs through event satisfaction surveys, analysis of publication distribution patterns, visitor interests or social media posts or surveys, or through analysis of quantitative variations in attendance at events.

There is scope to make more use in setting objectives and prioritising targets of the annual opinion poll conducted under the EUIC contract but carried out on behalf of the Delegation. However, it needs to be borne in mind that there is a dichotomy between the objectives of promoting EU policies, funding and values and the spontaneous interest. The impact of membership on a country's internal political life, its democracy, human rights, treatment of minorities came 13<sup>th</sup> in a multi-choice question in the 2018 survey. Employment opportunities came top followed by the impact of membership on individual lives, and then EU educational policy. While it cannot be proven, it is likely that, in the absence of a specific question on studying in the EU, this was a proxy, particularly as more information on opportunities for youth ranked highest in the question on the type of information of which respondents would like more.

**EQ2.** To what extent have the **objectives** of the EUIC been achieved?

- Extent that the outputs of the communication activities implemented by the EUIC have produced the expected outcomes, which contributed to the achievement of the set objectives.
- Extent to which the quantitative and qualitative effects of the outputs and outcomes of the EUIC's activities can be deemed to have contributed to the achievement of the set objectives.
- Extent to which other factors influenced the achievement of the outcomes.
- Extent that the communication tools used by the EUIC were appropriate for each target audience.
- Extent that the of other communication tools (e.g. social media) could have had a higher outreach to different categories of the target audience.

Without it being possible to establish a direct relationship between the outputs and the outcomes, the EUIC's activities are producing the expected outputs and it is reasonable to assume that this is leading to, or at least contributing to, the expected outcomes, and thus to increased public and stakeholder awareness, knowledge and understanding of the IPA, the SAA and the Accession negotiations, realistic expectations on the part of the public on the timing and implications of accession, improved stakeholder access to objective and clear information, better informed debate and higher quality media reporting.

It will always be difficult to establish a causal link between outputs and outcomes in communication where the expected outcomes are so broad, but more could be done to underpin the likelihood of the link by full compliance with the monitoring requirements of the terms of reference, analysing the data available on a systematic rather than an empirical basis, establishing targets based on year-on-year performance, and as mentioned above, using simple tools to measure outcomes, such as event or other types of surveys (paper or online).

There is a general focus on events with a ratio of hosted to EUIC-driven events of 6 to 1. There is no benchmark for an appropriate ratio. The Terms of Reference establish a norm for EUIC-driven but not for hosted events. However, the logistics and promotional effort put into hosting is not recognised in staffing levels, even though this activity detracts from staff's ability to carry out other EUIC-driven activities. The events which reach the most people are during Europe Week and the Film Festival. These are significant enough that the absence of any measurement of the outcomes, and indeed the impact as they are recurring events which have been carried out over a number of years, is surprising. There is a risk of hosting on demand becoming the easy option and taking resources away from outreach outside the EUIC, particularly in the absence, on the one hand, of any measurement of attendance, satisfaction or new audiences reached, or on the other of a formal outreach plan which identifies target groups and appropriate channels. Offsetting this is the undoubted benefit of the EUIC being *the* hub of all things European in Podgorica.

A range of factors influence the achievement of outcomes:

- Failure to make the most of the central location in attracting what footfall and spontaneous demand for information may exist;
- Relations between the EU and the government of Montenegro. These are good, but there is always a risk of tensions, or unrealistic expectations, triggering euroscepticism that will affect the EUIC's ability to be effective;
- The provision of information on the EU-funded projects independent of the projects' own communication and visibility strategies can suffer from a narrow approach to communication by projects, based on opening and closing events (and a website for the duration of the project) without developing synergies with the EUICCs even around those activities, e.g. through thematic packaging;
- Failure to exploit to the full the communication potential of European or International "Days" or "Weeks", when the EUIC can leverage the activities or interest of Embassies or international

organisations. The Council of Europe's European Day of Languages stands out as an example where both Embassies and implementing partners could be engaged.

The suitability of the communication tools cannot be properly assessed without compliance with reporting requirements supplemented by qualitative feedback from users. The EUIC has been making wide use of the materials prepared for the Delegation's environmental campaigns, and these have been positively assessed.

**EQ3.** To what extent **the organisation and management** of the EUIC has been conducive to an efficient, effective and sustainable implementation of the communication activities?

- The management of EUIC through service contracts is conducive to an efficient, effective and sustainable implementation of communication activities.
- The system setup for monitoring the EUIC's activities functioned at regular intervals and was capable of collecting data and detecting problems (indicators were appropriately designed to measure the progress in relation to the baseline situation and the effectiveness and of the targets, and extent that targets were set realistically).
- Extent that the use of financing and management mechanisms could have provided better cost-effectiveness.
- The physical location of the EUIC has facilitated the implementation of planned communication activities and the achievement of planned effects on the target audience.

The use of service contracts is appropriate, as is longer-term contracts/renewal of contracts. There is a risk of being locked in to a less than satisfactory contractor or EUIC team, but the continuity and the value of many events has on balance outweighed any lack of flexibility and creativity.

Monitoring systems are weak. No baselines and no targets are set. Indicators are quantitative (numbers of events to be organised, number of publications to produce) and unrelated to analysis of need or demand, or are very limited, e.g. website analytics requirements are limited to reporting on the number of visitors when additional analytics are readily available free of charge. The Delegation was not, during the period, following up on the indicators that are available.

Financing and management mechanisms are appropriate, providing there is compliance with reporting requirements. The effectiveness of EUIC operations is hampered by the planning format of the Delegation (in line with the requirement of DG NEAR) as it is not possible to establish a clear relationship between the Forward Communication Plans of the Delegation and the Terms of Reference of the EUIC, or a relationship between needs, expected results, the indicators or the target groups in one and the other. There is dialogue and cooperation, but this planning disconnect has been an obstacle to an integrated approach.

The physical location is appropriate as it is central. Budget could have been allocated at low cost to additional external signage to improve physical visibility, and to better access for people with disabilities. It is probably debatable whether the underground working conditions for the staff meet EU requirements as there is no natural light, while Directive 89/654/EEC states that: "Workplaces must as far as possible receive sufficient natural light."<sup>115</sup>

**EQ4.** To what extent the EUICs have contributed **to raising public awareness** about the EU, its policies and values, EU funding and on the enlargement process in the IPA beneficiaries?

- Extent that target groups of EUIC communication activities in the IPA beneficiaries are more aware of the EU, its policies and values, EU funding and the enlargement process.

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<sup>115</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:31989L0654&from=EN#d1e32-10-1>

- Extent that the EUIC reaches new audiences with EU messages about EU policies and values, EU funding and on the enlargement process that would not be reached by EU Delegations, or EU-funded projects.

The annual survey by the Delegation shows that awareness of the activities of the Centre is low, but this does not necessarily mean that target groups are not more aware of EU policies and values as a result of the activities of the Centre. However, more research or more segmentation in the poll (e.g. by municipality or by target group) is required to establish whether that is the case. A first step, however, would be to obtain feedback from those the Centre does reach, including establishing whether the audiences for EUIC-driven events are reaching new audiences. As already pointed out, this has not happened in the past.

That being said, stakeholders clearly value the work of the Centre and see it as making a contributing to greater EU awareness. The Delegation has reached new audiences with its environmental campaigns and there are likely to have been spin-off benefits for the Centre, but this cannot be proven and there is no evidence that the Centre proactively sought to build on those new audiences. This is where an outreach plan would be useful.

**EQ5i.** To what extent the **activities carried out by the EU Info Centre** have been coherent, complementary and **coordinated** with those carried out via other EU programmes and by other partners (e.g. Member States, IFIs, international organisations) **active in communicating re. EU policies & values, EU funding and the enlargement process** in the enlargement region?

- The EUIC liaises in a regular and planned way (either directly or via the EU Delegation) to share intelligence, identify synergies and opportunities to work together with other EU policy / programme communicators in the region.
- Extent that it is possible to identify other relevant opportunities to improve coordination to develop a more joined-up approach.

The main policies and programmes present in Montenegro are the Enterprise Europe Network, Erasmus+, Horizon 2020 and Creative Europe. The EUIC has hosted events for Erasmus+ and Creative Europe, and cooperation is good, but is not systematic or synergistic. The same is true of implementing partners, i.e. events are hosted and cooperation is good, but these are not systematically planned.

**EQ5ii.** To what extent the EU Info Centre can contribute to the development and implementation of a **joined-up Public Diplomacy** (cf. EU Global Strategy) and act as hubs for EU-related initiatives taking place at the local level (i.e. both EU and non-EU funded)?

- There is alignment between EUIC communication activities and messages, and public diplomacy activities and messaging in each IPA beneficiary.
- Extent that the EUIC and the staff of EU Delegation responsible for public diplomacy collaborate on joint initiatives or coordinate their initiatives.
- Extent to which EUIC supports and is a focal point of activities (EU and non-EU funded) to reach public diplomacy target groups.

EUIC communication activities and messages are distinct from public diplomacy activities and messaging, and caution is exercised through upfront validation of messaging, website and social media activity to ensure that the EUIC avoids politically sensitive issues. Where EUIC-driven events enter the public-diplomacy sphere is through debates with Member State ambassadors. The EUIC hosts public-diplomacy events for EU

and non-EU funded activities, and helps with promotion, but does not play an initiating or representative role. This is also not seen by the Delegation as its function.

**EQ6.** What is the **additional value** resulting from the communication activities carried out by the EU Info Centre compared to what could have been achieved by the IPA beneficiaries at national or regional levels?

- Extent that the reach and engagement of target groups by the EUIC with EU messages on policies and values, funding and the enlargement process is greater and more effective than the benefits for target groups at national or regional level than IPA beneficiaries do or could achieve.
- Extent that IPA beneficiary communicators convey the desired messages on EU policies and values, funding and on the enlargement process.

The main communication by the beneficiary comes through the EU4ME programme funded by the EU, implemented by UNDP and embedded in the government. The Delegation (and the EUIC) have the same target group as this programme, but with different perspectives: the purpose of EU4ME is to explain relations with the EU from the Montenegrin government perspective not the EU perspective. The Delegation and UNDP exchange information and have complementary roles, but these can diverge if there are strains in the relationship between the EU and the government.

Feedback surveys would be needed to provide an indication as to whether the target groups in fact perceive the difference between EU4ME and the activities of the Delegation and the EUIC, and which they perceive as better conveying information on EU policies, funding and values. It is likely that both are necessary and both could do more to reach and engage with target groups, since 75-90% of respondents to the 2018 survey had not heard of or did not know of the online channels of the Delegation, the EUIC and EU4ME, with the Delegation Facebook and Instagram accounts scoring best ahead of the EUIC Facebook page and the Head of Delegation's Twitter account, followed by five EU4ME channels.



## 4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS<sup>116</sup>

### 4.1. Conclusions

- As a concept, the EU Info Centre in Montenegro appears to be first and foremost an event centre, which provides communication support to the EU Delegation.
- Hosting other organisations' events brings the benefit of allowing the Centre to become an EU hub, which may be otherwise difficult given the volume of EU communication in such a small country. However, it is questionable whether the Info Centre concept should be limited to making available an event space rather than providing logistical support as well, because this reduces the capacity of staff to do outreach and support awareness-raising through their own actions.
- From the perspective of other EU communicators, the Centres are successful in providing an EU communication hub, with good networks among stakeholders and media.
- If the Centre is to be used officially as a location for Delegation meetings, as the current ToR require, the impact on other activities needs to be reflected in staff and budgets.
- The EU values element in the general objective in the Communication Plan is not picked up in the specific objectives of the Delegation or the purpose of the EUIC, but is regarded as an important objective by the EUIC team (and by implication the EUD, which approves the EUIC's monthly plans);
- The specific objectives of the EUIC (expressed as a purpose) in the ToR include objectives akin to and are therefore aligned with the specific objectives of the Communication Plan.
- There is no clear differentiation in the ToR or the Delegation Information and Communication Forward Plan of when the EUIC is supporting the Delegation and when an activity is EUIC-driven. Europe Week and media monitoring are just two examples of this. Media monitoring, for example, is an activity which in Montenegro has essentially been outsourced to the EUIC. Blurring like this, while it may be for good reason, makes it difficult to compare value for money across EUICs in the region.
- The Centre's visibility, in the physical sense of being visible to passers-by, could be significantly improved with some simple additional signage and visibility actions.
- Visibility of EUIC actions to citizens (in the broader sense) could be improved through an outreach plan, which should include testing whether Europe Week and the Film Festival create an understanding of the role of the Centre as a place to go for information on the EU.
- The Centre lacks or does not use modern means of audiovisual communication.
- More attention could be paid to working conditions for staff, who currently have underground offices with no windows and poor ventilation, and access to parts of the Centre for those with limited mobility.
- Monitoring and reporting on activities and in particular qualitative feedback on the EUIC performance is poor, and lessons are learned empirically.

### 4.2. Recommendations

- The intervention logic of the EUIC work should be nested in the chain of logic in the EU Delegation Communication Plan.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> To be read in conjunction with the Note at the end of this section of changes implemented since the evaluation.

<sup>117</sup> This may necessitate a review of the template used by the EUD and Delegations.

- Reporting requirements in the ToR should be met, in particular drop-in visitor numbers (and who the visitors are and why they visit the centre), the understanding of attendance categories at events, measurement of need for and satisfaction with the activities of the EUIC, preferably using online tools, such as Facebook surveys or ex post surveys of events emailed to participants.
- Demand for/ a plan for distribution of publications and promotional materials should be required.
- Reporting requirements should be expanded so that comparative figures are provided year-on-year.
- Based on the improved reporting requirements, baselines and targets should be established. Reporting requirements should then include provisions for an analysis of reasons for change or deviations, and lessons learned and the way in which these have been implemented.
- Major outreach events, e.g. Europe Week, Film Festival, the environment campaigns should be evaluated to assess whether they have led to a change in behaviour and should be prepared based on a simple Intervention Logic.<sup>118</sup>
- The Centre should have screens in the entrance and other areas where visitors/event participants congregate while waiting for appointments/events showing videos, and should have interactive game screens with quizzes and games for schoolchildren if it is decided that they continue to be a core target group.
- Further development of synergies with EU Member States and EU programmes should be based on a communication plan drawn up jointly by the EUD and the EUIC.
- An assessment should be made of the potential for making the EUIC a social hub with e.g. longer opening hours, a coffee bar, a more extensive library in more EU languages, including European magazines, and comfortable seating.

*Note: This evaluation was carried out at the end of a three-year contract and on the eve of the handover to a new contractor. This has resulted in significant changes which have anticipated a number of recommendations above. In particular, the Delegation has already:*

implemented more evaluation and monitoring

halted the practice of hosting technical events; more media events are hosted instead;

implemented a more thematic approach to campaigns and thematic days (e.g. International Women's Day and International Environment Day – previously never marked in Montenegro);

implemented more outreach and regional visits (including celebrations of Europe Days outside Podgorica) as well as cooperation with municipalities (with a view to providing EU info corners in municipalities);

introduced more systematic cooperation with EUMS, including regular meetings in the EUIC to exchange plans every 6 months;

modified the poor working conditions in the EUIC by moving the offices from the cellar to the top floor.

*The Delegation also emphasises that the staffing constraints have limited the ability of the EUD to have clearly lines of responsibility between the EUD and the EUIC in the past, and meant outsourcing some activities to the EUIC that might be thought to be natural EUD activities. The blurring is also a reason why EUICs do not figure prominently in the strategic documents, but the Delegation sees the EUIC as an extension of the EUD, and they work hand in hand.*<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> These are major recurring events and an evaluation of these need not be very expensive if it triangulates focus groups, online/social media surveys and on-the-spot interviews, for example.

<sup>119</sup> It should be borne in mind, however, that the criticisms of the planning process are more fundamental and rooted in what the evaluators consider is the unsuitability in this context of the template the EUD is asked to use.

## North Macedonia

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This document is the case study country note on the field mission to North Macedonia, which took place between 21 and 23 November 2018, as part of the evaluation of EU Info Centres in the Western Balkans and Turkey. As part of the field mission, the evaluation team visited three EU Info Centres in Skopje, Info Points in Bitola and Veles, and the EU information and documentation centre (EUi) in Skopje. The team conducted interviews with individuals representing the EU Delegation, other EU programmes (Creative Europe and the Enterprise Europe network), the communication contractor, and conducted a focus groups with students. It was not possible to conduct on the spot surveys / interview visitors to any of the centres as there were no visitors at the time of the evaluators' visit. The evidence gathered in this field mission will be triangulated with findings also on hypotheses from other sources and presented in the Synthesis Report.

<b>IPA beneficiary visited</b>	North Macedonia
<b>Dates of field visit</b>	21 – 23 November
<b>Evaluators responsible</b>	Karolina Wrona Biserka Ivanovic Sarkanovic
<b>EU Info Centres / Points visited</b>	Info Centre - Skopje Info Point – Bitola Info Point – Veles EUi (EU information and documentation centre) – Skopje
<b>EU Delegation staff interviewed</b>	Head of Delegation Deputy Head of Finance / Contracts Communication coordinator
<b>Interviews with EU programmes / beneficiary government</b>	Creative Europe Europe Enterprise Network
<b>Interviews with MS Embassy</b>	Dutch Embassy
<b>Focus group with students</b>	Skopje

The EU Information Network in North Macedonia includes one Information Centre in Skopje, 13 Information Points in Bitola, Gostivar, Kavadarci, Kocani, Kumanovo, Tetovo Veles, Ohrid, Debar, Strumica, Gevgelija and Kriva Palanka and 3 EU Information and Documentation Centres (EUi). The EUi's are all in universities.

From the outside, the **EU Info Centre in Skopje** makes a good impression and is very visible. The building is covered in a very large banner using the image of the *EU for You* campaign. It is also not far away from the city centre. On the negative side, there is no clarity on who the centre is for or what type of services they have available, even though it has very clear opening hours and a phone contact number featured on the doors.

Once inside the current location, it is also not easy to establish who the Info Centre



is for, giving more the impression of a tourist agency. However, the interior looks relatively modern, hosting a reception desk, dedicated sitting area and a separate space for events. Nonetheless, the way its interior is designed, the impression is created from the outside that no one is in there.

As there are only around 30 visitors a month (excluding those who come for events), the Centre is, of course, often empty. Despite being open on Saturday mornings, there are never any visitors then. This may be a 'chicken and an egg' situation in which visitors find an empty centre forbidding and uninviting, and then do not come in. In consequence, as highlighted it was not possible to speak to visitors to either the EUIC or the EU Info Points.

The fact that there is no member of staff who speaks Albanian was commented on negatively by a EUIC staff member to the evaluation team, as Albanian is spoken by 25% of the population.



The type of information available in the Info Centre consists mainly of general documents, information on policies and mini-photo exhibitions. The Centre has books, brochures and magazines available, and computers for consulting the Internet. There are posters and a video screen, but no interactive tools. The brochures laid out in the Info Centre are mostly outdated<sup>120</sup>. This is the result of the Delegation wishing for the EUIC to be largely paperless. It appeared that this policy is selective as visitors to centres like this often want to leave with a document in their hands. The Info Centre has a meeting room for events for 60-70 people. It is used for events organised by the Info Centre itself, by the Delegation, and by partners (e.g. various NGOs, or the Creative Europe Desk).

There is a belief among the staff of the Info Centre that a focus on fewer target groups would allow the Centre to channel its efforts more effectively, including assessing and tracking target group needs. The preference of the Delegation for reaching the general public via TV and billboards precludes smaller targeted campaigns, as there is not budget for both. The TV advertising and the use of billboards are part of the ongoing *EU for You* campaign<sup>121</sup>. This campaign covered three topics in 2017: the environment, human resources and development. In addition to TV and billboards, the campaign used social media, printed theme-based publications and promotional materials and organised theme-based events. The campaign is managed by the EUD with EUIC providing supporting role for managing accompanying events which form the part and parcel of the overall campaign.

**Social media** was suggested by the EUIC staff and partners (e.g. Creative Europe Desk, Enterprise Europe Network) to be the best mechanism to increase the impact of the EU Info Centre. With the EU for You

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<sup>120</sup> The Info Centre staff members were in the process of getting rid of old materials, such as maps of EU with no Croatia on it. The country's name change could be a good opportunity to making updated maps available.

<sup>121</sup> The aim of the "EU for you" campaign is to raise awareness and to inform the public about EU assistance in the country. The logo of the campaign is visible on the EUIC/ EUD building in the photo on p.5.



campaign running, the EU Info Centre Facebook page is taking the limelight (with 40k followers), while it is the EUD Facebook page (with fewer than 2K followers) which has the more institutional feel, reporting only on events. The Info Centre Twitter account is being used for the EU for You campaign.

TV (which is used for *EU for You* campaign) is still an important medium even if social media is where the growth is, and the case was made to us that an Instagram account should be considered, as more and more young people are using this medium. What stood out in the focus groups is that foreign news channels (US, UK, German) are important sources of information for the students who took part in this evaluation, which indicates that they are looking for more comprehensive information coming from various reliable sources.

The **website** has an old-fashioned feel and is not updated frequently enough. In February 2019, while news items were up-to-date, the website was still featuring the Maltese Presidency of the EU. The link to the Facebook page was broken.

The **EU Information Point in Bitola**, the country's second largest city, is a small corner on the ground floor of the municipality, covering approximately 5 square metres. The person in charge of the EU Info Point works on the first floor and has to go down to the ground floor to meet any visitors specifically when someone asks for information. It is a part-time function. While the person responsible sees scope for closer cooperation with the Info Centre and other Info Points, and for more use to be made of her knowledge of the local community, she perceives that the job would need to be full time for the most to be made of it. She suggested that a coffee corner in the Info Point would add value and enable visitors to sit and read brochures and that outreach projects should be further pursued as the visits of the EUD officials and talks to ordinary citizens and students and pupils make a great impact and raise the visibility of the EU. This is particularly true in remote areas where there is not much happening.

The most demand is for information relevant to the farming community and / or related to funding opportunities. There is also a strong interest from farmers in organic production. Other topics of interest are education (particularly Erasmus+), projects, reforms, EU projects in education and information on human rights. The interest comes mainly from farmers, students and NGOs.

The availability of brochures was reported to be supply-driven with the Info Centre deciding what to send. The Centre tends to use up its whole stock, but no records are kept of which brochures are distributed to which visitors. As well as having the brochures available, the Centre sends brochures to primary and secondary schools, and uses them at cultural events. They do not target specific groups, but find that the publications are self-targeting, i.e. they deal with specific topics of interest. Nevertheless, the person responsible for the Info Point sees scope for a more strategic and targeted approach to the activities of the Info Point.



The team also visited the **EU Information Point in Veles** (the country's sixth largest city), is situated in the same building as the Citizens Advice Centre (CAC), occupying a small corner in the same room as one of the CAC's citizen-facing departments. Judging from the outside, its visibility could be significantly improved. Even though there are posters, they look old and faded from the sun, with one of them being hung upside down. Inside, the Info Point displays information materials, such as leaflets, brochures and other materials about EU funding opportunities or EU support in the country.

Of the estimated 50 people who visit the Citizens Advice Centre daily, only 2-3% go to the Info Point, but mainly because they want to "kill time" reading, while queuing. People tend to pick the small materials such as leaflets or small brochures – so that they can throw them away after reading or return them to the stand. The Info Point is most interested in receiving more materials about agriculture, and for

students, though where the information is really needed for farmers is on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the Centre (in the Agriculture Department) or as part of the information they obtain from the Ministry of Agriculture because

it is the implementing agency for EU-supported agricultural programmes and has its own source of information.

The Info Point does not have its own social media presence and its one main activity is to support one event per year: Europe Day. Europe Day is a national event, with wide visibility, as it is announced on the radio and in the local media. However, the timing of the event is not optimal as it takes place at midday on 9 May and usually this is when people are working. Thus, the visibility and outreach potential are poor, but this is intuitive as no formal feedback is collected after the event.

The municipality of Veles has plans to build a youth centre in the city and to move the Info Point there. These plans are still not confirmed, but there is clearly scope for a fuller discussion on where the Info Point should best be located, and whether the present location is useful given the lack of spontaneous interest.

**The EU Information and Documentation Centre (EUi)** in Skopje is hosted in the Department of Economics of the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius. Even though it is located slightly outside the city centre and looks very academic and formal, people who go there know exactly what it is and what it does. In the past, the EUi was used as a library centre for books and periodicals, and it was reported that there were thousands of users per year who came and used books on EU topics. But now that the dissemination policy changed, reflecting information habits, and everything is electronic, EDC receives more calls to ask where to find the links to particular documents or pieces of legislation. Students are less and less used to having physical books, they use materials related to their study subject, so it is difficult to say if there is anything under-used. Reportedly, the EUi does not get any spontaneous visitors – no one comes simply to ‘get informed’, but instead they know exactly what type of information they are looking for.

Sometimes citizens call the EUi and ask for general information about strategies on specific topics (employment, rule of law) and they are directed to the EUIC. The people mistake the two organisations, but the EU Info Centre and the EUi cross-refer the people to one-another. Given that the EUi is far more targeted and specific (it is a space more for students and researchers), when someone comes to EU Info Centre asking about academic topics, they are sent to the EUi, which suggesting good collaboration and complementarity.



There is a link on the faculty webpage to the EUi, the faculty Facebook page also provides information about EUi events. The EUi also promotes itself on the Facebook page of the Info Network (which includes the EU Info Centre, Info Points and EDC). The EUi organizes workshops and, events targeting young people between 15-26-year-old.

The EU Info Centre treats the EUi as the key event venue for speeches by experts and high-profile personalities. For example, if the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy comes to Skopje, she will have a meeting at the EUi, because they are the closest to her intended

target audience (students and business professionals). This again suggests good complementarity at an informal level and is in fact essential because the EU Info Centre organises few specific activities for students – so the EUi is the EUIC's main outlet in reaching the students. The EUi does not interact with the government's Secretariat for European Affairs, which relates to a desire to maintain independence. For that reason, the EUi does not request government co-financing.



## 2. CONTEXT

### 2.1. Specific context

North Macedonia has a population of 2,103,721 million<sup>122</sup>. The country is one of the successor states of Yugoslavia and declared independence in 1991. Skopje is the capital and largest city, with a population estimated at 507,000. The country is divided into 81 municipalities. Nearly half of the population (43.6%) are aged 25-54 and 30% are under 24. The main language spoken is Macedonian (66.5%), followed by Albanian (25.1%), Turkish (3.5%), Romani (1.9%) and Serbian (1.2%). The main religion is Orthodox Christianity (69.6%), followed by Islam (28.6%).

North Macedonia has been a **candidate country** for accession to the European since 2005. The country was the first Western Balkan nation to sign a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU, which entered into force in April 2004. The SAA aims to liberalise trade for 95% of exports to the EU. With the entry into force of the SAA, the Stabilisation and Association Council, as well as the SA Committee were formed. In February 2008, the EU adopted the Accession Partnership for the country, which updated the previous European Partnership agreement of January 2006. Citizens of North Macedonia were granted visa-free travel to the Schengen area in December 2009.

In 2009, the Commission recommended to the Council to open accession negotiations with North Macedonia. The recommendation was made conditional, in 2015 and 2016, on the continued implementation of the 'Pržino Agreement' (on cooperation between the political parties) and on substantial progress in the implementation of the 'Urgent Reform Priorities'. Since the election of a new government in May 2017, it seems that the country has finally overcome its previous deep political crises. The new government has shown commitment and political will to advance the EU reform agenda. Most elements of the 'Pržino agreement' have been continuously and largely implemented or are, by now, overtaken by subsequent events. Substantial progress has been made in the implementation of the 'Urgent Reform Priorities'. Athens and Skopje reached a bilateral agreement ("Prespa Agreement") in June 2018 to end a bilateral name dispute, thus enhancing the EU accession process for the country<sup>123</sup>.

In 2015-2016, relations between the EU and North Macedonia were very strained as progress in reforms went into reverse and the then government abused its powers. This had an impact on the willingness of the government to be involved in EU communication projects, even those which were EU funded. During this time the EU Delegation had to ensure that there was a clear demarcation between its communication and that of the government.

Since May 2017, the new reform-oriented government has taken steps to gradually restore checks and balances, strengthening democracy and the rule of law. The municipal elections in October 2017 confirmed the support of citizens for the government coalition's EU-oriented policies. The Parliament has continued functioning with opposition parties chairing key committees. Civil society has played a constructive role in supporting democratic processes and ensuring greater checks and balances. Since the second half of 2017, the climate in which civil society organisations operate has improved and the government has shown commitment to dialogue and inclusion. Nevertheless, the government in place at the time of the field mission expressed a desire to be more involved and to cooperate on communication with EUD as much as possible.

The issue of the constitutional change to the name, which was a factor delaying accession, had also been complicating relations<sup>124</sup>. Another key point that was highlighted in the Council conclusions (June 2018) was the progress on reforms, especially rule of law, which need serious amendments.<sup>125</sup> This seems to be a recurrent problem, with other neighbourhood countries, such as Serbia and Montenegro, struggling to make progress in this area as well. The Delegation admitted being sceptical if much will be done by the national government in this direction.

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<sup>122</sup> [https://www.indexmundi.com/macedonia/demographics\\_profile.html](https://www.indexmundi.com/macedonia/demographics_profile.html)

<sup>123</sup> On 11 January 2019, i.e. two months after the study visit, the Macedonian Parliament completed the legal implementation of the Prespa Agreement by approving the constitutional changes for renaming the country from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) to North Macedonia. This report uses the name 'North Macedonia' throughout, yet takes into consideration the fact that this was not the name of the state at the time of the study visit taking place.

<sup>124</sup> North Macedonia voted for it in the Autumn of 2018 and Greece in January 2019.

<sup>125</sup> <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/35863/st10555-en18.pdf>

## 2.2. Strategic communication

In terms of public perceptions of the EU, staff interviewed at EUD considered that the communication climate is relatively receptive. This is confirmed by polling data published in August 2018 by International Republican Institute's (IRI) Center for Insights in Survey Research<sup>126</sup>: Support for EU and NATO membership has continued to rise since March 2017. Support for North Macedonia becoming a member of the EU was 83% in August 2018, a six-point increase from August 2017. However, despite significant public will for accession to the EU, there is a lack of understanding that membership of the EU also brings obligations. Although EUD is aware of the need to manage citizens' expectations, this aspect is perhaps not sufficiently recognised in the overarching communication objectives<sup>127</sup> that have been set for North Macedonia, even if managing citizen's perceptions of obligations is included in the purpose section of the EUIC ToR.

### EUD Information and Communication objectives:

1. To inform about EU's best practices (policies and programmes)
2. To communicate about the positive benefits of being part of the European family
3. To communicate about EU's role in the transformation process (including the objectives and results of EU assistance)

A concrete example of the challenges of managing citizens understanding and expectations was cited in relation to EU support to build the first ever water purification facility in North Macedonia, which was applauded until it was realised that it would be necessary to pay for water from the facility and this caused a public outcry.

It was suggested by a few representatives of the EUD that it is easier to promote the EU in North Macedonia than to promote the EU in the Member States, because there is a positive story to tell in terms of tangible benefits, such as schools being built, investments in education, stations being refurbished, etc. According to the Delegation, people are aware that the EU is the biggest donor in the country. According to the data presented by the EUD Programme Manager during the interview with the evaluation team, in the last seven years, EUR 607 million have been invested by the EU in North Macedonia, with 350 projects in 2017 alone, with a total budget of EUR 371 million (split into 40% to be implemented by municipalities, 40% for national institutions and 20% for civil society). However, whilst citizens may be aware that the EU is the biggest donor, they do not necessarily understand what the EU does in practice.

For 2019-2020, funding will be more focused at the local level on social inclusion and competitiveness and funds will be divided between the central government and the municipalities. Despite the large amounts of money coming from the EU, budget execution is rather weak, which relates to a large extent to the limited national administrative capacity. Following the change of government in the spring of 2017, there was institutional memory loss when many medium and senior managers left the public administration. There are also issues relating to accountability and governance in the system, which cause delays in cooperation assistance implementation, as do frequent policy changes. This can impact upon the sustainability and absorption of EU project results, and poor follow-on planning.

In the past, a distorted view of the EU has often been presented in the elections. This created animosity between the Delegation and the former government. The new government seems to be more responsive to the EU as seen through media statements, but the government sometimes presents EU investments as its own achievements in bringing the country closer to the EU.

EUD sees external communication as being critical. The Delegation has communicated actively over the last few years, and intensified communication and outreach, especially in the run up to the referendum (on the

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<sup>126</sup> <https://www.iri.org/resource/macedonia-poll-high-levels-support-eu-nato-ahead-referendum>

<sup>127</sup> EUD Information and Communication Forward Plan, 2017

country's name change); EUD ran a campaign called "Imagine the future together"<sup>128</sup> which focused on highlighting the benefits of accession to the EU. The campaign (the biggest EUD campaign ever) provided a vehicle for EUD to hold discussions at municipality level on how to access cooperation assistance funds. The campaign also provided an opportunity to work with EU MS ambassadors and generated government support. The EUIC organised the whole campaign and this was foreseen in the EUIC contract. EUD estimated that the campaign reached several thousand citizens. Other specific initiatives included on the 2018 Year of Culture Heritage, for which EUD received additional funding, but later questioned whether this had generated much impact.

The level of visibility of the cooperation projects is considered to be quite high. The existence of an online map, accessible at [www.euprojects.mk](http://www.euprojects.mk), is felt to contribute significantly to this. But there is room for improvement, the Delegation confirmed that it should communicate more on what happens after projects are implemented. In the past, many municipalities were unaware of EUD's role in programme management. This led to events being organised to allow municipalities to discuss how they could benefit from EU funds. Municipalities also received advice on how to write technical proposals. Involvement of the EU ambassador in events organised in the municipalities helped to support outreach by providing the 'hook' for journalists. Currently, EUD meets with the municipalities and local communities at least once a month, which is considered to help to bring the EU closer to the people.

The main EU communication goal reiterated repeatedly by the EUD representatives interviewed is **to influence attitudes: to make people feel good about the EU**. Accession will require that changes and reforms take place in North Macedonia, and some of the changes and reforms may be not as straightforward or easy-to-accept by the population, as they may imagine at this point. It is, therefore, important to ensure the buy-in of the population and ensure an ongoing positive sentiment towards the EU. For this reason, the Delegation is engaging two main types of communication:

- political communication which conveys messages from HQ and EU Member States Ambassadors.
- soft communication, which aims to make people feel good about the EU, "to have the happy, feel-good type of events".

The Delegation is responsible for political communication and soft communication, and the EUIC for soft communication. From an EUD perspective target groups are categorised as belonging to two groups: 1. media, civil society, youth and general public; 2. Political actors, state institutions and local government. The EUIC approach is modelled on these target group strands. The media environment is politicised with outlets either pro or contra the government, but there is a sense that it does not make much difference to the media if they get their messages from the EUIC or EUD directly, although EUD verifies messages from the EUIC. EUD recognises social and traditional media as being important in North Macedonia. A high percentage of the population watch TV regularly, but it is noted that the real movement in terms of growth of users is in social media. Facebook is very popular in North Macedonia and users span the generations (not just young people).

From an EUD perspective the EUIC is an invaluable resource that provides a great deal of support to EUD communication. This is reflected on the EU Info Centre's website, which states that the aim of the EU Info Centre is "to enhance the EU-related flow of information among the public. The general approach is to ensure that systematic, factual, correct and comprehensive information are provided to the public."<sup>129</sup> However, views within EUD are that the current Info Centre model was designed for the early 90s, when people were enticed by access to the internet / a computer. There needs to be a reason for people to visit an

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<sup>128</sup> In North Macedonia the campaign was called: „Замисли иднина заедно“. See e.g. the article:

[https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/29459644.html?utm\\_source=daily.mk&utm\\_medium=daily.mk](https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/29459644.html?utm_source=daily.mk&utm_medium=daily.mk) and a video of the campaign's launch at: <https://www.slobodnaevropa.mk/a/29459792.html>

<sup>129</sup> <http://www.euic.mk/objectives.nspix>

Info Centre and it was suggested that the rationale is likely to be to gain access to content that can't be sourced elsewhere. This rationale has not been tested with the public in any structured way. However, the discussion points to a need to define the rationale for using an info centre as being central to the design of the Info Centre concept.

Within EUD it is recognised that it is optimal that the centre has certain physical attributes and the Delegation is tendering for a reconstruction of the space to allow a better balance between being an info centre with a café/bookstore feel and an event space. The advantage of having a physical Info Centre is that it is a good place to organise events, it allows EU branding, which can't be achieved by renting space in hotels and an independent space is considered to allow greater social exclusion, as citizens may be put off by visiting formal premises or hotels

### **2.3. Management and organisation**

Feedback from EUD suggests that the preferred contractual solution is a 24-month contract with a prolongation option. Any arrangement should, however include a break clause after 1 year to allow EUD to end the contract if a contractor is not performing. As highlighted in other IPA beneficiaries, new contractors need a certain amount of time (at least 6 months) to understand what the EUIC involves and EUD expectations. In North Macedonia the management of the network has been somewhat problematic. This relates to relationships between different consortium members; there have been disagreements between members of the consortium on the distribution of work; late payment of salaries by one of the consortium members and low salaries being paid, which means that staff retention and the quality of staff challenges. EUD is considering ways to make the consortium to work together better.

The EUIC is managed directly by EUD, whereas the Info Points are smaller, not in the centre and not managed by EUD. Whilst Info Points provide a network across the country their added-value is much more limited than that of the EUIC. There is also variability in the extent that the municipalities are willing to support EUD. As municipalities pay for Info Point staff member's salary, EUD has a lot less influence and what can be achieved in communication terms is also much more limited. One option for the future is to see the Info Points as an integral part of an Info Centre. This implies that more funding would be required. The basis for this approach is reflected (albeit in a minor way), by the existence of an Info Point coordinator within the EUIC. However, the level of coordination is minimal.

The EUIC provides the Info Points with a 3-4-page 'outline document', which does not include objectives or targets. The Info Points inform the Info Centre about the events that they consider to be most appropriate, but do not give guidance on priorities. Whilst this level of coordination can be interpreted as relevant to the status of Info Points, which are essentially municipality outlets, not under the direct control of EUD, experience from the past suggests that the low level of coordination is not a must. The previous contractor took a more directive and collaborative approach to working with the Info Points. The previous contractor was reported to have implemented more events and regular meetings with all Info Points. Now, planning and decisions on events and topics are decided by the EUD, including Europe Day. In the past, the Info Point suggested the content and the programme of Europe Day, whereas the Info Centre handled the content of the other events they organised. In consequence, the Info Points now feel less connected to the Info Centre, which implies that the network is working less well. The Info Points would welcome closer contact with and more outreach from and greater social media activity by the Info Centre, and more visits by the Delegation as these bring the Info Points into contact with citizens.

On monitoring, the main focus of data collection relates to EUIC and EUD activities. The rest of the EU Information Network does not collect monitoring data. The EUIC ToR includes descriptions of indicators, but there are no baselines and no quantitative targets set. However, given the volatility of the current political environment EUD considers that a more specific and targeted approach is not suitable especially given that ToR are written a couple of years before the communications are implemented. Flexibility is required to allow communication efforts to be targeted when required, rather than a focus on implementing a detailed and specific plan. Nonetheless small surveys are carried out at EUIC events, including to understand satisfaction rates and an opinion poll was launched following a campaign, although it is recognised that with the current approach and political climate developing communication that supports behaviour change, seems unlikely. EUD pointed out that what can be achieved through communication depends on the type of communication

strategy selected and the amount of human and financial resources that are made available to support this. Campaigns can create significant visibility but are costly. Whilst social media were suggested to be low cost on several occasions, in the communication industry it is generally recognised that greater social media impacts are generated through paid for rather than earned media.

The current approach to monitoring by the EU Info Centre, means that EU Info Centre staff members were unable to say whether they are reaching new audiences as there are no mechanisms on avoiding double-counting of people participating at events and no tracking of target audience profiles. It was suggested that the EUIC has scope for attracting wider audiences by broadening the number of topics it covers, but that ultimately this is a decision for the Delegation. There is also no qualitative monitoring of participants at events in terms of collecting their feedback after the event has taken place. The only exception may have been the survey conducted by the previous consortium, but there is no record of how the survey was conducted and with whom, or what lessons were learned. The EU Info Centre organises events in Info Point locations, but some interviewees (from the EUIC and the Info Points) suggested that the Info Point should do more outside Skopje to reach out to Macedonians who live outside their capital city. Info Points make their own decisions on priorities.

With regards to monitoring by the rest of the Information Network, Info Points do not tend to collect consistent data on numbers of visitors, visitor profiles, enquiries or questions. EUi do not ask for feedback from event participants. The dissemination of materials from lectures or guest speakers on request is treated as a proxy indicating that people like the events. All the activities organised by EUi were reported to be impactful, but this assessment is based on informal feedback. It is also difficult to compare the audience reactions, as each event seems to have slightly different target audiences: workshops (e.g. researchers, businesses – jointly with Enterprise Europe Network), presentations (students), competitions (PhD students), info/open days (prospective students) and even events for municipalities or the local government. The EUi does not have a strategic plan of how many events to organise a year.

With regards to financing, EU Info Points receive 800 EUR for the organisation of Europe Day, but otherwise do not have a specific budget. It was suggested that this budget was not sufficient, even if the municipalities provide certain facilities free of charge. However, the Info Points do not have any permanent staff. For example, in Veles there is one employee of the municipality, who walks down from his office in the CAC to the Info Point two hours per day, or more often when needed. The cost of maintaining the Info Point as it stands is low, but the image it is presenting of the EU may be counterproductive and the effort by the municipalities better deployed elsewhere (e.g. directly supporting communication activities about the EU, with no physical Info Point), or more closely monitored.

The EU Information and Documentation Centre (**EUi**) does not have a budget. The faculty pays for EUi's incidentals, like printing and, what is more important, the full salary of the two part-time employees. If it was not for the support of the faculty, there would be no physical space for the EUi. The EUi gets targeted support from the Delegation (a grant for the Europe Day of 800 EUR). The grant is not a bulk sum allocation, but rather the EUi submits invoices to the Delegation and they get a refund up to an 800 EUR ceiling. Prominent guest-speakers come to the EUi pro bono. EUi identifies key speakers to their events (e.g. from the European Central Bank) when the speakers are meeting the Dean of the University for other reasons (they then come and speak at the EUi as well). During the field mission, it was suggested that the EUi would require a dedicated budget to take a more structured, strategic approach to planning and monitoring. Every year there is an annual meeting of the EUi network with the Delegation, where EUi's reportedly repeatedly request a proper budget, but so far, no actions have been taken in this direction.

#### **2.4. Other actors communicating on the EU**

Collaboration between EUD, EUIC and other partners and actors communicating about the EU was by different stakeholders interviewed to be strong. The EU Info Centre works both with Creative Europe (CE) and Enterprise Europe Network (EEN). The Centre also works with Creative Europe beneficiaries to develop activities in the culture area. The Info Centre and the Creative Europe desk consulted each other on reaching people as part of the Cultural Heritage year. Representatives of the CE and the EEN reported the



cooperation with EUIC to be constructive and bilateral. Cooperation with the Creative Europe Desk was reported to the evaluation team as being almost daily. Creative Europe posts relevant Info Centre events on its Facebook page. EUD plans to launch a European Culture Hub (a website with links to social media incl. Facebook), which will be used to gather all cultural events (theatre, poetry evenings, exhibitions, etc.) on one platform, with information be provided by the MS.

The Info Centre works with a wide range of Embassies on a regular basis. This includes events hosted or co-organised by the Centre and activities around Europe Day and other major "Days". There are regular meetings at Delegation level to coordinate activities with the Embassies, including meetings twice a year to discuss culture. The Embassy representative interviewed confirmed that all of the Embassy's communication features EU values and messages supporting EU integration and that the communication approaches taken by the Delegation and EUIC are very complementary to those taken by the Embassy, which for example does not have the same communication budgets available to develop campaigns. There was reported to be strong EUD coordination with MS embassies around Europe Day and Human Rights Day activities in particular.

The premises of the EU Info Centre in Skopje are valued by the Embassies for the fact that it space is accessible for the general public and it can be used free of charge as per EUIC staff interviewed. The Info Centre has more resources and capacity to organise or host bigger events than the Embassies, who do not have limited resources to host events outside of the Embassies buildings. Whilst the Info Centre type service may no longer be meeting demand for leaflets, brochures, etc., providing partners with a venue for events is considered to add significant value.

Previously, the EU Info Centre shared an entrance with the EU Delegation, but there is now a separate entrance, and this is an advantage in attracting an audience who would be put off coming in through the Delegation. However, some stakeholders still think that the Info Centre is perceived as too institutional and that this is off-putting for some.

## **2.5. Assessing the Intervention Logic**

As part of the desk phase of the evaluation, an Intervention Logic was reconstructed to show the results chain from inputs to activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts. Intervention logics can help to provide a deeper understanding of how an intervention is working and, in this case, is used to guide performance assessment.

The forward communication planning of the Delegation, which is based on a template supplied by DG NEAR, uses some Intervention Logic terminology (e.g. general and specific objectives, results to be achieved and activities), but does not present them in the form of an Intervention Logic nor does it always make it clear how the EUIC fits in each case. The EU for You campaign is included in the ToR of the Info Centre as the Info Centre is one of the EUD's tools to implement its information and communication strategy. The Info Centre is devoting a considerable amount of time to implementation on behalf of the Delegation, but the Info Centre is not mentioned explicitly as implementing the campaign in the Communication Plan. The DG NEAR Guidelines on linking planning/programming, monitoring and evaluation published in 2016<sup>130</sup> do not appear to have been taken into account.

The field mission provided an opportunity to understand that the concept of an Intervention Logic was new to Info Centre staff, it was not possible to have a structured discussion, although Info Centre staff identified in broad terms with the Intervention Logic that had been reconstructed. It was acknowledged that conceptually

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<sup>130</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/financial\\_assistance/phare/evaluation/2016/20160831-dg-near-guidelines-on-linking-planning-programming-vol-1-v-0.4.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/financial_assistance/phare/evaluation/2016/20160831-dg-near-guidelines-on-linking-planning-programming-vol-1-v-0.4.pdf)



the IL needs to remain at the general level given the unpredictability of the specific tasks of the EUIC, for example due to the politically charged environment.

They also particularly agreed with the prioritisation of the target groups listed in the Intervention Logic, with the list in the Intervention Logic correctly reflecting in their view the actual priorities starting at the top. Youth is considered the most important.

The EU Info Centre key experts were not aware of the content of the Delegation Communication Plan. They reported on mainly engaging in three types of activities:

- supporting large campaigns that come from the Delegation, where the EUIC has a limited role in the design;
- activities hosted by the centre on behalf of other organisations, such as NGOs;
- traditional events: award ceremonies, press conferences, etc.

The Info Centre does not have its own communication plan and needs EUD approval for the different activities that they carry out, including website content, which comes from the Delegation. Broadly speaking, the EUIC is an implementing partner of the Delegation's communication, though it does put forward proposals and ideas.

This section provides some reflections on the draft intervention logic, that was constructed during the desk phase of the evaluation, to represent EUIC.

### **Inputs**

Inputs are drawn from the activities described in the ToR relating to the EUIC. It is not possible to assess the extent that level of inputs is sufficient to achieve the desired outcomes and impacts. This relates in part to the range of other external factors, including changing in the political environment, which are outside the control of EUD and the challenges in interesting and engaging target groups. However, from the field mission the evaluation team had a better understanding of the limitations of the Info Points in particular, which are staffed by employees of the municipalities, and it is understood that if EUD wishes to make greater impact with these Info Points that additional funding will be required.

### **Activities**

The activities listed reflect those listed in the ToR for the EUIC. It was not possible to view any of the activities for example campaigns or events during the field mission, as none of corresponded to the timeframe of the field mission. However, it was possible to observe the EUIC and Info Points in operation and to see that there were no visitors to these offices. This confirms the need for a rethink about the extent that it is desirable to have a visitor centre, which purpose it should serve and, if desirable, how to increase usage of the centre.

Furthermore, it was also identified that engagement between the Info Centre and the Info Points appears to be somewhat at arm's length rather than integrated as envisaged.

### **Outputs**

In this reconstructed Intervention Logic, three main outputs are described: that communication campaigns and events generate visibility, which is covered in traditional and social media and this results in raised awareness of target groups.

It is difficult to assess the communication outputs and any effects generated by the Info Centre beyond the number of participants in events or raw website/social media data, or visitor numbers – though the numbers of visitors do seem low. There is no data from satisfaction surveys or on distribution of publications. No data is collected for the Info Points.

### **Outcomes**

The specific objectives listed in the EUD Information and Communication Forward Plan were considered in relation to outcomes, as per DG NEAR's approach to defining outcomes. The outcomes are as follows:

1. To inform about EU's best practices (policies and programmes)
2. To communicate about the positive benefits of being part of the European family
3. To communicate about EU's role in the transformation process (including the objectives and results of EU assistance)

These elements are taken into account in the outcomes and outputs. However, the outcomes and outputs are formulated from the perspective of the outcome on target groups, rather than the information and communication process, which is described by the three specific objectives listed above. Also, the three specific objectives do not cover the need to communicate about the obligations that are implied by accession, they instead focus the benefits and the positive story to be communicated.

Two key outcomes are defined in the reformulated IL, which are EUIC's contribution to helping to strengthen an informed public debate and to increase the level of public understanding of the implications of integration.

### **Impact**

The desired impact to which the EUIC is intended to contribute draws on the general objective as expressed in the EUD Information and Communication Forward Plan. It is not possible to define the extent of contribution of the EUIC and EUD communication to achieving this impact but the activities being undertaken are supportive of this overall goal.

The Intervention Logic presented below is intended to represent the EU Info Centre set up in North Macedonia, taking into account the feedback that has been gathered from a variety of stakeholders. Evidence relating to inputs and activities can be found represented in Terms of Reference and contractual documents. The elements listed under outputs, outcomes and impacts draw on the EU Delegation's Information and Communication Forward Plan.

It is important to note that relative to the Intervention Logic as derived from the ToR's and from what was observed in practice:

- there is nothing in the ToRs which requires the EUIC to develop synergies with Embassies and EU programmes, but this appears to be an expectation of HQ and the Info Centre does cooperate with them, though not always synergistically;
- there is no expectation of reaching new audiences in the ToR and this therefore does not figure in the Intervention Logic, nor is it regarded as important in practice in terms of the activities of the Info Centre per se. They are in practice being reached via the EU for You campaign.

## Reconstructed Intervention Logic

Inputs	Planned activities	Outputs	Desired Outcome	Desired Impacts
<p><b>Personnel</b> EUD: 1 staff member: Coordinator</p> <p><u>EU Information Network:</u> 7 EU staff members: <b>3 key experts</b> (Team Leader, PR &amp; Event Manager, Public Information Officer) <b>4 non-key experts</b> (1 Publications Specialist, 1 Website master, 1 Events Assistant &amp; Administrator, 1 Help Desk Officer/ Translator) Voluntary contribution by municipalities</p> <p><b>Contractual</b> Terms of Reference, 12-month service contract, €475,000 budget, Supply contract (equipment) €44,512, 12-month lease contract</p> <p><b>Content</b> From partners/ projects to be investigated</p> <p><b>Process</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordination meetings with EUD: 2 x per month</li> <li>• Other coordination to be investigated</li> </ul> <p><b>Premises</b> Inside EU Delegation</p>	<p><b>Management:</b> Running EU Information Network, the 12 EU Info Points, 3 EUi-s and the EU Info Corner. Welcoming visitors, advising &amp; informing; dissemination &amp; display</p> <p><b>EU for You:</b> awareness-raising campaign under guidance of Delegation<sup>131</sup></p> <p><b>IT:</b> Update EUD and EUIC website, FB, Twitter, Flickr.</p> <p><b>Events:</b> organise 1 EU related lecture; 10 press conferences per year; Activities marking Europe Day; 50 events for promotion of EU funded projects; 2016 Jean Monnet award; 2016 BABYLON award; Cultural and civil society events</p> <p><b>Promotion/dissemination:</b> production of publication and promotional materials, no specification</p> <p><b>Opinion poll to be carried out</b></p>	<p>Communication campaigns, Europe Week activities and other events generate visibility of EU's external assistance programmes, their objectives and results are ensured.</p> <p>Coverage of best practice in EU programmes and policies in traditional media and engagement via social media is increased.</p> <p>Various target groups are more informed/aware about the EU, its policies and programmes and their impact on the everyday life of citizens.</p>	<p>An informed public debate on integration into the EU, its benefits and challenges, in terms of reforms and EU support is supported</p> <p>Understanding of the implications of the integration process and the long term benefits it brings to citizens is increased;</p>	<p>Levels of acceptance of the necessary changes in the society to pave the way for integration of European values in every segment of citizens' daily lives is increased</p>

<sup>131</sup> This is an omission from the original Intervention Logic not a change as a result of the Intervention Logic.

Target groups		Assumptions/Risks
<b>Frequent target groups (survey)</b>	<b>Target groups</b>	<b>Assumptions</b>
Politicians and community leaders Governmental/local institutions employees Schoolchildren, teachers, university students Academics/Researchers Entrepreneurs/Business people Journalists Youth groups/ associations New target groups with little/no awareness of EU	General public Youth, university and high school students Children and kindergartens National and local media Opinion makers, public figures Governmental and local municipal institutions and organisations Civil society organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interest in EU membership remains high, notwithstanding the unresolved name issue during the period covered by this Intervention Logic</li> <li>• Support for the reforms related to the EU accession process is not lacking</li> <li>• Government commitment and political consensus regarding accession is maintained</li> <li>• Other EU information providers continue showing interest and willingness to mobilise resources and to play a major role in maintaining and stimulating the discussion on EU related issue and accession process.</li> <li>• Media interest, cooperation with EUIC and support re. coverage /dissemination of EUIC's envisaged activities.</li> <li>• Levels of pre-accession financial support remain or increase as accession plans progress</li> <li>• No setbacks in implementation of the 'Pržino Agreement' (on cooperation between the political parties) and on substantial progress in the implementation of the 'Urgent Reform Priorities'.</li> </ul> <b>Risks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possible augmentation of EU scepticism also re long period ahead until the actual accession</li> <li>• Major domestic or international political developments take precedence over communication efforts on EU integration process.</li> </ul>

### 3. EVALUATION FINDINGS

The following sections describe the key findings from interviews with EU Delegation staff, EU programmes and students as highlighted in the above table. Evidence has been analysed and integrated in-line with considerations of its overall relevance to the wider evaluation and the questions set. In the evaluation Synthesis Report, the evidence gathered will be integrated with findings from the other field missions, surveys, desk research and other interviews to develop clear findings and answers to the evaluation in relation to EU Info Centres in the enlargement region.

**EQ1.** To what extent have the **objectives** of the EUICs been defined considering the **specific needs** of the target audience in the IPA beneficiaries and contribute to the objectives set in the **EU framework** on strategic communication in the enlargement region?

- Specific target group communication needs have been well defined and the EUICs' objectives clearly focus on these needs.

The EUIC and network do not have an input into decisions on target groups, for example which target groups to prioritise, as target groups are defined in the Terms of Reference. The list of target groups is relatively long, but this is considered to allow for a more inclusive approach and feedback suggests that target groups, which are higher in the list presented in the Intervention Logic are most relevant with regards to their level of interest and engagement. The list of target groups could be reduced in future ToR to reflect the significant focus on young people, but there is no evidence to confirm that this change on paper would lead to any cost savings / increase in impact in that the services provided and the level and types of regular communication (outside campaigns) tend to be demand driven with the EUIC and Info Points engaging most with those who are interested.

Whilst polling data provides high-level data on public perceptions and confirms the public's interest in North Macedonia acceding to the EU, to date there has been limited focus on research to dig deeper into the different information interests and needs and there is no structured approach. However, the Info Centre, Info Points and even EUi's provide EUD with a network of eyes and ears on the ground and ad hoc qualitative feedback is gathered for example in relation to specific events which allows the contractor to understand how events have been received and to gather ideas albeit in an unstructured way. The amount of funding available to the network is extremely limited, which means that representatives of this network need to focus on providing information / running events rather than conducting research.

Campaigns conducted by the EUIC have focussed on the general public with limited specific tailoring to individual groups, this also relates to budget capacity, tailoring individual materials with specific slogans and content to increase the level of engagement of different groups would cost more money. In practice, tailoring is focussed on reaching different target segments by using different channels and tools, which reach different user profiles. Despite the financial limitations, the existence of an information network which reaches across the country supports communication to local audiences in the regions outside the capital. This is important in the country, which is reported to be very Skopje-centric.

There is a greater focus and understanding of young people through the EUIC's continuous programme, which reaches out to children between kindergarten and university student age. There are events for young people at the EUIC at least once per month and sometimes two to three times per month. For this group, the contractors have adapted EU materials so that they are appropriate to young people and there is some demand for information, for example teachers reach out to the EUIC to ask for further information and

timeslots when they may visit. The EUi with its location in a university has a more academic focus and tailors its activities to suit these audiences.

**EQ2.** To what extent have the **objectives** of the EUICs been achieved?

- Extent that the outputs of the communication activities implemented by the EUICs have produced the expected outcomes, which contributed to the achievement of the set objectives.
- Extent to which the quantitative and qualitative effects of the outputs and outcomes of EUICs' activities can be deemed to have contributed to the achievement of the set objectives.
- Extent to which other factors influenced the achievement of the outcomes.
- Extent that the communication tools used by the EUICs were appropriate for each target audience.
- Extent that the EU Delegations' use of other communication tools (e.g. social media) could have had a higher outreach to different categories of the target audience.

It is difficult to assess the extent that communication outputs have achieved the desired communication outcomes. From the contractor's reports reviewed and from feedback gathered during the field mission it is possible to ascertain that the EUIC supported the process of raising awareness about the EU accession process and generating visibility for EU activities. There is quantitative monitoring data to confirm the number of visitors to the EUIC and the number of attendees at events, in addition to social media and website analytics with regards to followers and likes. There is also evidence to confirm the number of questions received and answered by the EUIC<sup>132</sup> and it can be assumed that this process has resulted in the generation of increased knowledge and awareness. Meanwhile the EUi support to debates in academic circles is also in-line with the desired outputs of the network.

One of the objectives set in EUIC ToR requires the EUIC to contribute to an increase in the amount of visibility and awareness-raising that is achieved. Whilst this objective may be in relation to what EUD could achieve without the support of the EUIC, a comparison between data in EUD Annual Reports relating to 2015 and 2017 suggests that in recent years the performance of the EUIC on web and social media metrics has remained relatively stable.

Indicator	2015	2017
EUIC website unique visitors	21,530	7,536
EUIC FB page fans	37,396	38,287
EUIC Twitter followers	380	1,417
Attendees at EUIC events	10,000	8,430

However, the data collected to confirm on-line activity can be complemented by significant traditional media coverage, which is also reported in the EUD Annual Report (2017) which confirms that the 51 events organised were covered in newspapers with a circulation of 1.2 million and TV coverage seen by 14.1 million viewers. Given the significance of TV as the key medium to reach the wider public this data is significant. Furthermore, impact assessment data relating to the EU for You campaign launched in January 2017, suggested that by April 2017 the campaign messages had been viewed by one third of the population.

<sup>132</sup> The EUIC answered 589 questions in 2017.



Therefore, whilst it is not possible to make a robust assessment of EUIC contribution to achieving outcomes, even if there is satisfaction with the work that has been undertaken and acknowledgement within EUD that with the current budget there are limits to what can be achieved by the network. Those in EUD and working in the EUIC and Info Points report that citizens have a general awareness of North Macedonia's opportunity to become a member of the EU, as well as a sense that the EU is making substantial investments in the country, as the largest external donor. These outcomes cannot be attributed to information prothe Information Network or the EUIC in isolation, but the activities that they carry out and the materials and messages that they communicate are making a contribution.

There are several factors that influence what can be achieved. The EUD Information and Communication Forward Plan (2017) acknowledges that freedom of expression and the media are serious challenges, with journalist intimidation, poor working conditions, self-censorship and poor ethical and professional standards. Despite this, overall coverage by the media tends to take a positive tone. Whilst public opinion is broadly in favour of accession, the key challenge relates to the need to present the benefits and obligations of EU membership in a way that keeps the public engaged and on-board with EU messages. Whilst the Information Network helps to provide some outreach across North Macedonia, Info Points are by any standards very under funded and there are limits to what can be achieved, because effective communication has a cost. In terms of EUIC communication there may be scope to allow the contractor greater creative freedom to add value to EUD approaches. It is noted that the IPs have become somewhat redundant - people do not visit Info Points any more to get information.

There is no evidence to suggest that the EUIC or EUD are not using the appropriate communication tools. Social media is important in North Macedonia as confirmed in several interviews, but a reliance on social media would be limiting given the continued importance of traditional media to reach larger audiences. Also, the use of events allows the public tangible opportunities for direct engagement with the EU, and although there is limited evidence (due to the fact that qualitative data is not or is not systematically collected) to confirm the significance of events having 'touch points' with the EU can be considered to be highly relevant in a country that is preparing for EU accession.

**EQ3.** To what extent **the organisation and management** of the EUICs have been conducive to an efficient, effective and sustainable implementation of the communication activities?

#### Relevant Judgement Criteria

- The management of EUICs through service contracts is conducive to an efficient, effective and sustainable implementation of communication activities.
- The different EUICs and Info Points / Corners set up in an IPA beneficiary have worked together in an efficient and effective manner to reach the target audience and achieve the set objectives in that particular beneficiary.
- The system setup for monitoring the EUICs' activities functioned at regular intervals and was capable of collecting data and detecting problems (indicators were appropriately designed to measure the progress in relation to the baseline situation and the effectiveness and of the targets, and extent that targets were set realistically).
- Extent that the use of financing and management mechanisms could have provided better cost-effectiveness.
- The physical location of the EUICs in the IPA beneficiaries has facilitated the implementation of planned communication activities and the achievement of planned effects on the target audience.

The rules for contracting are determined in the Commission's Procedures and Practical Guide (PRAG). The use of service contracts is considered to be appropriate by those in EUD and there is consensus that longer contracts, at least two-year, are better than shorter ones because of the reduced administrative burden that

these imply. Global price contracts are not appropriate for EUICs as EUD requires flexibility to tailor requirements to its sometimes, ad hoc needs. Also, given the value of the contract it was suggested to be impractical to take a global-price approach although this can work with Framework Contracts, which are established to deliver a specific communication campaign, such as EU for You. With regards to the global price approach, it is not feasible to determine whether a unit price or specific deliverables approach should be the norm and this particular hypothesis is considered to be theoretical, given that decisions need to relate to the specificities of the tasks required.

The consortium partners managing the EUIC / Information Network have not always worked together well with the result that there have been disagreements about work allocation and EUD is considering ways to address the issues. Meanwhile EUIC coordination of the network appears to be 'light touch'. Info Points are provided with some direction, but they feel isolated and would like to feel more integrated. At the same time, there are limits to what the Info Points can realistically achieve with the €800 budget and voluntary level of support from the municipalities. Feedback gathered during the field mission suggests that the EUi and EUIC work together well in that the EUi refers queries back to the EUIC and there is signposting on the websites, to confirm that they are all part of the same EU communication effort.

The system set up for monitoring allows the EUD to track the achievement of performance indicators, which relate to reach and engagement of the public. This evidence allows EUD to understand the coverage of EU messages and to ensure that the EUIC is carrying out the activities that are required in the ToR. However, in the reports viewed by the evaluation team, indicators are not aggregated and compared year on year, which would provide a greater sense of the cumulative effect of the activities and progress made in extending communication to wider audiences. There is no systematic gathering of qualitative feedback and insights and this means that quantitative data provides relatively superficial insights, but cannot explain whether target groups noticed, liked or understood the messages disseminated. This also means that there is no scope for lessons learning, the creation of a feedback loop or a more strategic approach being developed using this information. There is, however, no evidence to confirm ways to increase the levels of target group reach and engagement without increasing cost. It is noted that large communication campaigns may generate a more consolidated and measurable impact. However, communication impacts do not tend to last forever, in short: people forget unless messages are continuously reinforced. There is also no evidence that greater efficiencies could be achieved through improved management and financial mechanisms aside from the need to address the consortium troubles identified.

It is difficult to assess whether the physical location of the EUIC, Info Points, Info Corner and EUi have been instrumental in allowing the EU Information Network to achieve its goals. The EUi location at a university is appropriate to an academic setting. However, with the setting of the EUIC is not necessarily optimal. Public perception research run by the EU Info Centre together with local Think Thanks in 2017 found that because the EUIC is located in the same building as the EUD, the general public associate the Info Centre with a formal institution and avoid going there. Research findings confirmed that the public tend to assume that there will be a complicated registration process required before entering the building. Furthermore, the idea of calling the venue a "centre" was seen by the general public as too bureaucratic, formal and uninviting. Whether or not a physical presence is required is a further question. There is consensus within EUD that there is a need for a public EU space to support EU communication efforts.

- **EQ4.** To what extent the EUICs have contributed to raising public awareness about the EU, its policies and values, EU funding and on the enlargement process in the IPA beneficiaries?

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extent that target groups of EUIC communication activities in the IPA beneficiaries are more aware of the EU, its policies and values, EU funding and the enlargement process.</li> <li>• Extent that EUICs reach new audiences with EU messages about EU policies and values, EU funding</li> </ul> |
|---|

and on the enlargement process that would not be reached by EU Delegations, or EU-funded projects.

As highlighted in the desk report, there is evidence to confirm that the communication materials and tools used by the EUIC and disseminated by the Info Points, Info Corner and EUi convey information on EU policies and that there is information on EUIC websites relating to accession and EU values. However, during the field mission it was apparent that some of the materials currently available at the EU Info Centre are actually out-dated; this relates to the decision to focus efforts on on-line and digital and not printed materials, as these are rarely used and are considered to be an old-fashioned means of communication.

There is no systematic collection of feedback from target groups even if event organisers ascertain participant satisfaction on an informal basis. This makes it difficult to ascertain the extent that target groups awareness has been raised. Whilst figures relating to website visits, visitors to the EUIC and social media followers can be considered to be proxies for raised awareness and provide indications of new followers, it is not possible to define the extent that individuals found what they were looking for and or found new information and were therefore more informed or more aware or whether their engagement with the EU communication activities simply reinforced their existing awareness and knowledge. Social media analytics to provide data which confirms the number of new followers.

However, there is consensus among EU Delegation staff, the MS Embassy interviewed and others who represent EU communication partners that EUICs/Info Points are making a significant contribution to raising public awareness and reaching new audiences.

- **EQ5i.** To what extent the **activities carried out by the EU Info Centres** have been coherent, complementary and **coordinated** with those carried out via other EU programmes and by other partners (e.g. Member States, IFIs, international organisations) **active in communicating re. EU policies & values, EU funding and the enlargement process** in the enlargement region?

- EUICs and Info Points liaise in a regular and planned way (either directly or via the EU Delegation) to share intelligence, identify synergies and opportunities to work together with other EU policy / programme communicators in the region.
- Extent that it is possible to identify other relevant opportunities to improve coordination to develop a more joined-up approach.

There is regular and planned coordination between the EUIC and EUD and this is supported by formal activity reports. The EUIC has a coordinating function to a certain extent and provides guidance to the Info Points. However, Info Points have a sense that that the previous contractor was more collaborative, which suggests that there is room for improvement. On the other hand, the Info Points receive very little funding and this funding is essentially to ensure that Europe Day activities are implemented. Therefore, the extent that they are able to add significant value to the overall EU communication effort is limited and this makes the question about the opportunities for more synergies and opportunities to work together more theoretical. Looking to the future, it is suggested that the network would work much better if the Info Points were part of the contract for the EUIC rather than being run by the municipalities. This implies a need for increased funding.

Feedback suggests that there is good collaboration with other EU programme partners, for example Enterprise Europe Network and Creative Europe. Creative Europe communicates with the EUIC almost daily and there is a track record of working together. The programme “cultural stories” was cited as one where Creative Europe and the EUIC have had particularly good collaboration with the EUIC supporting, including via EUIC social media. Both consult with each other on how to improve their reach of target audiences and they collaborated well to support the year of cultural heritage. Meanwhile feedback from the Enterprise Europe Network (with its specific focus on business) is that representatives of the network sometimes attend events organised by the EUIC, including project dissemination events for higher education, meetings for

chapter 20 of the negotiations (industrial policy) and round tables. Relationships with MS embassies are also considered to be strong with their involvement and engagement in a range of EUIC events. These relationships are managed through a regular coordination by EUD.

**EQ5ii.** To what extent the EU Info Centres can contribute to the development and implementation of a **joined-up Public Diplomacy** (cf. EU Global Strategy) and act as hubs for EU-related initiatives taking place at the local level (i.e. both EU and non-EU funded)?

- There is alignment between EUIC and Info Point communication activities and messages, and public diplomacy activities and messaging in each IPA beneficiary.
- Extent that EUICs, Info Points and staff of EU Delegations responsible for public diplomacy collaborate on joint initiatives or coordinate their initiatives.
- Extent to which EUICs and Info Points support and are a focal point of activities (EU and non-EU funded) to reach public diplomacy target groups.

As highlighted in the answers to previous evaluation questions, the EUIC supports EUD public diplomacy communication. The specific example of campaigning around the name change to North Macedonia can be provided as an example. The EUIC is very much a communication implementation body for the EUD communication. There is very limited collaboration between EUD and Info Points on public diplomacy given that these are essentially located in municipalities and the staff who run the Info Points are not selected by EUD. EUD recognises that the Info Point model is somewhat outdated because people rarely visit and therefore it cannot be assessed that these are hubs to reach public diplomacy target groups. However, each Info Point is focussed on supporting Europe Day celebrations and this is an albeit limited contribution to public diplomacy. As an event centre the EUIC and with its collaboration with other EU programmes and MS embassies on specific events the centre can be considered to have potential as a hub, but the fact that it is actually within the same building means that it lacks the independence, which is seen as necessary to engage the public.

**EQ6.** What is the **additional value** resulting from the communication activities carried out by the EU Info Centres compared to what could have been achieved by the IPA beneficiaries at national or regional levels?

- Extent that the reach and engagement of target groups by EUICs with EU messages on policies and values, funding and the enlargement process is greater and more effective than the benefits for target groups at national or regional level that IPA beneficiaries do or could achieve.
- Extent that IPA beneficiary communicators convey the desired messages on EU policies and values, funding and on the enlargement process.

It is not possible to make comparisons between information provided by the EUIC and information provided by the North Macedonian government for example in relation to reach and engagement of target groups. However, feedback suggests that the key issues, which limits communication capacity by the IPA beneficiary relate to human and financial capacity, internal bureaucracy and for example the capacity to absorb the additional cooperation assistance funding that is supporting the country. There have been frequent changes of staff and processes within the national administration and basic issues relating to delegation and organisation.

Whilst citizens seem to have an awareness that the EU is the biggest donor, they have little understanding of how the EU is contributing and what the impact of EU funding. As highlighted earlier in this document, there are also issues relating to lack of public understanding of the obligations as well as benefits of EU membership. Whilst, as highlighted above, it is difficult to assess the extent of EUIC contribution, there is more work to be done on communication in North Macedonia and a sense that a collaborative approach involving the EU and the beneficiary is required.

## **4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **4.1. Conclusions**

- It is not possible to define the effects and outcomes generated by the EUIC in North Macedonia. But there is strong consensus within EUD, which is substantiated through feedback from other stakeholders that the EUIC adds significant value to EUD communication.
- The Information network would benefit from a re-think. Relying on municipalities to support Info Points has its advantages, including allowing EUD wider coverage across the country, but as Info Point staff salaries are not paid by EUD and given the minimal budget provided, EUD is less able to harness the potential of this network. This raises the question of whether it is desirable to increase EU presence in the regions and at local level in the run up to accession, for example even if post accession these points could then be cut back. The EUi's appear to work well and in complement to the work of the EUIC and should be retained as part of the network.
- The EUIC as an EU-branded event space and a pool of communication experts to support EUD communication capacity works well. However, based on the number of visitors, the Info Centre aspect is surplus to requirements. This suggests a need to rethink if it is desirable to continue to offer this service, what the purpose should be, and which needs can be met, even if a nicer, more user-friendly space is established.
- The fact that the EUIC acts as the communication arm of the EUD has its pros and cons. It ensures that there is strong alignment between EUD wishes, content and messages and EUIC actions. On the other hand, EUIC staff want the opportunity to have a greater say in the creative process. The open question is whether the loss of control implied if the EUIC had greater independence would equate to more impactful communication; there is no evidence as yet to confirm that this would be the case.
- The EU for You campaign is creating a particular communication environment for the Info Centre, as it is reaching out directly to the same audience that the EUIC is supposed to reach. It is too soon to say whether the campaign itself is successful and what implications that could have for how this or other Info Centres should interact with Delegations in future. But the use of campaigns to create moments of high visibility appears to be impactful.
- There is regular cooperation and complementarity between the EUD, EUIC and other EU programmes, particularly Creative Europe, but also the Enterprise Europe Network and EU MS Embassies, reportedly particularly French, Swedish and Dutch.
- The increasing use of social media by all age ranges of the public is recognised by EUD as is the need not to ignore traditional media given the numbers of people who watch TV regularly and read newspapers. The focus on traditional and social by the EUIC is in line with these trends. However, it is noted that there may be more potential to use social media in a more targeted way if EUD allocates increased budget to this – social media impact needs to be bought.
- Whilst the focus on the collection of quantitative indicators is understandable given that it is generally easier to collect / count, EUD should consider annual or six-monthly qualitative data collection exercise to ensure that it is taking account of target groups actual interests and views on the work being undertaken.

### **4.2. Recommendations**

- The planned upgrade of EUIC facilities should be taken as an opportunity to develop the EUIC around a specific concept, for e.g. as an attractive and inviting outreach centre, with modern interactive tools. The upgrade also needs to include on-line tools. The EU Info Centre web page

should be redesigned and be made more interactive and user-friendly and should be regularly updated. The current approach to social media should be reviewed to assess the merits of giving the Info Centre an independent social media identity.

- More systematic needs assessment should be carried out to understand the topics of interest to key segments of the public, and how best to explain the implications and benefits of accession for the local population.
- Performance framework and robust monitoring should be embedded in all activities carried out by the Info Centre and Info Points. a proper monitoring system should be designed and maintained by the EUD, irrespective of the contractor selected.
- All major campaigns or communication expenditure should be evaluated.
- The EU Info Centre should have a staff member fluent in the second national language, Albanian, in order to be able to take on the calls coming from the Albanian speaking community and to be able to translate communication materials and information in Albanian language.
- The EU Info Centre should make more use of the EU Info Points throughout the country for joint activities, and not only for the Europe Day events. EU Info Points represent the network that has potential to be utilized as multipliers of information and as excellent tool for outreach, visibility and information dissemination.
- The Info Point concept should be re-assessed with a view to considering a larger investment (in human and financial resources) and better targeting, as it is not clear if the current investment (in effort rather than financially) is justified. IPs not possessing any own budget beyond reimbursement for Europe Day activities and ultimately staffed by part-time 'volunteers', with little visibility and resources, does not lend itself well to increasing their visibility.
- The EUI concept should be re-assessed to see whether a larger investment and more strategic approach would not achieve even better results.
- There is a need to link the EUIC ToR with the Forward Planning, thus reflecting the concrete actions to be taken.



IPA beneficiary visited	Serbia
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## Serbia

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This case study country note provides information on the field mission to Serbia in November 2018, as part of the evaluation of EU Info Centres in the Western Balkans and Turkey. The note presents key findings from interviews with EU Delegation staff, EUIC and EUIP staff, representatives of EU programmes, representatives of the beneficiary government and of beneficiary programmes, other donors, MS embassies and cultural institutes, students and visitors of the EUIC/EUIP. It was not possible to conduct on the spot interviews with walk-in visitors as there were no visitors during the time of the visit. The evidence gathered during this mission will be integrated with findings from other field missions and triangulated with findings from other sources of evidence. The results will be presented in the evaluation Synthesis Report.

The main challenge during the field mission was the lack of availability of monitoring data from the contractor. In the absence of a monitoring system with clear indicators, the evidence base was therefore thinner. It was mitigated by a large consultation programme involving many different stakeholder categories to gather their feedback and triangulate data on the perceived results.

<b>Dates of field visit</b>	26 – 28 November
<b>Evaluators responsible</b>	Anne-Claire Marangoni, Biserka Ivanovic Sarkanovic
<b>EU Info Centres / Points visited</b>	Project director  Belgrade EUIC Team leader EU assistance visibility and information officer Social media officer Reporter and web editor Support staff (3)  Novi Sad EUIP Manager Public space manager Information media officer Project assistant  Nis EUIP Public space manager and acting manager Information and media officer Project assistant
<b>EU Delegation staff interviewed</b>	Head of Delegation Head of Cooperation Deputy Head of Finance / Contracts Head of Communication and Communication coordinator
<b>Interviews with EU programmes / beneficiary government</b>	Creative Europe Desk DG GROW/ Head of Unit H2 Enterprise Europe Network and Internationalisation of SMEs EURAXESS Horizon 2020 Ministry of Youth and Sports Ministry of European Integration
<b>Interviews with other donors and beneficiary programmes</b>	Regional Youth Cooperation Office Erasmus student network Researchers' night Belgrade Open School Europea Nostra Civic initiatives European Western Balkans Portal United Nations in Serbia European Movement in Serbia National Library of Serbia European Policy Centre
<b>Focus group with MS representatives (Embassies and cultural institutes)</b>	Austrian institute Belgian Embassy Croatian Embassy
<b>Focus group with students</b>	8 participants Held at EUIC Belgrade
<b>Focus group with EUIC/EUIP visitors</b>	One held at EUIC Belgrade (6 participants) One held at EUIP Novi Sad (8 participants)

The EU Information Network consists of the teams of the EU Information Centre (EUIC) in Belgrade and the EU Info Points (EUIPs) in Nis and Novi Sad. The evaluation team visited the EUIC in Belgrade and two EU info points, in Nis and Novi Sad.

## *EUIC in Belgrade*

The EUIC is in a non-pedestrian street, not frequented by the public. Views on the location of the EUIC are split between the institutional partners (representatives of EU programmes, beneficiary programmes, of MS embassies and institutes, other donors and of the beneficiary government). Given the proximity of the location with their offices, they report that it is a good location, which facilitates their participation in events. Other stakeholders consulted, including EUD and EUIC staff recognise that a location in a pedestrian area would be more appropriate, reflecting a focus on walk-in visitors and on the support the EUIC can offer to EU Delegation networking and the visibility of the EU vis-a-vis the media, civil society, citizens and in particular youth and students. On the other hand, it can be anticipated that renting space in a pedestrian area is likely to incur additional cost.

From the street, the EUIC's logo is visible and the window displays information on upcoming activities, as well as the production of past activities (e.g. children's drawings).



The EUIC occupies a generous space. Visitors first go through a reception, which includes an IT corner with six computers with an Internet connection for visitor use. But these are rarely ever used: EUIC staff reported that because citizens are well connected the IT corner does not serve a specific purpose. Lack of use confirms that an IT corner for public access is an outdated concept in a world where many people access the internet via their mobile phone. There is also a library where visitors can consult lots of publications (either in brochure format or publications from academic journals) and books on the EU, as well as a selection of international newspapers. At the time of the visit, the available languages included local languages and a sample of EU languages (English, French, Italian, German, Spanish).



There is one large meeting room on the main floor, and a smaller room for informal use downstairs. This is complemented by a shared office space with 5 desk stations and an auditorium with capacity for 40-60 participants. The auditorium supports the event function of the EUIC, which is central to the EUIC concept, with EUICs placing a strong focus on bringing people together for direct interaction with the EU.



The premises are made available to the EUIC by the Government. This has several benefits, it reduces the cost of running the Centre and provides a practical example of collaboration between Serbia and the EU to support the transfer of information about the EU, in a country that is looking to join the EU. The space has been refurbished and looks very pleasant. There is a clear blue and yellow branding, and the EUIC logo clearly visible around the space.

#### *EUIP in Novi Sad*

The EU Info Point in Novi Sad cannot be recognised from the outside. This is not ideal and should be considered as a minimum requirement for Info Points and Info Centres. For instance, there is no EU flag outside the centre. For people travelling from Belgrade to Novi Sad for a decentralised event, in its window, Furthermore, the EUIP does not use the same logo as the EUIC, this makes it difficult for visitors (some of whom come from Belgrade for decentralised events) to recognise the link between the two. The Novi Sad EUIP is very small size (only 40 square meters, in contrast to the EUIC in Belgrade, occupies 300 square meters). The space is subdivided into a corner with EU documentation, two computer stations and one TV/ projector. The feedback received from the EUIP Novi Sad team focused on the fact that the EUIP space is not appropriate to host event. During the visit, the hosting of a focus group with eight (8) participants seated in circle showed that the concerns were grounded (see second picture below).

Overall, the feedback from the team was neutral as to their workload. They explained that the team was delivering activities decided by the EUINFONET, including local stakeholder relationship management.





### *EUIP in Nis*

The EUIP in Nis is in a busy street close to the main city square. It occupies approximately 75 square meters. The space is well furnished and looks cozy. This is important if the goal is for people to spend some time at the Info Point. The walls have book shelves and displays of books and brochures on EU issues. There is a maximum capacity of approximately 60-70 people, for example that could be hosted at an event.

The visit to the EUIC and EUIPs highlights the perceived significance of having high visibility physical location in a busy pedestrian area to attracting spontaneous visitors, who it is assumed may include citizens with no previous direct contacts with the EU. However, the photos illustrate that the centres are not busy activity hubs, except when specific events are being organised. This highlights one of the central questions for the evaluation, which relates to the importance of having a physical space and how to make this physical space work for the Delegation. If it is decided to retain the physical spaces, then a more creative approach is required to 'animate' the centres.

Branding and visibility are also key elements in the presentation of the Centres. If the purpose is to promote the EU and confirm the EU presence on the ground in Serbia, then the Centres and Info Points need to be clearly marked. What needs to be in an Info Centre is also a point for consideration and this relates to the need to reflect on what Centres and Info Points are for. If they are intended to be used to host events, then they need to have enough capacity to host an event. As providing access to the Internet is not required, there needs to be a rethink about what EUD's want visitors to the Centres to actually do.

### *Communication activities*

In terms of communication<sup>133</sup>, the EUINFONET supports EUD with five main types of activities implemented by the contractor (events, visitor reception / answering questions, campaigns, creation and dissemination of information products, website and social media).

### *Events*

During the period under review, a total of 1,412 events were organised (of which 1212 were organised by the EUIC or EUIP and 170 were supported<sup>134</sup> but were organised by third parties). This is an average of 39 events per month held at the EUIC and the two EUIPs. Events could be:

- Debates (e.g. "HoD's debate on political issues and the EU with Law University Belgrade students", in April 2016),
- Lectures (e.g. "The role of (royal) women in social networks before the internet. Connecting Serbia and Europe in medieval and early modern times, in March 2016),
- Workshops (e.g. seminar for librarians in September 2015, on "Libraries as sources of quality information about the EU"),
- Public events (e.g. Mobility week and European Film Festival, every year).

Events are organised as one-off events or regular events, on site (at the EUIC and EUIPs) or off-site (e.g. at universities, at the diplomatic representation of a MS). For the events organised on site, EUINFONET monitors the participation. Events can have different targeting relating to the objectives to be pursued. Some events were organised under a campaign.

EUINFONET public space statistics	#EUIC Belgrade	# EUIP Novi Sad	# EUIP Nis
Questions received via email or in person on EU-related topics (studying, volunteering, funding)	1662	664	1877

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<sup>133</sup> Based on the final report for contract nr. 2015/364-829 covering the period from 10/08/2015 to 9/08/2018.

<sup>134</sup> For example, technical and visibility support was provided to Artlink Young Talents Festival for Festivals, Europe for Europe

Visitors per day	3737	7.8	9.8
Total number of all visitors	30226	11348	12825
Total number of visitors using regular services	9106	2709	1741
Total number of visitors participating in events	20592	1693	4123
Total number of visitors participating in outdoor events	n/a	6043	5782

In its final report (2015/364-829), the contractor identifies four categories of events, which are defined as follows (pp.136-137). The fact that the contractor has categorised the events confirms strategic thinking into the purpose and need to tailor events to particular target audiences., as follows:

- Public events: events open to a wider audience or targeted groups with media presence (e.g open public debates, workshops for journalists, thematic conferences)
- Standard events: events organised on a regular basis (e.g. lectures, workshops, exhibitions, receptions, conferences, debates)
- EU-funded project events: focused events that aim to increase the visibility of EU assistance to Serbia
- Media events: e.g. media clubs, media briefings and trainings

However, the above categorization shows a certain degree of overlap between the categories and the evaluation team deemed it more relevant to make the distinction between events targeting the general public and events addressed at specific target groups. For this reason, the team has re-classified the events as public and targeted events.

#### 1. Public events

Public events are open to wider audience, with media presence if possible (e.g. roundtables on various topics, such as equal rights and social inclusion, film projections). Public events aim to create an EU exposure for the audience. During the field visit, the EUIC team reported that when public events are open to a wide audience, the objective is to create the conditions / a favourable environment for a long-term, more intensive engagement on EU topics. These events (include Europe Day, Researchers' Night, International Women's Day, etc. are considered helpful to give visibility to the EU, EU assistance and the EU integration process, and as a useful tool to promote values and showcase stories of what the EU can do for individual citizens. These types of events also provide information. But there is no data evidencing that these events *do* raise the visibility of the EU and lead to a better understanding of what the EU is and does.

#### 2. Targeted events

Alternatively, events may be for a specific target audience, with media presence if possible (for example competitions). There are conceptualised as education and information-sharing events. This event category includes **media events** (e.g. media clubs and media briefings and trainings), which aim to develop and maintain media relations to multiply the effect of communication activities by generating media coverage. They are typically high-profile or VIP events<sup>135</sup>, which have a networking purpose and are perceived as helpful to mobilise political figures, influencers and multipliers. They also provide an opportunity to identify ways to develop and implement joint activities.

Both public and targeted events can also relate to EU-funded projects and aim then to increase the visibility of EU assistance to Serbia. Events can also be one-off events, or organised on a regular basis or as part of a series, such as the European Film Festival, European Debate school, Let's talk about Europe (series of 10

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<sup>135</sup> Media events include: organising press conferences for EUD, EU-funded projects and EUIC/EUIP, scheduling interviews and appearances in media, TV and radio, organising media clubs, press field visits to EU-funded project sites, and organising media briefings, brunches and trainings (EuropeAid/136280/DH/SER/RS, Final report, p. 137)



TV debates on N1 cable TV)<sup>136</sup>, Event series are embedded in a long-term strategy to create an EU reflex for participants by promoting EU values and to familiarizing the public with the EU.

#### *Other activities*

The EUINFONET contractor also implements other activities, which have different objectives:

##### 1. Welcoming visitors

The EUIC and EUIP staff is available to welcome visitors at their premises. The emphasis is put on answering questions, providing information (including with support materials by distributing documents/brochures) and if relevant providing contact information for EU programmes.

##### 2. Organisation of large-scale campaigns

Campaigns can include competitions, for instance the essay competition on the “future of Europe” which was supported within the youth campaign or the selfie Instagram photo competition “We share our heritage”. Competitions mobilise target groups in the medium term and are often coupled with the organisation of events. They are an interactive way to promote EU values and to provide information on what the EU does.

EUINFONET also organise nation-wide campaigns. Examples include: the yearly Book fair, the yearly Europe month, the Youth spring campaign 2017 or the EU support to Serbia 2017 campaign. They are aimed to:

- Give a general boost to EU visibility and positive image of the EU (and MS)
- Provide high quality information to target audience and explain how to find the most relevant information about the EU
- Spread key messages about the EU-Serbia relationship
- Strengthen the networking with decision-makers, public opinion leaders, writers, media editors, librarians, students and youth (as relevant).

##### 3. Information products, publications, audio-visual and promo materials

Information products can be for the public or for a targeted audience. Depending on the targeting, the content is more or less detailed and specific. For instance, the content of a brochure on Erasmus+, targeted at students, will include details about the Erasmus+ programme and tips for the application process. a billboard posted in a town will have a more generic content to promote EU assistance and values (e.g. “Because we preserve cultural heritage”, “Because youth are the future”). The objective is that these products support the objectives related to raising the visibility of what the EU does and to increasing understanding and knowledge of the EU. However, over the years the Commission has generally focussed on reducing the production of paper leaflets and brochures in recognition that these are often not read and the trend to read on-line. All items are available at the EUIC and EUIP premises, and they are distributed at events and other activities. It was not possible to assess whether or not the cost of these materials justifies the level of impact that they achieve and whether or not they are necessary to support engagement with target audiences. But promotional items are often used to complement campaigns in the knowledge that visitors and particularly young people and children often like to take something tangible away with them

##### 4. Websites and social media

The contractor also maintains two websites and develops content for social media. The network’s final report provides a long list of objectives – while interviews with the EUIC team recognise that there is no evidence on the quality of engagement with social media content.

Social media
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<sup>136</sup> This type of events also includes the ‘Ever closer Union’ exhibition, European year of cultural heritage exhibition, European youth parliament, Erasmus chats and trainings.

#### Overall key goals

- To provide the of information on activities of EUD and EUINFONET
- To engage and motivate general public with the focus on youth to participate in EUD and EUINFONET activities, both through public events and via social media
- To have an effect on target audiences about EU activities in Serbia, about EU in general and potential benefits for Serbian citizens from EU membership
- To positively motivate audiences to get knowledge on the EU
- To generate positive attitude about EU
- To provide information about EU donations in Serbia

#### Overall key communication goals

- To motivate debate and to get more interactions (to increase engagement - more likes, shares and comments)
- To get exposure of EUD/EUIC/EUIPs activities and campaigns
- To build stronger online community and to reach new audience by getting new likes
- To collect user-generated content, increase engagement and to promote main yearly activities by organizing one big SM contest and couple of give-away contests

The implementation of different activities aims to create synergies between the activities to enhance the overall exposure to EU affairs. The primary focus is put on events and discussion groups with MS representatives, other programmes and students seem to indicate that it is a privileged communication channels to engage different publics (although there are no data confirming the actual impact). The 2017 EUD annual communication plan also recommends focusing on events based on past experience. The second focus is social media in Serbia – which notably reflects the targeting of youth and efforts to reach out to youth. EUINFONET develops and implements the activities. The EUINFONET develops the concept for the different activities on the basis of the outline included in the 2017 EUD communication plan. The visit to Novi Sad revealed that the EUIP team was also developing specific documents to adapt to the local context (e.g. “Komunikacioni plan EU info pointa” of June 2017, shared by the team). Activities are implemented as relevant by the EUIC and/or the EUIPs. The EUD remains in a steering position and is consulted on decisions such as the validation of logo design and contributing to the development of content (e.g. working meeting between EUINFONET and Head of info section to brainstorm on how to strengthen the visibility of EU assistance, see Final report, p. 21).

## 2. CONTEXT

### 2.1. Specific context

Located in South East Europe (Balkan Peninsula), Serbia has a population of at **7.02 million**.<sup>137</sup> Belgrade, the capital, is the only city with a population over 1 million. The population is mainly comprised of Serbs, who make up 83.3% of the total population, while Hungarians, Roma, Bosniaks and a range of other ethnic minorities account for the rest of the population<sup>138</sup>.

Serbia has been in a **demographic crisis** since the early 1990's. It has one of the most negative population growth rates in the world. Over the last 20 years, the number of young people aged 14 and under has fallen and the number of people aged over 65 has been increasing. This can be primarily attributed to wars and the emigration of Serbian youth<sup>139</sup>.

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<sup>137</sup> Estimated population in 2017; see at [www.stat.gov.rs/en-us/oblasti/stanovnistvo/procene-stanovnistva](http://www.stat.gov.rs/en-us/oblasti/stanovnistvo/procene-stanovnistva) (last accessed 18/6/2019)

<sup>138</sup> <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/serbia-population/> (last accessed on 24/1/2019)

<sup>139</sup> [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/population-demographic-situation-languages-and-religions-66\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/population-demographic-situation-languages-and-religions-66_en) (last accessed on 24/1/2019)

The official language, spoken by 88% of the population, is **Serbian**, while minority languages (Hungarian, Bosnian and Roma among others) are also in use. Eighty-four per cent of the population is **Christian Orthodox**, and there are seven other religious denominations in the country<sup>140</sup>.

The 2003 Thessaloniki European Council recognised Serbia as a potential candidate for EU membership – along with five other Western Balkans countries. In 2008, the European partnership for Serbia was adopted, setting out priorities for the country's membership application, and in 2009 Serbia formally applied. **In March 2012** Serbia was granted EU **candidate status**. The Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the EU and Serbia entered into force in September 2013.

In line with the June 2013 decision of the European Council to open accession negotiations with Serbia, the Council adopted in December 2013 the negotiating framework and agreed to hold the First Intergovernmental Conference with Serbia in **January 2014**, signalling the **start of Serbia's accession negotiations**. Since then, 16 out of 35 chapters have been opened, two of which are provisionally closed<sup>141</sup>.

On 6 February 2018, the European Commission adopted a strategy for 'A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans', where Serbia is identified as a **front runner** in the accession process and key steps are identified in view of a possible 2025 membership perspective<sup>142</sup>.

Apart from further reforms in the rule of law area, the issue of the normalisation of relations with Kosovo\* with the conclusion of a legally binding agreement remains crucial and the overall pace of negotiations will continue to depend on Serbia's progress in the relevant reform areas.

## 2.2. Strategic communication

Overall, the global objective of the 2017 EUD communication annual plan is to *"raise public awareness about the EU, its policies and values and to ensure an informed public debate on integration into the EU, its benefits and challenges, in terms of country reform effort and EU support"*.

But the current state of political affairs in Serbia can be described as challenging for this objective. The presidential elections held in April 2017 were marred by accusations of voter intimidation<sup>143</sup>. The already fragile situation deteriorated in November 2018, when Kosovo imposed 100% customs tariffs on Serbia for conducting an "aggressive campaign"<sup>144</sup>. Serbia immediately warned that the decision would bring all trade to a halt and the EU said that the decision had to be revoked immediately.

What is more, **concerns over the current state of affairs in the EU**, including among others internal divisions, problems associated with migration, terrorist attacks and the UK referendum, combined with the growing Russian influence in the region, have resulted in a decline in the proximity feeling towards the EU in comparison to the first decade of 2000.<sup>145</sup> Over a decade, since a peak at the end of 2009 because of the visa liberalization, the support for the EU is declining in Serbia.<sup>146</sup> To the question, "If there was a referendum tomorrow with the question: "Do you support the accession of our country to the European Union", how would you vote?", 55% of the population would vote for (down from 73% in November 2009, but on an upward trend since June 2016, while the "against" camp is also increasing again over the last semester to

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<sup>140</sup> [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/population-demographic-situation-languages-and-religions-66\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/population-demographic-situation-languages-and-religions-66_en) (last accessed on 24/1/2019)

<sup>141</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/serbia\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/serbia_en) (last accessed on 24/1/2019)

<sup>142</sup> European Commission (2018). Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans, COM (2018) 65.

\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

<sup>143</sup> The New York Times, "A Serbian election erodes democracy" (9 April 2017), [https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/09/opinion/a-serbian-election-erodes-democracy.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/09/opinion/a-serbian-election-erodes-democracy.html?_r=0)

<sup>144</sup> BBC, "Kosovo hits Serbia with 100% trade tariffs amid Interpol row" (21 November 2018), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-46287975>

<sup>145</sup> European Commission (19/1/2017). Annual Communication Plan 2017. Serbia delegation Office (internal document).

<sup>146</sup> Republic of Serbia, Ministry of European Integration (December 2018). European orientation of Serbian citizens. Public Opinion Poll, [http://www.mei.gov.rs/upload/documents/nacionalna\\_dokumenta/istrazivanja\\_javnog\\_mnjenja/opinion\\_poll\\_dec2019.pdf](http://www.mei.gov.rs/upload/documents/nacionalna_dokumenta/istrazivanja_javnog_mnjenja/opinion_poll_dec2019.pdf) (last accessed 18/6/2019)

25%) A majority of respondents in Serbia (51%) consider that the EU membership would bring benefits or a lot of benefits to Serbia.

Factors contributing to **euro-skepticism** are - among others - the repeated EU ‘bashing’<sup>147</sup>, mainly over EU Member States’ migration policy, especially by the former Serbian President Nikolic and the incumbent Minister for Foreign Affairs Dacic, coupled with anti-EU campaigns in government-controlled tabloids and activity of government trolls on social media. Consultations held during the field visit suggest that messaging on the EU are not necessarily working as intended and may be unclear to the population. In the absence of a date set for Serbia’s EU accession, focus group discussions with MS representatives, EU programmes and beneficiary programmes, and students, as well as interviews with EUIC staff emphasised that there is a certain fatigue in the coverage of this issue.

Regarding the **media environment**, Serbia had achieved some level of progress on **freedom of expression** but Serbia 2019 Report refers to current concerns. The lack of progress is considered as “a matter of serious concern”.<sup>148</sup> The report notes that the overall environment is not conducive to the full exercise of this right. Privatisation of state media outlets has not led to greater transparency of ownership or funding sources, including state funding. Co-financing of media content to meet public interest obligations needs to be implemented in line with the legislative framework, using transparent and fair procedures, and without interference by the state administration, especially at local level. Perpetuation of these issues leads to control on the information communicated by certain power circles and restricts media access. Intimidation of journalists remain a concern but investigations and final convictions for attacks on journalists are rare.

### 2.3. Management and Organisation

*At the time of the field visit, to ensure the continuity of the contract, a bridge contract was agreed to cover the period from 22/8/2018 to 22/12/2018. An extension of two additional months was foreseen until 22/2/2019 to address delays in the tendering procedure for the next contract. The bridge contract was rather short, which challenged the planning process although it was necessary to ensure the alignment of the longer-term contracts.*

The 2017 EUD communication plan details the list of activities to be implemented. This list reflects that, overall, there is a substantial delegation of communication activities to the EUINFONET (the communication plan may either refer to the EUIC/EUIPs in the description of the activities or not; if it does not, the review of the contractor’s final report highlights which activities are implemented by EUINFONET and which are not). There are only few examples where the communication activities which do not seem to involve EUINFONET (as these activities are not mentioned in the contractor’s final report) such as the project with the EIB to produce a documentary film.

Interviews with EUD and EUIC staff reveal that, overall, contract management is satisfactory. However, there are issues relating to continuity on each new contract. The EUINFONET team changes with each successive contract, but there is no evidence of lessons learned from the management of previous contracts. One key element reported by the EUIC team is the importance of a quality handover between successive teams implementing the contract. At the start of the then contract, there was a limited handover to transfer knowledge / insights between the previous and the new team. EUIC staff reported that the handover file was not detailed enough about lessons learned from previous implementation periods. But as some staff remained on the team, this helped to overcome the challenges.

Lack of continuity also appears to be an issue on the EUD side. Staff rotation can introduce different styles and work culture, which may impact on the relationship between the EUD and the EUIC team (for instance, within the EUD, staff reported that internal communication had changed following the arrival of the new Head of Delegation.)

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<sup>147</sup> European Commission (2017). Annual Communication Plan 2017 for the EU Delegation to Serbia (internal document).

<sup>148</sup> European Commission (2019), Serbia 2019 Report, SWD(2019)219 final

In terms of administrative burden, EUD staff reported challenges in the management of the contract. There were delays in the preparation of the new tender and the signature of the new contract. It was noted that the lower level of responsiveness from the EUD on contractual questions had created uncertainty for the contractor. This led to the signature of two bridge contracts (the first implemented between August and December 2018, and the second to cover the period until February 2019 whose preparation was also late) and even to a few staff members to leave.

Overall, based on interviews, the EUD and EUIC (as the hub for the EUINFONET) are happy with their collaboration. There is very open communication between the EUIC team and the EUD manager. Weekly meetings cover operational questions. The EUD manager of the EUINFONET is the primary contact person and responsible for staff, maintenance and budget issues. Other communication officers of the EUD work directly with the EUIC, on issues under their portfolios. The EUD Head of communication also visits the EUIC on a weekly basis to support a good relationship and e.g. participates in some of the activities organised. The EUD manager of EUINFONET also organised an information meeting, at the start of the EUIC contract, with all EUD project managers to explain the objectives of the contract. Given the delegation of communication activities (which often require a rapid response) strong communication between the contractor and EUD is a must. All EUD project managers can contact the EUIC team directly for example with a translation request, or a meeting room booking request for an event.

The EUD manager of the EUINFONET retains an oversight of the different initiatives (notably through a team-up calendar, which shows the full agenda of the EUIC and the occupation of the premises), but direct contact and a decentralised approach are encouraged to provide more flexibility in addressing the requests. One shortcoming was noted by the EUICs though: the staff at the EUICs feels disconnected from the EUD. There are no formal catch ups foreseen and often the contacts are limited to specific events, which EUD staff might attend in Nis or Novi Sad. This seems to be due to the fact that the primary contact is the EUIC as the EUIC is established in Belgrade. The EUICs are local branches, to support outreach activities beyond the capital. But because they are not in the capital, the exposure with the EUD is less and more relies on EUINFONET internal communication (between the EUIC and EUICs).

In terms of management of the contract, from the point of view of the EUD, no particular questions were raised. If the EUD staff recognises that a fee-based contract is more time-consuming than a global price, they also acknowledge that using a fee-based contract gives them more control over delivery. Contract management has benefited from a good working relationship between the EUD and the contractor. Moving forward, the finance and contract section is in favour of maintaining a fee-based contract. They welcome the move to two-year contracts, renewable once, as this strikes the right balance between the time necessary for a contractor to develop its strategy, while maintaining enough pressure, through the regular reopening of competition to incentivise the contractor.

Reporting and monitoring are key elements of the management of the EUINFONET, but the monitoring and reporting system presents major shortcomings. The EUD and EUINFONET are aware of the shortcomings of the monitoring and reporting system. It is interesting to note that the logical framework (annexed to the final report, contract 2015/364-829) lists a number of “measurable indicators”. However, first, some of these are actually not indicators, but communication products (e.g. the “number of EU related campaigns, events and activities organised during the timespan of the project” is an indicator, but the “interactive map of EU funded projects upgraded and regularly updated” is not an indicator, rather a communication product). Secondly, some indicators are not used at all although they would be relevant for the EUINFONET contract, for instance the “percentage of Serbian citizens with knowledge about the EU and access process and positive attitude towards the EU membership of Serbia increases” (in addition, the wording of this indicator should not include an indication of the change – increase – which should instead be captured in the target set for this indicator).

Overall, there is no comprehensive monitoring and reporting system in place. The focus is put on the collection of quantitative data, but no qualitative indicator is used, which raises the issue of how to assess the achievement of the communication objectives. A sample of reports is included in the annex and analysed below.



First, EUINFONET monitors a number of quantitative variables. These includes the number of visits to the EUIC and EUIPS, web statistics and social media analytics. The EUIC team shared a report on the “statistics of the public space” between January and November 2018 (see document embedded below). Four quantitative indicators are used:

- Total number of visitors who used regular services (visitors using computers, reading publications, reading newspapers)
- Total number of visitors who participated in events
- Total number of visitors
- Total number of questions (either asked in person or by phone)

As an add-on, the team also monitors the number of participants in Saturday kids workshops at the EUIC. The document below includes quantitative data on the number of workshops delivered (activity indicator) and the number of participants (output indicator). The EUIC team also reported that monitoring was sometimes subcontracted (e.g. a subcontractor was responsible for monitoring of the number of visitors of exhibitions that took place in the EUIC/EUIP in Novi Sad and Belgrade in 2018).

The final report also details the monitoring of the large-scale campaigns implemented. It includes a summary of each campaign with data on a number of quantitative indicators: number of visitors, number of events with number of participants, number of participants in particular activities where relevant, number of media partnerships, number of media reports, number of tweets, number of Facebook likes, number of publications distributed, number of promo items distributed. But not all data are provided for every campaign (for instance, there is sometimes only a reference to “increase of all social media parameters”). In addition, there are individual campaign reports, which conclude on the key achievement but do not provide the evidence supporting the results considered to be delivered.

The EUIC teams also shared a document on web statistics they monitor, for both the EUD website and the EUIC website and a monthly social media report. Again, social media monitoring focuses on a number of quantitative indicators for each social media. A review of these indicators shows that there are both activity (e.g. number of new videos) and output indicators (e.g. number of tweet impressions).

Reporting on events does not appear to be structured by indicator. The EUIC team shared an example of the report on the “EU and Serbia: Creative love in the air”, which lists the expected outputs and outputs delivered. But there is no evidence to support the reporting and no indicators are used. For campaigns, the EUIC team collects press clippings, which gives an overview of media coverage on campaign activities. However, the focus is on the number of references in media but there is no content assessment on placement, tone, citations, etc.

The monitoring evidence is presented in a consolidated format in semester reports (provided in the Annex) and in the Final Report. Overall, monitoring is quantitative, the qualitative dimension is missing. The EUIC team recognises this as a limitation of the system but also outlines that the use of qualitative indicators would be too costly for the project. based on the sample of reports received, there does not appear to be reporting templates used systematically or the formalization of the indicators used. But the team also noted that they were waiting for more information from the EUD and DG NEAR as work is ongoing to develop common monitoring indicators (the “communication network indicators”). In addition, there is no systemic reporting in place which results in the multiplication of reports, on different topics and at different levels. This results in a clear lack of consolidation of the monitoring data. The data are not easily accessible, and this creates a risk of double-reporting. A rationalisation of these efforts would help lower the burden for the contractor.

## **2.4. Partnerships with other donors and networking**

Beyond the EUIC/EUIPs, the wider landscape of communications about the EU in the country is complemented by the actions of International Organisations, NGOs, networks, and Member States’ embassies/cultural institutes, other EU programmes as well as beneficiary programmes. The EUIC/EUIPs have managed to establish good relations with many local and international actors and programmes, e.g. Horizon 2020, Creative Europe, EURAXESS, the European Policy Centre, Researcher’s night and the European Movement.



Focus group discussions with these organisations / programmes reveal that they target their audience and tailor their specific strategies according to their field of competence within an overarching, common communication framework with a main objective, namely the promotion of EU Integration and of EU accession. They also use similar channels and tools to the EUINFONET, with a focus on events and social media. For instance, the Creative Europe programme focuses on raising cultural awareness on the importance of cultural heritage for children, the public, expert and non-expert audiences. The programme works mostly with professionals from the cultural sector (both public and private), as well as other institutions (i.e. universities, schools, tourism and science). The Horizon 2020 programme seeks to promote mobility between the EU and Serbia. The Researcher's night targets mainly school children, but also scientists. In the long-term, the goal is also to promote scientific careers for those children.

Overall, the organisations and programmes consulted conclude that there is scope for EUD, the EUINFONET to develop a more coordinated approach to the implementation of the communication activities. Feedback from the discussions highlighted that the EUIC/EUIPs are perceived as reliable information sources and resourceful ("Whenever we want to have a real media coverage, we ask the EUIP"<sup>149</sup>). The feedback confirms close cooperation with the EUIC/EUIPs, for many of them even on a daily basis on operational aspects. The consulted organisations and programmes are satisfied with the support they receive from the EUIC/EUIPs, as the latter lend their premises, promote the partners' activities and in some instances provide financial support. Especially Erasmus+ reported on a very close collaboration, both at national (e.g. celebration of the Erasmus anniversary) and local level. It was also noted that the EUIC/EUIPs send speakers to events organised by other EU programmes (such as Erasmus+). Representatives of EU Member States Embassies or national cultural institutes interviewed (namely, Austria, Belgium and Croatia) also confirmed good collaboration with the EUIC/EUIPs, highlighting the EU film festival in Belgrade as a successful case of cooperation where different MS provide each one night around one movie and the EUIC organises the screenings, and may organise side events (e.g. European Film festival 2017, EUINFONET final report, 2018, pp.318-319).

Networking also extends to national and local governments. It is interesting to note that they are defined as a target of communication activities but consultations during the field visit outline that it could be strategic to make them perceive they are partners more than a target group. It is expected to create a sense of ownership in relation to the visibility, information and awareness raising objective. This in turn is likely to further strengthen and multiply the effect of the communication efforts of EUINFONET and the EUD. Overall, networking contributes to enhance the sustainability of the communication results.

## 2.5. Assessing the Intervention Logic

During the desk phase of the evaluation, the evaluation team reconstructed the intervention logic of the EUINFONET based on the ToR, technical offer and final report for the contract 2015/364-829. The first draft of the intervention logic was presented in the Desk Report. The field visit allowed further discussion on the intervention logic with EUD and EUINFONET staff and to validate the diagram. The revised intervention logic is presented in figure 1.

At input level, the contract provides for a network of EU information units, EUINFONET. It consists of the EU Info Centre in Belgrade and EU Info Points in Novi Sad and Nis. The EUIC serves as the hub of the network and is the primary contact point for the EUD. The EUIPs aim to enable an outreach beyond the capital. The total budget for the EUINFONET is € 2,218,600 for 36 months (2015-2017).

Interviews with EUINFONET and EUD staff, focus group discussions with MS representatives and other donors, EU programmes and beneficiary programmes, as well as the review of the 2017 Communication plan highlight a number of risks and assumptions underlying the validity of the intervention logic:

- Despite Serbia's status, there are uncertainties on the EU integration process. It is important that EU membership remains an objective of the Government. Inconsistent messaging from leading

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<sup>149</sup> Interview with partners of EUIP in Novi Sad, 28/11/2018

- politicians who are perceived as supporting anti-EU campaigns creates a very challenging environment
- The evolution of the relationships between Serbia and Croatia, and between Serbia and Kosovo is also expected to impact how EU accession is perceived and any communication efforts related to EU accession
- The field visit also confirms overall concerns over the manipulation of information, fake news and Russian and other anti-EU groups' campaigns
- Media are not considered a source of reliable information on the EU and there are criticisms of the low quality of media coverage of EU affairs

During the field visit, the EUIC staff confirmed that their main target groups were young people aged 16 – 25, university students, youth organisations / student associations, academics / researchers, cultural associations, journalists, governmental / local institutions employees and NGOs / civil society. But not all communication activities are targeted. Some are aimed for the general public (e.g. Europe month). It is also important to note that the targets groups are considered potential multipliers: once they have participated in EUINFONET activities, by the interactions they have with their pairs, colleagues, families, they are expected to carry the EU messages to other publics.

The activities can be presented in four blocks:

- Overall coordination and management of the network
- Event organisation
- Networking (internal and external, to develop relationships with other donors, other EU programmes, MS e.g. to implement activities jointly and overall increase the cost-effectiveness of the activities)
- Development of promotion and communication products, and dissemination to support other activities and notably the expected effects related to better understanding and knowledge of EU, as well as to the increased visibility of EU policies, programmes and opportunities
- Online activities (websites and social media)

In addition, the TOR for the new EUINFONET (EuropeAid/139106/SER/RS) also provides that the contractor will support the EUD in developing its information and communication strategy (from 2019).

The intervention logic then details the different levels of expected results: outputs, outcomes and impacts. The objective of the EU Communication Network in Serbia is to provide citizens with information about the European Union and its institutions, EU-Serbia relations and the activities of the EU in Serbia, as well as to raise awareness on EU membership. The logical framework has a slightly different wording, considering that the “overall objective of this contract is to raise public awareness about the EU, its values and policies and assist EU Delegation’s public diplomacy activities”. Based on consultations during the field visit, the evaluation team’s assessment is that these objectives are at a lower level of the intervention logic, at the level of the outcomes. The overall, expected impact is really to contribute to the recognition of the benefits of the EU accession and EU programmes, as well as to generate a sustained interest for the EU and EU accession in an otherwise challenging context for the integration process.

It follows that, at the outcome level, the EUINFONET is expected to contribute to:

- Raise public awareness about the EU, its policies and values, in particular with the primary targets of the communication activities
- Trigger an informed public debate on EU integration

As the EUINFONET supports the EUD through the implementation of communication activities, it also allows the EUD to refocus on other activities.

In terms of short-term results, outputs, relates to:

- The participation in the communication activities (including in online, social media activities, and
- The immediate, direct products of the activities implemented, namely why the activities are expected to be useful in the (very) short-term for participants: (1) the target groups gain a better understanding and knowledge about the EU and (2) EU policies, programmes and opportunities are more visible for the target groups.

It would be too far-reaching to consider that the suite of expected results is for the general public in Serbia. The underlying logic is to deliver the results for the target groups, which is expected to build the basis for a change, for the general public, in the very long term.

**Figure 1: Revised reconstructed Intervention Logic taking into account the findings from the field mission**

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Desired Outcomes	Desired Impacts
<p><b>Personnel</b> EUD – 1 staff member: Coordinator</p> <p><b>EUINFONET – 12 staff:</b> <b>1 key expert:</b> Team Leader <b>11 non-key experts:</b> 1 EU assistance visibility officer, 1 Reporter/Web editor, 1 Events/Campaign manager, 1 EUIC public space manager and librarian, 2 EUIP managers 2 EUIP public space managers, 2 Media/information officers</p> <p><b>Contractual</b> Terms of Reference 36-month service contract €2,218,600</p> <p><b>Content</b> From partners/ projects to be investigated</p> <p><b>Process</b> Constant exchange of information; Daily interaction with the team of experts and the backstopping unit; Day-to-Day meetings and liaison with the Project Director; Regular liaison with the EUD</p> <p><b>Premises</b> Separate location of the EUD (1 EUIC &amp; 2 EUIPs)</p>	<p><b>Coordination of the EUINFONET</b></p> <p><b>Events:</b> public events targeted events EU-funded project events Prolonged or repetitive events</p> <p><b>Other activities</b> Welcoming visitors, providing information, answering questions Large-scale campaigns</p> <p><b>Promoting and disseminating:</b> books, brochures, flyers, leaflets, factsheets, videos (translated); audio-visuals of 5-10 min. and web screening and by media; 12 audio-visual web materials for events and campaigns,</p> <p><b>IT:</b> management of EUD and EUIC/EUIP websites and social media; maintenance and updating of the EUD contacts databases</p> <p><b>Networking:</b> Develop and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with other donors, other EU programmes, MS (incl. cultural institutes)</p>	<p>Events are well attended and participation in communication activities is good</p> <p>Targets of communication activities engage on EU topics in social media</p> <p>Raised target groups' understanding and knowledge about the EU</p> <p>Increased visibility of EU policies, programmes and opportunities (notably for primary target groups)</p>	<p>To contribute to raise public awareness about the EU, its policies and values– including awareness of students about the EU</p> <p>To contribute to trigger an informed public debate on integration into the EU, its benefits and challenges, in terms of country reform effort, the integration process, and EU support</p> <p>To contribute to strengthen the EUD's capacity to implement public diplomacy activities</p>	<p>To contribute to the recognition by targets groups of the benefits of EU support and EU accession</p> <p>To contribute to generate a sustained interest from the target groups for the EU and EU accession process</p>

TARGET GROUPS	RISKS/ASSUMPTIONS
<p><b>Primary target groups</b></p> <p>Young people aged 16-25  University students  Youth organisations / student associations  Academics / researchers  Cultural associations  Journalists  Governmental / local institutions employees  NGOs / civil society</p> <p><b>Secondary target group</b></p> <p>General public</p>	<p><b>Assumptions</b></p> <p>The EU Integration and future membership remains an objective for the Government  Civil society and media continue to support public debate on EU-related issues and the accession process</p> <p><b>Risks</b></p> <p>Inconsistent messaging about the EU by leading politicians  Serbian public opinion is won over by the Russian propaganda  Manipulation of public discourse, fake news, counter campaigns of anti-EU groups.  Increase in scepticism about EU, accession perspective and challenging times ahead for the EU  Setbacks in Serbia's accession process &amp; Setbacks in the relationship between Serbia and Croatia, and between Serbia and Kosovo  Low interest of EU information multipliers, especially media, and low quality of media  Low interest in EU integration by the wider public</p>

### 3. EVALUATION FINDINGS

The following sections describe the key findings from interviews with EU Delegation staff, other donors, EU programmes and beneficiary programmes, MS representatives, EUIC/EUIPs visitors and students as highlighted in the above table. Evidence has been reviewed, analysed and integrated in line with considerations of their overall relevance to the wider evaluation and the questions set. In the evaluation Synthesis Report, the evidence gathered will be integrated and analysed across to develop clear findings from across the enlargement region.

**EQ1.** To what extent have the **objectives** of the EUICs been defined considering the **specific needs** of the target audience in the IPA beneficiaries and contribute to the objectives set in the **EU framework** on strategic communication in the enlargement region?

- There is alignment between the EUICs' objectives set by EU Delegations and EU strategic communication objectives, and the needs addressed by this framework.
- Specific target group communication needs have been well defined and the EUICs' objectives clearly focus on these needs.

The objective of the EU Communication Network in Serbia is to provide citizens with information about the European Union and its institutions, EU-Serbia relations and the activities of the EU in Serbia, as well as to raise awareness on EU membership. This is in line with the EU Delegation Global Objective, which is to *raise public awareness about the EU, its policies and values and to ensure an informed public debate on integration into the EU, its benefits and challenges, in terms of country reform effort and EU support*. The reconstructed intervention logic provides the breakdown between the different levels of objectives. Based on consultations during the field visit, awareness-raising and the triggering of an informed public debate should be considered at outcome level, while the expected impact is longer-term (and relate to EUINFONET's contribution to creating a sustained interest in the EU and the EU integration process, based on the recognition of the benefits of EU membership. Consultations confirm that objectives are strongly correlated and that it is important to differentiate between these different levels of objective to consolidate them as building blocks for delivering on the expected overall objective.

There is no evidence that objective setting responds to a needs analysis / mapping. There are general opinion surveys available in the Western Balkans, but these surveys have their limitations as follows:

- (1) often the survey questions remain general;
- (2) the surveys do not provide a detailed breakdown at local level; and
- (3) there is no evidence in the 2017 annual communication plan that a detailed analysis has been conducted.

Nevertheless, the contractor's final report indicates that, for the large-scale campaigns, the messages are tailored to the targets' needs based on their staff expertise and "knowledge of both, EU context and national level policies, as well as regional and local specificities, needs and interest of their constituencies". The contractor's final report indeed shows an effort to take a strategic approach to events, which are categorised according to the different targets and purposes. However, we do not know to what extent messages and materials at events are targeted as we were not able to see any.

Lastly, the limited use of the EUIC and EUIPs as information providers by walk-in visitors raises questions as to which needs are being met to provide these services. This suggests that a better definition of the needs would help identify which activity(ies) are the most relevant and strengthen the rationale of the EUINFONET refocused on these needs.



**EQ2.** To what extent have the **objectives** of the EUICs been achieved?

- Extent that the outputs of the communication activities implemented by the EUICs have produced the expected outcomes, which contributed to the achievement of the set objectives.
- Extent to which the quantitative and qualitative effects of the outputs and outcomes of EUICs' activities can be deemed to have contributed to the achievement of the set objectives.
- Extent to which other factors influenced the achievement of the outcomes.
- Extent that the communication tools used by the EUICs were appropriate for each target audience.
- Extent that the EU Delegations' use of other communication tools (e.g. social media) could have had a higher outreach to different categories of the target audience.

The discussion on monitoring in this country note illustrates that the contractor does use a number of quantitative monitoring indicators. These evidence that activities are delivered, and that outputs are achieved to a large extent. Indeed, where the first output (see figure 1) focuses on participation in events and activities, indicators such as the number of visitors and the number of event participants are relevant and sufficient. The second output in the reconstructed intervention logic relates to engagement on social media. There is general consensus that, although social media analytics are interesting tools to monitor traffic on social media, they cannot depict a *true* engagement. They would need to be complemented by a qualitative analysis, which is too costly.

There is a qualitative gap between the indicators used and the evidence that would confirm that outputs have contributed to an increase in the volume and quality of:

- Information about the EU, its policies, values and funding;
- Debate with target groups;
- Increased awareness of the benefits of enlargement and EU support.
- Networks with partners and multipliers;
- Enhanced media coverage;

For the first three issues, it would be necessary to collect qualitative data. For instance, administering a satisfaction survey at the end of events would allow to collect qualitative feedback from event participants on what they perceived were the benefits of their participation. The feedback could be systematically analysed and reported. In the absence of this data, it is difficult to establish whether and to what extent the EUINFONET has delivered the expected outcomes and impacts. Similarly, the press clippings collected by the contractor shows that the activities generate a good amount of media coverage. It is, however, difficult to assess whether there is an increase in volume – in the absence of data on the baseline – or in the quality – in the absence of a qualitative analysis of the media coverage. Nevertheless, feedback received during the field visit from the contractor, other donors, EU programmes and beneficiary programmes, as well as from the targets of the communication activities themselves indicates that “things are moving in the right direction”. It is not possible to qualify the extent of the change, but there is general consensus on the fact that a change is happening. The contractor's feedback on networks and the collaboration in the implementation of communication activities indirectly evidence the enhanced quality of the networks – a view which other donors, organisations and programmes working with EUINFONET confirm.

This change is supported by a number of factors, identified by the EUD, other donors, MS representatives, EU programmes and beneficiary programmes. The field visit reveals that there is a general consensus praising the professionalism and the pro-active attitude of the contractor. Contractor staff members are in particular perceived as very good networkers, who proved instrumental in reaching out to partners for the implementation of communication activities and are ready to share their network. It is also recognised that the EUIC Belgrade and the EUIP Nis have very good premises, which are appropriate to host a number of events. A general limitation concerns the tense political context – in particular in relation to the Serbia-Croatia and Serbia-Kosovo relationship – which put additional pressure on content development for any activities to ensure that content cannot be interpreted differently than intended. Limitations were also

identified by the contractor themselves and are more inward-looking. They relate to (1) the poor handover which was done when the new contract started (in 2015), (2) a lack of clarity over which groups to prioritise which results in a fragmentation of efforts, (3) the insufficient coordination between the EUIC and EUIPs at first (which was addressed by the set-up of regular catch ups between the teams) and (4) the overall administrative burden linked with reporting, which the contractor fears will increase further with the introduction of the communication network indicators. On that final point, there is no systemic reporting in place which results in the multiplication of reports. A rationalisation of these efforts would help lower the burden for the contractor.

Overall, consultations during the field visit confirm that EUINFONET uses appropriate tools and uses them appropriately.

There is an emerging consensus that the most successful activities are those that target academia and NGOs because these groups have a pre-existing, strong interest in the EU and the EU integration process. Even if young people are a target, it can be challenging to reach out to them, especially when they are under 15 years of age because they have no interest in the EU; similar challenges are faced when communicating about the EU to the population active in agricultural and rural development sectors. To reach out to the latter targets, traditional media (TV, radio) might be more relevant, but they are also more expensive media. All stakeholders and the contractor emphasised the importance of investing in content development for any channels used to ensure that the content is relatable and tailored to ensure it can trigger engagement.

There is no accurate evidence in the public domain to confirm that different target groups use social media extensively and that other stakeholders achieve a wider reach than EUINFONET or the EUD. Discussion groups with stakeholders (including students) confirm that social media are a key communication channel and therefore relevant to use.

**EQ3.** To what extent **the organisation and management** of the EUICs have been conducive to an efficient, effective and sustainable implementation of the communication activities?

#### Relevant Judgement Criteria

- The management of EUICs through service contracts is conducive to an efficient, effective and sustainable implementation of communication activities.
- The different EUICs and Info Points / Corners set up in an IPA beneficiary have worked together in an efficient and effective manner to reach the target audience and achieve the set objectives in that particular beneficiary.
- The system setup for monitoring the EUICs' activities functioned at regular intervals and was capable of collecting data and detecting problems (indicators were appropriately designed to measure the progress in relation to the baseline situation and the effectiveness and of the targets, and extent that targets were set realistically).
- Extent that the use of financing and management mechanisms could have provided better cost-effectiveness.
- The physical location of the EUICs in the IPA beneficiaries has facilitated the implementation of planned communication activities and the achievement of planned effects on the target audience.

The international tendering procedure in place allowed to identify a contractor with the necessary project experience, communication expertise, a contractor which was also in a position to propose a local team. This is considered a *sine qua non* given the challenges of the political situation and the communication context. During the field mission there was unanimous feedback from EUD, during the group discussions with other

donors, EU programmes, beneficiary programmes, and MS representatives who collaborate with EUINFONET that the contractor is very professional.

However, the contracting process has some shortcomings as well. After a contract which covered the period from August 2015 until August 2018, a bridge contract was signed until December 2018. The aim of this mechanism was to allow a start of the new contract in 2019 to align the implementation period of the contract across the enlargement countries. However, due to delays in the tendering process, an extension of the bridge contract (until February 2019) was foreseen. At the time of the visit, additional contracting delays were anticipated, creating uncertainties for both the contractor and EUD on the status of the bridge contract and the next contract. The contractor aimed to ensure continuity in the delivery of the services, but the contractual uncertainty also prompted some of the team members to leave. Moving forward, the contractual model will be a two-year service contract, which is perceived to offer a reasonable balance between the competition obligation and the need to ensure continuity in the work.

The different teams of the contractor (in the EUIC and each of the EUIPs) are perceived as equally professional and committed to the delivery of high-quality work. There was only anecdotal evidence on the insufficient communication between the EUIC and EUIPs, and between the EUIPs and the EUD (as reported during the meeting with one EUIP team). This team felt disconnected from Belgrade and decision-making. The EUIC team confirmed that weekly coordination meetings had been set up to address that concern. There is also a weekly email between the EUD and the contractor to circulate the latest agenda and updates.

If the feedback on the services provided by the contractor is positive, the aggregated quantitative and qualitative monitoring data are insufficient to evidence this assessment. The quantitative monitoring indicators used confirm that outputs are delivered overall. Numbers of events and event participants in particular confirm the space is well used. But there are no data on the achievement of higher-level objectives (outcomes and impacts). Overall, it would be helpful to develop a set of monitoring indicators, which could be used across different activities and throughout the duration of the contract, by the EUIC and EUIPs. Meanwhile the reports currently included a large number of indicators, not harmonised, not systematically used and for which no overall value for any particular reporting period is provided. A set of common monitoring indicators would support a consolidated reporting, which would easily provide an accurate picture of the implementation status.

There is also little evidence on ways to increase the levels of target group reach and engagement without increasing cost. On this question, the feedback received during the field visit from other donors, EU programmes and beneficiary programmes focuses on social media. Social media play an important role in the way the EUIC/EUIPs engage with the public, especially young people. Tailored content in social media is paramount for meaningful engagement with the public, especially with youth. The recommendation is to ensure that the content promotes interaction (especially when targeted to the younger population) and that a separate social media plan is created for each campaign; though it is not clear if the latter can be carried out without additional costs. This is the objective of the dedicated social media officer at the EUIC/EUIPs.

**EQ4.** To what extent the EUICs have contributed to raising public awareness about the EU, its policies and values, EU funding and on the enlargement process in the IPA beneficiaries?

- Extent that target groups of EUIC communication activities in the IPA beneficiaries are more aware of the EU, its policies and values, EU funding and the enlargement process.
- Extent that EUICs reach new audiences with EU messages about EU policies and values, EU funding and on the enlargement process that would not be reached by EU Delegations, or EU-funded projects.

There is no qualitative and quantitative monitoring data which confirm that the awareness raising objective is achieved. Similarly, there are no qualitative data on the reach and engagement with messages about the EU, its policies and values, EU funding and on the enlargement process. There are only quantitative data on social media engagement which cannot be used to qualify the actual engagement of the wider audience.

Despite the absence of monitoring evidence, EUINFONET's partners perceive that EUINFONET communication materials accurately convey information on EU policies and values, EU funding and the enlargement process. These materials are considered to be adequate tools to support the different objectives of EUINFONET, in particular to contribute to increasing understanding and knowledge of the EU, and to raising the visibility of the EU, the EU integration process and EU assistance in Serbia. The focus group discussion with students agree with this assessment overall, but students consider that the design of the materials could be more dynamic, and that story-telling is instrumental to make EU achievements in the various sectors known to the audience. The EUD, EUIC/EUIP visitors and students agree that EUINFONET is making a positive contribution to raising public awareness.

**EQ5i.** To what extent the **activities carried out by the EU Info Centres** have been coherent, complementary and **coordinated** with those carried out via other EU programmes and by other partners (e.g. Member States, IFIs, international organisations) **active in communicating re. EU policies & values, EU funding and the enlargement process** in the enlargement region?

- EUICs and Info Points liaise in a regular and planned way (either directly or via the EU Delegation) to share intelligence, identify synergies and opportunities to work together with other EU policy / programme communicators in the region.
- Extent that it is possible to identify other relevant opportunities to improve coordination to develop a more joined-up approach.

The group discussion with representatives of EU programmes highlights that collaboration with EUINFONET is of good quality. It is not possible to quantify the collaboration. However, representatives from EU programmes outline the professional approach of the EUINFONET team, its network – which EUINFONET stands ready to mobilise to support partners – and the quality of the support provided by EUINFONET. The quality of the events organised by EUINFONET, which EU programmes might support was also praised. This collaboration is not limited to EU programmes (notably Horizon 2020, Creative Europe, Erasmus+, Euraxess). It also extends to beneficiary programmes (namely programmes which receive funding from the EU such as Researcher's Night and civil society organisations – as evidenced by the focus group done with the EUIC users in Belgrade). No example was provided as to coordination on target groups, messages and objectives. Similarly, MS representatives confirm good collaboration and coordination on joint activities. Examples relate to relatively large-scale, and repeated events, such as the Erasmus anniversary, the Researcher's Night and any events organised in the framework of the European year of cultural heritage (from EU programmes and beneficiary programmes) and the European Film festival (example from MS representatives). The support ranges from financial (funding made available), logistical (the EUIC hosts an event) to substantial element (development of content and help in identifying speakers) and media outreach (mobilisation of the journalist network).

No particular recommendation was made to improve collaboration. One suggested idea was to define a more horizontal approach to communication. This would require stakeholders to select themes, which are of common interest and to develop content building on their respective experience in Serbia. But this would mark a substantial change from the current way to design and implement communication activities and is not considered a priority given the existing resource constraints for all parties. A “quick win” to improve the reach of all communicators would already be a systematic cross-reference of relevant organisations / programmes / projects. There is no evidence that the EUINFONET is cross-referenced on the websites of EU programmes and partners.

**EQ5ii.** To what extent the EU Info Centres can contribute to the development and implementation of a **joined-up Public Diplomacy** (cf. EU Global Strategy) and act as hubs for EU-related initiatives taking place at the local level (i.e. both EU and non-EU funded)?

Judgement criteria

1. There is alignment between EUIC and Info Point communication activities and messages, and public diplomacy activities and messaging in each IPA beneficiary.
2. Extent that EUICs, Info Points and staff of EU Delegations responsible for public diplomacy collaborate on joint initiatives or coordinate their initiatives.
3. Extent to which EUICs and Info Points support and are a focal point of activities (EU and non-EU funded) to reach public diplomacy target groups.

There is a lot of uncertainty regarding the definition of public diplomacy. Indeed, consultations with the EUD, EUINFONET and MS representatives show that no stakeholder can provide a definition of public diplomacy and in the large majority of cases, a number of concepts are used interchangeably: communication, public diplomacy, outreach. It is interesting to note that the EUINFONET focused on “cultural diplomacy” as one sub-dimension of communication or public diplomacy. The contractor considers this is a successful example of how the EUINFONET aligns with EU and EUD messages. The opportunity was created by the year of cultural heritage and the contractor implemented a large-scale campaign, including events and a selfie competition on Instagram. The contractor emphasises that the theme provided a bridge between Serbia and EU values. Overall, even if there is no explicit reference to “public diplomacy” in the 2017 EUD communication plan, the evaluation team considers it is implicit. Public diplomacy is one of the objectives of the EU’s foreign policy, aims to project a clear vision of what the EU stands for and seeks to achieve in the world.<sup>150</sup> Public diplomacy is understood as measures to improve long-term engagement and “build trust and understanding in non-EU countries”. In this case, communication activities are the measures to pursue public diplomacy objectives. The EUD communication plan sets the direction and outlines activities – and their target groups – to be implemented. The EUD supports and validates the content of the activities. The implementation is delegated to the EUINFONET.

**EQ6.** What is the **additional value** resulting from the communication activities carried out by the EU Info Centres compared to what could have been achieved by the IPA beneficiaries at national or regional levels?

Judgement criteria

1. Extent that the reach and engagement of target groups by EUICs with EU messages on policies and values, funding and the enlargement process is greater and more effective than the benefits for target groups at national or regional level that IPA beneficiaries do or could achieve.
2. Extent that IPA beneficiary communicators convey the desired messages on EU policies and values, funding and on the enlargement process.

There is no monitoring data to confirm reach and engagement of target groups. There are data relating to direct, quantitative reach (e.g. number of participants and walk-in visitors, followers on social media) but no data on qualitative reach (e.g. engagement with the content of social media publications, tone of the comments made on social media). The contractor collects quantitative data for some activities: events, social media, but this is not done systematically for the reach of campaigns or the dissemination of publications. These data confirm regular communication of messages relating to EU policies and values, EU funding and the enlargement process. These data refer to the activities through which messages are communicated (e.g.

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<sup>150</sup> Online resource available at [https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/eu-global-strategy\\_en?page=2](https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/eu-global-strategy_en?page=2)

events, campaigns, information materials, social media and audio-visual content). But they do not include qualitative data which would confirm the quality of the messaging, if the messages are noticed by target groups, how the messages are received and resonate. It is not possible to conclude on the quality of the activities and the results achieved. Nevertheless, the feedback received during the focus groups with EUIC visitors and with students, a primary target group of the EUIC's communication activities, evidences that the EUINFONET adds value to other communication activities because the EUINFONET is perceived as a provider of quality and reliable information.

## **4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **4.1. Conclusions**

- The EUINFONET is a network of EU information units, consisting of the EU Info Centre in Belgrade and EU Info Points in Novi Sad and Nis. The EUIC serves as the hub of the network and is the primary contact point for the EUD. The EUIPs aim to enable an outreach beyond the capital. While the EUIPs develop local activities and are recognised by local stakeholders (as illustrated by the group discussions held during the field visit), the EUINFONET model seems to be steered by the EUIC. Challenges in the communication within EUINFONET and between the EUD and EUIC/EUIPs tend to show that not all units in the network are on an equal footing. Steps to strengthen the EUINFONET's internal coordination (between the EUIC and EUIPs) have been taken, the results remain to be seen.
- There is a perceived inconsistency between communication messages from the EU and the national government or national politicians, and an opportunity to work closer with the relevant EU department in each Ministry, which should be seized.
- Though the media environment in the country is compromised by fake news and transparency issues, the discussion groups and interviews conducted during the field visit outline that the EUIC/EUIPs are perceived as a credible source of information, it is unclear whether the EUIC /EUIP are exploiting this advantage fully.
- Interviews with EUINFONET reveal a tendency to focus on activities rather than think more strategically about communication objectives and target groups, to then define which activities would be best adapted to the target to deliver the objectives. There is a disconnect between the implementation of activities and what communication objectives they should contribute to specifically (which also comes from the lack of accurate monitoring data which would evidence that these objectives are achieved).
- The importance of clear objectives, quantitative and especially qualitative monitoring indicators to provide clearer indications on EUIC/EUIPs communication performance is paramount.
- Young peoples' negative perceptions of the EU and the difficulties in engaging them are significant concerns based on the interviews with the EUIC team.
- Partners (representatives of MS, EU programmes, beneficiary programmes interviewed) and EUIC/EUIP visitors confirm that the events and activities carried out by EUINFONET are of good frequency and quality. But the extent that this translates into effects, outcomes and wider impact is not measured.
- The EUIC team considers that cultural diplomacy is a powerful tool in the Serbian context and a safe ground for promoting EU messages amid the strained political climate.
- Partners (MS representatives, EU programmes and beneficiary programmes) report that the EUIC/EUIPs have succeeded at building and maintaining good relations and close cooperation with other local and international partners.
- The debate around the location of the EUIC in Belgrade remains controversial, with valid arguments existing to support both sides (i.e. focus on walk-in visitors and focus on event organisation). The



EUIC and the EUD consider that a combination of both sides is needed, which has prompted them to start discussing about a relocation to meet both conditions. The EUD and the contractor agree that the EUIP space in Novi Sad is too small. Only small-scale events can be organised which is a constraint for the EUIP team – which then has to identify off-site locations.

The EUD is working to improve collaboration between EUINFONET and EUD project managers. The objective is for EUD project managers to more systematically share content with the communication contractor to support the development of communication materials and ensure that they are very concrete and relatable for the target groups.

## **4.2. Recommendations**

- Consider if for the EUIC and EUIPs catching the attention of passers-by, bringing spontaneous visits into their spaces makes sense / which of the structures should provide spaces for events, given the apparent weaknesses relating to the actual location of the EUIC and the amount of available space in Novi Sad.
- Require the EUINFONET contractor to develop a knowledge management system to ensure institutional memory is saved. It will notably support the transfer of contacts and partnerships and contribute to better continuity in the development of communication content when staff changes occur.
- Consider ways to develop a more systematic approach to monitoring using qualitative/quantitative indicators to allow a better measurement of the performance and added-value of the structures in place. The inception phase of a contract could also require the establishment of a baseline through appropriate tools (opinion survey).
- Require consolidated reporting at regular intervals against a single set of indicators to provide a clear picture of the implementation status of the contract (throughout the contract), and of the achievement (in the final report)
- Consider the options for establishing collaboration protocols. The protocols would facilitate the information flows between the EUD and EUINFONET, and between the EUIC and the EUIPs.
- Determine the priority target groups for the EUIC/EUIPs taking into account those that these structures can realistically reach and those expressed in the EUD communication strategy. It would be better to focus on a smaller number of target groups as that will allow a greater pooling of resources to reach these groups.
- Ensure that communication includes both traditional and social media, with adequate resourcing and building up appropriate partnerships with multipliers to support the use of these channels.

## ANNEXES: MONITORING AND REPORTING

This annex presents a sample of reports prepared by the contractor. The reports focus on particular activities implemented by the EUINFONET and give an indication as to how monitoring data are collected and what monitoring indicators are used.



Statistics Public space  
jan-nov 2018.docx



Daily report for  
Public Space for 24.11



Izveštaj Kreativne  
radionice.docx



web stats nov  
2018.docx



Monthly Social Media  
Report January 2018.c



Crnobrnja Report-  
example.doc



Europe Month  
Campaign Report 201



EU DEL Serbia -  
Report on communica

# Turkey

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This document is the case study country note on the field mission to Turkey, which took place between 12 and 16 November 2018, as part of the evaluation of EU Info Centres in the Western Balkans and Turkey. As part of the field mission, the evaluation team visited three EU Info Centres in Istanbul, Ankara, and Gaziantep and conducted interviews with individuals representing the EU Delegation, partners and projects, the Turkish government, the communication contractor and two focus groups with students. The limitations and constraints to this exercise relate to logistical aspects, for example the willingness and availability of interviewees to take part in the data collection and aspects relating to the knowledge, experience and capacity of interviewees to answer the interview questions posed. In some cases, interviewees can find it hard to think strategically about issues that may never have occurred to them for example, in relation to possible hypotheses about Info Centres. The list of interviews and focus groups were agreed with and arranged with the support of the EU Delegation. The evidence gathered in this field mission will be triangulated with findings from other sources including on the hypotheses and presented in the Synthesis Report.

<b>IPA beneficiary visited</b>	Turkey
<b>Dates of field visit</b>	12 – 16 November 2018
<b>Evaluators responsible</b>	Murat Daoudov Melanie Kitchener
<b>EU Info Centres / Points visited</b>	Istanbul Ankara Gaziantep
<b>EU Delegation staff interviewed</b>	Head of Delegation Deputy Head of Finance / Contracts Communication coordinator
<b>Interviews with EU programmes / beneficiary government</b>	Enterprise Europe Network Erasmus+ Communication unit, Turkish Ministry for Foreign Affairs' Project Implementation Unit, Directorate for EU affairs National Agency for Erasmus+, Department of Civil Society, Communication and Culture
<b>Interviews with partners and projects</b>	EBRD EIB Spark (NGO), EU Madad Programme, project on higher education for Syrians
<b>Two focus groups with students</b>	Istanbul (8 students from University of Marmara) Ankara (9 students from Ankara University, TED University and ETÜ University)

The evaluators visited three EUICs and discussed with a range of other stakeholders. In all three cases, it was necessary to pass through a **security check** and to provide identification and in one case two different security checks were required. None of the EUICs could be easily identified from the street and in two cases there was no signage in the entrance to the buildings in which they were hosted, although they did have signs outside the doors to their premises, for example on the 11<sup>th</sup> floor of the building in Istanbul. These facts confirm a mismatch with the goal of providing a public walk-in centre. But are in-line with today's reality, also observed by several interlocutors, that EUICs are not or **no longer places frequented by the public**. Very few people visit EUICs to get information. This may be due to several factors:

- lack of signage: there is no spontaneous 'foot fall', only people who know about the Centre visit;

- changes to information retrieval habits: increased use of the internet and social media and reductions in visits to institutions;
- lower levels of interest in the EU: particularly among those who are not eligible for EU funding or opportunities to engage with Europeans either in Turkey or by visiting the EU;
- location: in the past, the highest profile EUICs in Istanbul and Ankara were based in attractive locations in city centers, they were gateways to the EU and this seemed to fit with the sense of optimism at the time that Turkey would join the EU.

During the three visits to EUICs, the team saw only **one spontaneous visitor**, who came to collect information from the EU Documentation Centre<sup>151</sup>; otherwise, the rooms of each centre were unoccupied. In two out of three cases, the EUIC coordinator did not actually work in the centre premises. He or she spent most of their time at another desk in the host institution and came to meet visitors when they are announced. This gave rise to questions concerning whether staff were really working full-time on EU communication. Yet, as there is only one key expert per info centre, it is understandable that that person would want to sit with colleagues rather than spend all day, every day in isolation in the info centre!

Given the few visitors, limited emphasis is given to collecting data on those who do visit. The EUICs visited had a visitor book, but the information collected was not informative in relation to the profile of the visitor or the reason for the visit. No systematic information collected about enquiries by phone, emails, etc. although it was explained that these were very few. There were no regular surveys of target audiences, for example those attending events and a sense from some that systematic collection of this data would be an annoyance for participants.

However, a relatively standard set of events is carried out. The EUD decides some of the event types and EUICs can determine the others. The communication contractor provides materials and messages. There is variability in the type of event participant feedback that is gathered by EUICs to inform EUD about the success of events. As a minimum, EUICs count the number of attendees. In the Turkish set up, it is more meaningful to put most monitoring and evaluation requirements onto the communication contractor and not the EUICs, given that the communication contractor (in this case Norm Consulting) is responsible for design and implementation. This then raises the question as to the indicators for Turkish EUIC performance management and the extent that these relate to fulfilling contractual requirements instead of communication **impact**.

Discussions with EUIC key experts confirmed that in practice EUICs' main tasks are to organise events, according to a plan outlined in their ToR. There were questions at EUD as to whether implemented the required events really kept the key expert in each EUIC occupied and whether they were working 'on the side' for the chamber of commerce. On the other hand, feedback suggests that at certain moments the chambers step in to provide additional support to EUIC key experts. Key experts who staff the Info Centres pointed out the challenge for one person to organise and running a large event. Events are grouped under the following categories:

- "Regional Events",
- "EU Thematic Days",
- "Public Debates",
- "IPA visibility events"

Feedback from the EUIC key experts is that in practice some events feel like "one-type-fits-all" activities, which are "imposed" by EUD. However, feedback from EUD suggests that opinions among the network are actually quite diverse on this point. The main complaint is that some themes do not always make sense in the **local context**, which makes it difficult to generate interest in the events. It was suggested that themes

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<sup>151</sup> European Documentation Centres collect and disseminate publications of the European Union for purposes of research and education.

should be **tailored** to the regional realities. There was a clear message that EUICs would like more freedom to shape their own content. However, strategically EUD wants to ensure that key themes are transmitted across the country. Also, as EUICs no longer have responsibility for communication, and not all key experts are communication professionals, EUD's position is understandable.

This situation raises two questions:

- should the communication contractor's ToR require greater tailoring to regional themes (which are then supported through EUIC events)?
- should EUD be more tactical, encouraging key experts with proven superior communication skills greater scope to take initiatives<sup>152</sup>?

The EUICs visited also maintains websites and social media although it was noted that much social media activity relates to tweeting and retweeting messages crafted by the communication contractor in line with the requirement for posts to have official approval. This situation raises questions about the added-value of info centre social media, where there are few followers and difficulties in increasing follower growth. It was noted that in one case a EUIC key expert took own decisions on which messages to post and suggested understanding the types of messages that are EU-appropriate. This approach is more in line with the need for timely and relevant messaging to feed social media and raises questions about whether proven communicators could or should be given more freedom to take these initiatives if they result in communication impacts. Subsequent feedback from EUD suggests that EU Info Centres are encouraged to create their own social media content.

The current EUIC set up can be characterised as:

- one-person event organisers;
- partnerships in trusted semi-governmental organisations in each regional city;
- partnerships with local authorities to support outreach to schools and nurseries;
- typically organise outreach events in students and universities;
- empty visitor centres and conference rooms with very occasional use;
- a separate communication contractor;
- outposts, supporting both a low level of EU presence at regional level, with latent potential to be 'turned up', should accession be moved forward in the future.

The entities within the EU Info Centre Network are not really info centres. They also only display certain characteristics of a network. The set-up is a hub-and-spoke type structure rather than a web of communicators who share ideas and support each other's work; there is no need for this type of network as management and communication support is centralised. There is scope for a rethink about the terminology, which describes this set-up. A more accurate description could facilitate future decision-making concerning goals and targeting and should be more in-line with what can and is being achieved.

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<sup>152</sup> The key expert in Istanbul cited example of initiatives which he had taken to further promote EU communication, including a high-profile bike ride, spanning the Asian and European sides of Istanbul, which had caught the media's attention. However according to EUD the level of communication competence shown by different Info Centres is frequently not high.

## 2. CONTEXT IN TURKEY

### 2.1. Country specific context

Turkey has a population of **81.92 million**<sup>153</sup> in 2018. The most populated cities in Turkey include Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir. Istanbul is the world's 8th largest city<sup>154</sup>. Almost **70%** of the total population live in **urban areas**. Seventy-five percent of the population are Turkish, 18% are ethnic Kurds and other ethnic groups account for the remaining 7% of the population. The population is fairly **young** with almost 27% aged between 0 and 14, 67% are aged 15 to 64 years old. Only around 6% are above 64 years of age. The language spoken by the majority is Turkish, as well as Kurdish in some areas, while other minority groups speak other languages. The main religion, followed by 99.8% of the population, is **Islam**. The literacy rate of the population is fairly high - about 95.6% overall as of 2018.

Turkey is a **candidate country**. In 1987, Turkey applied to join what was then the European Economic Community, and in 1997 it was declared eligible to join the EU. Turkey's involvement with European integration dates back to **1959** and includes the Ankara Association Agreement (1963) for the progressive establishment of a Customs Union (ultimately set up in 1995). Accession negotiations started in 2005 and within the framework of accession negotiations, 16 chapters have been opened so far and one of these (science and research) was provisionally closed. The Turkish government reiterated its commitment to EU accession, but this has not been matched by corresponding measures and reforms. On the contrary, Turkey has been moving away from the European Union. The Presidency conclusions of December 2016 stated that under the currently prevailing circumstances, no new chapters are considered for opening. The EU and Turkey continued their dialogue and cooperation in the areas of joint interest including with several high-level visits, Leaders' meetings in May 2017 and March 2018 and a High-Level Political Dialogue in July 2017.

During 2017, the implementation of the March 2016 EU-Turkey Statement has continued to deliver concrete results in reducing irregular and dangerous crossings and in saving lives in the Aegean Sea. Turkey supported to more than 3.5 million refugees from Syria and some 365 000 refugees from other countries. Turkey and the EU further built on their cooperation under the Facility for Refugees in Turkey. By the end of December 2017, the full envelope of EUR 3 billion had been contracted, with 72 projects and almost 1.2 million of the most vulnerable refugees benefited from monthly cash-transfers. Disbursements reached EUR 1.95 billion to date.

### 2.2. Strategic communication

Interviews with EUD highlighted how the accession negotiation process with Turkey is seen at best as **slowly progressing or stagnating**, and at worst as a failing process. The political and democratic context, especially in the last two years that followed the failed military coup attempts in 15 July 2016, has worsened considerably. Although very recently (last 2-3 months before the mission) there were visible efforts from the Turkish and European sides to improve the relations and to re-energize the process, the basic dynamics of the EU-TR relations did not change fundamentally. Turkey has seen a decline of democratic values, rule of law and human rights. The Turkish side's grievances can be seen at two levels: on the top political level the Turkish side complains of lack of European support for and understanding of Turkey's efforts in liquidating the threats posed by the perpetrators of the military coup attempt and their support base. On the administration level, there is frustration that slowing or blocking the EU accession process undermines Turkish reform efforts.

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<sup>153</sup> <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/turkey-population/>

<sup>154</sup> Istanbul has a population of 14,808,116



As highlighted, the relations with the beneficiary country can be classified as having two layers political and technical. At a political level, there is a tendency to maintain a certain tension as a necessary and strong component of the domestic discourse towards and in bilateral communication with the EU. Yet for **technical cooperation**, there is a **willingness** to maintain dynamic relations and positive discourse. In this regard, it appeared that Turkey seems to be more willing to “take” (in terms of accession funds, support to modernisation of the country, directs benefits to Turkish population like Erasmus mobility, etc.) than to “give” (reluctant to give in to EU’s expectations on human rights and democratisation, seen as “concessions”).

From the interviews with the Turkish Foreign Ministry and the EUD, there is a **need for EU communication** to ensure that EU messages as expressed in the EUD information and communication forward plan on values, including on rule of law and strengthening democracy as well as the EU-Turkey relationship and accession are disseminated. National government does not communicate EU messages and values and has its own political agenda. One of the questions for consideration for this evaluation relates to whether there is a duplication of efforts between EU and national government both communicators and / or whether there is scope for a more joined-up approach to communication. Based on feedback from interviews, the evaluation team’s analysis of this feedback and review of promotional materials, the Commission needs to support its own communication messages. The EU and Turkey approach communication from very different angles. The ambiguity<sup>155</sup> and **negative messaging** from the Turkish government is likely to negatively affect the receptiveness of target audiences to messages from the EU.

This was affirmed by young people who participated in the two focus groups organised. They expressed a **lack of trust** that the EU really wants Turkey to join the EU, even if Turkey meets the requirements for modernisation and democratisation. Negative perceptions of Islam were cited as reasons why Turks believe that Europeans do not want Turkish accession. The young people who participated showed a deep sense of pessimism about the EU-Turkish relations. Yet the evaluators also noted that participants were aware that Turkey sits between East and West, which was suggested to be part of Turkey’s added-value to the EU and again could offer opportunities for messaging should Turkish accession become a realistic goal. Some participants questioned whether it was appropriate or desirable for Turkey to even be in the EU because they considered that it could be better to strengthen ties with other countries in the East rather than the EU.

The focus groups with students from different universities in Ankara and Istanbul and general discussions with the EUIC representatives revealed that, although there is certain **interest among students** in the EU, there is a **lack of genuine knowledge** about the EU, on how the membership will practically change or impact the lives of the Turkish citizen. The young people would like to see more concrete benefits from the EU side (like Erasmus, which is a tangible example) and believe that would strengthen the support to EU. Opportunities such as internship programmes, free travel, English language courses for businesses were mentioned.

At the time of the field mission, interviewees within EUD and Turkish government highlighted a slight improvement of EU-Turkish political dialogue, which was suggested to be influenced by the sudden acute political crisis between Turkey and US in summer 2018, that caused serious economic turbulence in Turkey. This pushed the country to counter-balance and to seek to create or to restore alternative partnerships, and thus made it “re-discover” the European Union. The Turkish Inter-ministerial Reform Action Group for EU Reforms, suspended for 3 years, gathered in late August 2018, in a desire to send a positive message to Brussels. However, the latest visit of Commissioner Hahn and High Representative Mogherini team to Ankara revealed how **fragile** the improvement in relations was in reality.

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<sup>155</sup> The evaluators noted a poster in Turkey’s EU Directorate, which highlighted the mixed feelings about accession. The poster depicted a flower with petals falling out and the slogan: “Europe loves me, loves me not?”

Interviewees from the Turkish-EU Directorate had positive expectations for the EU officials' visit, hoping for an opportunity to re-launch the political dialogue. Instead, the visit revealed tensions. According to the Turkish media, the President declined to meet the delegation from the EU. There was little media coverage, aside from conveying how Turkish officials reproached the EU delegates. The EU officials' visit coincided with the ECHR ruling that Turkey release the former co-chair of the opposition Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), a ruling that made the headlines in Turkey and received harsh criticisms at the highest political level. The ECHR's decision was attributed to the "ill-intentioned" EU and when Ms Mogherini also called upon Turkey to comply with ECHR's decision, this fuelled the anti-EU discourse. The episode highlighted the strength of the Turkish government's influence on public opinion about the EU, as well as the challenges for EUD to counterbalance these negative messages, in a context where disputes with individual Member States or with other international organisations are often attributed to EU.

### **2.3. Management and organisation**

The approach to EU Info Centres in Turkey is different to that taken in the Western Balkans. Turkey has 20 EU Info Centres in different cities across the country, which are coordinated and administered by one entity (communication contractor) based at the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges (TOBB). Turkish Info Centres are staffed by one key expert, who is available to answer questions and provide information, and organises a series of regional and thematic events throughout the year. These activities are supplemented by an independent contractor, who takes responsibility for all other EUD PR and communication. This approach evolved for reasons specific to the Turkish context. (The same is true in the Western Balkans.). The size of the country and location of the population underpin the choices made and it seems would also be relevant factors for consideration in decision-making on the setting up of info centres in the neighbourhood region. If one of the goals is face-to-face interaction, there is a need for more info centres in Turkey than in the countries in the Western Balkans.

The Head of Delegation's personal interest in communication underpins EUIC effectiveness. The Head of Delegation accepts the limitations of the empty info centres but considers that they offer strategic benefits as outposts for EUD across Turkey. The Head of Delegation uses EUICs to increase EU visibility. Head of Delegation participation in EUIC-organised events increases the level of media interest that is generated.

The previous format for EUIC management involved each EUIC having a direct contract with EUD, this generated significant administrative burden for EUD. The current situation provides a good example of administrative simplification. Today, EUD manages two contracts:

- A service contract with TOBB to manage 20 EUICs. EUD signs partnership statements with each chamber/host structure. Whilst TOBB is responsible for checking all expenditure and fulfilment of the contract, for example by not limited to numbers of participants at events;
- 
- A contract with a professional communication firm Norm Consulting, which manages all EU Delegation communication (website, social media, press surveys, TV and other media visibility work). Norm supports EUD by overseeing EUIC communication content. EUICs submit their draft communication messages to the firm (and to the EU Delegation's Communication Team) for approval.

Norm Consulting is a Turkish firm, which is part of an international consortium led by German firm Particip GmbH. EUD puts strong emphasis on the benefits of working with professional local company rather than international contractor for communication management. Interviewees in EUD reported that international contractors that want to work successfully in Turkey face considerable learning curve because international contractors do not have sufficient knowledge of the specificities of the Turkish context. Therefore, the current arrangement represents the best of both worlds, as the contract value size required an international tendering process, yet the contract is delivered by a Turkish communication firm.

The small coordination team at TOBB manages financial and contractual compliance across the EUIC network, checking expenditure and providing guidance on EUD expectations. For example, for events they may make suggestions on possible attendees and request explanations, if the required number of participants is not met. One of the key financial management concerns on the side of EUICs relates to the

differences in exchange rates between the time that an item is purchased and the time that the invoice is submitted. This can create problems for EUICs due to currency fluctuations. It would be easier for EUICs to manage their activities if exchange rates relating to expenses were honored in relation to the exchange rate on date of expenditure. Other issues relating to non-planned expenditure can arise when planned events need to be cancelled at the last moment, as was the case in the military coup. These aspects underline the need for the network to be hosted by an organisation, which can provide **financial back-up**; a factor to be taken into consideration if this approach is to be replicated in the neighbourhood region.

The choice of host institutions (mostly chambers of commerce), makes sense to the extent that these have the financial stability required to support the network and enjoy a high level of **trust** in Turkish society. There are two exceptions to the type of host institution: the EUIC in Istanbul is hosted by the Economic Development Foundation (IKV) and in Izmir it is hosted by the Association of Businessmen and Industrialists of Aegean Region (ESİAD). The existence of a coordinating chamber body (the natural candidate to coordinate the EUIC network) and the fact that chamber network counts more than 350 members also confirm that from a practical perspective the chambers make sense to host EUICs. As semi-governmental organisations they are independent but provide a bridge to local and national authorities, when permissions must be requested for example in relation to certain events. They can, however, sometimes restrict EUIC events as they have a tendency to be more aligned with the government than with the EU.

The set up in chambers is **pragmatic and tactical**; however, it does not represent a strategic push to engage the business community. Info Centres neither capitalize on the opportunities within chambers to engage with business nor proactively target the business community. Their activities are mainly oriented to civil society, youth and 'non-segmented but interested publics'<sup>156</sup>. This could raise questions as to whether chambers of commerce are the right host organisations for Turkey particularly as the evaluators observed that Enterprise Europe Network with its established business networks is much better placed to communicate to the business community. Also, chamber may not be ideal and accessible for the wider public. Given the mismatch between target groups and the natural target groups of the chambers and that there are some chambers, which have less capacity and interest in hosting EUICs and in consequence some EUICs are performing less well, there is an argument for diversifying the network to include other types of organisation to **reinforce the connection** with the **actual target groups**.

**Variability in EUIC performance** is acknowledged both at EUD and by TOBB. Some EUICs are doing well on social media and others need to be encouraged. Although not possible to verify, several issues were identified during the field mission, including in relation to the motivation and lack of dynamism of some key experts who had been working on EU communication in some cases for many years, the isolation and challenge of working alone and the suggestion that one or two EUICs should actually be closed given their poor performance and being in the wrong city, with little or no strategic importance in Turkey. It was also apparent although not possible to verify that some key experts are busy working on other tasks for the chambers in addition to the tasks required of them as EUICs. This results from the fact that key experts are chamber of commerce staff whose salary is paid or, it was suggested, part-paid through the EUIC network. This implies potential for competing priorities and raises questions as to whether external experts would be preferable, although it is acknowledged that chambers' interest in being involved would be less if external experts needed to staff EUICs.

Whilst the one key expert per EUIC has allowed efficiency by maintaining a network and pooling communication budgets to achieve greater economies of scale and consistency in communication content and to reap benefits from the financial and in-kind support offered by many of the chambers, there are obvious limitations. There is a limit to the amount of activity that can be carried out by one person. Interviews with other EU communicators, for example Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) and cooperation assistance partners, highlighted that there is limited interaction with EUICs now in comparison to the past when each EUIC was staffed by two key experts. There are moments during the calendar when **additional support is**

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<sup>156</sup> The term non-segmented, interested publics is used here instead of the general public (which is the term used in the Intervention Logic) in the knowledge that without specific targeting EUD communication is most likely to be seen and heard by people who have some interest in the EU.

**required** and a reliance on the chambers to provide this. Support can be forthcoming from chambers, which like the prestige and close contacts with EUD, but this may not always be the case.

With regards to reporting, EUIC key experts shared concerns about the **multiplication of approval levels** and increased reporting workload with this approach. EUICs are required to submit their communication materials, which are produced locally (in-line with EU visibility guidelines) to the EUD communication team and the communication contractor. The double approval process was suggested to create delays and is also viewed as lack of trust. The trust element seems to reflect a lack of acceptance that the design of communication activities has been centralized because it seems that staff enjoyed this part of their previous work. Many of the key experts have been working on EU communication for twenty years.

On reporting, EUICs complain that they have to submit monthly work reports, in addition to six-monthly and annual reports, which creates significant burden with unclear and, in their view, questionable benefits. However, monthly reporting is a requirement of the ToR. A further concern voiced was that approvals on communication content / messages by the other contractor can impact payments / financial sanctions to EUICs. Norm Consulting pre-approves EUIC content but does not have financial responsibility in case of error (wrong communication). In consequence a contractor is responsible for approvals without being accountable for its actions. Subsequent feedback from EUD is that it is EUD rather than Norm Consulting that gives approvals relating to payments, but the fact that this issue was raised highlights that a lack of clarity on this point and suggests that some EUICs feel disadvantaged by the fact that Norm approves their messages and content.

## **2.4. Other actors communicating on the EU**

When considering the pros and cons of the EU Info Centre set-up in Turkey, it is important to remember that there are many actors spreading information about the EU. The Turkish government plays a part in this although as observed has a very different angle to the EUD team.

Communication by the Turkish government or by semi-governmental organisations, including by the EU Directorate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a network of 81 provincial EU “focal points” consisting of:

- Deputy-governor assigned for EU Affairs
- EU Unit or EU Office in the governorship reporting to the deputy-governor<sup>157</sup>
- Provincial EU Coordination Council, a regular platform chaired by deputy-governor and which brings together various administrations, CSOs, universities etc. interested in EU matters.

Communication on opportunities under Erasmus+ is supported by the National Agency, a dedicated Turkish central administration located in Ankara, which has relations with Erasmus coordinators in the universities. Erasmus+ is well known in Turkey. There is an oversubscription in the number of applications to Erasmus+, which implies that the Erasmus+ programme does not require additional support from EUICs to communicate key messages, there is already a strong and well-coordinated approach to communication in place. However, there is still value in promoting the Erasmus programme because it provides an example of a well-performing EU-TR action.

Communication to small businesses is supported by KOSGEB<sup>158</sup> the Turkish coordinator for the EEN. The network offers some tangible benefits to companies such as access to a network of companies in the EU, information about EU regulations, involvement in some trips to the EU and potentially access to funding. As highlighted above, there is **limited interaction** between the EUICs and EEN. In addition, KOSGEB appeared more able to target Turkish business than EUICs because even if they are located in chambers, the key experts have a rather generalist communication profile.

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<sup>157</sup> These units are mainly run by English teachers seconded to this task

<sup>158</sup> [www.kosgeb.gov.tr](http://www.kosgeb.gov.tr)

Communication is done also by international institutions and organisations that implement cooperation assistance projects or actions in partnership with EU or (co-)funded by EU, such as EBRD, EIB, UNDP, IOM, UNHCR, NGOs, etc. International organisations are highly polished and professional in their communication activities they have access to greater human and physical resources and expertise to support their communication. In some cases key communicators were unaware of the EUICs' existence. The evaluation team concluded that there was in practice limited added value for these organisations to collaborate more with the EUICs, which in many ways appear to be more amateurish given that each EUIC is managed by one person with a small event budget.

Yet EU-funded projects, that include a communication dimension in their budget, have the potential to play a major role in conveying positive message about the EU. This factor, or the positive impact of "tangible" benefits of EU-accession process through number of projects, was also stressed often by the Turkish side (the EU Directorate, the Turkish National Agency running Erasmus Exchange Programme) and the EU Delegation. In practice, EUICs do not tend to engage with specific projects and this relates to the fact that the communication contractor Norm Consulting has taken responsibility for harnessing communication content from projects. The contractor has reviewed all the cooperation assistance projects to identify success stories for communication process

A more coordinated and conscious way of doing EU visibility should be achieved in the field of EU-funded projects contracted to non-Turkish organisations that operate in Turkey. The Turkish side (Turkish administrations or civil society/business actors) seem more willing/enthusiastic about displaying the EU dimension of the activities or projects implemented. This may be motivated by the fact that for the Turkish side these efforts serve certain agenda that is important for their country (pave the road to EU accession), while other non-Turkish actors operating (UNDP, foreign NGOs working with Syrian matters) in Turkey with EU funds have not necessarily such motivator/drive, not to mention that they have their own visibility agenda.

## **2.5. Assessing the Intervention Logic**

An intervention logic is a theoretical model to show how a results chain works from inputs to activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts. This section provides some reflections on the reconstructed Intervention Logic (IL) that is presented overleaf. The IL presented in the evaluation desk report represented the EUIC network in Turkey. The reconstructed IL presented overleaf now shows the interplay between EUD, the EUIC network and the communication contractor (Norm Consulting).

### **Objectives**

EUD interviewees acknowledged that EUIC objectives are not SMART. However, their general formulation is considered appropriate given the politically charged and uncertain context. Having broad objectives allows EUD to take a tactical approach to communication and means that activities can be adapted to the needs and conditions of the situation. In practice, EUIC activities are clearly defined, and the tactical approach is more relevant to the communication contractor than to the EUICs. Specific objectives are usually framed as desired outcomes in an intervention logic. The challenge of measuring the performance of EUIC activities was highlighted during the desk phase and the fact that this is exacerbated by a lack of SMART objectives to confirm what needs to be achieved.

### **Inputs**

Inputs include the human and financial resources allocated to both the EUICs and Norm Consulting, as well as in-kind support provide by chambers of commerce, which includes premises and as feedback from the field missions suggests some ad hoc additional human resources to support the running of events.



## **Activities**

The field mission provided an opportunity to better understand the role of the contractor which is responsible for the design and implementation of EUD communication and the inter-linkage between the EUICs, which provide strategic outposts and carry out events in the regions and the communication contractor (Norm Consulting), which is responsible for communication content and a wider range of communication activities. The activities of both EUICs and the communication contractor are presented in the revised intervention logic which represents communication activities, which are directly managed by EUD.

The EU Delegation's dedicated webpage lists the tasks carried out by EUICs, as follows:

1. answering queries about the European Union and EU-Turkish ties;
2. ensuring the public is able to access to EU databases;
3. contributing to widen the network among EU information providers;
4. establishing and maintaining close relations with target groups;
5. serving as a reference point for the general public by advising on where and how to obtain further information from other more specialized sources;
6. organising seminars on EU-Turkey relations and on EU policies, attended by experts as speakers;
7. distributing to the relevant sections of the public the booklets and other written materials prepared by the EU and translated into Turkish by the Delegation of the European Union to Turkey;
8. organising cultural activities financed by the European Commission.

Currently the EUIC work focuses on outreach aspects in relation to above tasks 6 and 8, which in turn support task 3. The other tasks are relevant, but there may be much less emphasis on these in terms of the day-to-day work of the EUICs.

The ToR also include the establishment of local media partnerships and EU visibility for IPA projects, which suggests a focus on raising awareness of other projects funded under the IPA II programme in Turkey. During the field mission, there was limited evidence on this point, but it appeared that whilst there may be media coverage from time-to-time, there did not appear to be media 'partnerships'. However, media aspects are currently managed by the communication contractor.

Also, the info centres tend to focus on implementing the agreed list of events per annum and did not seem to put much focus on communicating about IPA projects, in fact the centres might not actually be aware of the IPA projects in the local vicinity. However, both aspects are substantially covered by the communication contractor, which harnesses content from IPA projects to support communication. It was not possible to assess the extent that the communication contractor has local media partnerships in place, as this is outside the scope in place although it appeared that whilst there may be media contacts from

## **Outputs**

Based on documentation and interviews the main outputs of EUD communication are as follows:

- Strategic outposts in chambers of commerce support EUD communication in the region.
- A coherence of EU messages / content disseminated by EUIC network and the contractor
- Debate on EU themes which is supported by EU publications and information.
- Different target groups are informed about the EU its policies, programmes and their impact
- Media coverage of EU messages and content
- Key target groups and the wider public are made aware of the EU.

The field mission focussed on understanding the communication performance of the EUIC network. Key findings from the mission include that the network appears to focus on far fewer target groups than is foreseen in the ToR, children and parents, students and academics appear to be the main profile of individuals reached, but this assessment is based on feedback from EUICs given that their monitoring records did not tend to provide analysis of target audience profiles. However, there was evidence to confirm that EUICs supported events / debates on different themes and that coordination by EUD, TOBB and the communication consultant ensures that there is a coherence of messages and materials. Although the EUIC



ToR makes references to partnerships and liaison with the media, in practice these relationships are driven by the communication contractor. Some EUICs use event monitoring questionnaires and one of the examples sourced during the field mission includes a question on if participants identified a link between the event that they attended this provides an indication that awareness raising outputs are achieved.

Whilst chambers are respected institutions, there are issues around trust that the EU actually wants Turkey to become a member of the EU, which are likely to influence the way that uninformed publics process the information that they receive, this may be less the case for academic / informed audiences.

When it comes to children and their parents', the communication tends to be much simpler and focussed on providing information about countries in the EU. This suggests that the purpose is to ensure that children know about the EU, ie that it exists. There is anecdotal feedback that this is well received.

A main output of the funding allocated to the EUIC network relates to the maintenance of EUD relationships with key actors at regional level, which could not otherwise be sustained by EUD without support. Taking this into account, the team considers that there is an effect on the chambers that they value the relationship and the associated prestige.

## **Outcomes**

The EUD information and communication forward plan describes the following specific objectives:

1. To inform different target groups about the EU, its policies and programmes and their impact (and potential impact) on citizens' everyday life
2. To increase the frequency and quality of media coverage and public debate on EU-related issues
3. To raise awareness about the EU among our key target groups
4. To ensure greater visibility for EU external assistance programmes, their objectives and results
5. To promote EU interests both within Turkey and in terms of foreign policy cooperation.

In the restructured IL:

- some of these elements (1, 2 and 3) are represented as outputs;
- ensuring greater visibility of EU external assistance programmes (4) is represented as an aggregate outcome, ie that a degree of awareness is achieved within society beyond increased awareness;
- enhanced EU interests and foreign policy cooperation are represented as desirable impacts (5), which is the output from different activities. Communication outcomes (specific objectives stated in the ToR) are described as: relating to the promotion of the EU's interest in Turkey, informed public debate, and values.

In the revised intervention logic, the evaluation team has put less emphasis on these communication outcomes for the info centres (which are staffed by one person). Individual info centre events contribute to all of these areas and the fact that events are happening all over Turkey in 20 different cities creates some critical mass. But the extent that these achieve any outcomes beyond informing and raising-awareness of participants to events is difficult to assess and seems likely to be limited.

## **Impacts**

The inputs, outputs and outcomes should logically support the achievement of enhanced EU interests within Turkey, including in relation to Foreign Policy and raised public awareness about the EU, its policies and values. There is no evidence to confirm whether activities support the achievement of these impacts even if there are public opinion polls, which include questions on the EU.

## **Target groups / assumptions and risk**

These have been amended taking account the findings from the focus groups and interviews with stakeholders. Whilst specific thematic events may target specific target groups, for the most part there appears to be clear focus on young people.

**Turkey: Reconstructed Intervention Logic of EUD Communication implemented by EUICs and the Communication Contractor**

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Desired Impacts
<p><b>EUD staff:</b> 1 member of staff</p> <p><b>TOBB staff:</b> <b>3 key experts:</b> Network Coordinator, Network Activity Expert, Public Information Expert. <b>4 non-key experts:</b> 1 Network Media Expert, 1 Accountant, 2 EU Information Centre Coordinators</p> <p><b>EU Info Centre staff:</b> 1 chamber employee per centre</p> <p><b>Communication Contractor</b> Norm Consulting 4 full-time key experts and non-key expert support</p> <p><b>Financial</b> EUICs: 12 months for €2,191,000 and addendum 17 months €2,40.100,00 In-kind contributions from host organisations, incl. premises and hoc additional human resources</p> <p>Norm Consulting: €3,654,000, plus €2M for incidentals</p>	<p><b>TOBB</b> coordination of the EU Information Centres Network, including training and study visits (amended this part).</p> <p><b>Each Info Centre organises</b> seminars, trainings, workshops, festivals, cultural/art events and exhibitions; <u>annually</u>: 4 national events, 2 thematic days, Europe Day; 1 regional event per city; opening 40 info stands and participation in 2 of these each, 80 public debates</p> <p><b>Public Information Services:</b> Social media, Capacity to answer questions by telephone and email about the EU</p> <p><b>Promotion/dissemination:</b> Production &amp; distribution of information/promotional materials about the European Union its programmes and policies are shared mainly with children, students and academics via events.</p> <p><b>Local media partnerships for EU visibility &amp; IPA projects</b> for radio programmes, ads on local newspapers, special columns to promote IPA projects &amp; EU related policies, local TV ads [delivered by Norm Consulting the Communication Contractor]</p> <p><b>Delivery of all EUD communication</b> Target group research; messages, content and tools, including audio-visual, website and social media; harvesting success stories from cooperation assistance projects; review of EUIC content</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic outposts in chambers of commerce support EUD communication in the region.</li> <li>A coherence of messages / content across the EUIC network</li> <li>Debate on EU themes, supported by EU publications and information.</li> <li>Different target groups are informed about the EU its policies, programmes and their impact</li> <li>Media coverage of EU messages and content</li> <li>Key target groups and the wider public are made aware of the EU.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EU values are understood within Turkish society</li> <li>More informed public debate on the EU integration, its benefits and challenges,</li> <li>More awareness within Turkish society of country reform efforts and EU support via external assistance programme and their results</li> </ul>	<p><b>EU interests are promoted within Turkey including in relation to Foreign Policy</b></p> <p><b>The level of public awareness about the EU, its policies and values raised</b></p>

Target groups		Assumptions and risks
<b>Main groups reached via events</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School and nursery age children and their parents</li> <li>Teachers and academics</li> <li>University students</li> <li>Academics/researchers</li> </ul> <p>Also, in relation to specific one-off thematic events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Civil society</li> </ul>	<b>Target groups (reported in TOR)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Media</li> <li>Political decision makers</li> <li>Teachers and educational professionals</li> <li>Civil society</li> <li>SME community</li> <li>Farmers</li> <li>Youth</li> <li>Women</li> <li>General public</li> </ul>	<b>Assumptions</b> Local partners and EU information providers (NGOs, professional associations, educational institutions, media) continue showing interest/willingness, mobilising adequate human and other resources and to play a major role in maintaining and stimulating the discussions on EU issues and the accession process of Turkey.  <b>Risks</b> Difficulties in EU-Turkey's accession negotiation process Deteriorating EU-Turkey relations Decrease in public attention to EU matters due to international and domestic developments Increase in negative impact of regional instability (Syria/Iraq) on activities/events Economic downturn that would distract from the strategic interest of Turkey to join the EU

### 3. EVALUATION FINDINGS

The following sections describe the key findings by evaluation question and judgement criteria from interviews with EU Delegation staff, partners, EU programmes and students highlighted in the above table. As per the evaluation questions matrix defined for the evaluation, the field mission is not intended to provide evidence in relation to all the evaluation questions and judgement criteria. Final answers to the evaluation questions will be drafted drawing on analysis of hypotheses from different sources of evidence and provided in the Synthesis Report. .

**EQ1.** To what extent have the **objectives** of the EUICs been defined considering the **specific needs** of the target audience in the IPA beneficiaries and contribute to the objectives set in the **EU framework** on strategic communication in the enlargement region?

- Specific target group communication needs have been well defined and the EUICs' objectives clearly focus on these needs.

In Turkey, EUICs are not required to place specific focus on researching and understanding target group needs. Feedback from Info Centre staff suggests that some efforts are made to tailor materials to target groups, for example significant emphasis is placed on engaging with school children and this has led to child-focussed publications using cartoon characters<sup>159</sup>. Info Centres also reported using theatre as a medium to engage young people.

Other ways that target group needs are taken into account are relatively simple, including providing transport to bring students from provincial universities to Info Centre events. However, Info Centres do not have budgets to tailor their materials or approaches significantly to target group segments. Whilst ToR for Info Centres lists a large number of target groups, in practice Centres tend to focus on children, students and academics. The hypothesis that reducing the range of target groups would provide additional funding to support target group research does not hold true in Turkey, given that this type of research is not within the remit of Info Centres, with their relatively tight budgets.

Info Centres are focussed on meeting needs relating to information and awareness about the EU and this links to strategic communication objectives. Some, but not all, Info Centres monitor participants' satisfaction with the event that they attended, including the speaker, if they identified a link with the EU and key words that participants associate with the EU.

Target group feedback is collected by Norm Consulting the communication contractor and this is feed into the design of communication messages and content that are disseminated by the EUIC network.

**EQ2.** To what extent have the **objectives** of the EUICs been achieved?

- Extent that the outputs of the communication activities implemented by the EUICs have produced the expected outcomes, which contributed to the achievement of the set objectives.
- Extent to which the quantitative and qualitative effects of the outputs and outcomes of EUICs' activities can be deemed to have contributed to the achievement of the set objectives.
- Extent to which other factors influenced the achievement of the outcomes.
- Extent that the communication tools used by the EUICs were appropriate for each target audience.

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<sup>159</sup> For example, the cartoon character Lokum (Turkish Delight) is used to convey information about countries in the EU.

- Extent that the EU Delegations' use of other communication tools (e.g. social media) could have had a higher outreach to different categories of the target audience.

Overall the EUIC network is meeting expectations in relation to carrying out the activities required and perhaps more importantly, providing a strategic network, which supports key relationships between EUD and high-profile semi-government partners across Turkey, which is a strategic goal for the EU as confirmed by the Ambassador. It is not possible to make a causal link between the outputs generated by EUICs and ensuring that these result in achieving outcomes. This relates to the fact that monitoring activities are not always systematically carried out by all EUICs in relation to all of their activities, and the fact that feedback data tends to focus on satisfaction rates and awareness of a link with the EU.

There is a range of factors that influence the achievement of outcomes:

- EUICS are staffed by one individual, have a small budget, and focus their main activities on implementing a number of thematic and regional events.
- The Turkey-EU accession process has stalled, it is not clear if Turkey will join the EU in the short term, which means that the population are less likely to be receptive to messages from the EU.
- Media reporting on EUD activities can be patchy / inaccurate, as was highlighted by the visit from Mogherini shortly after the field visit

Despite this the focus on events ensures that there are debates and discussions relating to EU themes, which take place across Turkey and this significantly extends the reach of EUD communication on the ground. There was no evidence collected during the field mission to suggest that the range of tools used by the Info Centres is not appropriate, debates are relevant for academic audiences and theatre plays and cartoons are relevant to young children. EUICs use of social media is also appropriate to reach a young audience and students, however evidence suggests that there is variable performance / effectiveness in the use of social media by different EUICs and this relates to the communication competence of the individuals working in the Centres. The EUD increases its outreach through another contractor Norm Consulting, which has run a series of TV programmes, with a regional focus to reach target groups who still make significant use of TV.

**EQ3.** To what extent **the organisation and management** of the EUICs have been conducive to an efficient, effective and sustainable implementation of the communication activities?

- The management of EUICs through service contracts is conducive to an efficient, effective and sustainable implementation of communication activities.
- The different EUICs and Info Points / Corners set up in an IPA beneficiary have worked together in an efficient and effective manner to reach the target audience and achieve the set objectives in Turkey.
- The system setup for monitoring the EUICs' activities functioned at regular intervals and was capable of collecting data and detecting problems (indicators were appropriately designed to measure the progress in relation to the baseline situation and the effectiveness and of the targets, and extent that targets were set realistically).
- Extent that the use of financing and management mechanisms could have provided better cost-effectiveness.
- The physical location of the EUICs in the IPA beneficiaries has facilitated the implementation of planned communication activities and the achievement of planned effects on the target audience.

There is a service contract currently in use in Turkey to support the EUIC network. Discussions with EUD confirmed satisfaction with the contract type, as it allows the Delegation to have a good level of control over the services for which it pays. As the Info Centres are hosted in chambers of commerce requirements in



terms of equipment and premises are provided for within the partnership agreements. As the EUIC network has running for many years, it can be concluded that the contractual arrangements have led to a sustainable approach.

In the case of Turkey, it cannot be ascertained that different Info Centres work together in an efficient and effective manner. This relates to the fact that there is no real need for EUICs to work together. EUICs are based in different regions, which means that they have different target groups and cannot help each other in practice, for example to run a specific event. EUICs also have clear roles and responsibilities.

EUICs provide regular monthly and three-monthly reports to the EUD. Reports highlight the types of activities undertaken, the number of participants, the number of brochures / materials disseminated and social media activity. This approach allows the Delegation to have a good overview of the performance of each EUIC and the performance of the whole network. What is more challenging is to understand the effects that EUICs maybe having on their target groups and within their target environments. Whilst some evidence is gathered on satisfaction rates and awareness of links with the EU although not by each Info Centre, it cannot be ascertained that there is any lasting or longer-term impact beyond the events or any significant cumulative effect on the wider Turkish population. These points relate directly to the intrinsic difficulties in using communication to change public perceptions and awareness, the size of individual EUIC budgets and the volume of activities that one person can hope to achieve in each EUIC.

**EQ4.** To what extent the EUICs have contributed **to raising public awareness** about the EU, its policies and values, EU funding and on the enlargement process in the IPA beneficiaries?

- Extent that target groups of EUIC communication activities in the IPA beneficiaries are more aware of the EU, its policies and values, EU funding and the enlargement process.
- Extent that EUICs reach new audiences with EU messages about EU policies and values, EU funding and on the enlargement process that would not be reached by EU Delegations, or EU-funded projects.

There is evidence to confirm that each EUIC carries out events to raise awareness in relation to a range of topic areas and is available to provide access to EU reports and publications in the local language. However, the current approach to monitoring does not systematically collect data to confirm levels of awareness pre and post participation in or exposure to EUIC activities. Whilst EUICs allow EUD to have a much wider reach than would be feasible without the network, the approach to monitoring and reporting does not provide evidence which confirm the extent that EUICs are able to reach new audiences, if at all. It was not possible to test awareness with target groups / users of the Info Centres as there was no one visiting the EUICs during the field mission and students in the focus groups did not appear to have any recall of EUIC messages or materials.

The field phase hypotheses pose the question as to whether EUIC's focus on events is too great at the expense of other communication activities. It is not possible to assess whether there should be re-balancing of communication activities, yet given the fact that there are no spontaneous visitors to Info Centres, that events allow direct contacts between the local community and the EU and provide hooks for promotion and possible media coverage, and the EUICs have premises available to host events, the focus on events can be fully justified.

**EQ5i.** To what extent the **activities carried out by the EU Info Centres** have been coherent, complementary and **coordinated** with those carried out via other EU programmes and by other partners (e.g. Member States, IFIs, international organisations) **active in communicating re. EU policies & values, EU funding and the enlargement process** in the enlargement region?

- EUICs and Info Points liaise in a regular and planned way (either directly or via the EU Delegation) to share intelligence, identify synergies and opportunities to work together with other EU policy / programme communicators in the region.
- Extent that it is possible to identify other relevant opportunities to improve coordination to develop a more joined-

There was no evidence to confirm that EUICs work together in a regular and planned way with other EU programme communicators even if there is an awareness, for example on the part of the Erasmus+ coordinators and partners such as IFIs that Info Centres exist. The approach is not linked to difficulties in gaining access to project coordinators, suggested in the hypotheses rather it relates to the instructions that EUICs receive for the types of events to be organised. With regards to Member State embassies the Delegation manages these relationships and MS embassies engage in relevant events organised with the support of Norm Consulting there are no specific success factors that can be identified here. Feedback from the Turkish government highlighted a keen interest for greater collaboration with EUICs for example in relation to raise awareness about the results of cooperation assistance via their EU desks, which are in municipalities. However, feedback from EUD suggests that EUD and the Turkish government have very different messages. There did not appear to be a strong appetite within EUD to strengthen these relations.

Given the limitations of human and financial resources and remit of EUICs it seems that it would be difficult for EUICs to increase their level of collaboration with partners. Also, there is no evidence that increased collaboration with EUICs would add any value to partners, who may themselves have much more resources available and a more extensive communication programme than EUICs. Despite this, partners expressed a willingness to work with EUICs, but it is unclear how this could really be implemented in practice, given the limitations and constraints in place. **EQ5ii.** To what extent the EU Info Centres can contribute to the development and implementation of a **joined-up Public Diplomacy** (cf. EU Global Strategy) and act as hubs for EU-related initiatives taking place at the local level (i.e. both EU and non-EU funded)?

- There is alignment between EUIC and Info Point communication activities and messages, and public diplomacy activities and messaging in each IPA beneficiary.
- Extent that EUICs, Info Points and staff of EU Delegations responsible for public diplomacy collaborate on joint initiatives or coordinate their initiatives.
- Extent to which EUICs and Info Points support and are a focal point of activities (EU and non-EU funded) to reach public diplomacy target groups.

Alignment between EUIC messaging and content and public diplomacy content and messaging is ensured, where relevant, by the fact that there is a communication contractor responsible for developing most communication content and for checking and overseeing any content and messages that are developed by EUICs. For the most part, the brochures and documents, which EUICs disseminate are official publications. When EUICs develop their own publications, these are reviewed, as highlighted.

EUICs in Turkey have very clear responsibilities, which relate for the most part to planning and implementing a set of pre-determined types of events, as well as very limited information provision services given the low level of demand. It is understood that the EU Ambassador frequently travels to the different regions and when he does this he may attend an event organised by an EUIC. In this way, EUICs provide EUD with regional focal points for EU communication, but it cannot be confirmed that EUICs provide a focal point for all EU and non-EU-funded public diplomacy actions.

**EQ6.** What is the **additional value** resulting from the communication activities carried out by the EU Info Centres compared to what could have been achieved by the IPA beneficiaries at national or regional levels?

- Extent that the reach and engagement of target groups by EUICs with EU messages on policies and values, funding and the enlargement process is greater and more effective than the benefits for target groups at national or regional level than IPA beneficiaries do or could achieve.
- Extent that IPA beneficiary communicators convey the desired messages on EU policies and values, funding and on the enlargement process.

It was not possible to collect any data or to confirm the reach of the Turkish government's own communication activities with regards to the EU. Therefore, it is not possible to assess the added value of EUICs in relation to IPA beneficiary communication on the basis of the size of target group reach or penetration, although it is understood that the Turkish government has a network of EU desks in 81 Turkish municipalities.

However, it can be ascertained that EUICs add significant value to communication that is anyway carried out by the Turkish government, because evidence in the field mission confirms that the Turkish government clearly has a different political agenda and conveys messages about the EU, which are not the same or even aligned with the EU. This being the case, the EUD cannot rely on the Turkish government to convey information about the EU.

## **4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **4.1. Conclusions**

- The strategic approach to communication about accession needs to be tailored to progress towards this goal. In Turkey, EUD acknowledges that accession is becoming less likely and, therefore, the approach taken by the communication contractor is tailored appropriately. However, there is a lack of clarity at EUIC level on this point, which is likely to reflect the fact that EUICs are located in semi-governmental organisations.
- The model of a network of info centres is appropriate given the size of Turkey, both in terms of its geography and population. The network allows the EU to have a profile in strategic locations across the country, for example regional capitals.
- The EUIC network is located in significant cities in each regional province. However, discussions with numerous stakeholders suggest that the relevance of the choice to host an EUIC in the city of Mersin is questionable because in this particular region another city (Adana) has a higher profile / is a bigger hub of commercial / cultural activity.
- From a management perspective, the decision to take political communication and the preparation of communication content away from individual info centres is sound because it is easier to work with one contractor, ensures a consistency of approach and allows funds to be pooled to achieve greater impact. It supports a more consistent and professional approach to communication and reduces EUD administrative burden. At the same time, this raises questions as to whether the EUIC key experts really need the level of communication expertise and qualifications required by the ToR, as they are not required to design communication content / campaigns and in the east of Turkey it can be challenging to find appropriate key experts.
- There is scope for more tailoring of communication at regional level, taking account of feedback from EUICs that some events do not really fit with local interests; given the centralized approach this is a point for consideration by the communication contractor.
- Overall, the info centre network provides an important strategic, outreach (outpost) function. Key experts are no longer providing info centre services, but they provide a regional bridge from EUD to key stakeholders (chambers of commerce), local authorities and school and universities. The focus for the future is on how to further penetrate key target groups and extend outreach.
- There are inconsistencies in the info centre approach to social media and the extent that this adds value. Yet as people rarely visit info centres to gather information, there is scope to rethink the info centres social media role. Consideration could be given to reinforcing the level of support provided to EUICs by the communication contractor, so that EUICs increase the impact of their activities. This implies that additional coordination /input by the contractor should be foreseen in the next contractor contract.

- There is acknowledged variability in the quality<sup>160</sup> of EUICs; a mismatch between actual target groups and the natural catchment of chambers of commerce, which are businesses. There is also potential to reinvigorate the network by discontinuing EUICs, which EUD acknowledge to be offering less value, for example some chambers offer a lot of in-kind support and others are less interested in supporting EU communication. This suggests that a next step is to consider adding or replacing some chambers with a small number of large (but financially viable) partners who have dynamic networks with the actual target groups.
- Third parties (NGOs, international organisations, etc.) cannot be relied upon to communicate EU messages and values in line with EUD interests, beyond compliance with visibility requirements, given their focus on communicating their results to donors to support additional, future funding.

## 4.2. Recommendations

- Rebrand the network, update the purpose and name of the network: it is the EU communication network. The network's main focus is communication and outreach and not information centre services. Appropriate targets and indicators should be set in relation to the revised goal for example as defined using an Intervention Logic.
- Maintain the overall level of presence throughout the country (such as more or less 20 cities as currently), but refresh/reenergize the network of EUICs by its (partial) diversification, by keeping the chambers that are champions and substituting the weaker chambers with other host organisations with access to relevant target group networks.
- Consider diversifying the network by adding additional sub-network(s) managed by other types of host institutions in NGOs/CSOs and universities. Which chambers should be maintained should be decided on a rational basis with a focus on champions and reduction / closure of weaker EUICs. There is an argument for an equal focus on each target group (chambers, NGOs/CSOs and universities), but the many benefits currently offered by chambers means that in the next edition of EUICs chambers are likely to remain the dominant, but for these there needs to be a rethink on how to work with EEN to engage with business.
- If it is not possible to identify a viable host organisation / small set of host organisations with a network to reach a specific target group, for example women. To reinforce connections with young people (a priority target group) consideration could be given in Turkey and beneficiaries in the Western Balkans to the EU ambassador-type scheme, which is works well in the eastern neighbourhood region<sup>161</sup>, albeit under the auspices of the OPEN programme and could be included within the main communication contract (not under the EUIC contract),
- Promote and launch a call/competition to become a EUIC host, to increase ownership by the winning institution/organisation. The selection process should aim to result in the selection of prestigious and well -espected organisations, which are financially stable (can offer in-kind benefits / withstand currency fluctuations and have access to target group networks.
- Reconsider the overall approach to social media and on-line communication and the way that the main communication contractor and EUICs should support each other for example with national

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<sup>160</sup> For example, the level of communication expertise, the level of energy and proactiveness of the individual experts, the extent that EUIC key experts take initiatives to increase the scope and impact of their activities.

<sup>161</sup> <https://www.euneighbours.eu/en/east/eu-in-action/youth/young-european-ambassadors>

and regional content. With a clear focus on outreach and the prevalence of on-line communication, how to increase on-line engagement should be a stronger goal with targets.

- Consider opportunities to build and strengthen the networks partnership with EU Directorate (Turkish MFA). Creating more synergies between EUICs network and the Turkish network of governorship EU desks to communication on technical projects, with a view to harnessing in-kind support and keeping communication open.
- In Turkey and in beneficiaries in the Western Balkans, consider a more systematic approach to student internships at low or no cost to EUD<sup>162</sup>. This could help to strengthen the human capacity of the individual key experts currently in position. This could be linked to the rethink on targeted social media / on-line communication, similar to the community manager model that was piloted in the Representations in the Member States, because young people are more social media savvy.

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<sup>162</sup> The EUIC in Istanbul offers internships to students who help to organise events and then benefit from access to information and knowledge about the EU to support their dissertations.

## **5. ANNEXES: EXAMPLES OF EUIC REPORTS AND MONITORING DATA**

5.1 Thematic Report Template

5.2 EUIC Monthly Report

5.3 Satisfaction Survey for Activity Participants





**European Union**

**Thematic Events Report Template**  
**World Refugee Day: 20 June 2016**

**Name of the EUIC: İstanbul**

**Date of the Activity: 20 June 2016**

**Type of the Activity: Thematic Days**

**Budget Spent: 2115 €**

**Distributed EU Publication Number:**

**1) Activity description + (3-5) Photos**

The IKV EU Information Centre organised an iftar dinner at Darüzzıyafe near Süleymaniye Mosque on 20 June 2016 at the occasion of the World Refugee Day. Head of EU Delegation in Turkey Ambassador H.E. Hansjörg Haber, IKV Vice-Chairman Prof. Halûk Kabaalioğlu, IKV Board of Directors members, Consul Generals, representatives from foreign missions as well as from civil society organisations, academicians, members of the media and refugees attended the event.









## 2) Attendance

- *Approximately how many people attended the event?*

214

- *Was the turnout high in relation to the venue size?*

Yes

- *Was the attendance high throughout the activity, or at specific times?*

Yes

- *What was the average profile of the participants, e.g. young people, families with kids etc.?*

*Participants were the Syrian refugee families who live in Istanbul at the moment.*

## 3) Media Visibility

Please write the names of the printed media / TV/ radio names and their circulation numbers (the headlines)  
the screenshots of printed media coverage

**Printed media clippings (e.g.)**

News Item Details	
Published by:	
Date:	09 May 2016
Page:	3
About	
Publication Type:	Local Daily
Political orientation:	Mainstream
Circulation figures:	1473

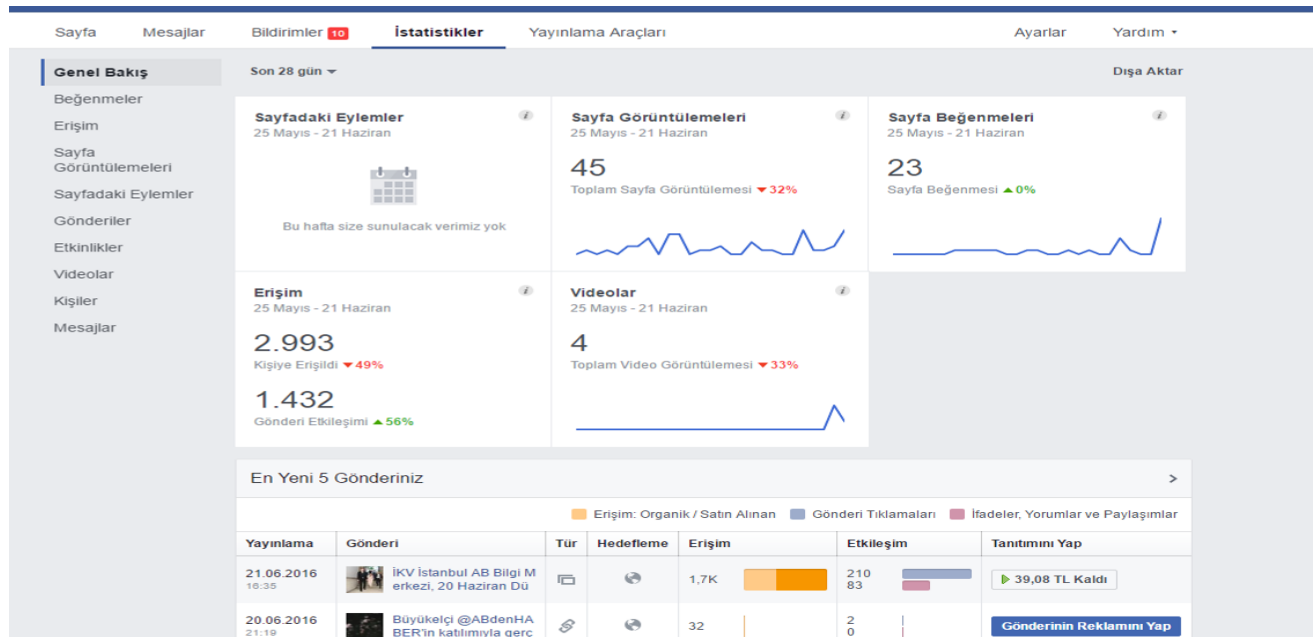
#### 4) Social Media Visibility

Refugee Day (20 June) - Social Media Traffic				
	twitter	facebook	YouTube	Instagram
#follower	136	140		
#posts	10	12		
#re-post /tweet	8	7		
#favoriteclick/likes	15	354		
#page views (1-13 May)	47	24		

#### Statistics:

[Twitter Account @ikv\\_ABBM](#)

[Facebook Account /IKVistanbulABBM](#)



#### 5) Feedback from participants

- Survey results: N/A

- Did you engage with any of the participants/ attendees?

Yes we had a chance to speak with refugees.

- What was your general impression about their satisfaction level with the activity?

They were so happy to be part of the activity. Their satisfaction level was good.

**-Were people in your view aware that the activity was related to the European Union?**

They were aware that the activity was organized by the EU and Ambassador Haber's speech was clearly contributed.

**6) EU Publication Distribution List:**

<b>Name of Publications Distributed</b>	<b>Number of the Publication</b>
<i>Avrupa'yı Keşfedelim</i>	
<i>İklim Değişikliği ile Mücadele</i>	
<i>AB Nedir</i>	
<i>Kadınlar için Avrupa</i>	
<i>Travel in EU</i>	
<i>Lokum Yenilik Peşinde</i>	
<i>Lokumla Avrupa'ya</i>	
<i>Lokum Tatilde</i>	
<i>Gönüllü Lokum</i>	
<i>Lokum'la Tasarım</i>	
<i>Lokum'un Çeşitlilik Koleksiyonu</i>	
<i>AB – TR İlişkileri Hakkında Doğru Bilinen Yanlıklar</i>	
<i>4 İnsan 4 Öykü</i>	
<i>AB'ye Genel Bakış (brochure- last version)</i>	
<i>AB Nasıl Çalışır?</i>	
<i>AB ve TR Kadınlar için Birlikte</i>	
<i>Avrupa'da Seyahat (2014- 2015)</i>	
<i>Bunları Biliyor Muydunuz? AB'nin Vatandaşlarına Sağladığı 10 Önemli Hak</i>	
<b>Total</b>	

**6) Conclusion**

***Would you recommend organizing a similar event again next year? Why/ why not?***

Yes, we do recommend organizing a similar event.

<b>CONTRACT NO.</b>	IPA2015/370/735
<b>NAME OF THE PROJECT</b>	<b>SUPPORT TO THE EU INFORMATION CENTERS NETWORK in TURKEY</b>
<b>NAME OF THE EU INFORMATION CENTRE</b>	IKV ISTANBUL
<b>REPORT NO.</b>	6
<b>REPORT PERIOD</b>	01.06.2016 – 30.06.2016
<b>DELIVERY DATE</b>	23.06.2016
<b>SUMMARY OF THE MONTH</b>	Thematic Day Events (Environment Day & World Refugee Day); Attending EU Education Forum

<b>Activity Number</b>	2
<b>Type of the Activity</b>	EU Thematic Day Events
<b>Name of the EU Information Centre</b>	IKV ISTANBUL EUIC
<b>Name of the Activity</b>	“Cyclist Festival” “İftar Dinner with Refugees”
<b>Date of the Activity</b>	5 June 2016 – 20 June 2016
<b>Objective of the Activity</b>	<p>Raising the awareness of benefits of Turkey’s integration process into the EU’s Environmental Policy among general public and contributing positively to ride bicycle across the city. The aim is to show riding bicycle easy way to reduce air pollution.</p> <p>In Honour of World Refugee Day with refugees and local people. This activity will be important to provide for a sense of shared community and solidarity with refugees in Istanbul.</p>
<b>Location of the Activity / Where?</b>	İSTANBUL
<b>Target groups</b>	General Public
<b>Number of the participants</b>	<p>Environment Day: Over 10.000</p> <p>World Refugee Day:214</p>
<b>Partner Organisation(s)</b>	Bisikletliler Derneği
<b>Name(s) of the Speakers/ Lecturers</b>	



<b>Dissemination of the Materials</b>	AB Nedir? Avrupa'ya Seyahat, Doğru Bilinen Yanlışlar, Lokumla Avrupaya, Lokum Tatilde, Gönüllü Lokum and Europe Day materials.
<b>Summary of the Event</b>	<p><b>Environment Day:</b> The Third of the International Bicycle Festival was held in cooperation between IKV EU Information Centre and the Turkish Cyclist Association with a high level of participation. The cyclists, who participated to various trips across Istanbul during four days, attended the festival's last day within the framework of the Intercontinental Istanbul Bicycle Tour organized at the occasion of the World Environment Day. Apart from Turkey, many cyclists from the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and also from Europe attended the event.</p> <p><b>World Refugee Day:</b> The IKV EU Information Centre organised an iftar dinner at Darüzzıyafe near Süleymaniye Mosque on 20 June 2016 at the occasion of the World Refugee Day. Head of EU Delegation in Turkey Ambassador H.E. Hansjörg Haber, IKV Vice-Chairman Prof. Halûk Kabaalıoğlu, IKV Board of Directors members, Consul Generals, representatives from foreign missions as well as from civil society organisations, academicians, members of the media and refugees attended the event.</p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	
<b>Media Visibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/istanbulda-10-bin-bisikletli-cevre-icin-pedal-basti-40113441">http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/istanbulda-10-bin-bisikletli-cevre-icin-pedal-basti-40113441</a></li> </ul> <div data-bbox="459 1178 1270 1980">  <p><b>Hürriyet</b> MENÜ</p> <p>GÜNDEM »</p> <p><b>İstanbul'da 10 bin bisikletli çevre için pedal bastı</b></p> <p>SONRA OKU</p> <p>İSTANBUL (İHA) 05 Haziran 2016</p> <p><b>10 bin sporsever, Dünya Çevre Günü nedeniyle düzenlenen 3. Uluslararası Bisiklet Festivali'nde Şişli'den Kadıköy'e 20 kilometre pedal çevirdi. Grup köprü üzerinde renkli görüntüler oluşturdu.</b></p> <p>Bisikletliler Derneği tarafından bu yıl 3'üncüsü düzenlenen Uluslararası Bisiklet Festivali'nin son gününde sporseverler 5 Haziran Dünya Çevre Günü</p> </div>

- <http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/1090982-10-bin-bisikletli-bogaz-koprusunden-gecti>



- <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/10-bin-bisikletli-bogazdan-gecti-istanbul-yerelhaber-837748/>



- [AB Türkiye Delegasyonu Başkanı Büyükelçi Haber Açıklaması](#)
- [AB Bilgi Merkezleri Ağı'ndan 20 ilde iftar verdi](#)

## Social Visibility

## Media

**bilgi** İKV AB Bilgi Merkezi  
@ikv\_ABBM

**Takip ediliyor**

Kıtalararası Bisiklet Turumuz birazdan başlıyor  
#keepsaving #DunyaCevreGunu  
@EUDelegationTur @ABBilgiMerkezi

RETWEET 7 BEĞENİ 12

10:11 - 05 Haz 2016

Sayfa Mesajlar Bildirimler **İstatistikler** Yayınlama Araçları Ayarlar Yardım

**Genel Bakış** Son 28 gün

**Beğenmeler**

**Sayfadaki Eylemler**  
25 Mayıs - 21 Haziran  
Bu hafta size sunulacak verimiz yok

**Sayfa Görüntülemeleri**  
25 Mayıs - 21 Haziran  
45  
Toplam Sayfa Görüntülemesi ▼ 32%

**Sayfa Beğenmeleri**  
25 Mayıs - 21 Haziran  
23  
Sayfa Beğenmesi ▲ 0%

**Erişim**  
25 Mayıs - 21 Haziran  
2.993  
Kişiyi Erişildi ▼ 49%  
1.432  
Gönderi Etkileşimi ▲ 56%

**Videolar**  
25 Mayıs - 21 Haziran  
4  
Toplam Video Görüntülemesi ▼ 33%

**En Yeni 5 Gönderiniz**

Enişim: Organik / Satın Alınan Gönderi Takımları İfadeler, Yorumlar ve Paylaşım

Yayınlama	Gönderi	Tür	Hedefleme	Erişim	Etkileşim	Tanıtımını Yap
21.06.2016 18:35	İKV İstanbul AB Bilgi Merkezi, 20 Haziran Du			1,7K	210 83	30,08 TL Kaldı
20.06.2016 21:19	Buyukelci @ABdenHA BER'in katılımıyla geç			32	2 0	Gönderinin Reklamını Yap



İKV AB Bilgi Merkezi  
@ikv\_ABBM



Takip ediyor

Büyükelçi Hansjörg Haber'in katılımıyla, 20 Haziran Dünya Mülteciler Günü vesilesiyle bir iftar yemeği düzenliyoruz.



#### VISITORS

Number of Visitors to the EUCs (Profession)	3
	Bilal Bilgiç - Student
	Gizem Gök – Attorney at law
	Bilgehan Anarat- Researcher

#### INQUIRES

Number of Inquiries Received	
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Telephone	2	
Individually		
E-mail	1	
Fax		
No	Questions Asked	By (name & profession)
1	Environment Day	Begüm Karadaş / Student
2	World Refugee Day	Büşra Bozkurt/ Student
3	Visa Free Travel	Selim Tekin/ Businessmen

<b>EU PERCEPTION IN THE REGION</b> <i>(Related to the each event of the month, the EU perception of the participants will be summarized)</i>	
<b>Event Name</b>	<i>How are EU, values, policies and its institutions perceived? What info/view/ note did EUIC Coordinators receive from the participants to give briefing to EUD?</i>
<b>Environment Day</b>	EU membership is supported by participants.
<b>World refugee Day</b>	Refugees were thanking the EU Delegation and the EU Information Centres network for their sensitivity with respect to the refugee issue on the occasion of the World Refugee Day.

<b>PUBLICATIONS DISTRIBUTED</b>	
<b>Name of Publications Distributed</b>	<b>Number of the Publication</b>
Avrupa'yı Keşfedelim	
Medya Gözüyle AB Genişlemeleri	
AB Bilgi Ağı Tanıtım Broşürü	
Bilgi Notu (AB Genişlemesi)	
İklim Değişikliği ile Mücadele	

AB Nedir	25
Kadınlar için Avrupa	35
Travel in EU	
Lokum Yenilik Peşinde	36
Lokumla Avrupa'ya	22
Lokum Tatilde	34
Gönüllü Lokum	
Lokum'la Tasarım	
Lokum'un Çeşitlilik Koleksiyonu	
Türkiye için AB Üyelik Müzakere Süreci	
AB –TR Mali İşbirliği	
AB – TR İlişkileri Hakkında Doğru Bilinen Yanlışlar	
4 İnsan 4 Öykü	
AB'ye Genel Bakış (brochure)	
AB Nasıl Çalışır?	
AB ve TR Kadınlar için Birlikte	
Avrupa'da Seyahat (2014- 2015)	
Bunları Biliyor Muydunuz? AB'nin Vatandaşlarına Sağladığı 10 Önemli Hak	
<b>Total</b>	<b>152</b>

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS	
Name of the news/announcement	Where it is published
İstanbul'da 10 bin bisikletli çevre için pedal bastı	<a href="#">Hürriyet Newspaper</a> 6 June 2016





## Survey of Assessment of Satisfaction with Activities of EU Info Centres

Details of the Activity					
The organizing EU Info centre					
Title of activity					
Date of activity					
Information about the Participant					
(Optional)					
Name - Surname					
Organization					
Level of Satisfaction and Recommendations					
	Very much satisfied	Satisfied	Not satisfied	Not satisfied at all	Comments
	●	●	●	●	
Content met my expectations					
Speakers met my expectations					
Organisation of the activity met my expectations					
I understand the activity's link with EU					
Other recommendations and opinions you want to share with us (critics, questions etc)					
What is EU for you, tell in 3 words please.	1) 2) 3)				

# Armenia

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This document is the case study country note on the field mission to Armenia, which took place between 15 and 18 April 2019, as part of the evaluation of EU Info Centres in the Western Balkans and Turkey and EU Delegation communication in the neighbourhood region. In addition to the focus on the evaluation questions and judgement criteria relevant to the field mission and the Delegation's current approach to communication the evaluation team placed a focus on researching the strengths and weaknesses of the former EU Info Centre that had been in place as a pilot project from contract signature in August 2012 until the closure of the centre in December 2014 in Yerevan.

The main documents reviewed to support the field mission, included the:

- EU Delegation Information and Communication Annual Report (2017) and Forward Planning (2018)
- ToR for Lot 2: Communication of the Framework Contract (EuropeAid/137211/DH/SER/Multi)
- Communicating EU-Armenia Cooperation and Partnership 2018-2019<sup>163</sup>
- ToR for communication activities relating to Europe Day, 2019<sup>164</sup>
- Technical offer for communication activities relating to Europe Day January 2018<sup>165</sup>
- ToR and Final Report of the pilot EU Info Centre (Support to EU communication reforms in Armenia – technical assistance)
- EU Neighbours East Annual Opinion Survey: Armenia<sup>166</sup>

The evaluation team met with individuals representing the EU Delegation, the Armenian government, other EU programmes, communication contractors, individuals who had worked for the former EU Info Centre and young ambassadors and conducted a focus group with Armenian students. The limitations and constraints to this exercise relate to logistical aspects, for example the availability of interviewees to take part in the data collection and aspects relating to the knowledge, experience and capacity of interviewees to answer the interview questions posed. In some cases, interviewees can find it hard to think strategically about issues that may never have occurred to them, for example, in relation to possible hypotheses about Info Centres, or because they were not aware of the previous Info Centre. The list of interviewees was shared and arranged with the support of the EU Delegation. The evidence gathered in this field mission will be triangulated with findings from other sources and presented in the Synthesis Report.

<b>ENI country visited</b>	Armenia
<b>Dates of field visit</b>	15 – 18 April 2019
<b>Evaluators responsible</b>	Melanie Kitchener, Coffey Tobias Schumacher, College of Europe, Natolin
<b>EU Delegation staff interviewed</b>	EU Ambassador <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Deputy Head of Cooperation</li><li>• Press and Information Officer</li><li>• Communications Coordinator</li></ul>

<sup>163</sup> B-AnxII\_EuropeAid\_2017\_139-274-TOR.doc

<sup>164</sup> Ref. Ares(2019)1250478 -25/02/2019

<sup>165</sup> Proposal on the organisation of Europe Day activities 2018, 29 January 2018, Publicis Armenia.

<sup>166</sup> <https://www.euneighbours.eu/en/east/stay-informed/publications/opinion-survey-2018-armenia>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of Finance</li> </ul>
<b>EU Delegation communication contractors interviewed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deem Communications</li> <li>• Publicis</li> </ul>
<b>Interviews with representatives of Armenian state authorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adviser to the President of the National Assembly</li> <li>• Head of the EU Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs</li> <li>• EU Department of the Ministry of Economic Development and Investments of the Republic of Armenia</li> </ul>
<b>Interviews with other experts working with EU programmes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior Expert International Cooperation Programs, SME Development National Center</li> <li>• Head of International S&amp;T Programmes, National Academy of Sciences, EU H2020 NCP, EEN Partner</li> <li>• National Coordinator Erasmus+</li> </ul>
<b>Interviews with media representatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Editor of Aravot.am</li> <li>• Editor of Aravot Daily's English Edition</li> </ul>
<b>Interviews with staff of the former EU Info Centre</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Former Communication expert at the EU Centre in Armenia</li> <li>• Former education advisor at the Info Centre</li> </ul>
<b>Interviews with former users of the EU Info Centre</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PR specialist, stringer at Bloomberg</li> <li>• Chair of the Regional Studies Association</li> <li>• Deputy Chief Director, Support to Prisoners Foundation</li> </ul>
<b>Interviews with EU Member State Embassies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff member responsible for communication, British Embassy</li> </ul>
<b>OPEN Programme</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two Young Ambassadors</li> </ul>
<b>Focus group with young people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus group with 5 Armenian students</li> </ul>

## 2. CONTEXT IN ARMENIA

### 2.1. Country specific context

The Republic of Armenia is a landlocked country in the Eurasian region of the South Caucasus with a population of **approximately 3 million** that borders Georgia to the north, Turkey to the west, Azerbaijan to the east, and Iran to the south. Armenia officially declared its independence on 21 September 1991 in the context of the dissolution of the Soviet Union to which it belonged since 1922.

In terms of ethnic composition, Armenia has a highly **homogeneous society**: more than 98% of its population is of ethnic Armenian origin, with the remainder being largely made up of Yazidis and Russians., Armenian and to a lesser extent Russian are the two main languages spoken across Armenia.

### 2.2. Strategic communication

The EU is Armenia's most important donor partner and there are several major infrastructure projects worth billions of euros currently being developed in the country. The EU Delegation implements overarching communication campaigns and outreach activities to pass on key messages about EU support. The campaigns are intended to serve as an umbrella for communicating about the existence and impact of EU technical and financial assistance and the contribution that the EU makes to Armenia. In the frame of Armenia's Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (2017), the EU and Armenia have agreed upon several Partnership Priorities as well as a common communication narrative to show how the EU and

Armenia will work together in 2018-2020. The agreed narrative, which is also at the heart of the Eastern Partnership, is: *'Stronger Economy, Stronger Governance, Stronger Connectivity and Stronger Society'*.

The communication landscape in Armenia has several key features that need to be considered in any strategic approach to communication. In terms of channel coverage, television plays the leading role in Armenia and it is the medium which is most able to reach nearly all of the population – urban and rural, followed by the Internet<sup>167</sup> and social networks, which are slightly behind; radio ranks third and the print media rank the last. Since 2012, the reduction in the cost of Internet service providers has brought about a massive transition from print to online media. The media landscape is very fragmented in Armenia; this was reflected in the focus group with students who confirmed their use of:

- Youtube
- online media (NYT, Figaro, Liberation, RT, Hetk, Radio Liberty, Armenian Times, RTM, BBCNPR, Aljazeera, Euronews, F24, CNN, Euractiv, Politico, The Hill, Fox News, Aravot, Twitter (focus on people rather than media),
- Mediamax
- Some Azerbaijani and Georgia sources of information.

Other communication challenges relate directly to the **current political situation**. After decades of authoritarian rule, the systematic violation of political and civil rights, endemic corruption and the pursuit of economic mismanagement, the newly democratically elected but highly inexperienced government needs to manage the Armenian public's unrealistically high expectations. Managing them while at the same time consolidating democratic rule and good governance, in conjunction with pursuing complex political, judicial and economic reforms, is an enormous challenge.

Armenia's new inexperienced political elite is also faced with the challenge of carefully navigating between Russia and the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) and the European Union, to which Armenia is tied through the CEPA. In practice this has been reflected by a lack of willingness to raise the profile of the EU flag and a sense that the EU should not be seen to be 'too close' to the government in public. For this reason, there is a lack of bill board posters and obvious EU signage, which is reported to be more apparent in Georgia.

Against this backdrop, the 2019 public opinion polls confirm that (62%) of Armenian citizens have a **positive image** of the EU and only 6% hold a negative view. This is an improvement on the results for 2018, when just under half of Armenians had a positive opinion of the EU. The Delegation suggested these outcomes to be the result of strategic communication throughout 2018. Over three quarters of Armenians who have heard of the EU 'strongly' or 'very strongly' associate it with individual freedom (87%), economic prosperity (86%), human rights (86%), freedom of speech (86%), respect for other cultures (85%), rule of law (82%), freedom of religion (81%) and of the media (79%) and democracy (76%). However, only 48% of the population are convinced that the EU fosters the preservation of traditional values in their society. Linked to this last point, any focus on LGBTQ topics is felt as a threat coming from the EU, and for this reason discussions and awareness-raising on these topics need to come from Armenia-based organisations. EUD staff has a strong sense of which values and topics can be promoted in the country and where the EU needs to remain in the background. For example, Armenia has a rich cultural heritage, which EUD recognises as offering potential to promote links to EU culture. Sport and healthy lifestyles are other areas, which EUD is using to promote positive values with a view to aiming for these positives to be associated with the EU.

The main overarching goals for the EU Delegation communication relate to **behaviour change** in relation to EU values. Most campaigns are framed with a view to raising public awareness combined with public diplomacy efforts, which focus on behaviour change. Communications around the adoption of the law on

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<sup>167</sup> In early 2019, there was 73% internet penetration in Armenia, according to Publicis

domestic violence provide concrete examples of this approach. The fact that there were no protests in the streets when the law went through is taken as a sign of the success of the communication approach.

With regards to more technical topics, feedback from government and EUD sources suggested that visa liberalisation is a particularly hot topic that engages the public. EU-created opportunities for education, clean water and clean energy also capture the public's interest.

Feedback from state representatives confirms the strategic role played by the EU Delegation to support government communication around policy areas relating to EU values. The ambassador confirmed his focus on **public diplomacy** to support EU-Armenia relations. Budget support and strategic communication advice via EUD contractor's Deem communication, resulted in engaging with the church and young people on the topic of domestic violence. The communication work supported the passing of a new law on domestic violence without the expected public protests. On this topic, EUD played a facilitator role supporting the Ministry of Justice via Deem. Gender equality and LGBTQ rights are other sensitive issues, which can be rejected by some sectors of the public if they are perceived as coming from the EU, and therefore would need to be communicated by Armenians themselves rather than the EU.

However, in some policy areas, for example in relation to the judiciary, it was reported that the public prefer that the EU is present. Feedback from state officials included that having a strong EU presence in the country is important because it helps to ensure **transparency and trust**. The EU recent support for the renovation of court buildings has been such an opportunity to bestow upon the high EU visibility. EU presence was suggested to help a lot to increase public trust in the courts and judiciary and to inspire other partners to adhere to EU values.

It was suggested that society is mainly EU-minded rather than oriental-minded, and this may be influenced to some extent by the fact that many in power have had a western education. However, when asked how visible the EU is to citizens, it was generally felt that more should be done. It was noted that there is less visibility via on-the-street billboards in comparison to Georgia, and that TV coverage tended to focus on economic projects, which might not always appeal to the wider public. It was suggested that there is space to communicate in a **more innovative** way and a need for a **longer-term** strategic plan about what to communicate. The need for the EU to invest in its own visibility is linked to the fact that there is no structural communication on the EU by the government. It was suggested by one state representative citizens expect that communication on the EU comes from the EU, even if the Armenian government supports this. The public do not expect the government to communicate about the EU.

Staff within the EUD reported the increase in EUD **visibility on social media** in recent years. There is insufficient evidence, and it is inherently challenging to attribute causality to communication; but it is noted that in recent years the EUD has changed its strategic intent whereby communication is used as a policy delivery tool, with the aim of changing attitudes and ultimately behaviour, through understanding target audiences and identifying effective channels to promote and sustain particular types of behaviour. In terms of measurable indicators, it is noted that there has been an increase in the number of Facebook followers since the arrival of the Ambassador from 44,984 followers on 31 December 2017 to 61,000 at the date of the field visit and this was suggested to be highest number for EUD Facebook followers in the Eastern Partnership. The extent that this translates into greater awareness among the public is not possible to determine although feedback from the EU Young Ambassadors suggests that there is an increase in EU visibility in the last few years, and during the focus group with students, participants were able to cite a number of communication materials and events relating to EU communication.

EUD senior staff suggest that communication on corruption has been particularly successful, even if the previous authorities disliked the EUD stance and some of the messages proved to be controversial. The EUD statement on hate speech on gender was highlighted as one which had not been well received by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is acknowledged within EUD that some ministries have a long tradition of engaging and can be considered to be pro-EU (labour and social affairs, environment and health) whereas others such as the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs tend to take a more traditional, old-

guard approach. The **communication climate** has also been very challenging and there have been issues with Russia distributing leaflets with counter messaging on domestic violence - another area where EUD communication is considered to have played an important part. Media representatives suggested, however, that Russian propaganda could work against the EU's communication efforts. China is also a competitor for the communication space in Armenia. The **Chinese** government has given a sizeable fleet of Chinese buses, which are very visible in Yerevan, with **clear branding** to confirm the support provided by the Chinese government to the people of Armenia.

The EUD has tended to focus on youth, women and people in business in recent years, but lately there has been a shift in the current focus to those aged 55+. It was suggested that it is important to target this age group as otherwise other external actors may fill the communication space and take over the narrative to this group.

Communication on the EU is also supported through the OPEN East Project, which takes a regional approach to communication in the eastern neighbourhood region. EUD reported that the activities carried out through the project were complementary to the work carried out by the EUD. **OPEN** tends to decide on which topics to communicate and then requests information about relevant projects that can be used to illustrate these topics. Materials produced by OPEN are very appreciated by the EUD. One of the advantages of the OPEN Project from an EU Delegation perspective is that it **allows EUD staff to focus on other tasks**. For example, the EU Young Ambassadors scheme supports EU outreach to students in the regions with 44 volunteer Young Ambassadors and two Young Ambassadors in part-time paid positions. The lack of direct management from EUD staff is a clear benefit, given the capacity constraints.

EU communication efforts in Armenia are significantly strengthened by the ethos, approach and activities undertaken by the Head of Delegation. The Ambassador places a strong focus on outreach to citizens, regional governors and mayors rather than focussing exclusively on relations with national government ministries. The Head of Delegation allocates some 70% of his time to support communication, and there was consistent feedback that this is time is well spent. This underlines the **importance of personality** and having the right person in place to support and advance EU communication within the neighbourhood region. Excellent and high-quality contractors are an important key success factor, but their overarching effectiveness is shaped by those in charge and the level of importance that they place on communication. This factor is intangible and difficult to measure but is a key performance driver.

### 2.3. Management and organisation

The need to outsource communication activities relates to the relatively **limited human resources** available for the management of communication activities towards the Armenian public. There is no communication section within the Delegation. Instead, the Delegation has a Communication Coordinator, who works from within the cooperation team. The integration of communication within the cooperation team has perhaps facilitated greater understanding that projects are not using their visibility budgets to communicate with sufficient effectiveness / there is a fragmentation of budgets and efforts, which has been reducing the potential visibility of EU support to Armenia. The EUD has taken steps to address this by retaining €800,000 from the visibility part of the budget allocated to cooperation assistance projects and **pooling** these funds to support one integrated communication Framework Contract<sup>168</sup> and is due to start in July 2019. The focus of the contract<sup>169</sup> will be sectoral communication campaigns, the development of communication products, success stories and social media materials. It will last until 31/12/2020.

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<sup>168</sup> Reference: 2018-401236: this is effectively the follow on from the current contract support to EU communication on reforms, which is currently delivered by Deem communication.

<sup>169</sup> The budget breakdown will be 52% allocated to campaigns, 23% for general outreach via Europe Days in Yerevan and the regions, 20% to general communication support, and 5% to strategy, including the definition of four quantitative KPIs per activity.



The pooling of visibility budgets to allow a more focussed approach to communication on cooperation assistance is in-line with feedback from journalists who suggested that despite improvements to EU visibility, what the EU stands for and the values it promotes are **still not clearly understood** by the Armenian public. It was suggested that there is a need for greater focus to citizens outside Yerevan, who were reported to have little or no awareness of EU support. Also, project-level communication outside Yerevan was suggested to have not been **sufficiently tailored** to interest citizens, though a project on biogas boilers was highlighted as one that had gained visibility because citizens could allegedly understand the relevance.

A new contract worth €3m, with €1m per year is envisaged under the AAP 2019 to be contracted for 2021-2023 to support **strategic communication efforts**. The main activities will include utilising different communication and visibility tools for greater outreach and supporting EU Delegation to Armenia in communication. It will also include capacity building for Armenian counterparts in strategic communication on CEPA.

Europe Days / Month is an EU flagship concept, which provides a common thread for communication across the enlargement and neighbourhood regions. In Armenia, Europe Days is an annual occurrence, which comprises a range of social and cultural performances and activities which take place in May. The activities bring together representatives from a sample of EU programmes, EUD staff, EU projects, EU Member States' embassies, Young Ambassadors, etc. Europe Days provide PR and promotion opportunities, including via TV, print on-line and social media. The Days are intended to create a celebration of Europe, raise public awareness and generate knowledge on the EU and its policies and values.

Feedback suggests that Europe Days generates visibility for the EU. During the focus group interview students confirmed that Europe Day was one of the audio-visual clips that students remembered seeing via social media; others related to the EU replacing sockets at bus stops, and the EU4Business programme. It is noteworthy in this context that no source explicitly mentioned concrete projects or communication activities by individual EU Member States, though focus group students did allude to cultural events open to the public, organised by the French and occasionally the German embassy, respectively.

However, feedback was mixed on the Europe Days concept. Various sources suggested that there is a need to renew the approach because their **high cost** did not match their level of effectiveness. As raised in several interviews Europe Days may **no longer** have the same impact and appeal as they did in the first few years. Despite this the Delegation reports high numbers of citizens participate in the activities. Journalists suggested that citizens are not necessarily interested in stories about the EU and that people attend the Yerevan-based activities for the free concerts, food or take-aways without really being engaged or interested in the messages being communicated. As well as a need to update the messages and formats to retain public attention (flash mobs and working with VIPs were suggested, for example), scaling back Europe Day celebrations to one week instead of one month of activities was suggested, with each day focussed on a different region of Armenia.

In terms of the EUD's management of communication activities, there appear to be strong and effective management **relationships** in place with the two companies currently under contract. Contractors reported clear and consistent management on the part of the EUD in terms of requirements and expectations and this was welcomed as being supportive of the wide range of activities to be delivered.

However, several bottlenecks in the communication processes can be identified. The first relates to managing the **tendering process**, given the heavy workload that this involves. Administrative burden from this process has been alleviated by using Framework Contracts, with one contractor to support a range of communication activities. There is reported to be **sufficient financial resources** to support EUD communication. Yet, managing the review and sign-off of each specific communication activity is a significant challenge for the EUD, as staff are **overloaded**. This situation has a direct impact on the amount of communication activities that can be delivered by the contractors. One of the contractors reported that it struggles to use the budget allocated due to EUD capacity constraints. However, decisions on when and how to allocate communication budgets are the responsibility of the Delegation and these need to match political and strategic needs.

With regards to the media: media representatives praised the EUD for its current approach to media liaison, but some issues relating to EUD resourcing were highlighted. Journalists noted that it could sometimes be difficult to obtain information about specific projects directly from the EUD due to internal procedures / limited human resources. Journalists were aware and made use of the OPEN Neighbours East hub (which includes information about projects, though without contact details) but were not informed of the ICCT platform originally developed under the Info Centre contract, which provides project coordinator contact details.

## 2.4. Feedback on the EU Info Centre

Armenia is one of the few partner countries in the neighbourhood where this evaluation can draw on previous experience and feedback on Info Centres. *'Support to EU communication on reforms in Armenia and technical assistance'* was a pilot project that ran between August 2012 and December 2014.

As the field mission took place in April 2019, some time had elapsed since the pilot project. The evaluators sought feedback from those who had worked in or with the Info Centre and / or had experienced the activities, which it organised. Interviewees did not necessarily have a perfect knowledge of all aspects and it was noted that there was some loss of institutional memory within the EUD.

As the project (Info Centre) was the first of its kind, several different aspects needed to be considered before it could become operational. Initial tasks included finding the premises, renovating and decorating the centre, and establishing networks with stakeholders. Key experts reported that these tasks were time-consuming and delayed the actual undertaking. This time lag seems to have been exacerbated by an initial lack of alignment between the key experts working in the Info Centre and EUD staff with regards to the **scope** of activities to be carried out by the centre. This finding is in-keeping with findings from the enlargement region, where EU Delegations have noted a long lead-time for contractors to understand how to work with an EU Delegation in a way that meets expectations. However, feedback suggested that the EUD tended to take a rather hands-off approach to managing the contract and this had made it more difficult for the key experts to understand expectations.

Whilst the contract started in October 2012, in practice the functions only started in May 2013. In July 2013, there was an external evaluation of the centre and it was suggested that the timing of this evaluation was not appropriate, given the limited activity that had been achieved at that point. This also alludes to the fact that there was a mismatch in expectations between the EUD and the contractor, as well as a lack of consistent communication.

The project was comprised of 11 specific activities and one of these activities was the provision of an EU Information Centre. The main objective of the project was to support the communication on the EU development cooperation and reforms in Armenia to **increase the visibility, knowledge and understanding of EU-funded programmes**, projects and policies among the Armenian stakeholders, media and the public. The project was also intended to increase awareness and understanding of the EU, its values, policies and institutions among university and secondary school students in Armenia. The project had three main purposes:

1. to support EUD communication activities on EU funded programmes and projects;
2. to explain to pupils and students the EU, its institutions and relevance to Armenia; and
3. to raise public awareness about EU-Armenia relations.

There were four key experts: a team leader, a junior expert in communication and public relations, a junior IT expert/web master who developed the ICCT project platform tool, and a website and a senior education specialist. Activities were grouped under two main components: communication and education. The communication component was intended to:

- Provide a professional communication facility
- Improve communication of EUD and projects
- Develop an interactive website and social media accounts
- Establish an EU in Armenia Club
- Serve as an EU information centre
- Organise EU bus tours
- Assist the Armenian government in drafting a communication strategy on EU integration.

In practice, the goal of assisting the Armenian government with drafting a communication strategy on integration became less relevant by the end of the project. The status of EU-Armenia relations changed in the second half of 2013, with the result that EU integration was no longer a strategic goal. This highlights the significance of political relations between the EU and individual countries, when choices need to be made on the form and content of communication. Former key experts highlighted several of the below communication activities as being particularly effective:

- **off-the record monthly meetings between journalists** (10 – 15 mainly editors) and the Ambassador, which helped to cultivate a network of journalists and increase understanding about the EU.
- **events and collaboration with other EU stakeholders:** these included weekly student meetings on EU-related topics; cooperation with Erasmus+ and different MS embassies. By the end of the contract in 2014, it was reported that the Centre was frequented by some 55 spontaneous visitors each day. This was corroborated to some extent by one stakeholder interviewed whose office had overlooked the EU Info Centre.
- **EU bus and outreach tours:** the Centre rented a bus and decorated it with EU flag branding. Key experts from the Centre visited all 10 regions in Armenia and provided support on how to apply for grants and, cooperation assistance support. Efforts were made to present information in a way that would engage local populations and planning trips were set up to investigate the specific needs in each region.

Interviewed stakeholders were consistently positive about the **bus tours**, which were reported to have been popular with local citizens. Government officials interviewed were in favour of repeating the outreach bus in the future. One interviewee cited government statistics, which confirmed the effectiveness of a similar bus-approach during the recent election campaign.

The **education** component contained three main objectives:

1. Preparation, design and implementation of two courses on the EU for high schools. This involved selecting 12 schools from different regions, working with the principals and teachers and preparing a series of integrated lessons to combine different subjects: geography, science, history and language.
2. A university EU text book, student guides and lesson plans for teachers. The tools were adapted to distance learning to allow the public to participate, and a mobile application was developed. The Centre collaborated with Yerevan State University for this work.
3. Creating an EU Alumni Network, which brought together a range of different stakeholders, including NGOs, youth and students. However, the network was reported by some stakeholders to be not particularly effective due to the wide scope of its membership.

It was reported that there were, however, some mismatches on expectations for the education component, in particular, the time required to develop new educational materials. The education component is not one that is currently integrated into the Info Centre approach within the Western Balkans and Turkey, and it is possible that this may bring value added especially in countries that have an EU membership perspective. The work in Armenia was also timed to support greater alignment between the EU and Armenia, before the political climate changed. The preparation of curricula, text books and other teaching materials are **tangible outputs** that can provide a more sustainable impact than simple public relations actions. It was noted that the course developed was recommended by the Ministry of Education and that, if updated, could still be relevant for use in schools today. In addition to the updates, the Centre also shared **new pedagogical methods** and introduced a range of educational tools and techniques to schools, which are likely to have had some longer-term effects. These points feed into an issue that was raised both by those who worked in the Centre and also some external stakeholders that it was not possible to reap the full benefits of key resources developed (website and educational tools), when the project came to an end, even though they could have had continued use. It is noted, however, that the ICCT tool was continued.

Overall, a **mixed picture** was identified among the representatives of state authorities regarding their **awareness** of the previous EU Info Centre. Of the three different parts of government branches represented in the interviews (two ministries and the national assembly), only staff from one ministry (Economic Development) had visited the previous EU Info Centre and participated in EU Info Centre events, but still did

not really have a strong sense of knowing what the Info Centre did. However, these staff expressed some dissatisfaction that they had had **little collaboration** with the Centre and indicated that they had much better coordination with the EU Delegation. Staff from the National Assembly and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs had either heard about the EU Info Centre but had not visited it or participated in any events or had not heard about the Centre.

Despite this mixed picture on visibility and engagement, which was replicated throughout the field mission with interviewees either praising the Info Centre and confirming that it had been useful and well used or indicating that they had no knowledge of the Info Centre. However, the idea of a possible new EU House was strongly supported by all interviewed representatives of the different branches of government. Representatives from the Ministry for Economic Development even indicated their interest in being involved in drafting the ToR for such a house and suggested that setting up a steering committee involving civil society, government, EUD, etc. could be useful. The enthusiasm identified could relate to the lack of budget for communication within government branches, as highlighted by the EU Department in the Ministry of Economic Development.

Meanwhile, the representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs requested a concept note on the EU House and indicated that this would be given support at the highest governmental level as a place to support EU values. The positive feedback on a potential EU House reflected the fact that the concept had already gained approval through a cooperation assistance project called LEAD (Local Economic Assistance and Development), which included an EU House and had been brought to the attention of the Prime Minister's Office. However, it was suggested that what would be important would be not only carrying out events and awareness-raising activities, but also outreach beyond Yerevan, for example with a network that might comprise one or two centres in the north and the same number in the south of the country. An overarching sentiment among those interviewed was that EU presence is fragmented and, therefore, not as visible as it could be. Hence, by for example bringing together the different aspects of EU presence in one space (Erasmus+, EEN and Horizon 2020, etc.) this could help to increase EU visibility.

It was suggested that an EU House could complement the work done by the EUD via its communication contractors (Deem and Publicis) and provide another Armenian interlocutor to support EU messages, offer a more innovative approach to communication and strengthen outreach beyond Yerevan, which was – as said above – suggested to be currently lacking. Feedback from media representatives also suggested that having a tangible presence was important. Others suggested that any EU House should be linked to a longer-term strategic approach to support improved economic growth and a fair and independent judiciary, for example over a period of five or ten years. Other ideas were suggested from within interviewed branches of government, including renting the space to civil society organisations to make the space more sustainable. This type of approach was also suggested by the Ambassador who identified a need for an EU House to support communication in the northern territories of Armenia and suggested that this could be located in Gyumri and run at a very low cost.

However, within the EUD, it became obvious that there are mixed views about the need for an EU centre or House that might for example simply replicate the previously existing structure. Key issues raised related to what the focus of such a centre should be and how it should be managed, as well as what the legacy of the previous centre had been, even though this assessment suggests that there has been some tangible legacy in terms of education materials and the ICCT tool developed. Yet, it may also be difficult to answer this question, given that at least four years had passed since the end of the Info Centre contract.

Staff currently involved in communication activities are stretched by their current workload and feedback suggests that it is already difficult to manage the current contracts with the available human resources. This situation, in conjunction with similar feedback from the enlargement region on how EU Info Centres are managed, implies that if a decision is taken to set up a new Centre/House in the future, there will be a need to add a member of staff to the EU Delegation to manage this contract. In addition, what appears to be key from the discussions held is that if it is decided to set up a new structure or a network of Info Centres, there is a need for a clear concept that explicitly defines how the operation will work and how it will add significant value to the existing contractual arrangements. The option of replicating the mentioned bus tours appeared to carry more favour among many, given the perceived need for additional outreach and the implied savings.

## **2.5. Assessing the Intervention Logic**

An intervention logic is a theoretical model to show how a results chain works from inputs to activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts. This section provides some reflections on the reconstructed Intervention Logic (IL) that is presented overleaf. The IL draws on information that was presented in the 2016 - 2017 EU Delegation Information and Communication Forward Plan and feedback that was collected from stakeholders and target groups during the field mission and evidence on communication effects relating to public opinion research.

Staff at the EUD did not consider that the IL offered significant insights into the management of the communication approach currently in place, given that this structure had not been used to plan and design communication activities. Therefore, the IL was not used as the basis for discussion with EUD staff as a way to explore decision-making and discussions focused more on the current situation and future plans.

One overarching observation is that the EU Delegation's approach to communication is often of an ad-hoc nature and thus constantly evolving. There appears to be a strong, lessons-learning reflex from contract to contract with bold adjustments made in terms of the types of contract and approaches which are pursued.

### **Inputs**

Inputs include the human resources within EUD and financial resources, which are used to implement communication activities. The Ambassador allocates 70% of his time to communication as part of the EU's communication efforts. As highlighted earlier, the Ambassador is an important figure in the EU-Armenia communication space and has a strong understanding of the domestic dynamics. Attention can be drawn to the fact that the ICCT platform that was developed as part of the EU Info Centre project is still in use, which highlights the benefits of these centres in developing tangible outputs that have a lifespan beyond a specific contract, for example.

Although not shown in the IL, EUD has made approx. €1m savings for communication by pooling visibility budgets from projects. This represents a 36% increase in the total budget available for communication when compared with the budget allocation for 2017 (€649,000). The additional funds will be used to reinforce visibility and reduce fragmentation in terms of efforts and budgets through one integrated communication contract.

### **Activities**

EUD communication activities are delivered via two main contractors, Consortium by EQUINOCCIO, Deem communication and ASTEC GLOBAL, and Publicis. The range of different types of channels and tools are standard. The way that communication is used as a support function for public diplomacy stands out.

### **Outputs**

The main outputs relate to increased visibility and awareness in relation to EU values and culture and the volume and type of EU support to Armenia in the form of cooperation assistance, which is supported through media coverage. The number of followers on social media is considered to confirm improvements in the level of visibility and engagement with the population, although these are usually considered to be relatively weak indicators of communication performance within the communication industry, which identifies engagement metrics as stronger measures of engagement.

The EUD did not highlight particular assumptions about the extent to which the outputs listed result from the activities undertaken, but other stakeholders questioned the extent to which citizens are really interested in stories about the EU.

### **Outcomes**



The outcomes listed in the Intervention Logic relate to the extent to which increased awareness and visibility translate into understanding and acceptance of the messages and values communicated.

It was not possible to test the extent to which this process is occurring. However, feedback suggests that certain activities may be more successful at generating outcomes than others. For example, several interviewees suggested that Europe Days needs a re-think because the types of activities / approach may no longer be sufficiently innovative. Yet the work around values and linking their transposition to public diplomacy activities appear to be having some tangible success. The Delegation confirms that new creative idea and approaches are always welcome as well as the fact that the approach to Europe Days monthly resulted from lessons learned from the approach taken in 2011 – 2015.

Communication which is not tied to public diplomacy has its role, but it is more difficult to define concrete outcomes from these activities and there are risks that communication materials do not reach target groups and / or are not effective.

### **Impacts**

Three possible impacts are listed in the Intervention Logic:

1. Increased proportion of Armenian citizens with a positive **opinion** of the EU;
2. Enhanced **support** within government for reforms including the introduction of new law on domestic violence and EU-Armenia cooperation;
3. **Behaviour change** within Armenian society in relation to EU values.

Polling surveys conducted by the OPEN East Project provide evidence on public opinion on the EU in Armenia. Whilst it is not possible to define the exact extent to which EUD communication is responsible for the levels of opinion, but it is highly plausible that the push on strategic communication has had a significant impact. However, a range of elements that influence polling data, including propaganda from Russia, this data provides a useful benchmark for the EUD.

The introduction on the law of domestic violence can be counted as evidence of an impact that has been significantly influenced by EUD efforts. Interviews with former staff from the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Economic Development confirm support for EU reforms, as well as CEPA. With regards to evidence relating to public behavior change, via Deem communication, the EUD managed to engage the Armenian church in the discussion on domestic violence. This was apparently a 'game changer' in the debate and meant that public unrest that was expected did not occur. Given the important role of religion and the church in Armenia, it can be assumed that the engagement of the church and the introduction of new legislation would support behavior change on domestic violence within Armenian society.



**Armenia: Intervention Logic of EU Delegation 2017 communication activities  
(based on 2016 and 2017 Forward Information and Communication Plan)**

Inputs		Activities	Outputs	Desired Outcomes	Desired Impact
EU Delegation	<p><b>Staff:</b></p> <p>Ambassador 70%; Head of Information/Press 30%; Head of Cooperation 20%; Political Officer 20%; Press/Information Officer 100%; Secretary 65%; Communication Coordinator 100%; Accountant 7%; Head of Admin 5%; Admin Asst 5.5%; Translator 35%/ Cultural Focal Point 15%</p> <p><b>Total budget: 649,000 EUR</b></p> <p>P&amp;I: 91 500 EUR ENPI &amp; ENI: 557 500 EUR Visibility clause for projects Up to 5% contract budget</p> <p><b>Equipment:</b></p> <p>TV; video player; still camera; Video conference equipment</p> <p>EUD internal online communication coordination tool (ICCT)</p>	<p><b>Activities for traditional media:</b></p> <p>Lunches, conferences, visits etc.</p> <p><b>Public diplomacy</b></p> <p>EUD engagement with national ministries on EU values and benefits of EU-Armenian cooperation.</p> <p><b>Information products:</b></p> <p>TV programme (Europe Today), calendar, videos, info clips, social media clips, posters, leaflets, infographics, op-Eds, news articles, success stories.</p> <p><b>Communication campaigns:</b></p> <p>Erasmus+ awareness EU4Energy; EU4Innovation Anti-Corruption Campaign Be Bold for Change (women) Learning is cool campaign International Day for Protection of children EU4Education EU4Business Human Rights campaign Climate diplomacy week Civil society day Contribution to gender-based violence campaign HoD regional tour</p> <p><b>Cultural diplomacy events:</b></p> <p>Europe Day International Women's Day Formal Europe Day with APO Universal Rights Award Treaty of Rome 60th Cultural and sports activities EU Heritage days Euro club activities EU Model AEGEE</p> <p><b>EUD on-line</b></p> <p>Facebook, Twitter, Youtube /r Website, on-line newsletter ABC domain</p>	<p>Network of journalists is supported and there is increased quality coverage about the EU in Armenia.</p> <p>Increased awareness of linkages between European culture and Armenian culture by wider public and cultural actors</p> <p>Enhanced visibility of EU cooperation assistance in Armenia, e.g. energy efficiency and innovation, climate change, and education between ministries, civil private and public sectors, technical experts from civil society and academia.</p> <p>Increased public awareness EU values, for example: domestic violence, equal rights, sport and healthy lifestyles.</p> <p>Active youth (interested in the EU) and civil society have increased awareness on how the EU works, EU-Armenia relations and funding opportunities under Erasmus+.</p> <p>Increased number of followers on social media.</p>	<p>Increased public understanding of linkages between Armenian culture and European culture.</p> <p>Increased public acceptance of EU values: sport and healthy lifestyle, domestic violence, equal rights.</p> <p>Increased understanding of the importance and benefits of key policy areas: energy efficiency, innovation and education, and the need to act on climate change.</p> <p>Increased understanding of the scale, benefits and results of EU cooperation assistance in supporting Armenia.</p>	<p>Increased proportion of Armenian citizens with a positive <b>opinion</b> of the EU.</p> <p>Enhanced <b>support</b> within government for reforms including new law on domestic violence and EU-Armenia cooperation.</p> <p>Behaviour change within Armenian society in relation to EU values.</p>
	Target groups		Assumptions		Risks

<p><b>Priority target groups</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth</li> <li>• Women</li> <li>• Young professionals</li> <li>• Citizens aged 55+</li> </ul> <p><b>Other target groups</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government officials</li> <li>• Diplomatic corps</li> <li>• International organisations</li> <li>• Academics and intellectuals</li> <li>• Think tanks</li> <li>• Civil society, including churches</li> <li>• Youth</li> <li>• Media</li> <li>• General public</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Armenians are interested in stories about the EU.</li> <li>• Mass media products: TV, newspapers reach and engage with the public.</li> <li>• Communication materials and products are effective and convey messages clearly.</li> <li>• The new government is more receptive to EU than the last one.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Russian propaganda counteracts EU work to communicate about EU values.</li> <li>• Some of the old guard are still in power.</li> <li>• The public are used to key EU events such as Europe Day and only attend to receive freebies.</li> <li>• Communication activities are not as desirable as would be hoped.</li> <li>• There is fragmentation in messaging / actors communicating about the EU.</li> <li>• The public get fixated on specific values which are too controversial at this point: LGBTQ.</li> </ul>
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### 3. EVALUATION FINDINGS

The following sections describe the key findings by evaluation question and judgement criteria from interviews with EU Delegation staff, partners, EU programmes and students highlighted in the above table. As per the evaluation questions matrix defined for the evaluation, the field mission is not intended to provide evidence in relation to all the evaluation questions and judgement criteria. Final answers to the evaluation questions will be drafted drawing on analysis of hypotheses from different sources of evidence and provided in the Synthesis Report.

*Please note that EQ's 1-6 relate to the enlargement region.*

**EQ7.** To what extent the **objectives** of the EU Delegation's annual information and communication forward plans in the selected neighbourhood partner countries have been defined considering the **needs** of the target audience and are conducive to the achievement of the objectives set in the EU framework for strategic communication in the neighbourhood region?

- Extent that EU Delegations commission research into target group needs and set their communication objectives taking into account these needs.
- Extent that the intervention logic of the annual forward communication plans has been soundly defined and is conducive to meeting the objectives described in the EU framework for strategic communication in the neighbourhood region.

The EU Delegation has not commissioned specific research into target group needs, and levels of resourcing are suggested to hamper an additional focus on research. Yet the EUD works with two local communication contractors who appear to have a good understanding of Armenian society and communication needs, at least at a general level. The main consistent source of target group research relates to the public opinion data, which is collected via the OPEN East Project.

An Intervention Logic type tool has not been the basis for the development of the annual report and forward communication plan in Armenia. However, this does not imply that there is a lack of strategic thinking; i.e. the EUD has understood how to use communication as a tool to serve its public diplomacy goals. Nor does this imply that communication activities do not take account of target group's communication needs, but rather that these needs were not systematically assessed as the basis for designing communication objectives in the EUD forward plan. There is alignment, however, between the EUD objectives for communication and the strategic communication objectives for the neighbourhood region, yet a lack of overarching communication strategy which is shared between the EUD and its contractors hampers the work of contractors, who are committed to helping EUD to achieve its goals, want to understand better how their work fits within an overarching plan and would normally expect specific objectives and indicators to be set to allow their work contribute to EUD's goals.

Despite this, the communication activities being undertaken are **supportive of the strategic communication goals in the neighbourhood region**, which relate to communicating on bilateral issues, aid visibility, communication of the EU-Armenia cooperation and partnership priorities and communication with a one voice approach. However, questions could legitimately be raised with regards to the one voice approach, given the number of organisations that are tasked with communicating about different facets of EU support for example in relation to Horizon 2020, Erasmus+, Enterprise Europe Network, Armenian government departments, communication contractors, OPEN East project Member State embassies. The pooling of project visibility budgets supports a one voice approach and addresses weaknesses identified in individual projects' visibility actions. Whilst EUD may have an overview of these actors and many, but not all, are brought together under the Europe Day activities, these key actors act as separate entities and are not joined up with regards to understanding one another's communication activities or working together to

reinforce their actions. Each entity has different specific target groups and goals yet working separately fragments the opportunity to show the wealth and range of EU support. It was striking that at this point the Armenian ministries appear to be particularly keen on supporting EU communication, yet they lamented a lack of involvement and understanding about planning and delivery of EU communication. With so much change on the political landscape in recent years, a tactical approach to communication is understandable. Yet this tactical approach could still be pursued within an overarching strategic communication plan, which could bring together the different strands of EU communication more coherently.

**EQ8.** To what extent the **objectives** of annual forward communication plans for the selected Neighbourhood partner countries have been/are being **met**?

- Evidence that the communication activities implemented by the EU Delegation (directly and/or with support from external contractors) are delivering the intended outputs and outcomes, which contribute to the achievement of objectives set in the annual forward communication plans.
- Extent that the channels and tools used to implement communication activities are appropriate to meet the target group needs and contribute to the attainment of the forward communication plan objectives.

In addition to the standard communication objectives that are set for all EU Delegations (described above), in 2018 the EUD's communication objectives were to:

- Develop and conduct constructive and comprehensive communication strategy to cover CEPA and all other agreements, including a discussion and agreement with the Armenian authorities on a common communication strategy;
- To deepen and diversify cooperation with media, particularly with the outlets that are EU friendly and wish to strengthen cooperation;
- To enhance cooperation with the Young European Ambassadors and engage youth in EU activities by making EU messages to this group more visible;
- To use the European Year of Culture and important dates in Armenia's history to organise more cultural and sport projects in the regions of Armenia.

In line with the usual approach to describing communication activities in EU Delegations' Annual Report and Forward Planning documents, specific objectives and targets are not set for the different types of activities that are planned to support the achievement of EUD communication objectives. Expected impacts are defined in general terms as relating to enhancing understanding, providing support to different target groups, including youth, civil society and the media, and raising awareness. Specific outputs are required within specific contracts, for example the ToR for Europe Month confirms numbers of visitors required at events in Yerevan (at least 10,000) and in regional cities or towns (at least 2,000) and confirm numbers of promotional items for example for Kids Corner activities (blue and white balloons 500 per regional city and 1,000 for Yerevan, puzzles and colouring books 200 per regional city and 500 for Yerevan, Europe Day stickers, sweets, etc.). Outcomes are difficult to quantify and qualify but these are provided in Contractors' reports on the implementation of the ToR's.

As outcomes are not defined, it is not possible to assess whether each communication activity undertaken to support EUD goals contributes to their achievement. Contractors' reports and observation confirms that activities are undertaken and specific outputs are achieved. There are no systematic efforts and / or structures to collect feedback from target groups, for example in relation to events and campaigns. Insights are gathered through observations at specific events / through campaign delivery and via informal feedback. However, there is an investment in monthly media monitoring research, which does not provide direct target group feedback but confirms coverage of the EU on traditional media (print, TV and radio). The EUD / contractors harvest social media metrics and keep attendance lists. These elements are all indicative of the reach of different communication actions.

Feedback gathered during the field mission confirms that a **range of communication activities** have contributed to supporting the EUD communication objectives set. Through Deem Communication several strategies have been developed, which support communication on EU-Armenia cooperation, for example strategies on EU for Business, EU for Education in Armenia and EU for Energy. The latter strategy, in particular, was reported to have been a game changer in terms of making a shift in understanding on both

EU support and new technologies for energy. Positive feedback was gained from media representatives with regards to relationships with the EUD, and the Young European Ambassadors' network appears to be effective at connecting with students across Armenia, highlighting key EU messages and opportunities for support via Erasmus+. Peer-to-peer communication is an optimal way to engage with young people who use a different language and form of expression than older populations. Feedback confirms that activities have been undertaken to support communication on links between Armenian and EU culture and there has also been a focus on sporting type events. It was not possible to collect evidence to confirm if these activities generated any specific outcomes, however.

Despite the difficulties in assessing the extent to which individual communication activities work together to achieve specific outcomes, there is some tangible evidence of the EUD's success in using communication as a tool to support public diplomacy. Communication strategies and activities on domestic violence, which also engaged the Armenian church, helped to ensure the smooth passage into law of new legislation on domestic violence, which was accepted by the public. This is an excellent example of how communication can be used effectively to support the implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy.

With regards to the choice of channels and tools, the evidence confirms that the EUD is using approaches channels and tools to reach their chosen target groups. The focus on the use of TV as a medium is aligned with evidence that TV is a key communication channel in Armenia, and high numbers of the population regularly watch TV. Use of social media also makes sense and is the norm in any package of communication activities. However, mixed feedback was received with regards to the series of activities that are implemented around Europe Week. Europe Week / Day is a flagship communication moment that is used by all EU Delegations as an opportunity to communicate about the EU. Significant resources are allocated to the roll out of events. However, feedback suggested that the concept needs a re-think because it is no longer innovative. It was suggested that in previous years target audiences were excited and engaged through Europe Week, but that they have now become somewhat disengaged and are most interested in the freebies that are made available but do not really engage with the content. One suggestion was that the Europe Week is less effective because it is simply too long with a wide range of events occurring in Yerevan and the regions during the month of May. Focussing Europe Week activities in one week was thought to have greater potential for impact.

Whilst the EUD has achieved some success particularly in support of public diplomacy, there are continued question marks relating to EU visibility. More could still be done, but wide visibility is **recognised as not being easy to achieve**. However, feedback also suggests that there is a need and much more scope for outreach beyond Yerevan. The EUD is cognisant of this need, hence the push to reinforce communication in the northern territories, in particular with plans for an EU House in Gyumri. Yet there are other territories where EU communication could also be reinforced, and the evaluators noted the very positive feedback that was consistently received with regards to the EU bus, which used to tour the regions.

**EQ9i.** To what extent the available resources, **the organisation, production, validation and the management** of communication activities by the EU Delegation **are conducive** to an efficient, effective and sustainable implementation of the communication activities in the selected neighbourhood countries?

- The EUD human resources working on communication have the capacity and appropriate procedures to design and manage/ implement in an efficient, effective and sustainable manner the communication activities/contracts.
- Current monitoring arrangements for communication function at regular intervals and are capable of collecting data, detecting problems and issues to inform decision-making.
- The type, number and budget of communication contracts managed by the EUD communication officers allow for efficient, effective and sustainable implementation of communication activities.

Within the EUD Armenia, the amount of human resources working on communication is not sufficient to ensure effective and efficient management of contracts. This assessment draws mainly on evidence that communication contractors, who confirm that relationships with EUD are highly effective and that clear

expectations and instructions are provided, are not able to implement all the activities that they plan because there is insufficient capacity within the EUD to sign off on their actions. Concerns were also expressed that communication resources could be wasted because there would not be time to use the budget allocated within the timeframe of the contract.

There is considerable will within the EUD to make a difference to Armenian society through communication, and this is supported and driven by the Ambassador. However, it could be argued that there is too much reliance on this **good will and personalities**, which could put the sustainability of communication activities at risk if, for example, the next Ambassador was less convinced of the importance of communication and/or had a different personality. Also, the reliance on one person to manage communication contracts also carries some risk. It means that consideration of an alternative structure such as an EU Info Centre is more a cause for concern, given the additional manpower required to set up and manage such a contract, than a source of optimism for what such a structure might be able to provide.

One area in which structures have been improved relates to the pooling of communication funds and the set-up of larger contracts. This has reduced the fragmentation of efforts in the tendering of communication activities and supports the EUD's goal of making project visibility budgets more effective by bringing together their budgets under one umbrella contract. Overall, though, as far as sustainability is concerned, it can be considered that continuity in the use of contractors who have built up an understanding of the way to support the EUD provides some sustainability. Furthermore, contracts have been designed to ensure an evolution of activities; for example, the current contract managed by Deem Communication is a follow on from the communication part of the former EU Info Centre project. There was no evidence detected during the field mission to suggest that EU budgets and contracts are not appropriate in themselves, the main constraints appear to relate more to **human resources** within EUD.

The approach to EU communication is not currently characterised by the existence of systematic monitoring arrangements that are able to collect data, detect problems and inform decision-making. This means that some activities are likely to be less effective than others. Also, there is a lack of information to allow detailed comparisons to be made and that different management choices would be made, if more data were available. However, given the alignment of communication to bigger diplomacy goals/outcomes, it should be relatively easy to assess whether efforts are making a difference or not even if it is less clear what alternative strategies could be pursued.

There is insufficient evidence to confirm how budgets for communication activities could be reduced or allocated differently, although it is possible that local contractors may be able to develop more creative approaches at lower cost if this was required. With the open tendering procedure, the cost of communication increases because local companies lack the financial capacity to bid. There is some suggestion that large-scale events represent a significant expense and that contractors might, in theory at least, choose alternative creative options for the same budget. However, there was no tangible evidence to confirm specific alternatives for example to increase the reach and engagement of target groups.

**EQ9ii.** To what extent the set-up of **EU Information Centres physically located** in the selected neighbourhood countries could enhance the outreach of the different target audiences by the EUDs and the OPEN Neighbourhood Programme?

- A physical space/presence for communication purposes in the Capital and other locations<sup>170</sup> would make it possible to significantly enhance the reach and engagement by the EU Delegation of new and hard to reach publics.

This question is central to this evaluation and the answer to the question is: it depends. It depends how such a physical centre would be used, what the concept for the centre should be, and how it would link to an

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<sup>170</sup> The EU Delegation suggests that any physical space should be at three-inter connected points in the North, Centre and South.



overarching strategy. Concerns were expressed both within the EUD, although there are mixed views, and by the communication contractors on the role and function of an Info Centre.

An Info Centre can be used as a communication channel and like all communication channels and tools would only be as effective as the strategy that has been designed and is implemented to make it a success. The question of whether to have a centre is relatively theoretical, unless this type of strategic thinking is done in advance and formalized. Strategic thinking and a strategic and detailed communication plan are, therefore, pre-requisites that need to be addressed if it is decided to establish an Info Centre in Yerevan and elsewhere. Other pre-requisites also include consideration of sustainability, i.e. whether it would be possible to rent part of the space to other organisations, to allow it to become self-sustaining for example, and the need for additional human resources within EUD to manage the Centre.

Yet as highlighted earlier, feedback on the need and use for an Info Centre is clearly very mixed. Some highlight how having a tangible presence can make the EU more visible, even though the evidence suggests that even when there is a tangible presence, significant efforts are still required to make sure that it is truly visible. Others highlight that there is a political opportunity for the EU to establish a 'House' or 'Centre' in fear that in due course the Russian Federation may step up its presence in Armenia. This political opportunity is reflected by feedback from both ministries visited that an EU House is a good idea and that they would want to be involved in seeing it materialize. At the same time, another element that needs to be addressed is the sustainability of such a Centre. When the previous centre was shut down, this may have given a negative message that the EU was less engaged in Armenia; this was not confirmed during the field mission, however.

Existing contracts and resources include provisions for on-going, face-to-face contact with citizens for example through events. Direct contact with citizens is a powerful way to engage target audiences, which can provide greater certainty than TV or social media that messages have been understood and taken on board, although this point relates to the extent to which research is built into approaches to traditional and social media.

One aspect of the previous EU Info Centre, which appeared to be unique when compared to the types of activities carried out in the Western Balkans and Turkey, was the focus on developing school curricula, a university text book and lessons plans on the EU. This was a very tangible added value, which was used and appreciated by schools and will have had a wider direct reach among students and teachers. The fact that high quality materials were developed, which could still be used today if updated, confirms the sustainability of this approach. This aspect represents a good practice which could be usefully applied in countries in the enlargement region, which are lining up to join the EU, for whom education on the EU is important. As highlighted earlier in this country note, if it is possible to determine a way for an EU Info Centre to provide a tangible service to citizens whilst at the same time providing information relating to values or the benefits of EU cooperation assistance, then this would provide the type of win-win approach for citizens and the EU which would add value.

During the field mission, it was difficult to assess the de facto communication value of the former EU Info Centre. However, there were several tangible outputs such as the ICCT platform, used to showcase projects and still in use today, and the education materials, discussed above. However, the Centre operated with one junior expert dedicated to communication and PR, which is a minimal level of resourcing and clearly did not suffice to meet EUD needs, hence the need for a bigger focus on communication via Deem and Publicis. However, there does seem to be a relatively consistent message that the travelling EU bus did add value, that the assessment of EUD communication today confirms a need for more outreach activities beyond Yerevan and that these efforts should not be purely revolve around Europe Month.

It appears that the benefits of a physical presence can be identified. But there are many ways that this presence could be applied, which do not necessarily translate into a centre with staff sitting at a desk waiting for passers-by to come in. In fact, there is evidence from the Western Balkans and Turkey to confirm that this type of approach is now old fashioned and does not reflect modern habits of going on-line to find information. If the EUD intends to target the generation 55+ though, it could be that providing a place to sit down and discuss would be more attractive; but here again there was no firm evidence on this point. Discussions with

contractors highlighted that the EUD's current opportunity to work with individuals with a high level of creativity is in place. If tasked with a request to make EU presence on the ground more tangible, these contractors would undoubtedly be able to generate highly creative solutions.

A further consideration with regards to whether having a physical structure is feasible, relates to the range of different communicators on the EU (Erasmus+, Horizon 2020, etc.), who all appear to be working in their own silos unaware of what the relevant other is doing. These organisations rent or are provided with a premises within a host structure. There could be benefits to consolidating the EU's presence, if these different elements were brought together on the same premises, and this would add weight to the range of opportunities being currently supported by the EU, and it would allow synergies to be exploited that have not currently been identified.

**EQ10.** To what extent the communication **activities** carried out in the selected neighbourhood countries have been/are coherent, complementary and coordinated with those carried out via **EU** regional communication **programmes (e.g. OPEN Neighbourhood programme), HQ initiatives and by other partners** (e.g.; Member States, IFIs, international organisations) active in communicating about EU policies and programmes in the partner country?

- Extent that HQ and EU Delegations coordinate their communication activities in the partner countries to ensure coherence and synergies with other EU programmes/projects, Member States, IFIs and IOs.
- Extent that the establishment of EU Info Centres (acting as hubs) would enhance coordination, increase coherence and outreach of communication activities implemented by the EUD, the OPEN Programme, the other EU programmes, EU MS, the national government and other donors (communicating on EU policies and values) in the ENI partner countries.

Europe Month provides a key opportunity for coordination with Member States and other communicators on the EU. This year the Young European Ambassadors also took part in this event. However, not all EU communicators are involved in the Month; for example, Horizon 2020 representatives reported that they do not typically attend, and it is not clear why they, and others, are not included. During the field mission, it was not possible to gather evidence relating international financial institutions and international organisations, however the strong emphasis on communication in the cooperation section of the EUD, the pooling of visibility resources from cooperation assistance contracts, and decisions to support an increase in the effectiveness of project and programme visibility, suggest synergies between the EUD, programmes and projects that are in some cases implemented by other international organisations.

It is not possible to assess the extent to which an EU House could act as a hub, as this would relate to its ToR. However, given the limited human resources, feedback demonstrated that occasionally it takes the EUD time to answer queries. Hence, the suggestion that an EU House could provide a first line of response for queries and provide this type of support.

**EQ11.** To what extent the communication activities implemented by HQ and the EU Delegations have contributed/are contributing to raising public awareness about the EU, its policies and values in the selected neighbourhood partner countries?

- Extent that HQ, EU Delegation contractors can quantify and/or qualify increases in target audience awareness of the EU, its policies and values because of the communication activities.
- There are factors that have had a positive or negative effect on raising public awareness.

There is a lack of data to quantify and / or qualify increases in target audience awareness that can be linked directly to EUD communication activities. However, there has been an increase in the number of Facebook followers since the arrival of the Ambassador and data from the EU Neighbours East public opinion survey points to small increases in: trust in the EU (up 5% in 2018 from 2017); awareness of EU financial support (up 4% in 2018 from 2017), as well as the public's appreciation that EU support adds value.

Given the lack of available existing data, it is not possible to quantify which factors may influence the achievement of EU communication goals. However, several issues can be identified, including the political environment, the influence of the Russian Federation, levels of trust in and awareness of EU support,

personalities, expertise and the availability of human resources within the EUD and within the Armenian government. In addition, there is a range of normal challenges associated with communication, which mainly concern how to develop materials and messages, which resonate and engage target groups in some form or opinion or behaviour change. This challenge is persistent for all communicators and is one that cannot be underestimated.

## **4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **4.1. Conclusions**

- There is a lack of data to quantify and / or qualify increases in target audience awareness that can be linked directly to EUD communication activities. This makes it difficult to say with any precision how successful EUD communication has been. However, it appears that the EU is more visible for some but there is still a need to reinforce communication outreach beyond Yerevan
- The level of human resources within the EUD to manage communication contractors is not sufficient to ensure the effective and efficient management of communication contracts.<sup>171</sup> In consequence, the Delegation is not getting full value for money from its contractors and it appears highly unlikely that EUD would have capacity to manage an additional communication structure such as an Info Centre.
- Given the limited resources and current structure of communication support within the EUD (there is no communication section), there may be too much reliance on current good will and personalities. This puts the sustainability of communication activities at risk, including in relation to institutional memory, if and when staff leave, which appeared to happen when the previous Info Centre pilot came to its conclusion.
- The pooling of communication funds has reduced the fragmentation of efforts in the tendering of communication activities and supports the EUD's goal of making project visibility budgets more effective by bringing together their budgets under one umbrella contract.
- There is scope for a fresh approach to the Europe Days / Month celebration. The level of visibility and engagement with the public is not what is used to be, when the concept was relatively new. In consequence, the amount of value for money is not optimal.
- EUD's approach to making communication the vehicle to serve concrete public diplomacy goals has been successful, and support to the smooth passing of legislation on domestic violence can be highlighted as a best practice.
- There is some interest and potential scope to make EU presence more tangible, in particular outside, Yerevan, but also within Yerevan. The political climate appears to be receptive and Russia is not currently prominent in communication terms. Communication campaigns can be effective particularly when linked to concrete actions, but from a purely PR perspective their impacts can be fleeting and difficult to measure.
- Although there are mixed views on the level of visibility of the former EU Info Centre, it did produce several tangible outcomes that are either in use (the ICCT platform) or could still be used with some minor adaptations today (education materials/methods). Both components may add significant value in countries in the enlargement region.
- Although not directly linked to the EUD's own communication, insights from the field mission included the perceived value of the EU Young Ambassadors network as a way to reach out to students. The network provides DG NEAR with a valuable low-cost, peer-to-peer communication channel with young people, without requiring EUD's limited human resources to manage the network.
- It is not possible to draw a specific conclusion on whether a new EU Centre or EU House would enhance communication in Armenia, because there is no clear rationale and concept for discussion and any centre would need to be part of an overarching communication strategy. However, several elements can be concluded, which may influence the decision:

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<sup>171</sup> The Communication Coordinator of the Delegation is responsible for the Public Relations activities of the Delegation, including the daily management of the social media accounts and the visibility events. This drastically affects the man/hours allocated for contracts management duties.

- EU Info Centres should not be established just to raise awareness of the EU. Awareness-raising activities tend to be very intangible and their impact is difficult to measure.
- There is a fragmentation of EU communicators not only with regards to projects, but also in relation to other programmes Erasmus+, Horizon 2020, Enterprise Europe, which work in silos and rent their own premises, which could be brought together to consolidate the EU's presence / support the cost of renting premises. EU Young Ambassadors could also be linked to this consolidated approach.
- There is an appetite within the government for involvement in and setting up an EU Info Centre and a need for additional outreach beyond Yerevan.
- If it is possible to identify to link EU communication to some form of service provision for the public, this could provide a win-win solution to ensure usage / take up of the facility provided.
- There may be other tangible forms of service provision besides an EU Centre type format which could be suitable.

#### **4.2. Recommendations**

- It is recommended to set SMART objectives and define the specific outcomes that should be achieved through the communication activities undertaken. These results should establish a monitoring system to provide feedback on their achievement and insights to allow lessons learning and corrective actions, where necessary.
- It is recommended to establish and resource a proper communications section within the EUD to ensure that there are sufficient resources in place to manage communication contracts. Saving money on human resources by not having a communication section reduces the impact of the available communication budgets that are available.
- It is recommended to establish an EU House that gathers information on, and provides services for, all EU-related programmes (Erasmus+, H2020, Marie Curie, EEN, etc.). Having all services under one roof would inevitably generate much greater awareness among visitors, who would be exposed to the huge variety of EU offers. Other benefits include generating synergies between EU actors on how and what to communicate; and reinforcing the EU presence with a tangible structure which could support other EU communication initiatives. The risks to the sustainability of this House would be minimal given that the programme offices are already financed by the EU and are on-going.
- It is recommended to invest in activities that expose communities across Armenia to the EU, its presence, its policies and values, as well as its concrete projects. Examples are: re-establish the bus tours and connect them to a certain theme or motto (e.g. quizzes, small shows, concerts, public debates, book presentations, food trucks, etc.) and/or establish the energy-neutral bus stops that bring additional benefits such as mobile-charging facilities, interactive screens (displaying EU information).
- It is recommended to increase EU presence in schools and universities. It can be hard to communicate informally to young people who may not necessarily be interested in the EU, but education provides a tangible vehicle to do so and there are already examples of lesson plans and curricula that could be updated, it is assumed at lower cost than it would be to develop these elements from scratch. This also implies strengthening collaboration with Erasmus+.
- Drawing on insights from this field mission and field missions in the Western Balkans and Turkey, it is recommended to consider the applicability of the EU Young Ambassadors scheme forward to the Western Balkans and Turkey as a low cost and effective way to have a network of students in these countries. This reflects a lesson learned from Armenia of the benefits of the network for engaging with students and young people through peer-to-peer contacts, which cannot be achieved by Commission officials and may be difficult to EU Info Centre staff.
- It is recommended to develop a lessons-learning exercise on the approach to linking communication to public diplomacy, that lead to supporting the law on domestic violence. More broadly, opportunities to share lessons learned by Delegations across the Eastern Partnership should be explored.
- It is recommended to review scope to further increase efficiencies in communication by focusing more on linking communication to concrete public diplomacy actions and or public service type activities (such as TUMO / the bakery / a creche / youth centre, etc.) rather than for the sake of on-going general public awareness.

# Tunisia

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This document is the case study country note on the field mission to Tunisia, which took place between 3 and 5 April 2019, as part of the evaluation of EU Info Centres in the Western Balkans and Turkey and three countries in the neighbourhood region. As part of the field mission, the evaluation team visited the EU Delegation (EUD) in Tunis and conducted interviews with individuals representing the EUD, some of its partners, projects, and communication contractors, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), as well as the Tunisian government. The evaluation team also conducted one focus group with students. The evidence gathered in this field mission will be triangulated with findings from other sources and presented in the Synthesis Report.

A certain challenge to this exercise related to logistical aspects, as the dates for the field mission were only confirmed shortly before the mission itself. Despite the list of interviewees being substantially agreed and arranged with the support of the EUD, the limited time to arrange for interviews had an impact on the availability of interviewees, many of whom agreed to meet earlier and later in the day. An additional mitigating measure was to conduct a follow-up interview in the week after the field mission, so that the evaluation team succeeded in completing interviews with all relevant types of stakeholders. During the interviews, an additional challenge occurred in relation to the hypothetical questions about setting up an EU Info Centre in Tunisia, which most interviewees found difficult to answer as the concept was not familiar to them and they were unaware of any comparable structures in Tunisia.

<b>ENI beneficiary visited</b>	Republic of Tunisia
<b>Dates of field visit</b>	3 – 5 April 2019
<b>Evaluators responsible</b>	Anne-Claire Marangoni Andreas Marchetti
<b>Interviews with EU Delegation staff<sup>172</sup></b>	Head of Political, Press and Visibility Section Press Officer Head and Attaché of Cooperation Section Attachée of Finance/Contracts Section
<b>Interviews with communication contractors</b>	Campaign Coordinator of OPEN SOUTH Head of Innova Head of Wasabi
<b>Interviews with EU programmes and beneficiary government</b>	Coordinator and Adjoint Coordinator of Erasmus+ Communication manager of Moussawat, Ministry of Women, Family, Children and Seniors Communication manager of <i>Programme d'appui à la réforme de la justice</i> (PARJ), Ministry of Justice
<b>Interviews with partners</b>	Head of Al Bawsala Tunis Bureau Head and Volunteer, Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EuroMed Rights)
<b>Interviews with Member States, NGOs, and journalists</b>	Chief of cabinet and Head of Press Section, French Embassy Tunis Bureau Head and Project Manager, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Journalist
<b>Focus group with students</b>	Faculté des Sciences Juridiques, Politiques et Sociales, Tunis (9 students, Master level)

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<sup>172</sup> It was not possible to interview the Head of Delegation, who was on a business trip 3-5 April.



Besides the interviews conducted, the evaluation team relied on documents related to the EU/EUD communication strategy and activities. As a number of substantial documents on the issue were not made available sufficiently ahead of the field mission to inform interviews, the evaluation team continued collecting relevant documents based on the indications provided by interviewees.

<b>List of major documents reviewed</b>
EU Delegation Tunisia: Information and Communication Annual Report (2016) & Forward Planning (2017), 24 January 2017.
EU Delegation Tunisia: Information and Communication Annual Report (2017) & Forward Planning (2018), December 2017.
EU Delegation Tunisia: Information and Communication Annual Report (2018) & Forward Planning (2019), 21 December 2018.
Cahier des Charges for Contract with Innova, 2017.
Terms of Reference for Contract with Wasabi, 2018.
DAI Europe: Stratégie de Communication Moussawat, no date.
OPEN Neighbourhood: Communicating for a stronger partnership: connecting with citizens across the Southern Neighbourhood (Opinion Poll, Third Wave Report), February 2019.
Terms of Reference no. 28 for Communication strategist non-key expert senior, sans date [2018].
Avis de marché de services: Conception, réalisation et mise en œuvre d'une politique de communication sur la coopération de l'Union européenne en Tunisie, EuropeAid/139925/DH/SER/TN, August 2018.

## **2. CONTEXT IN TUNISIA**

### **2.1. Country specific context**

Tunisia is one of 16 countries covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), bordering the Mediterranean and located between Algeria to the West and Libya to the East. It is a medium-size country with a surface of 163,610 km<sup>2</sup> and a relatively young population of 11.3 million with almost 40% of the population under 25 years (2016<sup>173</sup>).

Tunisia was the pioneer country of the “Arab Spring” with vocal demands for democracy, participation and accountable government. Tunisia is the only country, which public discontent and the ousting of a long-time leader has led to a transition into a form of democracy. Despite growth having picked up again lately and inflation seeming to have reached a plateau, overall GDP has decreased from the 2014 peak, as the GDP/capita since the 2010 and 2014 peaks.<sup>174</sup> Unemployment still remains higher than before the revolution, with youth being particularly affected<sup>175</sup>. This creates a challenging environment for political communication where these themes are priorities and the audience (notably youth) has high expectations for change.

The European Union has continuously highlighted the political and strategic importance of Tunisia within the ENP as a whole and the MENA region, in particular. The EU has established a Privileged Partnership with Tunisia, built on the Association Agreement that entered into force in 1998. The EU has also substantially increased its assistance – in the form of grants as well as macro-financial assistance – to the country. The ongoing negotiations on a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) reflect this commitment to partner with Tunisia and work towards the continuous democratic and economic transition. Moreover, this focus is visible in the EU's high-level communication, notably through the Joint Communication of the High Representative and the European Commission on “Strengthening EU support for Tunisia” of 29 September 2016 (JOIN(2016) 47 final), and numerous high-level visits to Tunisia. However, the percentage of respondents in Tunisia reporting a positive image of the EU remains below the regional

<sup>173</sup> <http://www.ins.tn/fr/themes/population#sub-3701>

<sup>174</sup> <https://data.worldbank.org/country/tunisia>

<sup>175</sup> <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.ZS?locations=TN>



average (at 50%, versus 55% at regional level) despite an improvement compared to the 2016 and 2017 polls<sup>176</sup>, which indicates a somewhat challenging environment for the communication of the EU/EUD.<sup>177</sup>

## 2.2. Strategic communication

EUD's approach to communication is informed by the overall policy objectives of the revised ENP of November 2015, as well as the EU's Global Strategy of June 2016 and the specific policy objectives for Tunisia, namely:

- reinforcement of bilateral relations, including DCFTA negotiations,
- promotion of the democratic transition, and
- promotion of a sustainable migration policy, including visa facilitation and readmission.

This is based on the review of the EUD's Information and Communication Forward Plan for 2016 and 2017, The most recent Information and Communication Forward Plan (for 2018 and 2019) confirm this direction (the four documents were made available by the EUD, the team did not have access to the same documents for 2011-2015).

The communication objectives pursued by the EUD address all three policy objectives, albeit by varying degrees, with an emphasis on the importance and benefits of the bilateral relationship featuring most prominently and constituting the overarching orientation for communication across policy objectives. the communication objectives are defined in general terms, namely to raise awareness and the visibility of the EU, to increase the volume and quality of media coverage of EU affairs, engage in public discussions (including through social media) to support an informed public debate on the EU. Although they are not explicitly defined in the forward plans, the key communication messages appear clear to the EU stakeholders consulted, who also indicated that the messages had remained consistent over time. The key messages to be conveyed are:

- the EU is Tunisia's most important partner and can be trusted,
- the partnership is beneficial to the entire population, also in remote areas, and
- the partnership is particularly beneficial to Tunisian youth.

The Information and Communication Forward Plans reviewed also identify multiple target audiences for the EUD's communication activities: youth, public stakeholders (political leaders and parties, administration, diplomats), academics (researchers, students), businessmen, journalists, civil society, actors of the cultural field, and the public. The targeting is also confirmed in the most recent documents (for 2018 and 2019), as well as in the documents produced by Task Force Southern Neighbourhood (EU Delegations communication objectives for 2018 and Roadmap, no date). However, all interviews confirm that the primary focus is on youth. Meanwhile, journalists, civil society, cultural actors and public stakeholders are secondary targets and considered to be multipliers, who amplify EU communication efforts to the general public. Interviews at the Delegation and with representatives of EU programmes and the beneficiary government also highlighted the importance given to reaching out to target audiences not only in the capital, but also in the rest of the country, which inherently suffers from less access to information and communication activities.

The targeting in turn informs the selection of communication tools and channels. With a primary focus on youth comes a focus on digital tools and social media (there are 8 million Facebook users in Tunisia for example; see Innova presentation, 2018, "Séance d'accompagnement no.1"). To manage these channels, in particular, the Delegation is supported by an external contractor advising on digital media and training the Delegation staff responsible for these channels. The Delegation also uses other channels, such as events, media relations and mass media (there is for instance a plan to broadcast a quiz on a radio station). At EUD, staff are aware of the necessity to adapt communication to the demands and habits of principal target

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<sup>176</sup> Respectively at 49% and 47%; EU Neighbours South, Open Neighbourhood – Communicating for a stronger partnership: connecting with citizens across the Southern Neighbourhood, Opinion Poll, First and Second Wave Reports, 2016 and 2017.

<sup>177</sup> EU Neighbours South, Open Neighbourhood – Communicating for a stronger partnership: connecting with citizens across the Southern Neighbourhood, Opinion Poll, Third Wave Report, February 2019

groups. This implies recognition that there is a need to go beyond official statements and shifting the focus from budgetary figures to story-telling and giving concrete examples from the variety of available projects.

Despite the identification of and focus on these groups, the EUD did not and does not, at present, rely on any specific research into these groups' needs. There is no needs analysis to inform the targeting, selection of communication channels and tools, or the messaging. However, some data is collected by the EU Neighbours South Project. For this report, we are using the First, Second and Third wave reports which provide comparable data on opinions and their evolution between 2016, 2017 and 2019. Where available, we discuss comparative data and the evolution of opinions over time. The 2019 third wave report indicates that social networks are the third preferred source of news on national political matters (29% of the respondents, below the 36% average in Maghreb; the percentage in Tunisia is lower than in 2017 at 32%, but still higher than in 2016 at 21%) behind public TV channels (51% against 62% in 2017 and 52% in 2016) and private TV channels (40% against 64% in 2017 and 35% in 2016).<sup>178</sup> Social networks are still more preferred than internet sources and public radio stations (both at 27%; in 2017, internet sources were at 27% and public radio stations at 35% against respectively 22% and 23% in 2016). The evolution of the percentages shows that media habits are not stabilised yet. However, online social networks are the second most trusted source of information (at 15%) behind public TV channels (31%) – as in 2017 (respectively 14% and 31%) while in 2016 social media were the fourth most trusted source of information (at 8% after public TV channels at 42%, private TV channels at 18% and internet at 10%).<sup>179</sup>

In addition, there is no monitoring in place either to assess the actual reach and/or effects of the communication activities towards the target groups. Some data is collected, however, for example the most recent Information and Communication Annual Reports consulted include quantitative indicators such as event participation but especially with regard to digital resources (website use and social media) as follows:

Platform	Visits/Followers 2015	Visits/Followers 2016	Visits/Followers 2017 as of December	Visits/Followers 2018 as of December	Increase in %
Website EUDEL			11,070	23,931	116%
Facebook EUDEL	16,225	20,035	22,714	26,333	62%
Facebook EUDEL ( <i>Agenda culturel européen</i> )			757	929	23%
Twitter EUDEL	362	898	2,260	4,081	1,125%
Instagram EUDEL			n/a	58	n/a
Facebook HoD			16,846	19,578	16%
Twitter HoD			1,408	3,434	144%
Instagram HoD			454	1,111	145%

Note: where figures are available, the increase percentage compares 2018 to 2015. If figures for 2015 and 2016 are not available, the percentage compares 2018 to 2017

The above figures suggest a very substantial increase in the number of followers on social media between 2015 and 2017. The increase across all social media is in-line with the view shared during the interviews that the EUD is delivering / commissioning good communication activities and that EUD has made improvements to its communication in recent years. Stakeholders interviewed, both EU and non-EU stakeholders, emphasised that a qualitative shift is noticeable, which has been led by the Head of Delegation (HoD). A substantial contribution to the visibility and presence of the EUD – as well as the EU – is in fact attributed to the communication and information work by the HoD, who is constantly described as an outstanding communicator and public figure.

<sup>178</sup> EU Neighbours South, Open Neighbourhood – Communicating for a stronger partnership: connecting with citizens across the Southern Neighbourhood, Opinion Poll, Second and Third Wave Report, 2017 and 2019

<sup>179</sup> *ibidem*

The role assumed by the HoD also plays into the perception of stakeholders that regular communication by the EUD is weaker (due to a lack of resources) than EUD crisis communication, with the HoD again playing a crucial role in seizing opportunities to make the EU's/EUD's point of view heard. Some interviewees stressed this by pointing to the communication activities around the EU's decision to blacklist Tunisia as a tax haven – and again the decision to remove Tunisia from that list. When it comes to contentious issues beyond crises, such as the potential effects of a DCFTA, other actors who are not directly involved are seen to be better placed to bring together different points of view and to open spaces for dialogue. When it comes to some issues, the public and stakeholders are more likely to consider other actors as being more impartial than the EUD, despite efforts undertaken by EUD to organise public events or to have a specific focus on particular issues in the Manager magazine. This implies a need to work through third parties.

However, there is no qualitative monitoring in place to support any further discussion of the reception and effects of the communication activities. It is noted that the ToR for the Communication Strategist refer to a “brief analysis of the current communication tools of the EUD and [assessment] of their potential usage and impact”. When asked about this analysis and assessment, EUD staff indicated that it was very early stage and that there was no document available yet.

Despite enhanced outreach which may be suggested by the increase in the number of visits/followers on the website and social media accounts (see table above), most interviewees note that there continues to be a significant mismatch between the importance of the EU's role in Tunisia on the one hand and public visibility and awareness of the EU's role on the other hand. To further enhance its visibility and outreach, moving forward, the EUD, according to the EUD's Forward Planning for 2019 pursues different trajectories at the same time, namely:

- strengthening and ensuring **continuity of flagship events**, such as “Europe Week” usually in May and in November with a combination of different activities;
- **increasing its presence** in the different parts of the country, beyond Tunis, especially by projects implemented and events organised in the provinces, such as the “campus tour” of #EU4Youth (OPEN SOUTH);
- **enhancing and substantiating outreach, especially via social media**, by increasing knowledge and competence within the Delegation through training activities for staff and by meeting more precisely target group needs and expectations, informed by support from contractors, including consultancy services and compiling press/media reviews (Innova) as well as providing concrete communication services (Wasabi);
- **hiring a communication expert** in cooperation with StratCom (cf. ToR no. 28) to provide support to the EUD in terms of its communication strategic approach, developing audience-targeted communication products and increasing EU visibility by (1) defining a basic strategic communication approach for the EUD, (2) developing a communication roadmap for EUD, and (3) supporting the delivery of professional and high-quality communication products and deliverables included in the roadmap;
- **combining existing visibility budgets into one larger contract**<sup>180</sup> to ensure better visibility of EU activities in Tunisia and enhance public adherence to the partnership offer in-line with the above strategic objectives, including (1) putting in place a communication strategy of the EU in Tunisia, (2) piloting this strategy with communication on EU presence and action in addition to individual projects, (3) ensuring coherence and eligibility of EU policies and projects, and (4) tailoring communication and messages according to the specificities of each action, project or programme.

Although current EUD communication contractors (Innova or Wasabi) are playing an important role to communicate on behalf of the Delegation, their objectives are mainly defined with regards to concrete (quantifiable) outputs, such as the number of events to be organised or videos to be produced (Wasabi) or the frequency of press reviews and media monitoring, or the number of press conferences to organise (Innova). Specific targets relating to target groups are mostly lacking, and outcomes and/or impacts are not clearly addressed. In order to help contractors to better contribute to desired results – as regards communication in particular and policy objectives in general – outcomes and impacts would need to be more

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<sup>180</sup> This is an upcoming contract, consortia have been shortlisted and are preparing their technical offers.

specifically spelled out in future contracts. This seems particularly relevant for the ongoing process of merging existing budgets available for communication activities into one larger contract.

### 2.3. Management and organisation

Despite Tunisia receiving substantial attention and funding by the European Union, staff at EUD does not include a Communication Coordinator (ComCoord). This is an exception in the neighbourhood region. Communication and information work at EUD is, therefore, a shared task with staff being particularly polyvalent, carrying out communication and information work alongside their other functions. It is important to note that the press officer tasks are different to that of communication coordinators (in the table below, the percentage of the press officer's time devoted to information work might be misinterpreted). The weak human resources basis for communication and information work at the EUD is paired with a current reduction in budget due to Brexit related uncertainty on the Union's overall finances (the staff of the political, press and visibility section gave the example of the recent negotiations with headquarters on the allocation for 2019 from the FPI budget line). Nonetheless, EUD manages to coordinate its communication and information work with staff from both EEAS and the Commission, essentially by involving the political section and the cooperation section.

According to the EUD's Annual Reports (2015 to 2018), the budget allocations for information work have increased from a total of 371,400 EUR in 2015 to 463,500 in 2018 with a low point at 286,000 EUR in 2017 (it is important to note that the figures presented in the annual reports are not fully comparable<sup>181</sup>). Whilst this increase is significant, it has not been matched by the amount of human resources available to support this type of work. HR capacity has been consistently weak over the years and has increased between 2015 and 2018:

**Table 3: Human resources available for information work (2015-2018)**

Function	% time devoted to information work in 2015	% time devoted to information work in 2016	% time devoted to information work in 2017	% time devoted to information work in 2018
Ministre Conseiller	40%			
Head of Political section		30% (1 <sup>st</sup> Counselor)	10%	20%
Political counselor			10%	10%
Political counselor		30%	30%	
Press Officer		100%	100%	100%
Attaché of Cooperation section	50%	50%	50%	50%
Assistant	100%	70%	30%	30%
Head of Administration section				5%
Administrative assistant				10%
Contract staff working on culture & information	100%			

Source: Annual activity reports and forward planning 20015-2018 (made available by the EUD)

**Table 4: Budget allocations for information work**

	2015	2016	2017	2018

<sup>181</sup> The Annual Report for 2016 only indicates 101,000 EUR for the P&I budget line 19.0601 without giving a total amount. The global allocation is not specified in 2016, neither is the budget under the regional programme for 2016 and 2018.

P&I	40,500€	101,000€	96,000€	163,500€
Other funding instruments (where appropriate)	Global allocation: 365,000€	Global	Global allocation: 150,000€	Global allocation: 300,000€
Regional programme (where appropriate)	ENI Info centre	EU Neighbours South	EU Neighbours South estimated at 40,000€ for #EU4YOUTH & #EU4CULTURE	EU neighbours South for #EU4YOUTH & #EU4CULTURE
Visibility clause (projects)				
Other	"Renforcement": 50,900			
Total	371,400€		286,000€	463,500€

Source: Annual activity reports and forward planning 2015-2018 (made available by the EUD)

As highlighted in the annual activity reports, the OPEN SOUTH project – and country-specific contracts (to the extent they are subject to visibility requirements) support the work of the EUD in the field of communication and information:

- EUD in Tunisia actively involves OPEN SOUTH in a variety of activities, especially #EU4Youth, #EU4Culture, and its Europe Week. Although OPEN SOUTH is managed by DG NEAR, the interviews revealed that there is close coordination between the Attaché of Cooperation Section at EUD and the OPEN SOUTH Campaign Coordinator who happens to be located in Tunis. OPEN SOUTH also provides a communication strategist to support the EUD's communication strategic approach.
- the contract with Innova includes daily press/media reporting and supports EUD's digital communication by sharing best practices and training staff in light of achieving outcomes/impacts. It was concluded for two years in late 2017. According to the interviews, the main interlocutors at the EUD are the Head of the Political Section and the Press Officer with meetings organized on an ad hoc basis, depending on needs and events.
- the contract with Wasabi includes the principally demand-driven organisation of information days, other events and the production of videos, as well as some clearly defined deliverables such as the development of the graphic chart for Creative Europe, including for the website, or the development of visibility products (brochures on projects, pens, umbrella, etc.). The Attaché of the Cooperation Section is the primary interlocutor for the management of this two-year contract concluded in 2018.

With regard to the support of communication activities provided by OPEN SOUTH and external contractors, the interviews revealed that different personnel at the EUD are in charge of their management. There is no streamlined management structure in place, with the Political section and the Cooperation section being both in charge of communication and information activities, with the larger contract currently in preparation presumably being managed by the Cooperation section. Despite limited resources, EUD appears to manage the mentioned elements to support its communication activities rather efficiently. With regards to integrating support from OPEN SOUTH, this largely driven by the capacity / interest within the EUD to involve OPEN SOUTH, to add value not only in view of the limited resources at hand, but also due to extensive experience in running different formats.

In addition, though the need for an increased focus on projects and their results is acknowledged within the EUD, interviews with non-EUD stakeholders revealed that this has not yet resulted in closer communication *between* projects/programmes, i.e. there is no dialogue in place that would bring together the communication managers from different projects/programmes that involve the EU, despite the potential for such meetings to

streamline messages, but also to work on a more concerted approach to communication and to share best practices.<sup>182</sup>

## 2.4. Other actors communicating on the EU

Beyond EUD, the wider landscape of communications about the EU in the country is complemented by the actions of partners, NGOs and CSOs, media, Member States' embassies and cultural institutes, other EU programmes as well as beneficiary programmes. There is a consensus among interviewees that EUD has managed to establish good relations with many partners but at the same time a recognition that communication on the EU could be more powerful. Our interview programme provided insights into the communication on the EU by media, partners, MS embassies and cultural institutes, other EU programmes as well as beneficiary programmes.

Interviews with non-EU stakeholders and a journalist outlined that there has been a continued, qualitative improvement in the media coverage of EU affairs. Interviewees indicated that it was most likely due to the availability of information on the EU and the provision of good quality information on the EU by the EUD, the EUD's efforts to engage with media representatives, as well as personal factors (such as the fact that the EUD's press officer has a journalist background and is well networked).

The partners (NGOs) were more critical in their discussion on the communication on the EU and its impact. They noted that EU communication is under resourced (providing the example of billboards which could be set up to recognise the EU-Tunisia partnership on projects of common interest). They also noted structural factors, which weaken the communication efforts:

1. Focus on numbers: they consider that communication on the EU focuses too much on the amount of financial support available and misses the narrative on the content of the partnership. Rethinking the content of the communication and refocusing on story-telling and the relatable character of the stories of the EU-Tunisia partnership are expected to enhance the communication effects.
2. Conspiracy theory: the communication environment remains challenging. Some people question the EU's interest in the partnership with Tunisia and mistrust the engagement in-country.
3. Prevalence of relationship with MS: there was consensus among those interviewed, that the relationships with individual Member States remain very important for historical reasons and that Tunisians know more about individual MS than they know about the EU. For instance, the 2019 Third Wave Report notes that the awareness of the existence of the EUD in Tunisia is below the regional average (39% of respondents in Tunisia against 40% in the Maghreb), after Algeria but before Morocco. There also seemed to be a tension between the communication efforts of the EU and those of Member States whose national, foreign policy interests are important. This point was also confirmed by the interviews with MS representatives.

Interviews with EUD staff consider that overall EU programmes and beneficiary programmes do a satisfactory job in communicating about the EU. In terms of EU programmes, it was only possible to interview the Erasmus+ coordinator for Tunisia. The current team has been in place for six months and described the steps taken to plan and communicate about the programme. The team explained that it was targeting not only youth but also institutional actors (namely academic and non-academic staff in universities) to strengthen the interest in the programme and pave the way for the institutionalisation of the programme (i.e. the participation of Tunisian universities in exchanges). The Erasmus+ team also uses different communication channels and modes (social media, face-to-face meetings, information sessions and provision of support notably) to address the perceived needs of the communication targets. However, they recognise that they did not do a formal needs analysis and that they have not formalised the monitoring of their activities.

The Erasmus+ team considers that communication is effective because the quality of the applications sent by Tunisian candidates is improving and because the take up of the Erasmus+ opportunities is increasing,

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<sup>182</sup> Cf. also "2.2.7 Promouvoir des synergies avec d'autres projets de coopération de l'UE" of the Stratégie de Communication Moussawat.



but there is no data to support these perceptions. Nevertheless, opinion polls in Tunisia confirm the increased awareness of EU-funded programme in education (37%, +3 between 2017 and 2018).<sup>183</sup>

With regards to the OPEN SOUTH project, the flagship activity is the caravan tour, which targets young people. In terms of beneficiary programmes, our interviews suggest that they fulfil the visibility requirements, which contribute to communication on the EU. Interviewees from the beneficiary programmes emphasised that the working relationship with their managers at the EUD is good and that they consider there has been a qualitative shift, and a renewed focus on communication at the EUD. But they also note that these efforts seem to be delivered mainly through the commitment of EUD's current staff, which raises the question of the sustainability of the investment in communication.

Overall, interviews with the different groups conclude that the quality of communication has improved, and all agree that the main message is the recognition of the EU as a critical partner for the EU. The feedback confirms that:

- when the EUD is visible, it is perceived as reliable information sources and resourceful,
- there is a close and good cooperation between the EUD (with the notable existence of the challenges in the coordination between the EU and its MS represented in Tunisia) and other EU actors, and
- a renewed emphasis and qualitative shift on communication in recent years.

However, the perception is that communication on the EU still punches below its weight due to a focus on numbers (the amount of financial support available) at the expense of relatable story-telling. Among stakeholders, there is general awareness of the important role the EU is playing in Tunisia. Among the Maghreb countries, respondents in Tunisia are the most likely to be aware of EU financial support (48%, compared to a regional average of 30%).<sup>184</sup> Opinion data do not provide a clear picture on awareness raising though: the 2019 percentage is an improvement compared to 2017 (at 36%), which was yet substantially below the 2016 level (45%). In addition, this is not consistently translated into public awareness of the EU's role: Tunisia has the largest share of don't knows across the Maghreb countries (36% against the regional average of 25%).

It appears that a type of broad common ignorance persists when it comes to concrete EU contributions: respondents in Tunisia, compared to opinion polls in other Maghreb countries, are the least likely to say EU financial support is effective (at 50% against a regional average of 59%) and the country has the largest proportion of respondents saying that EU support is not effective at all (33% against a regional average at 13%).<sup>185</sup> With regard to this observation, some stakeholders and target groups alike highlight that EU/EUD visibility is inter alia reduced by Member States' communication, which results in an underestimation of the role the EU is playing. This perception also comes from confusion on EU/EUD visibility within projects implemented by the EU and other international institutions. EUD interviews reported challenges resulting from conflicting priorities in the communication and visibility requirements from different donor organisations. In that respect, it is interesting to note that the Third Wave Report found that, although the EU is perceived as the closest partner of the country (at 30%; still the lowest percentage in Maghreb), the second and third closest partners of the country (respectively Qatar and the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank) are credited with the highest scores in the region.<sup>186</sup>

## **2.5. Assessing the Intervention Logic**

During the desk phase of the evaluation, the evaluation team reconstructed the Intervention Logic (IL) of the EUD's communication activities in Tunisia based on the 2016 and 2017 Information and communication

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<sup>183</sup> EU Neighbours South, Open Neighbourhood – Communicating for a stronger partnership: connecting with citizens across the Southern Neighbourhood, Opinion Poll, Third Wave Report, February 2019

<sup>184</sup> EU Neighbours South, Open Neighbourhood – Communicating for a stronger partnership: connecting with citizens across the Southern Neighbourhood, Opinion Poll, Second and Third Wave Reports, 2017 and 2019

<sup>185</sup> Data indicate a very substantial drop in the share of the public responding that EU support has been effective (from 84% in 2016 to 88% in 2017 to 59% on average at regional level and from 69% in 2016 to 79% in 2017 to 59% in 2019 in Tunisia; Ibidem)

<sup>186</sup> Ibidem

forward plans. The first draft of the Intervention Logic was discussed with the evaluation manager. The field visit was aimed to further discuss the Intervention Logic and to validate the diagram. However, EUD's political, press and visibility section insisted that because the diagram had been reconstructed it did not underscore the current approach to ongoing communication and information activities. Consequently, the EUD team was not willing to discuss the IL with the evaluation team. The other stakeholders interviewed were not in a position either to directly comment on the intervention logic. The analysis of the interview materials nonetheless provided information that fed into the revision of the diagram, presented in figure 1.

## **Inputs**

Despite the importance attributed to Tunisia by the EU, confirmed by the amount of financial support available; EUR 300 million from 2017; the ongoing negotiation of a trade agreement between the EU and Tunisia; and the adoption of a communication dedicated to this partner country within the neighbourhood region, compared with other EU Delegations, internal resources available for communication and information work are scarce within EUD Tunis. The absence of a ComCoord is a visible shortcoming of the resourcing of communication activities at the EUD. No staff is working full time on communication (the press officer is a 100% position, but focuses on press relations). Staff members in the cooperation section contribute to the work on communication, which is principally carried out by the political section, as the cooperation section manages projects, which are required to meet EU visibility requirements, thereby also contributing to the EUD's communication objectives.

In addition to internal resources, external resources also contribute to EUD communication activities. The budget allocation for 2017 amounts to EUR 286,000. It consists of the press and information budget (EUR 96,000), the global envelope (EUR 150,000) and the contribution from Open South. This regional project implements communication activities, depending on the interest and needs expressed by the EUD (the 2017 annual report and forward planning includes a budget of ca EUR 40,000 for two activities, #EU4YOUTH and #EU4CULTURE from Open South – this is an estimated budget because it is managed from Headquarters).

1. The situation evolved after 2017 with a number of initiatives being implemented / in the pipeline. The budget planned for 2018 amounts to EUR 463,500 (2018 annual report and forward planning). It includes an increased press and information budget (at EUR 163,500) and global envelope (EUR 300,000) but no figure for the contribution from Open South. The budget increase reflects a qualitative turn in the approach to communication, with the following innovations: Communication strategist: the Open South project also made available to the EUD a communication strategist to support the definition of the Delegation's communication strategy (work is ongoing). The ToR for this mission defines a maximum number of days to be delivered by the expert (120 days), but no maximum budget.
2. External contractors: (1) a framework contract for the provision of communication, information and visibility services to the EUD for a maximum price of 102,350 TND over 24 months (signed in December 2017)<sup>187</sup> and (2) a contract to support the EUD in the implementation of the P3AI programme and the PACT programme, as well as the implementation of communication and visibility actions (no budget defined in the ToR<sup>188</sup> or in the extract from the technical proposal shared with the evaluation team<sup>189</sup>).

They are included in the intervention logic diagram to provide a more comprehensive picture of the planned evolution of the approach to communication. We have also included in the diagram examples of the different types of activities implemented from the 2018 report: the objective is to provide a more concrete idea of the activities implemented and of the topical issues covered when no specific examples were provided in the 2017 report.

## **Activities**

Different communication and information activities are implemented, namely:

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<sup>187</sup> Contrat cadre de services, No EEAS-008-DELTUNT-SER-FWC-2017

<sup>188</sup> Ref. Ares(2018)537585 – 30/01/2018

<sup>189</sup> Annexe III: organisation et méthodologie

- activities implemented by the EUD itself, e.g. newsletter, press communiqués, running website and social media channels
- activities delivered under the visibility and communication requirements for cooperation projects, e.g. events, thematic days, communication materials. These activities are implemented by contractors who were awarded EU-funded projects while the EUD staff (cooperation section) ensures that the activities meet EU visibility requirements
- activities delivered by EU programmes, e.g. information events by Erasmus+. These activities are developed and implemented by the teams managing the EU programmes (e.g. the Erasmus+ coordinator and his team).
- activities delivered by communication contractors, e.g. event organisation, production of AV materials (this will become more important in the future with new contracts having been signed or being procured)

The EUD manages relations with media and implements activities targeting media.

Despite the often-repeated assertion during interviews that the public – and in particular youth – do not read printed materials anymore, it was striking that the only available information products at the EUD that could be delivered to the evaluation team was one issue of the EUD newsletter and a calendar (an example of promotional item) – but that reflects the current situation given the timeline for the field visit. The 2017 annual report and forward planning also lists the annual report on cooperation, brochures/leaflets and press kits as other printed materials.

The external contractors interviewed – as confirmed by the review of their TOR – referred to the production of information brochures<sup>190</sup>, visibility and promotional products such as roll-up banners for event organisation, notepads, pens and umbrellas with the EU flag. The other external contractor is not expected to produce communication materials, but materials for EUD's internal use, namely media monitoring<sup>191</sup>. The contractor also supports the EUD by translating press articles and communiqués in Arabic, French and English.

In terms of online communication, observations are also based on the current look and content. The look of the EUD's website is relatively formal, relaying the EU's official communication. But the site also features news targeting youth<sup>192</sup>, for example links to Erasmus+ and YouTube. The website also cross-references the EUD social media (Twitter and Facebook) as well as the Head of Delegation's Twitter. The EUD manages and updates the website and social media accounts, with the support of one of the external contractors, which advises on online communication<sup>193</sup>. A contractor is also responsible for the development of the dedicated "Europe Creative Tunisie" website and for developing AV material for online communication and is developing an interactive map of EU-funded projects implemented in Tunisia, which is intended to provide a visual support for future communication and information activities<sup>194</sup>. Lastly, the Open South contractor also manages a dedicated website, which hosts a Tunisia-specific page.<sup>195</sup>

The EUD, Wasabi (contractor), Open South, EU-funded projects and EU programmes organise a range of events. Based on the 2018 annual report and forward planning, the EUD organises or supports public events (e.g support to "Jazz in Carthage") or targeted events (e.g. "Forum de la Mer" or "Forum de l'Economiste Maghrébin"). The report also makes the distinction between one-off events and recurring events and outlines that some events have a specific cultural dimension, which responds to the emphasis put on cultural relations. Interviews with EUD staff emphasised the importance of outreach in the regions and the need to leave the capital, which was impossible for some time due to security concerns but the situation is improving. Based on interviews, contractors and EU programmes may also organise / support both event types. But depending on the nature of the contract or programmes, may focus on a specific target group (e.g. Open South targets mostly youth).

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<sup>190</sup> Notably on twinnings, culture and the Association agreement; cf Ares(2018)538585

<sup>191</sup> This relates to ToR No: EEAS-008-DELTUNT-SER-FWC-2017

<sup>192</sup> There is link to Erasmus+ with for instance a report on the information day on "Volontariat Jeunesse" in Hammamet on 16 April 2019, or a YouTube video on the reception hosted by the President of Tunisia for young entrepreneurs and Erasmus+ alumni

<sup>193</sup> This relates to ToR No EEAS-008-DELTUNT-SER-FWC-2017

<sup>194</sup> These activities are described in ToR Ref. Ares(2018)537585

<sup>195</sup> <https://www.euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/tunisia>

## **Outputs**

With the commitment of staff and HoD engagement, EUD manages to continuously deliver information about the EU and cooperation programmes to the media. EUD staff highlighted working with all media, including the national news agency (TAP) which is a multiplier within the media community, and non-EU stakeholders reported they perceived the EUD staff as non-discriminatory. There was consensus during the field visit that there has been an increase in information on the EU has increased (when the EU provides information directly through the communication activities and events it implements and uses media as a relay) and the quality of the information on the EU has improved.

There is no evaluation of the extent of the contribution of the EUD of communication outputs, but stakeholders consider that EUD plays a critical role by providing information, which is perceived as reliable. The extent to which that translates into a more EU-informed public is uncertain. Tunisia has the highest percentage of respondents in the Maghreb, who reports being fairly well informed about the EU (40%).<sup>196</sup> An additional 8% of the respondents indicates that they are very well informed. Still 32% of respondents reported not being very well informed and 14% confirmed that they are not informed at all, which highlights room for progress.

Interviewees confirmed the importance of raising awareness of the EU and the support available. This objective concerns specific target groups of certain activities (notably youth, children) but also the public at large. However, existing polling data show that respondents in Tunisia are the least likely of the Maghreb region to be aware of EU-funded programmes (at 22% against a regional average of 32%).<sup>197</sup> It is important to note nonetheless that this percentage is increasing on a continuous basis (from 8% in 2016 to 17% in 2017 and 22% in 2018) – unlike the figures in Morocco, Algeria and the regional average which decreased between 2017 and 2018. The 2019 Third Wave Report also confirms that respondents who are aware of EU-funded programmes in Tunisia are the most likely to mention education, cultural, infrastructure development, and energy efficiency and global warming programmes. This seems to reflect the targeting of communication in youth and the importance given to education and culture, but there are no data confirming the contribution of the communication activities to these results. Besides, on these two themes, EUD is not the only implementer of communication activities, there are other actors involved (for instance the Erasmus+ coordinator on education and the Open South project on culture). Data do not provide any breakdown by actor. It is likely to reflect a combined effort.

However, in the assessment of progress on awareness raising, the 2019 polling data suggest respondents who indicated that they were aware of EU-funded programmes, were actually those who tended to have been involved with an EU-funded programme (24%), which is higher than the regional average in the Maghreb (11%). This indicates a concentration of the objectives on stakeholders, which can include the secondary targets of the communication activities (officials, civil society, culture stakeholders and businessmen). But although stakeholders during the field visit reported that they expected that the described outputs are being delivered, there is hardly any robust evidence that this is the case.

Moreover, even if this is an objective, there is no data on whether the objective is achieved in the capital and in marginalised regions alike.

External contractors report that participants find their communication activities and events engaging on the basis of observed exchanges between participants at events. Contractors also report that this feedback can also be confirmed through the feedback that they gather from event / activity participants says. But the contractor's approach is not systematic and any monitoring type activities are done on an informal basis. There is no robust evidence confirming that exchanges have been indeed fostered.

## **Outcomes**

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<sup>196</sup> EU Neighbours South, Open Neighbourhood – Communicating for a stronger partnership: connecting with citizens across the Southern Neighbourhood, Opinion Poll, Third Wave Report, February 2019

<sup>197</sup> EU Neighbours South, Open Neighbourhood – Communicating for a stronger partnership: connecting with citizens across the Southern Neighbourhood, Opinion Poll, Third Wave Report, February 2019

Feedback suggests that EUD/HoD are frequently mentioned in the media, also via television and radio. There was no evidence reviewed during the field mission to confirm this. The EUD 2017 annual report mentions that newspapers are taking up press communiqués on loans and financial support and that there are articles published after events. The 2018 annual report and forward planning indicates that there is a weekly coverage of EU news in the most important media (newspapers, national TV notably) but does not provide figures or the evolution of the coverage over time. An external contractor is tasked with media analysis, which might generate relevant data in the coming months.

Stakeholder interviews highlight that communication activities aim to generate positive opinions about the EU, the opportunities offered by the EU and the EU-Tunisia partnership with the primary and secondary targets (to pave the way for the public's positive opinion on these topics). But there are no data available on whether this outcome is delivered or not.

## **Impacts**

Interviews with stakeholders confirmed that information by the EU is widely considered to be credible despite a certain inclination of parts of public opinion to subscribe to “conspiracy theories”. But there is only limited data as to whether and to what extent the EUD’s communication activities influence the public’s opinions on the EU, the EU-Tunisia partnership and EU support to reforms in Tunisia. The latest polling data show that respondents in Tunisia consider the EU is the closest partner of the country, yet the percentage is the lowest proportion in the Maghreb region (at 30% against an average at 41%). The majority also recognises that the EU is an important partner (at 57%, but against a regional average at 61%) that the EU and Tunisia have sufficient values in common to be able to cooperate (at 50%, still below the regional average at 59%). The general picture is also blurred by the fact that

- 67% of respondents in Tunisia consider that the bilateral relation with the EU is good (at 67%) and that this percentage increased between 2017 and 2018 (+3) while it decreased at regional level (-2) during the same period
- While more people tend not to trust the EU (48% against a regional average at 39%) and increasingly so (+7 between 2017 and 2018) unlike the regional average which shows that respondents tend to trust the EU (at 53%) despite a decline (-3) between 2017 and 2018. It is nevertheless important to highlight that respondents in Tunisia tend not to trust the UN or the Arab League either (in a much larger proportion, in both cases at 63%, also characterized by an upward trend during the same period).

These figures depict conflicting views on the EU and the EU-Tunisia partnership but also the ongoing evolution of the views. In the absence of robust monitoring data on the communication activities, it is impossible to conclude on whether and to what extent the EUD’s communication activities are contributing to the evolution. Nevertheless, overall, Tunisia is the only Maghreb country where the percentage of respondents reporting a positive image of the EU increased between 2017 and 2018 (at 50%, an increase of +3).<sup>198</sup>

## **Target groups**

The target groups described in the Information and Communication Forward Planning appear to be reflected by feedback gathered during the field mission. There is a distinction between different target groups:

- primary target group: youth,
- secondary target groups: journalists, civil society, actors of the cultural field, public stakeholders (political leaders and parties, administration, diplomats), and academics

These target groups are viewed as multipliers in order to reach out to the larger public. It is interesting to note that the formulation in one of the ToR of an external contractor (Ref.Ares(2018)537585) remains very

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<sup>198</sup> EU Neighbours South, Open Neighbourhood – Communicating for a stronger partnership: connecting with citizens across the Southern Neighbourhood, Opinion Poll, Third Wave Report, February 2019

general. The contractor is expected to target *the general public in the capital and beyond*, with nonetheless a specific mention for stakeholders in the cultural sector and policy-makers because activities in the field of culture and the association agreement are the main dimensions of this contract.

The primary focus on youth translates into the importance given to online communication and social media. But interviews at the EUD emphasised that they were still engaging with traditional media, to support outreach efforts to the general public. In terms of offline communication, events also target youth, with a more or less focused character (e.g. the promotion of Erasmus+ at the 2017 Bazar diplomatique targeted “the general public and in particular youth” and the events organised by Open South are targeting youth).

An additional consequence of the targeting is the importance of communicating in French and Tunisian Arabic, and English. In the absence of translators at the EUD, one of the external contractors provides translation services.

### **Assumptions and risks**

Assumptions and risks refer to structural and contextual factors. Structural factors refer to both internal and external challenges:

1. The EUD has **limited human resources** for the management of communication activities. The absence of a communication coordinator is the most challenging issue, as well as the absence of a translator. The ongoing rethinking of the management of communication activities also responds to the uncertainty related to the budget available for communication activities in the light of Brexit.
2. Communication on the EU takes place in a relatively **challenging environment**. The percentage of respondents considering the EU is the closest partner is the lowest in the Maghreb region.
3. Some **MS are very present** and for historical reasons have a very close relationship with Tunisia. The insufficient coordination between MS and EU creates a limited space for communication on the EU.
4. **Access to information** is limited, especially in the marginalized regions.

Contextual challenges come from:

1. The Brexit negotiations which weaken the image of the EU as a club and question the added value of the relation with the EU. This creates additional obstacles in the general communication environment in Tunisia.
2. The negotiations of the trade agreement, which remains a sensitive topic.



**Figure 2: Reconstructed EUD Intervention Logic – Tunisia**

Inputs		Activities	Outputs	Desired Outcomes	Desired Impacts
EUD Delegation	<p><b>EUD Staff:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Head of Political Section (10%);</li> <li>2 Political Advisors (30%, and 10%);</li> <li>1 full-time Press Officer;</li> <li>1 Cooperation Officer (50%);</li> <li>1 Assistant (30%).</li> </ul> <p><b>Total Budget 286,000 EUR<sup>199</sup></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publicity and information budget: 96,000</li> <li>Global allocation: 150,000</li> <li>EU Neighbours South for #EU4YOUTH et #EU4CULTURE: 40,000 (contracted separately)<sup>200</sup></li> </ul> <p><b>External contractors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support in the implementation of communication, information and visibility activities</li> </ul> <p><b>Equipment:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internet access;</li> <li>DVD player;</li> <li>Video conference equipment;</li> </ul>	<p><b>Media relations / press releases</b> re. high level visits/ EU announcements</p> <p><b>One-off public diplomacy activities &amp; events (public/targeted)</b> e.g. #EUBeachCleanup, CEED conference</p> <p><b>Campaigns/regular public diplomacy activities &amp; events (public/targeted)</b> e.g. Maghreb Economic Forum innovation EU-Tunisia cooperation event, 10 tripartite dialogue meetings</p> <p><b>Cultural diplomacy activities &amp; events (public)</b>e.g. Cultural events for Europe Days, support to cultural events</p> <p><b>Supporting dimension (where possible): Outreach to marginalised regions:</b> Kairouan, Kasserine, Médenine, Sfax, Sousse, Sidi Bouzid and Kef.</p> <p><b>Project visibility (public/targeted) EUD:</b> Print materials (newsletters, calendar), Interactive map of EU-funded projects (upcoming) &amp; production of AV materials Events: educational cabin in Nefta, day of exchanges between EU &amp; Tunisian local representatives</p> <p><b>EU projects/programmes:</b> Production of AV materials, Graphic design Promotional items</p> <p><b>Social media / web</b> EUD manages its website &amp; social media (Facebook, Twitter) Open South website (Tunisia page)</p>	<p>Increased information provided to Press, audiovisual media and social media on 1)EU messages, 2)ongoing EU cooperation programmes and 3)their results</p> <p>Public, including in marginalised regions, are more aware of EU cooperation programmes and their results and the role of the EU (limited data) Children and parents have a better understanding of Europe / the EU (limited data)</p> <p>Young people made more aware of EU funding opportunities (limited data)</p> <p>Officials, university staff, civil society, stakeholders in the field of culture and journalists are more aware of public diplomacy messages and engage in debate</p> <p>Fostered exchanges between young people on cultural, artistic, entrepreneurial and educational fields (limited data)</p>	<p>Increased quality and quantity of media coverage on EU themes, including in the regions (very limited data)</p> <p>Primary and secondary targets have positive opinions about the EU -Tunisia cooperation and recognise the results achieved (no data)</p>	<p>Positive public opinion on the EU and the reforms promoted (limited data)</p>

<sup>199</sup> Based on the 2017 annual report and forward planning shared with the team during the field visit.

<sup>200</sup> This is included in the EUD 2018 annual report and forward planning but no budget is specified. The ToR for a communication strategist under the regional programme indicate that a maximum of 120 days of expertise will be delivered.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EBS reception equipment;</li> <li>External hard drive.</li> </ul>	Two campaigns organised via EU neighbourhood South: #EU4Youth & #EU4Culture Programme-/project-specific websites & social media <sup>201</sup>			
Targets		Assumptions / risks		
<p><b>Primary target group:</b> youth</p> <p><b>Secondary target groups:</b> journalists, civil society, actors of the cultural field, public stakeholders, and academics</p> <p>End target: general public</p>		<p><b>Structural factors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insufficient resources of the EUD for the management of communication activities</li> <li>Uncertainty on the evolution of the budget</li> <li>Challenging communication environment, including public's attitude towards the EU &amp; prevalence of some MS for historical reasons</li> <li>Limited access to information especially in marginalized regions</li> </ul> <p><b>Contextual factors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brexit negotiations question the value added of the EU as a club and of the partnership with the EU</li> <li>Ongoing negotiations of the trade agreement remain a sensitive topic</li> </ul>		

<sup>201</sup> Managed by individual programme / project as relevant. These are multipliers of the visibility of the EU.

### 3. EVALUATION FINDINGS

The following section describes the key findings by evaluation question and judgement criteria from interviews with EU Delegation staff and other interlocutors identified in the above table. The field visit provided an opportunity to gather primary evidence on the current situation. In the relative absence of documentary evidence of the results delivered in the past by communication activities, findings are based on the memory of the stakeholders' interviewed (also taking into consideration staff turnover). Interviews focused on the most recent developments and current situation in Tunisia. The findings presented below largely reflect the current situation, and highlight where possible recent changes/trends.

As per the evaluation questions matrix defined for the evaluation, the field mission was not intended to provide evidence in relation to all the evaluation questions and judgement criteria. Final answers to the evaluation questions will be drafted drawing on analysis of hypotheses from different sources of evidence and provided in the Synthesis Report.

Please note that EQ's 1-6 relate to the enlargement region.

**EQ7.** To what extent the **objectives** of the EU Delegation's annual information and communication forward plans in the selected neighbourhood partner countries have been defined considering the **needs** of the target audience and are conducive to the achievement of the objectives set in the EU framework for strategic communication in the neighbourhood region?

- Extent that EU Delegations commission research into target group needs and set their communication objectives taking into account these needs.
- Extent that the intervention logic of the annual forward communication plans has been soundly defined and is conducive to meeting the objectives described in the EU framework for strategic communication in the neighbourhood region.

The evaluation team did not find evidence of a needs analysis to support information and communication choices. The identification of target groups for EU/EUD communication and information work is in line with generally shared assumptions as to the most relevant groups to address, as reported by the interviews with EU and non-EU staff. The primary focus on youth reflects Tunisia's demographic specifics. The identification of secondary target groups responds to the need to identify different multipliers to reach out to the public.

There is no research into target groups' needs, that would inform the tailoring of the objectives by target group, the definition of messages and the selection of communication channels and tools. This fact is also reflected in the absence of breakdown of the objectives by target groups in the ToR for communication contractors. The evaluation team notes that this is a weakness of other EU programmes' communications, as well as beneficiary programmes, as the representatives interviewed indicated that there was no real needs analysis to support their communication choices (targeting, messaging, selection of communication channels and tools).

Nonetheless, one communication contractor (Innova) has just started to work with the EUD on how to make targeted use of social media to support the achievement of the expected outcomes, in particular with respect to youth. So far, social media has been run by a staff of four within the EUD without any clearly identifiable social media strategy, a limitation which the EUD staff is aware of. Content is frequently provided on EUD's Facebook and Twitter profiles. Its form, however, is more following a sender-receiver approach than truly generating interaction. However, working with an external contractor is expected to strengthen the approach to social media. To date, the EUD has not made use of Intervention Logics for communication planning purposes. However, the types of activities carried out can be considered to support the EU framework for strategic communication in the region as described in the EUD Information and Communication Forward Plan.

**EQ8.** To what extent the **objectives** of annual forward communication plans for the selected Neighbourhood partner countries have been/are being met?

- Evidence that the communication activities implemented by the EU Delegation (directly and/or with support from external contractors) are delivering the intended outputs and outcomes, which contribute to the achievement of the objectives set in the annual forward communication plans.
- Extent that the channels and tools used to implement communication activities are appropriate to meet the target group needs and contribute to the attainment of the forward communication plan objectives.

The monitoring in place is extremely limited and does not allow to draw conclusions on the achievement of the objectives set. Firstly, based on the documents available and the interviews conducted, monitoring is limited to quantitative data. The EUD has quantitative data available to assess its outreach via its website and social media (user statistics) and the number of participants in events (the data are presented in the annual report and forward planning documents). No further monitoring is in place and despite the usefulness of qualitative indicators being acknowledged, they are not applied due to lack of resources. Secondly, there is a gap in the reports available from communication contractors. No monitoring template or reports were available to the communication team. The ToR or sometimes the technical proposals (e.g. in response to Ares(2018)537575) include monitoring indicators but (1) they are almost only quantitative (with an exception such as “taux de notoriété de l'action de soutien de l'UE pour la Tunisie” which might include a qualitative element, but this could not be confirmed) and (2) no data seem to be systematically available yet. EU-funded projects such as Moussawat (Programme for gender equality) include quantitative and qualitative indicators in their communication strategy: Moussawat for instance envisages as indicators a “qualitative analysis of press articles” and a “qualitative analysis of radio/TV shows [coverage]”.<sup>202</sup> There was, however, no data available against these indicators.

Nonetheless, the EUD is currently working with external contractors on issues, which might have an impact on the monitoring and the assessment of the objectives achieved. Firstly, the contract awarded to Innova requires a regular analysis of the audience on social media. This does not provide direct monitoring data to assess the results of the communication activities on social media but will provide information on the evolution of the EU's social media footprint. Secondly, the communication strategist is undertaking an assessment of the impact of the communication activities. It is however unclear what methodology will be adopted and no documents are available yet.

The general perception by non-EU stakeholders is that communication by the EUD has improved over the past years, despite a substantial lack of resources available, as frequently highlighted by actors working directly with EUD. A substantial contribution to the visibility and presence of the EUD and the EU is attributed to the communication and information work by the HoD who is constantly described as an outstanding communicator and public figure.

Overall, interviews with non-EU stakeholders and the focus group with students confirmed that the EU/EUD is considered a trustworthy interlocutor and reliable source of information on its own policies and overall, stakeholders and the major target group (young people) acknowledge the efforts undertaken by EUD to communicate properly. But students also underline that the way communication is actually conducted does not appear to be the most appropriate. In order to respond to target audiences' interests and media consumption habits, communication would need to be more interactive, more focused on concrete results, using story-telling, “témoignages” etc. This approach seems already mostly followed by the activities conducted under OPEN SOUTH, in contrast to those directly run by the EUD. Lastly, focus group participants discussed the perception that EU communication and action in Tunisia is interested. The migration crisis notably and the controversial negotiation of the trade agreement challenge particularly in their view any communication because they result in a high politicisation of any topic and the suspicion that communication has a hidden agenda. One of the mitigation measures is to maintain the focus of communication on the EU-Tunisia partnership discourse (as opposed to an asymmetric relation, donor versus receiver), as consistently emphasised in interviews with EU officials.

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<sup>202</sup> Stratégie de communication Moussawat, Lettre de marché numéro 2015/366821 (made available by the interviewee)

**EQ9i.** To what extent the available resources, **the organisation, production, validation and the management** of communication activities by the EU Delegation **are conducive** to an efficient, effective and sustainable implementation of the communication activities in the selected neighbourhood countries?

- The EUD human resources working on communication have the capacity and appropriate procedures to design and manage/ implement in an efficient, effective and sustainable manner the communication activities/contracts
- Current monitoring arrangements for communication function at regular intervals and are capable of collecting data, detecting problems and issues to inform decision-making
- The type, number and budget of communication contracts managed by the EUD communication officers allow for efficient, effective and sustainable implementation of communication activities

The EUD is critically understaffed with regard to communication and information work. The lack of resources is made more acute by the absence of a ComCoord at EUD, which is an exception in the neighbourhood region. Despite scarce human resources and different affiliations of staff within the EUD (EEAS and Commission), coordination and cooperation within the Delegation is benefiting from the personal engagement of staff and trusted working relationships between staff.

When it comes to contractors and EU-funded projects, including OPEN SOUTH, they have defined contacts at the EUD to serve as interlocutors. Despite the existence of very good relationships between contractors and the EUD, some contractors feel that there is a certain bureaucratic inflexibility when it comes to procedures. Contractors also highlight the understaffing of the Delegation during the interviews conducted, thereby making a case for the allocation of additional resources also from an outside perspective.

In the absence of a complete monitoring and reporting system, it is not possible to conclude on whether and how lessons are learned and inform decision-making. In terms of communication contracts, the picture is not complete either. There is uncertainty as to the total budget allocated to these contracts because financial details were not systematically included in the documents provided during the field visit. The rationale for the different contracts seems to respond to three logical and complementary elements, (1) the definition of a communication strategy (as supported by the communication strategist), (2) better use of social media (through the support provided by Innova) and (3) support in the design of communication materials and implementation of communication activities (through the contract awarded to Wasabi as the EUD does not have sufficient internal resources to deliver these activities). As highlighted by the interviews with EUD staff, there is already a rationalisation process ongoing though. Combining individual budgets, including the visibility component of EU-funded projects, the upcoming communication contract aims to reflect a more integrated approach to communication. It remains to be seen what objectives will be set for this contract and how this contract will be articulated with the new communication strategy of the EUD.

**EQ9ii.** To what extent the set-up of **EU Information Centres physically located** in the selected neighbourhood countries could enhance the outreach of the different target audiences by the EUDs and the OPEN Neighbourhood Programme?

- A physical space/presence for communication purposes in the Capital and/or other locations would make it possible to significantly enhance the reach and engagement by the EU Delegation of new and hard to reach publics.

None of the stakeholders interviewed were familiar with the concept of the EU info centres. Half of the interviewees indicated that this could be an option to provide a one-stop-shop for any questions related to the EU and EU programmes. All interviewees did not seem to consider that the provision of a space to host events would add value to the way communication activities were delivered. But all emphasised that if such a concept were to be piloted, it should (1) be staffed by local communicators with Tunisian Arabic language skills and (2) have local branches to support outreach efforts to target groups in the provinces. They added that such a centre should not produce “more of the same” but would need to advance the professionalisation of communication and the targeting of audiences, based on SMART ToR. As regard the association of the Centre with the EU/EUD, some stakeholders also emphasised that such a Centre should have a neutral set up to be perceived as independent from the EUD.

As already discussed, interviews with EU staff revealed that a new approach to communication has been decided. The already planned merger of visibility budgets of different projects within one larger contract is expected to translate into more face-to-face contacts and to enhance communication and information effects. Eight consortia have been shortlisted and invited to submit a technical proposal for a contract of EUR 5 million over five (5) years in order to ensure better visibility of EU activities in Tunisia and enhancing public adherence to the partnership offer. It remains to be seen what the strategy for this communication contract, its objectives and implementation choices will be.

**EQ10.** To what extent the communication **activities** carried out in the selected neighbourhood countries have been/are coherent, complementary and coordinated with those carried out via **EU** regional communication **programmes (e.g. OPEN Neighbourhood programme), HQ initiatives and by other partners** (e.g.; Member States, IFIs, international organisations) active in communicating about EU policies and programmes in the partner country?

- Extent that HQ and EU Delegations coordinate their communication activities in the partner countries to ensure coherence and synergies with other EU programmes/projects, Member States, IFIs and IOs.
- Extent that the establishment of EU Info Centres (acting as hubs) would enhance coordination, increase coherence and outreach of communication activities implemented by the EUD, the OPEN Programme, the other EU programmes, EU MS, the national government and other donors (communicating on EU policies and values) in the ENI partner countries

Interviews conducted during the field visit with EU and non-EU stakeholders highlight that there are different degrees of (opportunities) for coordination between the EUD's communication activities and those of regional communication programmes, other EU programmes, other international partners in the framework of cooperation projects co-funded by the EU and EU MS.

Coordination and cooperation between the EUD and OPEN SOUTH, as well as EU programmes (as illustrated by the Erasmus+ programme) appear to be well functioning. OPEN SOUTH in particular is often cited as contributing to the EUD's communication and information objectives towards youth in a very comprehensive and coherent manner. Likewise, the activities of the Erasmus+ office, especially its "campus tours", appear to be linked to the decentralised approaches realised via OPEN SOUTH in order to be more present outside the capital.

When it comes to cooperation with IFIs and other international organisations, the cooperation section of the EUD is more critical. Collaboration on communication under specific projects co-funded by the EU is perceived as relatively limited. Interviewees outline that objectives in terms of the EU/EUD visibility are not always met as partners might have competing visibility objectives.

Similarly, coordination is reportedly very limited between the EUD and EU MS. The EUD and Member States' embassies communicate in parallel without prior coordination or joint planning. Although the EU interviewees and the representatives of MS are aware of the potential benefits of a more joined up approach to communication, the legacy of bilateral relationships between Tunisia and some MS and differing communication agendas seem to remain a substantial obstacle.

**EQ11.** To what extent the communication activities implemented by HQ and the EU Delegations have contributed/are contributing to raising public awareness about the EU, its policies and values in the selected neighbourhood partner countries?

- Extent that HQ, EU Delegation contractors can quantify and/or qualify increases in target audience awareness of the EU, its policies and values because of the communication activities.
- There are factors that have had a positive or negative effect on raising public awareness.

Evidence on the impact of communication activities by the EU/EUD on target group awareness is very limited. However, the intention articulated by EUD staff that the EU/EUD wants to be regarded as a partner is



echoed by opinion makers as well as national government communication departments who underline that the EU is a “true partner and not only a partner of circumstance” and that the values promoted by the EU are “universal values”. Nonetheless, other interlocutors frequently refer to the EU as a “bailleur de fonds” (donor), despite the intention of the EU to be recognised as partner, working on different issues in a joint effort with Tunisia. This again highlights the difficulty of the EU to frame perceptions with regard to its self-understanding.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS

- The documents reviewed, and the interviews conducted during the filed mission seem to suggest that overall the EUD is delivering satisfactory communication and information work, which has improved over the past years, but there is no hard (quantitative and qualitative) evidence to support this claim/perception more substantially. The lack of evidence also makes it difficult to define how and where any improvements could be made, if at all even if the external perception is that there has been a qualitative shift in communication and an increase in EU/EUD visibility in recent years.
- There is a strong commitment within EUD to delivering communication activities. Staff from different sections within EUD seem to work efficiently together to manage different aspects of the information and communication work. In addition, the overall communication and information work of the EUD benefits from strong communicators, starting with the HoD; also relations of EUD staff with contractors/partners appear to be well established.
- In contrast to the political and financial efforts undertaken by the EU in its relationship with Tunisia, the EUD is understaffed and lacks sufficient resources to strategically plan and conduct communication and information work. The mismatch between resources and communication objectives is all the more obvious given that the EU has committed the largest amount of financial support to Tunisia in the history of the partnership.
- EUD and OPEN SOUTH have a strong collaboration, which further reinforces EUD efforts and responds to communication needs in Tunisia. OPEN SOUTH provides additional resources to reach out to youth, the primary target of communication and information work.
- Any increase in human resources at EUD (e.g. ComCoord) or other resources is likely to positively impact communication and information efforts.
- In contrast to the political and financial efforts undertaken by the EU in its relationship with Tunisia, the EUD is understaffed and lacks sufficient resources to strategically plan and conduct communication and information work. The mismatch between resources and communication objectives is all the more obvious given that the EU has committed the largest amount of financial support to Tunisia in the history of the partnership.
- EUD and OPEN SOUTH have a strong collaboration, which further reinforces EUD efforts and responds to communication needs in Tunisia. OPEN SOUTH provides additional resources to reach out to youth, the primary target of communication and information work.
- Any increase in human resources at EUD (e.g. ComCoord) or other resources is likely to positively impact communication and information efforts.
- There is no evidence to confirm that additional communication resource should be channelled through an Info Centre as it exists in the Western Balkans and Turkey rather than any other communication mechanism, but there might be other models that could be relevant for Tunisia, particularly those who focus on outreach towards youth. There are also questions as to whether the EUD in Tunisia currently has the internal capacity to manage an EU Info Centre contractor, a factor that needs to be carefully considered before any decision is made.

- Despite EUD serving as the coordinating hub for a variety of activities, EU-funded projects and EU programmes are not systematically brought together, neither is coordination with Member States, IFIs, and other IOs. There are likely to be more opportunities for synergies, if EUD stepped up its coordinating efforts horizontally as well as vertically. Yet the extent that greater coordination would be able to deliver additional synergies also relates to the will and capacity of these organisations, which also have their own communication mandate.
- The preparation of the larger contract to pool funds available for communication and information work is an important step to reduce administrative burden relating to contracting and take a more strategic planned approach including to monitoring activities and should be seized as an opportunity in this respect. In theory, the contract could serve as a test ground for aspects that might be relevant for the potential establishment of an EU Information Centre, although as highlighted there is no strong evidence to confirm this.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consider creating a ComCoord position at the EUD Tunis to ensure there is a full-time position to manage communication and information work, especially in the light of the upcoming large communication contract
- Ensure work undertaken in parallel on several fronts is brought together to create a coherent framework for communication and information (integration of the lessons learned from the communication strategist contract and the capacity building on social media into the framing of the upcoming large communication contract to ensure its design is adequate and relevant to meet the needs and deliver on the objectives)
- Consider setting up regular coordination meetings with MS Embassies in Tunis. The meetings would aim to share information on communication agendas to identify opportunities for joined communication
- Integrate into the revised communication strategy and the upcoming large communication contract a more systematic approach to monitoring and reporting using qualitative and quantitative indicators to allow a better measurement of the performance and added-value of the communication and information work
- Ensure the collaboration between the future communication contractor and the Open programme so that polling data collected by Open contribute to establishing the baseline of future communication and information work and provide information on the evolution of opinions in Tunisia with regard to the EU



# Ukraine

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This document is the case study country note on the field mission to Ukraine, which took place between 1 and 5 April 2019, as part of the evaluation of EU Info Centres in the Western Balkans and Turkey and EU Delegation communication in the neighbourhood region. In addition to the focus on the evaluation questions and judgement criteria relevant to the field mission and the Delegation's current approach to communication the evaluation team focused on those communication measures and programmes ,which target segments of the general public consistent with the presumed targeting of any Information Centre network in Ukraine akin to that in the Western Balkans and/or which involve a network of centres providing information in some way. It should be stressed at the outset that there was no presumption that any such Information Centre will be set up. Indeed, as will be explained subsequently, there are already several structures in place fulfilling the information function, and that would have to be taken into account in any future decision-making.

The main documents reviewed to support the field mission, included the:

- EU Delegation Information and Communication Annual Report (2017) and Forward Planning (2018)
- EU Neighbours East Annual Opinion Survey 2018: Ukraine<sup>203</sup>
- Terms of Reference: Communicating Europe in Ukraine: EuropeAid/138218/DH/SER/UA
- Qualitative Research Results, December 2017, Communicating Europe in Ukraine: EuropeAid/138218/DH/SER/UA
- Project Report, September 2018, Communicating Europe in Ukraine: EuropeAid/138218/DH/SER/UA
- Information support to youth and EU Networks in Ukraine, P&I/2017/05, Final Report, 2017/2018, and associated reports from EU Information Centres, EU Careers Days, terms and conditions of Euroclub and video competitions
- EU Study Days in Ukraine: Contract: EEAS-518-DELUK\_RK\_SER-DIR-2016; Final Report
- Support for the implementation of the EUUkraine Association Agreement / A4U Project Project Identification No.: EuropeAid/137074/DH/SER/UA Contract N: 2015/370-128 A4U Reviews-Comments-Briefs N18 Status of the A4U Project and the AA/DCFTA Implementation in December 2018
- Communication Strategy for VLAP in Ukraine 2017-2018

The limitations and constraints to this exercise relate to logistical aspects, for example the willingness and availability of interviewees to take part in the data collection and aspects relating to the knowledge, experience and capacity of interviewees to answer the interview questions posed. In some cases, interviewees can find it hard to think strategically about issues that may never have occurred to them for example, in relation to possible hypotheses about Info Centres.

The list of interviews was set up based on advice from the Delegation and the EEAS in particular, and through desk research. The evidence gathered in this field mission will be triangulated with findings from other sources and presented in the Synthesis Report.

<b>Eastern Neighbourhood country visited</b>	Ukraine
<b>Dates of field visit</b>	1-5 April 2019
<b>Evaluators responsible</b>	Marion Bywater, Murat Daoudov

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<sup>203</sup> <https://www.euneighbours.eu/en/east/stay-informed/publications/opinion-survey-2018-armenia>

<b>EU Info Centres / Points visited</b>	National Technical University, Chernihiv; Taras Schevchenko University, Kyiv
<b>EU Delegation staff interviewed</b>	Head of EU Delegation Head of Political Section Head of Finance Head of Cooperation Head of P&I section Press and Information Officer Communications Manager
<b>Interviews with partners and projects</b>	Open Society Foundation Change Communications Open Society Foundation British Council GFA Consulting Svitlana Kisilova, E'Comm EBRD British Council Goethe Institut Second Secretary Strategic Communication, British Embassy
<b>Interviews with Member States</b>	
<b>Interview with the media</b>	EU Pravda
<b>Euro Info Centres</b>	National Technical University of Chernihiv Head of Career Centre, Institute of International Relations, Taras Schevchenko National University, Kyiv

The field mission was an opportunity to learn how the EU communicates in a country, which is the largest in the eastern Neighbourhood with a population of 42.2 million<sup>204</sup> and is also the largest beneficiary of EU assistance outside the EU<sup>205</sup>. The scale of the assistance programme to Ukraine can be gauged by data provided by the Cooperation section of the Delegation during the field mission: eight portfolios of a total value of EUR 1 billion consisting of 275 projects. 85% of this funding is under direct or indirect management. Only 15% is budget support.

All projects have visibility requirements, with some having significant communication components targeting a wide audience, e.g. the Anti-Corruption Initiative, the ULEAD decentralisation programme and EU4Business. However, the focus here is on the communication programmes and projects that are under the direct responsibility of the Press and Information Section of the Delegation, which have a total budget of less than EUR 5 million. EU4Business was also included because it includes a network of regional Business Support Centres.

The team met senior staff of the Delegation, including the Head of Delegation, key members of the Delegation communication team, and representatives of implementing partners of communication projects or projects with a high communication component, representatives of Member States, staff of the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), attended an EU Career Days at the EU Info Centre at the Institute of International Relations of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv and visited the Euro Info Centre at the National Technical University of Chernihiv. The Info Centres are hosted within university

<sup>204</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/4031688/9684146/KS-01%E2%80%9119%E2%80%911056-EN-N.pdf/c3f8811c-3793-48aa-befa-b8ad753f1131>

<sup>205</sup> [https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/4081/eu-ukraine-relations-factsheet\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/4081/eu-ukraine-relations-factsheet_en)

libraries but are open to the general public as a condition of their convention with the Delegation. The team carried out semi-structured interviews using discussion guides and hypotheses prepared in the Desk Report. The results feed the findings of this report and will feed the Synthesis Report that will conclude this evaluation.

A recurring theme through this report will be the absence of qualitative or analytical data on many activities. This should be taken as a statement of fact rather than a criticism. The evaluation team recognises that there is a fundamental problem of budget and workload within the Press & Information section of the Delegation, which is a barrier at present to implementing better measurement and analysis, even if time found in the short term to implement greater efficiency would lead to more effective communication in the longer term.

## 2. CONTEXT IN UKRAINE

### 2.1. Country specific context

Ukraine had a population of 42.1 million people in 2018 according to the Ukraine Statistics Office, of whom 29.4 million live in urban areas.<sup>206</sup> The population has been declining slightly (down from 42.8 million in 2016), in part because of a natural decrease, i.e. deaths outnumber births, and in part because of migration. Real incomes grew by double digits in 2015-2017, but there is nevertheless a perception according to those interviewed by the field mission that this is not meeting expectations of economic prosperity.

The IMF said in January 2019 that the economy is still vulnerable to shocks even though the Ukrainian authorities have been able to restore macro-economic stability and growth following the severe economic crisis of 2014-15, but “efforts to create a more dynamic, open, and competitive economy have fallen short of expectations, and the economy still faces important challenges. Investment, particularly foreign direct investment, is held back by a difficult business environment, while large numbers of workers seek job opportunities abroad as economic growth is too low for incomes to noticeably close the gap with regional peers. Reserves have recovered, but remain relatively low.”<sup>207</sup>

The EU is Ukraine’s largest trading partner, taking 40% of its exports. Just under 1% of the EU’s imports come from Ukraine.<sup>208</sup>

The field mission took place at a pivotal time in Ukrainian politics, between the first and second rounds of the Ukrainian Presidential Elections. At the time of the field mission, there was widespread expectation both among those interviewed and, in the media, that the eventual winner would be Volodymyr Zelensky. Zelensky is a political novice, who has come to power on the basis of his name (and face) recognition from playing a fictional President in a television series and by appealing to the young through all forms of social media.

Although international media may have reported the election of Zelensky result as being a pro-EU or pro-Western vote<sup>209</sup>, those with whom the field mission discussed this felt this was an over-simplification. They saw the vote as a vote against the previous President, Petro Poroshenko, for not having delivered economic growth as rapidly as hoped. These stakeholders recognised that Zelensky expressed pro-European and pro-Western views in general terms during the election campaign, but they also stressed the extent to which his political views are unknown and the fact that he had not put forward concrete policies. Zelensky fought the Presidential election as an independent. Zelensky’s “Servant of the People Party” is embryonic and has no seats in the current Parliament.

While only one person the team met expected Zelensky to turn out to be pro-Russian (though no one could totally rule it out because he is such an unknown quantity), their main fears were that Zelensky:

- he could be the puppet of self-exiled oligarch, Ihor Kolomoisky, who is best known as the former owner of Privatbank, who is fighting the nationalisation of the bank after a financial crisis,<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> [https://ukrstat.org/en/druk/publicat/kat\\_u/2018/zb/07/zb\\_ukraina2017\\_e.pdf](https://ukrstat.org/en/druk/publicat/kat_u/2018/zb/07/zb_ukraina2017_e.pdf)

<sup>207</sup> <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/CR/Issues/2019/01/08/Ukraine-Request-for-Stand-By-Arrangement-and-Cancellation-of-Arrangement-Under-the-Extended-46499>

<sup>208</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/ukraine/>

<sup>211</sup> [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-17-3045\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-3045_en.htm)

<sup>211</sup> [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-17-3045\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-3045_en.htm)



- he lacks political inexperience, particularly in dealing with Russia, both in general and in particular in the ongoing de facto civil war in eastern Ukraine and over Russia's annexation of Crimea, and

he lacks economic inexperience at a time when Ukraine faces major economic challenges.

### **EU relations with Ukraine**

EU relations with Ukraine centre on the Association Agreement concluded in March 2014 and which entered into force on 1 September 2017<sup>211</sup>, which implies implementation of a process of economic and political reform. The Agreement recognises Ukraine as a European country sharing a common history and common values with the Member States of the European Union (EU), notes the importance Ukraine attaches to its European identity and the strong public support in Ukraine for the country's European choice. A Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) is an integral part of the Agreement. The DCFTA was implemented on 1 January 2016.

While the EU is not seeking to impose a particular model on Ukraine, its assistance programmes are geared towards correlating a fair society with economic progress. Moreover, Ukraine itself sees itself as a European country with EU membership as its ultimate goal according to changes to the Constitution adopted in February 2019.

The government and the parliament adopted a joint Roadmap for implementation of the Association Agreement in February 2018 and updated it in September 2018.<sup>212</sup> The three pillars of EU support to reform in Ukraine are a strong economy, a strong society and stronger governance.<sup>213</sup>

Key areas of support in **economic reform** are an EU4Business campaign, and energy and energy efficiency.

A number of reform measures have already been passed, and the most recent Association Implementation Report<sup>214</sup> notes that "Ukraine has advanced with a number of important political and economic reforms in 2017-2018 across a range of sectors, for instance in the areas of health, pensions, decentralisation, public administration, public procurement and the environment." However, the Report identified more cooperation across the political institutions as key in order to achieve further progress in aligning EU standards and norms and for the Ukrainian authorities to "maintain and reinforce the reform momentum, including on the fight against corruption<sup>215</sup>"; in particular ahead of the presidential and parliamentary elections. The Report further notes that additional structural reforms would help business and therefore help Ukraine's "stable, but fragile" economic situation.

A number of those interviewed by the team during the field mission, both inside and outside the Delegation, painted a slightly less rosy picture of the reform process, pointing out that there are still influential figures in Ukrainian society who are benefiting from corruption and failure to level the playing field for business, and who are in a position to resist change.

The Association Agreement is designed to bring Ukraine closer to the EU politically, economically and in terms of the values Ukraine espouses. It is not per se a route to membership of the EU, nor has the EU promised this as an ultimate goal. According to a number of those interviewed by the team, many Ukrainians either nevertheless believe that Ukraine will one day become a member of the EU or would wish it to. Opinions among those interviewed on this topic were divided as to whether the current pro-EU orientation could sour once there is a full awareness that membership of the EU is not the intention on the EU side.

Some of those interviewed felt that this is a risk, particularly if Ukraine felt it was at a disadvantage compared to countries in the western Balkans. External observers interviewed felt, however, that the popularity of the EU could be at risk from a perception that the EU could be 'soft' on Russia, led in particular by Germany and because the UK's departure would mean the loss of a crucial harder-line ally of Ukraine. (Staff of the Delegation did not express a view on this.) Some others interviewed felt that Ukrainians would be happy with being a country with one of the closest relationships with the EU and recognised as a "European" country. This sense of being a European country was stressed to the evaluation team by key figures interviewed as

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<sup>211</sup> [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-17-3045\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-3045_en.htm)

<sup>212</sup> Association Implementation Report on Ukraine.

<sup>213</sup> [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/styles/manual\\_crop/public/support-for-ukraines-reform-programme-large.jpg?itok=9N5lxqVa](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/styles/manual_crop/public/support-for-ukraines-reform-programme-large.jpg?itok=9N5lxqVa), & Annex V to the Terms of Reference of the Communicating Europe in Ukraine call for tender, Ukraine Support Theme Framework

<sup>214</sup> Op.cit.

<sup>215</sup> Ukraine ranked 120 out of 180 in the 2018 Corruption Perceptions Index of Transparency International. <https://www.transparency.org/cpi2018>

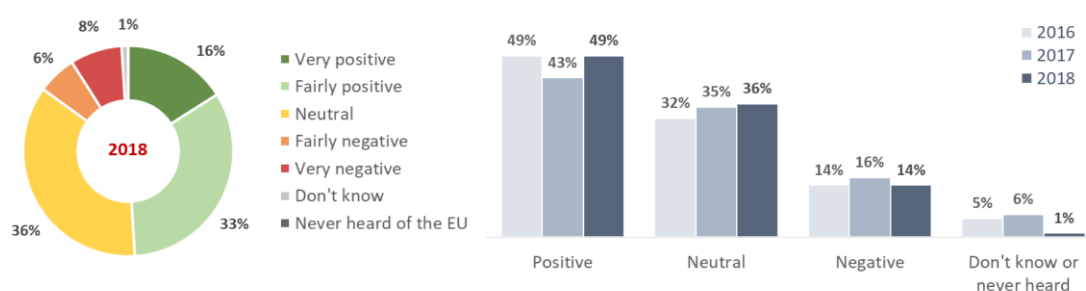
an important differentiator between Ukraine and most other countries in the eastern Neighbourhood and all countries in the southern Neighbourhood, and even some enlargement countries.

## 2.2. Strategic communication

### Perceptions of the EU in Ukraine

Ukrainians' attitude to the EU is positive or neutral<sup>216</sup>. The group with a very or fairly positive view of the EU is only just under half the population (49%); the neutrals (36%) are the second largest group by far. The EU attracts relatively high levels of trust: 66% tend to trust the EU as compared to 54% for the United Nations, 40% for NATO and 29% for the Eurasian Economic Union.

**FIGURE 1 – Do you have a 'very positive', 'fairly positive', 'neutral', 'fairly negative' or 'very negative' image of the European Union? (Q2.1)**



Positive views are higher in the 15-34 age group (56%), lower in large cities (42%), higher among men than women (52% v. 45%) and mother tongue speakers of Ukrainian as opposed to Russian (52% v. 39%). Of the 49% with a positive view of the EU are more likely to be highly educated (50%) and keen users of new media (64%).

The 15-34 age group, which are the focus of much communication, are the most positive about the image of the EU. This group is the most likely by far to use social media and the Internet (81%).

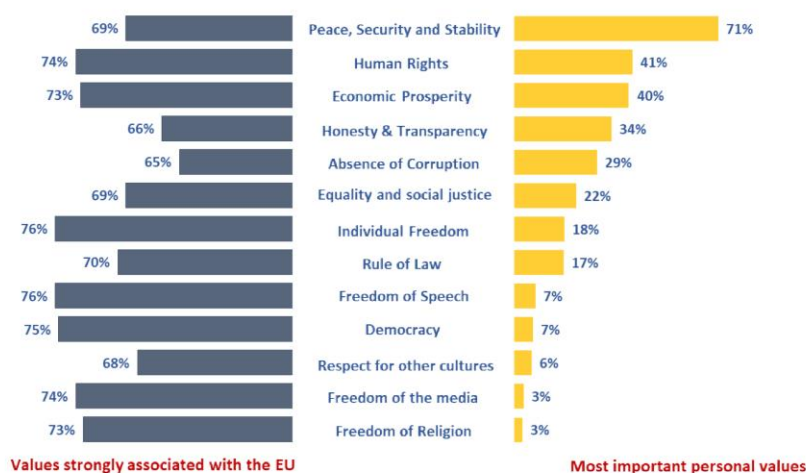
However, there are major discrepancies between what the citizens of Ukraine understand to be values associated with the EU (which are also broadly those which the EU prioritises in its communication) and what they personally consider important. Divergence is significant for human rights, economic prosperity, honesty and transparency, as well as for the absence of corruption, quality and social justice and individual freedom and rule of law, for example. This highlights the major communication challenges for both the EU and the Ukrainian government in bridging the gaps.

TV and word of mouth are the most frequent sources of information on the EU, but spontaneous interest is low: only 15% of those surveyed say that they look for/access information on the EU frequently or very frequently.

<sup>216</sup> <https://www.euneighbours.eu/en/east/stay-informed/publications/opinion-survey-2018-ukraine>

**FIGURE 2 – Values ‘strongly’ or ‘very strongly’ associated with the EU (Q2.3) & three most important personal values (Q4.7)**

(Percentages refer to Ukrainians who have heard of the EU)



The **policy objectives** of the Delegation are:<sup>217</sup>

- Vocally demand and support swift implementation of key political and economic reforms in Ukraine, with a special emphasis on those which deal with a fight against corruption. Support reforms in an inclusive and transparent manner, ensuring economic stability and providing for a vector for modernisation of the country
- Support implementation of Association Agreement / DCFTA
- Continue to support Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, including through diplomatic engagement, restrictive measures, non-recognition policy and support for the Ukrainian reform process, strengthening the overall capacity of the Ukrainian state institutions and civil society organisations and media freedom.

The **communication objectives** of the Delegation<sup>218</sup> are:

- Maintain momentum and support for reforms by illustrating the impact reforms are having on Ukraine's economy and people;
- Establish a credible, identifiable EU voice in Ukraine;
- Reduce the impact of disinformation pertaining to the EU in Ukraine<sup>219</sup>;
- Reaffirm and reassure EU's commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and issues related to the crisis in the East.

The **specific objectives** are:

- Increase awareness of the EU's assistance to the Ukrainian reform process and generate support to AA/DCFTA related reforms in the election year
- Explain the opportunities that arise from the implementation of the DCFTA + showcase specific EU's assistance provided (EU4Business, ULead, Creative Europe, Horizon2020 etc.)
- Increase understanding of EU-Ukraine relations among target enlarged audiences
- Further develop EU Networks, creating synergy in order to promote European values with a focus on youth
- Communicate success stories of young entrepreneurs, innovators and exporters, creative and cultural industries
- Strengthen cooperation and coordination with the Government<sup>220</sup>.

<sup>217</sup> Forward Planning 2018

<sup>218</sup> PPTX provided by the Delegation which covers the overarching objectives, the specific objectives and the overarching approach. These differ only in wording.

<sup>219</sup> It was out of scope to look in detail at disinformation but several interviewees inside and outside the Delegation stressed the importance of this.

<sup>220</sup> In 2019, they also include promotion of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Eastern Partnership

The overarching approach to communication is:

- Success stories and storytelling, especially via video and social media
- A regional level and "out-of-office" focus
- Sharing and synchronising
- Everyone one is a communicator, each EU project has to carry bigger message.

The key target groups are:

1. The most active and mobilised part of society, which support change and modernisation of the country in line with shared European values and free trade principles, i.e. opinion makers, leaders of CSOs, students' organisations and members of the businesses community who can act as multipliers;
2. (Regional) journalists and opinion makers with a following on social networks;
3. Natural pro-EU advocates – EU alumni amongst students and young professionals and experts in the regions;
4. Entrepreneurs and SMEs with the most to gain from the EU-advocated reforms;
5. "The neutrals", working through the media and Team Europe;
6. The Eastern and Southern regions of Ukraine, where there is a deficit of EU-related information.

The main pillars of Delegation activity are:

1. Work with media and journalists
2. Campaigns
3. Regional outreach activities
4. Development of the EU networks
5. Cultural and sport public diplomacy activities
6. Information products
7. Social media management.

The fieldwork mission focused on the second, third and fourth pillars in line with the orientations provided by the Delegation and the focus on activities akin to those that might be carried out by any new network of Information Centres:

The backbone of communication is the EUR 3.7 million strategic communication contract concluded in 2017 "Communicating Europe in Ukraine."<sup>221</sup> This contract is designed "to deliver a coherent and effective public communications package based on a common and compelling central narrative which convincingly sets out what the EU and Ukraine are committed to achieving in Ukraine, and why it is important."<sup>222</sup>

This contract has largely replaced a more fragmented approach by pooling the funds from several existing contracts. There are, nevertheless, other contracts targeting segments of the same general audience, which are outside the scope of the strategic contract. These include, in particular, those in support of EU networks and for the EU Study Days. The Delegation also carries out some activities directly (or working with sub-contracted suppliers), such as organisation of Europe Day, production of information products, concluding conventions with Euro Info Centres, press and media work and social media.

The field mission looked as well at a past communication campaign on visa-free travel, the EU Study Days, the Euroquiz platform, the EU Career Days, the EU Information Centres. This was in line with the orientations provided by the Delegation. At present, these contracts are tendered locally and individually, but since end-2017, there has been a **single contract to coordinate the activity of the networks**, Information Support to Youth and EU Networks In Ukraine, irrespective of whether the network is put in place via a contractor or by the Delegation. This was also researched. Prior to that, there was a contract, which only covered some of these activities without the overarching coordination role. The team also met communication staff of the EU4Business campaign, which helps Ukrainian business take advantage of the DFCTA by explaining opportunities, providing loans and running 15 Business support centres. Key areas of

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<sup>221</sup> <https://ted.europa.eu/udl?uri=TED:NOTICE:309657-2017:TEXT:EN:HTML&src=0>

<sup>222</sup> <https://ted.europa.eu/udl?uri=TED:NOTICE:400549-2016:TEXT:EN:HTML&src=0>

support in **strengthening society** are education and research, Horizon 2020 and culture. The key areas in **governance** are decentralisation, rule of law and public administration reform.

At the time of the field mission, work had started on drafting the **Terms of Reference for a Framework Contract**, which will be tendered internationally, to bring all these activities under a single umbrella. This is expected to give the Delegation more flexibility than working with individual contracts for a small number of activities, does at present.

The field mission also discussed a forthcoming contract known as the “**Europe House**” grant agreement, although the term “Europe House” could lead to misunderstandings, as there will be no physical presence. This is discussed in greater detail later in this section.

As explained further below in describing the strategic communication contract, there are also plans for a **Media Centre** in Kyiv, which will act as a *hub for events*, not just for journalists but more widely, e.g. for project implementers.

**Obstacles to achieving the objectives** identified through interviews include:

- The lack of professionalism in the press. This was expressed less as a problem of absence of freedom of the press than as the press reflecting the views of the owners of their media rather than being independent and objective<sup>223224</sup>;
- Lack of resources within the Delegation, which came out in not only interviews with the Delegation, but is highlighted in the Forward Planning and was expressed as a significant issue in our initial online survey of the Delegation;
- Difficulties for contractors (and even Press & Information staff despite recent improvements) in obtaining the information they need about cooperation projects in order to be able to “tell stories” – a problem recognised at senior level within the Delegation but difficult to overcome because policy officers are not trained in communication and do not see it as a priority;
- Insufficient commitment on the part of implementing partners to compliance with visibility requirements;
- Insufficient coordination across programmes and networks despite recent improvements.

Interviewees were systematically asked their views where appropriate about the possibility of setting up a network of EU Information Centres to better meet the perceived need for information or to achieve the objectives of the Delegation.

The consensus view was that:

- There is a thirst for information about Europe, particularly among young people, which is only partially met at present;
- Universities are a good channel, but communication should reach out more beyond students;
- Outreach across the country is important and there is much more to be done;
- Interest in EU policies, the Association Agreement or the DFCTA is low except among stakeholders directly affected; information and communication must focus on what affects people personally;
- There are a number of existing structures or plans which fulfil the Information Centre role to some extent. They need to be better coordinated, but this is not a good reason for creating something additional;
- There is a need to do more through cultural and sports diplomacy as means of conveying values.

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<sup>223</sup> The national media in Ukraine is characterised by a large number of outlets generally reflecting the view of their oligarch owners according to interviewees.

<sup>224</sup> Some journalists also expect to be paid to provide coverage.

Views were divided on whether a physical infrastructure is needed for this type of outreach, whether a separate network is needed in addition to what exists, and what its role might be, e.g. information per se or liaison to support outreach activities by the Delegation (or a contractor). Some saw a need for actual Information Centres (but not necessarily new networks); others doubted whether such a Centre would attract much footfall. The exact form the future contract on a “House of Europe” will take is still undecided, but as described subsequently, the emphasis will be on flexible structures that may well move around Ukraine.

The point was made by key stakeholders that the Commission and Delegation need a clearer idea of what it is they want to achieve and a good understanding of different needs across Ukraine, and only then decide whether an Information Centre, and what type of Centre, is appropriate. The objectives and targeting are for the moment are still often generic although the strategic communication campaign has taken steps to change that.

### 2.3. Management and organisation

The Press and Information section of the Delegation consists of five people. They manage the EUR 3.75 million strategic communication contract and the network support contract described in the next section as well as a dozen other communication contracts to a total value of more than EUR 0.8 million. They conclude conventions with Euro Info Centres, run a programme of support to libraries, the Team Europe pool of expert speakers, activities run directly by the Delegation, such as Europe Day and organise or sponsor culture and sports events, and handle press work and social media (with support from the strategic communications contractor for social media work).

The main metrics used to measure performance are quantitative and not based on achieving targets<sup>225</sup>/SMART objectives, qualitative assessment (e.g. surveys of reactions to events), benchmarks or best practice in going beyond reach. They are:

- statistics of the websites and social media accounts;
- number of subscribers in the electronic database of media and stakeholders' contacts (kept at the Delegation and sent to HQ only on request if needed);
- advanced traditional media monitoring (print, TV and radio) and online/social media metrics
- qualitative feedback from the participants to the trainings, public events, press briefings and other our and our networks' organised events;
- social media engagement metrics. The goal was to increase the number of friends on Facebook from 40,000 to 50,000 by the end of 2018.

Below and overview of key communication programmes and projects is provided.

#### Communicating Europe Together

Communicating Europe Together is the flagship strategic communication programme in Ukraine. The contract is held by Albany Associates in consortium with Portland PR and E'Comm. The campaign is designed to improve the quality of both internal Delegation communication and external communication. It has adopted the slogan *Moving Forward Together*, which was launched in March 2018<sup>226</sup> and replaced the ‘*Stronger Together*’ slogan. The campaign is designed to increase awareness with Ukrainian audiences about the benefits and opportunities of EU-Ukraine cooperation. The slogan and its visual identity are used across all communication in the Ukraine, as far as possible. The EBRD uses it in communication on EU4Business, for example.

The campaign was designed on the basis of research to identify the reasons for the perception of the EU and the influences which formed that perception. Semi-structured interviews and focus groups were organised with Ukrainians who are positive or neutral about relations with the EU. There was a “push” rather

<sup>225</sup> The exception is a target of increasing the number of friends on Facebook from 40,000-50,000, but it is not clear how that is to be achieved, and friends/likes do not measure the extent of engagement or to which a community has been built. That is best measured through shares and comment.

<sup>226</sup> [https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/ukraine/41139/eu-delegation-launches-all-ukrainian-%E2%80%99Cmoving-forward-together%E2%80%99D-communication-campaign\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/ukraine/41139/eu-delegation-launches-all-ukrainian-%E2%80%99Cmoving-forward-together%E2%80%99D-communication-campaign_en)



than a “pull” approach to this research, i.e. the research was based on asking about information on EU support programme not topics identified by research into the interests of Ukrainians.

The key insights were:

- Ukrainians do not want to be looked down on or patronised. They are looking for a cooperative partnership with the EU;
- A positive image and attitude towards the EU increase as levels of understanding of the scope of EU cooperation in Ukraine increases. The more clearly the EU can communicate with as many people as possible, the stronger the EU position will become;
- The more citizens learn and discover about EU cooperation, the higher their likelihood of having warmer/positive attitudes and feelings about the EU;
- SMEs do not feel the effects/support of EU cooperation. A perception shift is needed;
- It is not only financial support or material gains that will change Ukraine. It is when Ukrainians will start to adopt the “values of the EU” that society will become more democratically minded and socially active;
- TV and Digital are two focus channels to reach the nation at all demographic levels.

Communicating Europe Together concentrates on the results of cooperation and how it meets people’s basic needs for jobs, security and less corruption, for example. The objective according to E’Comm is to relate the results of people’s everyday lives since communication in the past has been too generic. Communicating Europe Together uses a campaign approach, making use of all forms of media, TV, radio, regional and national media, outdoor advertising, videos on screens in Intercity trains, social media, online resources for schools, etc<sup>227</sup>.

A dedicated news aggregation website<sup>228</sup> has been launched devoted exclusively to news about the EU or EU-Ukraine relations, including success stories. The site carries weekly announcements of EU events and information on grants. Banner promotion has been successfully on other sites to draw visitors to eu.meta.eu. A cross-media project has also been developed with news aggregator portal, Delo.ua. Content is provided for the website of the EU4Business project. The project also cooperates with Ostro.org, which focuses on news from the eastern regions of Ukraine.

The KPI’s for the campaign focus heavily on reach: TV rating points, Facebook views and YouTube clicks for the campaigns, reach and actions for Delegation Facebook posts which are boosted through payment, unique visitors to the website and page views,<sup>229</sup> and coverage of press and radio adverts. The campaign also measures reactions to Facebook posts and uses analytics that provide information on ratings by media group, web portal and TV channel, for example. There has also been a preliminary measurement of recall.

The results by September 2018 were that:

- the population with a positive view of the EU had risen;
- public opinion had shifted so that people who previously felt neutral about the EU felt more positive and people who previously felt negative felt neutral. It is, however, not possible to attribute this result directly to the campaign as other factors are likely to have been at work;<sup>230</sup>
- awareness of the EU had risen from 73% to 77% and of the DCFTA from 17% to 23.5%.

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<sup>227</sup> Other channels and tools include: advocacy through events, websites, media monitoring, online games, infographics, leaflets, guides, preparing project success stories for use in a range of channels, press releases and media contacts, PR around events, a photo bank, training, support for Team Europe, and ad hoc consultancy services for other projects and programmes, for example Creative Europe and the corruption parks funded by the EUACI, the EU Anti-Corruption Initiative.

<sup>228</sup> eu.meta.ua

<sup>229</sup> Time visitors spend on the site is also measured, but it is compared (positively) to average time spent on a website in Ukraine, but ought ideally to be measured against time spent on news sites if that data is available. Bounce rates (i.e. one page is consulted and then the visitor leaves the site) are not measured. Bounce rates are a basic analytical measure which should be readily available (though it cannot be used in isolation and needs interpretation and benchmarking).

<sup>230</sup> Data is not necessarily consistent with the results of the OPEN Neighbourhood survey cited in the introduction, but the source is not the same.

- awareness of the new brand was at 7.4% after 7 months.<sup>231</sup>

In 2018 and the first quarter of 2019, the EU had displaced the United Nations as the most visible international institution<sup>232</sup>. In an assessment in March 2019, the contractor concluded that:

- the strategy to communicate success stories and real heroes works because it gets the biggest audience engagement;
- there is a high level of EU presence compared to other international organizations and governmental institutions;
- there are too many messages: 6 campaigns with 3 messages each;
- the political season influenced people's level of trust towards socio-political messages; however
- there is still a lack of visibility.

The contractor recommended keeping TV as the main channel of communication, increasing the amount of outdoor advertising, and keeping campaigns running for longer.

Staff of the Delegation felt positive about the professionalism of the campaign but found it difficult to assess its effectiveness ahead of the internal evaluation required in the Terms of Reference. EUD agreed that the strategic communication contract is an improvement compared to the fragmented contracts of the past. However, it is still challenging to maintain an overview and align all communication activities, at Headquarters, within the Delegation and at local level across Ukraine. There are two reasons for this:

- EUD project officers do not necessarily see the visibility/communication element of their work as a priority; and
- there is a tendency on the part of implementing partners not to see the EU's visibility requirements as pivotal particularly when they are sometimes better accepted by the local population than the EU, which applies in particular to members of the UN family.<sup>233</sup>

As part of the campaign, it is planned to establish a Media Centre as a hub for EU project events in particular. This will be for events for all audiences, but the location is expected to be convenient for journalists. The Centre will use a building previously occupied by UKRINFORM, the Ukrainian national news agency, and therefore one with an existing association with the press and one that journalists are familiar with going to.

Other activities have included organising an SME week, promoting Erasmus+, eTwinning and Horizon 2020 on social media as part of the Education and Research strand. In both cases, the contractor faced challenges on the one hand in obtaining information for success stories or "heroes" to publicise, experts able to explain programmes in simple words, or visual materials because projects and programmes are not set up with this kind of communication in mind, and on the other in convincing successful SMEs or "heroes" that are identified to be a public face of the campaign.

### **Visa liberalisation campaign**

In 2017-2018, an EUR 246,000 standalone campaign was run under by a subsidiary of E'Comm on the benefits of visa liberalisation. This was an opportunity to highlight the benefits of integration, knowledge of Europe through travel and in facilitating business travel, and in so doing increase the number of travellers to Europe. The goal according to the agency handling the campaign was to create a concept of an "open Europe" and through this to combat disinformation by Russia about the complexities of travelling to the EU.

Preliminary research identified only one target group with any significant degree of understanding of the new rules, e.g. the permitted length of stay (90 days out of 180) and the need for a biometric passport: 2.1 million middle-class Ukrainians who already travel frequently. They nevertheless only had a mid-level understanding of the visa liberalisation process. The campaign targeted this group, but also 2.6 million potential labour migrants, 1.37 million students; 1.5 million "all inclusive" travellers (generally families) who travel once a year

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<sup>231</sup> These are the most recent results. A further wave of polling will take place in July 2019.

<sup>232</sup> The difference is significant, but there is no analysis whether external events or other institutions' campaign timing affected this rating.

<sup>233</sup> This is consistent with a finding from our work in the Western Balkans.

to Egypt or Turkey and perceive the EU as expensive. All of these had a poor understanding of the rules. A secondary target were 11.3 million who could afford to travel to the EU but see no need or have no desire to and who also had a poor understanding of the new rules.

This was a multi-channel campaign carried out nationwide, but with a particular focus on four cities with high numbers of travellers by sea or air (including labour migrants) and/or large student populations.

Research carried out at the end of the campaign showed that the knowledge of the basic rules had risen from 33.4% in February 2017 to 61.1% in December 2017, while the frequency of travel to the EU had increased by 15%.<sup>234</sup>

### **Information Support to Youth and EU Networks in Ukraine<sup>235</sup>**

Without there being a network of Information Centres as such in Ukraine, there are several projects, which function as information networks and have done so for a number of years. These primarily target young people based on a perceived need. (This report covers separately a network of centres for SME's run by the EBRD.)

Some of the networks are managed directly by the Delegation, e.g. the EU Info Centres in universities and the network of libraries; others are managed via the contract on Information Support to Youth and EU Networks in Ukraine held by the Open Society Foundation. This contract is an annual one, which has been run by the Open Society Foundation since 2015 with the exception of one year.

The core activities are the Euro Quiz, the Euroclubs and the EU Career Days. Since early 2018, all network-type activities, including EU Info Centres, have been run via a single online platform, with a single visual identity, as highlighted below.



The main activities covered by the contract in 2017/2018 were:

#### **A new online national platform at [Euroquiz.org.ua](http://Euroquiz.org.ua).**

This is for news of the EU networks containing information by region on the EU Info Centres, the Euroclubs, the Euroquiz, the EU Study Days, Team Europe, the Young European Ambassadors<sup>236</sup>, College of Europe Alumni, EU Visitors' Programme Alumni, Erasmus as well as news from the EU Delegation. The platform also contains blogs, a calendar of events and a space for the networks to exchange information and discuss among themselves. The website is integrated with social media and enables embedding of photo and video. It builds on an earlier more limited Euroquiz activity. In the reporting period from November 2017-October 2018, 156 EU network representatives registered on the platform to communicate on and provide information on their activities.

Web statistics are reported, including the number of page views and average time on the site, but there are no targets, and there is no analysis of reasons for peaks in traffic (other than where it has been boosted by payment). Page view levels and time spent on the site are reported, but without any information on which pages are most popular. The approach to reporting on social media is similar: it is based on likes/followers, without any analysis of shares, for example, or of comments.

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<sup>234</sup> A factor which is likely to have boosted travel to the EU over this period is the start of low-cost flights between the EU and Ukraine by Wizz in 2017. The probable importance of this and the subsequent entry of Ryanair as a factor in boosting travel to the EU can be considered self-evident, but was also mentioned in several interviews, and described in one case as a "game-changer". The message that travel was now cheap was, moreover, one of the messages of the campaign.

<sup>235</sup> Information in this section is taken from the Annual Report of this contract, interviews with the Delegation and with the Open Society Foundation, supplemented in the case of the Euro Info Centres and the EU Career Days with information gathered during personal visits by the mission team and interviews during meetings there.

<sup>236</sup> The Young European Ambassadors are an initiative coming under the OPEN Programme. The field mission found that this was the only area in which the OPEN Programme and the activities of the Delegation interfaced.

40% of visitors in the period under review were under 34. This might suggest that the target group is not being reached, but as the platform is also used by organisers of networks and teachers (who are of course multipliers to the target group), they are likely to be older.

## EU Info Centres

EU Info Centres are part of the network, but have a separate status based on an agreement with EUD<sup>237</sup>. The Centres are generally located in universities but are required to be accessible to the public. They receive no financial support, but the coordinator receives some training. They receive publications from EUD and organise events. Delegation staff (both from the press and information section, and from the trade and cooperation sections) often speak at their events, as does the Ambassador. Twenty-two EU Info Centres were invited to register and use the online platform during the period November 2017-October 2018. Twenty-one EUICs provided annual reports. As of April 2019, there were 27 Centres<sup>238</sup>. EUD's objective is to have a geographic spread across Ukraine.

The Convention requires the Info Centres to:

1. process, catalogue and index all the European Union publications received in a single collection;
2. serve as a central point for all European Union -related information produced by the host structure;
3. provide access to and enable consultation of publications and other material for a sufficient number of hours (at least 20 hours per week); free publications intended for the general public have to be made available with easy access;
4. enter into communication partnership with other stakeholders where possible;
5. take part in the Delegation's general information activities on the European Union;
6. routinely inform the Delegation of the events in which it participates (debates, conferences, seminars and the like);
7. report annually to the Delegation on its activities, using the special form provided by the Delegation.

Apart from providing basic information on address and contact persons, the Centres are required to report annually on their Internet and social media, location, size of the premises, the number of workspaces, the equipment available, any equipment provided by EUD, the number of publications and documents, who the centre is open to and whether it is by appointment, the opening hours, whether the Centre has Internet access and the EU information resources they have access to online (specifically Europa, the Delegation site, EUR-Lex, and any other databases), the assessment of access to EU information resources, documents and publications on the EU received regularly in print or online from the EU institutions and agencies, the Delegation and other sources, the frequency with which different sources are used, the average number of visitors by month or year and visitor categories by type, the number of information request and type, activities carried out during the year.

The mission team visited the Centre in Chernihiv, which from its website appeared to be the most proactive Centre close to Kyiv. The Centre is located at the National Technical University of Chernihiv and has been an EU Info Centre since 2016. The member of the team who visited the Centre was able to meet professors, students and the librarians who manage the Centre. According to its annual report, the Centre receives around 700 visitors a year. There were no visitors present during the field mission. Based on analysis of the breakdown of visitors in 2017: Students – 40%; Teachers – 40%; Journalists – 4%; Entrepreneurs – 6%; NGOs – 4%; Other – 6% and the types of event organised (scientific conferences / seminars / round tables (25); Lectures (10); Press conferences (15)). This Info Centre concept is essentially outreach support to universities they are not intended to be outreach to the public.

Of the 25 queries a month, 10 come by phone and 15 by Internet: The types of questions were: general information about the EU: 7%, EU-Ukraine relations (EU assistance programs) 10%; History of integration

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<sup>237</sup> A copy of the model of the convention is in Annex.

<sup>238</sup> Including two in Crimea, with which the Delegation currently has no contact.

4%, EU politics 7%, EU economy 12%; Practical issues (obtaining visas, studying in EU countries, receiving grants, employment, etc.): 60%.

It is not possible to say how typical this Centre is as the annual reports are all submitted individually and there is no composite collation of results. A spot check of other reports suggests that the figure for questions on practical issues is at the upper end of the range (but not the highest) and not atypical.

The key activities of the Centre in Chernihiv are the availability of publications and the events it organises. Recent examples of events are a summer Euro-picnic (an annual event), an English-language course on the Day of European Languages, a photo exhibition, a simulation of an EU Council discussion, an EU Careers Day, a round table on youth mobility and cultural policy, a lecture on How the EU Works and a seminar for exporters.

In the conversations with the Centre, the event activity came across as much more important to the Centre than the publications. The students are very interested in things European in general (i.e. not just the EU), but not in EU policies as such unless they impinge directly on their studies. This was not particularly the case because of the technical nature of their studies. They had no knowledge of EU research activities which might be relevant to their studies.

The topics that most interest these students are the opportunities for employment or study in the EU. Although one of the teachers had been on an Erasmus, the discussions identified filling in the application form and writing a motivation letter for the more advanced forms of Erasmus study as a barrier. A training course on this was in fact held in late 2018.

The students (and the teaching staff) are more interested in finding information online than in the publications held in the Centre (some of which were out of date). For example, they would welcome a webinar on navigating Europa. Internet access is not a barrier. The university has high-speed access and the team were told that even in remoter towns and villages students would have access from home, albeit sometimes not high-speed.

The focus of interest of the users clearly depends on the nature of the university. The Taras Shevchenko National University, which the field mission visited to attend an EU Career Day, has a Department of comparative EU law studies, and what was described by its staff to our mission team as “a very pronounced EU agenda”. There are a significant number of MA and PhD theses on EU integration, and a comparative chapter on the EU is compulsory in all business PhDs irrespective of whether the EU is part of the topic. The University also has an International Business Dept that works on Erasmus+ programmes and exchange of teachers. This clearly explains why it is at the low end of the spectrum in terms of receiving questions on practical issues (10%), while queries on EU politics and economics account for 25% each.

The two Centres visited are both pro-active, which does not necessarily make them typical. The Delegation in its Forward Plan admits that some Euro Info Centres need more encouragement than others. There is, of course, no financial incentive for the Centres to be pro-active – and no sanction for not performing. Indeed, there are no performance criteria.

## **EU Career Days**

Euro Info Centres are eligible to host EU Career Days. 19 applied in 2017/18 and 15 were selected. At EU Career Days, employers from European firms meet potential employees, and the students have an opportunity to see what their prospects are, either in Ukraine or further afield. Master classes are also held in parallel.

At the Career Days in Chernihiv in October 2018, 28 employers and 204 students attended. The Master Classes were on: “Writing a successful application for academic mobility within Erasmus+”; “The Europass CV and the motivational letter”; and “Safe employment abroad.”

At the Career Days at the Taras Shevchenko National University, where the fieldwork mission was able to judge from face-to-face contact the positive reaction of the nearly 1,900 students who attended, the master classes were held by some of the 34 companies or organisations participating in the event, including UNHCR, which talked about human and refugee rights and career opportunities in UNHCR and the UN, and representatives of consulting companies who talked about issues they deal with, such as strategy, forecasting and financial risk, explained various business functions and career prospects.



The universities are required to report on the duration of the event, who was present at the opening, the number of partners present (and breakdown between commercial companies, international and European programmes etc.), the EU networks involved, the learning outcomes and level of interest, the regional problems and tasks addressed, success stories and interesting elements. There is no integrated analysis of the individual reports.

### **EU Study Days**

EU Study Days in Ukraine is an EUR 130,000 annual contract held in 2018 by the Centre for Ukrainian Reform Education (CURE). Five four-day sessions for a total of 200 students were held in different regions of Ukraine focusing on the major issues in EU-Ukraine relations in the fields of politics, economy, energy policy, mobility, education and human rights. An alumni Forum was held in Kyiv. The 10 best graduates were rewarded with a trip to Brussels. Examples of positive feedback are available from social media and recommendations for the future are available, but there is no systematic analysis of participant reactions or the usefulness of the programme.

### **EU Networks Forum**

2018 was the first time that an EU Networks Forum was held. It consisted of a day of presentations and a day of workshops. A World Café session brainstormed on cooperation between networks and new areas of activity. They came up with more than 150 ideas, but no overall conclusions or survey of participant satisfaction are available. Network Forums are to be held twice a year in future.

### **Euroquizzes**

There is one quiz for under 14's and one for young people older than that. The questions are updated each year. In 2018, the game had five rounds run over the first four months of the year. 13,690 young people took part. Those who completed the quiz received e-certificates. The 200 winners received printed certificates. A special track for members of the Euroclubs (described subsequently) provided an opportunity to win actual prizes, such as t-shirts or balloons. Those who take part in additional mini-games on the site can win quiz coins and use them to purchase some of the giveaways used as prizes. The Ministry of Education sends out letter to schools about the quiz.

### **A video competition**

There were two target groups, young professionals studying the audiovisual arts or just starting out on their career and "amateurs" – students and schoolchildren in other areas of study. They were asked to produce a video of up to 3 minutes on European Education – A strong Society. 96 videos were submitted.

### **Euroclub platform and project competition**

Euroclubs in schools, universities and colleges or organised by NGOs have existed in Ukraine since the mid-1990's and were initially a Delegation initiative, though the Ministry of Education promoted them from 2005-2010. Formally, there are more than 600, but in practice only 300 are active.

Some are run by the students themselves; in some case, teachers are involved. They meet to discuss European issues, may run projects such as seminars or Europe Day celebrations, and may exchange with other groups, including visiting other Euroclubs. The Euroclubs are self-sustaining. They receive no official support.

By the end of the reporting period, 135 Euroclubs had registered on the online platform. They can access educational tools via the website and can network via the platform, and post news. In 2018, a competition was run for the 10 best projects, which then received organisational support from the Delegation. These projects were also awarded certificates by the Delegation and invited to the EU Network Forum.

### **Programme with libraries**

The Delegation has recently started to work with Ukraine's 500-strong network of libraries for children and youth, which are culture and education centres. The libraries are provided with a toolbox, including publications for both younger audiences and the parents who come with them to the library.

### **Europe House**



In 2019, a Europe House project is expected to get under way. This is an EUR 12 million four-year project, which will receive a grant from the EU to meet around 95% of the costs and is regarded as a pilot for a project of this kind according to those interviewed about the project. The cultural institutes who are programme partners will contribute around 5% of the total budget.

The project is spearheaded by the Goethe-Institut and will have two or three partners: the Institut Français, the *České Centrum* and possibly the British Council.<sup>239</sup> They will work closely with the ten of the EU-28 countries which are active members of the EUNIC (EU National Institutes of Culture) cluster in Ukraine.

The overall objectives are to:

- contribute to the advancement of Ukrainian reforms in culture and CCI, education, health, media, youth and SME;
- contribute to a stronger mutual understanding and dialogue between the EU and the Ukrainian society and within the Ukraine;
- support tolerance and cultural diversity in Ukraine and a stronger internal cohesion within Ukraine.

The specific objectives are:

- to broaden people-to-people contacts and hands-on exposure to EU working cultures in key reform areas, enabling Ukrainian professionals to gain a better understanding of EU *acquis* and realities and benefits of a partnership with the EU.
- to enhance sustainable interregional and international cultural, intellectual, artistic and youth exchanges, fostering mobility and mutual understanding among the target groups. Participants and alumni become change agents within their communities and work context.
- to raise awareness of EU and EU Member States' programmes for Ukraine, increasing synergies between different EU Member States' programmes and activities throughout the country and thus enhancing co-operation and contacts between the target groups of the Ukrainian society and the EU.

The target groups are:

- Education sector:
- Health sector:
- Culture and Creative and Cultural Industries sectors
- Media:
- Social entrepreneurs and SME related to innovation
- Young people (secondary school age +), youth leaders and activists
- Community leaders and influencers
- Local civil society organisations (CSOs).

All citizens are expected to be the final beneficiaries.

Expected results are:

- direct experience of EU practices and establishment of partnerships;
- increased cultural, intellectual, artistic and youth dialogue and exchange;
- a co-ordinated information hub for EU and Member State programmes.

Of particular relevance to this evaluation is the coordinated information hub. This is envisaged as **an online platform and physical space** serving as a single-entry point in Kyiv and obtaining support from existing regional offices of the cultural institutes and “pop-up” locations elsewhere. The exact form the latter will take has yet to be decided, but the sponsors of the project use terms such as “mobile pavilions”, such as marquees, to hold cultural events or fairs. The project will tour the country. No additional physical infrastructure is planned.

Even in the case of Kyiv, at the time the field mission was in Kyiv, the sponsors were putting the emphasis on the **virtual aspects** of activity in Kyiv, rather than the physical infrastructure that the term “Europe House”

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<sup>239</sup> The British Council was a co-applicant, but its participation will depend on the final terms of Brexit. Signature of the contract has been delayed until this can be clarified.

might suggest. It was made clear that the term “Europe House” was a label to denote a concept of the EU and Member States cooperating rather than them being under one roof.

The local “centres” will provide information on the mobility schemes of the EU and of the other EUNIC countries’ programmes, look for synergies with any partners that the cultural centres have in the regions, e.g. the partnerships the Goethe-Institute has with libraries and cultural associations, and will develop alumni work, including alumni of the College of Europe, Erasmus+, the EU Study Days, the EU Visitors’ Programme and Member State programmes.

There will be a focus on talking to young people (or reaching them through social media), not providing them with printed materials that the sponsors of the project believe they will not read. The emphasis will be on providing practical information on where to find information online and help with applications to access mobility programmes. The “people-to-people” aspect is considered very important.

A qualitative but detailed problem analysis, assessment of stakeholder attitudes and an intervention logic have been drawn up in developing the proposal for the House. The needs assessment will be further refined in the inception phase. A monitoring and evaluation programme will be drawn up during the first six months of the programme. External mid-term and final evaluations are planned.

## 2.4. Other actors communicating on the EU

A number of other players communicate on the EU. These include programmes such as Creative Europe, Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020, with whom there is a degree of cooperation on the part of the Delegation and in local events organised by Euro Info Centres, for example. Based on the available evidence there does not appear to be a **strategic approach** to this cooperation.

The evaluation team notes that **many cooperation projects have liaison offices** across the Ukraine. These may support the communication component of the project, but do not have an information and communication role as such. However, in looking holistically at the physical presence of EU structures in the Ukraine and at visibility, these need to be taken into account.

For the purposes of this evaluation, there are three key players other than the Delegation who provide information on the EU: the government of Ukraine through the EU-funded Association4EU, and the EBRD through the EU4Business Programme, the OPEN Neighbourhood Programme. The first two are described here. The OPEN Neighbourhood Programme is dealt with separately in this reporting process.

As noted elsewhere, the Young European Ambassadors’ programme is the only part of the OPEN Programme that interfaces regularly with the programmes run by the Delegation according to the information collected by the field mission.

### Association4U

Public communication and outreach is one of four components of this programme carried out for the government of the Ukraine, but funded by the EU. The other components are legal approximation, HR development, policy development, coherence and coordination. Overall, it is an EUR 7.7 million contract held by a consortium headed by GFA Consulting.

In the area of communication, the programme works on communicating the costs and benefits of reforms and works across ministries to ensure that messaging on reforms is coherent, that it is specific, i.e. it relates to citizens’ daily concerns, and that it is jargon-free. This work includes running a web portal on EU integration (<https://eu-ua.org/>), providing training for the press offices of Ukraine’s ministries. Outreach work is primarily in training and informing regional journalists and providing a help desk and IT support for SMEs.

Strategic communication by the government of Ukraine on integration with the EU is relatively new and started with the Action Plan for 2018 for the implementation of the Communication Strategy in the field of European integration for 2018-2021 adopted in April 2018. It defines tasks, events (which may be campaigns), executing agency and timelines, but leaves the definition of targets, channels and performance assessment to each event. Some of the first products were information leaflets on NATO and the EU in simple language and radio clips. It is too early to say what the impact on the Action Plan of the new President will be.

### EU4Business

The 15 Business Information Support Centres for SMEs across Ukraine are operated by the EBRD as part of the Ukrainian component of the EU4Business programme that runs across the Eastern Partnership. The EBRD is an implementing partner of the EU in providing support to SMEs to grow their businesses and take advantage of the DCFTA. The centres train consultants to advise SMEs and run events. The project has an online platform to encourage networking and impart expertise. Having physical centres is seen as essential

according to staff of the EBRD because they need a location for meetings with SMEs, which may be one-on-one with consultants as well as events.

The project has KPIs on increasing levels of awareness in percentage terms and will be evaluated subsequently. The short-term impact is measured by surveys of the consultants and at events on metrics such as whether skills have improved as a result, whether the consultants obtained a better understanding of SME needs or whether an event resulted in an SME exporting or selling more.

Perceptions of this programme gathered in the course of the field mission were that these centres are playing an important role as a visible presence of the EU in the regions and that there is unexploited scope to develop synergies with them.

## **2.5. Assessing the Intervention Logic**

An intervention logic is a theoretical model to show how a results chain works from inputs to activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts. This section provides some reflections on the reconstructed Intervention Logic (IL) that is presented overleaf. An Intervention Logic was drafted prior to the field mission but has been adapted in the light of the discussions in Kyiv and additional research.

### **Inputs**

Inputs include the human and financial resources allocated to the Delegation and the financial resources allocated to communication agencies or civil society organisations carrying out campaigns or specific communication projects.

### **Activities**

The field mission provided an opportunity to better understand, which activities are carried out directly by the Delegation and which are sub-contracted, and also which of the many activities are regarded as particular priorities and who they target. The revised Intervention Logic takes a holistic approach to these rather than looking solely at those activities carried out directly by the Delegation, both because this is necessary to have a complete picture and also because the governance of outsourced contracts is an important activity in its own right.

The activities fall into the following categories:

- Media-related activities
- Social media management
- Training
- Information products
- Public events
- Campaigns
- Euro Info Centres
- EU Career Days
- Network Forum
- Information for libraries

The field mission paid particular attention to activities which have an information centre-type component because of the nature of this evaluation and because it quickly became evident that there are a number of these and that coordination across them is a recognised weakness despite recent improvements, notably the creation of a Network Forum.

The activities with some form of information centre function are:

- 27 Euro Info Centres in universities (but open to the general public as a condition of their Convention with the Delegation);
- A Media Centre in Kyiv as part of the Communicating Europe in Ukraine project
- The future “Europe House”, which will draw on the existing support networks of the members of the EUNIC cluster and use mobile centres; there may be a physical support infrastructure in Kyiv

- 15 Business Info Support Centres operated by the EBRD as part of the EU4Business Programme (not included in the Intervention Logic as they do not formally come within the scope of the Delegation Communication Team).

The other priority was the Communicating Europe in Ukraine project as this represents a new approach to reaching out to citizens with information on the EU.

## **Outputs**

The main outputs expected from these activities are:

- Reach and engagement with information and EU messages;
- In-depth media partnerships and greater knowledge of the EU/Ukraine relationship as a result of this and other activities with media
- Multipliers better informed about the rationale and benefits of EU integration and adopting EU values, opportunities of the Association Agreement and the DFCTA
- Young people better informed about the rationale and benefits of EU integration and adopting EU values, and of opportunities for employment, travel and mobility
- “Neutrals” better informed about the rationale, benefits and opportunities of EU integration
- Government communication department(s) enabled to communicate more effectively on public administration reform.

The ability to do this is constrained by three factors:

1. projects are launched without any needs assessment or problem analysis, so that target groups are not well defined; while it is reasonable to assume that university students are an important target group, for example, decisions on where to site Euro Info Centres are based on universities approaching the Delegation not on an analysis of where the need would be greatest. The Delegation is limited, by not being able to offer an incentive and therefore having to rely on those who express a motivation, but then cannot apply sanctions if a centre underperforms.
2. second, where reporting exists, it is based on ex-post quantitative data. This not based on any objectives, targets or KPIs, and the data is often not collated to provide a composite picture that could be analysed; there is no internal or external evaluation; the format of the data is user-unfriendly, as each Info Centre or Career Days organizer, for example, fills out their own form, while Internet access is now clearly widely enough available for a single central online template to be used to facilitate analysis. In addition, satisfaction surveys are not used, and would also only make sense given the workload of the Delegation if online surveys were used.
3. Communicating Europe in Ukraine is too new. Outcome and outcome indicators, and an internal evaluation, are envisaged, but only reach data was made available to the evaluation team. Reach only provides theoretical numbers of those who may have been exposed to a campaign.

However, reactions among those interviewed to the activities that the Delegation has historically carried out were positive. The Delegation is perceived to be effective in its historic forms of communication within the constraints of its human resources and budget, which in particular limit its ability to be more effective in the Regions, something that will become increasingly important as Ukraine is in the midst of a major process of decentralisation which the change of President is not expected to reverse. In the case of Communicating Europe in Ukraine, the general perception which the evaluation team picked up was that initial results appear positive, but that it is too soon to judge the real impact.

## **Outcomes**

The Delegation Forward Plan for 2018 described the following specific objectives:

1. Increase awareness of the EU's assistance to the Ukrainian reform process and generate support to AA/DCFTA related reforms in the election year

2. Explain the opportunities that arise from the implementation of the DCFTA + showcase specific EU's assistance provided (EU4Business, ULead<sup>240</sup>, Creative Europe, Horizon 2020 etc.)
3. Increase understanding of EU-Ukraine relations among target enlarged audiences
4. Further develop EU Networks, creating synergy in order to promote European values with a focus on youth
5. Communicate success stories of young entrepreneurs, innovators and exporters, creative and cultural industries
6. Strengthen cooperation and coordination with the Government<sup>241</sup>.

These have not been taken over into the revised Intervention Logic in their current form as the evaluation team does not consider that they are all outcomes. Number 2, 3 and 5 are activities. Numbers 1, 4 and 6 are outputs. Increased awareness, knowledge or understanding are not normally considered necessarily to lead to a change in attitude. Moreover, these specific objectives do not capture the impact of the activities and outputs on the media as multipliers, which is clearly from the discussions held by the evaluation team and desk research a key specific objective. The revised Intervention Logic therefore reflects what the evaluation team considers to be the implicit specific objectives on the basis of its work and other contents of the Forward Plan.

### **Impacts**

The inputs, outputs and outcomes as reformulated in the revised Intervention logic support the impact which constitute the general objectives of the Forward Plan: a strong European voice, ongoing support in society for the EU-advocated reforms (and therefore integration with the EU and adherence to European values), trust in the EU's commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and a reduction in the impact of Russian disinformation.

### **Target groups**

These have been amended taking account the findings from the interviews with stakeholders, including the Delegation. The activities targeting young people stand out, but they are not to the exclusion of other groups, particularly when the role of the media as a multiplier in reach other target groups is taken into account. Some of the media work, such as that of the Building Europe in Ukraine, is highly targeted, e.g. in this case businesses wanting to take advantage of the DCFTA, and training in fake news.

### **Assumptions and risks**

The assumptions and risks in the revised Intervention Logic are the result of the evaluation team's discussions in Kyiv and desk research before and after the mission. The overriding consideration on both sides of the balance sheet is the political situation and any impact that has on the economic situation. With the election of the new President and Parliamentary elections due, a hiatus in the forward movement on reform seems inevitable, and it is impossible to predict whether Ukraine is entering a period of economic and political instability, and what role Russia might decide to play.

In pure communication terms, the communication strategy of the Delegation makes assumptions about target groups and effectiveness that are untested, and which are therefore a potential risk for long-term sustainable results. The sums of money involved mean that there is a strong case for external evaluation of all the communication activities of the Delegation, whether handled internally or through contractors.

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<sup>240</sup> The programme supporting local administration with the de-centralisation process.

<sup>241</sup> In 2019, they also include promotion of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Eastern Partnership

**Ukraine: Intervention Logic of EU Delegation communication activities in 2018**  
**(based on Annual Report 2017 and Forward Planning 2018)<sup>242</sup>**

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Desired Outcomes	Desired Impacts
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<sup>242</sup> The Europe House project described in the text was tendered in 2018 but will not take effect until 2019



EU Delegation	<p><b>Staff:</b></p> <p>Head of Press and Information; Press and Information Officer; Documentalist; Press and Information Officer; Assistant x 2; Communication Officer.</p> <p><b>Budget</b></p> <p>Cost DEVCO /NEAR: <b>EUR 4 507 834.35</b></p> <p>Cost Partnership Instrument: <b>EUR 844 884.70</b></p> <p><b>Equipment:</b> internet; Video conference equipment; audio recorder</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Media-related activities:</b> organisation of media forums, press events/ conferences, joint visits with EU Member States, publication of press materials, translation of press releases and preparation of explainers and factsheets.</li> <li>• <b>Social media management</b> and interactive social media products for youth (in part outsourced)</li> <li>• <b>Training</b> for journalists and Erasmus students</li> <li>• EUD printing of <b>information products:</b> publications, including posters, leaflets and promotional items</li> <li>• <b>Public events</b> outside the capital <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ three-day events in 24 Oblasts</li> <li>▪ online and offline contests, discussion clubs and public events</li> <li>▪ culture, music festivals and sport events</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Campaigns</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Migration /Visa free information campaign (outsourced)</li> <li>▪ Communicating Europe in Ukraine (outsourced)<sup>243</sup></li> <li>▪ EU Study Days (outsourced)</li> <li>▪ Building Europe in Ukraine (outsourced) including events for civil society, youth, intellectuals, opinion-</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reach of and engagement</b> with information and EU messages increased via TV views, on-line and via the EUD website, traditional media ad, social media, including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.</p> <p><b>In-depth media partnerships</b> with local media outlets in selected regions developed; greater knowledge on the part of the media industry of the Association Agreement, the DFCTA, EU culture and values, and how to combat fake news</p> <p><b>Multipliers better informed</b> about the rationale and benefits of EU integration and adopting EU values, opportunities of the Association Agreement and the DFCTA</p> <p><b>Young people better informed</b> about the rationale and benefits of EU integration and adopting EU values, and of opportunities for employment, travel and mobility</p> <p><b>“Neutrals” better informed</b> about the rationale, benefits and opportunities of EU integration</p> <p><b>Government communication department(s) enabled</b> to communicate more effectively on public administration reform</p>	<p><b>Volume and quality of media coverage</b> of EU-related topics improved, particularly the East and South</p> <p><b>Increased support from opinion makers and civil society</b> for EU-advocated reforms</p> <p>Higher number of Ukrainian citizens, particularly young people, <b>support integration with the EU</b>, EU-advocated reforms (and the Association Agreement and DFCTA)</p> <p><b>“Neutrals” become positive</b> about the rationale and benefits of EU integration (and the Association Agreement and DFCTA)</p> <p><b>Greater uptake and better spread</b> across Ukraine of uptake of opportunities (in business and education in particular)</p> <p><b>Higher quality of communication by Ukrainian government</b> on rationale for and benefits of EU integration</p>	<p><b>Credible and proactive EU voice</b> established in setting the tone for <b>EU-Ukraine relations</b></p> <p><b>Momentum of societal support for EU-advocated reforms</b> and “European values” maintained</p> <p>Citizens aware of and reassured of <b>EU commitment to Ukraine’s sovereignty</b> and <b>territorial integrity</b> and issues related to the crisis in the East</p> <p><b>Impact of disinformation reduced</b></p>

Target groups		Assumptions	Risks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth (inc. students, alumni...)</li> <li>• Civil Society</li> <li>• Intellectuals</li> <li>• Business sector</li> <li>• Opinion makers</li> <li>• Media</li> <li>• Government officials (central and local)</li> <li>• Parliamentarians</li> <li>• "Neutral" citizens</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The economic and political situation will remain stable</li> <li>• It is appropriate to target youth, "neutrals" and multipliers while largely leaving aside those above 34 as a target group</li> <li>• Communication can be effective without additional upfront needs assessment or problem analysis</li> <li>• Human and financial resources are sufficient to carry out communication objectives, ensure good governance of outsources programmes and projects, and coordinate across programmes, projects and networks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change of President and/or the results of forthcoming Parliamentary elections will lead to either a pause in the forward movement of reforms and/or a change of course by the Ukrainian government</li> <li>• Populist, anti-EU parties will make significant gains in forthcoming Parliamentary elections</li> <li>• Any deteriorating economic climate will create perceptions that the benefits of integration with the EU have been oversold and lead to a rise in euro-scepticism</li> <li>• Russia steps up its disinformation campaigns and the EU does not make available resources to match (or not quickly enough)</li> </ul>

<sup>243</sup>Tendered in 2017.

### 3. EVALUATION FINDINGS

The following sections describe the key findings by evaluation question and judgement criteria from interviews with EU Delegation staff, partners, EU programmes and students highlighted in the above table. As per the evaluation questions matrix defined for the evaluation, the field mission is not intended to provide evidence in relation to all the evaluation questions and judgement criteria. Final answers to the evaluation questions will be drafted drawing on analysis of hypotheses from different sources of evidence and provided in the Synthesis Report.

Please note that EQ's 1-6 relate to the enlargement region.

**EQ7.** To what extent the **objectives** of the EU Delegation's annual information and communication forward plans in the selected neighbourhood partner countries have been defined considering the **needs** of the target audience and are conducive to the achievement of the objectives set in the EU framework for strategic communication in the neighbourhood region?

- Extent that EU Delegations commission research into target group needs and set their communication objectives taking into account these needs.
- Extent that the intervention logic of the annual forward communication plans has been soundly defined and is conducive to meeting the objectives described in the EU framework for strategic communication in the neighbourhood region.

The communication objectives set by the Delegation are based on combining the strategic objectives of the Commission with assumptions of need from the Delegation's knowledge of the local environment, some of it built up over many years and some from personal experience in meeting people across Ukraine. There is also a correlation to be found between the priority regions established in the Forward Planning and the polls carried out by the OPEN Neighbourhood programme. The evidence collected in desk research and from interviews with implementing partners and other stakeholders during the field mission does not contradict that but is also based on perceptions rather than formal market and target group research. That gap is now being progressively filled by market and target group research for the more recent communication contracts (the Visa-free campaign and the Moving Forward

Working through multipliers as a target group as the Delegation largely does is internationally recognised good practice. The focus on youth as the generation of the future and the pool from which future multipliers will be drawn can also be considered good practice. However, there is scope for the Delegation go beyond this by **analysing data it already holds** and collecting feedback more systematically through surveys, including online surveys that are easy to collate. This would lead to better target group segmentation.

The Delegation did not carry out target group research before determining the groups mentioned in the Terms of Reference for the strategic communication contract. However, the contractor defined these more specifically and carried out extensive attitudinal research at the start of the contract.

The **reporting format** of the Forward Planning is not conducive to identifying the underlying Intervention Logic and establishing a results chain, and does not distinguish clearly between outputs, outcomes and results/specific objectives. It is possible to reconstruct an Intervention Logic based on interviews with the Delegation, by observing the communication activities and defining the perceived outcomes, and thereby to conclude that they will **contribute** to the desired overall objectives. However, **metrics** are not in place to establish a robust chain of results.

**EQ8.** To what extent the **objectives** of annual forward communication plans for the selected Neighbourhood partner countries have been/are being **met**?

- Evidence that the communication activities implemented by the EU Delegation (directly and/or with



support from external contractors) are delivering the intended outputs and outcomes, which contribute to the achievement of the objectives set in the annual forward communication plans.

- Extent that the channels and tools used to implement communication activities are appropriate to meet the target group needs and contribute to the attainment of the forward communication plan objectives.

The communication activities implemented by the Delegation (directly and/or with support from external contractors) are delivering the intended outputs at an overall level. However, these outputs are defined in very **general terms** and are not based on SMART objectives, targets, or KPIs. Information on outputs in isolation cannot provide an indication of what could have been achieved and provides no basis for assessing performance and possibly penalising poor performance. What is essentially paper-based reporting transferred into an electronic format is not conducive to collation or analysis of results. Simple tools, such as online surveys, are available to provide qualitative measurement of outcomes and could be used, as Internet access is not a barrier for the stakeholders and audiences involved.

In the case of the strategic communication contract, measurement is provided, but is based almost totally on reach, with some measurement of recall. The EBRD is an example of good practice in its measurement of feedback through surveys.

On the evidence available, the channels and tools being used are **appropriate to the target groups**, with a possible exception based on the limited evidence available within the constraints of this evaluation in the provision of publications to Euro Info Centres rather than putting more emphasis on online tools. In the case of the strategic communication contract, the channels and tools used are based on data on media consumption habits and the contractor is flexible in making adaptations where a tool is proving quite effective.

The overall evidence from **perceptions** of the relevant stakeholders interviewed is that the communication is **effective** and objectives are being met, with some nuances, such as known unevenness in proactivity of Euro Info Centres, and human resource and budget constraints to being as present across the regions as would be desirable. It is not, however, possible to say to what extent objectives are being met.

**EQ9i.** To what extent the available resources, **the organisation, production, validation and the management** of communication activities by the EU Delegation **are conducive** to an efficient, effective and sustainable implementation of the communication activities in the selected neighbourhood countries?

- The EUD human resources working on communication have the capacity and appropriate procedures to design and manage/ implement in an efficient, effective and sustainable manner the communication activities/contracts.
- Current monitoring arrangements for communication function at regular intervals and are capable of collecting data, detecting problems and issues to inform decision-making.
- The type, number and budget of communication contracts managed by the EUD communication officers allow for efficient, effective and sustainable implementation of communication activities

The **level of human resources** in the Delegation to the communications budgets the Press & Information Department is expected to manage directly or to oversee appears low, compared, for example, to the Western Balkans.

This does not leave time for strategic planning, sufficient networking with cooperation project officers to identify success stories or “heroes”, to analyse the work of networks or to work more closely with EU programmes. The planned move to a **framework contract** as an umbrella for a range of activities currently contracted separately and annually will provide more flexibility and should allow more time for strategic planning.

Reporting requirements by contractors are complied with, but the **templates** used for the activities managed directly by the Delegation do not lend themselves to identification of problems or informing decision-making. The reporting



mechanisms for the strategic communication contract and the communication components of other projects, including Steering Group meetings, enable problems to be identified in advance and decisions to be taken accordingly.

The evaluation team expects the forthcoming framework contract to **streamline** other activities and introduce improvements in the definition of target groups, indicators and required results, as that is clearly desirable. The strategic communication contract represents a first attempt at streamlining, but it would require an external evaluation to be certain that this is an effective approach, preferably one comparing the processes and results with the ex-ante situation.

**EQ9ii.** To what extent the set-up of **EU Information Centres physically located** in the selected neighbourhood countries could enhance the outreach of the different target audiences by the EUDs and the OPEN Neighbourhood Programme?

- A physical space/presence for communication purposes in the Capital and/or other locations would make it possible to significantly enhance the reach and engagement by the EU Delegation of new and hard to reach publics.

Any additional means of reaching out to the citizens of Ukraine face-to-face would clearly bear fruit as the evidence points to the Delegation and its contractors not being able to reach as many people, including multipliers at local level, such as local administrations and civil society, as would be desirable and to do so on a sustained basis.

However, there is no evidence of a need for a new network of EU Information Centres along the lines of those in the Western Balkans. The EU Information Centres in the Western Balkans were designed to fill a gap<sup>244</sup>. That gap as such does not exist in Ukraine, because there is already a network of Euro Info Centres in universities (with access for the general public), the terms of a contract to provide a location for cultural events and events for professionals across Ukraine on a roving basis have already been agreed, a media centre to act as a hub for event in Kyiv is planned, the EBRD is operating Business Information Support Centres in 15 locations, Info Points are being introduced into libraries. In addition, there are local project and programme offices. There may be a gap for an event hub in key cities, particularly as Ukraine decentralises.

Whether these entities are as effective in reach and engagement as they could be, and in particular whether the synergies are exploited as much as they could be, is more questionable on the basis of the evidence collected by the evaluation team. It is clear that there are many strands to the EU communication in Ukraine and an overlap in topics, messages and target groups, which the strategic communication contract only partially addresses, and which can only be properly determined by a holistic evaluation.

Any steps to enhance the information effort should start by carrying out research into the target group needs (by target group segment, channel and tools), setting global and specific objectives, and then defining the SMART objectives and performance indicators for the outputs and outcomes which will achieve those. Any decision on what to finance, including the possibility of funding Info Centres selected on the basis of need, and whether a physical infrastructure is needed to meet the objectives will flow from that.

**EQ10.** To what extent the communication **activities** carried out in the selected neighbourhood countries have been/are coherent, complementary and coordinated with those carried out via **EU** regional communication **programmes (e.g. OPEN Neighbourhood programme), HQ initiatives and by other partners** (e.g.; Member States, IFIs, international organisations) active in communicating about EU policies and programmes in the partner country?

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<sup>244</sup> It is out of scope of this note to say to what extent that gap is being filled effectively.

- Extent that HQ and EU Delegations coordinate their communication activities in the partner countries to ensure coherence and synergies with other EU programmes/projects, Member States, IFIs and IOs.
- Extent that the establishment of EU Info Centres (acting as hubs) would enhance coordination, increase coherence and outreach of communication activities implemented by the EUD, the OPEN Programme, the other EU programmes, EU MS, the national government and other donors (communicating on EU policies and values) in the ENI partner countries

Based on evidence provided by the Delegation and some partners, exchanges on communication are regular on those EU-funded projects dealing solely with communication or carried out by implementing partners where these have a high communication component. The strategic communication contract is providing opportunities to exploit synergies with EU programmes.

There is an active EUNIC cluster of cultural institutes, but Member State embassies are not closely involved in communication on EU-related issues. They focus on national interests in Ukraine, as pointed out in the Delegation's Forward Planning. Changing that is a strategic issue.

The Media Centre in Kyiv being opened as part of the strategic communication framework will provide the opportunity to assess the demand for an event hub, but any extension of the concept would need to be based on problem analysis and lessons learned from this Centre and the analysis of the Euro Info Centres in the western Balkans. A hub such as this, either in Kyiv, or a major city could have the potential to improve the coherence of communication but could only be a contributing factor.

There is recognition by Delegation staff and some external stakeholders that there are gaps in coordination at present, but a Euro Info Centre on the western Balkan model would not ipso facto be the answer. It requires a strategy of which the Euro Info Centre is part. The new model already being developed in Ukraine under the contract on youth networks of which the existing Euro Info Centres in Ukraine's universities are part is a step in that direction.

**EQ11.** To what extent the communication activities implemented by HQ and the EU Delegations have contributed/are contributing to raising public awareness about the EU, its policies and values in the selected neighbourhood partner countries?

- Extent that HQ, EU Delegation contractors can quantify and/or qualify increases in target audience awareness of the EU, its policies and values because of the communication activities.
- There are factors that have had a positive or negative effect on raising public awareness.

Under the strategic communication contract, it is and will be possible to quantify increases in awareness of the EU and the policies which the campaign highlights. It will not be able to establish a direct correlation with the results of the OPEN Neighbourhood polling, however, because it will not be possible to assess the impact of external factors, both political and economic.

Some contractors can quantify and qualify the results of their communication activity. Evidence is otherwise quantitative – website visitor numbers and social media follower numbers are expanding, media coverage is growing and the EU is contributing to better quality journalism, the youth networks are clearly reaching significant numbers of young people each year. That these numbers are growing if, of course, a positive.

In addition, the evidence collected from perceptions in the interviews with relevant stakeholders is that the EU is well known and well viewed (as the OPEN Neighbourhood polling illustrated), but that the extent of EU support for Ukraine





is less well understood (as the strategic communication market research confirms). Government communication that targets citizens in language they understand is in its infancy, so contributes essentially to the awareness of business, administrators and civil society. EU-funded communication is the primary institutional source of information about the EU, its policies and values across society, so it is reasonable to assume that the EU communication is a contributor to awareness and positive perceptions of the EU. The main challenge comes from disinformation coming from Russia.

## **4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **4.1. Conclusions**

- The Delegation's strategic communication contract is based on identification of target groups and appropriate channels and tools and is consistent with the objectives of communication on the EU, its policies and values. Other communication is based on recognised good practice in targeting the media, multipliers and young people, but is generally based on perceptions of need, and of appropriate channels and tools, rather than research or analysis.
- Reporting mechanisms exist for this communication but are not conducive to analysis. The reporting format of the Forward Plan is, moreover, not conducive to constructing a chain of results that would constitute a true Intervention Logic.
- Both types of communication (managed directly by the Delegation with or without contractors) and the strategic communication contract, in combination with other contracts with a high communication content, are contributing to fulfilling the general objectives in the Forward Plan, but it is not possible to say to what extent or whether one type of communication is contributing more than any other.
- Human resource constraints and reporting mechanisms which are paper-based in their conception even if submitted electronically, are hampering the ability of the Delegation to analyse the quantitative data, which is available.
- Participant surveying is rarely used by contractors, who largely only report numbers. The strategic communication contract reporting is largely based on reach, with some measurement of recall and of engagement with social media. Opinion shifts have yet to be measured. This is no longer state-of-the art in European Commission communication contracts, which now put much more emphasis on outcomes and short-term impact, i.e. attitudinal change.
- There is no prima facie case for setting up Euro Info Centres with a physical infrastructure. A good understanding of the effectiveness and scope for improvement and greater coordination of a series of existing structures in the communication landscape – Euro Info Centres in universities which are nominally open to the general public, Info Points in libraries for children and youth, a Media Centre as a hub for events being set up in Kyiv, 15 Business Information Support Centres and the future virtual “Europe House” and the support this will call on from existing physical infrastructures and pop-up locations.
- However, there is no common framework within which all the different communication structures fit to ensure that there is no overlap in specific objectives or target groups, or which would optimise synergies, and also take into account the activities of the strategic communication plan, the contract with a high communication component and the activities of EU Programmes. The Forward Plan as currently structured does not provide an appropriate framework.
- All the communication activities are contributing to public awareness of the EU, its policies and values, and that contribution is probably significant as the EU is the major player, subject to the caveat of disinformation on the part of Russia, and there is very limited communication by the Ukrainian government except to stakeholders directly affected.

### **4.2. Recommendations**

- Given the amount of Delegation budget allocated specifically for communication, the Commission should contract an external evaluation of this communication activity.
- The range of communication activities funded by the EU in the Ukraine should be mapped by objective, target group, messages and geographically. This could be carried out before commissioning an external evaluation or be a requirement of the Terms of Reference.



- The Delegation should contract an external expert to collate and analyse the existing quantitative reporting of all the activities under the Youth Networks coordination contract over a period of three years and make recommendations on improvements to reporting mechanisms and to operations.
- The Forward Plan template should be revised to fulfil the requirements of an Intervention Logic and careful attention paid to whether it reflects a good understanding of outputs, outcomes and results. Intervention Logics should be drawn up for any project with a budget of more than EUR 50,000.
- Decisions on whether there is a gap for Euro Info Centres with (or without) a physical infrastructure should await the outcome of further analysis. That should consider, in particular, the case for using the existing Euro Info Centres as a starting point, subject to the locations being based on problem analysis and target group identification, subject to them receiving funding, training and suitable tools, and meeting performance criteria.



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- Annex 1

EU Info Centre ToR

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