

**Conference on best practices in public administration, Lisbon,
10th to 12th May 2000**

**EUROPPlus, intranet of the European Commission
From information sharing to knowledge management**

1. Creation

EUROPPlus, the intranet of the European Commission was created in April 1995. In five years it has become so popular that many parts of it have been made available to the other institutions through the interinstitutional intranet server, called EUROPA Team.

With a view to making the same information available to other EU agencies and bodies located in the member states, it is foreseen to migrate by the end of the year EUROPAplus onto a web server protected by a password system.

Developed in the wake of EUROPA, the Internet server of the European institutions, EUROPAplus is accessible by all officials of the Commission, be they in Brussels, Luxembourg, in 23 cities where the Commission has Representations and in many delegations throughout the world. Most of the information is produced by the horizontal services of the Commission: Administration and Personnel, Press and Communication Service, Secretariat general, Budget, Translation Service, Informatics Directorate. EUROPAplus has a light management structure

An average of 180.000 documents are consulted per working day.

2. Goal

The overall goal of EUROPAplus is to allow for a coherent, quick and transparent flow of information and communication between the College, the DGs, the services and the staff. It contributes to the real "esprit de corps", to the modernization of the working culture, to the generation of documents improving quality and eliminating duplication of work.

Email has become in the last 5 years a standard means of communication. However the email services of the Commission (Route 400 and soon Outlook) are not yet incorporated at this stage into the intranet services.

3. Contents

EUROPPlus hosts around 360.000 static pages. But databases, used for the management of internal procedures, do generate dynamic pages that are significantly more numerous (see under 3.3). All in all EUROPAplus gives access to 4.000.000 pages or documents.

EUROPPlus contents are largely concentrated around three functions:

- 3.1. administrative information for the personnel
- 3.2. information as news
- 3.3. document production (legislative procedures)

3.1. Administrative information for the personnel

Administrative information used by the personnel counts for about 60% of all requests to the server but not necessarily 60% of the whole contents of EUROPAplus.

This information concerns:

- organisation charts of all General Directorates of the Commission
- the data disseminated by the 'Personnel and administration' DG in its "Guide des informations de nature administrative" (GINA) that hosts more than 6.000 pages dedicated to :
 - staff matters (statute, staff reports and evaluation, etc.)
 - medical care and refunding of medical costs
 - furniture, office supplies
 - European schools
 - internal directories of all sorts: telephone directory of the Commission staff (persons searchable on line according to different patterns), service directory of the Commission staff (staff searchable according to hierarchical structure, to keywords, by name)
 - job vacancies (NADIA)
- translation services (on-line ordering of translations, terminological database Eurodicautom, automatic on-line translation via Systran, bulletins of translators, etc.)
- secretariat general services on line (for example manual of procedures, legislative preparatory documents)
- budgetary guidelines and rules, budgetary management database, standard contracts
- IT guidelines and services
- sites produced by Directorates- General (autonomous sites or excerpts from local intranets)
- Central Library
- The administrative reform undertaken by Vice-President Kinnock, including interactive services with the staff.

3.2. On-line news and databases

3.2.1. News

News generated by the Commission is disseminated via the intranet. News produced **externally** by press agencies and specialised press bodies is purchased by the Commission and distributed on the intranet as well.

- *News from inside*
 - RAPID, news to the outside world from the Press and Communication Service of the Commission (PCS), also available on EUROPA.
 - EU-Review, a weekly review made in-house by the Secretariat general and sent to the delegations of the Commission throughout the world.
 - Press Reviews written and sent electronically each morning to the server and redistributed around 8 or 8.30 on the intranet. These Press Reviews come from representations and delegations of the Commission and relate to the way European events are appreciated locally in different parts of the world.
 - Press cuttings, excerpts from the press selected by the Press and Communication Service of the Commission (PCS) and redistributed via a database organised according to main themes or profiles
 - Sources say, a news fact sheet produced twice daily, mainly centred on EU news

- Commission en Direct, the in-house newspaper (45.000 paper copies distributed weekly to all institutions, delegations and retired officials) is a source of news and administrative information. It also has an interactive forum dedicated to issues of general concern for the Commission staff
- *News from outside*
 - LiveNews, most European news wires on line, also searchable via keywords since organised as a database
 - Telexpress, press releases selected by the Press and Communication Service of the Commission (PCS), issued three times a day
 - Agence Europe on-line (in four languages), daily bulletin on-line each morning
 - European Reports, bulletins published on-line twice weekly
 - Oxford Analytica, a database produced in Oxford (UK) with an analysis of economic and financial world events
 - Reuters databases (Reuters Business Briefing, Reuters Energy Briefing, Reuters Insurance Briefing, Reuters European Union Briefing)

The intranet is a real mine of news but profiling, i.e. tailoring request for news to one's needs still remains rare. Many news sources are collections of documents that are not searchable as such.

The Commission is investigating subscribing facilities, which would bring the information to the user in a more automated fashion than now.

3.2.2. Databases other than news or document production (for the latter see 3.3.)

The Commission buys in many information sources, which are neither news databases nor document production databases. These are invaluable sources, their existence is not necessarily conspicuous on the intranet but contributes to a better information for all the staff.

We may mention, without trying to be complete, a huge database collection like Dialog Corporation (750 databases in the field of business & finance, chemicals, energy & environment, food & agriculture, law & government, medicine, pharmaceuticals, science & technology, social sciences), Lexis-Nexis specialised in law, Dun & Bradstreet (information about firms).

3.3. document production (legislative procedures)

The Commission, as a legislative body, produces many documents, introduces and leads many procedures. Today, most procedures rely on electronic document production and management. The stream of preparatory and legislative documents is available in databases.

- *Greffe 2000*
Greffe 2000 is an electronically based document production database. The production stream uses compulsory templates in order to harmonise presentation and facilitate translation of legislative documents before they leave the Commission services to be dealt with by other institutions. This revolution is possible due to rules being imposed on document producers, which is essential in a multilingual environment (11 languages) like the Commission's. Greffe 2000 already has 3.000 users. In 1999, 391 COM documents were put in this database (99% of all COM documents) and also in 1999, 73.577 pages have been put into this database.
- *SG-Vista (Secretariat general Vista)*
This is a document repository. It contains all the documents emanating from the Commission's services. Old documents coming from legacy databases have been incorporated into this database (with documents dating back to 1981). The documents may be retrieved either via their code numbers or using a full text search facility. Contents represent 485.000 electronic files.
- *CELEX*, the database containing the European law, is also available on-line internally.
CELEX offers a simple and direct access point for obtaining legislative texts including the most recent publications of the Official Journal L and C series and pending preparatory documents.
CELEX contains 2.500.000 documents (all language versions included).
- *EUR-Lex*, database containing the European official journal is also available on line.
Whereas EUR-Lex on Internet only contains 45 days of on-line Official Journal, the internal copy of EUR-Lex contains official journals from 1998 onwards.
- *SCADplus*, bibliographical database, available on-line on EUROPA, is also on EUROPAplus.
It contains a calendar of political events within the European Union, a practical guide to the free movement of persons, fact sheets about the main changes resulting from the Amsterdam Treaty, a glossary on institutions, policies and enlargement of the European Union and summaries and legislative follow-up documents on the policies of the European Union. SCADplus contains about 400.000 documents.

4. Conclusions

EUROPA has been developed in the urgency of the G7 conference mentioned earlier. So has been the intranet EUROPAplus. After 5 years of experience, one can say that both servers are a success story. This development brought the Commission to allow access to internet for all its staff. The server is an integral part of the administrative reform, not only as a tool for better communication but also as a vector for a reinforced sharing of knowledge. Integration is the keyword.

Jean-Bernard Quicheron
DG Personnel and Administration, 15th March 2000

EUROPaplus Main Menu - Netscape

File Edit View Go Communicator Help

Back Forward Reload Home Search Netscape Print Security Stop

Bookmarks Netsite: http://www.cc.cec/home/menu_en.html What's Related

Herm Team E 10 E+ E+test EUPA Phone Cuts Archi+ Reform LiveN DICO Y2K

Administrative Information

- ▶ Guide
- ▶ Directories
- ▶ InfoAdmin
- ▶ Job Vacancies
- ▶ Guide des services
- ▶ Telephone Book

Internal Information

- ▶ DGs and Services
- ▶ Official Journal
- ▶ SG Vista
- ▶ News
- ▶ Press Reviews
- ▶ Live News
- ▶ Press cuttings
- ▶ Telexpress
- ▶ Commission en Direct
- ▶ Central Library
- ▶ Notice Board



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Index by theme

Search on the indexes

Search on europaPLUS - [Help](#) - [Extended Search](#)

Search

▶ [President Prodi's pages](#)

Commission Reform 

Message

Co-operation protocol DNA-OLAF

▶ [About EUROPaplus](#) ▶ [Suggestion Box](#) ©

europa PLUS

- ▶ [What's new ?](#)
- ▶ [Have you seen...](#)
- ▶ [DGs, what's new](#)

Public Information

- ▶ [EUROPA Home Page](#)
- ▶ [EUROPA What's New ?](#)
- ▶ [Commission Home Page](#)
- ▶ [DGs On line](#)
- ▶ [Midday Express](#)
- ▶ [Commission Press releases](#)
- ▶ [Council Press releases](#)
- ▶ [European Councils](#)
- ▶ [EP Session News](#)

Internet

- ▶ [Internet Password](#)
- ▶ [Search Engines](#)
- ▶ [Press On line](#)
- ▶ [Interesting Links](#)
- ▶ [Weather](#)

Document: Done

EUROPaplus - Main index - Netscape

File Edit View Go Communicator Help

Bookmarks Netsite: <http://www.cc.cec/home/index-en/index.html> What's Related







--- EUROPaplus Main Menu ---

Main index

[Extended Search](#) Enter words, separated by commas: [Help with searching](#)

Search in the Indexes: Search

<p>Administration Staff Regulations • Map 2000...</p> <p>Commission en direct Classified ads • Forum • Letters...</p> <p>Databases External databases • Internal • IO...</p> <p>Documentation Official documents • Publications...</p> <p>European Commission DGs • Commission meetings • Reform...</p> <p>Finance ACPC • Budget • EURO • Regulations...</p> <p>Health Sickness insurance • Reimbursement...</p>	<p>Index of 100 sites EUROPaplus main sites</p> <p>Informatics DI • Informatics Information • IRMs ...</p> <p>Institutions of the EU EP, Council... • Agencies...</p> <p>Internet • Intranet Europa • Information providers' guides...</p> <p>Legislation OJ • EUR-Lex • Celex...</p> <p>Libraries Docurama • ECLAS...</p> <p>Missions Hotels • Travel • Guide...</p>	<p>News Spokesman's Service • News agencies...</p> <p>Practical information Economat • Leisure • Eurobus...</p> <p>Statistics Eurostat • Eurobarometer...</p> <p>Tomorrow's Commission Role of the Commission • Structures...</p> <p>Training Informatics • Language courses...</p> <p>Translation • Interpreting Services • Language Help Desk...</p> <p>Who's who? Telephone book • IDEA • Dipl. corps...</p>
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