

Newsletter No 3

The preparation of the the White Paper on European Governance is now entering a phase of consultation and open debate. Until now the external contacts of the working groups have been directed primarily towards specialised experts and institutional partners of the Commission, such as - the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Council and the Committee of Regions etc.

From now on the working groups are engaging in a series of hearings in order to gather reactions from a much broader set of actors reflecting the extreme diversity of civil actors in the European Union.

Each working group has adopted a different approach.

The group on “European Scientific Benchmarks” has launched an electronic enquiry on the website of the Governance Team, whereas, the group on “Multi-level Governance” had already in January sent out a questionnaire to local and regional actors and is now analysing the answers. The same actors have also been consulted in connection with a large hearing on decentralisation which is to be held on the 13th and 14th of March (see below). This hearing will offer the possibility to discuss some of the questions raised by participants in over 200 comments received by e-mail.

The group “Vertical decentralisation” has launched a vaste appeal on the four subjects of his mandate, which are “Application of Community Law and decentralisation”, “Consultation and Participation of the Civil Society”, “Decentralisation and Policies of Territorial Impact”, “Organisation of Networks of Cities and other Geographic Entities”. These four hearings taking place on March 13th and 14th have gathered a total of 1200 registered participants who have sent about 100 written contributions beforehand

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/governance/publichearing.htm>.

The group on “EU and World Governance”, has, for its part, decided to deepen the subject of its mandate in a seminar which is to be held March 15th. This seminar will tackle issues such as “Global governance as a public good” , “Open Governance” amongst others and is held under the auspices of the DG Trade.

The other groups are proceeding via individual or group hearings.

As for instance, the group on “Future of EU policies” has chosen to have a dialogue on “European Unification” with around 20 personalities coming from Eastern and Western Europe.

Finally, on the transversal theme of subsidiarity, the governance team organises an open public hearing on the 16th of March to focus on the topic “Democratic Governance within the framework of the EU Treaty”:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/governance/whatsnew.htm>).

The aim of these hearings is to assemble diverse critical views from the public on the ongoing work, the results of which will be reflected in a final rapport, due for delivery at the end of April by each of the working groups. The results of the large hearings being held from 12th to 16th of March will be published on our Website

http://europa.eu.int/comm/governance/index_en.htm.

Cyberdemocracy: nine proposals to the EU

In a study intended for the European Commission, the cyberphilosopher, Pierre Levy¹ urged the EU to view the new information and communication technologies as tools to help with the development of a world democratic governance.

In considering that the Internet opens up a new *inclusive, transparent and universal* space which can renew public life by giving citizens new freedoms and a new sense of responsibility, he thinks European authorities should undertake the construction of the future State: *the transparent State*, re-centered on 3 core functions: justice, steering of the market and the governance of biosphere (public health, environment, control of biotechnologies).

This transparent State makes use of new technologies to broaden the scope of citizens' means of information, debate and hence action. He then makes nine concrete action proposals which range from the visual representation of the flows of financial resources, which transit through European institutions, to the promotion of virtual agora, or the simulation of the consequences of the acts of economic agents (producers and consumers) on the biosphere and public health².

This study is available in French on the Governance site:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/governance/areas/group1/contribution_fr.pdf

Governance Website

As you may have already noticed, our website is now fully operational and you are cordially invited to render us a virtual visit on http://europa.eu.int/comm/governance/index_en.htm.

For those of you who feel they could contribute we would like to mention our questionnaire concerning the work area "democratising expertise and establishing European scientific references", which is available at <http://europa.eu.int/comm/governance/whatsnew.htm>.

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¹ Author of numerous works dealing with the anthropological effects of the development of the cyberspace, including "Collective Intelligence, Mankind's emerging in cyberspace", "La Cyberculture", "Arbres de connaissance (translated: Trees of knowledge)"

² The Green paper on the integrated policy of products is similar and in both cases deals with how to stimulate the habits of consumers towards a conscious and ecologically responsible way