Dear colleagues,

President Barroso has asked me to reply to your open letter for which he was grateful. Your open letter highlights the importance of web communication and the use of social media to improve the way we communicate in the Commission both internally and externally.

As President Barroso said in the political guidelines that he submitted to the European Parliament last year, the EU must continue to deliver results for citizens. On EUROPA, that means providing information and services that are above all useful to the many millions of people who visit the site each year.

Communication needs to become an integral part of the process of policy preparation and policy delivery of all Commissioners and Departments. Consequently we need to integrate a feeling for communication upstream and we must integrate communication horizontally into all policy initiatives. It needs to be understood by all in the Commission as a tool to make our policies more efficient and effective.

In today's rapidly changing media landscape, the Internet must be an essential part of our efforts to communicate our good proposals and our good stories to better connect with citizens. I support your call to modernise and streamline the EUROPA website to this end. A user-focused approach, clear language, and a coherent and consistent brand image for all EU websites, will help us to convey clear messages about the EU's added value.

Your idea to invite e.g. DGs' communication units to peer-review each other's websites is an interesting idea in this regard.

Social media can help us to connect in a more interactive way with European citizens, provided they form part of a coherent communication strategy and are based on a solid cost-benefit analysis. Staff who have been properly trained could also be invited to support such communication activities and engage in online interactions with citizens as part of an "ambassador" function. The existing guidelines for "Staff as ambassadors" will remain the reference and, if necessary, they can be adapted to take account of the changing media landscape.

European Commission's Community
Of Internet Editors and Webmasters
(sent by e-mail*)
With regard to resources, we should be prudent, given the Commission's commitment to zero growth in human resources and the numbers of staff working in the fields of communication and publication already.

I intend to work closely with Vice-President Šefčovič to further improve our internal and external communication during the next five years. I count on your commitment and support in this context and I encourage you to work closely with DG COMM - for external communication and tools - and DG HR - for internal communication, staff regulations & ethics and training issues.

With best wishes,

[Signature]

Copy: President Barroso
Vice-President Šefčovič
Irene Souka / DG HR
Claus Sørensen / DG COMM

* Tony Lockett (EMPL), Jonathan Stockwell (DGT), Benedictus Nieuwenhuis (RELEX), Bert Van Maele (COMM), Ian Anderson (SCIC), Livia Ruszthy (EAC), Akos Moskovits (Representation Hungary), Sylvia Bombardone (OPOCE), Elda Salvi (SG), Joerel Stroemgren (MARE), Kajsa Frid (MARE), Ignacio Nuno Molina (AIDCO), Bernard Le Goff (ESTAT), Wilfried Schol (AGRI), Evan Woods (INFSO), Linda Jones (INFSO), Jose Arcos Ortiz (INFSO), Karel Bartak (EAC), Thomas Pritzkow (EAC), Nora Allavoine (MARKT), Ronny Bonne (TAXUD), Carla Caprioli (JRC), Sandra Cavallo (ENTR), Nathalie Collin (BUDG), Monique Dejeans (OPOCE), Dominique Delahaye (JRC), Luc Emaer (TREN), Olga Ferreira (OLAF), Margherite Gazze (TREN), Janice George (ECHO), Cristina Giminez-Estol (MARKT), Joris Goetschalckx (DGT), Alessandro Gomarasca (MARKT), Sylva Havlu (COMM), Oliver Lestoquoit (OIB), Françoise Lion (BUDG), Meran Macpherson (COMM), Eric Mamer (BUDG), Annie Parenteau (INFSO), Luka Sodja (ELARG), Jolante Zubrikaite (DEV), Deirdre Hodson (COMM), Anne Christensen (COMM), Stephen Gosden (RTD), Anika Bortin (ESTAT), Judith Nuhrenborger (HR), Sophie Birmann (TRADE), Christelle Cleutinx (TRADE), Didier Bloech (TRADE), Robert Gangl (ECFIN)