

CONSULTATION STRATEGY

Context

DG COMM has launched an evaluation of the European Commission's Visitors' Centre.

The move of the Visitors' Centre in 2013 to new premises in the Charlemagne building, located next to the 'Berlaymont', European Commission's headquarters coincided with the development of a more politically driven approach, with particular emphasis on the European Commission as the political executive of the EU, highlighting its political agenda.

The purpose of this evaluation therefore is to provide evidence-based information on the global impact of the above changes made. Its scope will cover both, the underlying concept of the Visitors' Centre of providing professional visit programmes responding to the interests of each group as well as an in-depth review of the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of services provided.

Depending on its conclusions, the evaluation will provide operational recommendations as to improve the functioning of the Visitors' Centre.

The evaluation is being conducted by an external evaluation company selected via a procurement procedure. It will be carried out according to the highest evaluation standards, using specific methodology and data collection tools.

Objectives and scope of the open public consultation

The goal of the consultation will be to collect views and opinions on the Visitors' Centre within the scope of the evaluation questions. It will be an additional element used by the evaluators who will also use other tools to collect relevant data (desk research/stakeholder interviews/web-based surveys/comparative analysis/cost-efficiency analysis). The gathered input will be further incorporated into the findings of the evaluation and will be taken into consideration in the final report of the evaluation.

The consultation will seek opinion on the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU added value of the Visitors' Centre.

Stakeholders mapping

Visitors having participated in information programmes organised by the Visitors' Centre can be considered as the most obvious group of stakeholders. Other important stakeholders are:

- Commission Representations and Regional Offices in the Member States
- Permanent Representations of the Member States to the EU in Brussels
- Europe Direct Centres in the Member States
- Commission staff co-operating with the Visitors' Centre, such as the Spokesperson's Service
- Team of external speakers
- Operational contractors providing services to the Visitors' Centre
- EU citizens in general

Method and accessibility

As a first step, an evaluation roadmap will be published together with this consultation strategy on the central Europa webpages.

Furthermore, the Terms of Reference of the evaluation contract concluded with Coffey Evaluation and Research s.a. already include interviews and web-based surveys with the following stakeholders:

- Commission Representations and Regional Offices in the Member States
- Permanent Representations of the Member States to the EU in Brussels
- Europe Direct Centres in the Member States
- Commission staff co-operating with the Visitors' Centre, such as the Spokesperson's Service
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- Operational contractors providing services to the Visitors' Centre

Additionally, DG COMM will launch a public consultation with the aim of opening a consultation in all EU official languages reaching out to EU citizens at large. It will be published on a consultation website hosted on Europa. The answers will be collected and analysed by the Commission services and incorporated in the evaluation process by Coffey Evaluation and Research s.a. EC Representations will be requested to promote it among their stakeholders. The consultation will complement the evaluation of the Visitors' Centre already ongoing.

The findings from all consultations will be summarized in a synopsis report and published on the consultation website.

Information about the consultation will be included on the Visitors' Centre's website (<http://ec.europa.eu/visits/>) with a link to all relevant sites.