

**Synthesis Study of the Corporate
Communication Campaigns**

COMM.A.1/05/2018/Lot 1

Final Report



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ACRONYMS

Acronym	Meaning
CPC	Cost per Click
CPM	Cost per Thousand Impressions
CTR	Click-through Rate
DG	Directorate-General
DG AGRI	Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development
DG COMM	Directorate-General for Communication
DG EAC	Directorate-General for Education and Culture
DG ECFIN	Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs
DG ECHO	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
DG EMPL	Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
DG ENER	Directorate-General for Energy
DG ENVI	Directorate-General for Environment
DG GROW	Directorate-General for the Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs
DG HOME	Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs
DG JUST	Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers
DG NEAR	Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
DG REGIO	Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy
DG RTD	Directorate-General for Research and Innovation
DG SANTE	Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety
DG TAXUD	Directorate-General for Taxation and Customs Union
EAAS	European External Action Service
EC	European Commission
EDIC	Europe Direct Information Centre
EP	European Parliament
EQM	Evaluation Questions Matrix

Acronym	Meaning
EU	European Union
EYD	European Year of Development
EYW	EU Youth Week
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
MEPs	Member of the European Parliament
MFF	Multiannual Financial Framework
MS	Member States
OTS	Opportunities to see
Representations	Permanent Representations of the European Commission in the Member States
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
VTR	View-through-rate
WII FM	“what’s in it for me”

1 Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

Five years after the adoption of the corporate communication approach to European Commission communication, DG COMM Headquarters decided to take stock of whether this new approach to communication instituted under the current Multiannual Financial Framework, and under the current Commission, had proved itself. That was the purpose of this study, carried out by Deloitte Consulting and Coffey International.

Publication of the study comes at a decisive moment for the Commission, not only with a new President and new Commission taking office and a new Multiannual Financial Framework under discussion, but also because the Commission needs to shape its communication against a background of conflicting messages. On the one hand, the citizens of Europe are showing greater interest in the EU than in the past, as shown by the highest turnout since 1999 at European elections but also because the ongoing UK debate on Brexit has spilled over into the debate on the future of Europe in other countries. On the other, it is many years since support for the EU on the part of several Member State governments, including some whose belief in the European project had previously appeared to be unshakeable, has appeared so uncertain. Yet, this can seem at odds with the ongoing political commitment contained in the Sibiu declaration on the Future of Europe, adopted in May 2019.

In that declaration, EU leaders reaffirmed their belief that “united, we are stronger in this increasingly unsettled and challenging world”. **This study confirms some key recommendations from the Commission’s input to the Sibiu declaration**¹, namely that:

- Communicating about the EU is a responsibility shared by EU institutions and Member States at all levels and that “*we need to communicate more with common messages, under the EU brand, explaining what decisions and policies mean for people*”²;
- EU institutions should work more closely together on EU corporate communication campaigns based on shared European values;
- EU institutions and Member States should step up their support for a continuous dialogue with citizens about the European Union.

¹ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Europe in May 2019: Preparing for a more united, stronger and more democratic Union in an increasingly uncertain world The European Commission's contribution to the informal EU27 leaders' meeting in Sibiu (Romania) on 9 May 2019, <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/1/2019/EN/COM-2019-218-F1-EN-MAIN-PART-1.PDF>

As the Commission embarks on implementation of these, the results of the study will be a source of information to:

- further **improve the way the EC communicates with citizens** and contribute to setting up EC-wide benchmarks and guidelines for external communication;
- provide **advice to the decision-making** and priority-setting of the new College of Commissioners on communication with citizens.
- provide **transparency and accountability** to stakeholders, and contribute to a more efficient allocation of resources for the EC's external communication

1.2 The corporate communication approach: key findings of the report

The corporate approach was initiated on 23 September 2013 when the EC adopted the Communication on corporate communication under the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020 (2014-2020 MFF)³. The corporate approach is designed to meet a strategic need identified by EC senior management and, in line with global best practice, is defined as a key organisational function in DG COMM's strategic plan for 2016-20. The three pillars of the approach identified in that plan are **prioritising** through more efficient governance of the communication domain, **professionalising** the communication function and **performance measurement**⁴.

The approach facilitates the pooling of resources from different MFF programmes to fund communication priorities based on the general objectives of the European Union (EU). This approach aims to ensure that the EC can communicate its over-arching priorities to a wide audience in a clear, coherent and cost-effective way. It supports the objective of "communicating effectively across the continent in times of increased fragmentation and disinformation" identified in the Commission's inputs to the informal meeting of EU-27 leaders in Sibiu in May 2019, at which the EU leaders affirmed a commitment to engage with citizens and bring the Union closer to them.⁵

The corporate approach has filled a gap in EC communication and has promoted greater cooperation between DGs under the leadership of DG COMM, facilitated by the thematic breadth of the corporate communication campaigns, which make it possible for information drawn from different policy areas to be communicated with a single and coherent "EU" voice.

³ <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/3/2018/EN/C-2018-4063-F1-EN-MAIN-PART-1.PDF>

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/strategic-plan-2016-2020-dg-comm_april2016_en.pdf

⁵ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2019/05/09/the-sibiu-declaration/>

Overall, the **corporate communication approach has allowed EC communicators to reach more people more often, disseminating high quality and professional materials** through channels and approaches that would have been otherwise beyond reach, based on research into target groups' needs and performance measurement. The limited size of the budget has been a constraint on communicating in a continuum and reaching out to target groups on a regular basis, while refreshing messages regularly. Insufficient in-house expertise and the learning curve in embedding the corporate approach across the Commission have also meant that the corporate approach has not yet reached its full potential. A best practice review for this study suggests that there is also more progress to be made in engaging with the target groups. It is common for organisations to believe that they are engaging in dialogue, but instead tailoring centrally defined messages to audiences' preferred channels and formats is an advance on monologue but stops short of engagement.

Strategic governance has been strengthened through the work of the Corporate Communication Steering Committee (CCSC) and the Communication Network (CN). DG COMM provides strategic direction across the EC through these entities, providing support at senior and practitioner levels. This has resulted in a commitment to greater collaboration on communication across the EC, which in turn has translated into integration of corporate communication objectives in Line DGs in their communication plans and readiness on the part of DGs to contribute to the corporate campaigns.

Notwithstanding the areas where there is scope for improvement, it is clear that **the need to place communication at the heart of policy-making has been well understood.** Communication is now understood as a "horizontal" function. It is no longer conceived in silos or as an add-on to beautify EU policies. The withdrawal of the approach would limit the dissemination of EU-wide messages across the Member States.

This study has concluded, therefore, that **the corporate approach is the right course to follow as the Commission** (and the institutions as a whole) implement the EU's Strategic Agenda for 2019-2024 agreed by the European Council, as the Commission implements the political guidelines of the next European Commission and prepares for citizens to have their say at the Conference on the Future of Europe, which is due to start in 2020 and run for two years.⁶

1.3 Corporate communication campaigns: key findings of the report

As a key element in the implementation of the corporate communication approach, DG COMM has, over the last five years, boosted its communication with corporate campaigns, first with a Pilot, and then with larger scale communication campaigns around three messages: an EU that delivers (#InvestEU), an EU that empowers (EUandME), and an EU that

⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/political-guidelines-next-commission_en.pdf

protects (EUProtects). These last three campaigns have run over the last two-to-three years, including in two phases in the case of #InvestEU. They will all conclude by the first quarter of 2020. This study did not evaluate the campaigns individually but took an overall view of how effective they have been within the context of the corporate approach.

The campaigns have been carried out by major international communication agencies working hand-in-hand with campaign teams in DG COMM Headquarters and with the Representations in the Member States. These campaigns are **a means of translating the political priorities of the Commission into messages to which citizens can relate.**

Broadly speaking, the targets were citizens who are ambivalent about the EU and countries where that group of citizens is largest.⁷ EUandME targeted a younger demographic (17-35⁸, neutral to positive) and EUProtects an older one (35-55 years olds; those living in rural areas and those with lower levels of education). #InvestEU focused on target groups who were neutral about the EU and economic prospects⁹. Campaigns segmented channels, tools and messages. The main channels of the three campaigns were aligned to the media preferences of their target audiences mapped in the baseline surveys. This resulted in a focus on social media, events and online dissemination for EUandME and the inclusion of traditional media for InvestEU. EUProtects' dissemination strategy had a focus on TV partnerships but at the time of the writing of this report only the results from social media promotion were available. Therefore, the use of television was an exception, other than in the Pilot and the final phase of EUProtects. It was used where partnerships could be developed (although these took a long time to establish), or Commission advertising enjoys public service status, due to the cost. All three campaigns had an online hub where all campaign materials could be found.

To enable DG COMM Headquarters to carry out campaigns on this scale and in line with the corporate communication approach, the corporate communication budget has been established with funds from Directorates-General budgets. DG COMM Headquarters has worked closely with Directorates-General and the Representations on the content of these campaigns. The work with DGs is a **two-way process**. DGs provide information on their successful policies and projects to incorporate in campaign materials. DGs can then use the campaign materials in their own communication. This helps broaden the audience for the DGs' activities and **gives a voice to low-spending Directorates General.**

The parameters for the campaigns were set in the tender specifications for the communication agencies but fine-tuned by the upfront research by the agencies. This **research into citizens' main concerns is a cornerstone** of these campaigns, with interim and/or ex-post measurement of how awareness, understanding and attitudes have evolved.

⁷ The Synthesis study also looked at the Pilot Campaign where relevant, but the main focus was on the three recent campaigns.

⁸ This group was further segmented into two groups those aged 17-24 and those aged 25-35.

⁹ This target audience was further segmented into positives (those who trust in the EU, are positive about the future and agree that the EU helps create the conditions for more jobs) and those who are ambivalent (who also trust in the EU ad are positive about the future but disagree that the EU helps create the conditions for more jobs).

This is a level of target group research going well beyond anything carried out by DG COMM Headquarters in the past. This has enabled the campaigns to focus on specific segments and to adapt materials and messaging over the life of the campaigns.

Full results of the campaigns were not available for this study, but the evidence available suggests that **the campaigns have achieved and, in some cases, significantly surpassed many of the objectives that have been set**, for example in relation to overall campaign reach and recall but also in relation to message acceptance, awareness and understanding.

The topics on which the campaigns have communicated resonate with the target groups to some extent. They find the materials of interest and are interested in learning more. They see a need for the EU to communicate on these issues. This has been measured in polling and focus groups specifically carried out for this study as well as by the communication agencies.

It is clear from the research for the campaigns and for this study that EU citizens are aware of the EU but do not fully understand what the EU does and its impact. When citizens are exposed to campaign materials, they are impressed and interested, and they often **see the EU more positively** as a result.

CONCLUSIONS

Corporate communication approach

The need to place communication at the heart of policy-making has been understood, which means planning the communication strategy as the policy is being developed rather than ex post, and regarding communication as a “horizontal” function across all policies. That means communicating on themes of interest to citizens that cut across different policies, and a continuum in communication.

The corporate approach is now well established as a European Commission institution-wide communication approach, with the efforts of line Directorates General, Representations and EDICs all complementing the work of DG COMM Headquarters. The establishment of a Corporate Communication Steering Committee, the rearrangement of the Communication Network, combining internal and external communication, and the established decision-making processes have helped to embed the corporate approach and ensured senior and practitioner level support.

Despite the corporate campaigns’ focus to communicate about the EU to citizens in the Member States, the Commission was less successful at engaging other EU institutions and the Member States to amplify the campaigns via their extensive networks in the Member States. This is a critical point as the Commission is largely communicating in a vacuum in the Member States. Furthermore, the evidence suggests that there was little or no awareness of the campaign by communication departments of national governments. Since the end of the Management Partnerships, dialogue with the Member States and peer pressure for them to communicate on EU values and the benefits of EU membership appears to have broken down.

Working in partnership with Member States now that there are no formal structures and there is no funding coming from the EU budget is challenging, but if it remains in the ‘too-hard’ basket, a potential resource is being wasted. Improved coordination appears to be the minimum that is required.

DG COMM Headquarters performed well in its coordination role establishing its credibility as the domain leader for EC external communication, but this role could be further strengthened. Staff from DG COMM Headquarters provided advice and support to corporate communication actors within the institution. This support was responsive and flexible in addressing unforeseen issues, allowing adaptations when necessary but still ensuring that campaign activities adhered to the campaign objectives. As would be expected, there is still scope for improvements in relation to communication around decision-making timing and processes. **There were variable levels of engagement, volume and quality of activities carried out by line Directorates General, the Representations and EDICs to support the corporate campaigns.** Variability related to events which were not sufficiently well targeted or promoted, as well as use of messages and materials at events, on web pages and via social media. There appears to have been an over-reliance on goodwill and a lack of clarity with regards to expectations and responsibilities. A clearer understanding is needed of the role Representations should play, with DG COMM Headquarters holding ultimate responsibility for deciding what materials should be used where, based of course on advice from the communication agencies and the Representations, given their knowledge of local communication landscapes and sensitivities.

A limitation of the current corporate approach is that it takes a top-down approach in defining the issues relevant to citizens. It then tests the relative importance of those issues to them, rather than taking a bottom-up, open-ended approach to ensuring that citizens’ information and communication needs are met, in determining the resulting issues on which to communicate. Whilst the need for genuine dialogue with citizens is understood, the Commission is still situated between the dialogue and monologue positions. The Commission is challenged in engaging with citizens on the issues that are of genuine concern and reconciling this with the sense that the institution needs to communicate its political and policy priorities.

Although listening infrastructure¹⁰ is in place and progress has been made, the Commission is not yet aligned with best practice which is to keep virtually in constant touch to catch and address issues as they emerge. This approach is followed by corporates and governments, which have ongoing programmes of targeted surveys and focus group. These tools are missing. They are expensive, particularly across a score of countries, but using them should pay off in better targeting and a better match between what the institution sees as its needs

¹⁰ The new Commission President’s proposal for a Conference on the Future of Europe, to start in 2020 and run for two years will also provide an opportunity to address the listening function. The Commission’s listening infrastructure includes Citizens’ Dialogues, EDICs, Eurobarometer surveys, surveys for specific campaigns, media monitoring and analysis.

and citizens' concerns¹¹. The speed of societal change was one of the challenges identified at the start of this study, which is likely to become more of a challenge in future. Public awareness of climate change today and five years' ago is one example of why rapid reaction is needed. The current campaigns have taken this need on board, but the current contracting arrangements are not fully suited to this level of responsiveness.

Corporate communication campaigns

The management of corporate campaigns has been a learning curve for DG COMM Headquarters. A lesson learned is the need to set clear and specific expectations for contractors in terms of campaign performance, reporting formats and frequencies to facilitate oversight and DG COMM Headquarters' capacity to guide decision-making. This implies a **need to strengthen the Commission's capacity in strategic communication** campaigning. This is in addition to the requirement for strong project management skills and stable staffing. Together these are important in building institutional memory, since there is otherwise a risk that this will be held only by the contractors.

There were human resource limitations in terms of capacity and expertise in DG COMM Headquarters and Representations, even if additional financial resources were made available to support the campaigns. There were difficulties in the Representations, who found it challenging to provide support to three communication campaigns on top of their usual communication activities. **Corporate communication cannot be an add-on** unless a decision is taken about which aspects of the Representations current communication responsibilities need to be dropped. However, this human resource deficiency in the Representations also relates to the availability and / or lack of strategic communication expertise, which is a different discipline from public relations.

The corporate communication campaign budget limited the scope of the campaigns. For the corporate approach to realise its full potential budgets need to be sufficient to cover all Member States with sufficient intensity continuously over a period of years, or able to target more of the ambivalent more often, to consolidate the positive attitudes of those who unreservedly support the EU and, in due course, to take on those who are negative.

There were pros and cons to running three campaigns but on balance a more consolidated approach would have been desirable. Supporting three campaigns on different policy areas helped to reinforce engagement and acceptance of the corporate communication approach within the European Commission; different line DGs could see the benefits of a collaborative approach, which used some of their communication budgets and showcased their policy areas. Yet managing three different campaigns across a number of Member States at the same time was a significant management challenge. In addition, from the perspective of generating resonance with citizens, the three-pronged approach fragmented the potential

¹¹ It was out of scope to look at the experience of the Representation in the Netherlands along these lines, but from earlier work, the evaluation team understands that it was considered useful and a lesson in not making assumptions about audience concerns.

impact as the high number of messages and materials were not grouped around one main ‘umbrella’ theme. The **three campaigns developed different visual identities**, which could result in confusing visual branding at events in Member States.

There was, moreover, no brand strategy underpinning the campaigns on how to convey a promise and a sense of European identity. Such a promise must be easy to understand and plausible. Institutions should not promise what they cannot deliver.¹² This is a key success factor that is the nub of any communication. If basic trust in the brand, and what it stands for, is missing, then other communication will fail. This is a missing link at present. However, there is a need for **a clear idea of what the EU stands for (its “promise”) and the emotions and values the EU wishes to see associated with its “brand”**, starting with the “EU values” spelled out in the Lisbon Treaty.

The three corporate campaigns generated effects, which supported increasing public understanding of the relevance of the EU to their lives across a range of different spheres and, thereby, maintaining or improving public perceptions of the EU. In addition, at the time of drafting, the corporate campaigns had achieved (or were on their way to achieving) and in some cases significantly surpassed the specific campaign targets set for the campaign as a whole (for example reach, recall, and levels of awareness, understanding and feelings about the EU). Estimated reach figures were: #InvestEU 240 million and 66% of its target population, EUandME 76 million and 80% of the target population; EU Protects: total estimated reach 70 million and 55% reach of the target audience.

The latest campaign materials were more effective than those that had been produced and tested in the Pilot corporate campaign. Campaign visuals were of a high professional quality, they were attractive and appealing; they conveyed the intended key messages¹³, and based on testing carried out as part of the Synthesis Study, individual clips increased understanding of the EU 38%-40% of those tested and made people feel more positive about the EU (40%-49%). This was also exemplified through the focus group research as follows:

- ***“My opinion about the European Union has changed a lot. My opinion of the EU has changed for the better, after seeing all the functions that it develops around me and that a large part is unaware of” – ES participant, group with a neutral view on the EU***
- ***“I feel a sense of care from the EU which I did not feel before” – BG participant, group with a rather negative view on the EU.***

¹² For a discussion of the preconditions for successful citizen consultation which discuss this see: https://clubofvenice.files.wordpress.com/2019/06/convergences-13_07-lr-page.pdf, the Spring 2013 edition of the magazine of the Club of Venice, the informal group of Europe's most senior and experienced government *communications* professionals.

¹³ There was some variability in materials with some either not easily identifiable as from the EU or confusion about the intentions behind some of the short films, in particular.

The campaigns achieved high levels of target group penetration¹⁴, but did **not have sufficient intensity to achieve breakthrough**. There are a number of factors that are likely to have affected this:

- the geographic scope of the campaigns versus the size of **campaign budgets**. Whilst Commission campaign budgets cannot be compared to the advertising budgets of multinational companies, which aim to recoup their costs through sales, our experts confirm that the budgets allocated were low even if pooling resources helped to increase the amount of financial resource available;
- the **duration** of the campaigns limits their contribution to sustained attitude change. Whilst the campaigns did not seek to change entrenched negative views, focus groups suggest that materials were positively viewed by people who felt somewhat negative about the EU. Campaign outcomes for these types of awareness-raising campaigns tend to be ‘fleeting’ and sustained efforts are required over the long term.
- **insufficient focus** due to the number of campaign themes and materials. This meant fragmentation of campaign impacts and budgets, which resulted from running three separate campaigns towards different target audiences in different countries;
- the choice of channels and tools and difficulty in **capturing audience attention**¹⁵:
 - in most cases, events were not very effective in terms of advertising the events, participation, size and number, and a wider dissemination of their content;
 - over-reliance on digital/social media to get the message diffused, rather a broader mix of traditional media (passive reception) and digital (requiring more active engagement).

The **understanding of campaign effects** is limited by several structural issues, which could be addressed in the design of future corporate campaigns, as follows:

- the Commission did not set SMART objectives for the campaigns although baselines and targets were set by contractors;
- comparative assessments of data were challenging due to the volume of indicators and data; the small differences in the type of data collected even when the same

¹⁴ Contractors followed recognised good practice using baseline surveys/focus groups to test messages and materials, and on-going surveys / focus groups to get user feedback and adjust campaigns.

¹⁵ The focus groups on campaign websites generated positive feedback including from groups comprised of citizens who feel negative about the EU, which highlighted the added impact that could be generated when target groups have time to look at the materials in more detail.

channels and KPIs were used¹⁶ a consequence of running campaigns with different contractors in different countries, and reporting formats¹⁷;

- the number of campaigns and level of differentiation in their approach, including channels and tools, materials, countries and timing;
- the lack of consistent monitoring and measurement of Representations', EDICs' and Citizens' Dialogue activities;
- the different campaigns used different research questions to assess outcomes on target audiences.

¹⁶ Slight variations in metrics mean that direct comparisons between campaigns cannot be made. For example, on print advertising, used by InvestEU first phase and the Pilot: both collected data on CPM and number of contacts, but only the Pilot also collected data on number of insertions by frequency of publication weekly, bi-weekly, etc. and circulation rates; on earned social media only InvestEU collected data on number of published posts, meanwhile EUandME, EU Protects collected data on tweets using the official #, this was not collected by InvestEU. On own social media: Facebook reach was used as an indicator and data collected for the Pilot, InvestEU first phase, EUandME and EUProtects, but only EUandMe and EU Protects collected data on average view duration, which was not collected by InvestEU.

¹⁷ This also made it difficult to make comparisons between the communication campaigns carried out by line Directorates General and the corporate campaigns.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Corporate communication approach

It is recommended that DG COMM Headquarters provide greater clarity on the roles, responsibilities and opportunities for Line Directorates General, the Representations and EDICs in the next version of the corporate communication approach, by:

- developing a detailed intervention logic for corporate communication;
- describing specific roles and responsibilities¹⁸ Service Level Agreements with Representations and between Representations and the local members of the Framework contractor's local network;
- agreeing roles and responsibilities for Directorates General in MoU;
- specifying standards for measurement and monitoring of campaign effects, which are not directly implemented by the contractor.

It is recommended to review ways of improving / creating information-sharing infrastructure (corporate campaign calendars, other EC campaign calendars, line DGs' communication plans) to enhance collaboration between DG COMM Headquarters and the CCSC, the Representations, the CN and the line DGs and to rationalise content and targeting.

It is recommended to further reinforce the strategic communication campaign expertise and positions within DG COMM Headquarters to ensure an improved steer of the communication agencies implementing the campaigns at central and local level.

It is recommended to continue the work in the Communication Network (CN) to mainstream the approach to monitoring and measurement across the Commission to support comparability across all Commission communication campaigns.

It is recommended to create a corporate communication post and reinforce the strategic communication campaign expertise in each Representation and consider supplementing this post with additional support, for example, through a Community Manager or intern within the Representations to support the important role that can and should be played by Representations in these campaigns.

It is recommended to establish a five-year corporate communication campaign Framework Contract. This should ensure continuity of communication, target group research and measurement and shorter lead-in times for specific campaigns, as well as provisions for a rapid reaction approach to allow the EC to be present in hot topics as they occur and tailor materials to these.

It is recommended to establish a five-year Framework Contract to support the corporate communication research separate from the Framework Contract for a communication agency to implement campaigns (see next recommendation). This should include an expert who will work from within DG COMM Headquarters. He/she will ensure that there is an on-

¹⁸ The roles and responsibilities are not be the same for Representations and Line Directorates General.

going focus on taking the pulse across the EU for example through polls and focus groups in each Member State.

It is recommended to review and reinforce the mechanisms that are available to the European Commission to support a structured dialogue with the other EU institutions on ways to collaborate to ensure joint collaboration and joint ownership of the next corporate EU campaign. This would likely imply pooling resources, expertise, manpower and dissemination networks to allow the EU to become more present in the Member States. The opportunity to define common indicators and benchmarks should also be explored. Priority should be given to the European Parliament as it has physical information infrastructure in the Member States.

It is recommended to review and reinforce dialogue with the Member States on opportunities to support communication about the EU. This should be used to ensure that as a minimum, communication departments in national administrations of the Member States know about plans for corporate communication and opportunities for support are sought and harnessed.

Corporate communication campaigns

It is recommended to increase the budgets for corporate communication campaigns to allow proper coverage of the Member States with enough campaign intensity. The amount that could be spent is, of course, virtually limitless. Our expert view is that a campaign budget two to three times the current amount is needed to provide a significant improvement in levels of understanding and appreciation of the EU brand across all of the Member States.

It is recommended to focus EU communication with an overarching slogan with different straplines rather than different slogans per campaign as has been the case across these three campaigns. Such a slogan should not be used forever but should be used consistently across all communication for a period of two-to-three years. There should be a clear understanding on which activities fall within which campaigns in order to avoid mixed messages. **This recommendation is based on our view, which has been further confirmed by consultation with experts, has not changed since the same team evaluated the Pilot scheme.**

It is recommended to invest in a strategic branding exercise to confirm what the EU brand is about (the underlying values described in the Lisbon Treaty). Decisions on branding will then allow the European Commission and institutions to implement the following recommendation.

It is recommended to confirm the strategic intent behind corporate communication campaigns with regards what the European Commission and in due course the EU institutions want to achieve, with a clearly understanding as to whether the goal is trust or an improved image of the EU, for example.

It is recommended to carry out a proper needs analysis exercise before drawing up communication campaign terms of reference. This exercise needs to draw on in-depth, unstructured qualitative research. The research should provide detailed insights into target

group needs through bottom-up research and allow better target group segmentation beyond the limitations of age and attitude to focus on specific communities with concerns on specific topics that may be comprised of different ages and attitudes to the EU, for example. This can be used to support decisions about the shape of each campaign and how to communicate the EU Brand.

It is recommended to discontinue the multi-campaign approach and focus corporate communication efforts on one campaign with a longer duration of 2-3 years, comprising various waves of communication activity to allow repetition across Member States, and no discontinuity before then moving to the next 2-3 year cycle. There should be one overarching campaign slogan and theme of wide relevance to EU populations. Resonance with specific target groups should be under pinned through qualitative research conducted upfront to understand people real concerns with the campaign issue.

On channels and tools, it is recommended to:

- **increase the focus on the use of TV advertising and gaining news media coverage in the corporate communication approach.** Whilst in some cases budgets for TV may prove to be prohibitive, depending on the willingness of public broadcasters to show material from the EU, there are likely to be opportunities that can be secured; and

revise and strengthen the approach to events in the Member States including those organised by the Representations. Our experts confirm the need for the EU to be more present in a tangible format and provide opportunities to meet people who work for the institutions, including reinforcing the listening aspect of the EU.

Drawing on the more in-depth needs assessment that is highlighted above, **it is recommended to:**

- **include specific campaign objectives in the terms of reference for communication campaigns;** and to
- **make the use of Intervention Logics** a compulsory element of the European Commission communication campaign approach, including for stakeholder campaigns. The work of AMEC, the Association for Measurement and Evaluation of Communication, can provide the basis for a template. Intervention Logics should be included in each terms of reference for (Framework Contracts and Specific Contracts) and not left to the contractor to prepare.

It is recommended that DG COMM Headquarters provide timely updates on communication campaigns in simple reporting formats to keep different parts of the institution and Representations informed and engaged in the corporate campaigns. The use of dashboards is recommended to facilitate a shared overview of progress.

With regards to campaign measurements, it is recommended to standardise the list of questions used by communication contractors to understand communication effects on target groups. These should be used to facilitate on-going comparative assessments. It will

be necessary to confirm whether the desired impact is increased perception, pride and trust in the EU. Using standard questions will allow DG COMM Headquarters to build up its own benchmarks for communication performance. Additional testing is also recommended to ensure that materials deliver messages ‘unprompted’ and channels and working through interim surveys. Where feasible collecting data on outcomes by channel is recommended to allow stronger confirmation of channel selection.

With regards to Key Performance Indicators, it is recommended to:

- **define the small set of campaign-level Key Performance Indicators to be used for all corporate campaigns.** Communication effectiveness should relate to the outcomes achieved, but this approach would allow a harmonised and consistent approach and insights into overall performance by tracking over time, for example:
 - % of total target population reached¹⁹
 - % of target population who recognise the brand and understand the campaign²⁰ theme or issues discussed (e.g 7 to 14 days after campaign exposure)
 - % of reached target population who have greater awareness or understanding
 - % Increase in positive opinion in the general population about the EU
 - % of the reached target population, who have greater trust in the EU.
- **define a specific standard list of channel-level indicators** that will be used by all contractors to collect campaign data;
- **consider updating DG COMM’s Communication Network Indicators** drawing on the list of indicators provided in the Annexes. Results and Impacts classifications should be revised to include short and medium-term outcomes. Campaign materials will focus on achieving short-term outcomes whereas campaigns will focus on medium-term outcomes and overtime the Commission will seek to test impacts with regards to the defined strategic intent of its communication; and that
- **continue existing work on the catalogue of campaign benchmarks that DG COMM Headquarters has started to develop** to provide insights into what can realistically be expected from these types of campaigns given certain parameters. However, going forward any databases should be updated as part of the reporting responsibilities of contractors.

¹⁹ There are several different methods to calculate reach and in particular de-duplicated reach. The Sainsbury method can cover the various communication channels. Other methods (such as Hofman’s, Kwerel’s, Metherringham’s for instance) have advantages and disadvantages. Anyway it is clear that all methods are only estimates of the actual reach. There are also computerised models that can be used to make reach calculations but these software are very often proprietary tools. Using the Sainsbury method to approach the cumulated reach of various communication vehicles remains valid, and would allow comparison if this method were to be used by the contractors and other DGs as well within the European Commission.

²⁰ We recommend use of recognition and understanding instead of the use of the catch-all term ‘recall’.

2 Introduction

The European Commission (EC) contracted a Synthesis Study to analyse the performance of its corporate approach to communication, first introduced in 2014, under the Framework Contract COMM.A.1/05/2018/Lot 1. The EC's corporate approach ensures that communication to the public is coordinated around a selection of specific themes and messages reflecting the Commission's political priorities (an EU that delivers, an EU that empowers and an EU that protects), which are conveyed by different EU communication actors (DG COMM Headquarters, other DGs, Representations in Member States and others).

The study was carried out by Deloitte and Coffey International Development (Coffey) and comprised of four phases. It was launched at a kick-off meeting held on 19 September 2018 in Brussels. This document is the **Final Report** of the study, the fifth deliverable to be submitted at the end of the analysis and synthesis stage of work.

The purpose of this report is to provide synthesis results and conclusions and recommendations to DG COMM Headquarters on the validity of the corporate communication approach. It will be discussed with DG COMM Headquarters on 15 November 2019.

This report is structured as follows:

1. **Background:** provides a brief overview of the EC's corporate communication approach, the objectives and scope of the study, the evaluation questions, methodology, and the limitations of the study.
2. **Study results:** provides answers to the evaluation questions by judgement criteria with boxed conclusions at the end of each evaluation question.

This report is accompanied by a separate document with 11 Annexes, which contain:

- Annex A: An overview of the campaigns
- Annex B: An overview of contractors' and the synthesis study's campaign research
- Annex C: Corporate communication survey
- Annex D: Events analysis and results
- Annex E: Insights on influencers
- Annex F: Global literature review on best practice in corporate communication
- Annex G: Campaign KPIs table
- Annex H: Key evaluation metrics / indicators for major communication activities
- Annex I: Focus group report
- Annex J: Polling results
- Annex K: Minutes from meetings with Steering Group

3 Background

The corporate approach was initiated on 23 September 2013 when the EC adopted the Communication on corporate communication under the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020 (2014-2020 MFF). The approach facilitates the pooling of resources from different MFF programmes to fund communication priorities based on the general objectives of the European Union (EU). This approach aims to ensure that the EC is able to communicate its over-arching priorities to a wide audience in a clear, coherent and cost-effective way.

Since 2013, the concept of corporate communication has increasingly been embedded within the EC under the management of DG Communication (DG COMM Headquarters). It focuses on the political priorities of the Juncker Commission, which have been endorsed by both the Parliament and the Council.

Since 2014, a wide range of corporate communication activities have been carried out, including four communication campaigns, local activities implemented by Representations in Member States, and other actions aimed at strengthening the overall communication with EU citizens, such as Citizens' Dialogues and investment in the audio-visual and social media realm.

The new approach started with a pilot campaign called "EU working for you". The pilot was evaluated in 2015 and was found to have "contributed to addressing the gap between the public and the EU institutions". Continuing with the corporate approach was recommended, and the evaluation made some specific proposals about targeting, tools and the role of the Representations in acting within Member States.

Whereas the initial corporate communication activities mainly dealt with economy-related topics²¹, in 2017 the EC broadened the initiative's scope, launching a new approach based on three conceptual strands: **EU delivers**, **EU empowers** and **EUProtects**²² (a detailed overview of the corporate campaigns and their progress to date can be found in Annex A).

- **EU delivers (#InvestEU)** focuses on the EU's contribution to boosting the economy. From this perspective, EU funding serves as a catalyst for more jobs, new business prospects, improved services, and modernised infrastructures, with a tangible impact on people's lives.
- **EU empowers (EUandME)** is linked to the dimension of being an EU citizen, acquiring a sense of belonging, showcasing EU values in action and improving understanding of the ways in which the EU helps citizens to improve their lives. It addresses five key

²¹ The main focus of the pilot campaign "EU working for you" was growth and jobs.

²² Mikel Landabaso (director, DG COMM), "Communicating Europe. The new approach of the European Commission", 28 March 2017. Available at: <http://cor.europa.eu/en/events/Documents/presentation-CoR-Final-28.3.pdf>.

thematic areas: mobility, rights, skills for jobs and business, sustainability and digital. It targets 17-35-year olds.

- **EUProtects (EUProtects)** showcases local heroes working in the area of safety and security, as well as EU activities that keep citizens safe across a number of topics ranging from terrorism, crime and health to the environment and broader societal issues such as poverty. It stresses the role of the EU in addressing people's concerns while recalling its values of peace, security, rule of law, democracy and respect for human rights.

These three conceptual strands are now also clearly identified as messages for the new MFF, proposed by the EC for the 2021-2027 period.²³

The overall communication objectives of DG COMM are that EU citizens²⁴:

- will perceive that the EU is working to improve their lives,
- will feel that their concerns are taken into consideration in EU decision-making,
- will know more about their rights in the EU; and as a result
- should feel more enthusiastic about engaging with the Union.

To achieve these objectives, DG COMM Headquarters collaborates with several line DGs in agreeing on campaign content and facilitating access to networks at Member State level.²⁵ At the same time DG COMM Headquarters closely works with Representations in the Member States, which have an essential role in delivering on the communication of political priorities, engaging political actors and citizens, while also providing essential political, social, and other feedback to DG COMM Headquarters.

3.1 Purpose and scope of the study

The overall objective of the synthesis study was to provide an assessment of the EC's corporate communication actions since 2014. The assessment was intended to help the EC and DG COMM Headquarters to strengthen the corporate approach in the future. The study has an important role:

- in providing **transparency and accountability** to stakeholders, and in contributing to a more efficient allocation of resources for the EC's external communication;
- in further **improving the way the EC communicates** with citizens and in contributing to setting up EC-wide benchmarks and guidelines for external communication;

²³ "EU budget: Commission proposes a modern budget for a Union that protects, empowers and defends", 2 May 2018. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-3570_en.htm.

²⁴ DG COMMUNICATION: Strategic Plan 2016-2020: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/strategic-plan-2016-2020-dg-comm_april2016_en.pdf

²⁵ European Commission: Communication to the Commission. Synergies and Efficiencies in the Commission: New Ways of Working: <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/2/2016/EN/SEC-2016-170-F1-EN-MAIN.PDF>

- in **providing advice to the decision-making** and priority-setting of the new College of Commissioners on communication with citizens.

The scope of the study was to:

- cover **all four** centrally managed corporate communication campaigns (**EU Working for You** [Pilot], **#InvestEU** [First Phase and Continuation], **EUandME** and **EUProtects**);
- cover **complementary** communication activities carried out by Directorate-General for Communication Directorates responsible for the Representations of the Commission in the Member States, and by those Representations and where appropriate the Europe Direct Information Centres;
- **assess** the contribution of other DGs to and from the corporate communication approach, building **synergies** with the corporate campaigns.

This is not an evaluation of each individual campaign, but an **assessment of the validity of the corporate communication concept**.

The study team drew conclusions on six evaluation criteria: effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence, EU-added value, and sustainability²⁶. The Terms of Reference (ToR) for the study describe 17 questions to be answered under the evaluation criteria. These were subsequently revised during the inception phase to limit any potential overlap and repetition, and are presented in the next section.

3.2 Overview of the study questions

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation Questions
Effectiveness	EQ1.i To what extent were the set objectives of the Commission's corporate communication campaigns achieved?
	EQ1.ii What factors influenced the achievements of the campaigns?
	EQ2. What is the additional value resulting from corporate communication activities, compared to what was achieved by individual Directorate-Generals' communication?
	EQ3. To which extent the sectorial Directorates-General are aligned to the principles of corporate communication?

²⁶ Criteria provided in the Better Regulation Toolbox: http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/guidelines/docs/br_toolbox_en.pdf

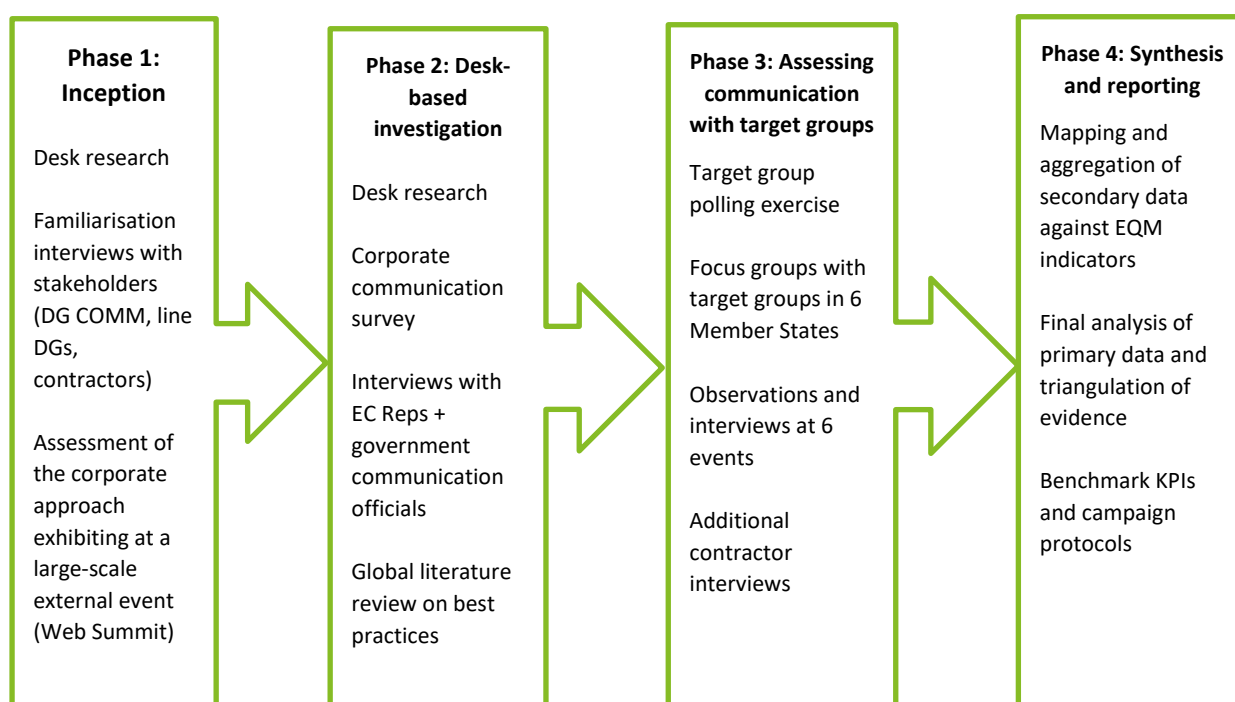
Evaluation criteria	Evaluation Questions
	EQ4. How did the sequence of corporate communication campaigns/ topics contribute (if at all) to the creation (or strengthening) of the EU brand?
Efficiency	EQ5. Were the effects/ benefits achieved at a reasonable cost? EQ6. Which factors influenced the efficiency of the observed results?
Relevance	EQ7. How relevant were the corporate communication activities to EU citizens? EQ8.i Did the objectives of corporate communication actions correspond to the needs from an EU institution perspective? EQ8.ii How relevant were the corporate communication activities to the Commission's line DGs?
Coherence	EQ9. Did the various corporate communication activities (corporate campaigns and local activities by the Commission Representations) work well together? EQ10. Did they work well with other European Commission communication activities and European Union communication activities?
ED-added value	EQ11. Has the corporate communication approach contributed to achieving EU-added value? EQ12. Has the corporate communication approach enhanced the EU branding? To which extent? EQ13. Are the effects of the Commission's corporate communication approach likely to last after the individual communication actions end? EQ14. To what extent do the topics communicated by the various communication activities require continuous communication effort? EQ15. To what extent is the Commission's corporate communication approach aligned with best industry practices?

3.3 Methodology

The study team developed a **methodological approach** structured into four phases (see Figure 1 overleaf):

- **Phase 1 Inception:** The inception phase was aimed at providing the foundation for subsequent tasks, ensuring a shared understanding of the scope and objectives of the study and finalising methodological tools and the work plan. It consisted of familiarisation research activities, such as interviews with stakeholders (DG COMM Headquarters, line DGs, contractors), and an initial review of available documentation and data on corporate communication activities. It also included an assessment of the corporate approach exhibiting at a large-scale external event (Web Summit in Lisbon, November 2018).
- **Phase 2 Desk-based investigation:** This phase comprised a detailed analysis of available documentation and data, as well as primary quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. The latter entail targeted in-depth interviews with Representations and government communication officials in Member States, and a survey on EC-wide corporate communication with members of the Communication Network and communication managers in Representations and EDICs. This phase also included a global literature review on best practices in corporate communication.
- **Phase 3 Assessing communication with target groups:** This phase was centred on data collection and analysis with target groups, including mixed-methods research at 6 events, a target group polling exercise in six Member States, and focus groups in six Member States.
- **Phase 4 Synthesis and reporting:** The final phase of the study consisted of a systematic analysis of primary and secondary data collected in phases 1-3, using appropriate quantitative and qualitative techniques. It included mapping and aggregation of secondary data against indicators defined for all the evaluation questions, final analysis of primary data and triangulation of evidence, development of conclusions, and formulation of recommendations. In this phase, the team has also developed guidance on benchmark KPIs and campaign protocols.

Figure 1: Study phases and methodological tools



In the following section, we describe in detail the data collection tools that we used and our approach to triangulation.

3.3.1 Methodological tools

All data collection tools were approved by DG COMM Headquarters in advance and included desk research, surveys, interviews, focus groups and observations / interviews at events.

Desk research

We conducted a systematic review and analysis of existing documents that were provided by DG COMM Headquarters which related to the four corporate campaigns as well as other non-corporate campaigns, strategic documents from DG COMM Headquarters, line DGs and Representations etc.

The aim of our review of campaign documents and data was to **synthesize results** that were reviewed and evaluated by the implementing communication agencies themselves as well as other external evaluators. However, there were challenges in this exercise due to timing of completion of this study relative to the ToR, which assumed that the EUandME and EUProtects campaigns would be finished, and that final and evaluation reports from the contractors would be available. Subsequent to the drafting of the ToR, it was also decided to continue the #InvestEU campaign.

The challenge of timing of completion of this study relative to the expectations in the ToR was recognised from the outset. Consequently, we took several mitigation measures over the

course of this study. These included agreeing with DG COMM Headquarters that we would, in addition to the sources cited in the ToR which are available, work with channel and wave / communication moment reports and KPI reporting where feasible and relevant.

The table below summarises the position at the cut-off date of 7 August 2019 in relation to all the campaigns and the Pilot.

Table 1: Documentation and data available to the study team

Campaign	Target Group	Time frame	Baseline survey/ polling results	Mid-term survey/ polling results	Final survey/ polling results	Key reports available as of 07/08/2019
EU Working for You ("Pilot")	15+	June 2014- March 2015	n.a.	n.a.	Yes	External Evaluation, July 2015
#InvestEU Phase 1	18+	October 2017- September 2018	Yes	Yes	Yes	External Evaluation of Y1 – March 2017-March 2018 180921_#InvestEU_KPI_reporting_ALL_complete.xls IPSOSMORRI_Pollingresults_POST.xlsx, July 2018 Third interim, Final Results, Phase 1, September 2018
#InvestEU Phase 2 ("Continuation")	18+	October 2018-late- 2019	Yes (supplements Phase 1 survey)	n.a.	No	Fourth interim, March 2019 KPI Report ALL, June 2019
EUANDME	17-35	May 2018- May 2019	Yes	Yes	No	First and Second Interim Reports (Jan & May 2018) Monitoring and Evaluation Methodology, August 2018 Aggregated KPI Report, December 2018 Third Interim ²⁷ (Jan. 2019) Final report of collaboration with Vice, May 2019 Consolidated evaluation, Wave 2, March 2019
EUProtects (5 Waves)	35-55	October- April 2018 (Waves 1-3);	Yes	n.a.	No (Wave 1 post-survey + on-going)	1 st Interim Report, September 2018 Monitoring and Evaluation Methodology, December 2018

²⁷ exists only as a Power Point presentation and is a report of the interim survey, not an interim report in the conventional sense.

Campaign	Target Group	Time frame	Baseline survey/ polling results	Mid-term survey/ polling results	Final survey/ polling results	Key reports available as of 07/08/2019
		Wave 4, June 2019, Wave 5, October 2019			recall/out-comes survey)	2 nd Interim Report, March 2019 KPI Reports, Waves 1, 2 & 3, January, March and June 2019 Global Media Approach, May 2019

We prepared parallel descriptions of campaigns, which are presented in Annex A. We also prepared a detailed mapping of key performance indicators used in the campaigns’ reporting and monitoring processes. The results of the mapping are presented in Annex G.

Stakeholder interviews

We conducted **41 in-depth interviews** with four groups of key stakeholders to collect specific qualitative information on how past and ongoing corporate communication activities are perceived. The interviews were intended to provide additional insights into the documentary and data evidence that was available for synthesis. Stakeholders interviewed included:

- DG COMM Headquarter officials
- line DGs officials²⁸
- Representations staff in Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Latvia, Poland and Spain
- national government communication officials in Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Latvia, Poland and Spain

In the table below, we provide the number of interviews per type of stakeholders.

Table 2. The number of interviews by categories of stakeholders

Type of stakeholders consulted	Number of interviews
DG COMM Headquarters	12
Line DGs	11
Representations	6
National authorities	6
Contractors	6
TOTAL	41

All interviews were based on semi-structured discussion guides tailored to each stakeholder group and linked to the relevant evaluation questions.

Corporate communication survey

We developed an **online questionnaire** aimed at gathering quantitative data on stakeholders’ views and perceptions of the corporate approach, the extent of institutional buy-in to the approach and the extent to which it addressed institutional needs. Questions also covered other aspects of the approach linked to the evaluation criteria, such as expected benefits, weaknesses, efficiency, internal factors and external factors that facilitate or hinder the approach.

²⁸ Including: DG AGRI, DG EAC, DG ECHO, DG EMPL, DG ENER, DG GROW, DG HOME, DG JUST, DG REGIO, DG SANTE, DG SANTE.

The questionnaire was uploaded onto the EUSurvey platform, and distributed to the following stakeholders:

- DG COMM Headquarters
- Other DGs
- Representations
- EDICs

The survey ran from 20 March 2019 until 12 April 2019, with the following response rate:

Table 3: Response rate to corporate communication survey

Category	N
DG COMM Headquarters	22
Other DGs	19
Representations	26
EDICs	125
Total	192

A detailed survey report can be found in Annex D.

Focus groups with target audiences

To assess the target groups' appreciation of the corporate campaigns, we conducted **twelve focus groups in six Member States** (Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Latvia, Poland, Spain).

The aim of the focus groups was to test audience reactions to campaign materials by gathering participants' opinions and insights about the three campaign websites (#InvestEU, EUandME, EUProtects). Participants were recruited via a brief online recruitment survey aimed at screening for **those who reported feeling "neutral" towards the EU** (Group 1: "neutrals") and **those who reported feeling "rather negative" towards the EU** (Group 2: "rather negatives"). While the target groups for the corporate campaigns are citizens with a neutral opinion of the EU, in agreement with DG COMM Headquarters the study team tested the materials with citizens who declared themselves to feel somewhat negative about the EU. The intention was to identify whether this group was assumed as 'too hard' to communicate with and to see if there would be any significant differences in reactions to the materials.

Each group discussion was based on a semi-structured questionnaire and was conducted via the online focus group platform 'Visionslive'. Each discussion lasted about 90 minutes and was conducted in the language of the Member State, moderated by a native speaker.

A detailed focus group report can be found in Annex I.

Polling exercise with target audiences

Our expert partners Ipsos conducted a target group polling exercise in six Member States with each of the three target groups of the three corporate campaigns. We selected **three groups of 500 respondents** (one group for each of the three campaigns, sampled by the **relevant target group age bands**)²⁹ in **5 Member States** (Bulgaria, Germany, Latvia, Poland, Spain), and **two groups of 500 respondents** (one group for EUProtects, and one group for EUandME, sampled by the relevant target group age bands) **in Croatia**.³⁰ Overall, **8,509** respondents completed the polling exercise.

The polling questions were aligned with the ex-post polling of the Pilot campaign to add value and we made efforts to avoid duplication with the campaign contractors' own ex-post polling. Each group of respondents was shown one short 1-minute clip about a campaign³¹, the choice of which was agreed with DG COMM Headquarters (see Table 4). They were then asked about their perceptions of the clip, emotions that the clip evoked, their feelings about the EU (and possible changes to their feelings as a result of watching the clip), their general attitude towards the EU, as well as the likeliness of them sharing the clip on social media.

Table 4: Campaign clips shown to polling respondents

Country	#InvestEU	EUProtects (teasers)	EUandME
Bulgaria	Tech for breast cancer diagnosis	How Europe shattered a human trafficking ring	The story of Iliana
Croatia		How Europe came together to fight forest fires	The story of Ivona
Germany	Tech for the visually impaired	Helping a patient with epilepsy	The story of Leonard
Latvia	The Latvian University	How Europe came together to fight forest fires	The story of Valters
Poland	E-healthcare	Patrolling the EU's maritime border	The story of Janina
Spain	Preserving marine life	The journey of an asylum seeker	The story of Kristin and Abraham

A detailed polling report with results by Member States and respondents' characteristics can be found in Annex J.

²⁹ #InvestEU: 18-65, EUProtects: 35-55, EUandME: 18-35

³⁰ There was no polling about the #InvestEU campaign in Croatia since Croatia was not one of the campaign target countries.

³¹ For the EUProtects campaign, respondents were shown 30 seconds teasers of ca. 4-minutes videos. Results should therefore be treated with caution, as respondents were shown less content than for the other two campaigns.

Events

The study team was asked to attend and observe **seven events selected by DG COMM Headquarters**, used to support the corporate communication campaigns in the Member States. The rationale for attending events was to gain **insights into the ways that the corporate approach plays out at external events**, which are either funded under the corporate budget or which serve as opportunities to disseminate campaign materials.

The table below presents the events that the study team attended as part of this synthesis exercise. Events were used as opportunities to carry corporate communication messages on the #InvestEU or EUandME campaigns, but not the EUProtects campaign³².

Table 5: Overview of the events attended

Event title	Date	Location	No of ppts	Organised by EC	Summary
#InvestEU					
Web Summit	6 – 7 Nov. 2018	Lisbon, Portugal	Around 70,000 ³³	No	Annual technology conference. Workshops and presentations held by EU officers and #InvestEU stand.
Student business incubator at the University of Latvia	6 March 2019	Riga, Latvia	11	Yes ³⁴	Organised as part of the #InvestEU campaign, targeted at students – potential entrepreneurs. Presentations by Representation official and an influencer (Marta Selecka).
Beach clean-up	8 June 2019	Ladispoli, Italy	Around 80	Yes ³⁵	Beach clean-up introduced by a short speech-session, including one speech from a Commission Representation’s officer. It gathered around 80 participants, most of them families with children.
EUANDME					
Internationale Kurzfilm-woche Regensburg	17 March 2019	Regensburg, Germany	10	No	Screening of all EUANDME movies, followed by a discussion with a Representation official and 2 film directors. International short-film festival
Dingle International Film Festival	22 March 2019	Dingle, Ireland	Viewers per film: Debut: 102; Living hostel: 49; Oona: 27.	No	Screening of three EUANDME films (Living Hostel, Debut, and Oona) during a short-film festival.
L’Europe dans ma ville	26 April 2019	Abbeville, France	100 at screening & 50 at the Citizens’ Dialogue.	Yes	Film screening of seven EUANDME movies and Citizens’ Dialogue; Attendees were mainly students aged 14-18.

³² As of 12 June 2019, 21 events have been carried out in the Member States in the context of the EUProtects campaign: #EUProtects, Consolidated Report of Wave 3, 12 June 2019. Slide 61.

³³ Data from the Web Summit website.

³⁴ Organised in cooperation with the University of Latvia.

³⁵ Organised in cooperation with Ambiente Mare Italia.

Event title	Date	Location	No of ppts	Organised by EC	Summary
European Youth Week	29 – 30 April 2019	Brussels, Belgium	Circa 1000	Yes ³⁶	Two-day event aiming at engaging young people in EU debates and at raising awareness of the EU values and programmes offered to youths. EUANDME stand, screening of the EUANDME movies at the Pop-up cinema and from the main stage before the Maastricht debate.

For each event, the study team prepared semi-structured discussion guides to gather qualitative feedback from:

- **visitors** on their motivations for attending the event, assessment of the quality of the event (and – where applicable – of speakers and workshops / presentations), their awareness that the event was hosted by the EU, their opinions on the image that the EU was trying to convey at the event, and any potential changes in attitudes towards the EU as a result of attending the event;
- **EU institutions staff** on their perceptions of what has worked well and key challenges in the preparation and running of the event, opinions about the quality of the event and aspects of governance that informed the event.

Additionally, the study team also prepared guidelines to inform consultants’ observations of the events, which included an assessment of the materials provided, visibility of the EU, consistency in branding, and interest of the general public in the activities.

Although the possibility of attending events was somewhat limited, the study team supplemented the evidence gathered through a review of the EC Representation 2019 country strategies. An analysis and results are presented in Annex D.

3.3.2 Analysis and synthesis

All primary data collected via surveys, interviews and focus groups was analysed using the appropriate data analysis techniques, which included:

- **Qualitative data analysis:** For focus groups, interviews and open comments in surveys, we developed coding frameworks based on EQM indicators to identify recurrent themes in answers to the evaluation questions with the aim to highlight consensus and differences in opinions within and between the audiences consulted.
- **Quantitative data analysis:** Surveys were analysed using descriptive statistics to present and interpret numerical data.

³⁶ DG EAC in collaboration with other DGs and the EP

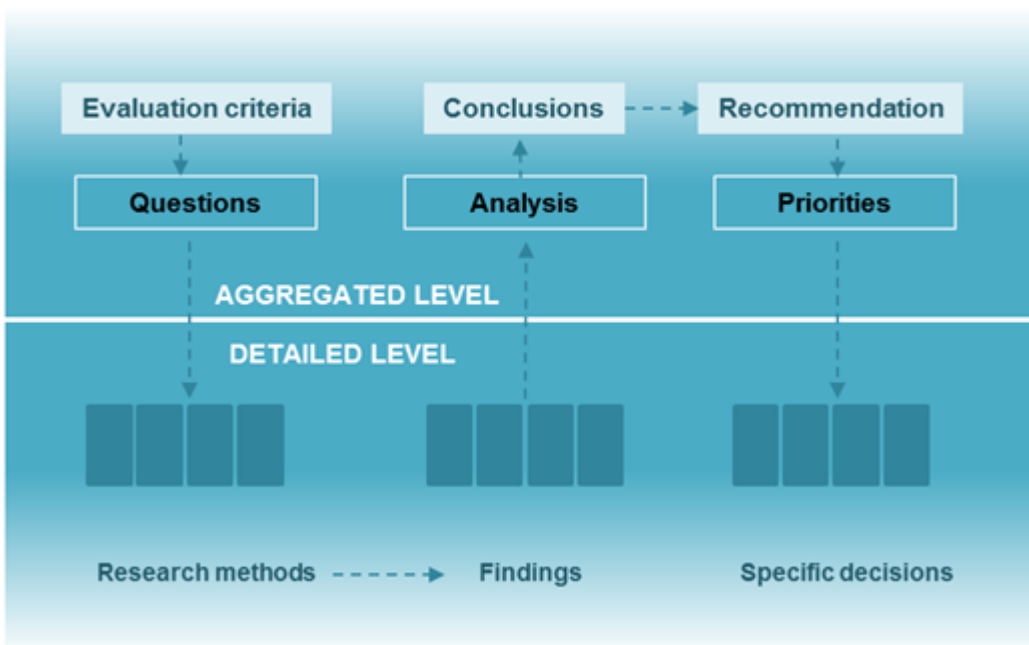
This process was underpinned by a **gap analysis** throughout the duration of the study to ensure that data gathered via desk research and primary data collection addressed all the EQM indicators correctly.

During the synthesis stage, we used **triangulation techniques** to compare key findings from different sources and provide answers to the evaluation questions that were based on robust evidence confirmed by more than one source. For this, we undertook a systematic review and mapping of all data, which entailed structuring and mapping evidence to the relevant EQM indicators, which provided us with a series of findings that related to each evaluation question. The synthesis of results made use of triangulation at three different levels:

- **Triangulation of data:** Primary data from interviews, surveys, focus groups and events, as well as secondary data, such as monitoring data and documentation provided by DG COMM Headquarters and contractors;
- **Triangulation of respondent groups:** EC staff (including Representations staff), EDICs, national authorities, contractors, events interviewees;
- **Triangulation of methods:** Desk-based research, surveys, interviews, focus groups and events attendance.

The study’s overall **conclusions and recommendations** emerged from the triangulated data, ensuring that the evidence from the past is translated into recommendations for the future, grounded in a relevant understanding of strategic priorities. This process is illustrated in the diagram below.

Figure 2: Process for the development of conclusions and recommendations



3.3.3 Limitations of the study

We encountered several limitations during the study, which are outlined below indicating the impact of these limitations on our results:

Timing of the synthesis study vs. timing of the campaigns:

There were gaps in the evidence available to the synthesis team due to the EUandME and EUProtects campaigns still being on-going, and the decision to continue the #InvestEU campaign subsequent to drafting the study's ToR. The ToR assumed the availability of final surveys and final reports from the campaign contractors. Those reports will incorporate evaluations by the contractors, based on Intervention Logics and Evaluation Criteria for EUandME and EUProtects³⁷. This information was not available to the study team. In addition, DG COMM Headquarters was able to share with us only a limited number of communication strategies from line DGs, as these are not all held by DG COMM Headquarters. Evaluations of line DG campaigns identified were shared by a limited number of DG COMM Headquarters' contacts across the Commission and we cannot be certain it is comprehensive. Relative to the number of events Representations hold, the number of events we attended was in line with the Terms of Reference, but nevertheless low because it proved difficult for DG COMM Headquarters to identify key events during the time frame of the study. One reason was delays in the first part of the year due to uncertainties about actual budgets with the possibility that the UK's contribution might fall away.

We have taken a number of mitigation measures over the course of this study, which included agreeing with DG COMM Headquarters that we would, in addition to the sources cited in the ToR which are available (such as technical specifications, pre testing, baseline surveys, interim surveys), work with channel and wave / communication moment reports and KPI reporting where feasible and relevant.

We had to reach conclusions and recommendations against the background of a "moving target". Not only have the contractors not yet distilled their own findings and conclusions, but it is clear from our evidence that the contractors are still learning and adapting. This is logical because these are on the one hand long campaigns, and on the other hand to some extent still pilots for campaigns of this type. Therefore, extreme caution was required in formulating conclusions and recommendations, which is highlighted throughout the report.

Providing a meaningful assessment of KPI data:

One of the challenges of providing a synthesis before the campaigns have finished was to provide a meaningful interim assessment of KPI data. A comparative mapping of what has or is being measured across the campaigns is presented in Annex G. This includes whether the KPIs have been set and whether the data have actually been collected, and the countries for which it is available. However, this is still a work in progress as the campaigns are not yet complete. We recognise that contractors are to a large extent still creating benchmarks for future such campaigns and testing what works for a campaign like this, including totally new avenues for DG COMM Headquarters, such as influencers, and a wide

³⁷ Final reports for EUandME and EUProtects will be available in 2020.

range of channels. However, since contractors are still learning and adapting as the go, it was difficult for us to draw conclusions from these metrics.

We notably lacked definitive quantitative data on many outputs (reach), in many cases on outtakes (recall) and in most cases on outcomes (impact), and the cost of these. We had to therefore rely heavily on qualitative data in answering the evaluation questions. We did, however, have a wide range of sources of this qualitative data (e.g. contractor baseline surveys, mid-term surveys, our own focus groups, the corporate communication survey and results from our polling, desk research into contractor findings on communication moments / waves, and interviews), which we consider a sound basis for triangulation. Moreover, we explored further whether there is an excessive emphasis on these KPIs.

Following decision-making processes about the campaigns:

Many reports that were available to the study team on waves, communication moments or specific aspects of the campaign, or Steering Groups, are in PowerPoint presentations prepared by contractors and intended for oral discussion or explanation, e.g. about the impact of the recent changes in Facebook rules on political content or the reasons for delays or changes.

In many instances, it was not possible for us to trace changes and the rationale for changes in the campaigns and assess the validity of these. This was mitigated against by conducting additional interviews with contractors to collect the information, however, there are still gaps which are noted in the report.

4 Study results

4.1 To what extent were the set objectives of the Commission's corporate communication campaigns achieved?

The objectives of the three corporate campaigns are described in the ToR to this synthesis study, as follows:

1. **#InvestEU**: improve public **awareness and knowledge** of how EU funding programmes contribute to economic growth and the creation of jobs in Europe. Target audience was people who were ambivalent / neutral about the EU. The KPIs set by the European Commission were **reach and recall**.³⁸
2. **EUandME**: to trigger interest and generate a **better-informed opinion** about the EU by showing what it allows Europeans, especially **youth**, to experience/gain/enjoy at all stages of life, wherever they are. The target audience was young people aged 17 – 35 and the KPIs were **reach and recall**.³⁹
3. **EUProtects**: to generate a better-informed opinion from the public about EU actions and to show that we are **stronger and safer** together. The target audience was people aged 35-55 and the KPIs were **reach and recall, and knowledge / awareness increase**.⁴⁰

As explained in the corporate communication best practice review, communication campaigns need SMART objectives, which should be set at the start the campaign to allow effective performance measurement. As highlighted above, the set objectives were broad, and no specific targets were set by the European Commission in relation to the KPIs. In the absence of SMART objectives, campaign contractors set some targets for their work. Therefore, the assessment under this question will be based largely on the targets set by the contractors.

In order to assess to what extent the set objectives of the Commission's corporate communication campaigns were achieved, we considered two judgement criteria:

³⁸ In practice, however, contractors set perception change KPIs for the first phase of #InvestEU: increase in individual perception of positive EU funding impacts, and for the continuation phase: increased individual perceptions that the EU can help boost investments and create the conditions for more jobs.

³⁹ In practice, however, contractors set perception change KPIs which are as follows: 10% of those reached feel better informed about the opportunities offered by the EU, 5% of those reached report increased awareness about key initiatives covered by the campaign.

⁴⁰ The KPIs are: 25-30% of those reached feel better informed about the EU action showcased in the campaign; 3-5% of those reached report increased awareness about the EU and its agencies

1. Extent that there is evidence to confirm that communication **outputs** of the four campaigns were delivered in line with targets set;
2. Extent that there is evidence to confirm that the corporate communication campaigns / activities generated the desired audience response (**outtakes and outcomes**).

The following sub-sections report on the key findings per identified criterion. An answer to the study question is provided at the end of this section.

JC 1. There is evidence to confirm that communication outputs of the four campaigns were delivered in line with targets

Sources of evidence:

- Desk research: Communication network indicators; Comm Network Indicators, 08/05/2019; evaluation of the Pilot campaign; final evaluation of #InvestEU first phase⁴¹; EUandME interim report; EUProtects Wave 3 consolidated report
- Interviews with officials from DG COMM Headquarters and line DG officials
- Focus groups

It is not yet possible to make a full synthesis of the extent that communication outputs for the four campaigns were delivered in line with targets. At the time of the drafting of this report, **only two campaigns had been completed**, the Pilot campaign and #InvestEU first phase. Incomplete data was available for the other campaigns. In consequence, there was only one final campaign report and one evaluation available⁴². It was also not possible to make a meaningful interim assessment of the KPI data because the targets were to be achieved by the end of each campaign and **no interim targets** were set to be achieved by an interim cut-off date.

In addition to the significant data gaps highlighted above, a further challenge in the synthesis of campaign results related to reporting formats of data. There was an extensive list of diverse KPIs,⁴³ and use of **similar, but not always identical metrics** and/or terminology across the different campaigns. This made the assessment of the achievement of campaign outputs challenging and a comparative assessment or synthesis not fully achievable.

The tables below provide an overview of the output KPIs set by the contractors for each campaign, as described in their reports. The focus is on data relating to reach rather than the number of materials produced by contractors. This data was compared with available data which shows progress to meet outputs. Targets relating to outreach costs such as CPM and CPC are discussed in the questions relating to efficiency.

⁴¹ Conducted by Technopolis.

⁴² At the time of drafting only the pilot (2015) and the #InvestEU phase 1 campaign (2018) were complete. The continuation phase of #InvestEU, as well as the EUandME and EUProtects campaigns were still ongoing.

⁴³ A comparative mapping of what has or is being measured across the campaigns can be found in Annex G. It includes whether the KPI had been set and whether the data had actually been collected, and the countries for which it was available.

Table 6: #InvestEU phase 1: outputs relating to reach

KPI	Targets	Results August 2018	Tracker
Overall campaign reach			
Size of target group	Not reported in available documentation	408.9 million	Incomplete data
Percentage of target group reached	Not reported	240,000,000 ⁴⁴ = 50% of total population in target countries.	Incomplete data
Media outreach			
(Paid) media or blogger partnerships	2-3 per country	5 per country on average	Target surpassed
Reach via paid & earned media relations	75 million contacts (earned) 160 million contacts (paid)	155 million contacts (earned) 496 million (paid)	Target surpassed
Third party endorsers	5 third party endorsers per zoom-in country of which: 50% internal stakeholders (EU institutions) 50% external stakeholders (other groups)	88 endorsers in 14 markets in total	Target surpassed
Press trips			
Press trip participation	At least 200 journalists	150 international journalists after 9 press trips and 1 one day visit + 65 local journalists	Missed but adapted
Paid media campaign			
Opportunities to see (OTS)	160 million OTS	496 million OTS	Target surpassed

Source: Study team based on data provided by contractors⁴⁵

As can be seen in the table above, the **first phase of the #InvestEU** campaign generally met and **surpassed the output / reach targets set** by the contractor, with **240 million people** estimated to have been reached (50% of the population) in the target Member States. The campaign far **exceeded targets set for paid and earned media**, doubling the target set for earned media reach (155m earned contacts on a 75m target) and tripling the target set for paid media reach (496 paid contacts on a 160m target). The number of opportunities generated through paid media was also three times higher than the target at 496m OTS. Targets for media outreach via third party endorsers and earned media outreach were also surpassed. However, this type of output data provides very limited insights. The campaign needs to be put into context in terms of its potential effects on target groups as can be assessed through conversion into outtakes and outcomes, as discussed in the next section. It is not possible to assess the extent of target group reach as the size of the target group and

⁴⁴ De-duplicated reach across all channels

⁴⁵ WPP, #InvestEU first phase, Final third Interim Report; evaluation of #InvestEU first phase.

target group reach was not reported. The only exception to this observation is in relation to the press trip participation, where it was not possible to reach the target for international journalists.

Table 7: #InvestEU (continuation): outputs focus on reach)

KPI's	Targets	Results - July 2019	Tracker
Paid social media outputs			
- Post impressions - Video views - Contacts / Reach	- 160 million impressions - 32 million paid social media video views - 93 million paid social media reach	84.6 million impressions 18 million video views 46.7 million reach	On track
Campaign website			
- Visits / Unique visitors - Number of actions / Page views - Visit duration	- 360,000 visits on campaign website - Page views: 540,000; - Average visit duration: 25 -30 seconds (paid & organic combined)	Visits: 368,830 Page views: 269,363 Average visit duration: 42 sec Bounce rate all traffic: 82%	On track (page views) Target surpassed
Earned media			
- Opportunities to see - Contacts / Reach	- 525 million earned OTS - 47.85 million earned contacts	368.5 million OTS 37.2 million reach	On track
Paid local media collaborations			
- Opportunities to see / Impressions - Contacts / Reach - (for social media influencers) Engagements	- 17 collaborations established (1 per market) - 67 million contacts through local collaborations	°33 collaborations in 16 focus countries ° +30 million impressions over 8.1 million contacts generated	On track
Collaboration with France Télévisions			
- TV campaign with 52 + 2 spots on France 2/3 - Web campaign	- TV campaign: 8.6 million guaranteed contacts - Web campaign: 1 million guaranteed impressions	Overall reach: nearly 22 million	Final report pending
Web Summit Event			
- Visitors to #InvestEU stand - Indirect audience reach from media outreach initiated by Portuguese #InvestEU team	- No of visitors to #InvestEU stand: 5.000 - Indirect audience reach resulting from media outreach: 1.75 million contacts initiated by outreach	- No of event attendees who visited the #InvestEU stand: 6,000 - Indirect audience reach resulting from media outreach: 1.87 million contacts	Target surpassed
Paid social media outtakes			
- Engagements - Average view-through rate - Average interaction rate - Link clicks - Average link click-through rate	- Average view-through rate: 31% - 34% - Average interaction rate: 0.4% - 0.7% - Target n° of link clicks: 1.2 million - Average link click-through rate: 1.2%-1.5%	- Average view-through rate: 37.2% - Average interaction rate: 0.34% -Target no of link clicks: 93.930 -Average link click-through rate: 0.95%	Target surpassed on the basis of the results available at the time of this report (average

KPI's	Targets	Results - July 2019	Tracker
			view-through rate) On track
Paid local media collaborations			
- Interactions - Referrals	- N° of referrals to website: new measure, no initial benchmark set - N° of interactions / Interaction rate on social media outputs: new measure, no initial benchmark set	No data available	No data available

Source: Study team based on data provided by contractors⁴⁶

As highlighted, targets were set for each metric, with two exceptions: referrals and interaction. The contractor had no data against which these could be benchmarked. As the campaign is still ongoing, some gaps can be found in terms of data depicting current progress. For instance, data on paid local media collaborations are not available.

Based on the data available, the second phase of the #InvestEU campaign has already met its targets with regards to the **Web Summit, TV reach** and the average view-through rate on paid social media from the data available at the time this report was written. It also surpassed the target of unique **visits to the website** and amount of time spent on the website, but a high bounce rate can be observed. Based on the available data, progress is being made on a range of other metrics, but it is too early to confirm that these targets have been met. This could also be applicable to the metrics on paid local media collaborations.

Table 8: EUandME: outputs - reach

KPI's	Targets	Interim Results	Tracker
Total reach by all campaign activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Size of target audience: 110 million • Total reach within the target group: 51.7-63 million • 55-68 % of the total 	<p>2018: - 51-58% (34.5-39.5 million) of target audience estimated to have been reached by at least one campaign item</p> <p>Estimated total reach by 27/07/19: 86,600,944</p>	Target surpassed(?) ⁴⁷
Reach by type of channel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ° Paid online media: 47-61 million ° Media partnerships (TV): 9-18 million ° Organic influencers: 1.8 million 	<p>2018: - Paid online media global reach: 35 million (55% of 17-35 year olds in selected countries) - Organic influencers data: no comparable data available</p> <p>2019: Wave 1:</p>	No aggregate data available

⁴⁶ #InvestEU continuation KPI reporting, 10 June 2019

⁴⁷ It is unclear from the documentation whether the estimated total reach to date reflects only the target audience, or the entire population.

KPI's	Targets	Interim Results	Tracker
		- Paid online media global reach: 16.5 million Wave 2: - Paid online media global reach: 22.8 million Wave 3: - Paid online media global reach: no aggregate data available	
Campaign website	Campaign website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unique reach: 60 million; • number of impressions: 732 million <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Number of pages visited ■ Returning visitors ■ Bounce rate ■ Average time spent on the site ■ Number of views (<i>no targets set</i>) 	2018: - No of website unique visitors: 1,027,850 - No of pages visited: 942,488 - Returning visitors: 263,960 - Bounce rate: 88% - Average time on the site: 37 s - No page views: 1,228,677 2019: no aggregate data	Data pending

Source: Study team based on data provided by contractors⁴⁸

EUandME has an estimated total reach of **89.6m**, which surpassed the target set of between 51 and 63m. This represents a 10% increase on the target for penetration of the target group, which is circa **78%** instead of the target of 51-68%. As regards other reach targets, there was limited aggregated data available for the 2019 period. Particularly as regards the three waves of EUandME in 2019, aggregate data on certain channels (media partnerships, influencers) was not available to the study team.

Table 9: EUProtects: outputs - reach

KPI's	Targets	Interim Results	Tracker
Campaign level: total estimated reach, reach in target group coverage of reach			
Total reach by all campaign activities Total reach by the type of channel	° Estimated total population within the target audience: 290.8 million ° Total reach within the target group: 90- 100 million (circa 33%) ° Paid online media: 60 million ° Organic influencers: 1- 1.5 million	Wave 1: - potential total reach (based on 3 digital channels of the central campaign and total reach of owned and earned channels): 41.070.555 (41.07% of target) - total reach owned and earned: 829.109 Wave 2: - potential total reach: 14.250.000	No aggregated data available

⁴⁸ The data used to compile this table comes from the EUandME proposal, the EUandME evaluation methodology, the EUandME second interim report and the W29 Bi-weekly dashboard (29 July 2019)

KPI's	Targets	Interim Results	Tracker
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - total reach owned social media: 2.535.000 - earned media total potential reach estimate of mentions using hashtag: 20.100.000 Wave 3: - potential total reach: 18.623.986 - total reach owned social media: 2.102.000 - earned media total potential reach estimate of mentions using hashtag: 20.700.000 	
• Campaign web hub:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of campaign web hub visitors (unique and return visits) • Returning visitors • Bounce rate • Average time spent on the site • No of shares of the hub content • No of page views • No of pages visited 	No targets set	Wave 1, 2, 3 : inaccurate data due to issues with tracking link and Piwik.	N/A
Paid social media :			
<p>Facebook</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impressions • Total clicks • Total views <p>You Tube</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impressions • Total clicks / Total views • Av. view duration <p>DBM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impressions • Total clicks • Click through rate • Number of ads 	<p>Wave 1: no targets set</p> <p>Wave 2: no targets set</p> <p>Wave 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - total impressions: 80.520.235 - total clicks: 142.861 <p>Wave 4: targets not available</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wave 1: - Impressions/views: 155.688.477 - Clicks: 341.307 - Total video views: 9.969.155 • Wave 2: - Impressions/views: 72.940.916 - Clicks: 129.706 - Total video views: 1.573.153 • Wave 3: - Impressions/views: 88.241.721 - Clicks: 210.779 - Total video views: 8.531.201 • Wave 4 Results: - Impressions/views: 164.588.030 - Clicks: 351.264 - Total video views: 11.991.452 	Wave 3: total impressions and clicks surpassed target

KPI's	Targets	Interim Results	Tracker

Source: Study team based on data provided by contractors⁴⁹

As shown in the table above, the **data available** on the EUProtects campaign is **not aggregated** and does not (currently) allow for a judgment of whether the campaign is on track of meeting its objectives, which is further hindered by the absence of some targets. However, it can be observed that the first wave achieved an estimated total reach of **41.1m** against a target of 90-100m and that subsequent waves have contributed (as expected) to overall reach.

On paid social media, no targets were set for waves 1 and 2, but the number of impressions and clicks achieved in three out of the four waves, surpassed the targets set in wave 3. Where measurable targets are not set by the contractor at the start of the campaign it is difficult to make a synthesis of results. The lack of target metrics does not allow an assessment of the progress and success of the different campaign waves. In one of the cases, we note that the contractor will develop such targets later on in the process, however, the available evidence does not allow us to confirm this.

Contractors set targets for outputs and tracked progress against these for each campaign wave. The available evidence confirms that the three corporate campaigns have already met their targets for **overall campaign reach** or are on the way to achieving it.

The synthesis identified some evidence of targets not being set for specific channels as well as some gaps in reporting to date in the evidence collected and available. The synthesis was hindered to some extent by the formats used to reporting data by contractors. However, the evidence confirms:

#Invest EU (1st phase): reached an estimated **240m** citizens, representing 50% of the target populations in the focal Member States. Targets on paid and social media were also exceeded in some cases doubling or tripling the figure set.

There are no overall reach figures for #InvestEU (continuation), but targets set for referrals to the website, the TV viewers and number of visitors to the EU stand at the Web Summit have been surpassed.

⁴⁹ The data used to compile this table comes from the EUProtects proposal, the EUProtects evaluation methodology, the EUProtects first interim report, and KPI reports by wave (15 Jan, 7 March, 11 June 2019)

By the end of July 2019, **EUandME** reached an estimated **89.6m** people, representing **78%** of the target population. This is an increase on the initial target set to reach 55 – 63% of the target population. There was no aggregated data available on paid and earned media or the website at the time of drafting.

Total campaign target reach for EUProtects was 90-100m. Wave 1 achieved an estimated **41m** (circa 41%) via the main campaign channels digital, earned and owned. The attainment of output targets cannot be assessed at this stage due to the availability of data.

#InvestEU and EUandME achieved their targets for overall campaign reach. Data was not available on EUProtects. #InvestEU also met its targets for paid and earned social media. Aggregated data is not available to confirm this yet for EUandME and EUProtects. Whilst different campaigns used different channels a campaign website was developed for all. Bounce rates reported for #InvestEU (82%) and EUandMe (88%) appear high.

JC 2. Extent that the corporate communication campaigns / activities generated the desired audience response (outtakes and outcomes)

Sources of evidence:

- Desk research: Contractors’ monitoring data; final evaluation of #InvestEU first phase, Interim reports of the ongoing campaigns
- Corporate communication survey
- Focus groups
- Polling exercise

As the corporate campaigns are currently on-going, the answer to this judgement criterion relates to the evidence, which is available, not final evidence. However, the polling and focus groups conducted by the synthesis study team provided supplementary evidence. Therefore, this section draws first on the evidence provided by contractors and then highlights key insights on this data from the synthesis study data collection.

CONTRACTOR DATA

The table below provides an overview of the benchmarks set by the Commission in terms of outtakes and outcomes, and the data available to compare to the targets per campaign.

Table 10: Main outtake and outcome KPIs #InvestEU phase 1

KPI	Targets	Results August 2018	Tracker
Recall			
% recalling the slogan	No target set	41% recall having seen or heard the slogan.	N/A
% recalling at least one piece of content	1 in 4 (25%) respondents recall having seen an element of the campaign	31% of respondents recall having seen an element of the campaign	Target surpassed
Specific recall: Percentage of recall of publicity /information focused on EU	1 in 3 (30%) respondents recall having seen publicity/ information	1 in 3 (30%) respondents recall having seen publicity/	Target met

KPI	Targets	Results August 2018	Tracker
investment and funding (among target audience)	focused on the EU investment and funding	information focused on the EU investment and funding	
Engagement			
Message acceptance: % agreeing with campaign's messages	To be reviewed in relation to the original KPI predicting a 5% – 8% increase in individual awareness of positive EU impact.	From reached target group: 12% are more likely to agree that the EU is creating the conditions for more jobs in Europe 15% are more likely to agree that the EU helps boost investment in projects that benefit their region	Target surpassed
Engagement: % willing to share content	No evidence available	No evidence relating to %	N/A
Engagement: click through rate	Target to clearly outperform the 1.0% average CTR benchmark	2.16% average CTR across all countries	Target surpassed
Awareness raising			
Awareness: % raised awareness/knowledge of what the EU does	5% - 8% increase in individual awareness of positive EU impacts	3.7% increase in individual awareness of positive EU impact	Target missed

Source: Study team based on data from the campaign evaluation

The above figures confirm that the first phase of the #InvestEU campaign generated, overall, the desired results in all but one of the metrics. Targets for rates of recall were met and surpassed with 31% of reached citizens being able to remember one element of the campaign and 12% and 15% of those reached agreeing with campaign messages concerning the EU's role creating the right conditions for jobs and boosting investment. However, the targets set for this campaign were to raise awareness / knowledge of the impact on economic growth and job creation, which can be attributed to rates of message acceptance. It could be inferred that target group awareness / acceptance of the positive impact of the EU would be a type of impact that goes one step further than message acceptance and was not an original campaign intention.

Table 11: Main outtake and outcome KPIs for #InvestEU (continuation)

KPI's	Targets	Results
'Campaign recall overall		
% recalling of one piece of promoted content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 in 3 (30%) respondents recall having seen publicity/ information focused on the EU investment and funding; 1 in 4 (25%) respondents recall having seen an element of the campaign 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No data available

KPI's	Targets	Results
'Campaign recall overall		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> '5 - 8% point difference in perception of people who recall the campaign compared to those who do not recall seeing the campaign 	
Awareness increase:		
% people with increased agreement on better understanding of EU action to invest in the EU, and at national level.	No evidence identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No data available
Compared to people who have not seen an element of the campaign, people who have seen at least one element of the #InvestEU campaign ...		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... tend to have higher trust in the EU ... tend to have a more positive image of the EU ... tend to agree more that the EU can help boost investments ... tend to agree more that the EU can help boost economic growth ... tend to agree more that the EU creates the conditions for more jobs in Europe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No evidence identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No data available

Source: Study team based on data provided by contractors⁵⁰

As highlighted above, there was no contractor data available at the time of drafting to confirm results relating to recall, increased understanding and the range of other outcomes that will be tested in final polling. However, this evidence is supplemented below with the polling and focus group data collected through this synthesis study.

Table 12: Main outtake and outcome KPIs for the EUandME campaign

KPI's	Targets	Results achieved ⁵¹
Recall of the campaign material:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share of people reached who recall having seen the slogan/ hashtag Share of people reached who recall having seen one of the videos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30-40 % of those reached recall the campaign and its elements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 26% of respondents recalling having seen the campaign signature 25%-28% recalling having seen campaign films
Positive emotions associated with the campaign		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share of people who agree the campaign content they have seen was stimulating Share of people who agree the campaign content they have seen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targets not set 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No available evidence

⁵⁰ WPP, #InvestEU continuation phase, Final KPI Benchmarks.

⁵¹ Campaign wave 1 polling survey: #EUandME. Interim Report (presentation), KOMMITMENT/ICF, 21.01.2019.

KPI's	Targets	Results achieved ⁵¹
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> was associated with the emotions intended Share of people who agree that they can identify themselves with the message Share of people who consider the campaign surprised them in a positive manner 		
Improved understanding of the topics:		Results to date ⁵²
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share of people who feel having better knowledge about the EU Share of people who agree that the campaign improved their knowledge of one of the topics Share of people agree the campaign improved their knowledge of the specific initiatives portrayed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 % of those reached feel better informed about the opportunities offered by the EU 5 % of those reached report increased awareness about key initiatives covered by the campaign 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 46% indicated the campaign had informed them 52% indicated it made them curious of what the EU does.
Other		Results to date ⁵³
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share of people reached who agree the campaign contributed to improve trust in the EU Share of people reached who state that they are likely to take action on the message Share of people who have been reached and who acted upon the message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 % of those reached report having improved trust in the EU 15 % of those reached report having a more positive image of the EU 40 % of those reached who report likely to take action on the campaign messages (80 % for those reached via the campaign events) 2% of those reached examined the existing EU opportunities (6 % for those reached via the campaign events) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 43% proud of being European

Source: Study team based on data provided by contractors

Available contractor data on the EUandME campaign to date confirms that at least **one in four reached members of the target group recalled specific elements of the campaign**, including the campaign signature and the campaign films. This is an interim result as final campaign data is not yet available and this may relate to the result being slightly lower than the 30-40% target for reached recall. However, comparison of targets for recall set by the other campaigns suggests that 40% is a relatively high target. The campaign has exceeded the target set for the % of the target group being informed by far (**46%** against a target value of 10%). This may suggest that the original target was too low. The fact that a small majority (52%) was made more curious by the campaign is a positive result. Whilst data is not yet available with regards to possible impact on trust, **43%** indicated that the campaign made them feel **proud of being European**.

⁵² Campaign wave 2 polling survey

⁵³ Campaign wave 2 polling survey

Table 13: Overview of uptake and outcome KPIs for the EUProtects campaign

KPI's	Targets	Results
Recall of the campaign message		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share of people reached who can recall the campaign messages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12-15% of those reached recall the campaign messages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not available
Improved understanding and awareness of the topics		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share of people reached who feel better informed about the campaign topics Share of people reached who report increased awareness of the EU and its agencies implementing the actions showcased in the campaign 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25-30% of those reached feel better informed about the EU actions showcased in the campaign 3-5% of those reached report increased awareness about EU and its agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not available
Difference in perception		Results⁵⁴
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difference in the degree of adherence to the EU in baseline and post surveys Share of those people reached report having a more positive image of the EU Share of people reached who state that they are likely to take action on the message Share of people who have been reached and who acted upon the message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15% of those reached report having a more positive image of the EU 12-15 % of those reached report having improved trust in the EU 20-25% of those reached report taking action on the campaign messages 	(Representatives of the target group not reached target group) 11% much more positive; 29% slightly more positive; 2% slightly more negative; 2% much more negative.

Source: Study team based on data provided by contractors⁵⁵

There was no available data at the time of drafting from contractors' research to confirm any progress on the above KPIs for EUProtects. However, the data in the results column is based on the results of the polling conducted as part of this synthesis study. It is not possible to make a direct correlation between the results as the targets set by the contractor relate to the 'reached target group' and the synthesis study polling relates to representatives of the target group, who may or may not have seen any elements of the EUProtects campaign before. However, the result suggests that **40%** felt that the clip they saw made them feel more positive about the EU.

ADDITIONAL INSIGHTS INCLUDING FROM SYNTHESIS STUDY DATA

The following section highlights the additional insights with evidence collected through the synthesis study. This data sheds additional light on three key aspects of communication uptake and outcome:

- Engagement
- Improved understanding
- Perception change

These are addressed in further detail below.

⁵⁴ This result comes from the polling conducted as part of this synthesis study, and reflects responses from representatives of the target group (35 – 55), who may or may not have seen the campaign not the 'reached' target group.

⁵⁵ The data used to compile this table comes from the EUProtects proposal and evaluation methodology.

Engagement

The percentage of people willing to share content is one of the key metrics linked to engagement. Based on the information gathered via our focus groups, we observe that:

- most participants with “neutral” feelings towards the EU said they would share the websites of the campaigns with friends and family (while the rest said they would maybe share).
- most participants with “rather negative” feelings towards the EU also said they would share the websites of the campaigns with friends and family (while the rest said they would not).

Most participants said they would share the information discovered or were already sharing as they were participating in the focus groups with friends and family. Feedback related to both sharing via word of mouth and sharing materials by sharing links, for example. Although some participants indicated that they would not share the website links through social media immediately (although some would), some just said they would bring it up in conversations with co-workers, friends, family and, in the case of a few participants, specifically with children (see Annex I).

The polling data provides evidence relating to the participants’ intentions to share the video clips on social media, there is no data to confirm the extent that participants did go on to share and data on the intention to share is not the same as evidence of actual sharing. The table below provides an overview of the responses given:

Table 14: Likelihood of polling respondents sharing the clip on social media

	#InvestEU	EUandME	EUprotects
“very likely”	14%	12%	10%
“fairly likely”	31%	23%	25%
“not very likely”	27%	29%	29%
“not at all likely”	22%	30%	28%
“don’t know”	7%	6%	8%

Source: Synthesis study polling exercise

As seen by the results depicted in the table, participants seemed rather sceptical about sharing the videos they had just seen:

- 45% of participants likely that they would share the #InvestEU clip on social media;
- 35% of participants likely that they would share the EUandME clip on social media;
- 35% of participants likely that they would share the EUProtects clip on social media.

However, these figures should be taken with caution as the question was related to the three clips tested in the polling and sharing on social media specifically.

Improved understanding

We focus here on understanding. This is different from awareness. Awareness means having heard about something, understanding means having grasped the benefits and impacts, so

that a simple question about whether a respondent has a greater understanding does not test actual understanding, but is a first step.

Both the Pilot and the polling for this study tested a change in understanding, although comparisons need to be treated with caution as the methodology and the questions are not identical each time. In the Pilot, the percentage of respondents who felt the campaign improved their understanding of what the EU is doing was between 56% and 58%. **In the polling for this report**, there is no great difference by campaign in the results: **44%** felt that the **#InvestEU clip** had made a little or a lot of **difference to their understanding of the EU**; the corresponding figures for **EUProtects** were **38%**, and for **EUandME** were **40%**.

Table 15: Polling responses on whether the clip changed respondents' understanding of the EU

	#InvestEU	EUandME	EUprotects
"changes my understanding a lot"	13%	9%	9%
"changes my understanding a little"	31%	31%	29%
"makes no difference"	52%	57%	58%
"don't know"	4%	4%	5%

Source: Study team based on the polling exercise

The ex-post polling after the first phase of #InvestEU tested a measure of understanding in relation to a series of statements about the EU helping boost investments, boosting economic growth and creating the conditions for more jobs. These test understanding in greater depth, but the questions were not asked in a way that the answers could be attributed to the campaign.

The plans to test understanding in the ex-post surveying of the second phase of the #InvestEU campaign will make the link with the campaign more explicit⁵⁶. Thus, there will be proxies for understanding in the form of the data on those who agree that the EU (i) can help boost investments, (ii) help boost economic growth and (iii) creates the conditions for more jobs. It will also be possible to see the difference between the figures for those who noticed and those who did not see the campaign.

In the case of EUProtects, one of the aims is "to raise awareness, i.e. to generate a better-informed public opinion of the EU actions in the fields covered by the campaign, including a better understanding of what the EU does to protect its citizens."⁵⁷ However, the plan is for the ex-post survey to measure information and awareness rather than understanding⁵⁸.

Awareness and understanding are not measured specifically in the EUandME surveys (baseline, interim and ex post), although the measurement of the clarity of the messaging is a form of measurement of understanding⁵⁹. The focus of EUandME is on whether the target group feels informed and whether their awareness of areas of EU activity covered by the

⁵⁶ #InvestEU_Continuation_KPIbenchmarks_Final (1).xlsx

⁵⁷ Taken from the contractors Monitoring and Evaluation Methodology.

⁵⁸ The KPIs are: 25-30% of those reached feel better informed about the EU actions showcased in the campaign; 3-5% of those reached report increased awareness about the EU and its agencies.

⁵⁹ Based on the presentations made available to us.

campaign has increased. EUandME is also using better information and awareness as a proxy for “improved understanding of the topic”.⁶⁰

These findings are in line with data collected during the focus groups and the participation to events. Participants of the focus group stated that the websites of the three campaigns had allowed them to learn more about what the EU is doing, such as funding a great number of interesting projects or that it works in many different areas to improve citizens’ lives. Similar observations were made by participants who were interviewed during events.

■ Perception change

The Commission included perception change as a third KPI in the ToR for the EUProtects campaign. Although not a Commission KPI for #InvestEU and EUandME, the contractors set a KPI on perception change in citizens, i.e. to have a change in their feelings towards the EU.

The Pilot and the first phase of #InvestEU, as did the polling for this study, have tested for shifts in opinion in response to one advert (the Pilot), a poster and a social media video (#InvestEU), and a social media video (polling for this study).

There are risks in comparing the data and there can be wide variations across countries, but (very) broadly speaking across these three campaigns, there is commonality in the orders of magnitude in the shift of opinion produced by the campaign material, suggesting that, as in the case of understanding discussed under the previous Judgment Criterion, **this is also an area where a benchmark is beginning to emerge as to what can realistically be expected of such a campaign**. This should only be taken as an order of magnitude as the target group being surveyed was different each time.

In the #InvestEU polling, 32% overall felt more positive about the EU as a result of the ads they were shown (45% in the case of those responded that they had seen them previously, and 31% of those who had not seen them). Based on the EUandME January interim report, the “[c]ampaign triggers the intended positive feelings and emotions whilst avoids negative or controversial thoughts as underpinned by all surveys and qualitative fieldwork”. The feelings most often referred to as triggered were:

- “Informed me”
- “Made me curious what the EU does”
- “Aroused my interest in the EU”
- “Made me feel grateful that I live in the EU”

The positivity of these feelings is in line with discussion by the participants to the focus groups when they were asked to think of three words to describe the EU after viewing the campaigns’ websites. Most of the words that the participants used to define the EU after seeing these websites were rather positive and closely linked to the areas highlighted by the different websites, e.g.:

⁶⁰ The KPIs are: 10 % of those reached feel better informed about the opportunities offered by the EU, 5 % of those reached report increased awareness about key initiatives covered by the campaign.

- “Support”
- “Opportunities”
- “Protection”
- “Innovation”
- “Cooperation”
- “Rights “

Moreover, the results of the focus groups also suggested some improvement of the perception of the EU in the eyes of part of the participants of both ‘neutral’ and ‘rather negative’ groups. In fact, from the focus groups that responded to this question, four of them had all of their participants stating that their opinion had improved to some extent. The participants of both Spanish groups, as well as those from the neutral groups in Germany and Latvia, were happy about the information they had just learnt and noted a positive impact on their opinion.

“I feel a sense of care from the EU which I did not feel before” – BG participant, rather negatives group

“Yes, it has changed a lot because before I thought that the European Union was useless” – ES participant, rather negatives group

On the contrary, participants of the Bulgarian ‘neutral’ and Latvian ‘rather negative’ groups did not feel the websites had changed their opinion about the EU.

In the polling for this synthesis study, 49% agreed that the #InvestEU clip they were shown made them feel more positive about the EU. The corresponding figures for EUProtects were 40%, and for EUandME 47%. As above, in relation to understanding, there is a similarity in orders of magnitude that should be looked at with the proviso that the target groups surveyed were not the same each time.

Table 16: Polling responses on what, if any, difference the clip made to respondents’ feelings about the EU

	#InvestEU	EUandME	EUprotects
“makes me much more positive”	16%	13%	11%
“makes me slightly more positive”	33%	34%	29%
“makes no difference”	47%	47%	52%
“makes me slightly more negative”	1%	3%	2%
“makes me much more negative”	1%	1%	2%
“don’t know”	3%	3%	4%

Source: Study team based on the synthesis polling exercise

A more complete picture will emerge once the three remaining ex-post surveys are available.

- #InvestEU (continuation) will test for a more positive image of the EU among those who have seen at least one element of the campaign.
- EUProtects will measure the share of those people reached who report having a more positive image of the EU.
- EUandME is measuring emotions those exposed to the campaign associate with it as a result, including arousing interest in and curiosity about what the EU does, being

grateful for living in the EU, being reminded of good memories, smiling or laughing as a result of the campaign, feeling proud of living in the EU and being left indifferent by the campaign.⁶¹

Thus, there will be some basis for comparison across three campaigns, subject to the caution that is necessary because the methodologies are not identical. The approach of EUandME is rather different but is logical given that these campaigns are all designed to appeal to emotions. This is required by the Terms of Reference of all three campaigns.

Data available to date suggests that at least two of the campaigns, #InvestEU and EUandME have met and /or are starting to meet and surpass their outtake and outcome targets. There is limited data from contractors on EUProtects to date. Additional data from this synthesis study also confirms that this is the case.

With regards to campaign **recall targets** set for the **#InvestEU campaign (1st phase) and EUandME were surpassed**. On #InvestEU, 31% of reached citizens being able to remember one element of the campaign and results from polling following the first wave of EUandME suggest that at least **one in four** reached citizens could recall specific campaign elements. Rates of recall on EUProtects were not available at the time of drafting.

Recall provides a very limited view of the campaign performance. However, and all of the campaigns included a focus on data collection to confirm additional effects on target audiences, for example, in relation to perception change, raised awareness and / or understanding.

In the #InvestEU polling, contractor targets were surpassed as **32% overall felt more positive** about the EU as a result of the ads they were shown (45% in the case of those responded that they had seen them previously, and 31% of those who had not seen them).

On **EUandMe**, **46%** of the reached target group⁶² felt more informed than before seeing the campaign, this exceeded the target set of 10%, which could suggest that the original target was too low. The fact that a small majority (52%) was made more curious by the campaign is a positive result. Whilst data is not yet available with regards to possible impact on trust, **43%** indicated that the campaign made them feel **proud of being European**.

On EUProtects, the campaign target was for 15% of the reached target group to feel more positive about the EU, contractor data is not yet available to confirm this result, but polling data on views of target group representatives⁶³ suggests that 40% felt more positive about the EU as a result of viewing the clip.

Campaign contractors **did not use the same questions** to gather feedback on the effects of the campaigns from target groups. This reflects to some extent the different intentions behind each campaign. However, more standardization would allow for **comparability**

⁶¹ The VICE campaign within the campaign has also measured the emotional responses of 17-25 year olds.

⁶² In polling following the first campaign wave.

⁶³ In this polling there was no measure of whether target groups had seen the clip or anything similar to the clip before. Meanwhile the target set by campaign contractors related to the 'reached' target group.

across campaigns and also confirm how campaigns are contributing to higher EU goals, ie the ultimate **strategic purpose** of each campaign. In addition, some of the questions posed in the contractor's ex-post survey could not be related directly to the content of the campaign. This was the case for the 1st wave of #InvestEU and was addressed in the questions posed in the 2nd wave ex-post polling.

It is difficult to make cross-campaign comparisons between the polling data that has been collected through the synthesis study and the data that has been collected by contractors, this relates to the different methodologies used. But data collected through the synthesis study allows comparisons across the three campaigns. Key results suggest **some similar target audience responses** across all three campaigns on changed understanding of the EU which ranged between 44% and 38%. Similar results were also found when respondents were asked if they felt **more positive: 49% (#InvestEU), 47% EUandME and EUProtects (40%)**.

EQ1.i: To what extent were the set objectives of the Commission's corporate communication campaigns achieved?

Although the three corporate communication campaigns⁶⁴ are still on-going, it can be concluded that the campaigns have achieved and, in some cases, significantly surpassed many of the objectives that have been set, for example in relation to overall campaign reach and recall but also in relation message acceptance, awareness and understanding. It is encouraging that the campaigns appear to be having a positive effect on target group views on the EU. However, beyond confirming that campaigns are achieving their target results, it is difficult to make value judgements on the results that are being achieved, due to a lack of benchmarks that are currently available for comparison and because the European Commission set broad objectives for each campaign but did not define specific and measurable targets for overall campaign performance.

The fact that campaigns surpassed most of the targets set and in some cases by far, could suggest that targets, on reach in particular are, not accurate. On the other hand, it is understandable that a contractor would not want to 'over promise' to the European Commission, particularly on targets relating to target audience responses to the campaigns for which there are no precedents; although most of these results appear to be more accurate when considered against the target.

Some levels of target audience response appear to be similar, in particular in relation to how specific aspects make people feel about the EU. These results may suggest what can be achieved on these types of campaigns, which do not require target groups to take an action when they see or hear information about the EU, although the EUandME campaign was linked with promotion of the European elections and encouraging young people to vote.

Given the lack of benchmarks, it is difficult to understand the significance of campaign results also in relation to:

⁶⁴ The first phase of #InvestEU is complete and has been evaluated.

- the volume of targets set;
- lack of comparability of some of the targets set and data collected;
- different data becoming available at different times over the year, which means partial insights are reported; which may not always be the most insightful;
- reporting formats and presentation of data.

4.2 What factors are influencing the achievement of the campaigns?

In order to assess which factors have influenced the achievement of the campaigns, we considered the following criteria:

1. Extent that specific internal aspects have had / are having a positive or negative influence, either in terms of the campaign design or in terms of the campaign management;
2. Extent that specific external aspects in the communication environment had / are having a positive or negative influence.

The following sub-sections report on the key findings per identified criterion and provide an answer to the evaluation question.

An important contextual issue for consideration is that as there is a myriad of factors that are likely to have influenced the achievement of the campaigns, this section focusses on a sample of some of the most important factors.

JC 1. Extent that specific internal aspects have had / are having a positive or negative influence, either in terms of campaign design or in terms of campaign management

Sources of evidence:

- ☒ Desk research: contractors' monitoring data reports, final evaluation of the #InvestEU first phase, evaluation of the Pilot campaign, Europe in May 2019: Preparing for a more united, stronger and more democratic Union in an increasingly uncertain world. The EC's contribution to the informal EU27 leaders' meeting in Sibiu on 9 May 2019
- ☒ Interviews with DG COMM Headquarters, line DGs and EC Representation staff, contractors
- ☒ Corporate communication survey
- ☒ Focus groups
- ☒ Polling exercise
- ☒ Events

Two broad categories of internal factors have been identified as potentially impacting the success of the campaigns:

- **their design:** strategic focus, objectives, target groups, materials channels; and
- **their management:** approach to campaign management, resourcing, campaign research and contractor monitoring and reporting⁶⁵.

Hence, the findings in this sub-section are divided in two sections by each factor. The challenge in answering this question relates to the lack of evidence to confirm what the implications of these factors are / what their impact might have been if these factors had been addressed.

CAMPAIGN DESIGN

▣ Strategic focus

The process for defining the strategic intent of each campaign is critical to campaign effectiveness. There is mixed internal feedback on this point. Interviews with both DG COMM Headquarters and line DG officials suggests that the **messages** from the Commission are still too **top-down**⁶⁶ and that the general public does not necessarily relate to them, limiting their efficacy in convincing citizens about the benefits of the EU. By contrast, findings from the corporate communication survey show that a vast majority of EDICs and EC Representation staff consider the issues covered by the campaigns to be of **interest to citizens**.⁶⁷ It can be argued that both views hold true.

The issue seems to relate to the process of deciding focal topics. The selected campaign themes relate to Juncker's 10 priorities, which, as described in the European Commission's contribution to the informal EU27 leaders' meeting in Sibiu (Romania) on 9 May 2019⁶⁸, were defined drawing on public opinion data. The specific topics of the three campaigns were then selected based on target audiences ranking pre-defined lists of key concerns derived from these data. This means that, according to public opinion data, citizens generally consider that the **campaign topics are relevant** to them. Yet, the top down process makes it difficult to ensure that the selected issues strongly reflect what concerns individuals in their own daily lives, and the campaign sends relevant messages about "what is in it for them". This is a finding that emerged in the focus groups, where several participants noted that the topics presented on the #InvestEU and EUProtects websites, in particular, were important to them

⁶⁵ This is seen as an internally the pilot (2015) and the #InvestEU phase 1 campaign (2018) were complete. The continuation of #InvestEU, as well as the EUandME and EUProtects campaigns are still on-going.

⁶⁶ i.e. the Commission defines the messages based on their priorities and not what people are interested in.

⁶⁷ 100% of Representation staff and 89% EDIC staff who responded to the survey "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with this statement.

⁶⁸ European Commission, "Europe in May 2019 Preparing for a more united, stronger and more democratic Union in an increasingly uncertain world" - https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/euco_sibiu_communication_en.pdf

in general, but noted that the information was not necessarily interesting and/or useful for them personally.⁶⁹

📌 Campaign scope

A further aspect of strategic focus relates to decisions concerning the number of Member States and the number of campaigns, and the implications of stretching the budget to cover different Member States, topics, different target groups and a high number of different materials in different languages. In interviews with DG COMM Headquarters and line DGs' staff, it was suggested that, to ensure that they are effective, campaign messages should be more closely adapted to the realities of each Member State, their citizens' interests and current concerns. This is a significant challenge to campaign budgets, particularly as this relates to different target groups, materials and messages and languages, which may have fragmented efforts.

📌 Target groups

Corporate campaign target groups

- **Pilot:** People for whom the EU conjures up a neutral image, also referred to as 'neutrals' (about 40% of the EU population).
- **#InvestEU:** Europeans who are neutral about the EU and economic prospects, further defined as: 'Positives' and 'Ambivalents'.⁷⁰ The continuation of this campaign focussed on neutrals.⁷¹
- **EUandME:** EU citizens in the 17 to 35-year-old age group, who were later segmented into 17-24-year olds, who are understood to take many of the achievements of the EU for granted and grew up in a more critical era of the EU's history. 25 to 35-year olds who are depicted as growing up in the EU's 'glory days', who have mostly completed their education, are among the working population, and are often married with small children.
- **EUProtects:** 35-55-year olds who are ambivalent about the EU, those who live in rural areas and those with a lower level of education.

Responses to the corporate communication survey confirm high levels of internal agreement that choices relating to target groups have a significant impact on campaign effectiveness⁷². This is because the choice of target groups selected for the corporate campaigns has had a direct influence on key decisions in the design of each campaign with materials, channels and tools tailored to these groups.

As highlighted, the corporate campaigns have either focussed on attitudes to the EU, age ranges and / or both. The target groups are very large and not sufficiently specific to allow **detailed targeting of messages and materials**, which are truly impactful. There is significant

⁶⁹ About the EUandME website, participants generally agreed that the information provided was both interesting and useful to them personally.

⁷⁰ Final #InvestEU first phase evaluation report.

⁷¹ However, it is tailored to each country-specific context. In the case of some countries the description is more generic and for some it is more specific, e.g. in the case of Cyprus it was general public with a focus on youth (18-35), entrepreneurs, job seekers, parents, and teachers.

⁷² The majority of respondents to the survey "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that specific targets set during campaign contribute to the effectiveness of the campaigns. Concretely, 67% of respondents from the Representations, 73.7% of respondents from line DGs, and 90.9% of respondents from DG COMM "agreed" or "strongly agreed".

variation in the range of other factors that influence what people in these two groups care about in their daily lives, which implies a need for more **specific segments** to be defined so that campaigns ‘push the right buttons’ with individuals in the groups.

This finding is backed up by feedback from interviews with DG COMM Headquarters and line DGs’ staff, who found that the messages were not necessarily the best chosen to reach and impact the audience as they are not sufficiently relevant to the current “hot topics” reported in newspapers, such as Brexit, which interviewees found could be used to emphasise the value and benefits of the single market.

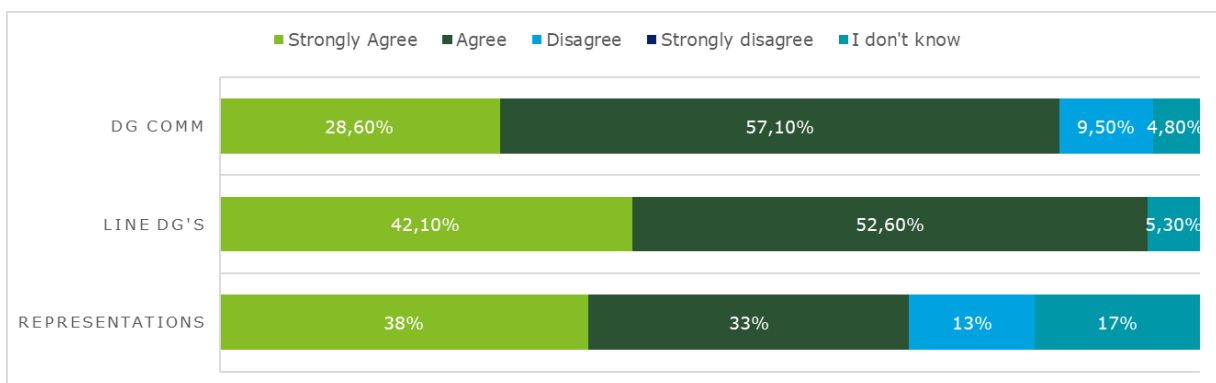
Interviewees from line DGs suggested that the target audience of #InvestEU was too broad to address effectively (both those who are directly or indirectly impacted by specific investment projects, as well as Europeans neutral or ambivalent about the EU). This was also suggested by several focus group participants who found that the target of the #InvestEU campaign was rather entrepreneurs or small businesses directly impacted by investment projects.

Some staff in line DGs also suggested that the target audience of EUandME was too wide (17-35) and was likely to include two distinct segments – those who are likely to be still studying and those who are likely to be working. This was accounted for in the contractors’ campaign research, which led to further segmentation of the group into 17-24 and 25-35-year-olds, however, interviewees still noted that young people are not necessarily those that need to be convinced about EU opportunities and values, as scepticism develops with age and, thus, older people would make more sense as a target group. Whilst the polling suggests that views towards the EU do not vary substantially within the age range 18 – 35, the issue remains that this is a large target group.

■ Campaign materials

In the corporate communication survey, most staff from DG COMM Headquarters, line DGs and Representations considered materials and, in particular, the visual attractiveness of these materials as having an impact on the effectiveness of campaign (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Extent to which communicators agree that visual attractiveness of campaign's materials contributed to the campaigns' effectiveness, by percentage



Source: Corporate communication survey

Inputs from focus groups confirm that visual attractiveness has a positive impact and show that progress has been achieved since the Pilot campaign, when many found the adverts too

abstract. Participants generally found that the campaign materials were of a **high quality** and the majority view across focus groups was that seeing the three websites had a **positive effect** on participants' **opinion about the EU**. This was irrespective of whether participants' original feelings towards the EU were "**neutral**" or "**rather negative**". Changes in opinion were explained as a result of **learning new information** and realising the direct impact of the EU on different areas of citizens' lives:

***"My opinion about the European Union has changed a lot. My opinion of the EU has changed for the better, after seeing all the functions that it develops around me and that a large part is unaware of"** – ES participant, neutrals group*

***"I feel a sense of care from the EU which I did not feel before"** – BG participant, rather negative group*

Only in two focus groups (Bulgarian "neutrals" and Latvian "rather negatives"), participants stated unanimously that the campaign websites had not changed their opinion about the EU, yet many participants in these groups admitted that they found a lot of the information positively surprising. Reasons for sticking with their earlier opinion about the EU, in the rare cases where they were provided, centred on participants being "naturally" firm in their convictions.

This does not mean that there is no scope for improvement of the campaign materials, as even when focus group participants appreciated the websites, they suggested that they needed to be **modernised in terms of design**.

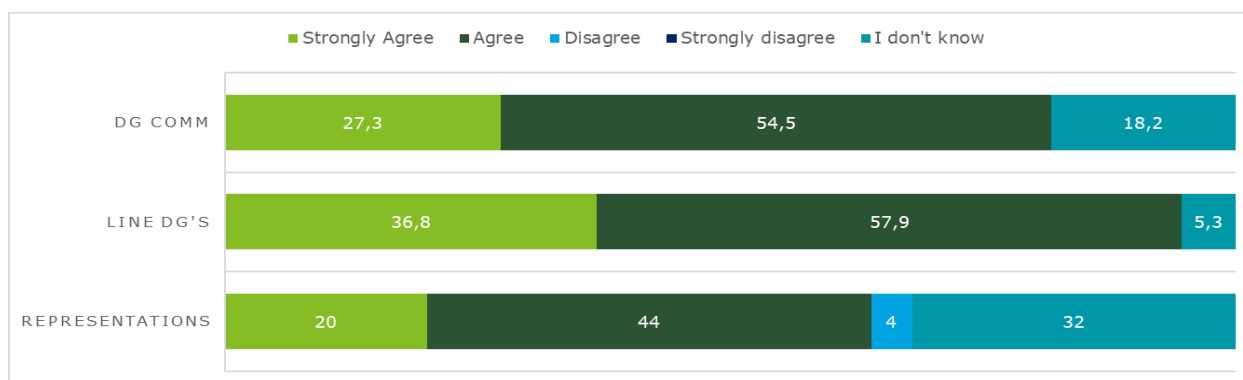
As noted in section 4.1, polling conducted for this synthesis study shows similar results across all three campaigns on changed understanding of the EU which ranged between 44% and 38%. Similar results were also found when respondents were asked if they felt more positive: 49% (#InvestEU), 47% (EUandME) and 40% (EUProtects).

Also, with regards to the EUandME short-films, viewers at EU Youth Week and the Dingle Film Festival commented that the **films were powerful tools to target young people** and commented positively on their format and style. However, several considered them **unrealistic** or found them "**confusing**" as they were unclear whether these were indeed movies, or advertisements of the EU.

▣ **Channels:**

In the corporate communication survey, most respondents from DG COMM Headquarters, other DGs and Representations also identified channels and tools as important for the effectiveness of campaigns (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Extent to which communicators agree that the use of target groups' preferred channels and tools, contributed to the effectiveness of the campaigns, by percentage



Source: Corporate communication survey

In the absence of available evaluations of each campaign, several observations can be made.

- Events did not seem to have significant impact. Attendees did not seem to be people outside the usual networks or those otherwise involved in the initiatives in some way, or who knew the organisers. The EUandME film screenings all attracted young people, and the Student Business Incubator in Riga engaged students; however, the attendees interviewed did not identify themselves as being indifferent towards the EU. None of the interviewed attendees at any of the events confirmed changed perceptions of the EU. They tended to be positive about the EU prior to the event and that view did not change after the event. Nevertheless, attendees **appreciated the EU's presence at these events and acknowledged having learnt something new**. For instance, at the #InvestEU events, attendees reported increased knowledge about EU investments in their countries.
- Use of social media: feedback from Commission officials highlighted some concerns on the use of **social media** to communicate on certain campaigns. Some interviewees suggested that social media may not always be the most appropriate channel to target specific audiences (such as older segments) or to promote some types of materials which are not suitable for this type of channel (e.g. because of format or length).
- Use of other channels to extend reach and engagement such as **TV and news media**. These channels were frequently referred to by both Commission officials interviewed and contractors as being useful to target a wider range of audiences, but **not sufficiently used**. This was attributed to the **high costs linked to such channels**, especially when it comes to TV in some countries. They all agreed that allocating more budget to access these channels in all countries would considerably benefit the effectiveness of the campaigns.

CAMPAIGN MANAGEMENT

The main aspects of campaign management that appeared to impact the effectiveness of the corporate communication campaigns, were the:

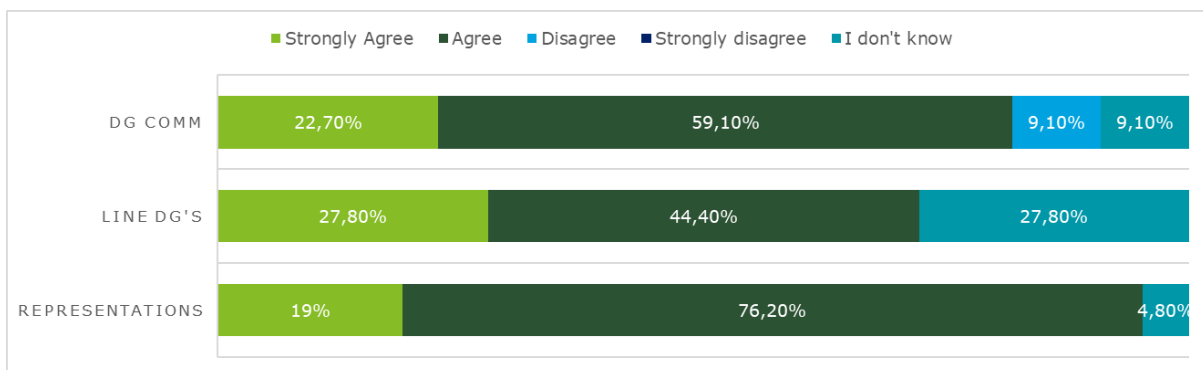
- Approach to corporate campaign management,
- Resourcing,
- Campaign research
- Contractor monitoring and reporting.

These are discussed in more detail below.

➤ Approach to corporate campaign management

According to interviewees and as highlighted in the corporate communication survey, collaboration on the campaigns across the Commission and with the Representations and EDICs has been a positive factor. This relates not only to the structures that are available to support the corporate approach, but also the level of buy-in to this approach. Level of buy-in is highlighted in the corporate communication survey as one of the factors which had a positive impact on the effectiveness of the campaigns. Most respondents from DG COMM Headquarters, other DGs and Representations “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that buy-in and support across the Commission contributed to the effectiveness of the campaigns.

Figure 5: Extent to which buy-in across the Commission contributed to campaign effectiveness according to corporate communication survey respondents



Source: Corporate communication survey

This evidence was also supported in the interviews with DG COMM Headquarters and line DGs. Representatives from DG COMM Headquarters considered the **line DGs’ involvement** in the corporate campaigns to be positive and fruitful, and found that there was general cross-fertilisation in terms of line DGs complementing and promoting the corporate campaigns with their specific communication activities. Line DGs’ commitment to the corporate approach is suggested by their communication plans.⁷³ Meanwhile interviewees from line DGs reported that the corporate approach allowed sufficient space to include their different policy areas. DG COMM Headquarters central management of the corporate processes was valued by line DG interviewees as a way to avoid fragmentation and ensure adherence to the campaigns’ objectives.

⁷³ see section 4.3

Interviewees from Representations also spoke highly of DG COMM Headquarters' strategic function in managing the campaigns and noted that DG COMM Headquarters was **responsive and flexible** in addressing unforeseen issues. One example provided was DG COMM Headquarters agreeing to stop a campaign, which had received very negative comments in one Member State and giving the Representation an opportunity to re-allocate funding to other communication activities.

Nevertheless, Commission officials admitted that there was still scope for improvements. For example, decision-making **timing and processes**, as well as **feedback loops**, were found by half of the respondents to the corporate communication survey to impact the effectiveness of the campaigns⁷⁴. Officials from DG COMM Headquarters interviewed also noted that sometimes requests and deadlines set by DG COMM Headquarters were "unreasonable" even if this view was not voiced in interviews with line DG officials. Yet EC Representation staff also had mixed perceptions of the extent to which they received sufficient notice of corporate campaign activities in their Member State. Some stated that DG COMM Headquarters' deadlines were appropriate and allowed sufficient time to provide feedback on materials, while others reported the opposite to be the case⁷⁵.

▣ Resourcing

Interviewees from DG COMM Headquarters highlighted that there have been resource implications for DG COMM Headquarters in relation to the role out of the corporate approach. It was suggested that running three campaigns almost simultaneously has created a **high workload** and put a significant strain on available human resources. This was suggested to have had implications on DG COMM Headquarters' coordination with line DGs on their individual campaigns in terms of content and timings, leading to overlaps and missed opportunities for reinforcing messaging and cross-branding.

Resourcing issues were also felt in the Representations as confirmed by interviewees from DG COMM Headquarters, line DGs and the Representations. The **Representations** have often lacked the **resources and staff** to deal with requests related to the corporate campaigns in a timely manner. It was suggested that it would be helpful to have one person in each Representation dedicated exclusively to the corporate campaigns. The finding from this evaluation is that this should be a person with strategic communication skills, rather than the P.R. and press skills which are currently the priority. It was also noted that there is scope to improve planning and organisation when allocating specific tasks to the Representations to ensure that they have enough time and resources to deliver. There are also issues with variable levels of buy-in to the corporate approach on the part of the Representations. This is discussed in Section 4.11 in particular.

⁷⁴ Almost two thirds of respondents to the survey from DG COMM, line DGs and Representations "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that these aspects were important, and around one quarter admitted they did not know if these aspects had an impact.

⁷⁵ One interviewee stated that they were not informed about the start of the first wave of the EUProtects campaign in their Member State, pointing towards a lack of collaboration in this particular instance.

▣ Campaign research

The use of **research**, such as baseline surveys/focus groups to test messages and materials, and on-going surveys / focus groups to get user feedback and adjust campaigns were also considered as contributing to the campaigns' effectiveness. On average, almost two thirds of the respondents to the corporate communication survey "agreed" or "strongly agreed" on this point, while one third reported that they did not know.

This was an improvement on the Pilot corporate campaign, as the evaluation highlighted insufficient qualitative research prior to the campaign; i.e. pre-testing related to finalised campaign concepts. Meanwhile, #InvestEU drew on both quantitative and qualitative data: a Eurobarometer study to support mapping of profiles and countries (differentiated by levels of trust in the role of the EU) to inform the selection of channels and tools, and a focus group in which creative materials were tested and adjusted. Both the EUandME and EUProtects campaigns also used baseline studies and focus groups to tailor their channels, tools and campaign materials.⁷⁶

Indeed, in interviews, DG COMM Headquarters, line DG officials and contractors emphasised that resources had been specifically dedicated to campaign research to ensure close tailoring of communication activities to specific audiences.

▣ Contractor monitoring and reporting

Despite the positive perceptions on the use of campaign research, current practices for monitoring and reporting have not allowed for a proper understanding of the progress and achievements towards targets. The **sheer volume and diversity of metrics**, as well as the reporting formats make it difficult to have a clear overview of the different campaigns and their progress.

Contractors have frequently provided campaign reports in PowerPoint presentation format, which hinder comparability and tracking progress of campaigns, particularly when different metrics are highlighted in different presentations and different terminology is used to describe different metrics by different contractors. In addition, it is difficult to identify the decision making process from these PowerPoint presentations, which further exacerbates the challenge of reviewing ex-post why specific decisions have been made. As well as reducing opportunities for comparability, the current approach limits the Commission's ability to have an overview of which aspects are working best and least, which might support the need for changes in emphasis in the roll out of specific channels and tools

The challenges of reporting and data management were also emphasised during the interviews with DG COMM Headquarters and line DGs' staff. Monitoring and reporting data

⁷⁶ These processes are described in more detail in section 4.7

were found to be “**too quantitative**” and interviewees noted **insufficient guidance** on how to use the data to make improvements.

Key findings on internal factors that have influenced positively and negatively the effectiveness of the corporate campaigns can be grouped in terms of those relating to campaign design and those that relate to campaign management.

Best practice on campaign design confirm the need to make meeting **target group needs** central to decisions which shape objectives, target groups, channels and tools. And the evidence confirms that the strategic focus of all three campaigns had a basis in target group research on areas of most concern. However, the use of quantitative research methods to define these priorities implied a risk that the focal areas would not reflect target groups’ **actual worries** and concerns, in-line with the ‘What’s in it for me principle’ and instead reflect their areas of greatest concern from a pre-defined list. Staff also expressed concerns that messaging is too top-down.

In consequence, target groups may find campaign content to be interesting, informative and potentially useful, but may not necessarily be relevant to them personally. Some materials, particularly some short films, while interesting, have left target groups wondering as to their intended purpose. Despite these elements, the information being communicated has the potential to make people more aware of what the EU does and the benefits it brings, and this information can have a positive impact on how people feel about the EU, even those who declare that they feel fairly negative about the EU.

Evidence from target groups and staff in line DGs, Representations and EDICs confirms that campaign materials are high quality and of a professional standard. Representations could not achieve the same standards without the corporate communication approach.

But it can be observed that the target groups, which have been defined are not clearly distinguishable as target groups. They are not specific segments who share a number of clearly discernible characteristics; they have been very broadly defined with a focus on demographics and attitudes towards the EU. Whilst contractors have adapted channel usage to these target groups, it is unclear how materials and content are specifically tailored, for example to people who are ambivalent. The approach to targeting limits opportunities to create resonance.

Whilst it is difficult to track the implications of campaign scope, it can be observed that running three different corporate communication campaigns in different countries with different target groups, different materials and messages, in different languages is much more complex than running one campaign. This has had significant implications for human resources, which have been severely stretched both in DG COMM Headquarters and in the Representations. Whilst there is positive feedback on the level of support that has been provided by DG COMM Headquarters there is also some criticism. It has been difficult to keep up with planning and decision-making.

There are also implications for budget of running three different campaigns even if pooling resources has had governance implications. In addition to the additional funds available, these included supporting the engagement and buy-in of line DGs to the process and confirming DG COMM Headquarters as the domain leaders, which has empowered DG COMM Headquarters to retain decision-making and provide the leadership required to harness the inputs of so many different internal stakeholders and at the same time manage contractors. However, the total available budget over the timeframe has been fragmented and focussed on the achievement of different goals with different people in different countries.

The **choice of channels** and media mix have implications for budget. Rational choices have been made drawing on media consumption data and research. Events have not proven to be particularly effective, at least in the way that they have been rolled out under the corporate campaigns. On the other hand, focus group testing has highlighted the high added value of the campaign websites. Polling on a sample of video clips suggested that most people in the range of 70% **did not recognise the EU** as the author of the clips and given the amount of information that is available online, this is a concern. However, discussions in focus groups confirm that with more time citizens really see the added value of the EU and what it has to offer and as already highlighted, this has a positive influence.

This highlights the challenge of **capturing target groups attention** for sufficient time to allow the materials to generate their intended effects. This is alluded in feedback on EUProtects. The EUProtects target group expects to see materials on TV and in news media. Overall, there are questions as to whether the focus on social media has been the right choice. But as contractors have not linked the collection of data on outcomes (increased trust, awareness, views on the EU) to specific channels, understanding of channel effectiveness over and above looking at reach is limited.⁷⁷

The increased focus on research is important and there is much greater focus on understanding the outcomes of the campaigns than in the past. But, as already highlighted in section 4.1, it is difficult to gain a good understanding of campaign effectiveness from the data and formats provided by contractors. This makes it even harder for DG COMM Headquarters to manage the corporate campaigns.

JC 2. There is evidence to confirm that specific external aspects in the communication environment had / are having a positive or negative influence

Sources of evidence:

- Interviews with Representations, line DGs and DG COMM Headquarters
- Desk research

⁷⁷ This is addressed by asking target groups, which channel or tool target they recall viewing a particular clip and then triangulating with responses to other questions on level of understanding / opinions. This approach was followed in Ipsos polling on the Pilot campaign

- Survey with Communication network
- Focus groups
- Event attendance

In addition to internal aspects related to campaign design and management, a range of external factors were identified as having an impact on the effectiveness of the campaigns:

1. National political and economic context: elections and political processes in the Member States;
2. The communication environment: breaking news, protracted hot news topics and controversial issues in Member States;
3. Collaboration with Member States: quality of collaboration and engagement.

▣ National political and economic context

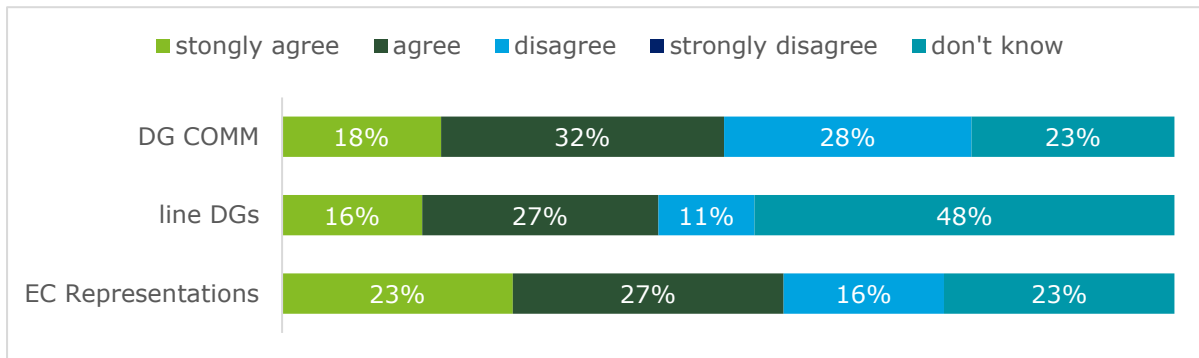
The final evaluation of the #InvestEU campaign found that there were two types of factors influencing the campaigns: “factors related to the national political context such as elections”, and “factors related to the developments of the economic situation”.

In interviews with staff from DG COMM Headquarters and line DGs, interviewees acknowledged that the political environment and context in the Member States can greatly affect the success of the campaigns, as well as their development⁷⁸. The corporate campaigns were designed with the aim to be relevant in all Member States, offering a wide range of content from which the Representations could choose. However, interviewees mentioned that political situations in some Member States had created discussion about the appropriateness of some messages or the timings of the campaigns. According to interviewees from DG COMM Headquarters, the main issue in this regard is finding a balance between **being daring to communicate EU values and avoiding counterproductive reactions in some Member States**. The relationship between DG COMM Headquarters and the Representations was found to be crucial in these situations.

In the corporate communication survey, respondents from DG COMM Headquarters, line DGs and Representations were **split as regards the influence of elections and political processes in the Member States on the campaigns’ effectiveness** (see Figure 6), and a substantial proportion of respondents in each group reported that they “did not know”. Half of the respondents from Representations “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the **EU presidency** had an influence on the campaigns’ effectiveness, however, most respondents from DG COMM Headquarters disagreed with this statement and most respondents from line DGs indicated that they “did not know” (see Figure 7).

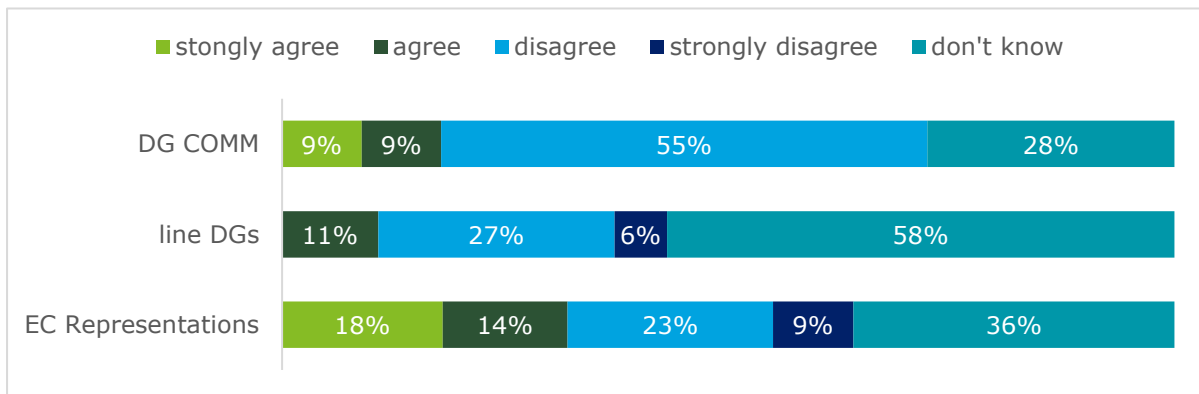
⁷⁸ DG COMM interviewees mentioned Brexit as an unexpected external factor which is actually serving the corporate approach’s purposes, by showing difficulties of being outside the EU.

Figure 6: Extent to which respondents to the corporate communication survey agreed or disagreed that elections and political processes influence campaign effectiveness



Source: Corporate communication survey

Figure 7: Extent to which respondents to the corporate communication survey agreed or disagreed that the EU presidency had an influence on the campaigns' effectiveness



Source: Corporate communication survey

However, officials from DG COMM Headquarters and line DGs mentioned that there was scope to make the campaigns more flexible to adapt to economic, social and political issues as they emerge. This was linked to collaborating closer with the Representations on campaigns' content and allowing for adjustments to be made, as Representations were found to know what their national audience is interested in and the negative responses certain messages can elicit in the population at a given moment.

➤ Communication environment

The communication environment which a campaign navigates also plays a role in its success. This is a finding in the final evaluation of the #InvestEU campaign, which found that "major news items (e.g. on corruption scandals related to EU funds)" are an important external factor that can influence the campaign.

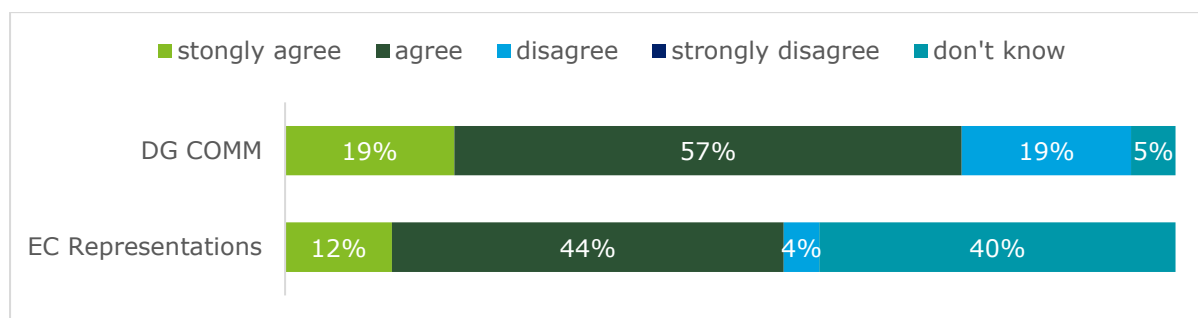
Reports of the EUProtects campaign also note examples of navigating the communication environment in Member States to either increase reach or avoid running of certain campaign

messages to avoid bad reception. For instance, the wave 3 consolidated report of EUProtects refers to synergies that were created between the campaign and EU actions / real-life events (i.e. Rare Disease Day, 2004 Madrid Attacks commemoration) which were found to have led to increased engagement rates to the campaign hub pages.

In interviews with DG COMM Headquarters and the contractors, the example of the EUProtects forest fire campaign was mentioned, the launch of which was supposed to occur in the summer due to heightened relevance of that topic, but was postponed as at the time of the launch in summer 2018, forest fires killed more than 100 people in Greece. Running this story at that time was considered to have potentially led to backlash in the population.

In the corporate communication survey, most respondents from DG COMM Headquarters and Representations “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that responsiveness to real-time issues contributed to the effectiveness of the campaigns, although a substantial proportion of Representations noted that they “did not know” (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: Extent to which respondents to the corporate communication survey agreed or disagreed that responsiveness to real-time issues has an impact on campaigns’ effectiveness



Source: Corporate communication survey

▣ Collaboration with Member States

Finally, and very closely related to the above two factors, collaboration with the Member State governments and the Representations has the potential of improving the effectiveness of campaigns. Both have privileged insights on key issues relevant in their Member States, so they are well-placed to contribute to reviews of campaign materials to ensure they are effective at national level.

As mentioned in the previous judgement criterion, Representations’ views are already being considered by DG COMM Headquarters for the campaigns. The involvement of the Representations was aided by ensuring that feedback loops on key matters related to the effectiveness are in place to facilitate quick reactions when needed. Nevertheless, interviewees from line DGs and the Representations themselves found that more collaboration with the Representations was required at the start of every campaign to feed into messages qualitatively, as they were crucial for contextualisation at the local level.

Moreover, interviews with national government communicators suggest that collaboration between DG COMM Headquarters, the Representations and national communicators could also be improved. For instance, most representatives from the sample of Member States interviewed admitted that they were not aware of all three corporate campaigns (EUandME, EUProtects, #InvestEU). All government communication representatives had come across at least one of the three campaigns, but only one out of six representatives knew about all three of them. This finding suggests a possible gap in information flows between Member State government communicators and the European Commission. It also points towards a potential missed opportunity to work with Member State governments to use their national, regional and local networks to extend the reach and penetration of each campaign at national level.

The synthesis study has identified fewer key findings on the external factors that have influenced the effectiveness of the corporate campaigns, but this also relates to the fact that some of the elements discussed under the earlier judgement criterion could also be defined as being driven by 'external forces': media consumption habits is an example as is the existing communication climate in relation to views on and knowledge of the EU.

Nonetheless the external factors which appear to have had or could have had some impact relate to: the national political and economic context, the communication environment and the collaboration with the Member States. Although the European Parliament elections took place during the timeframe of the campaigns, feedback from staff is not conclusive as to whether or not this has had an impact on target group reception of the campaigns. The same is true of the EU Presidency. Working with influencers and national personalities is reported to have had a positive impact on engaging young people.

Over the timeframe of the campaigns, different issues have arisen in national news within the Member States. Efforts have been made to adapt the roll out of the campaigns to take account of these local issues, particularly where they might result in a backlash, for example in relation to LGBTQ in Poland and forest fires in Greece. It has not been possible to track all the decisions that have been taken on these types of adaptations if they were not made apparent in interviews with contractors and Representations, for example. However, the two examples cited highlight the flexibility to pull back certain aspects of the campaign. The converse is also true; i.e. where flexibility has supported a more proactive approach. Some synergies were made between the EUandME campaign and the call to get young people to vote in the European Parliament elections. Generally, though, the campaigns have kept their thematic focus and these particular examples stand out as being exceptions rather than the norm, and there is a need for greater localisation.

Feedback from Member State communication representatives on both the corporate campaigns and the corporate approach suggests a low level of awareness of what the Commission has been trying to do. Given that national and regional authorities themselves also communicate a vast amount of information on the EU, the lack of active participation / awareness is striking and represents a missed opportunity given their access to existing

networks within each country, which could influence both the effectiveness and efficiency of the campaigns.

EQ1.ii: What factors influenced the achievements of the campaigns?

A range of different internal and external factors have had an influence on the effectiveness of the three corporate campaigns. It is not possible to determine the extent of this influence, but the key findings are supported through a range of qualitative and quantitative sources.

Extensive baseline research has been conducted by the contractors selected to implement the campaigns. But the research conducted prior to defining campaign ToRs has not allowed sufficient understanding of what the most pressing needs / desires and interests really are for citizens. In consequence, there has been a **lack in effective target group segmentation**, which has had consequences on all other decisions relating to the **tailoring** of campaign design and implementation. Both the amount and type of research undertaken before drafting the campaign Terms of Reference are called into question.

EU citizens are aware of the EU but do not fully understand what the EU does and its impact. All three corporate campaigns reconfirm this underlying premise that was also central to the Pilot corporate campaign. When citizens find this out, they are **impressed and interested**, and this can influence their view of the EU in a **positive way**. This may also be the case for people who tend to feel rather negative about the EU. The **production quality** of the materials has supported their credibility and validation for Commission staff and target groups alike, but our research suggests possible issues with target group recognition of the EU in the video clip testing.

Like all communication campaigns, the key challenge is still how to get **enough peoples' attention for long enough** to make an impact. Digital channels may offer extensive potential reach with millions of contacts and impressions recorded. But the high numbers do not necessarily convert into impacts on target groups. Small events are not impactful and can be considered to drain precious human resources. Campaign websites have good potential but driving people to the sites and keeping them there long enough to reap some benefit is a challenge.

Tailoring is the key word and this needs to happen at the national level. The potential gain of real-time responsiveness to the national hot topics that grab the public attention is not part of the campaign concept to date. Member States administrations and their networks are also absent from the concept.

Also related to segmentation and focus, it appears that the Commission has tried to reach 'everybody about everything' by running **three different campaigns** targeting different sectors of the population, in different countries, on different issues with a vast range of

materials and different contractors. What has been achieved in this timeframe is to be applauded taking into account the limited manpower and modest budgets, when compared to some other national government campaigns. A **more focussed** approach would have been easier to manage and could have allowed more time to sort out some of the fundamentals of the approach, including what exactly the Commission wants to **achieve** with the campaigns, which appears to have evolved over time rather than being clear at the outset, and could have given the Commission a much stronger hand in decisions on campaign implementation together with the contractors. This is a highly specialist area which probably needs external support / mentoring to get right.

The need for a synthesis exercise confirms the **complexity** of the challenge which the Commission set itself and has found difficult to have a clear and detailed understanding of campaign performance. Questions have been raised within the synthesis team and discussed with external experts on the **operational benefits** to DG COMM Headquarters of the **volume** of metrics provided by contractors and the need for more focussed management information. There is also need for additional support for DG COMM Headquarters and the Representations as they engage in managing these highly complex communication campaigns.

4.3 What is the additional value resulting from corporate communication activities, compared to what was achieved by individual DGs' communication?

To assess additional value of the corporate approach in contrast to what was achieved by individual line DGs, we considered the extent to which the corporate campaigns:

1. increased the focus on communicating about the EU as a whole, and enhanced raising awareness and improving public opinion of the EU;
2. increased the reach of campaigns run by line DGs;
3. allowed DGs to access new / additional communication channels, tools and approaches by pooling resources and creating synergies.

By "EU as whole", we understand, public awareness of the role, values, aims, priorities and work of the EU, i.e. a broad understanding on the part of individual citizens of the breadth of areas in which the EU plays a role in their life and of what the EU stands for in terms of values⁷⁹.

⁷⁹ This latter issue is dealt with in section 4.4

JC 1. Extent that past line DG campaigns have increased awareness of the EU as a whole, and enhanced awareness raising and improved public opinion of the EU

Sources of evidence:

- Desk research: evaluation reports and monitoring data of line DGs communication campaigns⁸⁰, EC Communication, Corporate communication action in 2017-2018 under the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020
- Interviews with DG COMM Headquarters and line DGs staff
- Corporate communication survey

The corporate approach aims to: “raise public awareness about the EU as a whole, its role, values, political priorities and its work in implementing annual and multi-annual programmes”⁸¹. With this intent, EU corporate communication has focused on showing the achievements of the EU institutions and the opportunities offered by them in a range of policy areas. In practice, this has been carried out by means of:

- the corporate campaigns, which communicate about specific topics and issues in a wide range of policy areas under the umbrella of common, cross-sectoral messages about the EU; and
- the action of line DGs, which are encouraged to convey EU messages through their activities in addition to their own communication to stakeholders⁸².

However, a review of a sample of evaluation reports available from six line DGs’ communication activities suggests that line DGs have nevertheless tended to focus on increasing awareness of their own policies or programmes (derived from the political priorities) rather than on the “EU as a whole”, so **any impact on perceptions of the EU as a whole will be an unintended side-effect**. The extent to which it is possible to assess this is limited by the number of evaluations available on which to base a judgment, with several of those made available to consider as part of this study antedating the corporate approach.

⁸⁰ The analysis is mainly based on the evaluation and monitoring data of the following line DGs’ communication activities:

- DG AGRI: Information policy on the CAP (2006 -2013);
- DG DEVCO: European Year for Development 2015 (EYD2015);
- DG EMPL: Communication actions on the European Pillar of Social Rights;
- DG EMPL: European Vocational Skills Week 2018;
- DG JUST: 2014-15 Consumer Rights Awareness Campaign;
- DG JUST: Raising consumers’ awareness when they take out credit;
- DG NEAR: Information and communication activities towards the EU Member States in the area of EU Enlargement;
- DG SANTE: Knowing your rights with regard to consumer credit;
- DG SANTE: Ex-smokers are unstoppable.

The SANTE and DG JUST consumer credit campaigns are two campaigns on the same policy, but in different countries at different times, with Consumer Affairs having moved from SANTE to DG JUST in the meantime.

⁸¹ European Commission Communication, *Corporate communication action in 2017-2018 under the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020* C(2016) 6838 final, 25 October 2016. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/3/2016/EN/C-2016-6838-F1-EN-MAIN-PART-1.PDF>.

⁸² This aspect is further investigated under the next question and in the coherence section.

Interviews with staff of DG COMM Headquarters and line DGs confirmed the tendency of the line DGs' campaigns to deliver messages strictly related to their policy area, whereas the corporate campaigns' messages are wide enough to allow for the integration of different policy areas. However, despite the confirmation of the focus of line DG campaigns, the assessment of the extent that the corporate approach has added value to communication of the EU, as a whole, is hampered due to a lack of evidence relating to the outcomes of these thematic communication campaigns on target groups.

Whilst evaluation reports from line DGs' campaigns confirm message acceptance and, in some cases, recall of key campaign messages, **line DGs' research focussed on whether themes had been communicated rather than the extent that communication on these themes also generated positive general outcomes in relation to perceptions and awareness of the EU as a whole.** This contrasts with the much more significant activities undertaken in the corporate campaigns to measure target audience perceptions, via focus groups and polling.

That the line DGs' communication nevertheless produces an enhanced perception of the EU as a whole as a side-effect was suggested by responses to the corporate communication survey. Of the Representations who participated in the survey, 4% agreed strongly and 42% agreed that line DGs' campaigns had increased awareness of the EU as a whole and improved public opinion of the EU, and only 16% disagreeing to a greater or lesser extent.⁸³ This suggests that, at least in theory, some previous communication on specific programmes has allowed the Commission to draw citizens' attention to the benefits of EU and to what the EU is doing in practice for its citizens, since line DGs' communication activities on their policies have not solely targeted sector-specific stakeholders, but also the general public (or at least segments of it based on demographics)⁸⁴. In such cases, the objectives of the line DGs are in line with the intent of raising awareness and understanding of the EU and enhancing the image of the EU by drawing attention at least indirectly to the fact that the line policies illustrate the benefits of the EU.

Examples of objectives of line DGs' communication activities contributing to the outcome of the corporate approach are:

- DG AGRI, Evaluation of the information policy on the CAP (2006-2013): "to enhance the credibility and improve the image of the CAP and its objectives by demonstrating its added value and its benefits at European level"⁸⁵.
- DG DEVCO, Evaluation of DG DEVCO's European Year for Development 2015 (EYD2015): "to raise awareness of the benefits of the Union's development cooperation not only among beneficiaries but also among Union citizens"⁸⁶.
- DG JUST, Evaluation of the 2014-15 Consumer Rights Awareness Campaign: "to raise awareness of EU-wide consumer rights". The main campaign message was "the EU empowers consumers"⁸⁷.

⁸³ The results of the survey are: 4% strongly agree, 42% agree, 12% disagree, 4% strongly disagree, 39% do not know.

⁸⁴ Please see the next section.

⁸⁵ DG AGRI, Evaluation of the information policy on the CAP (2006 – 2013).

⁸⁶ DG DEVCO, Evaluation of DG DEVCO's European Year of Development 2015 (EYD2015).

⁸⁷ DG JUST, Evaluation of the 2014-15 Consumer Rights Awareness Campaign.

Thus, the line DGs' campaigns may have contributed (directly or indirectly) to the desired outcomes of increasing awareness and reassurance in the stakeholders and the general public of opportunities and protections offered by EU initiatives if they in fact achieved their objectives. The extent to which they have done this varies. Considering the examples above, while the EYD and the Consumer Rights Awareness campaigns were successful in raising awareness of the benefits resulting from the EU in the areas of development cooperation and consumer rights, the evaluation of the CAP information activities found little evidence of their impact on increasing the understanding and improving the perception levels of the CAP among the general public.

The contribution of line DGs' campaigns to the desired outcomes of corporate communication may be a side-effect of their policy-focused communication when this targets citizens. The metrics used by line DGs up until now focus, however, on awareness and understanding of their own policies. As the line DGs do not assess the broader impacts, so any contribution as a side-effect has largely to be assumed.

JC 2. Extent that the corporate campaigns increased reach compared to campaigns run by line DGs

Sources of evidence:

- Desk research on evaluation reports and monitoring data of line DGs communication campaigns⁸⁸;
- Interviews with DG COMM Headquarters and line DGs staff;
- Corporate communication survey

Based on analysis of evaluation reports and interviews with EU officials, it emerges that line DGs' communication activities either focus on stakeholders or focus on both stakeholders and a wider public.

As highlighted below (Table 17), within the wider public, the line DGs tend to identify reasonably specific target groups. To facilitate comparison, Table 18 shows the target groups of the corporate campaigns.

⁸⁸ The analysis is mainly based on the evaluation and monitoring data of the following line DGs' communication activities:

- DG AGRI: Information policy on the CAP (2006 -2013);
- DG DEVCO: European Year for Development 2015 (EYD2015);
- DG EMPL: Communication actions on the European Pillar of Social Rights;
- DG EMPL: European Vocational Skills Week 2018;
- DG JUST: 2014-15 Consumer Rights Awareness Campaign;
- DG JUST: Raising consumers' awareness when they take out credit;
- DG NEAR: Information and communication activities towards the EU Member States in the area of EU Enlargement;
- DG SANTE: Knowing your rights with regard to consumer credit;
- DG SANTE: Ex-smokers are unstoppable.

The SANTE and DG JUST consumer credit campaigns are two campaigns on the same policy, but in different countries at different times, with Consumer Affairs having moved from SANTE to DG JUST in the meantime.

Table 17: Line DGs' target groups

Line DG's campaign	Target groups
DG AGRI: Information policy on the CAP (2006 – 2013)	<p>2010 – 2012: decision-makers.</p> <p>2012 – 2015:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people (15-24) and other people under 40; • People with a low level of studies; • Housewives; • The unemployed; • Students; • The retired.
DG DEVCO: European Year of Development 2015 (EYD2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people (primarily between 15-24 years old). <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development experts/academia; • Civil society; • Policy makers; and • Media/information multipliers.
DG EMPL: Communication actions on the European Pillar of Social Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people.
DG EMPL: European Vocational Skills Week 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutions and organisations such as education and training providers and their associations, schools, trainer associations, employers/ businesses, business associations and chambers, sectoral bodies and professional organisations, career guidance counsellors, student and apprenticeships organisations, parents organisations. • Individuals such as students in general education and VET students, apprentices, adult learners, parents, teachers and trainers, career counsellors, employers and social partners.
DG JUST: 2014-15 Consumer Rights Awareness Campaign	<p>Consumers aged 15-24 and those aged 60+.</p> <p>Small companies, particularly micro-SMEs.</p>
DG JUST: Raising consumers' awareness when they take out credit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people (primarily between 18-35 years old).
DG NEAR: Information and communication activities towards the EU Member States in the area of EU Enlargement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens: teachers and public sector professionals, people over 55's, people who are less educated. • Organisations and institutions: Youth and student organisations, universities and schools, cultural and sports' organisations, women organisations, business organisations, employees' associations. • EU-focused NGOs and think tanks. • Media and other multipliers.
SANTE: Knowing your rights with regard to consumer credit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people (between 18-35 years old).

Source: Evaluation reports of the relevant campaigns

Table 18: Corporate campaigns' target groups

Corporate campaign	Target groups
EU working for you	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Neutrals' (about 40% of the EU population).

#InvestEU (phase i and ii)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Positives' Trust in the EU, positive image of the EU or optimistic about the future of the EU AND agree that 'the EU helps create the conditions for more jobs'. • 'Ambivalent': Trust in the EU, positive image of the EU or optimistic about the future of the EU BUT disagree that 'the EU helps create the conditions for more jobs'.
EUandME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people aged 17 to 35
EUProtects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People aged 35 to 55, who are ambivalent about the EU, those who live in rural areas and those with a lower level of education.

Source: Campaign Terms of Reference and contractor documentation

Comparing the target audiences of the line DGs campaigns and the corporate campaigns, it is possible to observe that:

- The target groups of the corporate campaigns are more inclusive than those of the line DGs, which tend to focus on segments of the public more likely to be interested in/need to be informed about their policies;
- Young people are a recurrent target audience (although the age ranges differ);
- People aged 35-55, who are the primary target group of EUProtects, are not a typical target group of line DGs, who tend to focus on young people or older people (55+, 60+ or retirees);
- The level of education is taken into account both by the corporate campaigns and by some DGs' campaigns (i.e. by DG AGRI and DG NEAR).

Although target groups are segmented differently, the inconsistencies in research data mean it is not possible to assess to what extent they overlap with those of the corporate campaigns. Whilst we can assume that new target audiences are reached because the (potential) extended reach and budget of the corporate campaigns is large by comparison with the majority of line DG campaigns⁸⁹, there are no data confirming if these are really new to EU communication.

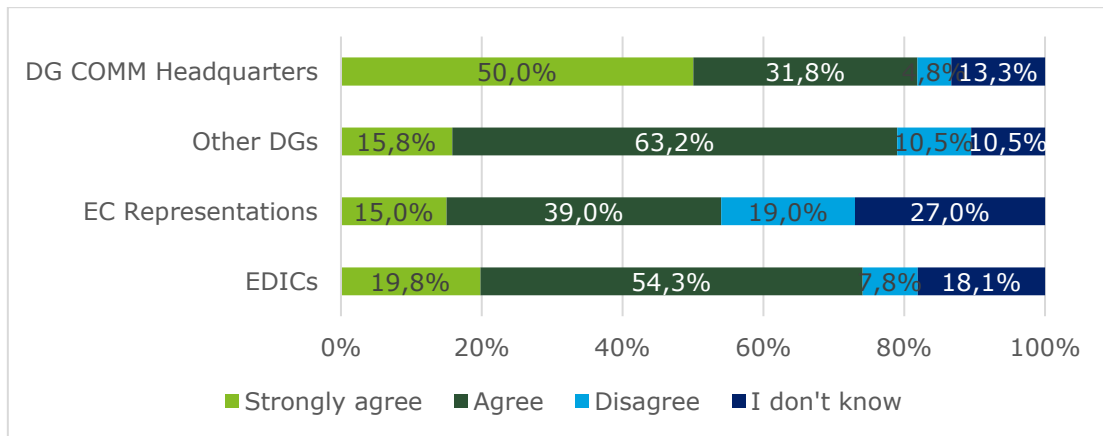
In interviews, staff in line DGs did agree that the corporate approach allows them to target people outside their usual scope, as well as to increase the focus on the general public. Yet, they underlined the importance, given their specific objectives, of communicating to stakeholders. Consequently, the corporate communication approach complements the activities of the line DGs in reaching out to target groups they do not normally have the resources to reach, but which they recognise may be important for them.

According to the majority of all groups who participated in the corporate communication survey, the corporate campaigns have reached new target audiences and the corporate approach has improved the Commission's ability to communicate to non-specialist audiences in the Member States. However, this view is held much more strongly within DG COMM Headquarters than by the other groups surveyed. The Representations are particularly uncertain that this is the case, with 19% disagreeing that the campaigns have reached new

⁸⁹ Please see data below.

audiences and 27% indicating that they did not know. This finding is important as it points to the main challenge in making this assessment, which is the lack of specific evidence from target audiences, which has been collected through the corporate campaigns, but was not systematically collected by line DGs.

Figure 9: Extent to which respondents to the corporate communication survey agreed or disagreed that the corporate campaigns have reach target audiences that line DGs would not usually reach



Source: Corporate communication survey⁹⁰

When it comes to assessing the extended reach of the corporate campaigns, due to different approaches in the monitoring data collected in the various campaigns, it is not possible to compare the reach of the corporate campaigns with those of the line DGs in any systematic way. Data on the overall potential reach of the line DGs’ campaigns are usually not available and the metrics used to measure the reach of the single tools differ. Therefore, any comparison would be weak and potentially misleading.

Moreover, the line DGs’ campaign budgets (and therefore the reach they might be expected to achieve) are extremely diverse, ranging from EUR 50,000 for the DG EMPL evaluation in our sample to EUR 33 million for “Ex-smokers are unstoppable”, and they vary considerably in duration. The reach data is also not necessarily deduplicated.

Below, we show some figures on reach from a sample of line DGs’ campaigns, followed by those of the corporate campaigns. It shows clearly how the lack of comparable data makes comparison across campaigns and with the corporate campaigns difficult. It should also be borne in mind that reach may not have been a primary consideration in some campaigns with very specific target groups.

Table 19: Examples of potential reach of line DGs campaigns

	Number of Member States targeted	Campaign potential reach	Approximate duration

⁹⁰ No respondents “strongly disagree”.

“Ex-Smokers are Unstoppable” campaign	27	Year 1: 19 354 142 ⁹¹	28 months
Consumer Rights Awareness Campaign	14 (Phase I: 8 phase II: 4)	Phase I: 36 801 044 ⁹²	27 months (Phase I: 12 phase II: 15)
Communication actions on the European Pillar of Social Rights	10 ⁹³	3 275 447 ⁹⁴	12 months ⁹⁵

Source: *Line DGs’ campaign evaluation reports*

Table 20: Potential reach of corporate campaigns

	Number of Member States targeted	Campaign potential reach	Approximate duration
EU Working for you 2014-2015	6	115 090 000	12 months
#InvestEU Phase 1 2017-2018	16	240 000 000	11 months
#InvestEU Phase 2 2018-2019	16	41 500 000	15 months ⁹⁶
EUandME 2018-2019	27 ⁹⁷	57 100 995	19 months ⁹⁵
EUProtects 2018-2019	27 ⁹⁸	44 545 805	14 months ⁹⁵

Source: *Corporate campaigns’ monitoring data*

There is, thus, a lack of quantitative evidence to draw a conclusion on the more extended reach of corporate campaigns compared to line DGs, albeit the data points in that direction and the very fact of targeting large population segments does the same. In the survey, there was a strong consensus among the respondents who expressed their opinion, from and across all groups, that corporate campaigns can not only reach more people but can do so more than individual DGs have been able to, i.e. corporate campaigns have the potential not only to have greater reach but also to achieve greater intensity. Intensity, e.g. three to four contacts as a

⁹¹ As explained in the evaluation report, for year 2 and year 3 “it is not possible to define the total number of people reached by the Ex-smokers’ campaign because the calculation of reach focussed on paid advertising not all campaign activities, was collected by channel and sub-campaign, and did not calculate duplicated reach.”

⁹²Theoretical reach of advertising campaign/ media space buying. Disclaimer in the evaluation report: “One of the key data deficiencies is that there is no information available on the total reach of the Consumer Rights campaign”.

⁹³ The social media campaign, which generate most of the reach, focussed on 10 Member States. However, events were organised in 12 Member States (it is not clear if these include the same 10 or others).

⁹⁴ Calculated by adding up the number of participants in the DG EMPL sessions at the EYE, the number of participants in the Annual Convention and Final Conference, and the total number of people reached through social media.

⁹⁵ This seems to be the time span of the activities, but it is not clear how long the social media campaign actually lasted.

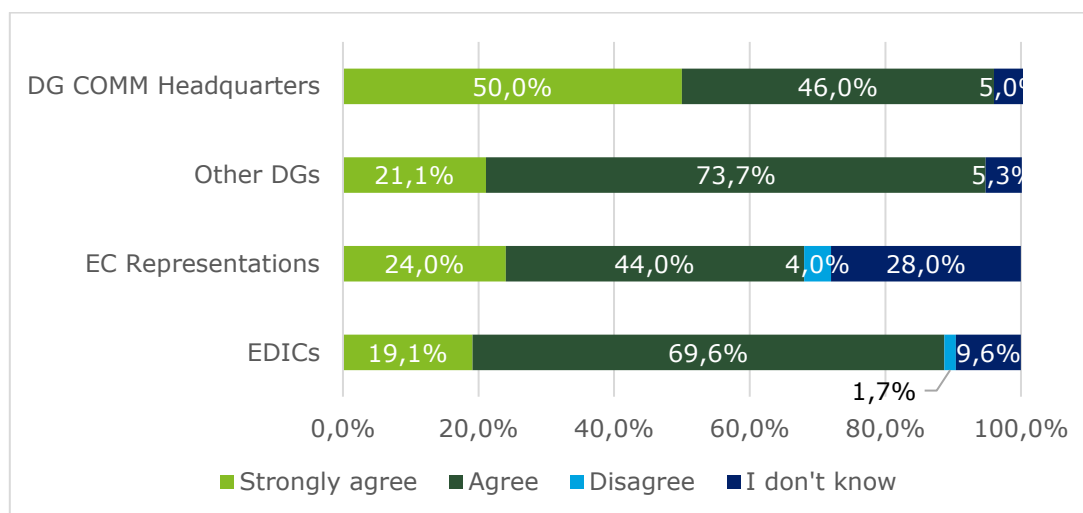
⁹⁶ Assuming the campaign runs until December 2019.

⁹⁷ This is the number of Member States in scope. In practice, the campaign does not target all the Member States separately at different times.

⁹⁸ This is the number of Member States in scope. In practice, the campaign does not target all the Member States separately at different times.

minimum⁹⁹, is an important element in ensuring that the target audience appropriates a message.

Figure 10: Extent to which corporate communication survey respondents agreed or disagreed that the corporate campaigns can reach more people more often than individual DGs have been able to



Source: Corporate communication survey¹⁰⁰

There is an overlap in the audiences targeted by corporate communication and DG’s, as the latter often target citizens in addition to their core audience. The available evaluations of Line DG’s communication campaigns have reported little information on reach in the absolute. Moreover, any analysis also needs to take budgets, duration and target group into account – and use the same deduplication methodology - in order to make true comparisons. What data there is, however, does point to corporate campaigns being able to have a more extensive reach than line DG campaigns.

JC 3. Extent that pooling resources has given DGs access to communication channels, tools and approaches that would be otherwise beyond their reach

Sources of evidence:

- Desk research: evaluation reports and monitoring data of line DGs communication campaigns¹⁰¹;
- Interviews with DG COMM Headquarters and line DGs staff;
- Corporate communication survey

⁹⁹ This is recommended by our experts taking into account the findings of Byron Sharp at the Ehrenberg Institute that 3-4 contacts is a useful benchmark for how often the consumer needs to have the message to be repeated for them to recall it in tracking research.

¹⁰⁰ No responses “strongly disagree”.

¹⁰¹ The analysis is mainly based on the evaluation and monitoring data of the following line DGs’ communication activities:

- DG AGRI: Information policy on the CAP (2006 -2013);
- DG DEVCO: European Year for Development 2015 (EYD2015);

The corporate approach has required the different DGs to contribute, to different extents, to the budget for the implementation of the corporate communication. In total, the amount pooled from different funds and programmes was EUR 44 million in 2017-2018¹⁰² and EUR 35 million in 2019–2020¹⁰³. This has resulted in budgets of corporate campaigns being substantially higher than those of line DGs (with a few exceptions), as the tables below show.

Table 21: Examples of budget of line DGs' campaigns

Line DGs campaigns	Budget
DG SANTE: Ex-smokers are unstoppable campaign	EUR 33 325 547
DG DEVCO: EYD 2015	EUR 10 500 000
DG NEAR: Information and communication activities towards the EU Member States in the area of EU Enlargement	EUR 5 000 0000
DG JUST: 2014-15 Consumer Rights Awareness Campaign	EUR 1 698 989
DG SANTE: Knowing your rights with regard to consumer credit	EUR 950 000
DG EMPL: Communication actions on the European Pillar of Social Rights	EUR 47 838
DG EMPL: European Vocational Skills Week 2018	EUR 35 915

Source: *Line DGs campaigns' evaluation reports*

Table 22: Budget of corporate campaigns

Corporate campaigns	Budget
EU Working for you 2014-2015	EUR 13 090 075
#InvestEU Phase 1 2017-2018	EUR 16 472 700
#InvestEU Phase 2 2018-2019	EUR 5 079 069
EUandME 2018-2019	EUR 12 331 368
EUProtects 2018-2019	EUR 10 276 829

Source: *Corporate campaigns' monitoring data*

Under the corporate approach, pooling resources is meant not only in terms of budget, but also of human resources and time dedicated to the corporate campaigns from the line DGs,

- DG EMPL: Communication actions on the European Pillar of Social Rights;
- DG EMPL: European Vocational Skills Week 2018;
- DG JUST: 2014-15 Consumer Rights Awareness Campaign;
- DG JUST: Raising consumers' awareness when they take out credit;
- DG NEAR: Information and communication activities towards the EU Member States in the area of EU Enlargement;
- DG SANTE: Knowing your rights with regard to consumer credit;
- DG SANTE: Ex-smokers are unstoppable.

The SANTE and DG JUST consumer credit campaigns are two campaigns on the same policy, but in different countries at different times, with Consumer Affairs having moved from SANTE to DG JUST in the meantime.

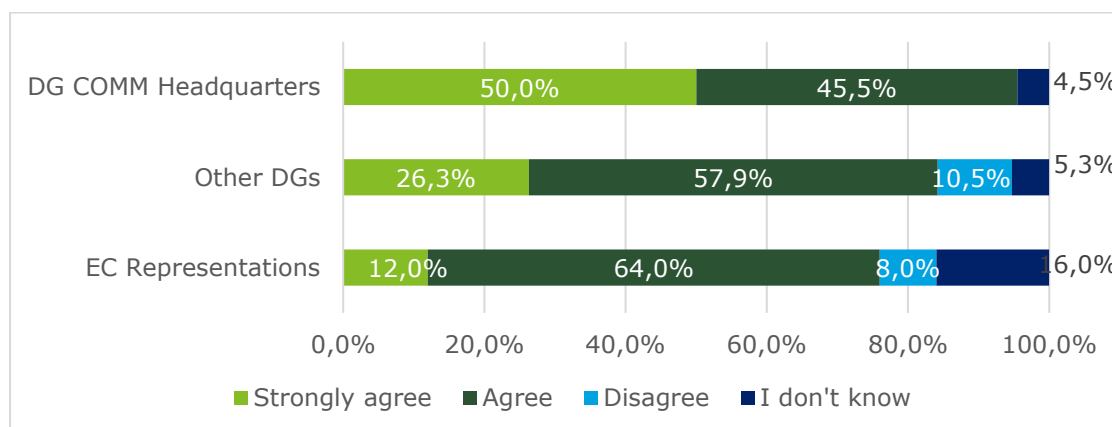
102 Communication to the Commission, "Corporate communication action in 2017-2018 under the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020", C(2016) 6838 final.

103 Communication to the Commission, "Corporate communication action in 2019-2020 under the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020", C(2018) 4063 final.

sharing of knowledge and contribution to the preparation and implementation of the campaigns. This section investigates whether this effort has resulted in channels, tools and approaches that were beyond the reach of line DGs.

The majority of all the respondent groups to the survey agreed that, by pooling resources, the **corporate approach has allowed DGs to access communication channels, tools and approaches that would be otherwise beyond reach**. However, as the Figure below shows, respondents from DG COMM Headquarters felt this particularly strongly, while 10.5% of the respondents in the other DGs disagreed.

Figure 11: Extent to which corporate communication survey respondents agreed or disagreed that by pooling resources the corporate approach has allowed DGs to access communication channels, tools and approaches that would be otherwise beyond reach



Source: Corporate communication survey¹⁰⁴

In terms of approach, interviewees from line DGs found that the corporate approach had the potential to break down silos within the EC, enabling them to link up with other DGs on relevant topics and learning from their communication approaches and solutions.

The sample of line DGs’ campaigns analysed have already employed most of the communication tools and dissemination channels used in the corporate campaigns. However, the differences in budget was reflected in the mix of tools and channels employed (examples are provided below).

Table 23: Campaign tools used in corporate campaigns and in line DGs campaigns¹⁰⁵

Corporate campaign advertorials	Ex-smokers are unstoppable campaign	Consumer Rights Awareness Campaign	European Vocational Skills Week 2018
Video clips (30 seconds)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Press advertisements	Yes	Yes	Yes

¹⁰⁴ No responses “strongly disagree”.

¹⁰⁵ This table is based only on the sample of line DGs’ campaigns considered. Therefore, it might not be representative of other campaigns.

Corporate campaign advertorials	Ex-smokers are unstoppable campaign	Consumer Rights Awareness Campaign	European Vocational Skills Week 2018
Online content (e.g. social media posts, digital banners, animated gifs)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Offline content (e.g. country-specific brochures and flyers, factsheets)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Billboards, posters	Yes	Yes	Yes
Campaign toolkit	Yes	Yes	Yes
Website	Yes	Yes	Yes
Short movies	No	No	No
Thematic amateur competition ¹⁰⁶	No	No	No
Localised digital stories (produced locally and reflecting the local context)	No	No	No
Heroes' profiles	Yes ¹⁰⁷	No	No

Source: Corporate campaigns' monitoring data and evaluation reports of line DGs' campaigns

Table 24: Dissemination channels used in corporate campaigns and in line DGs campaigns

Corporate campaigns' dissemination channels	Ex-smokers are unstoppable campaign	Consumer Rights Awareness Campaign	European Vocational Skills Week 2018
Own social media	Yes	Yes	Yes
Campaign websites	Yes	Yes	Yes
Events	Yes	Yes	Yes
Digital advertising	Yes	Yes	Yes
Print press advertorials	Yes	Yes	Yes
Outdoor advertising	Yes	Yes	No
TV advertising	Yes	No	No
Paid social media ¹⁰⁸	Yes	No	Yes
Print media partnerships	Yes	Yes	No
Digital partnerships	Yes	No	No
Radio partnerships	Yes	No	No

¹⁰⁶ EUandME Young Directors' Competition. Although not used in the DGs displayed as examples, a photo contest "Our future is on the table" was launched as part of the EYD2015 campaign.

¹⁰⁷ In the campaigns, 27 ex-smokers (one for each Member State) were selected to act as Ambassadors for the campaign. The objective was to recruit real people with real stories who had quit smoking or were in the process of doing so with iCoach.

¹⁰⁸ The corporate campaign has used VICE, which is a "first" for the Commission, and is a hybrid between social media and traditional media.

Corporate campaigns' dissemination channels	Ex-smokers are unstoppable campaign	Consumer Rights Awareness Campaign	European Vocational Skills Week 2018
TV partnerships	Yes	No	No
Earned media – Third party endorsement	Yes	Yes	Yes
Earned media – Media relations	Yes	Yes	Yes
Influencers	Yes ¹⁰⁹	No	No

In terms of tools, the main innovations in corporate communication (and therefore from pooling resources) have been:

- **Short movies (up to 10')**: the cost of this tool (EUR 1.4 million for seven EUandME movies and EUR 900,000 for eight EUProtects videos) makes it beyond the financial reach of line DG campaigns (with a few exceptions). The quality of the short movies was appreciated in the interviews with the line DGs, the Representations and participants in the events where EUandME movies were screened. The collaboration with well-known directors is an innovative aspect of the EUandME movies. Event participants considered the EUandME movies to be powerful tools for targeting young people.¹¹⁰
- **Localised digital stories** (six per Member State): the development of this tool required the Representations to play an active role. They are a compilation of various modular formats (60-80 second video, article, social media posts) on the added value of the EU for the daily life of young people, which are produced locally and adapted to the local context. These stories are an example of how DG COMM Headquarters sees the Representations as "co-creators" in the corporate approach. Interviewees from line DGs pointed out that collaboration with the Representations was crucial for contextualising messages at the local level, and felt that Representations should be involved right from the start of every campaign to feed into it qualitatively. That has been the case in the corporate campaign, even if there is some evidence from interviews of the process not always running smoothly in what has essentially been a learning process. Conversely, it emerged from the interviews with the Representations, that line DGs have hitherto not always involved them closely in the line DGs' campaigns and, if they are, their role remains marginal. Both DG COMM Headquarters' and the Representations' staff interviewed remarked on the need to streamline the requests from the line DGs as they would constitute additional workload that is not sustainable for the Representations.
- **Media partnership with VICE**: in the context of the EUandME campaign, the contractor established a partnership with VICE targeting 18-25 year olds. This was new for Commission communication and meant a willingness on the part of DG

¹⁰⁹ Notably, DG JUST "Raising consumers' awareness when they take out credit".

¹¹⁰ We could not assess the reactions of the public to EUProtects movies because they were not screened in any of the event we attended.

COMM Headquarters to cede control over content to an extent it otherwise does not normally do. The brief delivered to VICE by the Commission was to build an image of Europe with the unfiltered answers of youngsters, revealing an underlying union, despite the apparent differences. VICE was to promote five key values of the EU, in five EU countries, to promote each of these key values. This was done through video content that covered the ideas of 25 young people. The written articles were subjects chosen by the editorial team within each country to make sure that every article would speak to the young people in that country. The goal for the campaign was to activate the video content and the articles through different formats. It was accompanied by a brand lift study to measure attitudes towards life in EU and the role of the EU in improving living conditions in their country.

- **Heroes' profiles:** although a similar idea was implemented in the Ex-smokers' campaign, heroes' profiles were addressed in the interviews with line DGs' staff as an innovative tool. **Finding heroes requires close collaboration between the various DGs that, according to the line DGs' officials interviewed, would not be possible without the corporate approach.** (They also noted that finding heroes willing to present on camera and showing their situation without risk to the person concerned was a time-intensive process, which required considerable effort on the part of the various DGs.)

Officials interviewed in line DGs underlined that, although the tools used for the campaign are generally not new per se, **the level of professionalism of material has greatly increased.** Pre-campaign research and focus groups were mentioned as elements that have improved the quality of communication tools and channels (e.g. by choosing the most suitable tools and channels based on the target group). However, pre-campaign research was not affordable for single line DGs.

In addition, although line DGs had already employed social media, the corporate campaigns (especially EUandME) have boosted their use and made it more professional. Interviewees said that the campaigns **have served as inspiration for their own communication activities,** and they have helped them improve the way they communicate through social networks.

Budgetary reasons constrain the choice of dissemination channels. For this reason, TV advertising is rarely part of the mix of line DGs campaigns. It was employed only to a very limited extent also in the corporate campaigns, as it was acquired only in the Pilot campaign, which was implemented in six countries. Some DG COMM Headquarters officials and contractors addressed as a missed opportunity the fact that TV advertising was not used in the other corporate campaigns, not even in those Member States where it was affordable.¹¹¹ Partnerships with TV can be a substitute and have been used in France as part of the corporate campaigns.

¹¹¹ Some Representations have obtained the use of corporate campaign materials on additional dissemination channels and in France this included a partnership with TV, while in Portugal, partnership with TV consisted of placing a character in a soap opera.

The officials interviewed in the Representations agreed that innovations in terms of tools and channels were limited (the local heroes were mentioned as the most innovative tool). On the other hand, pooling resources has, in their view, a scaling-up effect because investing in high-quality materials, translated in all the EU languages and with different formats, makes it possible easily re-use them and disseminate them in all the Member States through different channels.

There are a number of ways in which corporate campaigns have enabled the Commission either to innovate compared to line DG's or, because of the larger budgets, to use some tools and channels more professionally than line DG's have been able to. These larger budgets come in part from pooling funds previously spent by line DG's. Line DG's recognise that they are benefiting in return from being able to use the pool of new and better materials. There has also been innovation in knowledge sharing on content, including involving Representations who in the past have had little involvement in line DG's communication. The corporate campaigns have been able to use TV more than the line DG campaigns, but nevertheless only to a very limited extent. The pilot was an exception.

EQ2: What was the additional value resulting from corporate communication activities, compared to what was achieved by individual Directorate-Generals' communication?

Line DGs' communication activities focus on specific programmes and policies, and primarily on stakeholders, or specific groups of citizens. They have not considered it as part of their role to achieve the type of broader objective relating to perceptions of the EU set for corporate communication. Line DG communication may do this as an unintended (and beneficial) side-effect, but they do not have measurement practices in place to assess this. On the whole, their campaigns do not, from the examples available to us, have as great a reach as those of corporate communication, so that in itself is an added value.

There are target groups in common in some cases, particularly young people. Line DGs are more likely to have targeted the 55+ age group, or to have targeted by gender or employment status. Pre-campaign research has also allowed the corporate campaigns to target their communications more to citizens. Line DGs' campaigns have targeted stakeholders or specific segments of the public that are perceived to be more likely to be interested in their activities.

The corporate campaigns also reach new target groups as these campaigns are to some extent more inclusive than those of the line DGs', in particular by targeting the 35-55 age group through EUProtects, and by reaching more of the same target groups because they have more resources.

Corporate campaigns have been able to use tools that are budgetarily out of reach of line DGs, such as short films; corporate campaigns have also been able to use influencers much more extensively than line DG's. The more the resources available make it possible to use international communication agencies, the more professional the output can generally be expected to be. This has been made possible by the pooling of funds, but Line DGs have seen a return on this investment in better materials for their own use, and through knowledge-sharing and working more closely with DG COMM Headquarters and Representations on the production of localised digital content. Even for corporate campaigns, however, TV advertising remains largely out of reach, however desirable, with the corporate pilot essentially a one-off in this regard.

4.4 To what extent are the sectoral DGs aligned with the principles of corporate communication?

In order to assess the extent to which the line DGs are aligned with the principles of corporate communication, we have considered two judgement criteria:

- Extent of buy-in among all Communication Units of the EU corporate approach and how it is reflected in sectoral DGs' communication strategies and annual communication planning;
- Extent to which the sectoral DGs included corporate messaging and materials in their communication platforms and evidence of new/additional collaboration and sharing of knowledge and information.

The following sub-sections report on the key findings per criterion, based on the sources listed above. The answer to the question is provided at the end of this section.

We understand the principles of corporate communication to be those described in the DG COMM Strategic Plan 2016-2020¹¹² and relate to:

1. The aim of making citizens aware of the political priorities of the College, in particular "jobs, growth and investment" as the overarching priority;
2. The governance mechanisms in place to exchange best practices (i.e. the Corporate Communication Steering Committee and the External Communication Network), receive assistance on technical issues of communication tools and services and make sure that the line DGs align their sectoral communication strategies/plans to the corporate messaging;
3. More consistency, efficiency gains and savings across the Commission's communication activities.

This followed on from the decision to pool certain line DG funds to create a central "pot" for DG COMM Headquarters.

The governance mechanisms have also been strengthened in recent years via the Corporate Communications Steering Committee, made up of senior management from DG COMM Headquarters, DG HR and DG Translation and a rotating membership of six line DGs. Corporate campaigns are a standing agenda item at their monthly meetings. The Committee sets the strategic direction on the basis of recommendations from the Communication Network on which all DGs are represented. It is strengthening the mechanisms for the flow of information and for peer learning across the whole Commission.

DG COMM Headquarters, DG HR and DG Translation are regarded as "horizontal" DGs. Considering DG as a "horizontal" DG is now taken as a matter of course. In practice, it is actually the result of a shift over the last decade from the time when the DG responsible for information was essentially just one other line DG.

JC 1. Extent of buy-in to the corporate approach by the sectoral DGs and incorporation into their own strategies and plans.

Sources of evidence:

- Desk research: DGs communication plans and strategies
- Interviews with DG COMM Headquarters and line DGs staff, Representations staff, contractors
- Corporate communication survey

The interviews with DG COMM Headquarters and line DG officials suggested that the corporate approach is changing the culture of communicating in the Commission. This is

¹¹² https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/strategic-plan-2016-2020-communication_en

linked to line DGs becoming more aware that they are not communicating to their stakeholders “in isolation”, but in the context of corporate campaigns running simultaneously, which address a broader audience and deliver a shared message across the Commission. They are also **more aware of the need to communicate as one voice. DG COMM Headquarters is viewed as having a fundamental role in driving this shift in mentality.** Representatives of line DGs that traditionally mainly communicate to stakeholders (e.g. DG EMPL) also found the shift towards reaching the broader public through corporate campaigns particularly positive and valued the opportunity to engage EU citizens in general on their policy issues, in addition to communicating with stakeholders.

Overall, some representatives from line DGs reflected positively on the ways in which **the corporate approach has led to a redistribution of “policy power” between line DGs** on the policy areas about which it is deemed important to communicate. These interviewees noted that policy areas that historically received a lot of attention from a communication perspective tended to be those, which managed funding programmes, creating an unbalanced public image of the policy areas operating within the EC. **The breadth of the corporate campaigns was found to allow for the integration of different policy areas and thus facilitate a broader set of areas that are communicated to the public.**

Across interviews with DG COMM Headquarters, line DGs officials and contractors, the governance of the corporate approach was suggested to facilitate the EC’s ability to speak with a single, coherent voice, which shows the EU as the clear owner of the message. The pooling of expertise and resource (especially financial), and the identification of a clear domain leader were seen to have contributed to better collaboration between actors, with fewer overlaps between messages.

Representatives from DG COMM Headquarters and line DGs considered the corporate approach to have brought several positive changes, including:

- **further professionalisation** of the Commission’s Communication approach;
- **streamlining and bringing discipline to the messages communicated**, including simplifying them and incorporating the “EU as a whole” dimension;
- **dedicating resources to research and focus groups**, in order to determine how to target the communication to a specific audience (often meaning choosing the most suitable tools during the preparation of the campaign);¹¹³
- **enhancing coherence and consistency** among the various communication activities (including those of the line DGs) (see also EQs 9 and 10);
- enhancing the cost-effectiveness of the EC’s communication actions by exploiting synergies and economies of scale, which reduced the duplication of certain activities (e.g. preparation of materials to be shared on social media).

¹¹³ Although, as discussed under EQ.2, the lack of monitoring data on this aspect does not allow to assess to what extent this was actually not done before by line DGs, or simply not monitored / reported.

Based on those communication plans in the sample provided to us which covered the relevant period¹¹⁴, the line DGs have integrated the corporate communication objectives and have committed to contributing to the corporate campaigns in their most recent communication strategies, for example, as highlighted in the table below. The opinions collected for this study show a high level of buy-in of the corporate approach among line DGs' Communication Units. There is some regret at having to some extent lost autonomy (as well as some of their funding), but these are minority views.

Table 25: Extracts from a sample of 6 DGs' communication strategies and plans¹¹⁵

DG AGRI¹¹⁶: "For 2019, DG AGRI intends to [...] participate in the ongoing development and implementation of the DG COMM 2019 - 2020 corporate communication campaigns with a view to **appropriately highlighting the contribution of the CAP to the Commission's top priorities** and on its delivery of tangible results for EU's citizens..."

DG EAC¹¹⁷: "The communication and dissemination activities pursue the following general objectives: [...] to increase the citizens' perception that the EU is working to improve their lives The EC corporate campaigns "EUandME", "EUProtects" and "EU Invest" will continue and **DG EAC will contribute substantially to them** and ensure the link of the campaign moments with relevant EAC events."

DG EMPL¹¹⁸: "EMPL¹¹⁹ has been working in **close collaboration with DG COMM Headquarters** on the three corporate communication campaigns. In particular, EMPL has selected a large variety of projects ...[which] are showcased on the dedicated website of the EUinvest campaign.... The EUandME campaign...covers, among other topics, EMPL policies in the field of mobility, skills and jobs, as well as rights. [...] The EUProtects campaign [...] will have a strong focus on social rights and the social protection of EU citizens, thus **complementing and reinforcing communication on EMPL own priorities.**"

"[**DG**] **ENER**¹²⁰ will contribute to and **actively support** Corporate Communication campaigns to highlight the benefits of EU policies Obviously, we will highlight all material relating to energy issues, but we will also include issues related to the circular economy, low carbon transport, research & innovation, planting forests, biodiversity, etc. using existing material from the #InvestEU and #EUandME campaigns. [...]

DG REGIO¹²¹ communication activities are "complementary to the Commission's corporate communication campaigns, to which DG REGIO will **contribute consistently in cooperation with DG COMM Headquarters**, the Representation Offices in the Member States and the Europe Direct Information Centres."

¹¹⁴ Two were excluded for being out of scope for this particular exercise.

¹¹⁵ We have no access to the other DGs' strategies and Communication Plans, so our findings are based only on these shared by DG COMM. As mentioned in one interview, DG COMM itself does not at the moment have access to all DGs' strategies. Mechanisms are currently being put in place to rectify that.

¹¹⁶ SG AGRI 2019 External Communication Action Plan.

¹¹⁷ DG EAC Annual Plan 2019 for Communication, Dissemination and Exploitation Activities.

¹¹⁸ DG EMPL Communication Action Plan for 2018 – 2019.

¹¹⁹ DG EMPL Communication Action Plan for 2018-2019.

¹²⁰ DG ENER 2019 Strategy & Action Plan.

¹²¹ DG REGIO Communication Strategy 2017-2020.

DG SANTE¹²²: “Under the leadership of **DG COMM**, three major corporate communication campaigns (EUProtects, #InvestEU and EUandME) are currently running. SANTE actively contributes in the first two, including with budgetary resources.... As regards EUProtects, “DG SANTE plays an active role in its implementation, contributing with tangible examples in the areas of food safety, health and emergency responses in crisis, which are a key concern for EU citizens. [...] SANTE's communication can also underline the economic importance of health investments in the EU growth, employment and innovation strategies.

Findings from desk research on line DGs’ communication strategies and plans are coherent with the results of the corporate communication survey. Some 80% of respondents to the survey of line DG communication officials “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that their DG reflected the corporate approach in the DG’s communication strategies and annual communication planning. Line DG respondents also confirmed that they used corporate messaging and materials in their own communication activities. Around 84% of respondents also “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that their DG provided inputs to the corporate campaigns.

Where this study has identified a gap in buy-in and governance is within Representations. Some Representations have embraced the corporate communication approach enthusiastically; others have not according to the interviews carried out for this report. In addition, there is no clear process for deciding who has the final say when differences of opinion arise as to the responsibilities of the Representations to participate in specific corporate communication activities or on what is appropriate for the local context. Section 4.11 expands further on this.

There is a high level of buy-in to the corporate communication approach based on the documentary evidence that DG COMM Headquarters was able to share with us from line DGs. This was confirmed in interviews, where line DGs underscored the greater professionalism in both research and outputs that has resulted from the corporate approach. These views significantly outweighed those of interviewees who regretted a loss of autonomy and/or some of their funding. There is also a high, albeit not universal, level of buy-in from the Representations..

JC 2. Extent to which corporate messages and materials were included in the sectoral DGs’ communication platforms, and extent that the corporate approach led to new/additional collaboration and sharing of knowledge and information by DGs

Sources of evidence:

- Desk research on DGs communication plans and strategies, final evaluation of the #InvestEU campaign
- Interviews with DG COMM Headquarters and line DGs staff
- Corporate communication survey

¹²² DG SANTE Communication Plan 2019.

In interviews, staff members from line **DGs confirmed that they had incorporated messages and materials from the corporate campaigns in their communication activities** (e.g. DG AGRI communicates about farm development under the umbrella of #InvestEU) and on their platforms. Materials created for social media were found to be suitable for re-use by the DG staff interviewed (e.g. DG EMPL, DG AGRI, DG HOME) and are being re-used by other DGs as well, as can be seen from some of the campaign measurement.

Indicative examples shared by DG COMM Headquarters and line DGs of how line DGs have adapted their activities to include corporate messages are DG REGIO “EU Delivers in the Regions” campaign, DG JUST “Consular protection” campaign, DG REGIO “Road Trip Project”, and DG MARE “Blue Invest 2018” event.

DG JUST

The campaign on **consular protection** ran for 8 weeks between August and October 2018 in nine Member States. This campaign uses the same branding and slogans as **EUandME** and addresses the same target group (young people aged 18 – 35), in particular travellers, backpackers and people recently at an airport (geo-targets). This DG JUST campaign also contributed to delivering the EUandME messages about the rights granted by EU citizenship, in particular consular protection.

DG REGIO

The “**EU Delivers in the Regions**” campaign started in November 2018 and will continue until the end of 2019. This campaign is meant as the **regional spin-off of #InvestEU** and is running in 40 regions in five Member States (Austria, France, Greece, Italy and Sweden).

The objective is to provide an opportunity for regional populations to reach a more informed view of the EU, by showcasing and branding EU delivery on the ground. In each region, a local campaign around a familiar, popular place (whose development/modernisation was supported by EU regional funds) is used to make people understand how the EU has helped.

DG REGIO

The **Road Trip Project** started in 2018 and aimed to create and nurture an online community of young people who share their opinions on the EU and its future with a dedicated campaign.

The 2019 edition will be launched **in connection with EUandME** as it will bring together the Road Trip travellers and the EUandME filmmakers. The young filmmakers who will be offered the chance to make a short movie linked to the impact of the European Union on people’s daily lives.

The two campaigns are intended to be mutually reinforcing in terms of visibility and engagement, with systematic cross-referencing on all platforms.

The evaluation of #InvestEU positively assessed the coherence of other DGs’ activities (in particularly DG REGIO’s) with the corporate campaign, highlighting that: *“all DGs and executive agencies involved in the management of European funds, engage in some level of proactive outreach, aiming to showcase project stories though earned, owned and/or shared media channels (e.g. EASME, DG REGIO, ERCEA, DG ENV, DG EMPL, DG RTD, DG AGRI and DG MARE).”*¹²³

¹²³ Final Report of the study ‘Monitoring the performance of EC communication activities for the Investment Plan for Europe’.

On the question of whether the corporate approach reinforced collaboration between line DGs outside the normal mechanisms of the Commission Communication Network, interviews with officials from line DGs' suggested that **the corporate approach had stimulated additional collaboration, and exchanges of knowledge and information between them.** This was particularly the case when a number of DGs were collaborating on a particular corporate campaign or campaign aspect.

This qualitative finding is backed up with some documentary evidence. For instance, the DG AGRI communication strategy acknowledges that in order to contribute to the corporate campaigns effectively, "it is foreseen to increase communication collaboration with colleagues in DGs SANTE and TRADE, as well as ENV, CLIMA and, of course, COMM." The strategy also underlines that "the pilot corporate communication campaign on rural areas, foreseen by DG COMM Headquarters for 2019, will be another opportunity for such collaboration, most notably with REGIO and other DGs involved with European Structural and Investment Funds." The DG SANTE Communication Plan identified a number of other DGs as being its key partners for EUProtects: DG HOME, EMPL, ECFIN, ENVI, DEVCO, ECHO, and EAAS. This evidence can also be reinforced through the corporate communication survey. Of line DG respondents to the survey, 74% "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that the corporate approach led to new / additional collaboration and / or sharing of knowledge and information processes across common EU platforms.

The corporate approach has led both to line DGs using (or adapting) the messaging of the corporate campaign, using the materials on their platforms, and cooperating and sharing knowledge with DG COMM Headquarters and other DGs both in corporate communication activities and activities independent of those of the corporate campaign, i.e. there have been spin-off effect.

EQ3: To what extent are the sectoral Directorates-General aligned with the principles of corporate communication?

The line DGs recognise that the corporate approach has brought greater professionalism to the Commission's approach to communication and that they have themselves benefited from access to more professional research and materials. Communication strategies are reflecting the buy-in to the corporate approach and line DGs are using, or adapting, the messages and materials on their platforms and in their communication. Line DGs are also working together more, not only on corporate activities, but independent of these. Thus the line DGs are aligned with the principles of corporate communication and implement them.

4.5 Did the sequence of the corporate campaigns / topics contribute (if at all) to the creation (or strengthening) of the EU brand?

In order to assess to what extent the sequence of corporate communication campaigns/ topics contributed (if at all) to the creation (or strengthening) of the EU brand, we have considered the following judgement criteria:

1. Extent that the corporate approach has led to sequencing and intensity of EU communication;
2. Extent that taken in sequence or as a whole, the corporate campaigns were successful in creating or strengthening the EU brand.

We understand the implicit intent of sequencing as being to increase the intensity of communication by reaching the audience more often over a period of time with a flow of information that follows a certain logic, rather than running one-off campaigns in isolation of what has come before.

By the EU brand, we understand a series of emotions or values that are recognised as “EU values” and which citizens associate with the EU, so that strengthening the brand would mean a stronger association of ideas between those values and the EU, but also an enhanced perception of the EU.

The following sub-sections report on the key findings per criterion. The answer to the question is elaborated on in the closing box.

JC 1. Extent that the corporate approach has led to sequencing and intensity of EU communication

Sources of evidence:

- Desk research: ToRs of the campaigns, contractors’ technical proposals, interim reports, monitoring and evaluation methodology, polling and surveys
- Interviews with contractors
- Corporate communication survey
- Focus groups
- Polling exercise

The sequencing intent in this case is clear.¹²⁴ The Terms of Reference for the current campaigns all use similar wording indicating that the campaigns are part of a strategic information and communication sequence with three main strands. However, these documents do not spell out what is understood or intended by sequencing. The Terms of Reference of EUandME suggest an intention for them to be mutually reinforcing, and the same phrasing is included in the Terms of Reference of EUProtects, where it is suggested that this means that the Juncker Commission priorities all be captured by one or other campaign.

¹²⁴ There was also an understanding in the documentation on the Pilot that, if successful, it would be followed by others.

Given this lack of clarity, we have worked on the assumption that it was anticipated that there were effectiveness and efficiency gains to be made from overlaps in timing and audience, and from intensity.

Aside from the mention in the Terms of Reference that these campaigns are to be seen as a sequence, the principle of sequencing being better than a one-off campaign was strongly supported by DG COMM Headquarters staff in the survey. Of DG COMM Headquarters respondents, 78% supported this view. It is perhaps more striking that the consensus around this principle was particularly strongly held by other DGs (where there is experience of running campaigns over a period of years). The figure for those who agreed or strongly agreed was (95%), while the figure for EDICs was 82% and for Representations was 76%.

The sequence in practice was:

- rollout¹²⁵ of the Invest EU campaign for non-stakeholders in April 2017 with a campaign that ended in March 2018, and a second phase that began in September 2018¹²⁶;
- rollout of EUandME in May 2018;
- rollout of EUProtects in October 2018.

All four campaigns will wind up in the fourth quarter of 2019.

The campaigns ran continuously over these periods. In particular, the website hub was being fed regularly with materials over the whole period. However, **within each campaign, there were moments of greater intensity**. In the case of EUProtects, there was a specific breakdown into “Waves”, but this was also true de facto of the other campaigns even if other terminology was used. All the campaigns, however they described the process, boosted activity at certain times, either through paid boosts or greater owned efforts related to a specific moment in the campaign. These boosts did not necessarily occur simultaneously across the campaigns or within campaigns in every country.

However, without composite documentation across all three campaigns on which groups were being targeted where or when, or any testing of the differently look and feel of the campaigns and whether they are mutually reinforcing, any effectiveness and efficiency gains from this sequence and the potential for added intensity across the campaign will have been unintended side-effects. They may have been positive or detrimental to the campaigns in the absence of **provision in the planning for coordinating any opportunities for sequencing or intensity** across the campaigns or for measuring whether running three campaigns in this timeframe generated any effectiveness gains with increased outcomes on target groups.

Nevertheless, the use of a single contractor for the two #InvestEU campaigns did illustrate the **benefits to effectiveness and efficiency of a follow-on campaign** by providing an opportunity for learning lessons and re-using material from one campaign to the next (and

¹²⁵ i.e. the point at which the campaign went live for the target audience,

¹²⁶ This was preceded by a stakeholder campaign about the Investment Plan, which first used the #InvestEU slogan.

from the earlier stakeholder campaign on the Investment Plan). This is made clear in the contractor's reporting¹²⁷. The final evaluation of the second phase will provide an indication of whether keeping the Invest EU slogan and activities in audiences' consciousness over a longer period has resulted in a continuing improvement in outcomes, providing it is possible to distinguish between those targeted by the first and second phases.

The other opportunities for sequencing and intensity benefits across the campaigns would in reality have been limited to the **overlap in target groups between the #InvestEU campaigns and the other two campaigns**. #InvestEU has a broad target group mandate, i.e. population segments directly or indirectly impacted by specific projects. It includes mini-campaigns targeting groups as different as 18-54 year olds, and millennials born between 1980 and 2000 (i.e. 20-40 year olds). It thus overlaps both with EUandME, which targets the 17-35 age group, and with EUProtects, which targets the 35-55 age group. Even if the overlap is not great, this suggests a missed opportunity in the planning process and possible fragmentation of effort, the more so because some target groups of all three campaigns would have been exposed to material from other campaigns in the natural course of events, e.g. when the material is on screens in airports. Interviewees with whom this was discussed regretted that there had not been more coordination between the contractors.

There was a clear intent at the strategic level in favour of sequencing, but this did not translate into evidence as to what sequencing was designed to achieve other than mutual reinforcement of the campaigns. That in turn has not, however, been turned into any operational approach across the campaigns to exploiting the opportunities that sequencing might bring for increasing intensity or avoiding duplication. The two Invest EU campaigns ran in sequence and derived operational benefits from that, but this is a narrower focus.

Increased intensity could apply where target groups overlap, i.e. between Invest EU and the other campaigns, or where there are spillover effects because other target groups discover and relate to the materials. There was no mechanism for planning or measuring this. Even though, these were stand-alone campaigns under separate contracts, there would have been scope to discuss opportunities (or eliminate duplication) from sequencing and intensity, and whether fragmentation was resulting. Any increase in understanding (i.e. a grasp of the benefits and effects of a topic being dealt with by the campaign) relates to individual campaigns and their topics, not the EU as whole.

JC 2. Taken as a whole and in sequence, the campaigns were successful in creating or strengthening the EU brand

Sources of evidence:

- Desk research: ToRs of the campaigns, Contractors' technical proposals, contractor's monitoring and evaluation methodology, contractors' polling and surveys

¹²⁷ Cf in particular the fourth Interim Report.

To answer this question, it is useful to define what a brand is and how it can be understood in the EU context. For the campaign (as a whole and in sequence), to create or strengthen understanding of the EU brand:

- values associated with the EU brand must be clearly defined (i.e. what the EU means for citizens);
- the campaign must convey those values to the target audience, implicitly or explicitly;
- the target groups must associate (or more strongly associate) those values / concepts with the EU as a direct result of the campaign;
- linked to the above, target groups must be able to identify the EU as behind the campaign.

If these conditions and those relating to an enhanced understanding and enhanced perception of the EU (discussed in the previous section) are met, then it is possible to say whether the corporate communication campaigns/topics as a whole contributed (if at all) to the creation (or strengthening) of the EU brand, and to look at the role that the different campaigns sequencing played in that.

A first point, however, is that there is a lack of clarity around the definition of the EU as a brand. None of the available documentation viewed by the study team provides clarity on this aspect, i.e. ties a definition to use of the terminology 'brand'. Also, creating or **strengthening the EU brand was not a specific objective** of these corporate campaigns. This implies that the validity of assessing the extent that each campaign contributed to strengthening the EU brand ex post is somewhat questionable.

On the other hand, the study question confirms that the Commission has an interest in the corporate campaigns strengthening what the EU stands for and how it is understood by EU citizens. Also, the Terms of Reference of the different campaigns generally do refer to the importance of conveying EU values. However, they use different definitions, e.g. in the Terms of Reference for the *Pilot*, the values are defined as **respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights**. The Terms of Reference for *EU Protects* list the values as **peace, protection, security and welfare of its citizens**. The contractor's proposal suggested taking a bottom-up approach based on the values that the Eurobarometer indicates citizens associate with the EU, i.e. peace, human rights and respect for human life. In the case of *EUandME*, the values cited are **democratic freedoms, rule of law, inclusiveness, solidarity...** Research for the contractor's proposal, however, found that young Europeans associate the EU with peace, democracy and human rights, and also proposed a bottom-up approach. Values are not mentioned in the Terms of Reference of Invest EU.

Firstly, therefore, the evaluation team notes an absence of consensus about what EU values are, even if the lists bear similarities. Second, there is a disconnect between the top-down and bottom-up views of what EU values are, though there are again broad similarities.

Clearly, it is important to communicate in ways the target group relates to and this can justify the bottom-up approach. At the same time, the EU has a legitimate interest in ensuring that the campaigns convey the values it believes should be associated with the “brand”. That requires definitions and a brand strategy, which once defined can then take the difference between the political perceptions and the perceptions of the target audience into account.

Whilst the strategic intention was to perhaps highlight all or some of these aspects or values, for the purposes of this study and for the corporate campaigns under review, the EU brand could be understood as the values that each corporate campaign attempted to convey, as stated in their individual objectives:

Campaign	Values: what the EU stands for
EU Working together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EU contributes to growth and job creation
#InvestEU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EU makes a positive contribution to job creation, economic growth and investment made by EU funding, The EU is central to the solutions to Europe’s challenges.
EUandME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What the EU does for citizens, especially youth, to experience/gain/enjoy at all stages of life, wherever they are. There is a set of core EU values which we all share.
EUProtects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Europeans are stronger and safer together because of the EU.

Despite this narrower focus, our observation is that the campaigns did not focus their evaluation and monitoring activities sufficiently strongly on gathering evidence to confirm these values. There was and will be in the surveying still to come a tendency to focus on confirming the reach and recall of campaigns, as well as the emotional response to campaign materials, which can be proxies but fall short of providing an understanding of whether and how the brand has been strengthened¹²⁸. However, the measurement of trust levels at the campaign could be considered a proxy, but proxies are no substitute for measurement related to the specific objective.

Thus, when it comes to the assessment of the cumulative effective of running the sequence of campaigns on strengthening the EU brand, there is a lack of evidence. Whilst certain policy areas may have reached higher numbers of citizens than the campaigns that may have been conducted by line DGs in isolation, there is a lack of evidence to confirm that each individual corporate campaign reinforced the understanding of the EU brand, which may have been created by the other corporate campaigns.

The different campaigns conveyed a range of different values. Therefore, the accumulation of campaigns did not necessarily imply a repetition of the same values, which it could be assumed might strengthen the message. Whilst there is possible value from the perspective of conveying a range of values, it is possible that the different campaigns would have had

¹²⁸ The Interim EUandME survey showed an increase in a positive response on all the emotions, and absolute levels of 39-45% from baselines of 38-40%.

greater impact if they had focussed on the same core value/s (to be defined by DG COMM Headquarters) and/or emotions despite having largely different target groups.

However, in the absence of evidence on this point, which could be taken into account in our synthesis, the study team attempted to bridge the gap through a series of on-line Focus Groups which looked, inter alia, at whether participants understood that the websites they were looking at originated with the European Commission/EU, and with polling, which also looked at whether participants understood who is behind the campaigns, since **the campaigns fall at the first hurdle if they are not associated with the EU.**

Evidence from the Focus Groups conducted as part of this synthesis study suggests that the corporate campaign websites were immediately understood as belonging to the EU campaign. The majority of Focus Group participants clearly understood that the Invest EU website originated with the EU or the European Commission¹²⁹ (Annex I).¹³⁰ When asked to identify the author of the website (“Who is the author of this website?”), without any prompting from the moderator, the most commonly **identified** author of the website across all focus groups was either the **EU or the European Commission**, with participants noting the “.eu” domain name or referring to the content of the website / the fact that contact information was listed. The only group where most participants responded that they “did not know” who the author of the website was, was the “rather negatives” group in Latvia.

However, the polling conducted as part of this study paints a different picture. The video clips shown to respondents were less readily automatically associated with the EU (the detail is in Annex J). Per campaign, the overall results were:

- Number of respondents who claimed they knew who made the clip: 25% for #InvestEU, 12% for EUProtects and 25% for EUandME. The proportion of those who were unsure was 26%, 24% and 23%.
- Number of respondents who correctly identified who made the clip when prompted to choose from a national government, the EU, or an international institution – 65% correctly identified the EU for the Invest EU clip, 46% for EUProtects, and 72% for EUandME.

The Member States with the largest proportions of respondents who identified the European Union as the author of the Invest EU clip were Spain (74%) and Germany (70%). The Member States with the smallest proportions of respondents who identified the European Union as the author of the clip were Bulgaria (58%) and Latvia (59%)¹³¹. In between came Poland (68%) The main differentiator was age. The older the respondent, the less likely they were to recognise that the EU was behind the clip, ranging from 73% in the 18-24 age group who recognised that the clip came from the EU to 54% among the 55-65 year olds.

¹²⁹ The Focus Groups were shown the three websites in sequence. Once they have responded on the first (Invest EU), the question was not repeated as the answer would have been self-evident.

¹³⁰ Understanding that there is an EU can be taken as a given. No instances were identified where a participant had never heard of the EU.

¹³¹ The question was not asked in Croatia.

Only in Croatia and Spain did most respondents correctly identify the European Union as the author of the EUProtects clip (68% and 52%, respectively), while in Poland only 34% did so. In Germany, the figure was 45%, in Latvia 41% and in Bulgaria 38%. The differences by any other characteristic overall are not sufficient as to be statistically significant – age, gender, level of education, in-/active, urban/rural.

In the case of EUandME, levels of those correctly identifying the clip was high across the board, with 83% in Germany and Spain correctly identifying it as being from the EU and a figure of 81% for Poland and 77% for Croatia. Figures were more than half or more everywhere, as they were 58% in Latvia and 50% in Bulgaria. The differences by any other characteristic are not sufficient as to be statistically significant – age, gender, level of education, in-/active, urban/rural.

In answer to the first question, **there was therefore a low spontaneous recognition that the clips came from the EU. In answer to both questions, there was greater difficulty in associating the EU with the EUProtects campaign.**

Spain stands out as the country where a high number of respondents across all campaigns understood that they originated with the EU. Spain is in the top two in every case. Germany is always in the top half. Bulgaria and Latvia are in the bottom half in every case.

Polling for this campaign measured whether the campaigns passed the first hurdle of target groups understanding that the campaign originates with the EU and the responses may be a cause for concern, but above all should constitute a benchmark for the future of something that is not otherwise measured.

The Terms of Reference generally expect that these will be emotion-based campaigns conveying EU values, i.e. what the EU brand stands for. There is no single definition of “EU values”. The definition differs across the Terms of Reference without it being evident that this is intentional. The campaigns have to some extent measures which values the target groups association with the EU (and there are some differences) and focus on those implicitly.

However, the campaign contractors were not required to regard strengthening the brand as an explicit objective, nor to measure what the results of their campaigns against their own broad objectives of what the EU stands for. They were also not required to measure emotional responses, though EUandME is doing the latter extensively. Trust in the EU at the end of the campaigns will be the main proxy for which there will be a comparable measure across the current three campaigns.

Sequencing per se will not play a role in this as there is not sufficient overlap in topics and target groups to generate a cumulative effect.

Conclusion EQ4: How did the sequence of corporate communication campaigns / topics contribute (if at all) to the creation (or strengthening) of the EU brand?

A sequence of campaigns (implying a logic sequence of campaigns, able in some cases to take advantage of overlaps in objective, timing and target groups) can bring cumulative benefits in effectiveness and efficiency. There is evidence that this was the strategic intent in this case, but it was not translated into operational mechanism to exploit the opportunities or avoid duplication of effort. While the scope for this appears to have been limited in three such different campaigns, this can only be an assumption and results in terms of increased understanding and more positive perceptions of the EU must be looked at in isolation of any potential benefits from sequencing or intensity (i.e. reaching the same people more often with constantly refreshed version of the message). Nevertheless, there are some orders of magnitude emerging on what can reasonably be expected in future from such campaigns (assuming a similar budget and approach).

One result of the absence of a mechanism at operational level to take advantage of having a series of campaign is that there are minor, and sometimes significant, differences in approach to measurement of outtakes and outcomes in the form of polling and survey questions. There is no core of common questions to create baselines on the strengthening of the brand. Thus, the approach to evaluation and monitoring that was established to provide evidence on the outputs and outcomes of the different corporate campaigns is not able to provide direct evidence of cumulative effects on brand. If this is an aspect, which the Commission considers needs to be addressed in the future, then this element needs to be built into the design of campaign measurement.

4.6 Were the effects / benefits of the corporate approach achieved at a reasonable cost?

As this question concerns the extent that the amount of budget allocated to each of the corporate campaign can be considered to be reasonable in relation to the results achieved by campaigns, it is helpful to start with an overview of campaign finances. The budgets of the three campaigns and the Pilot campaign are presented in the table below.

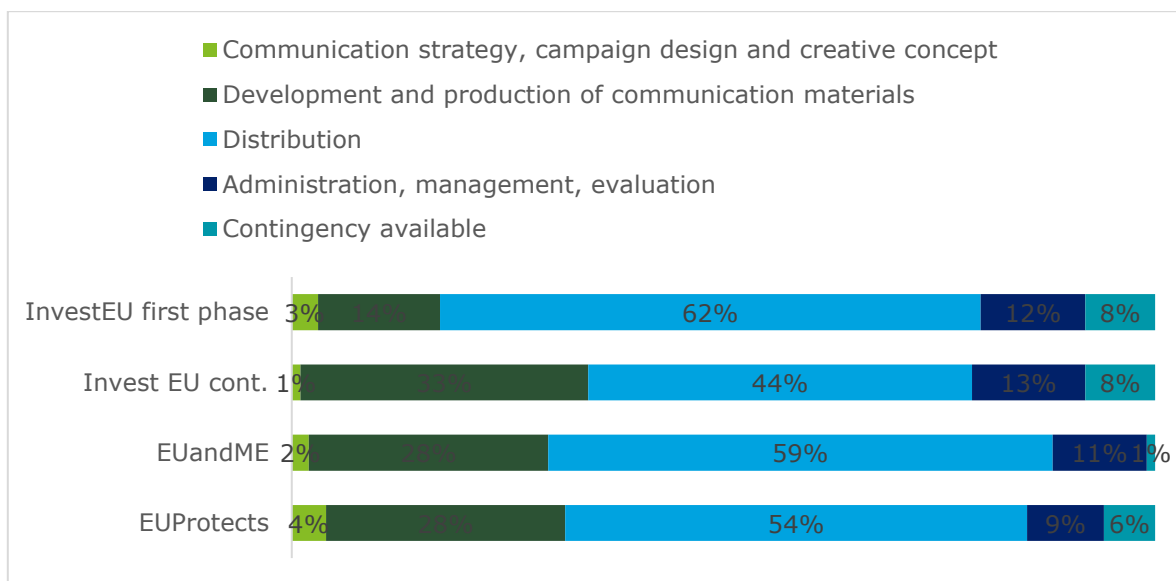
Table 26: Overview of the corporate campaigns' budgets

Campaign	Total budget	No of Member States
Pilot	€13.09 m	6
#InvestEU	€16.4 m – initial phase	16
	€5.1 m - continuation	17
EUandME	€12,2 m	10
EUProtects	€10,3	14

It is also helpful to have an overview of the way that different types of costs have been allocated in each campaign to ensure that there is a good distribution, in particular, between the amount of money spent on developing content and the amount of spent on promotion and dissemination of this content and materials.

In terms of the distribution of costs within each campaign, the initial phase of #InvestEU had the largest share of distribution costs (62%) and the lowest share of production costs (14%) among the four campaigns. #InvestEU continuation, on the other hand, had the largest share of production costs amounting to one third of the budget and the lowest share of distribution costs. Administration, including management, monitoring and evaluation, reimbursement of expenses, remains at similar level of 9-13% and design and creative work at the level of 1-4%. The details are provided on the chart below. According to the experts within the synthesis team, the distribution of costs between production and distribution across all three campaigns can be considered to be reasonable.

Figure 12: Distribution of corporate campaigns' budgets by key categories of costs



Source: Study team's elaboration based on budgets provided by DG COMM Headquarters

The key challenge in answering the question of whether the effects and benefits of corporate communication activities were achieved at a reasonable cost relates to the assessment of 'reasonable' cost, particularly as the cost of buying media varies significantly in different Member States. In addition, as highlighted elsewhere in this report complete data is not available.

Taking these constraints into account, we focused on comparing the unit costs achieved between the corporate campaigns themselves and between the corporate campaigns and with other EC communication campaigns implemented by line DGs. The following judgement criterion was considered:

1. Extent that a comparison between the four campaigns and with other EC campaigns confirms that corporate activities are more efficient in terms unit cost

The following sub-section reports on the key findings, based on the sources listed above. The answer to the evaluation question is provided at the end of this section.

JC 1. Extent that a comparison between the four campaigns and other EC campaigns confirms that corporate activities are more efficient in terms of unit cost

Sources of evidence:

- Desk research on: #InvestEU evaluation report¹³², Corporate campaigns' key performance indicators tables¹³³, Other DGs' campaigns' evaluation reports¹³⁴

This section focuses on a comparison between the four corporate campaigns, as well as comparison of their performance with other campaigns delivered by sectoral DGs. We assess their performance in terms of cost effectiveness, based on unit costs. The different status of the four campaigns and inconsistency in reporting hinder comparative analysis of costs per units. There is a lack of standard terminology used by contractors to describe the data being collected and there are also differences in the type of monitoring data collected. Some contractors report efficiency indicators per channels only, and the overall performance is not provided. There are also different ways of calculating indicators.¹³⁵

There are important caveats in the assessment of data in this section given that the campaigns are still on-going. The study team took a cut-off date on the available data to use the analysis, and it is possible that subsequent data is now available, which can be used to update this section in the Final Report.

The study team was able to review a small sample of evaluation reports of different DG's campaigns. However, they also lack consistency in the availability of data assessing efficiency and reporting data. Moreover, the findings are in most cases based on opinions of stakeholders gathered in **surveys and interviews, rather than performance measured per indicators**. In some cases, they also tend to focus on indicators which are less relevant for cost effectiveness analysis, particularly click-through rate CTR¹³⁶. Nevertheless, some comparisons can be made not necessary to overall achievements but rather benchmarks for selected channels.

¹³² Monitoring/Evaluation of the #InvestEU campaign, November 2018.

¹³³ Documentation provided by DG COMM:

- *Comm Network Indicators (8.5.2019)*
- *Key performance metrics #InvestEU campaign, 3.10.2018, WPP,*
- *Key performance metrics #InvestEU campaign (continuation), 7.08.2019, WPP,*
- *EUandME Key Performance Indicators, 7.12.2018,*
- *EUProtects KPI reports, wave 1 (15.01.2019), wave 2 (7.03.2019), wave 3 (11.06.2019).*

¹³⁴ We received documents from the following DGs: AGRI, DEVCO, EMPL, JUST, MOVE, NEAR, REGIO, SANTE.

¹³⁵ For instance, overall cost per 1,000 impressions (CPM) can be calculated for the total campaigns' budgets or for media buying budget only. In case of Pilot campaign this resulted in a difference between CPM of €4.14 calculated by the evaluators and €3.18 reported by the contractor. DG COMM calculated it also differently as an average of CPM per channels (€2.70). Similarly, in case of #InvestEU the contractor reported a CPM of almost €20 and the evaluation study calculated it to be below €10.

¹³⁶ Click-through rate is the ratio of users who click on a specific link to the number of total users who view an ad, post or page.

To expand the analysis of the costs of the corporate campaigns, we also took into account data available from the evaluations of a number of other communication campaigns. There was very limited data available to the synthesis team in relation to comparable campaign costs. The synthesis team focussed on a sample of evaluations that members of the team had conducted in previous years for the European Commission, as follows:

- ‘Missing Part’ campaign, DG TAXUD¹³⁷
- ‘Ex-smokers’ campaign, DG SANTE
- Consumer awareness campaign, DG JUST
- Consular protection campaign, DG JUST

Different ways of reporting and different sets of key performance indicators, including those related to cost-effectiveness, have been used in each campaign. Therefore, a full synthesis of the efficiency of the four campaigns at this stage is not yet possible.

The two most commonly used indicators to report cost-efficiency of communication campaign outputs (i.e. in relation to reach and engagement) are:

- reach unit costs indicator: **CPM**, cost per thousand impressions, i.e. the amount of money required to reach 1,000 readers, visitors, viewers, listeners and relates to paid channels. Below we assess the CPM by campaign and then by channel; and
- engagement unit cost indicators: **CPC**, cost per click, i.e. the amount being paid per one user clicks on a sponsored link/ad.

Overall CPM

CPM can be presented for overall campaign performance or per channel. The below table provides data on overall campaign CPM drawing on data provided by DG COMM Headquarters.

Table 27: Overall campaigns’ CPM

Campaign title	Overall CPM
Pilot	€2.70 ¹³⁸
#InvestEU (initial phase)	€8.49 ¹³⁹
#InvestEU (continuation)	€4.45 ¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ This was one of the campaigns used to provide a comparison for the Pilot corporate campaign.

¹³⁸ Calculated as an average per different channels. The Pilot campaign evaluation report provided a different amount of overall CPM (€4.14) and the contractor reported: €3.18. See: *Evaluation of the European Commission corporate communication campaign*, 6.07.2015, p. 103.

¹³⁹ Calculated as above. The evaluation report provided different amounts. the contractor reported €19.80 and the evaluation team calculated €9.87.

¹⁴⁰ Calculated as above.

Campaign title	Overall CPM
EUandME	€6.32 ¹⁴¹
EUProtects (average waves 1-3)	€3.00 ¹⁴²
Missing part campaign (DG TAXUD)	€8.66 ¹⁴³
Ex-smokers' campaign (DG SANTE)	€3.18 ¹⁴⁴
Consumer awareness campaign (DG JUST)	€10.00 ¹⁴⁵

Source: *Contractors' data monitoring reports*

Using the CPMs metric, the evidence suggests that the Pilot was the most cost-efficient campaign out of those compared, followed by EUProtects. On the contrary, the first phase of #InvestEU seems to have been the least efficient. However, these numbers should be interpreted with caution. First, there are different ways of calculating this indicator, which were already highlighted. Second, the performance depends heavily on:

- mix of channels used, as some channels (e.g. print) are significantly more expensive than other (social media). The #InvestEU focused on costly traditional media.
- where campaigns are implemented, due to noticeable differences in media buying costs per EU Member State. This resulting in different levels of performance efficiency performance. For instance, the #InvestEU contractor reported an overall cumulative CPM of €19.80, which varied between €10.95 in Hungary and €38.67 in France.

CPM by channel

Our review of CPM by channel starts with consideration of the four corporate campaigns. #InvestEU first phase reporting on efficiency is relatively detailed. KPI tables provide an overall social media advertising CPM, as well as CPM per specific social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and traditional media (digital, print, radio, TV, outdoor), including media collaboration; and cost per contact at events for selected countries. However, not all this data is available for other campaigns.

The three online channels for which the data is available for most of corporate activities are: Facebook and digital ads. Their performance is presented in the table below:

Table 28: Facebook and digital ads CPM per corporate campaigns

¹⁴¹ Calculated as above.

¹⁴² Calculated as an average of three waves of EUProtects (wave 1: €3.55, wave 2: € 2.78, wave 3: € 2.66).

¹⁴³ *Evaluation of the European Commission corporate communication campaign*, 6.07.2015, p. 103.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ *Evaluation of the 2014-16 consumer rights awareness campaign in 14 EU Member States*, 8.07.2016, p. 36.

	Facebook CPM	Digital ads CPM
Pilot	€2.90	€3.01
#InvestEU (initial phase)	€3.76	€4.20
#InvestEU (continuation)	€2.50	-
EUandME (May-July 2018)	€2.58	-
EUProtects (total 2018-2019)	€2.06	€3.97

Source: Contractors' data monitoring reports; Comm Network Indicators

The data suggests that similar costs were achieved for each unit of reach per the two channels across the campaign with EUProtects being the most cost-effective at Facebook and the Pilot remaining the most cost-effective in digital advertising. The first phase of #InvestEU again seems to be the least efficient corporate campaign, but on Facebook the continuation performed much better (unit cost reduced by one third).

CPM is also available for total social media performance which varies between €2.40 for the Pilot and €6.32 for EUandME, however this indicator is heavily influenced by the social media mix used per campaign.

The possibility to compare this performance with other EC campaigns is very limited. Nevertheless, some comparable data is presented below.

Table 29: CPM per channels for the corporate campaigns and other selected EC campaigns

	Facebook CPM	Digital ads CPM	Print CPM	OOH CPM
Pilot	€2.90	€3.01		
#InvestEU (initial phase)	€3.76	€4.20	€22.42	€3.34
#InvestEU (continuation)	€2.50	-	-	-
EUandME	€2.58	-	-	-
EUProtects	€2.06	€3.97		
Consumer awareness (DG JUST)		€53	€66	€4
Consular protection (DG JUST)	€5.17			
Ex-smokers campaign (DG SANTE)			€1.49	

Source: Contractors' data monitoring reports, campaign specific evaluation reports

The corporate campaigns perform well against this background. Facebook CPM in three of them (the Pilot, #InvestEU and EUProtects) was lower than within the Consular protection campaign ad so was the digital ads CPM compared with Consumer awareness campaign. Print CPM for #InvestEU was also below Consumer awareness campaign and only the out of home (OOH) advertisement for the continuation performed below this DG JUST campaign.

CPC

Another key measurement of reach of communication campaigns is measuring engagement of the audience and the basic and most commonly used indicator in terms of efficiency is cost per click (CPC). However, as compared to CPM this indicator is only relevant to monitor and assess online activities, such as social media and digital advertising.

The data provided by DG COMM Headquarters presents the performance of the corporate campaigns in this regard. We present the amounts of overall social media CPC in the table below.

Table 30: CPC overall and per channels by the corporate campaigns

	Overall CPC	Social media CPC	Facebook CPC	Instagram CPC	Digital ads CPC
Pilot	€3.17	-	-		€3.17
#InvestEU (initial phase) ¹⁴⁶	€1.42	€0.49	€0.39	€16.69	€2.35
#InvestEU (continuation)	€0.55	€0.55	€0.24	€5.03	
EUandME		€0.97 ¹⁴⁷	€0.65 ¹⁴⁸	€2.47 ¹⁴⁹	
EUProtects (waves 1-3 average)	€2.13	€0.96	€0.75		€3.40
Missing part (DG TAXUD)	€1.35		€1.96		
Consumer awareness (DG JUST)		€0.37-€0.9 / €6.46 ¹⁵⁰	€0.62		
Consular protection (DG JUST)			€0.25	€0.61 / €5.23	

Source: Contractors' data monitoring reports, campaign specific evaluation reports

Based on this data it is difficult to draw any conclusion with regards to the performance of the corporate campaigns. #InvestEU continuation performs relatively well. It had the best result in terms of overall CPC as well as Facebook CPC, although the initial phase performed better when overall social media CPC is concerned. The evidence is too weak to confirm that the corporate campaigns perform better than non-corporate campaigns in terms of engaging digital audiences.

It is not possible to make benchmark against other EC communication campaigns across a wide range of cost metrics given the different ways of reporting in each campaign. Furthermore, as the corporate campaigns are still on-going, a full synthesis of the efficiency of the four campaigns at this stage is not yet possible.

On overall campaign CPM, the first phase of #InvestEU is higher than the other corporate campaigns but the campaigns are within the ranges of other EC campaigns.

In terms of CPM by channel the evidence suggests that:

- the Pilot was the most cost-effective overall and in digital advertising,
- EUProtects was the most cost-effective on Facebook,

¹⁴⁶ In KPIs tables the numbers were slightly different: #InvestEU first phase reported digital advertising CPC of €2.41, Facebook CPC of €0.39, and Twitter of €1.11.

¹⁴⁷ based on monitoring data provided (2.05-8.07 period).

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Depending on phase.

- the first phase of #InvestEU was the least cost-effective overall and on Facebook,
- the continuation of #InvestEU performed much better on Facebook.

On **CPC**: #InvestEU achieved the best results when overall social media and Facebook and the continuation achieved the best overall CPC result. The evidence is too weak to compare the corporate campaigns with other campaigns on CPC.

EQ5: Were the effects/ benefits achieved at a reasonable cost?

The evidence is too limited to confirm if the results of the corporate campaigns were achieved at a reasonable cost as the campaigns are currently on-going. However, the costs that can be observed appear to be within the ranges that have been reported from other campaigns. Taking the metric CPM, the initial phase of #InvestEU was higher than the other campaigns and the current evidence suggests that this cost has been reduced in the continuation of this campaign. Comparison with campaign CPC of a small sample of other Commission campaigns suggests that the three campaigns are likely to be within similar ranges. However, it is difficult to make direct comparisons given the multiplicity of factors that drive costs, including choices on the media mix used and the selection of target countries. Other factors are also described under the next evaluation question.

It is not possible to assess whether the effects were achieved at a reasonable cost using industry averages because comparable benchmarks for EC communication do not exist. As Professor Macnamara puts it: *There are no universal benchmarks or KPIs for public communication campaigns and no universal numbers, percentages, or rates that can be set for activities such as video viewership, recall, attitude change, etc. What can be achieved through public communication is contingent on many factors [...].*¹⁵¹ Using industry (market) standards which are not customized for corporate communication of a political entity could be misleading, because marketing campaign of an attractive product will (probably) attract higher reach and engagement than corporate communication, hence generate lower costs per unit for reach and recall.

However, comparing KPIs on the basis of similar previous campaigns by the same organisation is valuable exercise, which can facilitate progressive improvement approach.¹⁵² The data that will eventually become available from the corporate campaigns provides an initial basis for benchmarks for assessments for future corporate campaigns. This implies setting (a limited number of) cost-related indicators, and their consistent use in future corporate campaigns.

¹⁵¹ Jim Macnamara, *Benchmarks and KPIs / Indicators for Communication Campaigns*, Discussion Paper, University of Technology Sydney.

¹⁵² Ibid.

4.7 Which factors influenced the efficiency of the observed results?

To assess which factors influenced the efficiency of the observed results of corporate communication we have considered the following judgement criteria:

1. Extent that there were factors relating to the **corporate campaigns** which drove / or could drive efficiency,
2. Extent that there were factors relating to the **corporate approach** which drove / or could drive efficiency.

The following sub-sections report on the key findings, based on the sources listed above. The answer to the evaluation question is provided at the end of this section.

JC 1. Extent that there were factors relating to the corporate campaigns, which drove / or could drive efficiency

Sources of evidence:

- Interviews with DG COMM Headquarters, line DGs and EC Representation staff, contractors
- Corporate communication survey

The corporate communication staff survey provides an overview of staff views, including representatives of DG COMM Headquarters and Representations, line DGs, and EDICs on factors that have influenced the efficiency of the corporate campaigns.

In the survey target group segmentation and choices on channel selection per country were well regarded. The corporate communication survey also assessed the following elements of the campaigns in terms of contributing to cost-effectiveness:

- media planning and buying (within campaigns),
- synergies with national activities,
- engaging national personalities,
- differences in costs in Member States.

The feedback highlighted that there are, both opportunities and threats at the national level, which can boost or limit cost efficiency of campaign and the corporate communication. The opportunities are in particular related to exploring **synergies with national activities** in the Member States and **engaging national personalities**. Both elements were rated strongly by representatives of EDICs, according to the survey.

More than eight out of ten respondents from EDICs (82%) agreed that **synergies with national activities** in the Member States contributed to the cost efficiency (or otherwise) of the campaigns. This view was also shared by most of respondents from line DGs (58%), DG COMM Headquarters (54%) and Representations (52%). Respondents presented a similar view on **engaging national personalities or ambassadors**. About eight out of ten respondents from DG COMM Headquarters and EDICs (82% and 79% respectively), and most of other

respondents (58% from line DGs and 56% from Representations) agreed that is contributed to the cost efficiency (or otherwise) of the campaigns.

An element of corporate approach design and management which gain a less positive assessment was **media planning and buying**. In the survey, most of DG COMM Headquarters respondents (57%) and respondents from Representations (58%) indicated that *better funded media buying contributed to the cost efficiency (or otherwise) of the campaigns*, among line DGs respondents 39% agreed with the statement and the majority (53%) did not know. Indeed, the selection of channels has a significant impact on the efficiency of campaigns. In the case of #InvestEU, as presented above, Facebook CPM amounted to €3.76 and digital ads CPM to €4.20, whereas print advertising CPM was more than four times higher (€22.42). It was influenced by the fact, that well-established print media were selected for the campaign, but nevertheless, the selection of channels in media planning is one of the key factors for efficiency of communication campaigns.

In the interviews with Representations, there were similarly **mixed views on the extent that central media planning and buying are suited to national realities**. The number of positive feedbacks equalled the number of negative ones and the following was an averaged opinion:

Headquarters planning and media buying decisions are not bad, although sometimes they choose a strange local media.

One Representation also indicated it was consulted too late to fully contribute to media buying decisions.

Desk research and interviews in #InvestEU evaluation pointed at one element of the campaign affecting cost efficiency, i.e. an underestimation of the project selection process – both in terms of number of projects to be showcased and the effort required for their selection. This was also reflected in contractor’s final report.

It is not clear how **differences in costs in Member States** can contribute to the cost efficiency of the corporate campaigns. According to EUProtects contractor, Western Europe has a higher cost than Eastern Europe due to publishers being more expensive across programmatic display and audiences across Facebook and YouTube having higher competition.¹⁵³ Although most of respondents from Representations (56%) agreed with the statement that this element contributes to efficiency (or otherwise) and this view was shared by 43% of respondents from DG COMM Headquarters, many respondents found this difficult to assess, with a large proportion of “don’t know” answers (the majority 63% in case of respondents from EDICs). According to #InvestEU **evaluation report**, there were significant and unprofitable differences between the largest and the smallest Member States which resulted in high costs per recall. In Latvia, the campaign was assessed as being too intensive (reaching the equivalent of 350% of population) and generating higher cost, whereas in Germany the intensity was too low to achieve a strong impact (campaign reach amounting to 50% of population). Impact on recall was assessed as difficult to detect in the poll. According to the

¹⁵³ EUProtects, 2nd Interim Report.

evaluation report, this is an optimal budget spent in terms of frequency of exposure to an ad in order to achieve a certain level of reach and recall. In #InvestEU too much was spent in Latvia and too little intensity was in Germany.

Most stakeholders assessed that target group segmentation, selection of channels as well as exploring synergies with national activities and engaging national personalities / key influencers contributed positively to cost-effectiveness of the corporate campaigns. Media planning and buying was also assessed positively, but to a significantly less extent.

It is not certain how the differences in costs in Member States can contribute to the cost efficiency of the campaigns as the opinions of stakeholders were mixed and the evaluation of #InvestEU highlighted an issue with campaigns intensity (and costs) per Member State.

JC2. Extent that there were factors relating to the corporate approach, which drove / or could drive efficiency

Sources of evidence:

- Interviews with DG COMM Headquarters and EC Representation staff, line DGs, contractors
- Corporate communication survey

Stakeholders generally agreed that corporate structures in DG COMM Headquarters, line DGs, Representations, and EDICs were conducive to efficiency, and pooling resources seems to be the key value. We assessed the following elements of the corporate approach in terms of contributing to cost-effectiveness:

- pooling resources, synergies and economies of scale,
- reusing concepts and messaging, sharing good practices,
- organisational and management structures and networks,
- corporate approach from the perspective of Representations.

Pooling **resources** was highly rated:

- all but one respondent from DG COMM Headquarters (96%) agreed in the survey that the corporate approach had allowed line DG's to access communication channels, tools and approaches that would other-wise have been beyond their reach. Eighty-four percent of line DGs respondent, and 76% of Representations respondents agreed with the statement. 83% of respondents from EDICs agreed that pooling resources is important in conveying a single message.

Pooling **budgets** was also highly rated:

- More than two thirds of respondents from DG COMM Headquarters (68%) and line DGs (67%) as well as 71% of respondents from Representations agreed that

pooling of budgets contributed to the cost efficiency (or otherwise) of the campaigns. In familiarisation interviews, DG COMM Headquarters staff, but also line DGs staff, also referred to communication management and indicated that the **pooling of resources** (especially financial) was seen to have contributed to better collaboration between actors and fewer overlaps between messages.

Most respondents also agreed that **learning, re-use, sharing of campaign assets, economies-of-scale** had been supported within and between campaigns. This was confirmed by 85% of DG COMM Headquarters respondents, 68% of line DGs respondents, 60% of respondents from Representations, and 83% from EDICs. This was also confirmed in interviews with representatives from DG COMM Headquarters and line DGs, who suggested that the corporate approach to increased efficiency by reducing the duplication of certain activities. For example, if certain events or activities are pooled and organised through the same contract, the Commission has more bargaining power. Nonetheless, some officials (both in DG COMM Headquarters and line DGs) found that there are still overlaps in messages of different campaigns, making them less cost-efficient.

Reusing concepts and messaging has also supported efficiency gains: all but one respondent from DG COMM Headquarters (96%) agreed on this. The statement was supported by nine out of ten respondents from EDICs and Representations and 85% of those from line DGs. **Sharing good practices** was particularly appreciated by representatives of EDICs with more than nine out of ten (92%) agreeing that it contributed to the cost efficiency (or otherwise) to the campaigns. Two thirds of respondents from line DGs (63%) and Representations (68%) agreed.

According to the survey, **organisational and management structures** was the most positively assessed element in terms of contributing to efficiency (or otherwise) by the respondents from EDICs, out of which above three fourth agreed with the statement (77%), followed by 60% of respondents from Representations, 58% of line DGs respondents and 55% from DG COMM Headquarters. 86% of respondents from DG COMM Headquarters and about three fourth of respondents from all groups surveys also agreed that use of **existing networks and platforms** to support corporate communication EDICs, Reps, Citizens' Dialogues contributed to the cost efficiency (or otherwise) of the campaigns (74% of respondents from line DGs and 71% from Representations). Most of respondents from DG COMM Headquarters (55%) agreed with the positive contribution of **coordination function of the Steering Committee and the Communication Network**.

Interviews with **Representations** does not give clear answer if the corporate approach is cost-efficient from their point of view. Two out of six consulted confirmed it is cost efficient, whereas another four did not give clear answer, but instead reported certain issues with efficiency. Representations staff appreciated **administrative procedures being handled centrally**. On the other hand, they noted that **workload had increased** since the adoption of the corporate approach, however, to some extent this was alleviated through procurement and invoicing being done by the headquarters.

According to them, the increase in required time and resources was mainly attributed to working with local contractors, which interviewees found to be not cost-efficient. The quotes below give an illustration of the issue and illustrate the mixed understanding on this issue:

- *The corporate approach brought additional workload for the Representation. The main inefficiency is due to the coordination among different parties because the headquarters hired a central contractor, who hire the local contractor (without consulting the Representation). As a consequence, the Representation does not have direct access to the local contractor, but it rather reports back to the central contractor.*
- *The corporate approach massively increased the workload, especially to deal with local contractors. (...) Sometimes the Representation has to spend a lot of time and resources to come back repeatedly to the contractor because of different expectations. The approach of having a local contractor hired by the central contractor is not cost-effective.*

Interviewees found that by external contractors reporting back directly to DG COMM Headquarters, their flexibility was limited, and collaboration with these contractors proved at times challenging for the Representations due to divergent expectations, absorbing already limited time resources.

Limited human resources in Representations was one of the key issues reported by interviewees. They reported that:

- *The Representation would be happy to contribute to media planning and buying, but they would need more resources.*
- *To really be one hundred percent engaged in all campaigns there would need to be more people.*
- *We don't have enough human resources to assimilate the budget.*

This issue was also confirmed during interviewees with DG COMM Headquarters and line DGs, which also noted that **Representations often lack the resources and staff** to deal with requests related to the corporate campaigns in a timely manner. Whilst the Representations understand the importance placed on corporate communication, this needs to be balanced against the wide range of other tasks to be fulfilled with no additional staff¹⁵⁴ to provide support. It was also found that there **might not have been sufficient focus placed on the demands for human resources in DG COMM Headquarters** due to running three campaigns almost simultaneously (see section 4.9, JC 2.).

In terms of **organisation of media planning and media buying**, respondents from Representations confirmed they would like current processes to remain as they are. While they would be happy to contribute to decisions about media planning and buying, in terms of

¹⁵⁴ Evidence from other evaluations of communication confirm that even when additional financial resources and communication contracts are made available to the Representations and Delegations, this poses a challenge due to the additional responsibilities that must be managed by staff.

confirming or rejecting proposals made by headquarters, interviewees asserted that they do not have the resources (time, human resources, expertise) to participate in the process beyond that (such as actively contributing to the selection of types of media, activating local media net-works, assessing media budget distribution and / or creating complete media plans). As one of the interviewees put it, representations should play an “advisory role” in terms of media selection.

In terms of campaigns’ design and implementation the following factors contributed positively to the efficiency of corporate communication, according to stakeholders consulted:

- engaging national personalities,
- synergies with national activities.

On the other hand, there seems to be room for improvement in case of:

- media planning and buying

as there were mixed opinions about this element of campaigns’ implementation. Some evidence suggests that improvements can be made in terms of better adjusting central media planning and buying to suit national realities.

There is also mixed evidence whether:

- differences in costs in Member States

create opportunities or rather threats to cost-effectiveness of corporate campaigns. In fact, evidence suggests that these differences can create a challenge to properly balance distribution of financial resources among Member States to achieve similar results.

At the higher level of general corporate approach structures and processes and opportunities created by them, the following elements contributed positively to the efficiency of EC communication, according to stakeholders consulted:

- pooling resources and sharing assets,
- opportunity to reuse concepts and messaging and learning from them,
- sharing good practices,
- organisational and management structures,
- existing networks and platforms of cooperation between various stakeholders.

Opportunity to reuse concepts and messaging and learning from them was the key gain with the highest average of positive responses by stakeholder groups (90% on average), followed by pooling resources (85%). Opportunity for sharing good practices was particularly important gain for EDICs and so was the switch to handling administrative procedures, such as procurement, centrally for Representations.

EQ6: Which factors influenced the efficiency of the observed results?

There is limited information to confirm the efficiency of individual channels and tools in terms of their ability to generate outcomes given the fact that evidence from reached target groups is not linked to specific channels. Sharing good practices, assets and resources, reusing concepts and messaging, as well as the structures and processes of the

corporate approach itself were all found to contribute to its efficiency. However, lack of sufficient human resources in DG COMM Headquarters and the Representations was found to impede on the efficiency of the approach, as a lack thereof was identified to account for the high workload of running three campaigns at the same time, and, in the case of Representations, to maximise their involvement in corporate communication.

4.8 How relevant were the corporate communication activities to EU citizens?

To assess the extent to which the corporate communication activities were relevant to EU citizens, we have considered the following judgement criteria:

1. Extent that there is evidence to confirm that target group needs were clearly identified;
2. Extent that channels and tools were tailored to suit specific target group needs;
3. Extent that specific target groups notice and relate to materials and messages.

The following sub-sections report on the key findings, based on the sources listed under each judgement criteria. The answer to the evaluation question is provided at the end of this section.

JC 1. Evidence confirms that target group needs were clearly identified

Sources of evidence:

- Desk research: Global Literature Review on best practice in corporate communication, campaigns' ToRs, campaigns' technical proposals, Pilot campaign evaluation, #InvestEU final evaluation, EUandME and EUProtects interim reports
- Interviews with campaign contractors
- Focus groups
- Polling exercise

The literature review on best practice in corporate communication emphasised the importance of corporate communicators understanding their audiences. The review highlighted how many organisations continue to inadequately understand those with whom they seek to communicate. In addition to basic demographic data (age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status and geographic location) the review highlighted that audience insights such as their interests, desires, and attitudes related to the topic, should inform corporate communication strategy.

Moreover, the literature review found that all corporate communication should answer the question of “what’s in it for me” (WII FM) in relation to its audiences. Messages and content need to allow audiences to understand “what’s in it for them”. It is hence not enough to simply talk about the organisation, its vision, objectives, products, services or attributes.

The evaluation of the Pilot campaign found that there was insufficient qualitative research prior to the campaign, i.e. pre-testing conducted by the campaign agencies focussed on understanding target audience appreciation of finalised campaign story concepts but did not use audience insights to design these concepts.

The series of corporate campaigns under review, placed greater emphasis on upfront research. Focus groups and polling conducted by the synthesis study team confirmed that target audiences generally responded much better to the visuals and materials (website, videos) produced under the three current campaigns than they did to those produced to communicate the EU Working for You campaign (the Pilot).

However, the extent that the campaigns were **sufficiently relevant** to citizens’ concerns is difficult to assess. The topics communicated by each campaign related to the Commission’s policy priorities, taking into account public perception research on issues of most concern. Whilst citizens’ views were taken into account, the Commission decided on the list of topics tested with citizens. There may be **other topics** which would be better at engaging citizens, but these can only be defined through **unstructured, qualitative research**.

Choices on campaign objectives, key messages and the tone of campaigns, was defined in the Terms of Reference for each corporate campaign (see Table 31), without a clear link to a needs analysis exercise that these choices were based on.

Table 31: Corporate campaigns’ objectives, key messages and their bases as listed in the campaigns’ ToRs

Campaign	Objectives	Key messages	Tone
#InvestEU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to provide an opportunity for citizens to reach a more informed view of the EU and how it contributes to jobs and growth creation; to generate a measurable public recognitions (perception) of the EU action to boost jobs, growth and investment, so as to build common ownership of key challenges for the EU 	<p>To show Europeans how the EU creates the right conditions to boost jobs and growth by presenting a message that is rooted in reality and reflects the EU:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> as a catalyst, helping connect dots between needs / expectations and responses / solutions; as part of the solution, building alliances with governments, companies and people with everyone playing their part: a joint achievement under #InvestEU 	open, authentic and supportive, and appeal not only to people’s reasoning but especially to their emotions / values
EUandME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to trigger interest and generate a better-informed opinion about the EU by showing what it allows Europeans, especially the youth, to experience / gain / enjoy at all stages of life, wherever they are; to inspire a sense of belonging and an appreciation of core EU values shared between 	<p>“EU empowers”:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to show why the EU, in concerted action, is best placed to tackle the new global challenges / threats for the benefit of its people, thus generating hope: knowing where we come from to find the best way ahead to our future; to show that the European project is characterised by the capacity of peoples to stand 	sober, clear and contextual both to audience and place, demystifying, accessible and attractive, adapted to local circumstances

Campaign	Objectives	Key messages	Tone
	<p>different cultures on a continental scale;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • measurable public recognition of what the EU does for Europeans 	<p>united in diversity and adversity to face global challenges effectively;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to show that the EU can certainly do more, firmly anchored in shared, revived values – democratic freedoms, rule of law, inclusiveness, solidarity; • to take stock of where we are and what has been achieved in the European project – what makes Europe a place like no other: a place to live and to reach your full potential. 	
EUProtects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raising awareness: to generate a better-informed public opinion of EU actions in the fields covered by the campaign (protection, safety, security), including a better understanding of what the EU stands for and why; • change of perception: to reassure Europeans that the EU is acting to address their concerns and to inspire a sense of security and protection that we enjoy as a community of European citizens; and to achieve recognition among EU citizens of the EU’s role and importance within and beyond the continent. 	<p>“EUProtects”:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU values: the “matters of the heart” and the “underlying feeling which peace, security and opportunities bring”; • link between values and action: the protection that the EU provides to its citizens, the support it offers to others, and the stability it brings to the world; • being stronger and more effective in tackling challenges together; • the EU being part of the solution, cooperating beyond national interests and helping Member States. 	<p>concrete, value-based, based on emotions, concise, repetitive, balanced, simple, clear, positive, appealing and reassuring, modelled contextually to different socio-economic, cultural and political contexts</p>

The tone of the campaigns was also set in the campaigns’ ToR’s . For #InvestEU, the overall tonality was defined as “open, authentic and supportive, and appeal not only to people’s reasoning, but especially to their emotions / values”. For the other two campaigns, the ToRs emphasised that messages needed to reflect “real stories about real people” and defined the expected tonality as:

- “sober, clear and contextual both to audience and place, demystifying, accessible and attractive, adapted to local circumstances” (EUandME)
- “concrete, value-based, based on emotions, concise, repetitive, balanced, simple, clear, positive, appealing and reassuring, modelled contextually to different socio-economic, cultural and political contexts” (EUProtects).

Using a story-based approach, “with stories rooted in reality”, is in line with a recommendation from the evaluation of the Pilot campaign, which found that people were most interested in stories happening in their country and topics for which people can see relevance in their everyday life and how it benefits them personally (WII FM).

With regards to defining the target audiences of the corporate campaigns, there was also a tendency to adopt a top-down approach with broad definitions already set in the campaigns’ ToR’s, although contractors had scope to segment further the target audiences further based on their own campaign research:

- For the #InvestEU campaign, the definition of the target audience¹⁵⁵ was based on outcomes of a desk research study aimed at understanding the environment of opinions in which the campaign would take place. This was based on an analysis of responses in the Standard Eurobarometer survey, which led to the identification of Member States (differentiated by levels of trust in the role of the EU), in which the campaign would be most successful. However, the final selection of Member States was determined by the EU Representations’ knowledge of what is relevant in their Member State and interest to participate in the campaign rather than research on target groups. This was followed up by pre-campaign focus groups, in which creative materials were pre-tested.
- For the EUandME campaign, the target audience¹⁵⁶ was pre-defined in the campaign’s ToR, which appears to have been driven by the main objectives and key messages of the campaign. This was followed-up by the contractor at tendering stage with an analysis of Eurobarometer data, data on media consumption, and soft-sounding the campaign’s concept with European students at Ghent University, as well as in selected Member States, in addition to an in-house focus group composed of representatives of the target audience.
- For the EUProtects campaign, the target audience¹⁵⁷ was again broadly pre-defined in the campaign’s ToR in a way that appears to have been driven by the campaign’s main

¹⁵⁵ In the ToR, #Invest EU target groups are defined as “the population segments directly or indirectly impacted by specific projects, with a focus on the local and regional level”. The contractor subsequently further segmented this groups as “positives” (trust in the EU, positive image of the EU or optimistic about the future of the EU AND agree that the EU “helps to create the conditions for more jobs”) and “ambivalent” (trust in the EU, positive image of the EU or optimistic about the future of the EU BUT disagree that the EU “helps create the conditions for more jobs”).

¹⁵⁶ In the ToR, target groups are defined as: “Europeans aged 17 to 35 [...] also in an inter-generational dimension [...] whose level of awareness about the EU varies, and even when they are aware of EU opportunities, they do not necessarily consider that there is something in it for them.” The target audience was subsequently segmented further by the contractor, based on campaign research, into 25-35 and 17-24-year-olds, as these two groups were found to have different needs.

¹⁵⁷ In the ToR, the target group for #InvestEU is defined as the broader public, mainly those who are “ambivalent about the EU and in need of reassurance, who feel anxious about their safety and security [...] they consider the EU as part of the problem, do not see its added value and think the EU does not enough to protect them” and also “people for whom EU values and ideals are very important [and] are worried by growing populist and nationalist tendencies and think the EU does not enough to counter those”. The age group of the target audience was subsequently defined by the contractor as 35-55-year-olds to complement the EUandME campaign targeted at young Europeans. The first interim report of the EUProtects

objectives and key messages. This was followed-up by the contractor at tendering stage with an analysis of Eurobarometer data, data on media consumption, and an in-house focus group comprised of representatives of the target audience to pre-test the campaign's concept (in addition to soft-sounding the concept with local network partners).

As regards the segmentation of the target audience by attitude towards the EU, the documentation shows variable levels of evidence on which decisions to target those “ambivalent” towards the EU was based for each campaign:

- For the #InvestEU campaign, the decision to segment the target audience by attitude towards the EU was due to **limited capacity** in terms of the amount of resources to change the attitude of those EU citizens with a negative perception of the campaign, which was based on key learnings from the Pilot campaign.¹⁵⁸
- For EUandME, the technical tender shows that the contractor conducted a target audience needs analysis based on the ToR specification of the 17-35 age group, analysing young Europeans' image of the EU, their view towards EU values and their core concerns. Findings highlight that young people **are generally positive** towards the EU, and the technical tender notes that to “address an important goal of DG COMM Headquarters' corporate campaigns, which is to enhance the EU's image”, the campaign would aim at “**reinforcing this positive image** or ‘winning over’ the neutrals”.
- For EUProtects, the contractor follows DG COMM Headquarters' objective, as set in the ToR, to target “**ambivalent**” adult Europeans, noting that to target those form the anti-EU establishment would “require long term efforts to influence their beliefs and attitudes”. However, there is no indication of evidence to substantiate this statement.

Consequently, campaign approaches were tested by asking target audiences about their views on pre-defined topics, rather than carrying out sufficient pre-campaign research to first identify the target groups and then their specific needs, and then tailoring objectives and messages following the WII FM principle. However, we recognise that as an institution, the EC needs to define certain topics for communication that come from political priorities, which may influence the definition of the target audience.

In interviews, contractors noted that segmentation by topic was particularly important in the case of EUandME and EUProtects. They noted that for EUandME, the needs of 25-35-year-olds were very different from those aged 17-24, which is why the campaign was broad in its scope of topics.

campaign also further specifies the target audience as those who “live in rural areas and who have a lower level of education”, albeit the rationale for this further segmentation does not come out clearly in the campaign documentation.

¹⁵⁸ #InvestEU final evaluation.

For EUProtects, the contractor noted that communication was segmented for paid campaigns, story choices, type of selected media partnerships and heroes that were recruited. For each activity, stories were tailored to the target group. For example, the contractor considered that “a heat wave story is more appropriate to 50-55-year-olds than 35-40; that a bank deposit guarantee was more interesting to 35-50 and product safety was more interesting to parents. However, the contractor did not specify the research that these decisions on topic-selection were based on and it does not emerge clearly from the documentation review.

For #InvestEU, the contractor noted that segmentation into particular sub-groups was less important than for the other two corporate campaigns but noted a focus on using localised media and localised targeting and focussing on specific regions rather than metropolitan areas to enhance the relevance of projects presented to particular local groups.

The corporate campaigns under review placed emphasis on campaign research to support the design of communication to reflect target group needs. In this synthesis exercise, it was not possible to track all decisions taken and the rationale for these, but certain aspects of campaign design appear to have related to decisions, which were not necessarily based on research to confirm to target group needs. There was a somewhat mixed approach to decisions on targeting by attitude with some basis in research (EUandME) and some more practical decisions driven by budget (#InvestEU) and some decisions taken by DG COMM Headquarters (the focus on neutrals in EUProtects).

Campaign themes, tonality and target groups were defined before the EC drafted its campaign ToR, without being clearly linked to a needs analysis. Instead, the approach to defining these aspects drew on extensive public opinion research, but because the research method is still somewhat directive (by presenting a list of topics) this may limit the extent that target groups’ greatest actual worries / concerns are identified and can become the focus of communication.

JC 2. Evidence confirms that channels and tools were tailored to suit specific target groups

Sources of evidence:

- Desk research: campaigns’ ToRs, campaigns’ technical proposals, #InvestEU final evaluation, EUandME and EUProtects interim reports
- Corporate communication survey
- Interviews with Representations staff and contractors
- Focus groups

The desk review shows that both, the EUandME and EUProtects campaigns based their campaign approaches (selection of campaign topics, campaign channels and tools), on evidence from baseline surveys:

- for EUandME, the baseline survey tested the target group’s awareness and perceived importance of EU actions, their use of social media and engagement with information about the EU, with results differentiated by Member State;
- for EUProtects, the baseline survey tested the target group’s level of exposure to information about the EU by campaign topics, their media consumption, trust in the EU and their image of the EU, with results differentiated by Member States.

For #InvestEU, the campaign strategy built on evidence from the Pilot campaign, which, as regards channels, recommended to build “reach” by using a multi-channel approach, keeping TV in the media mix where possible. It also drew on an analysis of Eurobarometer data, that allowed for the mapping of profiles of countries (differentiated by levels of trust in the role of the EU) with the main media sources for information on EU matters. The analysis found that countries where levels of trust in the role of the EU were higher, the media mix should emphasise the internet, while in those countries more reluctant towards the EU, the media mix should give an important place to traditional media, such as radio and written press, as these media are much more used in these countries.¹⁵⁹

Overall, the campaign research highlighted the need for localised approaches with regards to the dissemination of information, which led to several adaptations of the campaigns’ approaches.

- The #InvestEU campaign adopted a **communication mix that was country-specific**, adapted and tailored to local circumstances and audiences in order to optimise both the impact and the cost-efficiency of the campaign communication activities. In each country, the local market plans included, for example, indication on which social media would be more efficient (e.g. in countries where Twitter was not such a large platform, communication activities were to focus on Facebook).¹⁶⁰
- The EUandME identified the **preferred channels** of the campaigns’ target audience through research into their media consumption habits already at tendering stage as TV, the internet, and social networks, with only slight differences between the two age segments (17-24 and 25-35) and Member States¹⁶¹, and noted adapting media selection to each country. The contractor interviewed noted, however, that the full potential for adaptations was not exploited sufficiently, as the EC was concerned with **replicating tools and channels used in each Member State**, rather than exploiting those which were most powerful if not affordable to the same extent in every country.
- The EUProtects campaign identified media consumption via the baseline survey, showing TV as the primary source of information in most of the targeted countries,

¹⁵⁹ Final #InvestEU evaluation report.

¹⁶⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁶¹ Kommitment: Public information and communication campaign towards EU citizens: “A Union that empowers” Technical tender, May 2017

followed by social media and online other media, which was in line with the campaigns' central paid media and outreach strategy at national level.¹⁶² This was followed by the contractor investigating additional possibilities to disseminate the content, incl. via public service announcement in all EU countries. However, the public service announcement is not reflected in the campaign tools reported in the campaigns' interim reports (see Table 32), which may suggest that it did not happen yet.

Table 32: Channels and tools used in the corporate campaigns

Campaign	Campaign tools	Dissemination channels
Pilot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Videos • Press advertisements and dedicated web banners • Social media content • Campaign website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Videos • Press advertisements • PR and events • Paid social media campaign
#InvestEU (first phase) (Some tools were adapted for the continuation phase)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Videos • Campaign website • Online content (social media posts/ads on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn; animated and static digital banners) • Offline content (country-specific brochures, flyers, billboards and posters) • Campaign user guide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EC central / EC Representation owned channels • Events • Traditional paid media • Social media • Earned media • Influencers
EUandME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fact sheets • Campaign website • Campaign movies • Young Directors' competition • Localised digital stories • Campaign toolkit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch event for short films • Earned social media • Paid social media • Media relations • Influencers
EUProtects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heroes' profiles • Campaign videos • Animated gifs • Editorial services related to the stories / chains • Campaign hub • Photo coverage of heroes from 32 stories in 27 Member States • Outreach toolkit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising (incl. media buying adaptations of 8 videos in 23 languages, translations) • Establishment of media partnerships with TV channels in 27 Member States • Owned media channels

The three corporate campaigns also tested their materials (tools) in focus groups:

¹⁶² DG COMM – EUProtects – Presentation of results of baseline survey, Meeting report, October 2018

- the #InvestEU campaign pre-tested campaign materials and messages in local languages, which, according to the contractor interviewed, led to adapting the level of messaging from top-level to more concrete examples and stories;
- the continuation of the #InvestEU campaign further allowed for adaptations based on lessons learnt from the first phase of the campaign, and resulted in a shift from individual project-based campaigns to more inclusive storytelling;
- the EUandME hashtag and slogan was selected from a range tested in focus groups, and focus group results led to an emphasis on “discovery” in the content of the campaign materials, as well as a refocussing of the empowerments;
- the EUProtects campaign evaluated the campaign concept and visuals against the specific campaign objectives and to understand drivers behind citizens’ preferences and most impactful themes and resulted in several recommendations to adapt media channels, scripts, the hashtag and themes; the contractor further conducted story length testing of the website, which found that participants preferred the short version of the EUProtects story, and that the website was considered well-made overall.

One specific way of tailoring corporate communication approaches was through the **use of influencers**. This was reported, by contractors and DG COMM Headquarters, to be the first time that influencers had been used on a larger scale for an EC campaign.

The choice of influencers was supported by an influencer mapping exercise, which was conducted in close collaboration with the Representations. The contractor for the #InvestEU campaign suggested that **influencers added value by enabling them to reach the younger age groups**. The same logic applied to the use of influencers in the EUandME campaign given the target audience. In interviews, the contractor noted that, as was the case in the #InvestEU campaign, all KPIs were surpassed for the use of influencers, and that the media partnership with Vice was a particularly “smart move” by the Commission to reach the target audience. The EUProtects campaign did not opt for using influencers, as, in the words of the contractor interviewed, the aim was to build on the premise of “**ordinary heroes**” and appeal to the target audience on a personal level, and the use of influencers was felt to contradict this message – at least in the storytelling of the ordinary heroes.

The **localisation** of messages and channels was central in all three campaigns. This was not only as a result of the Commission’s request for localisation in the campaigns’ ToRs, but also based on campaign research findings that showed differences by Member State. Indeed, one of the key findings of the evaluation of the first phase of the #InvestEU campaign highlighted the importance of understanding the national context and preferences of the target audiences in order to shape activities and the communication mix. One campaign strength identified was the focus on tailoring narratives to the national sensitivities and concerns, ensuring high relevance and good effectiveness.

However, in interviews with Representations staff suggested that there is still scope for more localisation by adapting materials more to local contexts to improve their suitability. In this

context, interviewees also voiced willingness to contribute to decisions about media planning and buying, to ensure the most appropriate selection of channels for their national contexts, in terms of confirming or rejecting proposals made by the Commission. However, they also stated that they did not have the resources to participate in the process beyond that (such as actively contributing to the selection of types of media, activating local media networks, assessing media budget distribution or creating complete media plans).

The need for further localisation of the campaigns was also repeatedly voiced in open comment responses to the corporate communication survey from respondents from other DGs, Representations and EDICs, as described in Annex C. In focus groups, participants who voiced less interest in the #InvestEU and EUProtects websites argued that this was due to insufficient information about local projects or issues relevant to their Member States.

The campaigns' channels and tools were tailored based on evidence from the Pilot campaign evaluation, media consumption data, baseline surveys and focus groups to suit specific target groups. A novel way of tailoring corporate communication approaches for the Commission was through the use of influencers, which contractors found to add value in reaching younger age groups in particular. However, findings from the corporate communication survey, interviews with Representations' staff and our own focus groups suggest that there is still further scope for localisation of the campaigns to ensure greater interest, resonance and impact.

The campaigns' channels and tools were tailored based on media consumption data, baseline and focus groups to suit specific target groups. However, findings from the corporate communication survey, interviews with EC Representation staff and our own focus groups suggest that there is still further scope for localisation of the campaigns to ensure greater interest, resonance and impact.

JC 3. Evidence confirms that specific target groups notice and relate to materials and messages

Sources of evidence:

- Desk research on:
 - Pilot evaluation, #InvestEU final evaluation, EUandME and EUProtects interim reports
- Focus groups
- Polling exercise

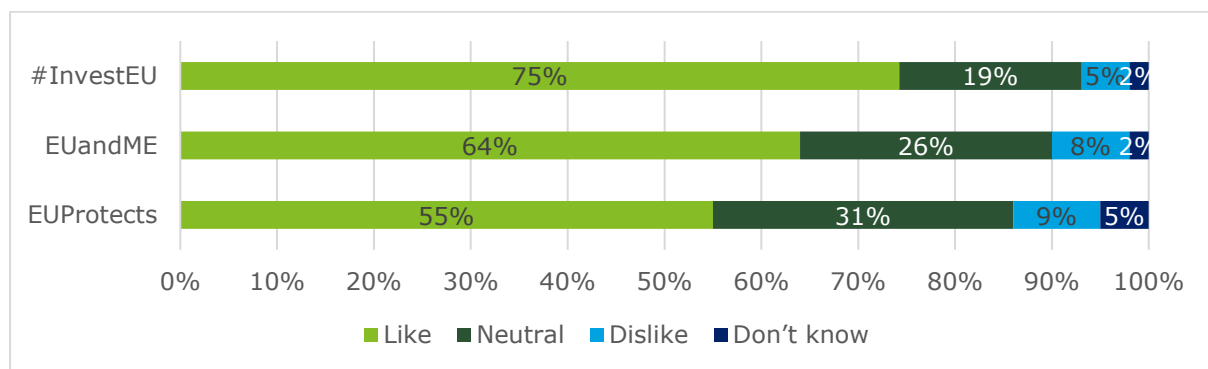
The evaluation of the Pilot campaign found that adverts should have been better targeted as people were confused about the abstract approach, the types of projects selected and the portrayal of other countries.

The evaluation of the first phase of the #InvestEU campaign shows that the target audience responded well, particularly to materials with themes linked to topical issues and to the more emotional issues, whether of national importance or benefitting the local community. In line with findings from the Pilot study, the relevance of the approach was further increased when

activities were tailored to the national context. Also, the EUandME interim report described how the campaign was overall perceived as “authentic” and “clear” and was well received by the target audience.

The results of the polling conducted as part of this synthesis study (detailed results can be found in Annex J) confirm that **most respondents within the three target groups** of the corporate campaigns liked the clips¹⁶³ they viewed and felt the issues presented interested people like them at least to some extent¹⁶⁴. The clip with the largest proportion of respondents who reported liking it within the specific target audience was #InvestEU (75%), followed by EUandME (64%) and EUProtects (55%)¹⁶⁵. Over one third of respondents who watched the EUandME and EUProtects clips felt “neutral” or “disliked” them (see Figure 13).

Figure 13: Polling responses on whether respondents liked the clip they viewed



Source: Polling exercise

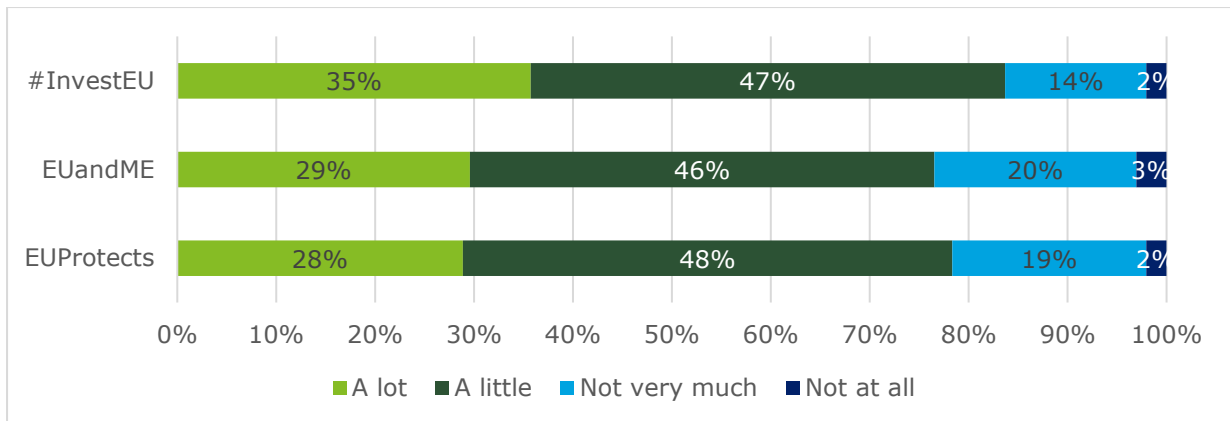
Slightly under one third of the respective target audiences polled felt that the EUandME and EUProtects clips presented issues that interested people like them “a lot” compared with 35% of respondents who watched the #InvestEU clip. Slightly less than half of respondents reported that the issues presented in the clips interested people like them “a little” in each target group polled.

Figure 14: Polling responses on whether respondents felt the issues presented interested people like them

¹⁶³ For the EUProtects campaign, respondents were shown 30 seconds teasers of ca. 4-minutes videos. Therefore, results from the EUProtects campaign should be treated with caution as respondents were presented with less content compared with the other two campaigns.

¹⁶⁴ For example, the target group for EUandME was 18-35-year olds with an ambivalent attitude towards the European Union. In the polling, 29% of respondents felt that the issues presented in the clip interested people like them “a lot” and another 46% that it interested people like them “a little”. 23% of respondents reported that the issues presented did not interest people like them “very much” or “at all”.

¹⁶⁵ Clips shown were: #InvestEU – Tech for breast cancer diagnosis (Bulgaria), Tech for the visually impaired (Germany), The Latvian University (Latvia), E-healthcare (Poland, Preserving marine life (Spain); EUProtects [teasers] – How Europe shattered a human trafficking ring (Bulgaria), How Europe came together to fight forest fires (Croatia, Latvia), Helping a patient with epilepsy (Germany), Patrolling the EU’s maritime border (Poland), The journey of an asylum seeker (Spain); EUandME – The story of Iliana (Bulgaria), The story of Ivona (Croatia), The story of Leonard (Germany), The story of Valters (Latvia), The story of Janina (Poland), The story of Kristin and Abraham (Spain).



Source: *Polling exercise*

There were, however, notable differences between results by Member States, with proportions of respondents who reported liking the clips coinciding with the proportions of those who felt that the issues presented interested people like them:

- for #InvestEU¹⁶⁶, the largest proportion of respondents who reported liking the clip was in Spain (89%), where also the largest proportion of respondents indicated that the issues presented were of interest to people like them (94%); the smallest proportion of respondents who reported liking the clip was in Latvia (73%), where also the smallest proportion reported that the issues presented interested people like them (73%);
- for EUandME¹⁶⁷, the largest proportion of respondents who reported liking the clip was in Bulgaria (90%), where also the largest proportion of respondents indicated that the issues presented were of interest to people like them (90%); the smallest proportion of respondents who reported liking the clip was in Germany (57%), where also the smallest proportion of respondents indicated that the issues presented interested people like them (67%);
- for EUProtects¹⁶⁸, the largest proportion of respondents who reported liking the clip was in Croatia (79%), where also the largest proportion of respondents indicated that the issues presented were of interest to people like them (91%); the smallest proportion of respondents who reported liking the clip was in Germany (51%), where also the smallest proportion of respondents indicated that the issues presented interested people like them (70%).

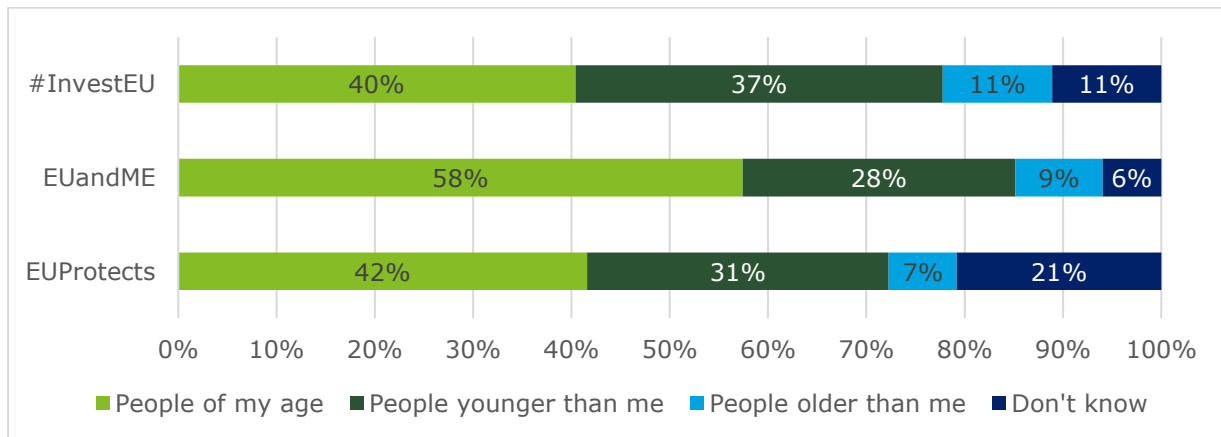
¹⁶⁶ Clips shown were: Tech for breast cancer diagnosis (Bulgaria), Tech for the visually impaired (Germany), The Latvian University (Latvia), E-healthcare (Poland, Preserving marine life (Spain)

¹⁶⁷ Clips shown were: The story of Iliana (Bulgaria), The story of Ivona (Croatia), The story of Leonard (Germany), The story of Valters (Latvia), The story of Janina (Poland), The story of Kristin and Abraham (Spain)

¹⁶⁸ Clips shown were: [teasers] – How Europe shattered a human trafficking ring (Bulgaria), How Europe came together to fight forest fires (Croatia, Latvia), Helping a patient with epilepsy (Germany), Patrolling the EU’s maritime border (Poland), The journey of an asylum seeker (Spain)

Target audiences were also asked who they thought the clips were for in terms of people of their age, or those younger or older than them. Only for the EUandME campaign, most respondents reported that the clip was for people of their age. For the other two campaigns, over one third of respondents felt that the clips were for people younger than them. For EUProtects, a notable proportion of respondents did not know who the clip was for (see Figure 15):

Figure 15: Polling responses on who respondents thought the clips were for



Source: Polling exercise

There were also notable differences in responses by attitude towards the EU. Across all three target groups polled, markedly larger proportions of respondents who reported feeling “very positive” or “fairly positive” towards the EU reporting that they liked the clip and that the issues presented interested people like them, than those who reported feeling “neutral”, “fairly negative” or “very negative” towards the EU.

In focus groups, the EUandME website generated the highest level of interest and ratings of usefulness among participants out of the three corporate campaigns, irrespective of whether participants defined their attitude towards the EU as “neutral” or “rather negative”. This was based on participants’ perceptions that they had learnt new information while browsing the website.

For #InvestEU, in most focus groups the majority view was that the content of the website was at least in part “interesting” and “useful”. These views were driven by the fact that participants liked learning new information about the different areas that the EU was working and investing in (also in their respective Member States). When participants voiced less interest in the website and considered it less “useful”, they mostly linked their arguments to the perception that the website was not targeted at them or that they did not see any benefit for them personally to know this information.

Views on the usefulness of the #InvestEU website were also strongly informed by who participants thought the website was for. In focus groups, where the majority view was that the website was overall “interesting” and “useful”, participants tended to respond that they thought the website was for “everyone” or “every EU citizen”. By contrast, in focus groups where the majority view was that the website was less “interesting” and less “useful”,

participants were more precise in who they thought it was aimed at, and specified “entrepreneurs”, “small companies”, “public institutions” or “only those looking for EU funding”. These findings contradict the opinions of some interviewees from line DGs who suggested that the target audience of the #InvestEU campaign was too broad to be addressed effectively.¹⁶⁹

For EUProtects, in most focus groups, opinions were split about participants’ levels of interest and perceptions of the usefulness of the website. Most participants who stated that they found the website interesting and useful based their opinions on the fact that the website provided them with new and important information about the EU’s work in the five thematic areas. Among participants who considered the EUProtects website less interesting and less useful, a recurrent opinion shared was that it did not provide enough information about their particular Member State, or did not cover topics that participants deemed important in sufficient detail.

However, across focus groups, participants found the websites to be overall a good way for people like them to find out about what the EU does and deemed this information to be very important. However, after probing, a number of recurrent criticisms came into the discussions, mainly that, while the websites could be useful, they are not easy to find, and, therefore, the information on the sites will not be accessed by “ordinary EU citizens”.

In addition, some participants also pointed out that it would be worth improving the design and layout of the websites to ensure that, if people find them, they would be attractive enough to capture their attention and stay on the site. The EUandME website was identified as the site the most able to achieve this.

The evaluation of the first phase of the #InvestEU campaign and our own polling results show that target audiences responded generally well to the campaign materials. However, there were notable differences in responses by Member States, as well as by attitudes towards the EU in general. Overall, markedly larger proportions of respondents who reported feeling “very positive” or “fairly positive” towards the EU also indicated that they liked the clips they viewed and that the issues presented interested people like them, compared with respondents who defined their attitude towards the EU as “neutral”. The polling results also point towards scope for more tailoring of the campaign materials, as (except for the EUandME campaign) only a minority of respondents who were within the defined age groups of the target audiences felt that the clips were for people of their age. In the case of EUProtects, a quarter of respondents indicated that they did not know who the clip was for.

In focus groups, perceptions of interest and usefulness of the campaigns’ websites were strongly linked to whether participants felt that the websites were targeted at them and provided sufficient localised information. The EUandME website was found to be the most effective at achieving this. For #InvestEU, participants who voiced less interest in the website argued that it was not targeted at ordinary citizens, but “entrepreneurs”, “small businesses” or “public institutions”. For EUProtects, participants less interested in the

¹⁶⁹ see section 4.2: What factors are influencing the achievement of the campaigns?, p. 67 in this report

website noted an absence of sufficiently localised information. However, overall, participants agreed that the websites were a good way for them to learn about the EU and found them informative, but also noted that they were difficult to find and would benefit from a more modern design.

EQ7: How relevant were the corporate communication activities to EU citizens?

Communication campaigns that have a strong fit between the issues they communicate and target groups' needs are likely to have strongest impact according to Professor Macnamara and are in line with the *What's in it for Me* principle. Since the Pilot campaign, the Commission has made strides in using campaign research (baseline surveys, focus groups) to tailor campaign materials and messages to better respond to target audiences' needs. Extensive data on media consumption habits of target audiences in different Member States informed the selection of channels and tools, and the Commission adopted specific approaches to tailoring, such as the use of influencers at an unprecedented scale. The success of these measures can be seen in markedly better overall responses from the target audience to the campaign materials tested in this synthesis study compared with the Pilot evaluation. However, decisions on campaign themes, tonality and target groups remain directive and reliant on public opinion data rather than truly bottom-up research to identify target audiences, their segments, and specific needs. There are also question marks with regards to targeting by age groups, as well as attitudes towards the EU, and the extent that these are segments that share enough characteristics to allow effective targeting. Finally, our findings highlight the importance of the localisation of messages to increase their relevance to citizens.

4.9 Did the objectives of corporate communication actions correspond to the needs from an EU institution perspective?

To assess whether the objectives of corporate communication actions correspond to the needs from an EU institution perspective, we have considered the following judgement criteria:

1. Extent that the goals of communicating as the wider EU addresses a gap in the previous approach to EC communication;
2. Extent that there are suggestions / evidence for ways to improve the corporate approach so that it better meets institutional needs.

The following sub-sections report on the key findings, based on the sources listed under each judgement criteria. The answer to the evaluation question is provided at the end of this section.

JC 1. Evidence confirms that communicating as the EU addresses a gap in EC communication

Sources of evidence:

- ✘ Desk research: DG COMM strategic plan 2016-2020, Europe in May 2019: Preparing for a more united, stronger and more democratic Union in an increasingly uncertain world. The EC's contribution to the informal EU27 leaders' meeting in Sibiu on 9 May 2019; Communication on corporate communication under the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020, Pilot campaign evaluation, line DG's communication plans
- ✘ Global literature review on best practice in corporate communication
- ✘ Corporate communication survey
- ✘ Interviews with EC staff

At the **strategic level**, the need for the European Commission to take a corporate approach to communication is well documented. The adoption of the Communication on corporate communication under the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020 in 2013 confirmed recognition of the need to change the approach to communication about the EU with Europeans and a genuine commitment to harness the EU communication resources to ensure a clear, consistent and cost-effective way of communicating. This highlights that the need to place communication at the heart of policy-making has been understood. This also confirms that the logic of communication is no longer conceived as an add-on to beautify EU policies.¹⁷⁰ Instead, it is intended to be part of policy making, with **institutions listening and then engaging with the public**.

DG COMM's strategic plan for 2016-20 emphasises that corporate communication within the Commission is a strategic function. The need for professionally-managed communication is also embedded in recognition of a stronger focus on professionalisation to enhance economies of scale, improve governance and generate efficiency gains with support at senior and practitioner levels through the Corporate Communication Steering Committee and the External Communication Network. This aligns with findings from the literature review on best practice in corporate communication, which defines corporate communication as a **key organisational function** that offers the framework for effective coordination of all internal and external communication with the overall purpose of establishing and maintaining favourable reputations with stakeholder groups (including citizens) upon which the organisation is dependent.

The literature review also confirmed that progressive corporate communication involves **collaboration, co-design and co-production**, including active participation by stakeholders and partners in planning and designing communication strategy and projects or campaign plans. In line with this principle, the corporate approach was reported to be effective at **breaking down silos in the EC's own communication** in its preparations for discussion on a

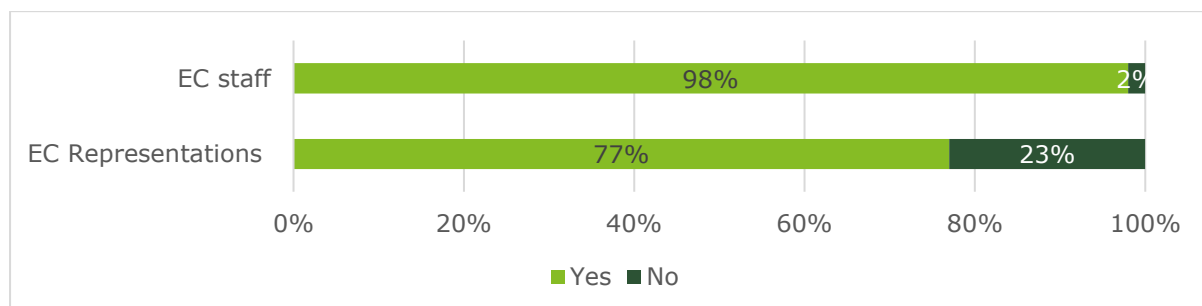
¹⁷⁰ European Commission Communication, *Corporate communication action in 2017-2018 under the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020* C(2016) 6838 final, 25 October 2016. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/3/2016/EN/C-2016-6838-F1-EN-MAIN-PART-1.PDF>.

stronger and more democratic union at the meeting of the EU-27 in Sibiu in May 2019. Line DGs’ communication plans also evidence adherence to collaboration in EC communication, as corporate communication objectives have been integrated into line DG communication strategies, which also state commitment to contributing to the corporate campaigns.¹⁷¹

The evaluation of the pilot corporate campaign notes as a key achievement of the pilot campaign that for the first time, the EC communicated to the public as one, using “the EU”, a term that citizens use interchangeably when they talk about EU institutions. The campaign was found to have contributed to addressing the gap between the public and the EU institutions, which had been identified at campaign baseline and included aspects such as trust in the EU being at a historically low level, citizens not feeling well informed about the EU, citizens noting that the EU need a clearer message, and citizens being interested in what the EU does.

The contribution of the corporate approach to communicating about the EU as a whole and, in doing so, filling a gap in the previous approach to communication, was also confirmed in interviews with EC staff from DG COMM Headquarters and line DGs. Interviewees found that, compared with the previous approach, the corporate approach **facilitates the EC’s ability to speak with a single and coherent voice**. Evidence from the corporate communication survey shows that most surveyed communication staff from the Commission and the Representations reported that the corporate campaigns fill a gap in EC communication:

Figure 16: Proportion of corporate communication respondents who affirmed that the corporate approach fills a gap in EC communication



Source: *Corporate communication survey*

In interviews with staff in DG COMM Headquarters and line DGs, this gap was identified as DGs communicating about their policy areas “**in isolation**” and separate from one another, and the EC being limited in its ability to communicate in a way that shows the EU as the clear owner of the message. By contrast, interviewees found that the corporate approach has facilitated collaboration between the different DGs in communicating different policy areas under the umbrella of the four corporate campaigns, and in doing so, reaching a broader audience and delivering a shared message across the Commission. The **role of DG COMM** Headquarters was considered crucial in providing strategic direction and governance to guide this process.

¹⁷¹ Examples of the integration of corporate objectives in line DG communication plans can be found in Section 4.3.

However, interviewees also noted that the process is still ongoing. On the one hand, this view was voiced with regards to the breaking down of silos within the EC being still dependent on the “good will” of DGs to cooperate with one another, and that there was still scope for enhancing the information flow about different communication activities between line DGs. On the other hand, it was voiced with regards to breaking down silos across EU institutions. Interviewees noted that while citizens see all EU institutions as the same entity, the “European Union”, the EU institutions themselves do not have this sense of unity and do not communicate as such. This was suggested to make it difficult to promote an “EU brand”, and interviewees suggested that the corporate communication approach needed to be developed further to include the different EU institutions.

The European Commission’s contribution to the informal EU27 leaders’ meeting in Sibiu in May 2019¹⁷² also notes the challenge of “how to communicate effectively across a whole continent in times of increased fragmentation and disinformation” and ensuring that citizens are well-informed about EU actions and the role of the EU when participating in EU elections. This objective is supported by the corporate campaigns, albeit broadly, in the definitions of their outcomes and impact and data collection on these:

- for #InvestEU, the outcomes are defined as **“a restored positive perception of the EU as a central part of the solutions to the challenges Europe faces today”** and impacts as **“improved image of, and support for, the EU”**;
- for EUandME, outcomes are defined as **increased awareness** (increased interest, association of campaign content with emotions), **understanding** (improved knowledge of one of the topics, specific initiatives / actions), and **actions** (increase in search terms relevant to the campaign, sharing and engagement with campaign content, increase in traffic to the website), and impacts as **improved trust in the EU and taking action** upon being reached on the message;
- for EUprotects, outcomes are defined as **increased awareness about the EU and understanding** (improved knowledge of at least one of the topics), as well as **engagement with campaign content** and communication about the campaign online, and impacts as **improved trust in the EU and positive “noise” online and in media** through partnerships / endorsements.

The corporate approach meets a strategic need identified by EC senior management and, in line with global best practice, is defined as a key organisational function in DG COMM’s strategic plan for 2016-20. It also supports the objective of “communicating effectively across the continent in times of increased fragmentation and disinformation” as identified in the informal meeting of EU27 leaders in Sibiu, through the corporate campaigns’ definitions of outcomes and impact, and data collection on these aspects. A majority of

¹⁷² Europe in May 2019. Preparing for a more united, stronger and more democratic Union in an increasingly uncertain world. The European Commission’s contribution to the informal EU27 leaders’ meeting in Sibiu (Romania) on 9 May 2019

respondents to the corporate communication survey reported that the corporate approach fills a gap in EC communication.

In interviews with DG COMM Headquarters and line DG staff, this was linked with the perception that the corporate approach has promoted greater cooperation between DGs. They found that cooperation is facilitated by the thematic breadth of the corporate campaigns, which allows for different policy areas to be communicated with a single and coherent “EU” voice. The commitment to greater collaboration on EC communication is also noted in line DGs’ communication plans which have integrated the corporate communication objectives and state line DGs readiness to contribute to the corporate campaigns.

However, there is still more scope for improvement, for example by enhancing the information flow about different communication activities within the EC. Also, there is a sense within the institution that to truly communicate “as the EU”, the different EU institutions needed to start working more closely together and agree on common messages and approaches.

JC 2. There are suggestions / evidence for ways to improve the corporate approach so that it better meets institutional needs

Sources of evidence:

- ▣ Desk research: Global literature review on best practice in corporate communication, #InvestEU final evaluation, Pilot evaluation
- ▣ Interviews with EC staff and EC Representation staff

This judgement criterion draws mainly on **staff views** on the extent that potential improvements can be identified and supplements this with documentary evidence to provide insights into the validity of feedback. However, this section does not attempt to capture all potential improvements, which are based on a wider range of evidence and described in response to other evaluation questions.

Strong coordination and effective governance structures are central to an effective corporate communication approach. The global literature review on best practices in corporate communication confirms that successful communication is about external and internal communication going hand-in-hand, an approach adopted by DG COMM Headquarters for their corporate communication. The #InvestEU evaluation highlighted the importance of coordination across DG COMM Headquarters, and with the Representations and the EDICs. The evaluation of the Pilot also emphasised that Representations, in particular, needed to be more strongly included in the corporate approach to fully exploit local knowledge, and consulted on aspects such as in-country timing issues and translations.

Coordination with the Representations and across DG COMM Headquarters has improved, but it appears at this stage that there is still work to be done across DGs (both centrally and the activities of other DGs in the Member States), as interviewees from DG COMM

Headquarters and line DGs noted that cooperation was still to a large extent reliant on willingness to cooperate rather than formalised processes for cooperation.

In interviews, EC and Representations' staff voiced several suggestions on ways to improve the corporate approach, so it better meets their needs. These were as follows:

➤ **Resourcing in DG COMM Headquarters / Representations:**

Whilst the corporate approach has made provisions for sharing budgets and additional financial support, it may not have placed sufficient focus on the demands for human resources. This is an area for review going forward.

Interviewees from DG COMM Headquarters recognised that running three campaigns almost simultaneously has created a high workload and put a significant strain on available human resources in DG COMM Headquarters. This was suggested to have led to a lack of proper coordination with line DGs on their individual campaigns in terms of content and timings, leading to overlaps and missed opportunities for reinforcing messaging and cross-branding.

Interviewees from DG COMM Headquarters, line DGs and the Representations noted that the Representations often lack the resources and staff to deal with requests related to the corporate campaigns in a timely manner, and that it would be helpful to have one person in each Representation dedicated exclusively to the corporate campaigns. It was also noted that organisation needed to be improved when allocating specific tasks to the Representations to ensure that they have enough time and resources to deliver.

➤ **Facilitating oversight of campaign progress:**

Whilst there is an intranet to support sharing of relevant documents and calendars, staff reported that layouts are not very accessible meaning that it is necessary to search for updates rather than these being clearly apparent.

Interviewees noted that collaboration between line DGs (and DG COMM Headquarters, including the Representations) could be improved by putting an on-line infrastructure in place that is accessible to all and informs line DGs about the progress of the corporate campaigns and requirements for materials in advance to allow them to feed in without running into tight timings. This was also raised as regards line DGs being able to follow other line DGs communication activities and link up to re-inforce messages, re-use materials or share good practices.

➤ **Possible improvements to campaign design:**

A number of suggestions were made:

- **Reducing the number of messages and content** was a potential improvement suggested. Some interviewees in both DG COMM Headquarters and line DGs noted that it would be beneficial to limit the number of campaigns as they considered that there were still overlaps in messages. The volume issue was also raised by campaign

contractors who suggested that the number of individual messages and content conveyed were in effect a lot of mini campaigns.

- **Strengthening the ‘real-time’ relevance** of corporate campaigns, by requiring contractors to quickly adapted materials to economic, social and political issues **as they emerge**.
- Allowing Representations “**more freedom**” to deciding how to tailor messages to the sensitivities and interest of their national audiences. Interviewees noted that one of the key challenges for the corporate approach in this regard was to find the right balance between being daring to communicate EU values and avoiding counterproductive reactions in some Member States. More flexibility in campaign design based on continued dialogue with Representations was suggested to aid finding this balance.

📌 **Campaign monitoring and measurement:**

Interviewees also suggested to dedicate staff to review corporate campaigns’ monitoring and evaluations in-depth in a timely manner to allow for the application of lessons learnt and to feed findings from evaluations into next campaigns phases. This was suggested to also be a question of requiring additional human resources.

In addition, the number of metrics being reported and the formats in which they are presented by contractors has made it difficult to have a good understanding and overview of campaign progress. Linked to this aspect, interviewees in DG COMM Headquarters and line DGs noted that there was still a need to **improve benchmarking** of the corporate campaigns and of EC campaigns in general, to be able to assess any direct impact on DGs own communication activities.

Staff have identified a number of areas for improvement and suggestions for ways to improve the corporate approach to meet their needs centred on increasing resourcing in DG COMM Headquarters to account for the high workload brought on by running three campaigns at the same time and alleviate any pressures and missed opportunities when it comes to coordinating with line DGs’ own communication activities.

Representations could benefit from a human resource specifically dedicated to the corporate campaigns in each Member State, and that any impact assessments of the corporate campaigns on line DGs campaigns would require improved benchmarking.

Other suggestions include improving the accessibility of information by improving / creating information-sharing infrastructure (corporate campaign calendars, other EC campaign calendars, line DGs communication plans) in order to facilitate collaboration between line DGs and DG COMM Headquarters on communication actions.

The campaigns are complex in terms of the volume of messages, content, channels and tools and this complexity exacerbated by the number of campaigns. Some staff and contractors question whether the number of elements should be reduced, which could

make management and oversight of campaign progress easier and reduce possible fragmentation of efforts.

Recognition of the benefits of adapting corporate communication to unforeseen, real-time events / to take account of the sensitivities and interests of citizens in the different Member States, is also suggested.

EQ8.i: Did the objectives of corporate communication actions correspond to the needs from an EU institution perspective?

The corporate approach meets a strategic need identified by EC senior management and, in line with global best practice, is defined as a key organisational function in DG COMM's strategic plan for 2016-20. Evidence confirms that the corporate approach fills a gap in the previous approach to EC communication in terms of

- an enhanced commitment across the Commission to deliver messages about the EU “as a whole”,
- facilitating collaboration between different DGs which manage complementary policy areas
- communicating different policy areas under the umbrella of the three corporate campaigns in a single and coherent voice that shows the EU as the clear owner of the messages.

However, several considerations need to be made for the approach to correspond to the needs from an EU institution perspective, which include:

- adequate resourcing, measurement, reporting and prioritising in DG COMM Headquarters and the Representations to alleviate any pressures and missed opportunities in the coordination of broader EC communications due to the running of three campaigns simultaneously. Otherwise, reducing the number of campaigns could be considered to simplify processes that drive campaign management and oversight.
- infrastructure in place to facilitate accessible information sharing between the different actors involved.
- flexibility in campaign design to respond to unforeseen, real-time events and account of the sensitivities and interests of citizens in the different Member States to strengthen the approach's objective of addressing citizens' needs.

4.10 How relevant were the corporate communication activities to the Commission's line DGs?

To assess the extent to which the corporate communication activities were relevant to the Commission's line DGs, we have considered the following judgement criteria:

1. Extent that there is evidence to confirm that the corporate approach supports line DG communication needs
2. Extent that there is evidence to confirm that line DG’s work was taken into account in the EU-wide corporate communication approach and these processes were manageable;
3. Extent that synergies were generated between line DGs, DG COMM Headquarters and the Representations.

The following sub-sections report on the key findings, based on the sources listed under each judgement criteria. The answer to the evaluation question is provided at the end of this section.

JC 1. Evidence confirms that the corporate approach supports line DG communication needs

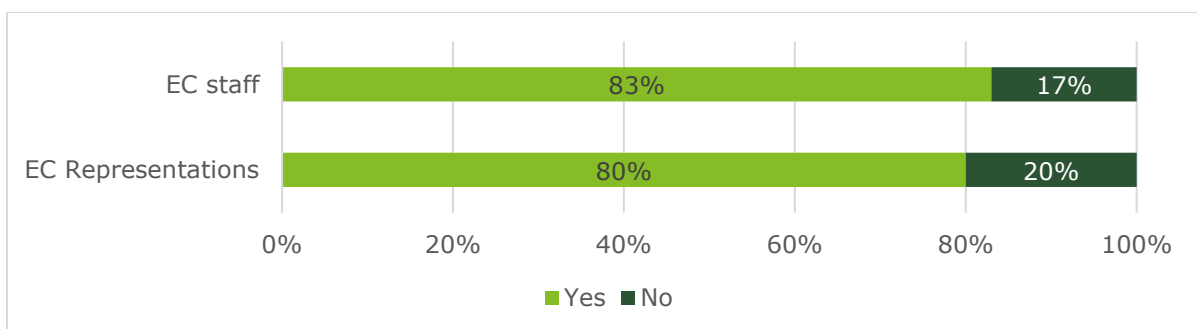
Sources of evidence:

- Corporate communication survey
- Interviews with EC staff and Representations staff
- Selected line DGs campaign evaluations

Whilst line DGs have contributed to a more joined-up approach to communication about the EU, this criterion explores the extent that line DGs’ own communication needs have also been supported.

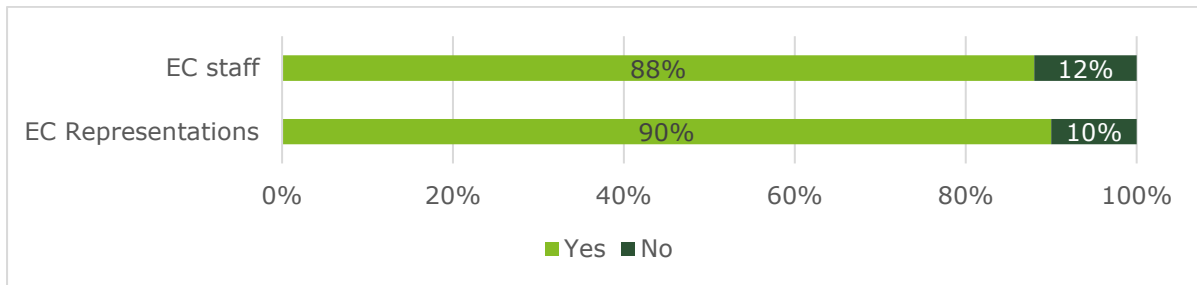
In the corporate communication survey, most staff from the Commission and the Representations reported that pooling resources increased reach of individual policy areas (see Figure 17) and of their potential impact (see Figure 18):

Figure 17: Proportions of corporate communication survey respondents who affirmed that pooling resources increases reach of individual policy areas



Source: Corporate communication survey

Figure 18: Proportions of corporate communication survey respondents who affirmed that pooling resources increases the potential impact for individual policy areas



Source: Corporate communication survey

The survey findings are also supported by feedback through interviews. Most line DGs' communication staff considered that the corporate approach had, overall, been a "gain" for them, as it allowed them to draw on the professionalisation of materials and secure broader reach than they had previously been able to. Several line DG interviewees linked this to the fact that their line DGs operated with significantly **smaller budgets**¹⁷³ than the corporate campaigns and thus ran campaigns that tended to be shorter and much less elaborate.

However, none of the interviewees from line DGs were able to assess the direct impact of the corporate communication approach on their own communication based on evidence. Some reported that they only collect KPIs for very specific campaigns and thus could not assess the general impact of the approach on the visibility of their DG. Others believed that there was not a clear enough connection between their own communication activities and the corporate campaigns to assess a causal link of any improvements observed, particularly as most corporate campaigns are still on-going.

Representatives of DGs that traditionally only communicate to stakeholders assessed the **shift towards communicating with the broader public** through the corporate campaigns particularly positively and valued the **opportunity to engage EU citizens on their policy issues** in addition to communicating with stakeholders. In this context, EC staff found that the approach had led to a widening of the scope of policy areas communicated to the general public, as, according to interviewees, the policy areas that previously had received a lot of attention from a communication perspective tended to be ones that were attached to large sums of funding, creating an unbalanced public image of the policy areas operating within the EC. However, in both interviews and the corporate communication survey, staff from line DGs emphasised that there is still a need to continue with communication that is specifically targeted at stakeholders.

Most EC and Representation staff surveyed tended to agree that pooling resources has led to increased reach and impact of individual policy areas.

¹⁷³ For example, the budget for the "2014-15 Consumer Rights Awareness Campaign" (DG JUST) was EUR 1,698,989, for the "Knowing your rights with regard to consumer credit campaign" (DG SANTE) EUR 950,000, and for the "Communication actions on the European Pillar of Social Rights" (DG EMPL) EUR 47,838.

In interviews, line DGs staff particularly valued the benefits of being able to draw on professionalised campaign materials and to communicate about their policy areas to the general public. However, none of the line DG interviewees were able to assess the impact of the corporate approach on reinforcing their DG’s messages, due to a lack of comparable data collected on DGs’ own communication activities.

Some also noted the absence of a direct link between their DGs’ own campaigns and the corporate campaigns, in cases where line DG communication was targeted at the broader public. Given that most of the corporate campaigns are still on-going, there was no data available for synthesis to assess any potential impact of the corporate campaigns on line DGs’ own communication activities.

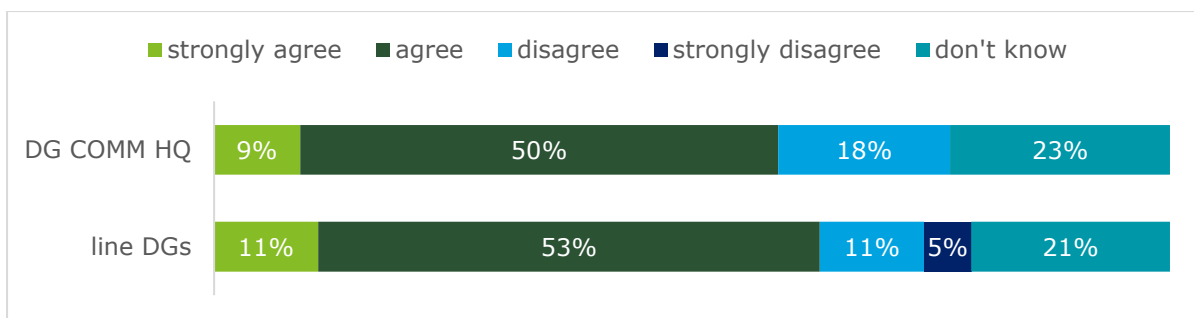
JC 2. Evidence confirms that line DG’s work was taken into account in the EU-wide corporate communication approach and that processes involved were manageable

Sources of evidence:

- Corporate communication survey
- Interviews with EC staff and campaign contractors

In the corporate communication survey, most respondents from line DGs “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that they were sufficiently involved in the corporate campaigns. This perception was also shared by most respondents from DG COMM Headquarters (see Figure 19).

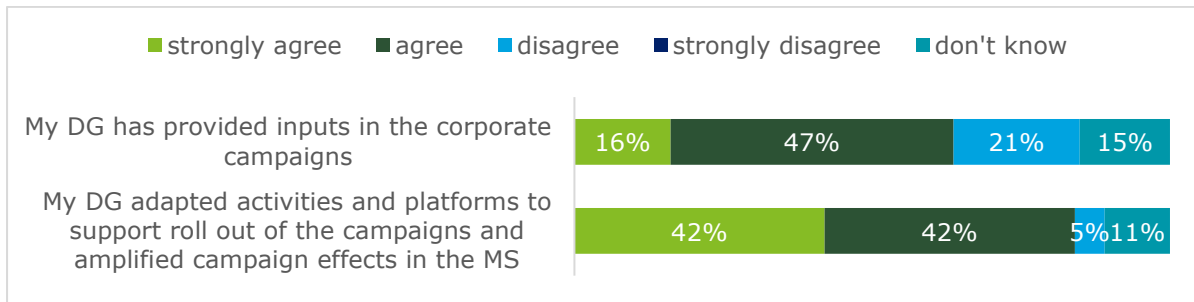
Figure 19: Extent to which EC staff agreed or disagreed that line DGs were sufficiently involved in the corporate campaigns



Source: Corporate communication survey

Most respondents from line DGs also tended to “agree” or “strongly agree” that their DG had provided inputs to the corporate campaigns, and that they adapted their activities and platforms to support roll-out of the campaigns and amplify campaign affects in the Member States (see Figure 20).

Figure 20: Extent to which line DGs' staff agreed or disagreed that their DG has provided inputs / adapted activities and platforms to support the corporate campaigns



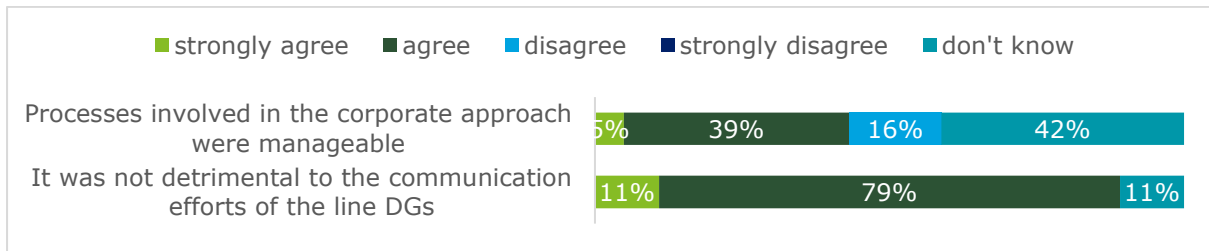
Source: Corporate communication survey

In interviews, line DGs officials described their role in corporate communication as contributors and experts with regards to content. They stated that efforts had been made by DG COMM Headquarters to take an approach broad enough to allow line DGs to find an angle that is still relevant to their own messages and audiences. Some line DGs also acknowledged that the corporate approach allows them to target people outside of their usual scope as well as address the general public more, and that this is relevant to them. Interviewees stated, however, that line DGs still need to continue their own campaigns to be sure to target their stakeholders while also complementing corporate communication. This was also a recurrent finding in open comments to the corporate communication survey, where respondents stated that corporate campaigns were unable to replaced needed stakeholder and expert engagement, albeit certainly contributing to a single EU message and enabling line DGs to reach new audiences.

Contractors interviewed also noted that line DGs showed great engagement in the corporate campaigns and great interest in providing ideas and stories. In this context, the found it valuable to have **DG COMM Headquarters acting as an intermediary** between themselves and line DGs, as DG COMM Headquarters was found to be better suited than contractors to navigate the EC's internal political atmosphere and to moderate suggestions on content from line DGs. This was considered important given that line DGs were found to tend to focus on stories that they found politically interesting and valuable, but which might not have high communication value or fit the corporate communications concepts and / or strategy.

However, views of respondents from line DGs who participated in the corporate communication survey were mixed on processes involved in engaging in the corporate approach. Forty-four percent "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that processes involved in the corporate approach were manageable and 42% reported that they "did not know" how to answer this question. However, most respondents from line DGs reported that the corporate approach was not detrimental to their own communication efforts.

Figure 21: Extent to which line DGs' staff agreed or disagreed that processes involved in the corporate approach were manageable and not detrimental to their communication efforts



Source: Corporate communication survey

In interviews, DG COMM Headquarters officials recognised that having three campaigns running almost simultaneously has some pitfalls, one of which included limited time for decision-making. This was found to result in DG COMM Headquarters making at times “unreasonable, last-minute requests” to DGs. However, this view was not voiced by interviewees from line DGs.

To facilitate the process of managing line DGs inputs, contractors suggested that line DGs needed to be provided with more editorial guidance from the beginning of the process, to ensure that they have a good sense of what makes a compelling story and fulfils the criteria for a chain.

In the corporate communication survey, respondents from line DGs reported that they were sufficiently involved in the corporate campaigns and that they had provided inputs. In interviews, they defined their role in corporate communication as “contributors and experts” on content and stories. In this context, interviewees from line DGs valued that the corporate campaigns were broad enough to incorporate their own messages and enabled them to communicate with the general public in addition to communication targeted at stakeholders.

There is very limited evidence to assess whether the processes involved in the corporate approach were manageable or worked at line DG level. However, findings from the corporate communication survey suggest that the approach was not detrimental to the communication efforts of the line DGs, and interviewees from line DGs did not voice any specific concerns about additional workload resulting from the EC adopting the corporate approach.

However, contractors interviewed identified further scope to improve the management of line DGs inputs into the corporate campaigns. They suggested that DG COMM Headquarters provides more editorial guidance to line DGs from the start of the process to ensure their stories are compelling and suited to the corporate approach.

JC 3. Synergies were generated between line DGs, DG COMM Headquarters and the Representations

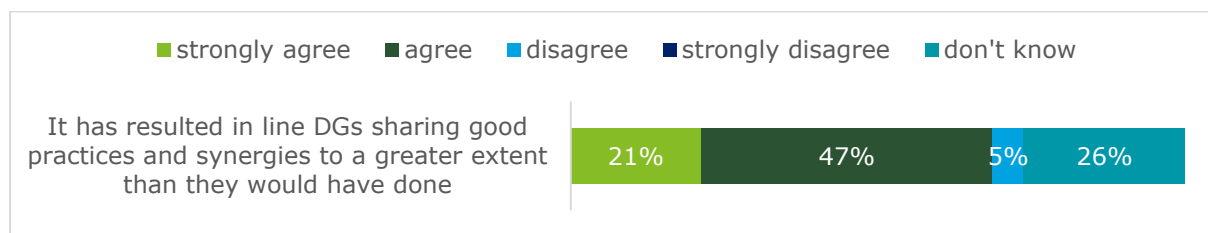
Sources of evidence:

- Corporate communication survey
- Interviews with EC and EC Representation staff

To assess whether the corporate approach was relevant to line DGs needs, we also considered whether it brought any additional value to line DGs’ own communications and approaches, for example, by generating synergies between line DGs, DG COMM Headquarters and the Representations.

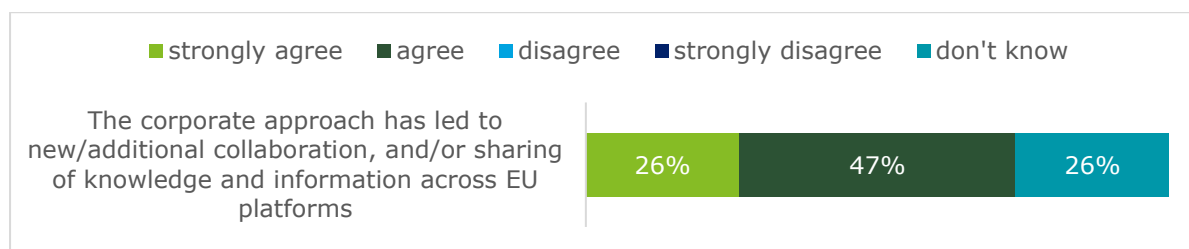
In the corporate communication survey, most respondents from line DGs “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the corporate communication approach has resulted in line DGs sharing good practices and synergies to a greater extent than they would have otherwise (see Figure 22). Most also “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the corporate approach has led to new / additional collaboration and / or sharing of knowledge and information across common EU platforms. (see Figure 23).

Figure 22: Extent to which line DGs respondents agreed or disagreed that the corporate approach resulted in sharing good practices and synergies



Source: Corporate communication survey

Figure 23: Extent to which line DGs respondents agreed or disagreed that the corporate approach resulted in new/additional collaboration and/or sharing of knowledge and information



Source: Corporate communication survey

These findings were also confirmed in interviews with EC staff. DG COMM Headquarters officials found that there was general cross-fertilisation in terms of other DGs complementing and promoting the corporate campaigns with their specific communication activities. Line DGs officials noted that the corporate approach had the potential to break down silos within the EC, enabling them to link up with other DGs on relevant topics and learning from their

communication approaches and solutions. This process was, however, still ongoing, as collaboration between DGs (and their collaboration with DG COMM Headquarters) was overall found to rely on their “goodwill” in order to fully realise the potential for synergies.

EC Representation officials interviewed also found that they were sufficiently consulted in the development of corporate materials and activities (in terms of revisions, translations, advice). They acknowledged, however, that their contributions to the design of the corporate campaigns were limited, since design decisions were made centrally, and that the campaigns could benefit from greater inclusion of Representations’ knowledge about their citizens.

In interviews, EC Representation officials also noted that the campaigns have served as inspiration for their own communication activities, particularly as regards the use of local heroes. They also highly valued the knowledge exchange between Representations of different Member States, which they attributed to the corporate approach, as it was found to have opened up collaboration to exchange insights and learning about what has worked well and what could be improved with regards to the corporate campaigns.

According to EC staff surveyed and interviewed, the corporate approach has led to greater synergies and sharing of good practices between DGs, however, this process was still regarded as on-going as collaboration between DGs was found to rely on “good will” of the actors involved. Representations’ staff interviewed also confirmed that they were able to revise and advise on the corporate campaigns, and that the corporate approach had led to greater collaboration between Representations of Member States to exchange insights and learning on what has worked well / could be improved in the corporate campaigns. However, Representations’ staff noted scope for further synergies and the inclusion of their knowledge about their citizens to inform campaign design.

EQ8.ii: How relevant were the corporate communication activities to the Commission’s line DGs?

The corporate approach supports line DGs communications of their own policy areas through adopting campaign themes that are broad enough to allow for the inclusion of different policy fields and Line DGs consulted for the synthesis study also find themselves sufficiently involved in the corporate campaigns. Greater synergies and sharing of good practices between DGs emerge as one of the key positive developments since the adoption of the approach. However, there is no data to draw conclusions on the actual impact of the corporate campaigns on line DGs campaigns. Evidence on the extent that the processes involved in corporate communication were manageable at line DGs level is also very limited, and does not allow for robust conclusions on the ways in which approach has impacted work at line DG level. However, we agree with contractors’ suggestions that providing line DGs with more editorial guidance to ensure that they can align their inputs more closely with the corporate approach could improve management of line DGs inputs into the corporate campaigns.

4.11 Did the various corporate communication activities (corporate campaigns and local activities by the Representations) work well together?

To assess whether the various corporate communication activities (corporate campaigns and local activities by the Commission Representations) work well together, we have considered the following judgement criteria:

1. Extent that planning and coordination between Representations and DG COMM Headquarters added value to the rollout of the corporate campaigns and local activities;
2. Extent that Representations' support to corporate campaigns and activities amplified campaign effects in the Member States.

The following sub-sections report on the key findings, based on the sources listed above. The answer to the evaluation question is provided at the end of this section.

JC 1. Planning and coordination between the Representations and DG COMM Headquarters added value to the roll out of the corporate campaigns and local activities at local level

Sources of evidence:

- Desk research: Minutes of Communication Network meetings, final evaluation of the #InvestEU campaign
- Interviews with DG COMM Headquarters staff, EC Representation staff and national government communicators
- Corporate communication survey

Among the duties of DG COMM Unit C.2 Political and Economic Intelligence¹⁷⁴ is coordination of responsible for coordinating the corporate campaign process with the Representations. Unit C.2 is updated by Unit B.1 on corporate campaign development, making sure that they are informed in good time to support Representations' own planning. There is a contact point for each campaign within this unit. In addition, DG COMM Headquarters' Political and Economic Intelligence Unit has regular video conferences with the Representations.

As explained in the evaluation of #InvestEU, there is a **“semi-decentralised” approach, with a centrally overseen pan-European campaign combined with campaigns, designed and implemented by the Representations with support from the contractors' local network.**

National government communication representatives are outside this process of localisation. Only one of six representatives interviewed knew of all three corporate campaigns.

¹⁷⁴ DG COMM Directorate C is responsible for coordination with the Representations and with communication at Member State level.

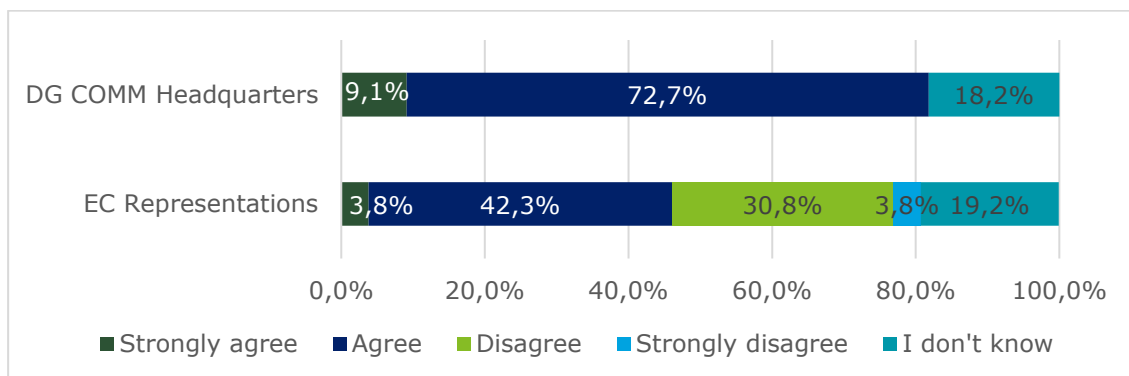
The Representations receive a top-up budget to support their involvement in the corporate campaigns. Amounts are based on the activities suggested by the Representations for the following year and their link with the corporate campaigns. This process allows the Representations to include some corporate activities in their Actions Plans for the following year¹⁷⁵.

According to some interviewees from DG COMM Headquarters, it was not always possible initially to execute the additional budget for the Representations due to the Representations' limited internal capacity to take on extra-work. **The Representations have now fully incorporated their involvement in corporate communication in their planning** and, in the last three years, there has always been full budget execution.

Interviews with some DG COMM Headquarters officials and with the Representations indicated that there were unclear expectations at the beginning of each campaign on the Representations' contribution to the content of the campaigns or dissemination activities. In consequence, some Representations (especially the smaller ones) found it hard to plan and meet DG COMM Headquarters' requests in time.

There is evidence in the online survey of capacity issues in Representations, which also surfaced in interviews with Representations. **DG COMM Headquarters' positive view of the processes associated with Representations' involvement in the corporate approach being manageable** (more than four out of five respondents) is **tempered somewhat by that of the Representation** (fewer than half the responses are positive).

Figure 24: DG COMM Headquarters' and Representations' officials' views regarding the extent to which processes involved in the corporate approach were manageable



Source: Corporate communication survey

This finding is supported by the report on the evaluation of the #InvestEU campaign, which pointed to a lack of clarity in the division of labour in terms of responsibility and accountability. Reporting by the #InvestEU contractor also pointed to teething problems, with the message that the target audience had changed from that of the previous stakeholder campaign and that responsibility needing to shift from the European Semester officer to communication staff not getting through and stakeholders being understood still to be the

¹⁷⁵ In 2019 all the Representations, with the exception of that of Denmark and UK, included activities linked to the corporate campaigns.

focus. By contrast, for the launch of EUProtects, DG COMM Headquarters organised a one-day workshop in Brussels with officials from the Representations, to present the campaign and clarify their involvement.

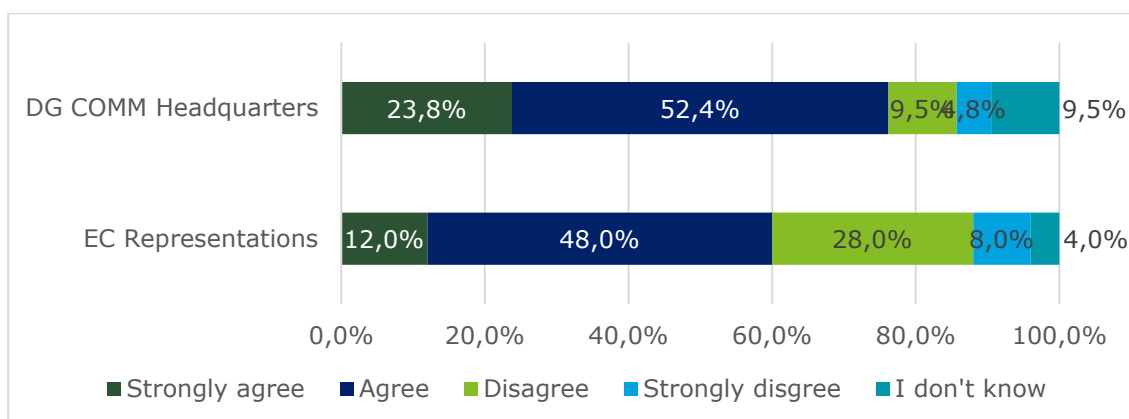
The goal is for Representations to now play a greater role in the design of corporate campaigns as well as implementing them in the Member States. Interviews with DG COMM Headquarters officials also indicate that the level of involvement of the Representations in the corporate campaigns has increased over time, as **a cultural shift is ongoing and the Representations now recognise the prominent role they should play in the corporate campaigns.**

However, this is a work in progress. In interviews, Representation officials felt that their contributions to the design of the corporate campaign themes, targeted countries, tools and channels were limited, since these decisions were made centrally. The balance is also a difficult one to strike: two contractor interviewees felt that Representations had too much individual freedom by DG COMM Headquarters on the choice of topics and ways of implementing a campaign, thereby threatening its overall coherence

In practice, **the level of involvement of the Representations varies**, as discussion under the next judgement criterion confirms, primarily due to human resource constraints. Although DG COMM Headquarters has worked to develop a coordinated approach, with strategic choices on what Representations can and should deliver in the context of the corporate campaign, Representations see this as **a significant addition to their workload.**

Perceptions of interviewees from the Representations were mixed, for example, regarding the extent to which Representations receive sufficient notice to organise the corporate campaign activities in their Member State. Half of interviewees stated that deadlines given by DG COMM Headquarters were adequate and allowed sufficient time for planning. Others indicated that there was not enough time for them to provide feedback on the draft materials. This was confirmed in the survey, where there is a difference in perception between DG COMM Headquarters (more positive) and Representations as to whether the Representations have received sufficient notice.

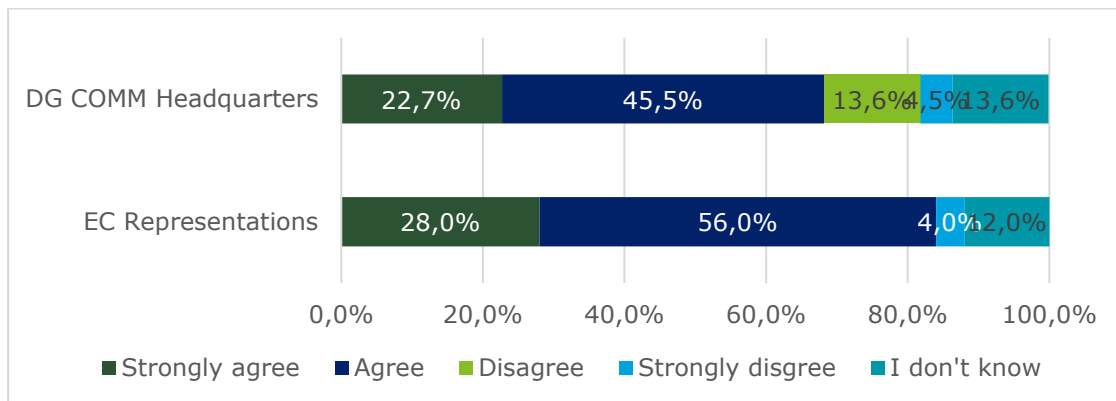
Figure 25: DG COMM Headquarters' and Representations' officials' opinion on whether the notice provided to Representations for campaign activities in their Member State is sufficient



Source: Corporate communication survey

Interviewees from the Representations were more satisfied than those in DG COMM Headquarters with the level of consultation on the development of corporate materials or activities (in terms of revisions, translations and offering advice). This finding is also supported by the survey; most respondents both from DG COMM Headquarters (68.2 %) and from the Representations (84 %) agreed or strongly agreed that the Representations provided systematic feedback to support the design and implementation of the campaigns in their Member States.

Figure 26: DG COMM Headquarters' and Representations' officials' views regarding the feedback provided by Representations to support design and implementation in their Member States



Source: Corporate communication survey

All Representations interviewed did consider that collaboration with DG COMM Headquarters had intensified since the adoption of the corporate communication approach, reaching almost daily communication. Most interviewees in the Representations also considered that the **Representations had benefitted from DG COMM Headquarters support and the exchange of knowledge**. Also, DG COMM Headquarters were found to be very responsive and flexible in addressing unforeseen issues.

Cooperation between Representations and the contractors' local networks has worked well according to interviewees, with any cases of friction being an exception. However, some interviewees felt that the processes could be streamlined, with fewer decisions having to be relayed via headquarters and central contractors.

Specific planning and coordination processes have been put in place for involvement of the Representations in the corporate campaigns, which are rolled out on a semi-decentralised basis, which required them to support the contractors and DG COMM **Headquarters** with localization and at the same time build the corporate campaigns into their national planning processes. It is possible to identify teething problems, which are likely to have been inevitable in such a new approach. Some have already been ironed out, for example the failure to spend all the top-up budget in the early years. While both DG COMM **Headquarters** and Representations are overall positive about the way the involvement of the Representations is working, and with the underlying planning and coordination processes, staff from the DG COMM **Headquarters** tend to take a more positive view than the Representations. The heavy additional workload remains an issue for many Representations.

JC 2. Extent that Representations' activities and platforms were adapted to support the roll out of campaigns and amplify campaign effects in their Member States

Sources of evidence:

- Desk research: EC Representation 2019 strategic plans and action plans, final evaluation of the #InvestEU campaign
- Interviews with EC Representation staff

The Representations draw up national strategies to describe their annual political and communication priorities and objectives in their Member State. Action Plans describe the measures that will be taken to address the priorities. A review of the Representations' country strategies, confirms that these documents consistently include references to the corporate campaigns and the way that each Representation will adapt its activities accordingly.

Communication objectives mentioned in the country strategies are in line with the central corporate campaigns and listed specific "themes" (#InvestEU, EUProtects) or "empowerments" (EUandME) on which they intended to focus their communication activities. The dissemination channels (including the typology of events) were adapted to the target audiences and to the "tone" of the campaigns.

Table 33: Overview of the Representations' country strategies

	#InvestEU	EUandME	EUProtects
Communication objectives	Raising awareness about the investment plan and its achievements and informing citizens about EU funding opportunities and EU impact on growth and jobs.	Raising awareness about opportunities created by the EU for young people and encouraging them to use these opportunities, building trust in the EU and communicating EU achievements related to the five thematic areas of the campaign.	Raising awareness about EU efforts and achievements in different policy areas related to security and safety and promoting cooperation and development of EU policies in these areas.
Dissemination channels	Media relations, and press releases, press conferences, placing op-eds and interviews with EU funding beneficiaries, as well disseminating videos via social media (e.g. HU, SE, SI); some strategies also mention “mass postings” in the form of thematic editions included in main newspapers (EE), project-related advertisements in online and print media (DE), or advertisements in public transport (SI and SK).	Partnerships with youth media and collaboration with relevant stakeholders and influencers (such as youth associations and organisations, schools, universities, youth cultural organisations, NGOs working on youth issues) on dissemination of EUandME materials via their channels.	Publishing interviews with local heroes on TV, radio, print and digital media, promoting local heroes’ stories via social media (such as Facebook live interviews with heroes in DK, EE and IT), as well as other activities such as travelling exhibitions (LV), a book about local heroes (LT), product placements in national TV soap opera (PT) or podcasts (SI).
Typology of events	Conferences, seminars, training workshops and Citizens’ Dialogues	Film and music festivals, as well as Citizens’ Dialogues; in Cyprus, Denmark and Ireland, EUandME film screenings were also planned to be included in LGBTQ+ events, such as Pride Parades / Pride Weeks.	Large-scale events, such as Europe Day, in the Member States as well as Citizens’ Dialogues.

In coherence with their country strategies, Representations included in their 2019 Action Plans several activities linked to the corporate campaigns. The graph below shows the number of activities planned in the Representations' 2019 Action Plans¹⁷⁶, distinguishing between corporate and non-corporate activities (Figure 27).

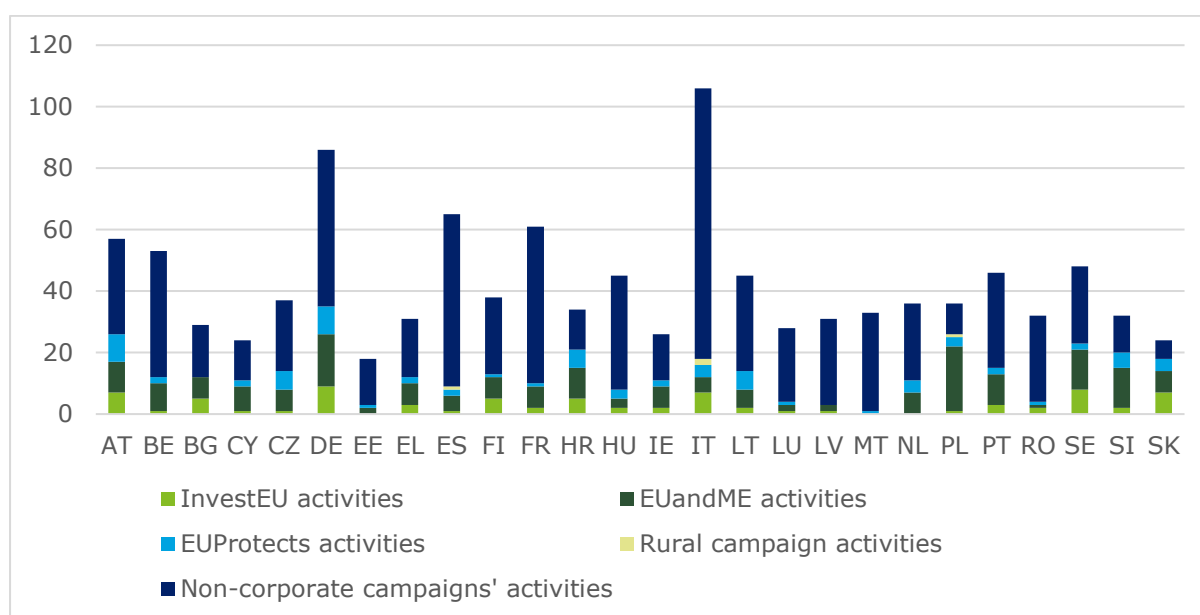
There is no standardised approach to decisions on the volume or types of activity. The total number of activities planned in each Member State for 2019 varies considerably, from 18 in Estonia to 104 in Italy. In some Member States they represent only a small portion of the total activities (e.g. in Spain they are 8 of 65 total activities), whereas in others they cover the majority of the activities (e.g. in Poland they are 26 out of 36). In almost all Member States, Representations supported activities under the three campaigns, with a few exceptions:

- #InvestEU was not covered in Estonia, Malta, and the Netherlands;
- EUandME was not covered in Malta; and
- EUProtects in Bulgaria and Latvia.

Activities in the context of the corporate rural campaign launched in 2019 were envisaged in the Action Plans of the Representations of only three of the six countries where this is being rolled out: Italy, Poland and Spain¹⁷⁷.

Nonetheless, the total number of activities planned in the context of EUandME (186) was more than double those of #InvestEU (78) and EUProtects (77).

Figure 27: Representations' activities planned by campaign for 2019



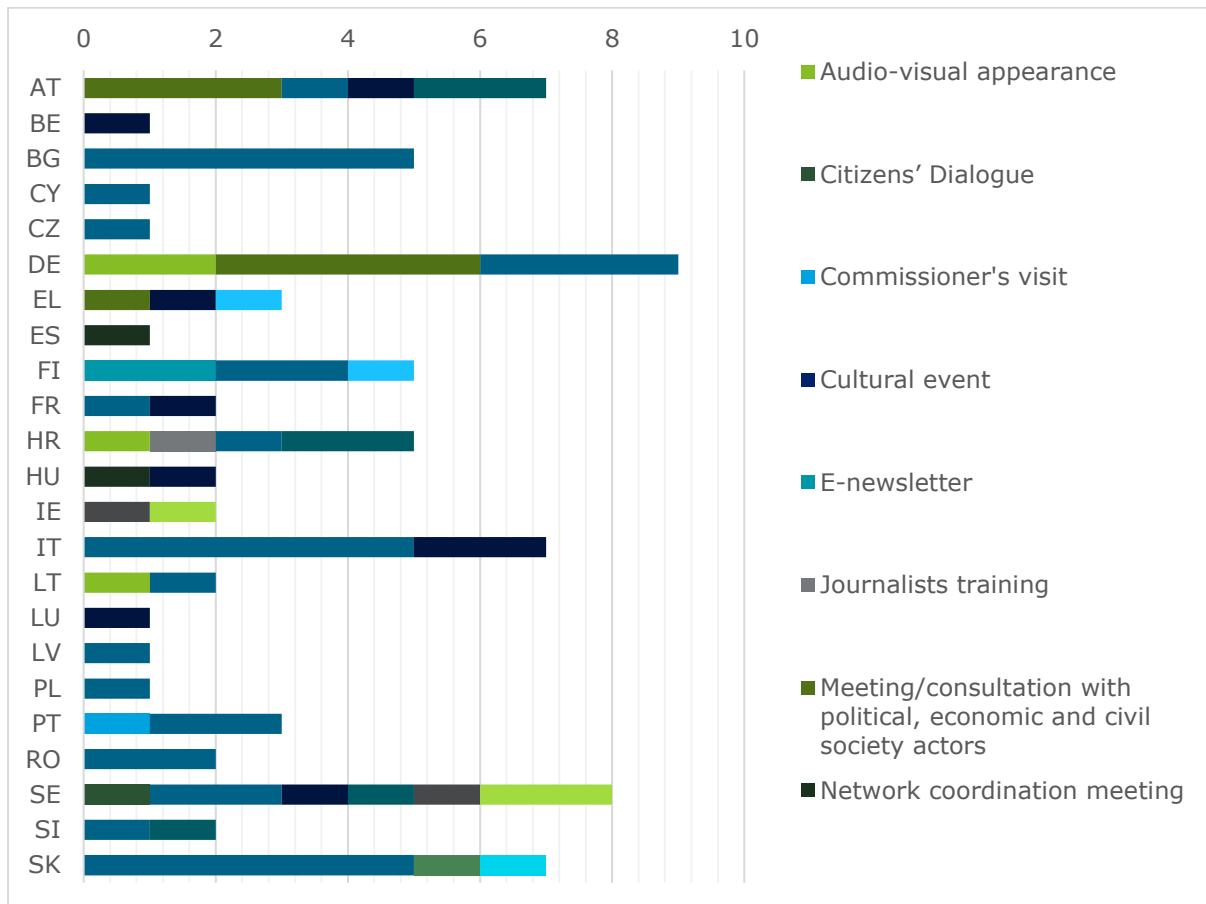
Source: Study team's analysis of Representations' Action Plans

¹⁷⁶ Data from the Danish Action Plan 2019 are missing.

¹⁷⁷ The corporate rural campaign was conceived to address the population living in rural areas, who are less exposed to digital channels. The campaign was planned to roll out in early 2019, reaching out to rural areas in France, Spain, Italy, Greece, Poland, Hungary and Latvia.

The following graphs provide an overview of the types of activities planned for 2019 by Representation for each campaign. Activities are extremely diversified in all three campaigns, although organisation of and participation in events are the most common. In purely quantitative terms, Germany, Sweden, Austria, Italy and Slovakia (in that order) are the most active countries.

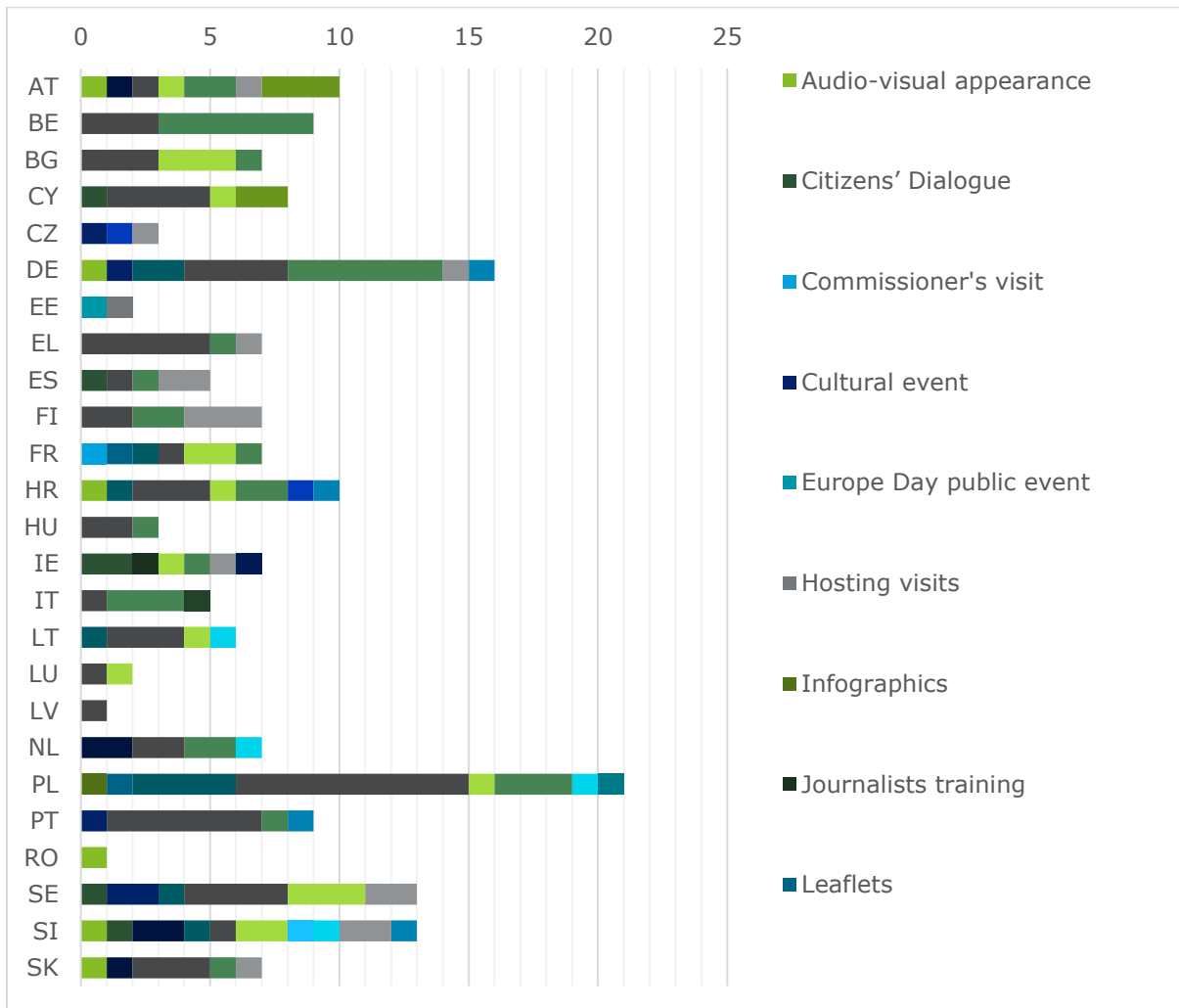
Figure 28: Types of activities planned for #InvestEU in 2019



Source: Own elaboration from Representations' Action Plans

In addition to events, meetings and consultation forums with political, economic and civil society actors were the channels most used to support #InvestEU. In particular, Germany seems to favour this type of activity for this campaign (whereas they do not appear in its plan for the other two campaigns). Conversely, social media played a marginal role in the planned Representations' #InvestEU activities, with only two countries, Sweden and Ireland, including them. Figure 29 below shows an opposite trend for EUandME: 10 Member States planned social media actions in the context of this campaign, which appears consistent with the target group of the campaign and the type of materials developed. In purely quantitative terms, Poland, Germany, Slovenia, Sweden, Austria and Croatia (in that order) are the most active countries.

Figure 29: Types of activities planned for EUandME in 2019

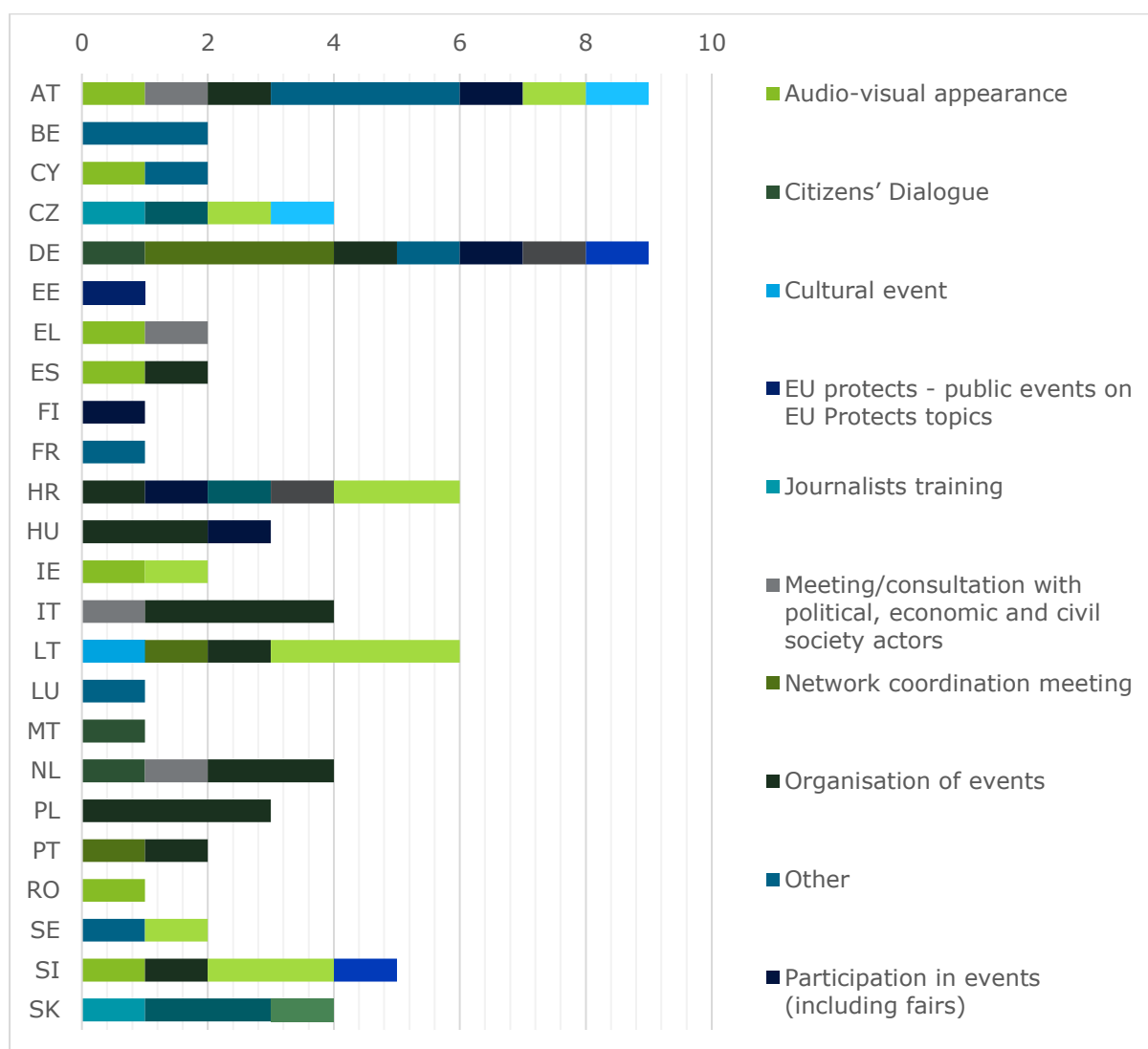


Source: Own elaboration from Representations' Action Plans

Audio-visual appearances and social media actions recur among the activities planned for EUProtects, with seven Member States including them. A higher number of Member States chose printed newsletters and newspaper supplements for this campaign compared to the other campaigns (4 versus 2). Austria, Germany, Croatia, Lithuania and Slovenia (in that order) are the most active countries.

Two countries stand out for being among the most active in every campaign: Austria and Germany.

Figure 30: Type of activities planned for EUProtects in 2019¹⁷⁸



Source: Own elaboration from Representations' Action Plans

In line with DG COMM Headquarters' expectations, Representations have made some local adaptations to the campaigns, both in terms of concept and of tools or channels, in order to amplify the campaigns' effects in their respective Member States. In particular, interviewees mentioned the following examples of **adaptation of the concept**:

- In Italy and Poland, the Representations have tried to avoid "controversial themes", filtering campaign materials that would be counterproductive, and have given more visibility to topics that resonate in the national public. For instance, in Italy the Representation chose the topics of environment, culture and health for #InvestEU, whereas it has excluded the topic of migration from EUProtects. Similarly, the Representation in Poland did not use the EUandME video on LGBT rights.

¹⁷⁸ The action plan from the EC Representation in Latvia does not list any campaign activities planned for the EUProtects campaign.

- Although Croatia was not in the scope of #InvestEU, which is limited to 16 Member States, the Representation took the initiative of contracting a communication agency to run a one-year campaign, in which they have re-used the #InvestEU materials (e.g. the posters in the cities and at Zagreb airport).

The following examples were mentioned as **adaptations of channels and tools**.

- The German Representation has developed “embassy stands” for EUandME and #InvestEU which is currently touring festivals in Germany and town fairs, to foster the promotion of the campaigns.
- The Representation in Spain contracted two e-influencers to launch the EUandME campaign.
- The Representation in Croatia has combined social media with traditional media envisaged by the DG COMM Headquarters’ contractor for EUProtects and has produced autonomously three videos for EUProtects.

Notwithstanding all these data about the number and type of activities carried out by the Representations, **there is lack of evidence on the results of these activities**, i.e. whether they actually amplify the effects on target groups. The #InvestEU evaluation report faces the same issue on the number of events organised by the Representations (232) and of the estimate number of participants, but acknowledges that “there is insufficient data to consider the extent to which these events directly or indirectly aim to reach out to the stated target audience of the campaign”¹⁷⁹.

Representations used a wide range of channels and tools for their involvement in the corporate campaigns, consistent with their discretion to choose what is most appropriate in the local environment. There are also examples of them adapting the concept or materials specifically or developing specific materials for their local environment. While the intention was clearly to maximise the results of the campaigns, only quantitative data on the level and type of activity is available at this stage. In purely quantitative terms, Austria and Germany stand out for their commitment to the corporate campaigns.

EQ9: Did the various corporate communication activities (corporate campaigns and local activities by the Commission Representations) work together well?

Coordination between DG COMM **Headquarters** and the Representations has increased since the Pilot campaign, with dedicated structures and processes established by DG COMM Headquarters. However, issues seemed to emerge regarding the facilitation of Representations’ understanding, at the start of the campaigns, of what is expected from them and in which phase. This has caused difficulties for the Representations in planning the activities, but there are clear signs of progress, e.g. in Representations’ now utilising their top-up budgets to the full. The additional workload without concomitant additional human resources remains a source of concern for many Representations.

¹⁷⁹ Final Report of the study ‘Monitoring the performance of EC communication activities for the Investment Plan for Europe’.

Representations are including activities linked to the corporate campaigns in their planning to a lesser or greater extent by campaign and by Member State. Austria and Germany stand out for their involvement across all three campaigns. A wide variety of activity types are used, though events predominate, with Representations using their discretion as to where to put the emphasis to suit the local environment. This includes in some cases developing dedicated tools.

Data is missing for the time being to know what results were achieved in the Member States as a result of the increased activity. However, at an operational level, this balance between the activities carried out directly by the corporate campaigns and those of the Representations appears to be working well despite the implications for the workload of the Representations and the fact that the new coordination mechanisms are to some extent still a work in progress.

4.12 Did they work well with other European Commission and European Union communication activities?

To assess whether the corporate campaigns have worked well with other European Commission or other European Union communication activities, we have considered the extent that corporate campaigns extended their reach through coordination with other EU communication channels, i.e.:

- EC line DGs,
- EDICs,
- European Parliament.

To do this, we have applied the following judgement criterion:

1. Extent of collaboration between the corporate campaigns and other EU communication partners, networks and activities.

The following sub-sections report on the key findings, based on the sources listed under each judgement criteria. The answer to the evaluation question is provided at the end of this section.

JC 1. Extent of collaboration between the corporate campaigns and other EU communication partners, networks and activities

Sources of evidence:

- Desk research: ToRs of the corporate campaigns, final evaluation of the #InvestEU campaign, Corporate Communication Steering Committee minutes, campaign data from a selection of line DGs, EUandME and EUProtects interim reports, Representations 2019 communication strategies
- Interviews with DG COMM Headquarters and line DGs staff
- Corporate communication survey
- Events

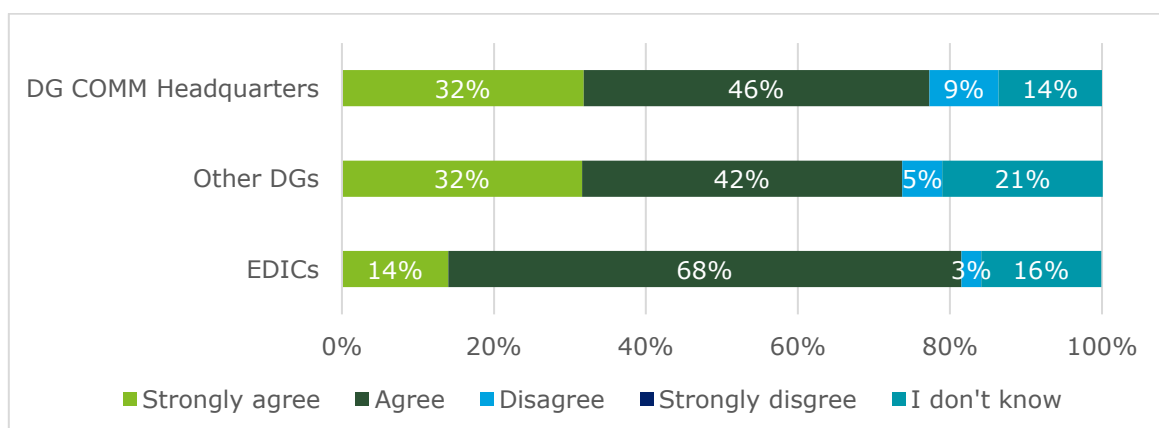
The Terms of Reference of the corporate campaigns required the contractors to “thoroughly investigate, in close cooperation with DG COMM Headquarters, what is already being done by line DGs, Representations and other stakeholders and to present a proposal on how to build upon and reinforce these activities” in order to amplify thematic activities already in place.

In terms of **cooperation with line DGs**, the final evaluation of the #InvestEU campaign highlights **how line DGs and other EU bodies have acted as multipliers of the campaign**, promoting its messages through their own social media accounts and using the “look and feel” of the campaign in their own key communication activities. Further information, illustrating the high level of buy-in of line DGs and their efforts to take a cohesive approach across all campaigns, which is to be found in the Communication Plans shared by DG COMM Headquarters is elaborated on in the answers to the Evaluation Questions on effectiveness.

A specific example of acknowledgement of the potential these campaigns have for leverage across the Commission is in the documentary evidence of DG COMM Headquarters’ request to the Corporate Communication Steering Committee to support the launch and dissemination of the EUandME campaign, e.g. via use of material in Citizens’ Dialogues, informing DGs’ stakeholders, informing and involving DGs’ staff at every level, and generally use and share the campaign material. The rationale for this DG COMM Headquarters request was that working with the line DGs and Citizens’ Dialogues would help to spread the campaign messages across the DGs’ stakeholders. The choice of the tools to use was left at the DGs’ discretion.

In the corporate communication survey, around three in four respondents from DG COMM Headquarters and line DGs, and more than four out of five of the respondents from EDICs “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the **corporate campaigns extended their reach/penetration of target groups by taking DGs’ communication activities into account.**

Figure 31: Extent to which survey respondents agreed or disagreed that the corporate campaigns extended their reach / penetration of target groups by taking DG’s communication activities into account



Source: Corporate communication survey

In interviews, DG COMM Headquarters staff confirmed that they shared common communication goals¹⁸⁰ with line DGs, who conducted complementary activities, which had the **added benefit of further extending the reach of the campaigns**. This was perceived to have come primarily from line DGs sharing campaign messages with their followers on Facebook and Twitter and with the subscribers of their newsletters. Evidence of the extent to which they did this is limited to some social media measurement of a limited number of DGs.

As regards **cooperation with EDICs** on the corporate campaigns, the evaluation of the first phase of #InvestEU highlights both benefits and shortcomings of EDICs' contributions to local campaign activities.

In total, **67 EDICs implemented communication activities in the context of the first phase of #InvestEU**, in response of a specific call launched in the autumn of 2016. According to the evaluation report, these activities formed a significant part of the local campaigning activities.

However, because the call was launched at such an **early stage of campaign design**, its scope was too broad, the target audience and expected activities were not clearly defined, and the **activities could not be properly integrated in the national planning of the campaigns**.

Although, according to the evaluation, the topical coverage, overarching messages and communication channels were in general aligned with the campaign and the EDICs' activities were considered by most of interviewees as complementary to #InvestEU, the **level of coherence in terms of target audience and topics varied across Member States**. In several cases (and especially in the non- zoom-in countries) the EDICs often regarded the #InvestEU campaign to the citizens as a continuation of the first part of the "information and communication sequence" on the Investment Plan and targeted the business community. (As discussed under effectiveness, this was a problem that also arose in some Representations.) In the zoom-in countries, the number of actions targeting the business community only and those targeting both the business community and the general public was almost equal. A minority of EDICs targeted the general public only (12 out of 67).

The interim reports of EUandME and EUProtects do not mention specific EDIC activities in the context of the campaigns. Interviews with Representations provided only limited evidence (e.g. in Germany) of them involving EDICs in their corporate campaign activity.

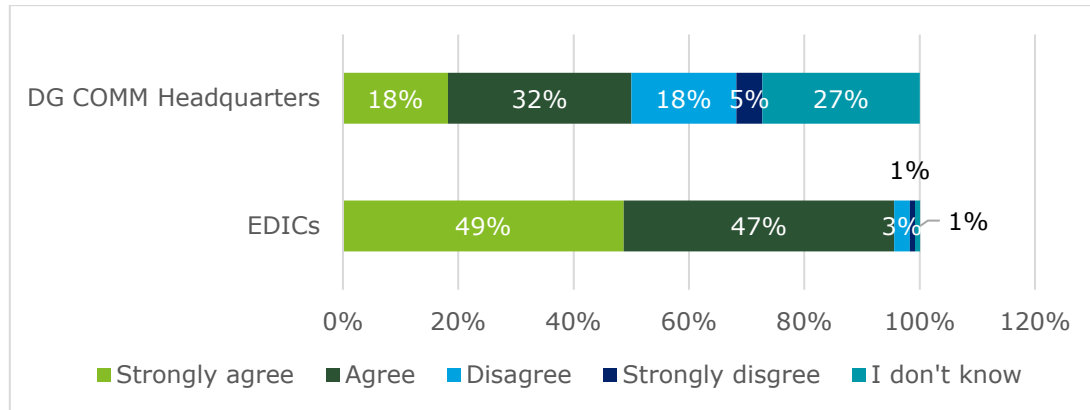
The results of the corporate communication survey show contrasting opinions between DG COMM Headquarters and the EDICs on the extent to which the latter adapted their activities: 96% of respondents from EDICs reported that they adapted their activities compared with half of the respondents from DG COMM Headquarters who had this perception of the EDICs.

This difference in responses might be due to the sample: although the EDICs who responded to the survey (n= 125) covered 18 Member States, around half came from four Member States only: Germany (16), Greece (13), Poland (16), Spain (22). Moreover, there is a possibility of bias. EDICs buying in to the campaigns may have been more motivated to complete the survey. DG COMM Headquarters respondents may have had a broader overview and this

¹⁸⁰ see Section 4.3 on the incorporation of corporate communication objectives in line DGs communication plans.

could account for their slightly less rosy perception. Corrected for the don't knows, the gaps are narrower, however, suggesting a generally positive view of buy-in from the EDICs.

Figure 32: Proportions of corporate communication survey respondents who agreed or disagreed that EDICs and other EU networks adapted their activities and platforms to support roll out of campaigns and amplified campaign effects in their Member States



Source: Corporate communication survey

In our survey, EDICs show a higher level of awareness of and involvement in #InvestEU and EUandME compared with the other campaigns, with respectively 72 and 87 EDICs confirming that they had been involved in the implementation of the campaigns. While 85 EDICs were aware of EUProtects, only half of them (n=42) reported that they had been involved in its implementation. The Pilot campaign was only recalled by 15 EDICs, with 5 EDICs reporting that they contributed to it. Finally, 17 EDICs (13%) reported that they were not involved in the implementation of any of the campaigns.

Figure 33: Awareness of and involvement in different the campaigns of the EDICs responding to the survey



Source: Corporate communication survey

As in the case of line DGs, there is documentary evidence of recognition by the Corporate Communication Steering Committee of the importance of **cooperation with the European**

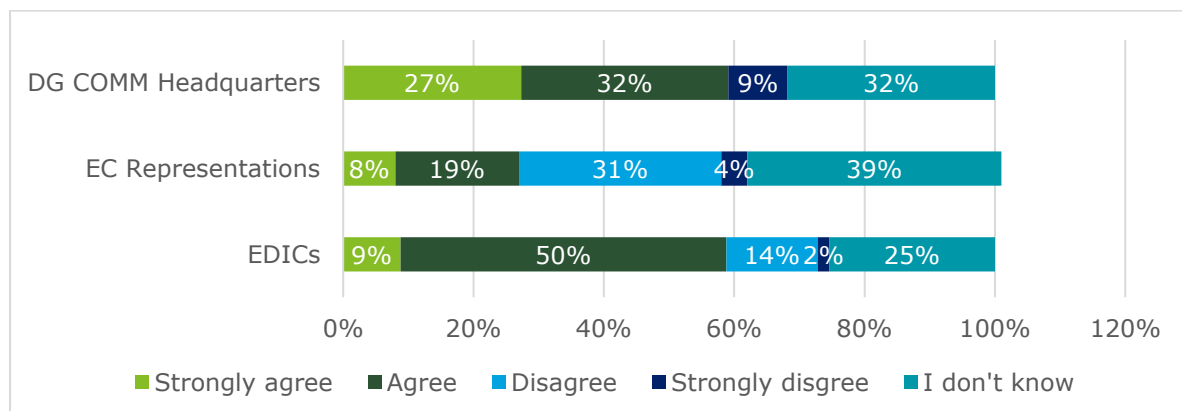
Parliament and the need for the line DGs to establish a link between the European elections and the corporate campaigns, so that there was mutual reinforcement.

One example of this collaboration was **EU Youth Week**, which focused on the importance of young people contributing to European democracy via the “Democracy and Me” theme and used an EUandME stand as a central hub for information about EU initiatives aimed at young people.

The risk of confusion and possibly conflicting messages was also avoided by pausing many corporate communication activities during the immediate run-up to the European elections.

The corporate communication survey looked at the issue of whether taking the activities of the European Parliament and of MEPs had enabled the corporate campaigns to be more effective. Most respondents from DG COMM Headquarters, the Representations and EDICs “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the **corporate campaigns extended their reach / penetration of target groups by taking the activities of the European Parliament and of the MEPs into account**, but the number agreeing strongly was much less in the Representations. The analysis of the Representations’ Action Plans discussed above suggests that these answers are closer to the reality.

Figure 34: Extent to which corporate communication survey respondents agreed or disagreed that the corporate campaigns extended their reach/penetration of target groups by taking the activities of the European Parliament and of the MEPs into account



Source: Corporate communication survey

A review of EC Representation strategies for 2019 also shows that Representations planned to conduct a series of communication activities using **EUandME materials** to cooperate with European Parliament Liaison Offices (EPLOs) in their Member States and reinforce the European Parliamentary campaign **This Time I’m Voting**. In interviews, EC Representation staff found that there was **a natural synergy between these two campaigns**, with EUandME materials highlighting EU opportunities for young Europeans which, in the officials’ view, had the potential to motivate young people to vote.

Nevertheless, some DG COMM Headquarters officials noted that there was still scope to align the communication of the two institutions more closely in the use of logos and campaign hashtags.

Evidence suggests that the potential for involving line DGs and other EU bodies as multipliers for the corporate campaigns has been recognised. Results from the corporate communication survey show that the corporate campaigns were found to have extended their reach and penetration of target groups by taking the activities of line DGs and the European Parliament into account. The particular synergy between EU and ME materials and its target groups and the European Parliament's "This time I'm voting" campaign was recognised and there is evidence that it was exploited. Corporate campaigning was paused in many Member States during that campaign in order not to send conflicting messages. However, the cooperation with the European Parliament or its Liaison Offices has not been intense. Involvement of EDICs has been mixed. On the basis of the evidence so far, the EU and ME campaign has resonated most with EDICs, more so than #InvestEU for which they received dedicated funding. The extent to which EDICs have been involved in the corporate campaigns has varied by Member State, with no systemic approach evident.

EQ10: Did the various corporate communication activities work well together with other European Commission communication activities and European Union communication activities?

Since their inception, the corporate campaigns have taken account of the activities of line DGs to extend their reach and penetration of target groups, and, at the same time, the line DGs have complemented and promoted the corporate campaigns with their specific communication activities. This cooperation has been closer than with the EDIC networks and the European Parliament. The potential for cooperation is recognised and there are good examples of cooperation with both, but this has not been systemic.

4.13 Has the corporate communication approach contributed to achieving EU-added value?

To assess whether the corporate communication approach contributed to achieving EU-added value, we considered the following judgement criterion:

1. Extent that it is possible to determine that if the corporate approach was withdrawn EU messaging would continue in the Member States

The following sub-sections report on the key findings, based on the sources listed under the judgement criterion. The answer to the evaluation question is provided at the end of this section.

JC 1. Extent that it is possible to determine that if the corporate approach was withdrawn messages about the EU would continue in the Member States

Sources of evidence:

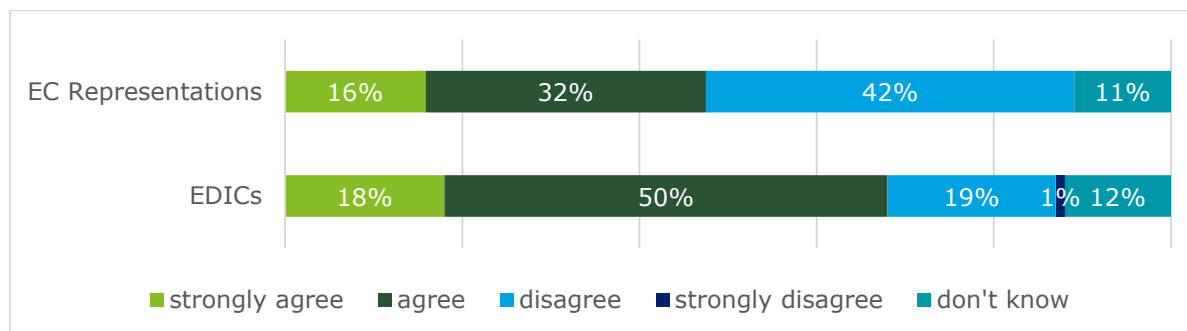
- Corporate communication survey
- Interviews with EC Representation staff and national government communicators

In this analysis, the EU-added value of the corporate communication approach is assessed as the benefit corporate communication brings to EU messaging in the Member States. The challenge of assessing EU-added value in the absence of a counterfactual and the frequent reliance on qualitative insights is highlighted in the Better Regulation Guidelines. This assessment of EU-added value is also largely based on staff perceptions.

Staff views provided in the corporate communication survey on this issue vary. Given their location and EU communication role in the Member States, feedback from Representations and EDICs in the corporate communication survey are of particular interest. It can be argued that these two categories of respondent are likely to be more aware of the amount and type of information about the EU in the Member States. However, the views of DG COMM Headquarters and line DG respondents were similar to those provided by Representations in the corporate communication survey.

Most respondents from EDICs (68%) “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that if the corporate approach was withdrawn, limited or no “EU-wide” messages would be available in the Member States. Staff from Representations have a more mixed view on this with 48% agreeing that EU materials would be limited, 20% disagreeing and 12% indicating that they did not know (see Figure 35). Whilst these responses may not provide a very clear view on what would happen if corporate messaging and materials were withdrawn in the Member States, they suggest that there would likely be some impact in some Member States.

Figure 35: Extent to which corporate communication survey respondents “agreed” and “strongly agreed” that limited or no “EU-wide” messages / materials would be available in the Member States if the corporate approach was withdrawn



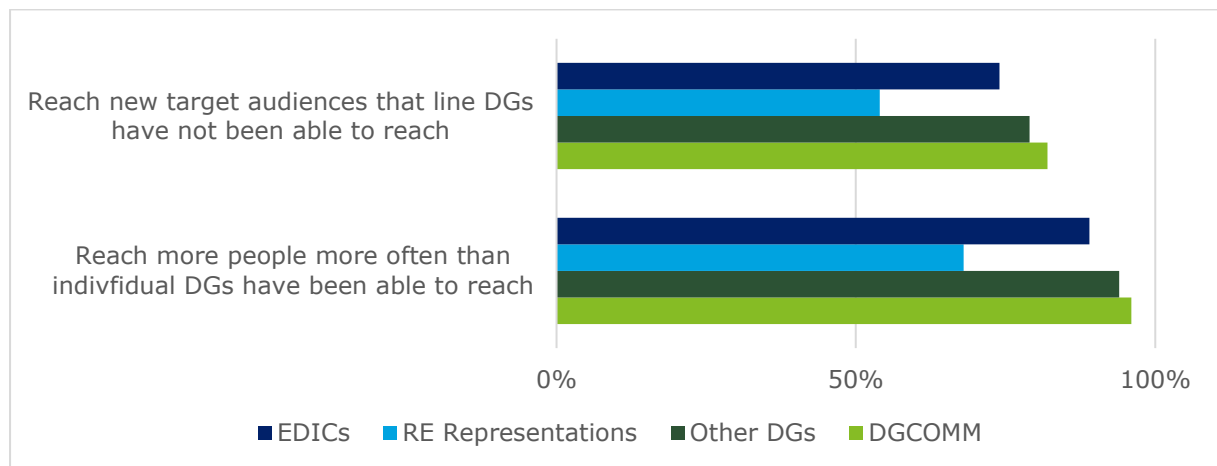
Source: Corporate communication survey

In interviews, EC Representation staff noted that the corporate campaigns had **provided them with professionalised materials** that they had been able to integrate into their own communication activities (such as events), and which they found to be well-received by the public. They also acknowledged that the corporate approach had provided them with a bigger

tool-box and, in their view, materials with a strong visual identity that promotes a single EU image. They suggested that if the corporate approach was withdrawn, they would require considerably **more resources** and planning in order to **create professional campaigns** to a similar standard at Member State level. Day-to-day tasks, particularly as regards social media and digital activities, would also be negatively affected.

Findings from the corporate communication survey also suggest that if the corporate approach was withdrawn, it would impede on line DGs' ability to communicate to non-specialist audiences in the Member States. Most respondents considered this a contribution of the corporate approach, with 85% who agreed that since the approach, line DGs were able to reach **more people** and 70% who agreed that it allowed line DGs to reach **new target audiences** (see Figure 36).

Figure 36: Corporate communication survey respondents who "agree" or "strongly agree" with the following statements



Source: Corporate communication survey

Feedback from a sample of national government communicators, who were interviewed as part of the synthesis study, was that in recent years the visibility of the EU in their Member States had increased. (However, it is not possible to make a link between the identified increase in visibility and the corporate campaigns.)

Member State communicators have some obligations for information and communication about the EU in their country, for example where they manage EU funds for example for DG AGRI, REGIO, RTD, etc. But there was no available evidence that could be integrated into this synthesis study to confirm the extent that Member States also systematically communicate about the EU as a whole to the wider public, for example through story-telling and messages, which engage on an emotional level about the EU. This type of evidence would need to be collated through a mapping exercise, which was not foreseen by the communication contractors, as part of their pre-campaign research.

However, the government communicators interviewed indicated that there is scope to closer align the corporate communication campaigns with EU messages at the national level. In fact, most interviewees stated that they had very limited awareness of the corporate approach

and variable awareness about the different campaigns¹⁸¹, which underlines the lack of engagement of the Member States in the corporate campaign approach.

The withdrawal of the corporate communication approach would limit EU-wide content targeted at non-specialist audiences across the Member States but would not lead to the disappearance of EU content and messages in the Member States altogether.

The corporate approach supports EC Representation and line DGs' own communication efforts with high quality, professional materials that would be beyond Representations' and line DGs' own resource capabilities. This would limit Representations capacity to engage with the general public and strengthen a single EU image and line DGs reach of non-specialist audiences in the Member States. However, there is a disconnect with national government communicators and scope for closer alignment on the corporate approach.

EQ11: Has the corporate communication approach contributed to achieving EU-added value?

Whilst there is limited evidence to allow a robust assessment of this question, perceptions suggest that the corporate communication approach is providing EU-added value to some extent.

The corporate communication approach allowed EC communicators to reach more people more often, disseminating high quality and professional materials through channels and approaches that would have been otherwise beyond reach. The withdrawal of the approach would limit these communicators (Representations and other EU networks) dissemination of EU-wide messages across the Member States.

Member States also communicate about the EU, but the corporate approach does not appear to systematically engage with Member State communication activities. However, in the absence of a detailed mapping exercise it is not possible to assess the extent that Member States also communicate systematically about the EU as a whole. Withdrawal of corporate communication messages may be unlikely to eliminate all such messaging in the Member States. However, regardless of the positive contribution of the corporate communication approach to EU-added value, some gaps remain in particular in relation to collaboration with Member State national, regional and local networks that communicate about the EU.

4.14 Has the corporate communication approach enhanced EU branding? To which extent?

The impact of the corporate approach on the EU brand is also assessed with regards to effectiveness under EQ4. In this section, the extent of enhancement of the EU brand is assessed in the context of EU added value; ie adding value to Member State activities to

¹⁸¹ Only one national government representative confirmed hearing about the EC's corporate approach in theory and had seen it in practice, one knew about it in theory, but had never come across it in practice, and four had never heard of the approach.

support the EU brand. In the absence of a standard definition for EU brand, in simple terms, we suggest that this relates to a combination of the established EU visual identity (ie the flag) and the activities and values, which are associated with the EU.

In the absence of criteria to define, which results would constitute an enhanced EU brand, we identified that the EU brand would be enhanced if there is evidence to support the following judgement criterion:

1. Extent that target groups identified the campaign messages and knew they were about the EU.

The answer to this question makes judgements which also take into account the previous question on the overall EU-added value of the corporate approach. The following sub-section reports on the key findings, based on the sources listed under the judgement criterion and is followed by the answer to the question.

JC 1. Extent that reached individuals noticed the campaigns and knew they were about the EU

Sources of evidence:

- ☑ Polling exercise
- ☑ Focus groups

As highlighted in the previous question, there is a lack of evidence to confirm the extent that Member States themselves communicate the values conveyed through the corporate approach, for example that:

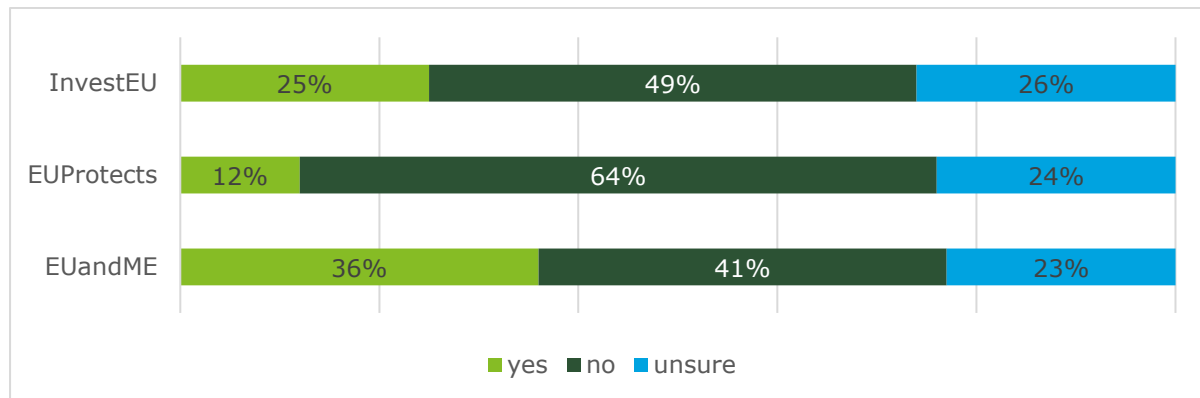
The EU is coordinating collective efforts to address global challenges, such as migration, security, etc. (EUProtects), or that the EU empowers its citizens who share common values (EUandME) or provides funding that helps to support economic growth, employment and jobs (#InvestEU). Although there is a wide range of activities to communicate about EU funding opportunities, traditionally these have focussed on an information-driven approach. It is assumed by the study team (but cannot be supported due to a lack of evidence) that Member State authorities have not tended to consistently focus on story-telling to support communication of EU values and thereby the EU brand.

In the absence of evidence on Member State activities, this assessment draws on evidence from target groups. In this question, we assume that target audiences' knowledge that the campaigns are about the EU is directly linked to the corporate approach enhancing EU branding. We understand that associating the corporate campaigns with the European Union is fundamental for communicating efforts to improve the audiences' view on the EU and bring about EU-added value. In other words, EU-added value of communication cannot be achieved, when the target audience is not aware that a given material talks about the Union.

As final reports on the EUProtects and EUandME campaigns are not yet available there are gaps in the available monitoring data in particular in relation to recall rates. These were supplemented by research conducted by the synthesis study team.

To test the extent that target groups were able to identify the EU as the author of the three campaigns, respondents of the polling exercise across the three campaigns were first asked whether they knew which organisation made the clip. **Most respondents reported that they “did not know” or were “unsure” which organisation made the clip for all three campaigns.** For EUProtects, 64% of respondents indicated that they “did not know” (see Figure 37).

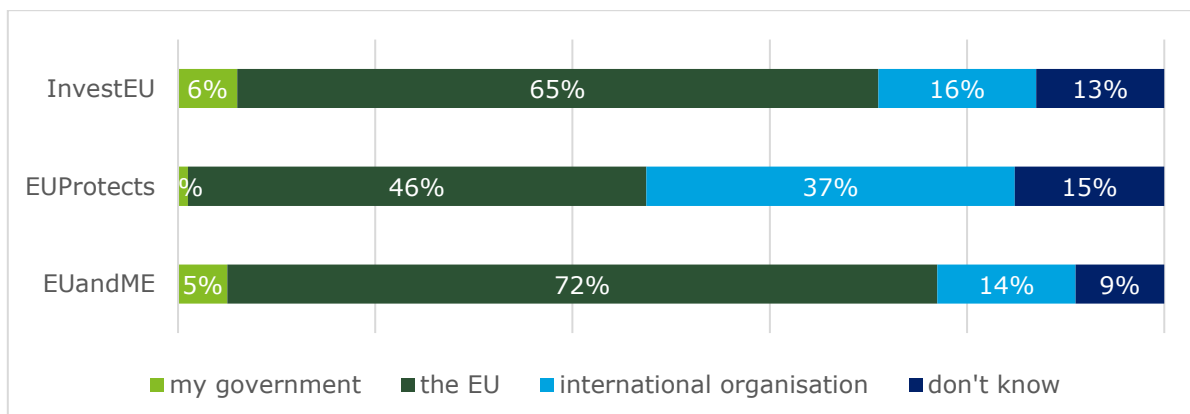
Figure 37: Proportions of polling respondents who indicated that they knew or did not know which organisation made the clip



Source: Corporate communication survey

Respondents were then prompted to choose between three authors¹⁸² when identifying the maker of corporate campaign clips showcased to them. For #InvestEU and EUandME, a **majority (65% and 72%, respectively) correctly identified the EU** as the author of the clip (see Figure 38). This shows, however, with circa one third and a quarter of respondents unable to name the institution behind the clip, that the clips did not fully serve their purpose / strengthen the EU brand in the intended way. Additionally, only 46% respondents correctly named the EU as the maker of the EUProtects videos. The recognition rate may be lower as respondents viewed a shorter clip (30 second Teaser) as longer video clip similar to those used in the other campaigns was not available at the time of the polling.

Figure 38: Proportion of polling respondents who identified the author of the clip when prompted with three options (my government, the EU, international organisation)



Source: Corporate communication survey

¹⁸² “my government”, “the European Union”, “an international organisation”

Furthermore, participants of the #InvestEU sessions identified the campaign website as a space for the EU to inform about EU investment programmes and how to obtain EU funding and support, hence **associated materials observed with the Union and the campaign theme**. Many participants also remarked that the website appeared to be an **“advertisement” for the EU**, the projects, as well as the charities and companies that were receiving EU funding. Finally, in most focus groups, participants noted that apart from showcasing EU funding opportunities, the website is also about highlighting benefits of the EU for EU citizens.

This was mirrored by insights on EUandME. All participants in all focus groups knew that the website was about the EU. Participants identified the website as a space for the EU to inform about EU citizens’ rights and opportunities. For EUProtects, many participants also highlighted that the website aimed at showcasing individual EU citizens and their work in the campaign’s five thematic areas.

Participants to the focus groups were recruited in two cohorts: people who felt neutral about the EU and people who identified themselves as being rather negative. The results of the focus groups highlight that there was **very little difference in the responses provided by the “neutrals” and the “rather negatives”**. Participants in both groups generally liked the websites and materials that they were shown, they personally felt more informed and reported that they materials were useful. In nearly all of the 12 focus groups conducted, participants also indicated that they felt more positive about the EU based on what they had seen. Those participants who didn’t feel more positive tended to explain that this related to the fact that their views were rather entrenched.

There is a lack of evidence to confirm the extent that other organisations, including national and regional administrations communicate on the EU brand in the Member States, which makes limits the assessment of EU added value. Final comprehensive data sets were also not available from the corporate campaign contractors.

Polling carried out as part of the synthesis study suggests that target groups may not necessarily identify short video clips with the EU. Most did not know who had produced the clips. The result was more The focus groups suggest that when target groups have a little more time to engage with materials they have no difficulties in identifying the EU.

Target groups appreciated the information provided on the campaign websites, which they found to be interesting, useful and informative. In nearly all cases, irrespective of whether participants declared themselves to be neutral or fairly negative about the EU, they felt more positive once they had viewed the websites.

EQ12: Has the corporate communication approach enhanced EU branding? To which extent?

It is not possible to assess the extent of EU-added value of the corporate campaigns to EU branding, given the lack of available evidence relating to Member States’ own communication activities. There is a range of Member State level information networks available, which to support the provision of information to a range of stakeholder groups; consumers, researchers, students, companies, etc.

Therefore, the assessment of the extent that the corporate communication approach has enhanced EU branding draws principally on feedback from representatives of target groups. Target group polling surveys, in six Member States, suggest that people might not identify the EU if they come across a video clip on-line, although young people appeared to be more likely to do so than the other target groups. As only one clip was tested in each response group, it is possible that a different clip may have elicited a different response. However, if target groups are not able to identify themselves as the target group from individual clips this could raise questions as to the appropriate vehicles to deliver these clips and whether or not channels need stronger EU branding, which could however have a negative effect if citizens feel that clips are too corporate.

The focus groups suggest that when target groups are exposed to more materials and have a little more time, they had a positive impact. Materials were considered to be useful, interesting and to improved audiences' opinions and knowledge about the European Union. In this regard, it can be said that in the absence of contractor data, the corporate approach had the potential to enhance and strengthen EU branding.

4.15 Are the effects of the Commission's corporate communication approach likely to last after the individual communication actions end?

In order to assess whether the effects of the Commission's corporate communication approach are likely to last after the individual communication actions end, we have considered the information on the short-term effects before discussing whether they are likely to last.

Sources of evidence:

- Desk research: Contractors' monitoring data; final evaluation of #InvestEU first phase, Interim reports of the ongoing campaigns
- Corporate communication survey
- Focus groups
- Polling exercise

The interest of the Commission in the sustainability of the effects is not in the ability of the audience to recall the campaign or the details, but to have had a lasting effect on understanding (often at a broad level, e.g. of the "EU as a whole"), emotions ("pride" in being a citizen of an EU country), perceptions ("positive" view of the EU), or trust.

The first step is to have achieved effects in the relatively short term. As explained under EQ1, both #InvestEU and EUandMe exceeded the targets set in terms of outcome effects. Concretely:

- The #InvestEU polling showed that targets set by the contractors were surpassed as 32% overall felt more positive about the EU after looking at the ads they were shown.

- The EUandMe polling¹⁸³ showed that 46% of the reached target group felt more informed than before seeing the campaign. This exceeded the target set of 10%. Moreover, the polling also determined that a small majority (52%) was made more curious by the campaign. Finally, while data on the possible impact on trust is not yet available, 43% indicated that the campaign made them feel proud of being European.

As for EU Protects, although data from the contractors is not yet available, polling data on views of target group representatives¹⁸⁴ suggests that 40% felt more positive about the EU as a result of viewing the clip.

Due to the different methodologies used, it is difficult to make cross-campaign comparisons between the polling data that has been collected through the synthesis study and the data that has been collected by contractors. Nevertheless, data collected through the synthesis study allowed comparisons across the three campaigns, and key results suggested similar target audience responses across all three campaigns:

- “changed understanding of the EU” ranged between 44% and 38%;
- “felt more positive towards the EU” ranged between 49% and 40%.

With the short-term effects measures, it is possible to address the standard question on sustainability in the Better Regulation Guidelines, *“How likely are the effects to last after the intervention ends?”*. The aim is to test the likelihood that a change brought about an intervention can be permanent. This is commonly used for interventions with a “finite duration, such as particular programmes”¹⁸⁵.

However, applying this criterion in a communication campaign is always challenging because the longer into the future these sentiments are measured, the more difficult it will be to assess the link between the results and the campaign since there will be other influences on these sentiments in the meantime. This is a reality of communication that does not fit well with the principles of the Better Regulation Guidelines.

As a general rule, Communication campaigns are unlikely to have significant lasting effects unless the campaigns can generate tangible outcomes, which in turn generate other effects and impacts, e.g. if there is a call to action (e.g. register to vote, are an exception, but that does not apply in this case).

Consequently, the fact that the short-term outcomes appear to be positive may be an indicator that the outcomes will be positive in the longer term. Even measurement of these sentiments among individuals surveyed previously can only be a pointer without intensive and costly research, into the other influences on their opinions in the meantime.

¹⁸³ Following the first wave of the campaign.

¹⁸⁴ In this polling there was no measure of whether target groups had seen the clip or anything similar to the clip before. Meanwhile the target set by campaign contractors related to the ‘reached’ target group.

¹⁸⁵ European Commission, Better regulation "Toolbox" 2017, Tool #47

Data on the effects at outcome level, i.e. on understanding and sentiments, is limited, but the data available shows what can be regarded as positive effects in the short term. It will not be possible to assess the likelihood of these outcomes lasting even when full data becomes available because the longer in the future the measurement takes place, the more difficult it will be (indeed it will be impossible) to establish a link with the campaigns, even among individuals known to have been exposed to the campaign.

EQ13: Are the effects of the Commission’s corporate communication approach likely to last after the individual communication actions end?

Although available data suggests that the corporate campaigns have reached or can reach the set targets in terms of outcome effects, it is not possible to determine the longevity of any impacts resulting from the campaigns.

No tools are currently available to monitor these effects once the campaigns are over, and it is not possible to directly attribute effects to communication campaigns that have ended because those exposed to the campaign will have been subject to many other influences in the meantime.

4.16 To what extent do the topics communicated by the various communication activities require continuous communication effort?

In order to assess the extent to which the topics communicated by the various communication activities require continuous communication effort we have considered the following criteria:

1. The extent to which the topics (themes) are still relevant to the target groups
2. Extent to which the topics/themes that are still relevant require a continuous communication effort

The following sub-sections report on the key findings per criterion, based on the sources listed in the introductory box. The answer to the question is elaborated on in the closing box.

JC 1. Extent to which the topics (themes) are still relevant to the target groups

Sources of evidence:

- Desk research: #InvestEU surveys; EUandME interim survey; EUprotects surveys
- Interviews with officials from DG COMM
- Focus groups
- Polling

For communication to continue as posited by this question, the topics would need still to be relevant to the target groups and based on the results of the polling and the focus groups, the topics addressed through the campaigns do still resonate.

80-85% of all respondents to the polling reported that the issues presented in the clips they saw interested people like them (80% for the EUProtects clip, 81% for EUandME and 85% for #InvestEU).

Likewise, with a few exceptions, **focus group participants unanimously responded that they felt it was very important for the EU to provide the type of information presented on the websites.** Focus group participants indicated that citizens and businesses need to be aware of what the EU is doing, and the opportunities and rights they have thanks to the EU. It was also considered to be important for citizens to understand where their money is going and clarify certain pre-conceived ideas that might exist. Learning new information was one of the recurrent arguments that participants used to explain their interest levels in the websites and perceptions of their usefulness.

The information provided through the focus groups not only showed that the topics that are being presented in the campaign websites are of current interest, the answers also show that the overall message is still relevant. The focus group findings on the importance of providing this type of information also show the relevance of the overall messages. When looking at the websites of the different campaigns, participants did not necessarily refer to their interest in one single topic but on the messages the website is disseminating (the EU invests, empowers and protects).

Attendees of #InvestEU events also reported increased knowledge of EU investments in their countries after their participation in the events.

The relevance of the topics to a number of audiences is also illustrated by the fact DG JUST and DG REGIO have both been able to work with the messages of the corporate communication campaigns in their own DG communications. Likewise, some Representations stated they used the corporate materials to complement their other communication efforts.

All this suggests that there is scope to maximise the investment by using and re-using materials. Institutional participants in the online survey overwhelmingly agreed with this, while recognising that they might need to be updated if they were being used with the same target group or adapted in order to reach new target groups.

However, **interviews with Commission officials suggested certain concerns linked to the topics currently in use by the campaigns¹⁸⁶, notably that the messages were not necessarily the best chosen to reach and impact the audience as they are not sufficiently relevant to the current “hot topics”** reported in newspapers, such as an issue like Brexit, which could be used to emphasise the value and benefits of a single market.¹⁸⁷ They also suggested that messages should be more closely adapted to the realities of each Member State, their

¹⁸⁶ We would like to specify that, although the word “message” was used in all three cases, this was considered as a misuse and the meaning was intended as topics, not as “messages” in the sense of the corporate campaign definition.

¹⁸⁷ Although the wording chosen by the official was “message” the study team considers that it was meant in relation to the topics, as the current messages are broad enough to include a variety of topics.

interests and their current concerns (despite the fact that Representations and local contractors are involved in this process).¹⁸⁸

These are individual views, albeit by interviewees well placed to hold an informed view, but may be suggestive of a challenge in this approach to corporate campaigns in identifying the topics which resonate most and of adapting communication topics as concerns change.

Thus, while the topics may indeed still be relevant to the target groups and have the potential to maximise the investment because the topics still resonate, this **cannot be assumed to be the best use of the marginal spend in the absence of ongoing research into whether these are the topics that are still the most relevant to citizens.**

There is strong evidence that the topics/themes of the current communication campaigns are still relevant to the target audiences and resonate with additional audiences. Thus, the materials are suitable for re-use. There are no mechanisms in place to assess whether they are still the most relevant or whether or not communication effort would be better deployed elsewhere because citizens' primary concerns have changed.

JC 2. Extent to which the topics / themes that are still relevant require a continuous communication effort

If the topics and themes are found still to be relevant and are also found by ongoing research to be priorities, even if lesser ones than when initially picked, then it is likely that they will need a continuous communication effort. The continuous communication effort that might be required if the topics/themes are still relevant is of two types. On the one hand, not enough of the need for communication on the topic/theme may have been met; on the other, the messages may need to be refreshed.

In this case, the measurement during and after the campaign will show the extent to which the need has been met and a judgement will have to be made as to whether a continuous effort is needed. This is a qualitative judgement based on research on the ongoing importance of the topic (or otherwise). It will not be possible to be more precise until the Commission has a catalogue of benchmarks sufficient for it to see that it is achieving only marginal gains from its investment. That is unlikely to imply halting communication, but either that it can be kept ticking or that a new approach is needed if there appears to be latent potential for greater gains. Where there are interim surveys (#InvestEU and EUandMe), and where other research is being carried out in the interim (EUandME, e.g. VICE), these are a useful pointer without waiting for the end of a campaign and losing momentum until results are known.

However, this question was drafted for this study at a time when it was expected that the campaigns would have been completed. We assume that this was with a view to assessing

¹⁸⁸ As messages are tailored to Member States through the topics and approaches taken, the study team also considers this aspect most relevant to the discussion on topics rather than on messages.

whether the needs had been met or whether further campaigns might be needed. It is clearly too early to be able to address that until the final evaluations are available.

What is certain is that, if a need can be established, it will no longer be a matter of just re-using materials, or even just testing that they are still relevant. Continuity is an important success factor in communication, but this does not mean repeating the same thing over and over again, but **constantly finding new ways to keep topics or messages in front of the target groups**. Contractors of the campaigns currently running point out that one of the challenges of these campaigns has been the need to keep refreshing the topics and messages over the whole period in order to achieve this continuity even within campaigns as these campaigns are unusually long.

All this implies a need not just for ongoing research to ensure the topics are still relevant, but, as pointed out in relation to other issues in this study, basing the degree of effort needed on **regular measurement of the extent to which the objectives of communicating on a particular topic are being met**, and in particular whether the desired outcomes have been achieved.

The need for a continuous communication effort will depend on what measurement of the degree of ongoing need indicates if objectives are not being met. The current campaigns are adapting content, messages and channels as they go along on the basis of research. However, until the Commission builds up a catalogue of benchmarks as to what can realistically be expected from a given effort, the extent to which ongoing effort is needed is likely to be a value judgement. As a general principle, however, continuity is a critical success factor in communication. Re-use of materials (tested for their continued relevance) has its place in this, but content and messages will need to be constantly refreshed, as they are being in the current campaigns.

EQ14: To what extent do topics communicated by the various communication activities require continuous communication effort?

The topics on which the campaigns are currently communicating do resonate with the target groups. They find the materials of interest. They see a need for the EU to communicate on these issues. This does not necessarily mean that these are the issues where the need is greatest, i.e. that the issues being addressed are those that are of greatest concern to them. Any decision on whether to continue the effort of communicating on these topics after these campaigns are over would need to be based on the one hand on research into the issue of greatest concern at that time and a judgement on the ability to make further progress in achieving objectives. As the Commission builds up a catalogue of benchmarks, it will be able to rely on those to assess the degree of effort needed and still likely to achieve the desired outcomes relative to other priorities. In principle, however, continuity is a success factor in communication. To some extent, materials can be re-used to achieve this, but constantly refreshing content and messages, as contractors are currently doing, is equally important, not just through new campaigns, but also in ongoing campaigns if they are to have a lasting effect.

4.17 To what extent is the Commission’s corporate communication approach aligned with best industry practice?

In order to assess to what extent the Commission’s corporate communication approach is in line with best practice, we have considered the following criteria:

1. The extent to which governance and implementation structures are in line with best practice;
2. The extent to which the strategy follows good practice in corporate communication.

The following sub-sections report on the key findings per identified criterion, based on the sources listed in the introductory box, and the answer to the question is elaborated on in the closing box.

JC 1. Extent that governance and implementation structures are in line with best practice

Sources of evidence:

- Literature review
- Interviews with EC staff

The review of international practice prepared for this report (Annex F) confirms that organisations position corporate communication as an essential organisational function, to ensure consistent communication of the organisation’s brand. **The function needs to be:**

- **strategic,**
- **professionally managed,**
- **coordinate internal and external communication.**

The European Commission has understood this need to place communication at the heart of policy-making as discussed also in answer to EQ 9. This means planning the communication strategy as the policy is being developed rather than ex post, and regarding communication as a “horizontal” function across all policies. That in turn means communicating on themes of interest to citizens that cut across different policies, and a continuum in communication. That means reaching out to target groups on a regular basis, while refreshing messages regularly, either within an over-arching campaign or with a coordinated sequence of campaigns fitting the same intervention logic. Predecessors of DG COMM Headquarters were often just one other silo. Reform was often discussion, but the real clear sea-change in thinking came with the current Multiannual Financial Framework, even if this evolution is to some extent still a work in progress.

As currently conceived, EC communication is intended to be part of policy making, with the institutions listening and then engaging with the public. **Corporate communication within the Commission is a strategic function.** The need for professionally-managed communication is also embedded within recognition of a stronger focus on professionalisation to enhance economies of scale, improve governance and generate efficiency gains with support at senior and practitioner levels through the Corporate Communication Steering Committee (CCSC) and the Communication Network. The rearrangement of the External Communication Network, recently renamed Communication Network (CN), to include both external and internal communication ensures the coordination between both types of communication. **This change combined with the decision-making process set between the SC and CN allows for an efficient and effective approach to governance.**

Evidence from the study's online survey, and interviews with internal stakeholders, both confirm the coordinated approach. There are high, but sometimes uneven, levels of buy-in for the corporate communication process from the Representations and the different Commission services. **Commission services generally accept and agree with the increased levels of coordination and pooling of resources and are aligned in a shared vision that this is the most efficient and effective way to communicate about what the EU does,** as EQ 2 illustrated in greater detail. In short, the corporate approach appears from the evidence reviewed to date, to have been effective at breaking down the silos in its own communication as suggested in its preparations for discussions on a stronger and more democratic union at the meeting of the EU-27 in Sibiu on 9 May 2019.

The characteristics of good corporate communication are that it should be strategic, professionally managed, and coordinate internal and external communication. The changes made within the Commission in recent years recognise this. Internal silos are coming down and the corporate approach is a strategy which is bringing a coordinated approach and more professional approach to external communication.

JC 2. The extent to which the strategy follows good practice in corporate communication

Sources of evidence:

- Literature review
- Desk research: DG COMM Strategy 2016-2020; technical proposal "EUandMe"
- Interviews with EC staff
- Focus Groups

The work for this study has also assessed the design of the corporate communication campaigns against current communication good practices, in particular messaging practices and story-telling approach, and metric-setting and evaluation:

- **Messaging practices and story-telling approach:**

The best practice review confirms that organisations need to engage in genuine dialogue and listening. The review points out that it is common for organisations to believe that they are engaging in dialogue, but instead are actually broadcasting centrally-defined messages tailored to audiences' preferred channels and formats. **The Commission has made great strides in this area, but the findings in this study suggest that the institution is still situated between the dialogue and monologue positions.**

The need for genuine dialogue is recognised at the highest strategic levels - DG COMM Headquarters' mission statement '*Listen, Advise and Engage*' confirms this recognition, which is also reflected in the overarching objective for external communication, and in DG COMM Headquarters' specific objectives. Listening infrastructure is in place (notably through Eurobarometer surveys, surveys carried out for specific campaigns, and media monitoring and analysis).

The communication campaigns draw on quantitative baseline research, focus groups and social media analysis. Citizens' Dialogues also provide opportunities to listen to and engage directly with citizens in the region. The network of European Direct Information Centres (EDICs) constitutes one of the EC's main tools to engage with the public on EU-related topics at local and regional levels, with centres in all Member States. The Europe Direct Contact Centre provides a free general number and local numbers in every Member State for citizens' questions about EU matters.

However, at the strategic / conceptual level some contradictions are apparent.

An organisation-centric approach is apparent in descriptions of the corporate communication concept. Corporate communication aims at ensuring that the European Commission communicates 'its overarching priorities to a wide audience in a clear, coherent and cost-effective way'. Corporate communication concepts focus on informing citizens on how EU policies make a difference to their daily lives. These are valid political objectives, but political objectives are not the same as communication objectives. Our initial assessment is that this is a systemic problem, which has not been clearly enough identified at the strategic level.

Citizens' Dialogues are meant to focus on the "issues that matter most to them [citizens]", yet they 'focus on the political priorities, their implementation and their impact on the daily lives of Europeans.'

Campaign concepts draw on research and feedback, which asks citizens their views on pre-defined topics. **These topics are the most significant problems affecting European society, but they should not be interpreted as the topics that necessarily interest or worry individual citizens on a day-to-day basis.** The genuine dialogue concept is questionable in this context. Initial synthesis of documents and data suggests that more efforts need to be made by the Commission to really understand its target groups. Rather, it understands target groups' views on its own political priorities. This gap undermines the effectiveness of the corporate approach. Furthermore, the ToR for this study suggest that main study insights will be derived through analysis of the synthesis of campaign results. Initial analysis suggests that there are indeed identifiable insights, but problems remain related to the overarching design of the

Commission's listening approach and the lack of truly unstructured, bottom-up feedback to drive communication objective-setting.

The listening infrastructure is arguably incomplete. The Eurobarometer is a useful, if broad brush, tool. It is important in highlighting trends. Surveys carried out for specific campaigns are essential, but there is a risk of monologue if the surveys are based on what the institution has defined as its communication needs upfront, and if there is no mechanism for feeding into broader external communication what listening to the media is feeding back.

As a result, the Commission is challenged in engaging with citizens on the issues that are important to them and reconciling this with the sense that the institution needs to communicate about what it sees as its political – and policy - priorities. Logically, the two should coincide, but that requires the ability to adapt the political priorities as individuals' priorities change.

In a fast-changing world, political priorities set at the beginning of a Commission's term of office, or even being locked into a certain course because of being bound by Terms of Reference written two or three years' previously, is a constraint. There have been some shifts in emphases in the course of the corporate campaigns looked at by this study, but the Commission's governance mechanisms do not currently enable it to move fast enough to keep up with changing concerns, and the right channels and tools to use to address those concerns.

Corporates and governments that represent best practice in communication have **ongoing programmes of targeted surveys and focus groups** to keep in virtually constant touch with their target groups in order to catch and address issues as they emerge. These are tools missing in the Commission's armoury. These are expensive tools, particularly across a score of countries or more, is clearly high, but using them should pay off in better targeting and a better match between what the institution sees as its needs and citizens' concerns¹⁸⁹.

As highlighted above and in more detail below, the corporate approach has made significant strides, but the picture remains mixed. **Best practice corporate communication recognises that individuals are interested in WII FM; 'What's in it for me?'**, which means using messages and content that allow audiences to understand 'what's in it for them'. It is not enough to simply talk about EU vision, policies, values, funding, etc.

Conceptually at least, one of the campaigns 'EUandMe' is in line with the WII FM need by confirming the link between the EU and 'me'. Indeed, the contractor's own reporting states that the campaign is designed with that principle in mind. This was confirmed by the focus groups, who responded very positively to the content of the EUandMe website, finding a lot of information interesting for them. Feedback on #InvestEU also showed a certain level of alignment with WII FM, although the focus group participants considered this to be true only for entrepreneurs and people looking for investments, rather than the target audience of the

¹⁸⁹ It was out of scope to look at the experience of the Representation in the Netherlands along these lines, but from earlier work, the evaluation team understands that it was considered useful and a lesson in not making assumptions about audience concerns.

campaign. However, the third campaign appeared not to fit as well with WII FM because EUProtects does not always address citizens as directly.

📌 **Metric-setting, and monitoring and evaluation:**

In line with good practices, we observe that **the corporate approach has clearly moved on since its pilot**. DG COMM Headquarters has specific SMART objectives for communication; and indicators and benchmarks have been set and data are being collected at the output, outcome and impact levels.

However, there is an on-going tendency¹⁹⁰ to focus reporting on output metrics (for example reach and recall), even though it is widely recognised, and highlighted in the best practice review, that outputs provide very weak insights into communication campaign success. At this stage in our study, information on outcomes and impacts is limited because the campaigns are on-going. And communication agencies do not have an incentive to report on outcomes when not required to, as these may be less ‘impressive sounding’ than the potential reach and recall figures. The Terms of Reference for our synthesis study were drawn up before the Commission drafted its Communication Network Indicators, which provide a framework for the future which is likely to impose more robust reporting on outcomes and short-term impacts.

Moreover, in line with international best practice, the Commission also makes sure that **evaluation** is an integral part of the corporate communication process. Evaluation is defined as a *key principle* of corporate communication as a means of facilitating the continuous improvement of effectiveness and the allocation of resources.

This strategic intention is also reflected in the approach to the three on-going corporate communication campaigns, which have drawn on both qualitative and quantitative research, setting baselines for communication, testing communication concepts with target groups and for which evaluation is planned as a key communication element from the outset. It is to be regarded as positive that Intervention Logics, and Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks, have been drawn up by the contractors for the EUandME and EUProtects campaigns.

The strategy of *Advise, Listen, Engage* provides a framework in line with good practice for DG COMM Headquarters to dialogue with citizens and avoid an organisation-centric monologue with citizens in which communication on political priorities and policy are decided on the basis of a perception of what citizens need to know rather than relating them to their concerns, and telling the story based on an understanding of what will resonate with them (“What’s in it for Me”). Listening mechanisms are in place to understand trends (e.g. the Eurobarometer) and the budget for the corporate campaigns has enabled a significant amount of research into target group needs to be carried (including the best channels and tools for meeting those needs.) There is still a gap in

¹⁹⁰ There is a focus on reporting on output data (social media followers, website visits, etc.) in Europe in May 2019: Preparing for a more united, stronger and more democratic Union in an increasingly uncertain world: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/euco_sibiu_communication_en.pdf

listening regularly and frequently enough, and the ability to adapt to changing needs that emerge from that. There are major advances in the use of good practice in the metric-setting, measurement and evaluation procedures in place for the current corporate campaigns, particularly the monitoring and evaluation methodologies for EUandME and EUProtects.

EQ15: To what extent is the Commission’s corporate communication approach aligned with best industry practice?

Based on the above findings, many of the recognised good practices in communication can already be observed in the corporate communication approach. These are mainly linked to having governance and organisational structures that are strategic, professional and coordinate external and internal communication. Silo walls are being broken down between DGs and DG COMM Headquarters is fulfilling the natural “horizontal”, or overall coordinating, role of a corporate communication department. In addition, there have been major steps forward in the messaging practices and story-telling approach, and in metric-setting, and monitoring results and evaluation. However, there is scope for rebalancing metrics to attribute more importance to outcomes.

The main challenge is in having appropriate mechanisms for avoiding an overly organisation-centric approach to setting topics, so that citizens’ actual concerns, rather than perceptions of those concerns, are properly taken into account and the information on these is updated frequently and drive decisions on communication campaigns.