

Annual Report of the Europe Direct Information Centres



**European Commission
Directorate-General
for Communication**







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1. FOREWORD

Think globally, act locally reflects an essential characteristic of the EU's recent two-way communication efforts. The 2008 Annual Report provides an overview of the main results of the Europe Direct Information Centres (EDICs) in all 27 Member States, illustrated by examples of good practice in communicating Europe at country level.



Communication networks reaching out directly to the public are a key component of the Commission's strategy of "going local". Unlike other communication networks, which address specific target groups, EDICs serve all audiences, taking a proactive approach to communication. By relying on face-to-face interaction, they are an essential part of the Commission's communication mix.

Director Dr. Lieve Franssen,
Directorate-General for Communication

2. MISSION

The EDICs promote an informed and active European citizenship by providing EU information tailored to the needs of their local communities. They stimulate an informed debate on EU matters by awareness-raising activities such as events, information products and active cooperation with local and national stakeholders and media. The EDICs also provide feedback on the outcomes of their communication activities.

The EDICs are hosted by organisations selected through open calls for proposals. Most of them are regional administrations and municipalities, followed by educational organisations, civic associations, public agencies, etc.

More information on the geographical distribution of the EDICs may be found on the Europa website at europedirect.europa.eu/visit_us.

In 2008, 38 new EDICs opened in Bulgaria and Romania, expanding the network to 468 centres in all 27 member states. Co-financing by the Commission ranged from €12,000 to €24,000 per EDIC, adding up to a total of €10,000,000. EDICs benefited from publications, dedicated training and networking platforms offered by DG COMM headquarters and the Representations in the Member States (amounting to approximately € 5,000,000 in 2008).





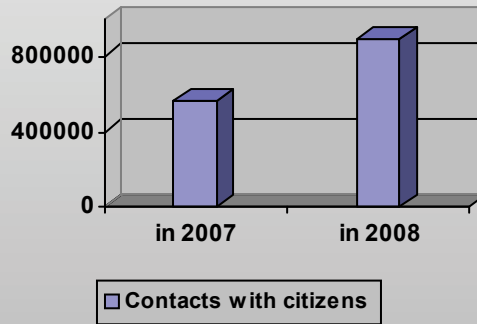
3. PROVIDING CITIZENS WITH INFORMATION ABOUT THE EU

The EDICs are an entry point to the European Union, providing citizens general information, assistance and answers to questions about EU's legislation, policies, and programmes. They contribute to an increased EU local and regional awareness through the dissemination of publications and documentation.

Welcoming, advising visitors and providing information tailored to their needs is a major part of their daily work. In 2008, the EDICs had almost 895,000 personal contacts with citizens, 50% more than during 2007. A remarkable peak in the evolution of contacts was in April and May, due to the EDICs' active participation in the Europe Day celebrations.



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In addition, throughout 2008, the EDICs received and dealt with nearly 196,000 phone calls and over 300,000 e-mails.

As part of their "listening" function, the EDICs pay special attention to the issues that interest their target audience most and report monthly to the Commission on the "hottest topics". In 2008, citizens' main areas of interest included EU grants, EU general affairs, education, youth and the free movement of persons.



