



Connecting Parliaments and Citizens

The European parliament's strategies and activities



Mag. Wolfgang Hiller
Stv. Leiter des Informationsbüros für Österreich



The European Parliament - a special case

- an European Institution - directly elected
- 732 members representing 457 million people from 25 Member states
- working in 20 languages
- organised in 7 political groups + a group of non-attached members
- thus representing the EU in its national, linguistic and political diversity



Institutional context

- the big majority of MEPs working in favour of more European integration
- legislator at European level
- on equal footing with the other EU Institutions
- as a partner of national parliaments in an effort to strengthen democratic control of the EU
- as a principle: no interference with national or regional debates
- thus dealing exclusively with matters of European importance



Communication policy as a „priority“ - Objectives

- to raise the awareness of the role of the European Parliament
- to inform about the work of the European Parliament and its elected members
- Contribute to the europe-wide debate on the future of Europe



Strategic considerations

- better focus on subjects of interest to the general public
 - enhance the communication infrastructure
 - forge closer contacts with the media
 - enhance visibility of Parliament's activities by special events
-
- go local and encourage dialogues and listening to citizens
 - involve MEPs as the voices of Europe



Enhancing the communication infrastructure

- relaunch of www.europarl.eu.int
- a new visitor's centre
- stepping up communication technologies (Web TV, web radio, mobile studios, etc.)
- enhancement of Information Office activities by adding offices in Bukarest and Sofia + special press officers
- coherent and new europe-wide corporate identity since elections in 2004



Evaluation of experiences

- Growing public interest both by media and the general public on the role of the Parliament, in particular if there is conflict (such as the EU budget 2007-2013, Service Directive, public hearings of Commissioners + vote on the Commission)
- Growing media interest in the institution corresponding with increase in political weight
- stronger interest in Parliament's activities if the form of presentation is improved (such as growing visitors of Parliament's new homepage www.europarl.eu.int)



Thank you for
your attention!

