

# EVALUATION OF DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION



EVALUATION REPORT 2018

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

# EVALUATION OF DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION

## EVALUATION REPORT

Directorate of Internal Oversight

Evaluation Division

Evaluation(2018)23

18 January 2018

*This report was prepared by the Directorate of Internal Oversight on the basis of terms of reference. The report reflects the views of the independent evaluators, which are not necessarily those of the Council of Europe. The evaluation team expresses its gratitude to all the persons interviewed during the conduct of this evaluation.*

## Executive Summary

This document is the final report on the evaluation of digital communication and access to information on the Council of Europe (CoE) and its work via internet, carried out from June to November 2017. The evaluation was managed by the Directorate of Internal Oversight (DIO) and implemented by the consulting firm Owl RE. This evaluation was made possible through the collaboration and support of CoE staff.

The goal of the evaluation was to contribute to improving the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the CoE's digital communications. Therefore, it focused on the public websites and social media (SM) activities of the organisation. It also considers the influence of the overall communications structure as this is directly linked to this process. The evaluation was completed using a combination of evaluation methods including: a document review, semi-structured interviews (47), an internal survey of CoE staff (158 responses), an external survey of website users (519 responses), process and content mapping, a website expert review (9 CoE websites), a resources analysis and a benchmarking study (4 comparable international organisations).

Overall, this evaluation found that, in recent years, the CoE has progressed in digital communications by implementing a common content management system (CMS) on the majority of websites, expanding into new formats, establishing a broader SM presence, growing its online following and developing a more consistent and coordinated web "look and feel". The evaluation findings indicate that the CoE's digital content was appreciated and perceived as trustworthy and useful for many of its key audiences. However, the findings also found that issues linked to **strategy, coherence, usability, roles and responsibilities, as well as coordination and resources** have impeded the CoE digital communications process in achieving its full potential in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency.

Thus, a clear need was identified for **more direction and guidance**, priority-setting, support, and **coordination** in digital communications from the Directorate of Communications (DC), a common point requested by staff of both DC and major administrative entities (MAE) staff. As CoE's key messaging lacks consistency across the organisation, DC should strive to create **awareness about key messages** and ensure that they are aligned, wherever possible, taking into account the complexity of the organisation and the different mandates of entities. Further, the evaluation concluded that the CoE has a limited impression of the impact of its digital communications activities due to insufficient emphasis placed on **monitoring and measurement** through research and interaction with audiences. Regarding the **experience of users** on CoE websites, three main challenges were identified: 1) the practice of setting up new websites instead of integrating new content into existing websites; 2) a compromised website architecture; and 3) a poorly performing search engine. Regarding roles and responsibilities, the evaluation concluded that the **skill set required for the web** should be reinforced and formalised within and between the MAEs, with the Web Consulting and Design Unit (WCDU) in an **advisory and leadership role** for web design, strategy and usability. In addition, a **common scheduling or archiving approach** for content is currently lacking and the existing process of overseeing content, carrying out usability checks and optimising texts for search engine optimisation (SEO) was inconsistent across MAEs. Finally,

**resources** currently allocated to web and SM both within the DC and the MAEs are considered insufficient. Given the increasing importance of these areas, digital communications can only be efficient if adequate resourcing is (re)allocated to web design and usability as well as SM.

Based on these findings and conclusions, the evaluation recommends that DC provides more strategic direction and guidance for communications within CoE, places high priority on measuring web performance, provides enhanced coordination of communication across CoE and works with the Directorate of Information Technology (DIT) and MAEs to standardise and encourage a common web publishing workflow and to focus further on improving the user experience on CoE websites. It also recommends that DC, DIT and MAEs with the support of the Directorate of Human Resources (DRH) clarify the roles and responsibilities for staff working on web and SM. Finally it is recommended that DC and the MAEs allocate appropriate resources to support web and SM work.

## Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Abbreviations .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2. Evaluation questions and methodology.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3. Findings .....</b>	<b>7</b>
3. 1. To what extent does the current process of digital communications support CoE in creating awareness/understanding of human rights issues and CoE instruments? .8	
3.1.1. Strategy.....	8
3.1.2. Guidance.....	9
3.1.3. Target audiences .....	10
3.1.4. Size of digital presence .....	11
3.1.5. Monitoring and measurement .....	12
3. 2. To what extent is the delivery of the digital messages/content effective? .....	12
3.2.1. Message coherence .....	12
3.2.2. Audience satisfaction .....	13
3.2.3. Usability.....	15
3. 3. To what extent is the delivery of the digital messages/content efficient? .....	17
3.3.1. Roles and responsibilities .....	17
3.3.2. Workflows.....	20
3.3.3. Coordination .....	23
3.3.4. Resources .....	24
3. 4. To what extent are the good practices of comparable organisations and research in digital communications relevant to the CoE? .....	26
3.4.1. Good practices .....	26
3.4.2. Innovations and trends.....	27
<b>4. Conclusions and recommendations .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Annex 1: Evaluation matrix .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Annex 2: Evaluation methodology.....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Annex 3: Persons interviewed .....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Annex 4: Documents consulted .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Annex 5: External survey – additional graphs .....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Annex 6: Assessment of the communication function matrix.....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Annex 7: Workflow mapping of web and social media processes .....</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>Annex 8: Benchmarking summary for four organisations.....</b>	<b>67</b>

## Abbreviations

CM	Committee of Ministers
CMS	Content management system
CoE	Council of Europe
DC	Directorate of Communications
DGI	Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law
DGII	Directorate General for Democracy
DIO	Directorate of Internal Oversight
DIT	Directorate of Information Technology
MAEs	Major Administrative Entities
ODGP	Office of Directorate General of Programmes
P&B	Programme and Budget
PACE	Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
PO	Private Office of the Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General
SEO	Search engine optimization
SM	Social media
WCDU	Web Consulting and Design Unit (of DC)

## 1. Introduction

This document is the final report for the evaluation of digital communications and access to information on the Council of Europe (CoE) and its work via internet<sup>1</sup>. The evaluation was managed by the Directorate of Internal Oversight (DIO) and implemented by the consulting firm Owl RE<sup>2</sup>. The evaluation was carried out from June to November 2017.

This final report is supported by the following documents: an expert review of nine websites carried out by usability consultants Telono<sup>3</sup> (working paper 1); a report containing staff survey results; process and content mapping; resource analysis and benchmarking study (working paper 2). These are internal working documents used as references within this report.

This evaluation was made possible through the collaboration and support of staff throughout the CoE who made themselves available for interviews, discussions and provided documentation and information.

## 2. Evaluation questions and methodology

The goal of the evaluation was to contribute to improving the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the CoE's digital communications and consequently increase the awareness and understanding of the CoE's target audiences<sup>4</sup>. This goal was delineated in the evaluation questions, which were shared and discussed with the Directorate of Communications (DC) and other major administrative entities (MAEs):

1. To what extent does the current process of digital communications support CoE in creating awareness/understanding of human rights issues and CoE instruments?
2. To what extent is the delivery of the digital messages/content effective?
3. To what extent is the delivery of the digital messages/content efficient?
4. To what extent are the good practices of comparable organisations and research in digital communications relevant to the CoE?

---

<sup>1</sup> In accordance with the [Work Programme](#) for 2017 of the Directorate of Internal Oversight.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.owlre.com>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.telono.com>

<sup>4</sup> The Directorate of Communications has segmented its audiences in terms of their level of knowledge of CoE work and standards: 1st: direct stakeholders, partners, experts; 2nd: Specialists, media, legal practitioners, professionals; 3rd: general public.

The above questions were matched to sub-questions, indicators and research methods in an evaluation framework, as found in annex 1. The evaluation was carried out using a combination of evaluation methods including: a document review, semi-structured interviews (47), an internal survey of CoE staff (158 responses), an external survey of website users (519 responses), process and content mapping, a website expert review (9 CoE websites), a resources analysis and a benchmarking study (4 comparable international organisations). Further details are found in annex 2. The communication function matrix (annex 6) was the basis for the criteria of the benchmarking study.

**Digital communications:** The scope of the evaluation focused on the CoE's digital communications, which was understood to be:

- All public websites and pages managed by the DC and the different MAEs.
- All social media (SM) activities carried out by DC and MAEs, including YouTube, Facebook and Twitter.
- Other digital channels such as e-newsletters.

Within this definition, the evaluation did not include intranet (internal) websites, document and records management. In reference to the "Access to information" part of the title, this evaluation focuses on access to information on CoE's websites and not access from the internet to CoE websites, i.e. via search engines.

**Limitations:** The limitations included the limited amount of information, including plans, budgets and strategies available about the digital presence of the MAEs, SM in particular. A further limitation was the fact that the scope of the evaluation was able to explore only to a limited extent the broader link to the overall communications structure. The definition of communications and digital communications also varies within the CoE.

### 3. Findings

Overall, this evaluation found that the CoE has progressed in digital communications in recent years by implementing a common content management system (CMS) throughout the organisation, expanding into new formats, establishing a broader SM presence, growing its online following and developing a more consistent and coordinated web "look and feel". As this evaluation shows, the CoE's digital content was seen as trustworthy and useful for many of its key audiences. However, the full potential in digital communications has not been achieved, due to issues linked to strategy, coherence, usability, roles and responsibilities, coordination and resources as outlined in this report.

This chapter details the findings of the evaluation and is structured around the four evaluation questions.

### **3. 1. To what extent does the current process of digital communications support CoE in creating awareness/understanding of human rights issues and CoE instruments?**

The CoE's current digital communications process has yet to reach its full potential in supporting the organisation to create awareness and understanding among its target audiences.

#### **3.1.1. Strategy**

The process starts with the ability of DC to represent the CoE's goals and priorities in a communications strategy and to cascade this down through specified focal areas, such as digital or media, and then to the MAEs.

This evaluation found that there are several gaps in this chain of communication at the CoE, which includes digital strategies as illustrated in figure 1. The first gap identified is the lack of a global communication strategy. The most recent communication strategy is from 2006 and has not been updated since<sup>5</sup>. On its recently created portal page<sup>6</sup>, the DC currently has set out three priorities or approaches to guide its communications as part of its communication policy<sup>7</sup>. According to MAEs and DC staff, this is not seen as sufficient to replace a communication strategy, which normally includes objectives, priorities, messages, target audiences, communications tools and channels, and measurement indicators. MAEs also indicated they were not aware of these priorities. Strategies are also inconsistent, lacking or in draft form at other levels within the communication focal areas such as digital, media and publications.

Some MAEs, such as Directorate General for Democracy (DGII) and the Office of Directorate General of Programmes (ODGP) (with the support of DC) have created communication strategies, but with their own priorities, and content, given that they were unable to use an overall organisational communications strategy as a benchmark or guideline<sup>8</sup>. Very few digital (or online or web) strategies were identified. In the MAEs, only the Directorate General of

---

<sup>5</sup> Communication Strategy, TC-INF (2006)3revE, 19 October 2006, Council of Europe, DC.

<sup>6</sup> From March 2017.

<sup>7</sup> The statement is: *The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. To raise its profile and maintain its reputation we: have the capability to respond rapidly to political developments and crises at all times; focus on key issues including freedom of expression, the rule of law and judicial reforms in member states as well as combatting discrimination, hate speech, corruption, terrorism and cybercrime; co-ordinate communications of the constituent parts of the organisation.* Source: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/directorate-of-communications>.

<sup>8</sup> Of note, the DGII communication strategy refers to the "first and only" 2006 CoE Communication strategy. (TC-INF (2006)3revE / 19 October 2006). The strategy makes reference to the available communication guidelines.

Human Rights and Rule of Law (DGI) was found to have an online content strategy. This strategy defines guiding principles, goals, target audiences, platforms, narrative, marketing and promotion, evaluation and monitoring, raising awareness, the future and implementation.

A meeting was recently organised by the DC and DIT with representatives of MAEs working on the web to discuss the perspectives of a online communication strategy.

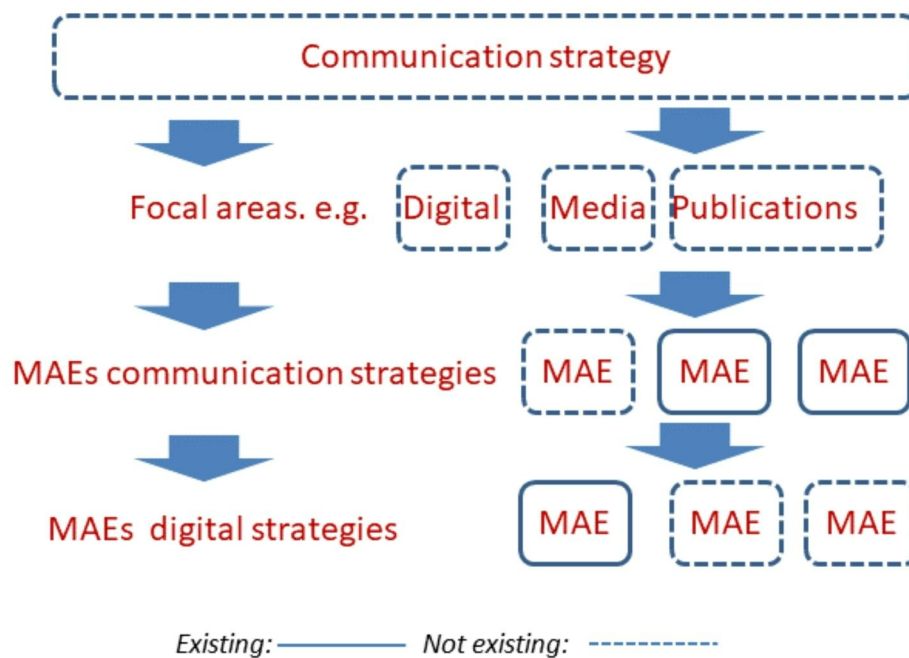


Figure 1: Communication and digital strategy of CoE (source: evaluation)

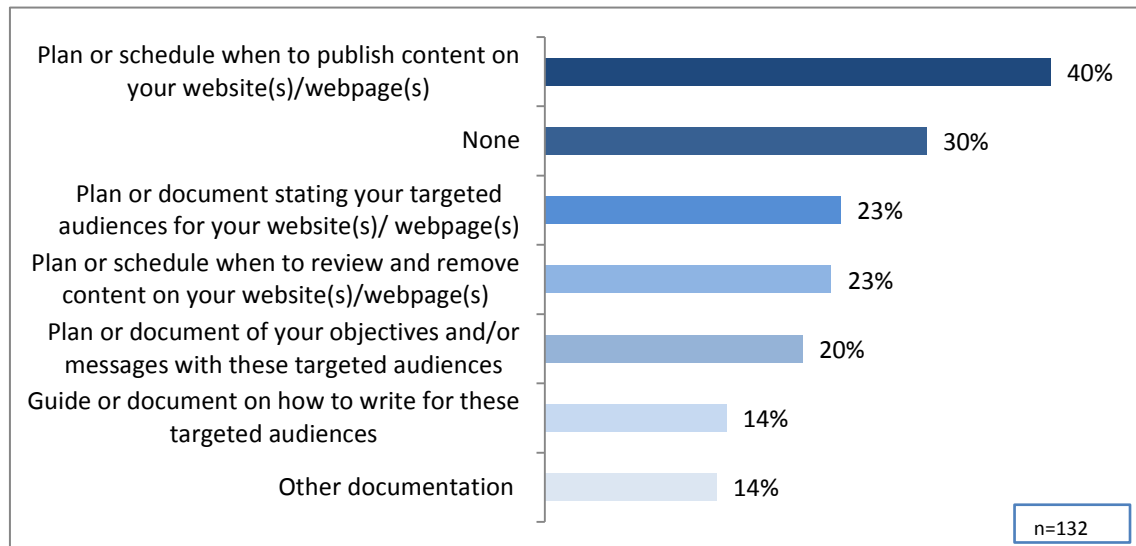
### 3.1.2. Guidance

The evaluation noted that the absence of communications and digital strategies has also impacted guidance and tools for digital activities. DC offers guidance or training and resources in digital activities, including website set-up, usability and search engine optimisation (SEO), and SM to a lesser extent and on a more ad-hoc basis (guidance is centralised on DC’s Web Resources page<sup>9</sup>). The Directorate of Information Technology (DIT) offers training on CMS usage. Surveyed MAE staff rated positively support from DIT and the Web Consulting and Design Unit (WCDU) of DC; 95% and 99% “moderately” to “very satisfied” respectively.

While CoE staff who are responsible for uploading content or managing websites received guidance from DC or DIT either in-person or through the Web Resources page, 30% of these staff surveyed indicated that they did not receive any guidance from their own entities, as seen in figure 2. Those who did receive some guidance indicated that it was more in

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/group/web-resources>

planning/scheduling for web content (for 40% of staff) and less in strategic aspects such as objectives, targets and messages (only available for 14%-23% of staff). The fact that the first training request of staff surveyed was web communication strategy also illustrates this gap (see figure 7).



**Figure 2: Staff survey – available supporting guidance from their own entity (source: evaluation)**

Conversely, SM media guidelines were available. The two-page guidelines decentralise the responsibility, leaving the MAEs free to authorise the creation of SM accounts. At the same time, a proliferation of SM accounts (70 in total) has been observed and an absence of overall coordination, as discussed below (chapter 3.3.2).

### 3.1.3. Target audiences

The absence of a global communication strategy was also seen to contribute to a lack of clarity about the CoE's digital target audiences. The DC has defined three priority levels: first - direct stakeholders, partners, experts; second - specialists, media, legal practitioners, professionals; and third - general public<sup>10</sup> (although the DC webpage has four categories<sup>11</sup>). However, this definition sits outside a strategy and was not known by all MAEs; for example, the DGII's communications strategy recommends defining target audiences on a case-by-case basis. Although the ODGP communications strategy does consider the DC's definition, the majority of interviewed MAE staff were not aware of the DC's categorization of audiences (the categorization is available on their Web Resources website – see footnote 9). DGI considers it audiences to be broader and includes observers (for those CoE treaties concerned),

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/group/web-resources/web-communication>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/directorate-of-communications>

Neighbourhood Cooperation and also worldwide audiences, as detailed in their online content strategy. This lack of clarity on target audiences also was confirmed by staff surveyed where 77% reported having no target audience plan for their website (s) (see figure 2 above).

### 3.1.4. Size of digital presence

The digital communications process was also seen to be impacted by the size, set-up and the procedures for websites and SM management (procedures are discussed in chapter 3.3). In terms of size, the CoE currently has 191 active websites and some 70 individual SM accounts, as illustrated in figure 3<sup>12</sup>. The decentralised approach means that MAEs and their various projects and programmes have the ownership and are responsible for managing their website and SM accounts.

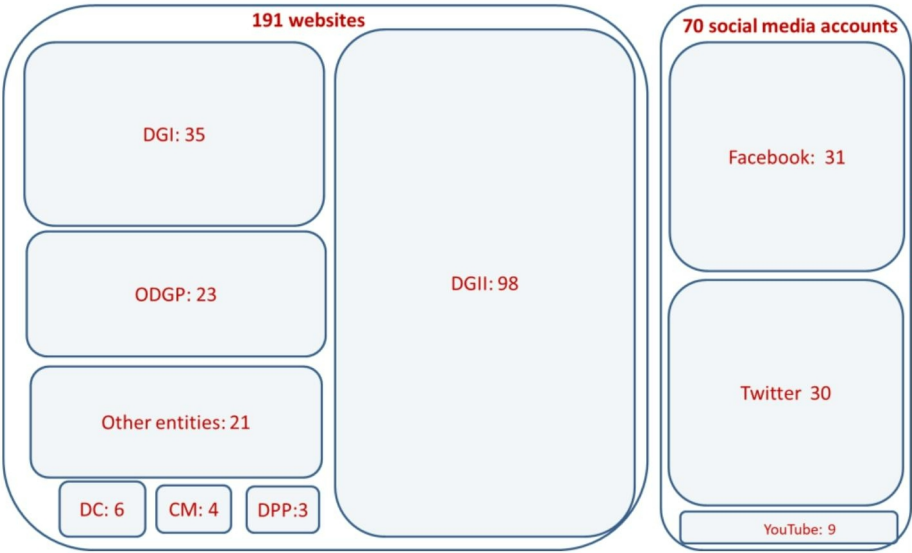


Figure 3: Number of CoE websites and SM accounts 2017 (source: DC & DIT)

The evaluation found that the large number of websites and SM accounts has implications both in terms of their efficient management (see chapter 3.3), coherence of content and the ability of users to find and locate content (see next chapter). The CoE has adopted an approach to create new websites for projects, programmes, initiatives and field offices as stand-alone websites rather than adding sub-pages to the existing central portal or websites. This evaluation found that comparable organisations have tended to opt for the latter approach rather than setting up multiple stand-alone websites (see chapter 3.4). One consequence of the stand-alone approach is the challenge with integrating the some 190 websites into a global navigation structure that makes sense to users, as discussed in chapter 3.2.3.

<sup>12</sup> The number of websites as of 1 November 2017 with possibly more in existence that are not included in this list. SM accounts does not include other SM platforms such as Instagram, LinkedIn, etc.

### 3.1.5. Monitoring and measurement

All CoE websites using the common CMS have available a metrics analytical tool, Piwik. CoE staff working on websites reported using this tool to various degrees to support their analysis and understanding of their web visitors. In addition, some MAEs also monitored their SM activities through consulting the analytical tools of these SM platforms, such as the Facebook Insights page. No global SM analytical tool<sup>13</sup> was used for CoE SM presence as far as this evaluation was aware. Only two MAEs, DGI and the secretariat of the Committee of Ministers (CM), reported using online surveys to canvass their audiences. Within the Programme and Budget (P&B) 2016-2017<sup>14</sup>, the DC had two performance indicators for web and SM:

- Number of web pages consulted and a number of unique visitors
- Number of followers on active social media platforms.

More significant indicators, such as level of satisfaction of web visitors and level of SM engagement were not used as performance indicators of the P&B. The 2012 External Auditors report had a specific recommendation in this direction that is yet to be implemented:

*“The External Auditor recommends that the performance indicators be revised so that they measure the effectiveness of communication activities, in particular in terms of their impact on the target groups.”<sup>15</sup>*

## 3. 2. To what extent is the delivery of the digital messages/content effective?

The evaluation found that the CoE is currently delivering a considerable amount of content that is highly credible and useful for its audience. However, the effectiveness of the delivery is obstructed by issues of message coherence, coordination and web usability.

### 3.2.1. Message coherence

A main issue identified by this evaluation was the coherence of digital messages. Interviews with staff showed that the biggest challenge was the incoherence or inconsistency of messages among MAEs, and between MAEs and the DC. Inconsistency of content was also the third highest challenge mentioned by CoE survey respondents, after resources and web know-how (see figure 12). The need to have coherent messages was identified nearly 10 years ago by the DC<sup>16</sup>. Incoherence is seen in different ways, such as:

---

<sup>13</sup> See for example: The Best Social Media Management & Analytics Tools of 2017: <http://uk.pcmag.com/cloud-services/71221/guide/the-best-social-media-management-analytics-tools-of-2017>

<sup>14</sup> Similar indicators are contained in the draft 2018-19 programme. DC advised that more substantial measures such as visit duration and engagement level are gradually being introduced.

<sup>15</sup> Report of the external auditor on the consolidated financial statements for the year ended 2012, CM(2013)100.

<sup>16</sup> “Further improvements in communication activity should be achieved through message development. DC should work in close co-operation with the Directorates General and other parts of the organisation to define clear and

- Lack of visibility of core messages from the CoE’s focus areas, human rights, rule of law and democracy on the CoE portal, i.e. on the main landing pages of the portal. Internal guidance for core messages in the focus areas was also seen as limited by staff. Although both the SG Annual Report and the P&B contain summary texts on the focus areas they have not been transformed into key messages, i.e. adapted for use on the portal.
- The evaluation found that the fact that the CoE portal’s home page does not display a key tagline message: "*The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation*" but appears on a sub-page (Who We Are) also illustrates message inconsistency (of note, there is no consensus within the CoE as to a common tagline, notably concerning the absence of “democracy” from this key message).
- Staff stated that there were inconsistencies in content publication, for example where the DC could publish a press release online that would subsequently be modified by an MAE then re-published by them and possibly altered once more by another MAE and re-published.
- A further example provided was where DC or an MAE may publish a webpage on a given focus however, not link it to all relevant entities within the organisation that may be working on the same issue. Therefore, some content may be seen as overlapping or inconsistent by external audiences.
- This evaluation did not find any common procedure or coordinated approach to prioritizing and publishing important messages on websites and SM. For example, while the DC could publish a message that it considers of utmost importance on the website and across its main SM channels, it may not be published by other MAEs or field offices also working on the topic. Similarly, an MAE may consider a topic important but it would not be disseminated on the main CoE portal or the main SM accounts.
- The evaluation also found examples where one of the more autonomous bodies of the CoE, such as the Commissioner for Human Rights or Parliamentary Assembly may release a report or statement on an issue or topic at the same time as another MAE on the same issue, thus potentially confusing external audiences.

Issues of coherence were seen as linked to coordination which is discussed in chapter 3.3.3.

### **3.2.2. Audience satisfaction**

At the same time, the evaluation found that the CoE’s web content was highly appreciated by its users, notably for its trustworthiness and usefulness, rated at 89% and 82% for “excellent”

---

*concise messages that are in line with political and other priorities of the organisation*”. DC, TC-INF(2009), Road-map for the implementation of the Communication Strategy.

and “good” respectively, as seen in figure 4<sup>17</sup>. This was also confirmed by the web expert study of the nine CoE websites, which showed an average rating of 90% “credible” and 80% “useful” (see table 1 below). However, these ratings were provided by users that had found and visited the CoE websites. As indicated below, it is possible that not all potential users found the website(s) with ease (i.e. issues of finding the CoE through search engines, although this was not measured by this evaluation). For SM, DC staff pointed to the popularity of their SM content as seen in the number of follows: 293,000 on Twitter (English) and 181,000 on Facebook (English).

Website users rated the visual appeal of the websites third highest (75% for “excellent” and “good”) with the equivalent “desirable” rated at 64% by the expert study. The study also praised the consistent graphic design of the websites, their responsive designs, language options and the use of photos and videos. According to CoE staff, this reflected the progress in recent years corresponding to the adoption of a common “look and feel”, templates, a CMS and web design elements.

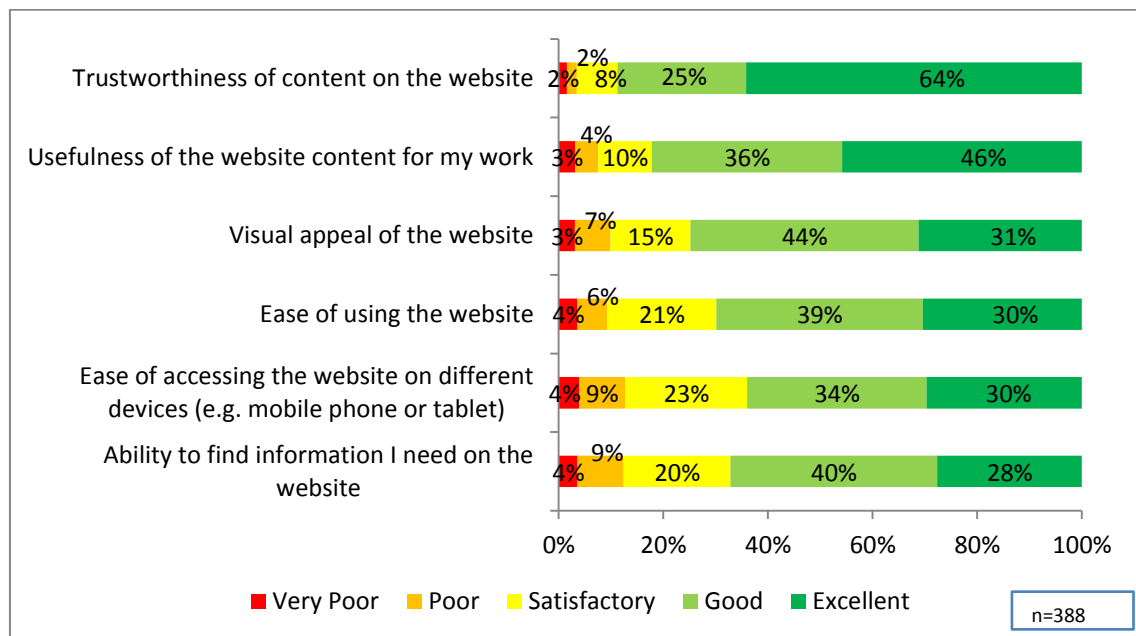


Figure 4: User survey: rating of key factors – all CoE websites (source: evaluation)

The CoE websites were seen as an important and often consulted reference for the majority of users surveyed: 54% visited a CoE website between 1-10 times per month and 24% visit more than 10 times per month. 33% of users surveyed rated the CoE website as “essential” and 46% “important” for their work/interests. According to users surveyed, the main purpose for

<sup>17</sup> An analysis of the key factors of figure 4 by each of the 10 most visited CoE websites shows no major variations in the rating by users (see annex 5).

visiting a CoE websites was to view news, updates, reports, publications, treaties, conventions and other legal documents (see annex 5 for additional details). Figure 5 shows the 11 most visited CoE websites by usefulness and frequency of use. The size of the circles indicates the number of survey respondents that selected the given CoE website (annex 5 contains graphs with precise numbers per CoE website rated).

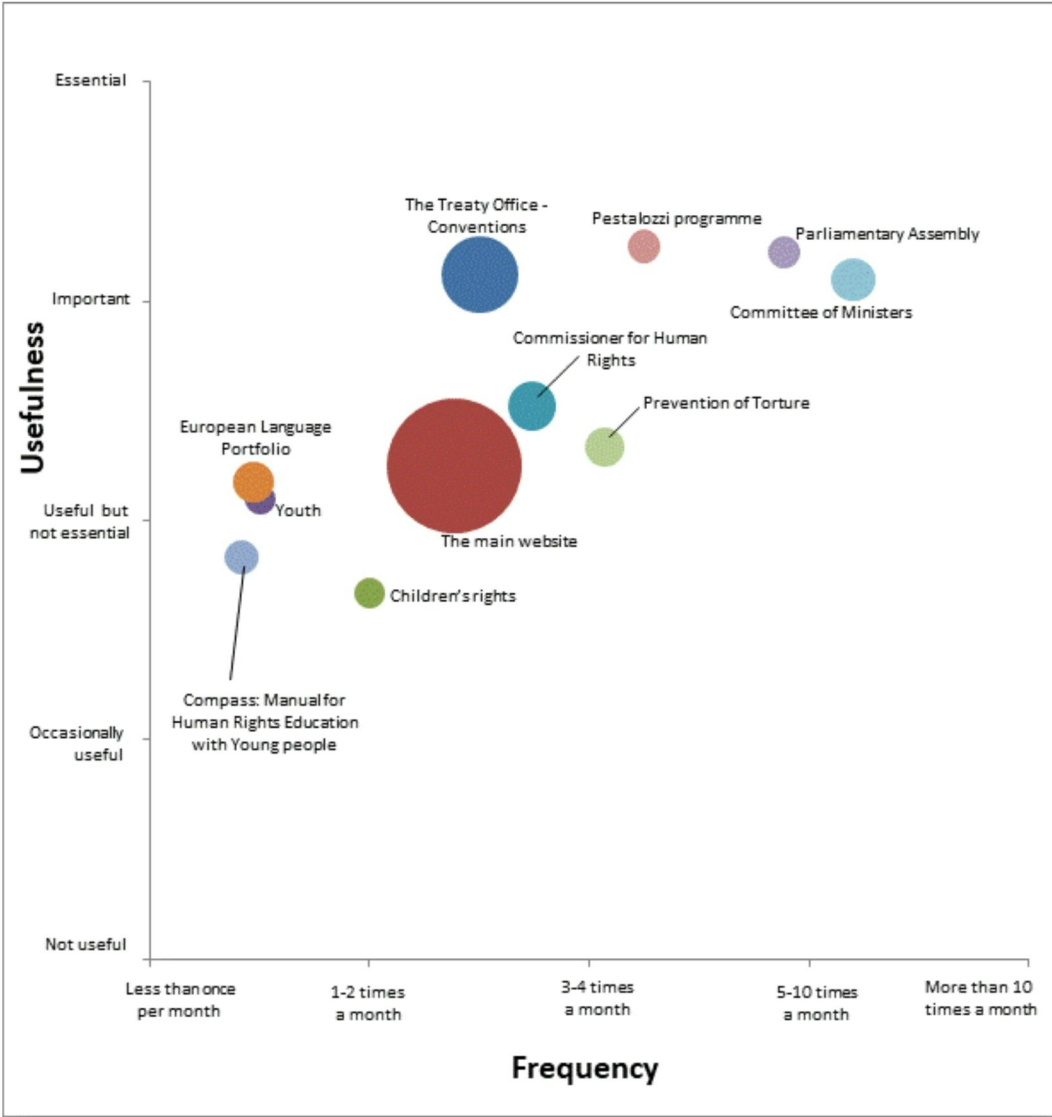


Figure 5: User survey - 11 most-visited CoE websites – usefulness and frequency

### 3.2.3. Usability

The evaluation found that while the CoE websites were appreciated and used there were issues of usability limiting their potential. As seen in figure 4, the usability ratings, notably the ease of using the website, as well as accessing and finding information were all rated the

lowest by the users. Similarly, the web expert study rated “usable” and “findable” the lowest as seen in table 1.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Average across 9 CoE websites</b>
Credible	90%
Useful	80%
Accessible	80%
Desirable	64%
Usable	54%
Findable	46%

**Table 1: Rating of 9 CoE websites on usability criteria (source: web expert study)**

The usability elements were found to directly impact the ability for users to complete their goals during their visit to the CoE websites: only 34% of surveyed users responded that they could completely achieve the goals of their last visit. Based on the expert study as well as feedback from users and CoE staff this inability for users to achieve their goals was found to be due to two main aspects: complex website navigation and the search function, as illustrated by these two quotes from users:

*“The CoE websites are not user-friendly. The content (documents, reports, meeting agenda's) is poorly accessible - one has to know the structure of CoE pretty well to be able to find information on thematic areas.”*

*“[It is] not clear what is covered in the search, no option for limiting/filtering in search; not clear where to find specific information.”*

The website navigation encompasses the CoE portal navigation and consequently the navigation of the CoE website that a user is directed to. According to the web expert study, the navigation is based on a compromise between the CoE structure and its key focuses and does not adequately guide users to relevant content. This is accentuated by the inability to integrate the 190 websites into the navigation.

The web expert study found three issues with the search engine; it looks disconnected from the rest of the websites, thus introducing doubts in the mind of users who might wonder if it can be used to search on the specific site they are on; no advanced search tools were detected; and the study was unable find a way to filter search results. CoE staff also indicated the lack of common document tagging and descriptions hindered search. CM and DGI have worked on improving search within their given websites. This did not however benefit the overall search offered across all CoE websites.

### 3. 3. To what extent is the delivery of the digital messages/content efficient?

The evaluation found that efficiency of digital messages/content delivery is hindered by issues related to roles and responsibilities, workflows, coordination and resources.

#### 3.3.1. Roles and responsibilities

The evaluation found that the CoE's decentralised communications approach has resulted in a division of responsibility for managing and updating web and SM content. While the WCDU of the DC is responsible for the overall web design and usability, institutional web content (mostly the main portal) and the institutional SM accounts, the MAEs manage and update their own web content and SM accounts.

As a result of this arrangement, three MAEs update and manage a large proportion of the CoE's websites: DGII (98 websites), DGI (35) and ODGP (23) (see figure 2). Findings also showed that the majority of work on MAE websites is carried out by B level staff, 70% according to the staff survey (with the remaining 30% being A level staff). Two-thirds of staff surveyed (63%) spent less than a day (20%) per week working on the websites and one third (37%) spent more than 1 to 2 days on them, as seen in figure 6.

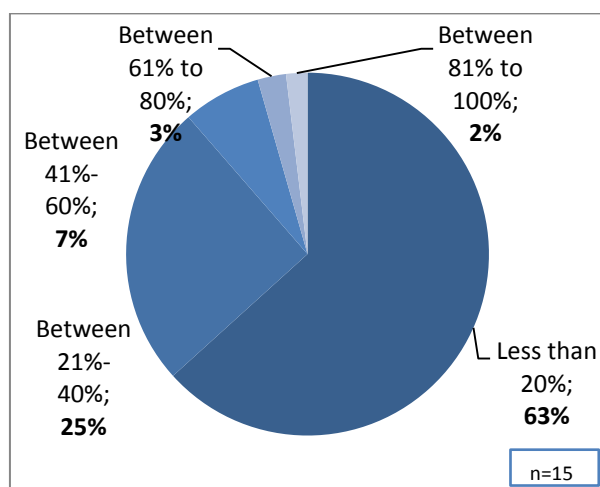


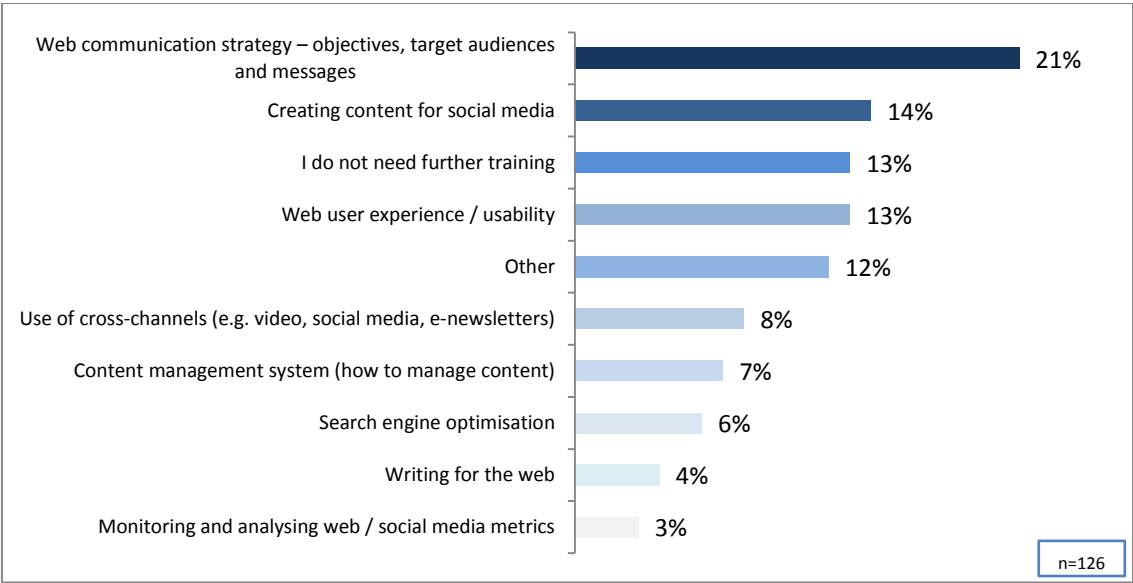
Figure 6: Staff survey - percentage of time spent working on websites (source: evaluation)

Within DGII, an estimated 19% of staff work on their websites, which accounts for the equivalent of 6% of their full-time staffing numbers (see table 2 below).

The work carried out by staff on websites includes updating tasks (e.g. lower grades of B level staff), managing tasks (e.g. higher grades of B level staff) or supervisory/oversight tasks (e.g. A level staff). However, the evaluation did not find any consistent formal recognition of the work carried out on websites in the job descriptions of the staff working on the websites, in the

human resource competency frameworks or in the job codes/classifications used<sup>18</sup>. This contributed to an informal approach of work on websites as staff perceived it as an additional task outside of their core duties.

Less than half of surveyed staff who work on the MAE websites had received relevant training: 41% had taken the web content management system training, organized by DIT and 22% the best practices for the web workshop, organized by WCDU. According to DIT and WCDU, both workshops were designed as compulsory training for staff working on websites but the evaluation found that it was not considered as such by the MAEs, and as seen by the above participation rates. Staff interviewed confirmed that the skill level for updating, managing and overseeing MAE websites required improvements. When asked about their main challenges when working on the websites, 45% of surveyed staff indicated “know-how and skills to manage the websites/webpages” (see figure 12). The most requested areas for training for staff working on websites was “Web communication strategy”, as seen in figure 7 below. Of note, 13% indicated that they did not need further training. Of this 13% (16 staff), the majority were A level staff (10 out of 16).



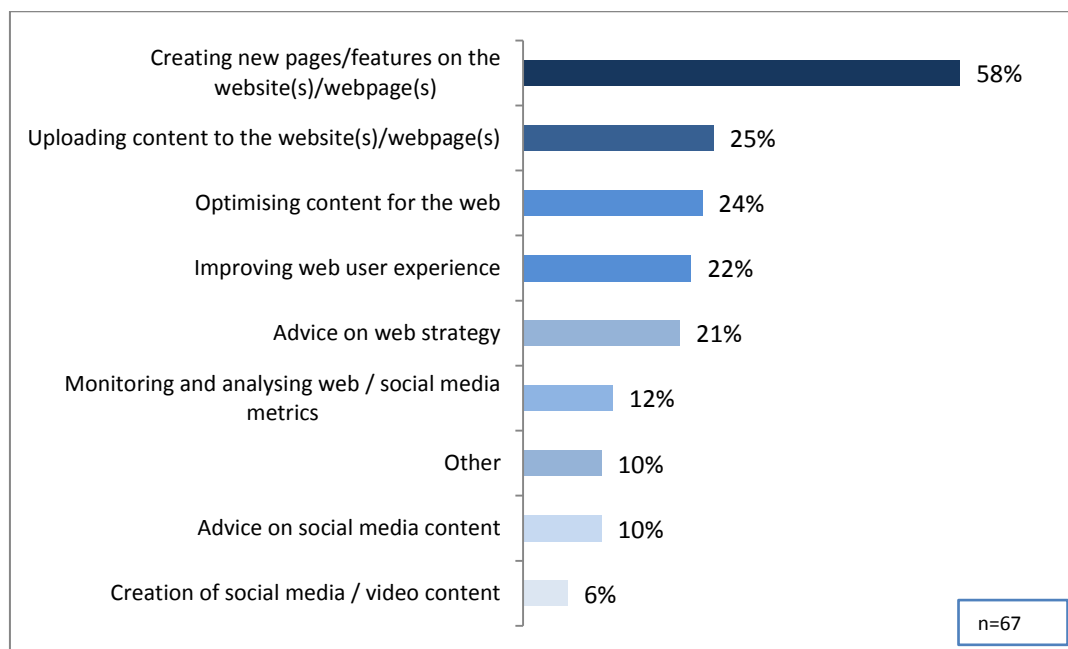
**Figure 7: Staff survey - areas where training required (source: evaluation)**

MAE SM accounts were found to be predominantly managed by A-level staff and/or those with communications/web roles and responsibilities. WCDU and some MAE web staff reported providing ad-hoc coaching and one-to-one training on SM for staff taking on these roles but this was not systematic nor a prerequisite for these roles.

The evaluation found that the roles and responsibilities of the WCDU and the DIT for websites were relatively clearly defined on paper, specifying that the WCDU is accountable for the portal, web design and usability, and DIT for the technical aspects. Nevertheless, staff

<sup>18</sup> A job code “Web” does exist but out of 17 positions currently allocated this code, 12 are in DC, notably the WCDU management and staff (source: extract of SQR database, supplied by human resources).

surveyed indicated that where they requested support from the WCDU was mainly on technical aspects, such as creating new webpages/features (58%), as seen in figure 8 and much less for usability and strategic issues. The WCDU staff confirmed that the majority of queries from general staff were linked to technical aspects, overshadowing their role with web strategy and usability. This was found to be linked to an inability to respond to all requests adequately due to lack of resources, as discussed below. WCDU reported that when they have spent time working with MAEs on web strategy and usability at the creation stage, less support was consequently needed and the resulting websites conformed better to web best practices, e.g. Children's rights website (<http://www.coe.int/en/web/children>).



**Figure 8: Staff survey - area of support requested from WCDU (source: evaluation)**

Within the DC, staff outside of WCDU was also found to be involved in web and SM. For example, the French and Russian institutional Twitter accounts are managed by DC press officers with these language skills. As press officers work on a thematic and geographic focus basis, they were found to be the *de facto* main liaisons between the MAEs and the DC, according to both the DC and the MAE staff, even if this is not formally recognised. Therefore, their work may involve providing advice and support which may go beyond press and spill over into areas such as web and SM. For example, a press officer may be informed about a specific issue and could provide guidance about content to a staff member working on a Twitter post, or they may provide the content for the post to the MAE. This is also a reflection of the increasing cross-functional roles seen in communication units of other comparable organisations (see chapter 3.4).

The evaluation found that at least 15 staff members carried out cross-functional communication/web roles in the different MAEs. For example, the Parliamentary Assembly of the CoE (PACE) communication staff deal with all areas of communications including web and social media. There are also at least four staff within MAEs that have specific webmaster/web manager roles. In the CoE field offices, it is often the deputy head of office that manages the websites and SM accounts, even if this is not part of their written job description, according to field office staff interviewed.

### 3.3.2. Workflows

Three workflows were identified that were key to the efficient delivery of digital content:

- The workflow for creation of websites and SM accounts by MAEs;
- The workflow for publishing web and SM content within the MAEs;
- The workflow for promoting web and SM content of MAEs.

Annex 7 contains detailed diagrams mapping these three workflows.

The workflow (simplified) for the creation of websites for MAEs is illustrated in figure 9. The process, jointly managed by the WCDU and the DIT has been refined over time and functions in a satisfactory way, according to DC, DIT and MAE staff.



Figure 9: Simplified workflow for creation of MAEs websites (source: DIT/DC)

The evaluation identified several issues with this workflow that could impact the efficiency of this process:

- For the WCDU and the DIT, the MAEs' requests for the creation of websites were seen as sometimes unrealistic in terms of desired delivery deadlines. For example, requests placed in the lead up to the end of the budgetary year (December) were difficult to complete in a timely manner according to WCDU and DIT staff.
- For step 1, the assessment by the DIT and the WCDU was based on the assumption that a new stand-alone website was the solution for MAEs, rather than considering integrating the new content into an existing website.
- For step 2, accommodating MAE requests for web features and design adjustments was not always possible, according to MAE staff interviewed. According to the DIT and the

WCDU, their aim was to limit adding complexity to the CMS (Liferay). MAEs were not always aware of all the available functionality of the CMS, according to MAE and WCDU staff.

- For step 4, the WCDU and the DIT workshops designed for the MAEs (as detailed above) were not considered as compulsory by the MAEs.
- For step 5, validation of MAE websites by WCDU once content had been uploaded was not always respected, according to both the WCDU and the MAE staff interviewed.
- For step 7, both the DIT and the WCDU were limited in their ability to follow-up and monitor MAE websites once they were published, given resource limitations. Web content reviews were conducted on an ad-hoc basis, resulting from a request by an MAE or the WCDU having been alerted to an unusual layout/content that did not meet best practices for the web.

The creation of SM accounts by MAEs followed the SM guidelines as described above. According to the guidelines, MAEs can create SM accounts for professional use and should inform the DC. The guidelines ask MAEs to *“assess the need for a new account where existing activities or accounts may suffice”* with no further criteria available. The SM accounts created to date, mostly Facebook and Twitter, represent a range of CoE units, initiatives and DGs. In addition, managers, professional staff, also post about the CoE, mostly on Twitter, under their own names. DC stated that, they are not always informed when new accounts are opened and do not have to be informed according to the SM guidelines when a manager or professional staff posts about the CoE on their personal account(s). Further, several MAEs reported having sub-contracted the management of their SM activities for a given project to external consultants. As a result, DC staff emphasized the difficulty to have an overview of all SM activities carried out on behalf of the CoE.

For publishing web content within MAEs, there is no common or documented workflow. A workflow (simplified) has been constructed based on feedback from the MAEs, DIT and DC, as seen in figure 10.

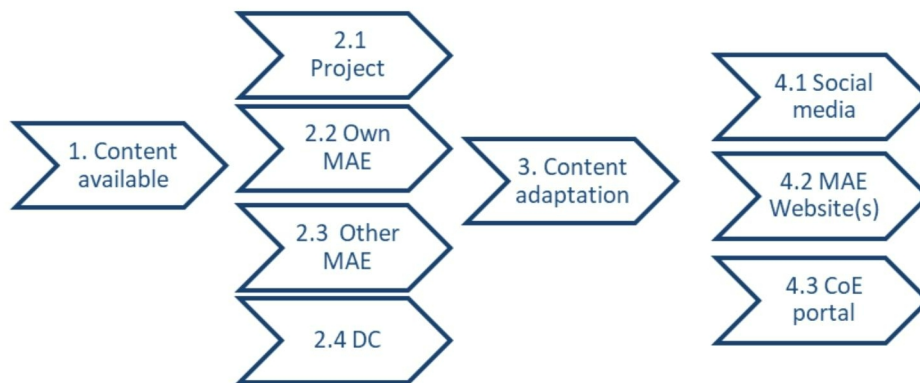


Figure 10: Simplified workflow for publishing web content within MAEs (source: evaluation)

The evaluation identified several issues with this workflow that could impact the efficiency of this process:

- For step 1, only some MAEs had content schedules to guide their content publishing (40% of staff surveyed did, see figure 2). There was no common scheduling or coordination of content between MAEs and the DC.
- For step 2, limited adaptation was seen with transforming content for digital, such as editing a text to make it more web appropriate. However, MAEs were increasingly using different formats such as video, audio and images.
- For steps 4 and 5, the validation of content and the usability check varied across MAEs. In some MAEs, A level staff and/or communication/web staff validated content prior or after publication, whereas for other MAEs validation was not specifically assigned. Checking content from the usability and SEO perspective was also not carried out systematically<sup>19</sup>.
- Step 6, the promotion of content is discussed below. Not featured in this workflow is the archiving or removal of content from MAE websites. This was not carried out systematically; only 23% of staff surveyed reported that they had a schedule to review/remove content on their website(s) (see figure 2.)

The workflow (simplified) for the promoting web and SM content of MAEs is illustrated in figure 11.



*Figure 11: Simplified workflow for promoting web and SM content of MAEs (source: evaluation)*

The evaluation identified several issues with this workflow that could impact the efficiency of the process:

- Once content was available from an MAE, a project or programme, it could then be promoted by all the entities listed at step 2. However, a wide variation is seen at this step. Content was dealt with on a case by case basis with no documented process to manage its promotion.

<sup>19</sup> DGI reported that they have a system in place to prepare, revise and proofread all texts posted online.

- At step 3, content could be further adapted by the entities listed in step 2. For example, an MAE could adapt the content of another MAE and re-publish it on its own website or SM account in step 4.
- At step 4, the entities of step 2 would selectively publish content. For example, the DC would select content it assessed as being appropriate for the CoE portal and the institutional SM accounts. No documented criteria for selection of content for promotion by the DC were found. According to DC and MAE staff, this caused tensions as MAEs and the DC could differ in their assessment of the importance of content and its potential for broader publicity.

### 3.3.3. Coordination

The evaluation found that coordination of communication, web and SM impacted on its efficient delivery at different levels.

Limited coordination in communications was found between the DC and the entities throughout the organisation. Of note, coordination was one the three stated priorities of DC (see footnote 6). The Director of Communications has a dual role as both spokesperson and director with his time divided between these two roles. According to CoE staff interviewed, monthly or bimonthly meetings were held between MAE communication staff and the DC prior to 2009, to coordinate communications across the CoE (e.g. sharing planning, discussing messaging and priorities, common initiatives, etc.). Staff agreed that the absence of such coordination filtered down into all communication activities including web and SM. The 2012 External Audit highlighted the importance of coordination:

*“These institutions [PACE, Commissioner, Congress] require their own communication activities on account of their particular nature. However, for reasons of effectiveness and clarity, as well as saving and rational use of resources, this communication network must be properly linked up and co-ordinated under the aegis of the Directorate of Communication.”<sup>20</sup>*

No common planning or scheduling for communications was found within the CoE with the exception of the press team coordinating the release of their press releases with the MAEs (which was on behalf of most MAEs). According to DC staff, attempts have been made in the past to establish a common communications calendar but without success as MAEs saw it as optional and/or those appointed to keep it updated did not have the relevant information. A 2009 DC report comments on the use of *“an intranet-based collaborative space, which enables other communication teams and a larger number of staff across the organisation to regularly*

---

<sup>20</sup> *Op. Cit.*, CM (2013)100.

*contribute to planning and co-ordination of communication activities*”<sup>21</sup>. However, this tool is believed to be no longer in use.

The evaluation also saw limited coordination of web and SM activities with the exception of the WCDU and the DIT who held annual or biannual briefings for MAE web coordinators or contributors for web and SM. A recent initiative in 2017, proposed by the MAEs, was to set up a Working Group on Web (GT-Web), chaired jointly by the Directors of DC and DIT with the participation of MAE web coordinators. GT-Web will focus on internet and intranet platforms but not SM according to participants. This was also seen as an effective practice in the comparison study with other organisations, where the OECD indicated that all staff working on web held regular informal meetings to coordinate content and discuss developments.

The publication of web content, notably for the portal was found to be coordinated within the DC. However, coordination is lacking between the different web and SM channels and accounts. For example, there was limited coordination between the different staff managing the English, French and Russian Twitter accounts for CoE, in terms of sharing and scheduling content.

The Private Office of the CoE Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General is tasked to *initiate and promote internal and external communication, in close co-operation with the Directorate of Communication*<sup>22</sup>. Private Office stated that the SG/PO has a daily meeting with the Director of Communications and others at which communications issues are discussed and actions agreed. In addition the Private Office could, for example, initiate and promote an intra-secretariat discussion of communication issues with DC and representatives of MAEs working on communication and also with the members of the senior management group.

### **3.3.4. Resources**

Staff and budgets allocated to web and SM activities varied throughout the CoE in accordance with the decentralised approach. Within the DC’s annual budget, the web and SM component accounts for some 15% of the total budget (as detailed in working paper 2). The DC currently has 11 staff dedicated to the web and SM (management (1), portal (6) and Twitter/blog (1) and WCDU(3)).

Although no web and SM budgets were available from comparable organisations, comparative data on the number of staff dedicated to web and SM activities for three organisations is depicted in table 2. The three organisations allocated between 12 to 21% more staff to web and SM of their central communication teams compared to the CoE<sup>23</sup>.

---

<sup>21</sup> *Op. Cit.*, DC, TC-INF(2009),

<sup>22</sup> Overall Mandate of the Private Office: [http://www.coe.int/t/dc/general/mandat\\_EN.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dc/general/mandat_EN.asp)

<sup>23</sup> In all organisations, this includes only communication staff of the equivalent to DC, i.e. central HQ communication team carrying out tasks such as web, SM, events, publications and media. No field or MAE equivalent staff are included.

<b>CoE</b>	<b>OSCE</b>	<b>OHCHR</b>	<b>WHO</b>
<b>18%</b> (11 out of 62 staff)	<b>40%</b> (4 out of 10 staff)	<b>38%</b> (7 out of 18 staff)	<b>30%</b> (15 out of 50 staff)

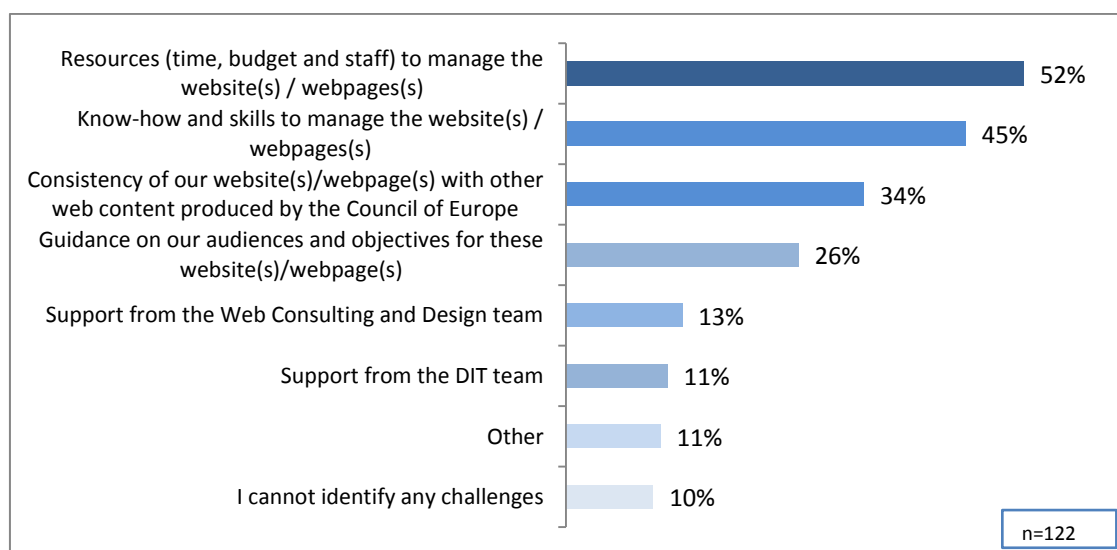
**Table 2: Percentage of web/SM staff of total central communication teams for CoE and comparable organisations (source: evaluation)**

The evaluation found that 1.4% to 6% of the MAEs staff and 0.3% to 1.5% of budgets were allocated to the web and SM, as seen in table 3<sup>24</sup>.

	<b>DGII</b>	<b>PACE</b>	<b>DGA</b>	<b>ODGP</b>	<b>DGI</b>
<i>Web/SM staff as % of total staff</i>	6%	2%	1.5%	1%	1.4%
<i>Web/SM budget as % of total budget</i>	1.5%	0.8%	0.6%	0.3%	0.5%

**Table 3: Percentage of web/SM staff and budgets of total staff and budgets of select MAEs (source: evaluation)**

Both within DC and the MAEs, staff noted concerns about the lack of resources available for web and SM. Some half (52%) of staff surveyed referred to a lack of resources when asked about the main challenges of their work with websites, as seen in figure 12.



**Figure 12: Staff survey – challenges concerning websites (source: evaluation)**

<sup>24</sup> Costs are based on estimates provided by the MAEs; costs are only approximate and do not include document management, publication preparation or creation and database management. One-off costs such as website migration are not included.

The WCDU was found to have 11 staff, one is responsible for the management of the unit, a second manages the English Twitter account and Human Rights Europe blog, six work on translation and updating content for the portal (in five languages) and three are responsible for web design and usability, front-end development, theme maintenance, Web strategy implementation and training (WCDU). Two out of three staff of the WCDU are currently funded from the Investment budget. Resource challenges were noted with the increasing demands placed on the three web design and usability staff, resulting in an inability to respond to the needs of the MAEs seeking their support, according to the WCDU staff. Further, the training needs identified (figure 7) all fall within the responsibility of WCDU (with the exception of CMS training).

### **3. 4. To what extent are the good practices of comparable organisations and research in digital communications relevant to the CoE?**

A comparison of digital communications was carried out in four comparable organisations to establish a reference of best practices for the CoE. The four organisations were selected based on their complex structures, subject material (e.g. human rights) or both. They were: Organisation for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE), World Health Organisation (WHO), Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), and Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Key points reviewed include strategy, size and architecture, message coherence, roles and responsibilities, challenges, and future innovation. Annex 8 contains a summary of the key points in comparison with the CoE.

#### **3.4.1. Good practices**

**Strategy:** All four organisations were found to have a more developed communications strategy than the CoE, i.e. a written document detailing objectives, target audiences, messages and channels/tools. In addition, two organisations were found to have digital strategies.

**Size and architecture:** The study found that all four organisations have a central website as a starting point for the webpages/websites of their organisational units/entities, themes and field offices. In general, the organisations have very few stand-alone websites, an exception being the some 150 field offices of WHO, each with their own website. The availability of languages of the websites varies from 2 (OECD) to 18 (OSCE). Each organisation has challenges in representing their complex structures on the web with varying degrees of complexity seen. The OECD was found to have opted for a simple website architecture with three main tabs; institutional (About), geographical (Countries) and thematic (Topics):

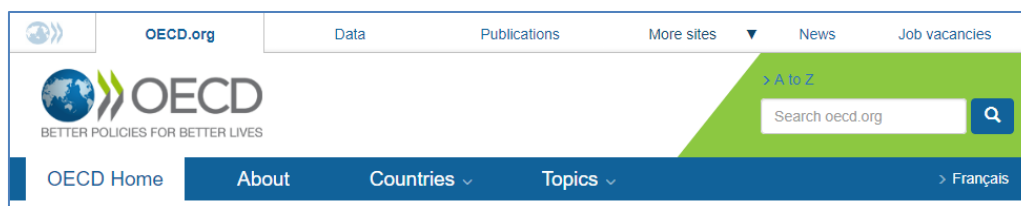


Figure 13: navigation of OECD main website (source: [www.OECD.org](http://www.OECD.org))

**Message coherence:** The evaluation found that all organisations aimed to present coherent messages on their key topics. The OSCE has summary pages for their some 20 focus topics. The texts explain both the position of the organisation on a specific issue and the organisation’s work on that theme or issue, as seen in the example here.

**Roles and responsibilities:** All four organisations have central teams to manage web and SM. Two organisations have a decentralised approach for web and SM content (WHO and OECD) and two have a more centralised approach (OSCE and OHCHR).

**Challenges:** all organisations face challenges common to complex organisations; managing multiple language version websites; balancing competing priorities of their entities; ensuring the quality of the content; and coping with a lack of a web/SM skill-set of staff that are updating and managing online content.



Figure 14: Example of summary page - OSCE (source: [www.osce.org](http://www.osce.org))

### 3.4.2. Innovations and trends

All organisations recognised that digital communication is a fast paced environment with challenges seen in coping with the latest developments in web and SM. The following innovations and trends were identified:

- Organisations are investing more to ensure that their complexity is able to be communicated well online. For example, the OHCHR has launched a “web transformation” project to create a web governance and content strategy for the whole organisation.
- Organisations have shifted resources to web and SM as these channels grow and the influence of mainstream media diminishes, decreasing the work for the traditional press officer role.
- Organisations are increasingly moving towards a more cross-functional work approach where teams are assembled according to competencies instead of job descriptions. This

means breaking out of the “web”, “media” and “publication” silos and moving towards more holistic communications roles that involve advising, guiding and working across multiple channels, such as print (publications and press) and digital (web, social media, audio and video).

- Organisations are recognising that web and SM is not only the responsibility of the central communication unit. For example, the OSCE is formalising the roles and responsibilities of their entities in managing their SM presence.
- Organisations have adopted results-based management systems that compel all units and entities, including communications to orientate their activities towards measurable and achievable results. Communications is increasingly required to measure outcomes rather than simple output measures.

## 4. Conclusions and recommendations

This chapter summarizes conclusions and recommendations based on the findings presented in chapter 3. For each recommendation, suggested actions are proposed; these actions are ranked by importance. Figure 15 provides a visualisation of how these conclusions and recommendations link to the findings and evaluation questions.

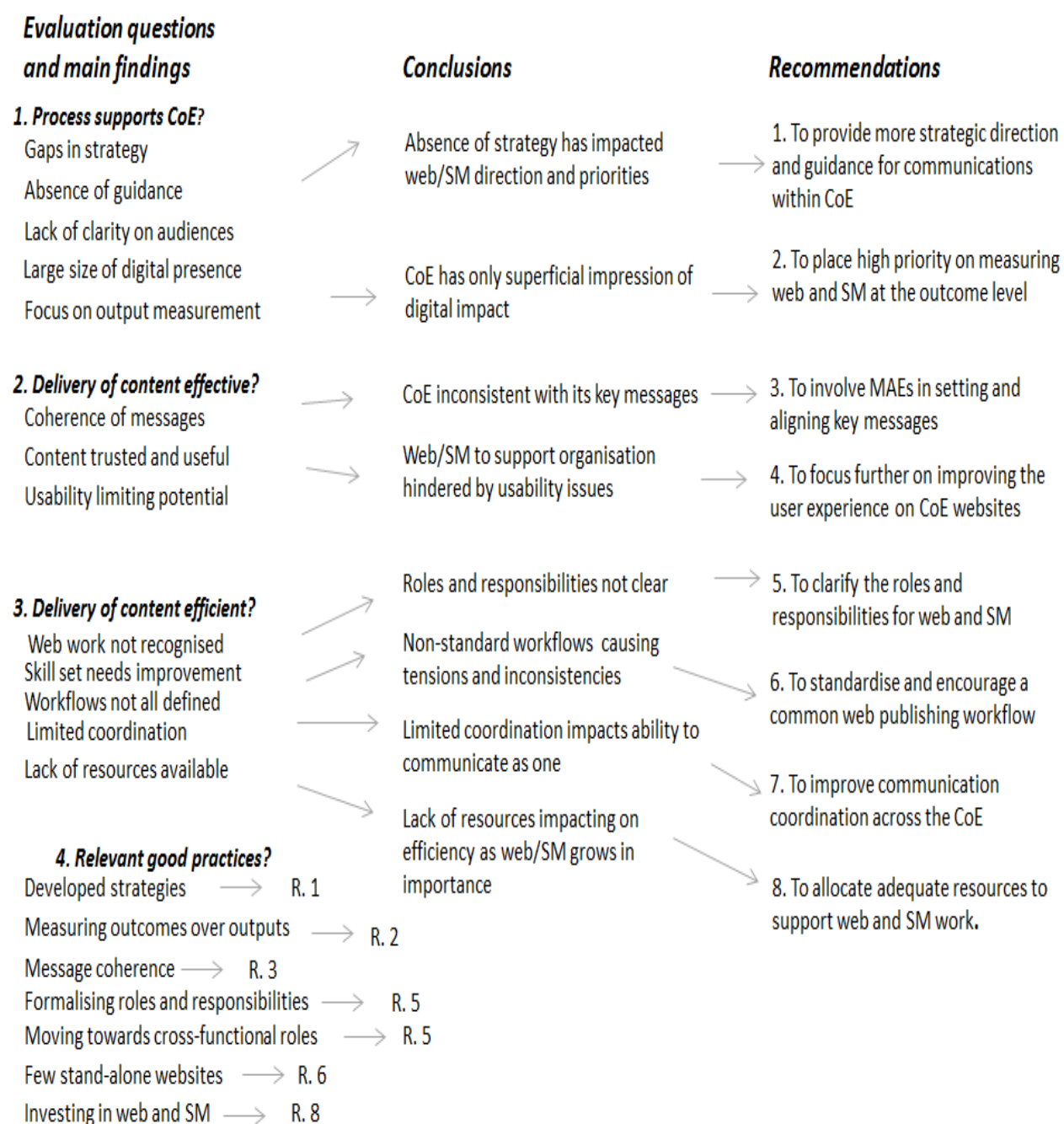


Figure 15: Evaluation questions, findings, conclusions and recommendations matrix

**1. Strategy, guidance and target audiences:** The absence of an overall CoE communications strategy has impacted the direction and priorities for digital communications in the DC and the MAEs. There is a clear need for more direction and guidance, priority-setting, support, and coordination for digital communications from the DC. This is illustrated in the differences seen on fundamental issues such as target audiences. In a large complex organisation such as the CoE, written strategies, guidelines and templates would be a necessary building block for a more solid foundation and more consistency and coordination in digital communications for all the entities and staff.

<b>Recommendation 1: DC to provide more strategic direction and guidance for communications within CoE.</b>	<b>Responsible:</b>
<i>Suggested actions (ranked):</i>	
1.1. Create a working group with communication representatives from MAEs to develop an overall short- to medium-term communication strategy for the CoE detailing measurable objectives, priorities, messages, target audiences, channels and tools.	DC with MAEs
1.2. Finalise the web (digital) strategy encompassing both web and SM including a mechanism for better coordination of content between the MAEs and DC.	DC(WCDU)
1.3. Create templates for MAE communications strategies and MAE digital strategies.	DC with MAEs
1.4. Proactively support the MAEs with the creation of their communication and digital strategies by initial discussion on strategies and reviewing consequent drafts and existing strategies.	DC with MAEs

**2. Monitoring and measurement:** Currently the CoE only has a very broad and superficial impression of the impact of its digital communications activities, mostly based on web analytics. For SM this is even less clear, given the absence of any global monitoring tool and the DC's lack of a clear overview of all MAE SM activities. Little emphasis has been placed on monitoring and measurement through research and interaction with audiences such as SM engagement, surveys, discussions, web ranking and usability testing. The P&B performance indicators for communications, including digital, are largely at the output level and provide limited insights into the impact of digital communications activities on target audiences, as already highlighted by the 2012 external audit. Common indicators for digital communications across the CoE would allow comparison between MAEs and support a learning exchange of good practices and a better understanding of outcomes instead of outputs.

<b>Recommendation 2: DC to place high priority on measuring web and SM at the outcome level.</b> <i>Suggested actions (ranked):</i> 2.1. Create a set of common outcome indicators for web and SM for use by DC and all MAEs <sup>25</sup> . 2.2. Based on these common indicators, adjust the current communication performance indicators of the P&B. 2.3. Consider how outcome indicators can be measured through the regular use of tools such as online surveys, discussion groups, web ranking and usability testing. 2.4. Investigate the use of a common SM monitoring tool that can be used by DC and all MAEs.	<b>Responsible:</b>  DC(WCDU)  DC  DC  DC(WCDU)
---	---

**3. Message coherence:** Across the CoE, the organisation is assessed as being inconsistent with its key messages as described in chapter 3, namely linked to alignment and synergy between content published by DC and MAEs. Evidently, the CoE is made up of institutions with different priorities and some with their own voices. However, the DC could do more to ensure key messages are set and known within the DC and the MAEs. This is also related to coordination as discussed below.

<b>Recommendation 3: DC works with MAEs so as to involve them more in setting and aligning key messages.</b> <i>Suggested actions (ranked):</i> 3.1. Create a set of priority messages annually and disseminate them within DC and MAEs. 3.2. Ensure that key messages are visible to audiences, e.g. displayed on the portal. 3.3. Ensure that key messages are aligned and complementarities managed between published web content so that overlaps are avoided, through common scheduling and regular monitoring of content published.	<b>Responsible:</b>  DC with MAEs  DC(WCDU)  DC(WCDU)
---	---

**4. Audience satisfaction and usability:** The CoE websites and SM presence will continuously grow in importance and usage as audiences increasingly shift to digital. The CoE is not facilitating the user experience on CoE websites due to three practices: 1) setting up new websites instead of integrating new content into existing websites; 2) a compromised website architecture (due mostly to the previous point) and; 3) a poorly performing search engine. Revisiting and accelerating change in these areas would support a better user experience.

<sup>25</sup> Common outcome indicators for digital communications have been developed and include: level of satisfaction for website visitors; level of goal completion for website visitors; level of engagement on SM. See EU guidelines: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/communication-evaluation-toolkit\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/communication-evaluation-toolkit_en.pdf)

<b>Recommendation 4: DC and DIT with MAEs to focus further on improving the user experience on CoE websites.</b> <i>Suggested actions (ranked):</i> 4.1. Review and redesign the website navigation and architecture with the support of information architecture expertise. 4.2. Accelerate efforts to revise the search engine with the support of usability search expertise. 4.3. When a new MAE website is requested, introduce a new step in the workflow process to first assess the new content for possible integration into existing websites rather than creation of a new website.	<b>Responsible:</b>  DC(WCDU) with MAEs DC(WCDU)/ DIT with MAEs DC(WCDU) with DIT
--	---

**5. Roles and responsibilities:** A direct result of the decentralized approach is the dispersed responsibility and ownership of websites and SM activities throughout the CoE. This work has largely been adopted as an additional task not formally integrated into official job descriptions. The skill set needed for uploading, managing and overseeing content is not yet fully in place or formalised within the MAEs. Relevant training is only followed on an ad-hoc basis and it is not available for all the levels required (e.g. A-level staff). Between the DIT and the WCDU, this evaluation concludes that the roles could be more clearly defined, with the WCDU in an advisory and leadership role for web design, strategy and usability and the DIT providing technical advice and support. Within the DC, the role of the press officer as de facto liaisons on communications should be recognised and broadened to a cross-functional role supporting MAEs more on strategic communications, in relation to the themes and regions they oversee. Within MAEs, clear communication correspondents should be established who oversee the totality of their web and SM presence as part of their job descriptions. This would be distinct from web correspondents who have more of a role in uploading and managing website content.

<b>Recommendation 5: DC, DIT and MAEs with the support of DRH to clarify the roles and responsibilities for web and SM.</b> <i>Suggested actions (ranked):</i> 5.1. Integrate web and SM responsibilities into job descriptions of relevant B and A level staff of MAEs (including field offices). 5.2. Ensure communication correspondents are appointed in all MAEs and they oversee web and SM presence. 5.3. Review the responsibilities between WCDU and DIT with WCDU focusing more on in web design, strategy and usability. 5.4. Introduce a new compulsory training course for communication correspondents and relevant A level staff focused on strategy and overseeing web content (to complement current training plans); re-introduce SM training for staff. 5.5. Move towards the role of press officers becoming more cross-functional in their liaison role for communications with MAEs; provide them with the necessary training and consider this for future recruitment.	<b>Responsible:</b>  DRH MAEs DC(WCDU)/ DIT DC(WCDU)/ DRH DC/DRH
---	--

**6. Workflow:** Given the decentralized approach, the publishing workflow for web and SM within the MAEs has not been standardized in terms of a common scheduling or archiving approach for content. Training offered by the DC and the DIT has not been recognised as compulsory and, therefore, not followed by all relevant MAE staff. Other weaknesses were noted with the process of overseeing content, carrying out usability checks and optimising texts for SEO. The re-use and promotion of content by other MAEs and the DC was seen as a cause for tension due to lack of transparency and clarity about how content was selected for wider visibility and promotion. This was also linked to the missing alignment of priority messages as described above.

<b>Recommendation 6: DC and MAEs to standardise and encourage a common web publishing workflow.</b>	<b>Responsible:</b>
<i>Suggested actions (ranked):</i>	
6.1. Develop a common workflow/process for publishing MAE web content with clear designation of responsibility for oversight and validation, in addition to SEO, scheduling and archiving rules.	DC (WCDU)
6.2. Create a clear and transparent process and selection criteria for the promotion of web and SM content by DC and MAEs.	DC with MAEs
6.3. Ensure that the DIT CMS training and WCDU Best Practices training is clearly communicated as compulsory for all staff working on the web (those with an oversight role should have another training – see suggested action 5.4.).	MAEs

**7. Coordination:** The limited coordination in communications across the CoE has had implications for the web and SM. The organisation cannot fully capitalize on opportunities to align content publication and communicate together. DC has communication coordination as its stated aim and there was a clear request from both DC and MAE staff to increase its role in coordination. Staff also asked that the Private Office use its convening power to support further coordination.

<b>Recommendation 7: To improve communication coordination across the CoE.</b>	<b>Responsible:</b>
<i>Suggested actions (ranked):</i>	
7.1. Communication is included as a regular item on the agenda of senior management group meetings.	PO
7.2 A kick-off meeting (see recommendation 7.3) of DC and MAEs staff working on communication is organised.	PO
7.3. The DC should restore the monthly meetings with MAE communications officers and web coordination staff (separately or together depending upon topics).	DC
7.4. The WCDU should consider building a community of practice for web contributors through an online group and quarterly meetings to exchange experiences, updates and provide mutual support.	DC(WCDU)
7.5. The DC should re-animate the intranet-based collaborative space for communication planning and coordination for itself and the MAEs.	DC

7.6. The DC should introduce a coordination of SM accounts (e.g. registry of all accounts; regular meetings and exchanges between account holders; discussion on common themes, etc.) and revised guidelines to be developed in collaboration with the MAEs.	DC
--	----

**8. Resources:** Currently insufficient resources are allocated for web and SM both within the DC and the MAEs. This evaluation concludes that digital communications can only be efficient if additional staff and funding is allocated to web design and usability, as well as SM given the increasing importance of these areas. As mentioned in chapter 3, other communications areas such as publications and media will decrease in importance as digital communications grows. The use of audio-visual products will increase while the production of text content will still be needed for use across multiple channels and platforms. The organisation could learn from the comparable study to adopt a more cross-functional approach in communications. While some MAEs do have specialist web staff this evaluation concludes that more are required as web and SM work will increase for A level staff.

<b>Recommendation 8: DC and MAEs to allocate adequate resources to support web and SM work.</b> <i>Suggested actions (ranked):</i>	<b>Responsible:</b>
8.1. Consider increasing or shifting existing DC resources (staff and operational budget) to support the WCDU role in digital communications, web management, design and usability.	DC
8.2. Allocate adequate resources to support audio-visual, web and SM work in MAEs in order that the objectives of the communication strategy can be achieved.	MAEs and DC
8.3. Review the existing roles within the DC to adopt more cross-functional work given the changing media landscape.	DC

## Annex 1: Evaluation matrix

<b>Evaluation Criterion</b>	<b>Evaluation question(s)</b>	<b>Sub-questions</b>	<b>Measure /Indicators</b>	<b>Sources of information / Data collection methods</b>
<b>Relevance</b>	1. To what extent does the current process of digital communications support CoE in creating awareness/ understanding of human rights issues and CoE instruments?	To what extent is the communication content correlated with the main strategic documents of the organisation (such as priorities of the SG, P&B, etc.?)	- main strategic documents feed into communication content; - priorities present in website content	Review of strategic and working documents; semi-structured interviews; website review
		To what extent is content continuously updated and UX improved? How is content removed? How is consistency maintained?	- web governance system in place - checking mechanism in place - mechanism for updating/deleting content - Consistency of content across websites and social media	Review of working documents; internal survey; semi-structured interviews
		Is communication target audience clearly defined? To what extent is there an organizational consensus on target audience(s)?	- written documentation on target audience; - guidance for defining target audience	Review of working documents; internal survey; semi-structured interviews
		To what extent is communication content created with its target audience(s) in mind?	- evidence of content created with target audience in mind	Review of working documents; ; internal survey; semi-structured interviews; Website review

<b>Evaluation Criterion</b>	<b>Evaluation question(s)</b>	<b>Sub-questions</b>	<b>Measure /Indicators</b>	<b>Sources of information / Data collection methods</b>
<b>Effectiveness</b>	2. To what extent is the delivery of the digital messages/ content effective?	To what extent are the communication activities conducted with specific and concrete communication objectives in mind?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- written objectives of the web section;</li> <li>- evidence of digital communication activities aiming at reaching objectives</li> </ul>	Review of working documents ; internal survey; semi-structured interviews
		To what extent do the entities involved in communication have an effective communication plan? To what extent are the advantages/specificities of different communication channels put to use?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- existence of communication plans;</li> <li>- communication plans feature core messages;</li> <li>- evidence of effective use of diverse communication channels , e.g. video, web, social media and relays</li> </ul>	Review of working documents; ; internal survey; semi-structured interviews; process mapping
		To what extent do the involved entities have the necessary skills and training to communicate the messages effectively? Is there a competency framework for staff involved in communication activities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- competence framework for communication in place;</li> <li>- evidence of use of internal expertise</li> <li>- number of persons involved in communication work who received training;</li> <li>- satisfaction with training;</li> <li>- continuous training offer;</li> <li>- absence arrangements</li> </ul>	Review of working documents; semi-structured interviews; Internal survey; Review of training / workshop curricula; process mapping

<b>Evaluation Criterion</b>	<b>Evaluation question(s)</b>	<b>Sub-questions</b>	<b>Measure /Indicators</b>	<b>Sources of information / Data collection methods</b>
		How are the messages received by the stakeholders? Are messages understood by the target audience? Are they found useful? Are there examples of further use of content?	- level of satisfaction of stakeholders with clarity, usefulness of content; - examples of further use / effects of using website content	Website review; external survey; data of previous surveys and other monitoring tools, if any
		To what extent is information findable and easily accessible? To what extent is information presentation user-friendly?	- level of satisfaction of stakeholders with findability and accessibility of information; - examples of further use / effects of using website content	Website review; external survey; data of previous surveys and other monitoring tools, if any
		What metrics are available to measure, monitor and control performance of the main communication activities?	- level to which metrics available allow to make conclusions on achievement of objectives; - examples of how metrics have been used to monitor performance / influence decisions	Review of working documents; semi-structured interviews; Review of statistics
		Are the tools supporting the communication objectives appropriate to reach the target audience(s) (for example search engine, portal organisation, back-up)?	- level to which stakeholders are satisfied with user-friendliness of website and its elements - existence of technical risks and their mitigation	Website review; external survey; data of previous surveys and other monitoring tools, if any

<b>Evaluation Criterion</b>	<b>Evaluation question(s)</b>	<b>Sub-questions</b>	<b>Measure /Indicators</b>	<b>Sources of information / Data collection methods</b>
<b>Efficiency</b>	3. To what extent is the delivery of the digital messages/ content efficient?	To what extent does the decentralised set-up of communication activities influence the efficiency of the activities?	- degree to which decentralised set up is contributing to or creating obstacles in achieving communication objectives	Review of working documents; Semi-structured interviews; internal survey; process mapping
		To what extent are the responsibilities between different entities involved in communication efforts clearly defined and overlap minimised?	- degree to which responsibilities are clear and overlap and waste of resources avoided	Review of working documents; semi-structured interviews; internal survey; process mapping
		To what extent are the information flows between the different entities involved functional and sufficient?	- level of satisfaction of stakeholders with information flows	Review of working documents; semi-structured interviews; internal survey; process mapping
		To what extent are the resources allocated to communication activities sufficient in reaching their objectives?	- level of resources of the web section in relation to its tasks and responsibilities	Resource analysis; Review of working documents; semi-structured interviews;

<b>Evaluation Criterion</b>	<b>Evaluation question(s)</b>	<b>Sub-questions</b>	<b>Measure /Indicators</b>	<b>Sources of information / Data collection methods</b>
	4. To what extent are the good practices of comparable organisations and research in digital communications relevant to the CoE?	<p>What activities do comparable organisations undertake in the field of communications?</p> <p>How are these activities managed, controlled, and co-ordinated?</p> <p>What innovations and emerging trends can be identified?</p>	<p>- good practices in external communication (communication function matrix –see annex 2) from other organisations</p> <p>- potential use of good practices/ innovations in CoE</p>	Benchmarking study; semi-structured interviews

## Annex 2: Evaluation methodology

Methods	Implementation	Sources	Sample target	Sample achieved
Document review	All available documents were reviewed relevant to digital communications including plans, budgets, strategy, processes, monitoring data and activity reports. The list of main documents consulted is found at annex 4.	CoE entities	N/A	N/A
Semi-structured interviews	Semi-structured interviews were conducted in-person or by phone. The list of persons interviewed is found at annex 3.	DC  CoE entities managing web  DIT  Private Office Ambassador	7-10  8-12  2-4  1-2 --  Total: 18-28 interviews	9  31  2  0 1  43 interviews
Internal survey	The online survey was comprised of closed questions and a limited number of open questions. Full results are found in Working paper 2.	CoE contributors and coordinators	100 (all 900 potential contributors and coordinators were emailed)	158
External survey	The online survey was comprised of closed questions and a limited number of open questions	CoE target audiences (subscribed receivers to CoE e-newsletters)	All accessible subscribers to be emailed with survey link	519 <sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> An additional 64 survey responses were received from CoE staff that were not included in the analysis.

Process and content mapping	A mapping was carried out of the process to create and publish digital content within the CoE detailing roles and responsibilities and content managed. The mapping is found in working paper 2.	DC and CoE entities	All web content and processes.	Mapping of creation of websites, publishing of web content; promotion of web content.
Website expert review	A review of a sample of CoE websites was carried out by usability experts based on a set criteria. The full review is found in working paper 1.	Some 170 CoE websites	9 CoE websites	Portal Treaty Office Commissioner Committee of ministers Children rights CPT SOGI database Octopus community Human Rights Channel
Resources analysis	An analysis was carried out of the expenditure of digital communications of DC and select MAEs (where data was available). The analysis is found in working paper 2.	Available budget data and activities reporting of digital communications	All digital communication activities for a set budgetary cycle.	Digital communication of DC, DGI, DGII, PACE, ODGP & DGA.
Benchmarking study	A study was made with four comparable organisations. The study is found in working paper 2.	Comparable intergovernmental organisations	4 organisations (representatives interviewed)	OSCE WHO OECD OHCHR

## Annex 3: Persons consulted

<b>CoE staff</b>				
1.	Markus	Adelsbach	Adviser	PO
2.	Tatiana	Baeva	Press Officer	DC
3.	Daniele	Cangemi	Special Coordinator	DGII
4.	Micaela	Catalano	Head of Communication Division	PACE
5.	Alun	Drake	Head of Web Section	DC
6.	Gabrielle	Dumont	Archives Correspondent, Directorate of Legal Advice and Public International Law	DLAPIL
7.	Schnutz	Dürr	Head of Division, Venice Commission	DGI
8.	Marten	Ehnberg	Head of Office	Kiev office
9.	Gianluca	Esposito	Executive Secretary, Secretariat of the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO)	DGI
10.	Adrian	Evtuhovici	Co-ordinator of the Journalist Protection Platform	DPP
11.	Simona	Ghita	Communication Officer	DGI
12.	Fiona	Gilchrist	Deputy Head of Public Relations and Documentation Division	EDQM
13.	Matjaz	Gruden	Director	DPP
14.	Eva	Gutjahr	Deputy Head of Office	Chisinau office
15.	Christine	Hattersley	Website, electronic documentation and archives coordinator	CM
16.	Jonathan	Hell	Web designer-developer	DC
17.	Emma	Hellyer	Communication Advisor	DGII
18.	Carole	Herdly	Head of Communications Unit	DGA
19.	Daniel	Holtgen	Director of Communications and Spokesperson	DC
20.	Nichola	Howson	Communications Officer	ODGP
21.	John	Hunter	Director	DIT
22.	Regina	Jensdottir	Head of Division and Programme Co-ordinator,	DGII

			Children's Rights	
23.	Franck	Kolb	Multimedia Unit Manager	DGA
24.	Jan	Kleijssen	Director	DGI
25.	Sandrine	Marolleau	Information Manager	DGII
26.	Jeremy	Moakes	Head of Web & Audio-Visual Division	DC
27.	Jelena	Mocevic	Programme manager, Cultural Heritage	DGII
28.	Stefano	Montanari	Head of Communications Unit	Commissioner for Human Rights
29.	Patrick	Muller	Information Officer, Secretariat of the Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment	DGI
30.	Tatiana	Mychelova	External Relations Officer, Venice Commission	DGI
31.	Susana	Nunez	Web Coordinator	DGII
32.	Philippe	Reilhac	Head of Unit, Content Management	DIT
33.	Euan	Roddin	Adviser/Speechwriter	PO
34.	Jaime	Rodriguez	Press Officer	DC
35.	Suzette	Saint-Marc	Project Assistant	DPP
36.	Alexander	Seger	Head of Cybercrime Division	DGI
37.	Jean Jacques	Siegel	Head of Web Design & Consulting Unit	DC
38.	Nigel	Smith	Social Media Officer	DC
39.	Octavian	Sofransky	ISD Coordinator	DGI
40.	Estelle	Steiner	Press Officer	DC
41.	Philia	Thalgott	Coordinator, Equal opportunities and Quality Education	DGII
42.	Saida	Theophile	Communications Officer, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities	Congress
43.	Eleni	Tsetsekou	Head of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Unit	DGII
44.	Rosella	Tutino	Auditor	DIO
<b>External interviews</b>				
45.	Corina	Călugăru	Ambassador of Moldova to	n/a

			the CoE	
46.	Yousef	Elbes	Multilingual Manager/Department of Communications	WHO
47.	Toby	Green	Director of Communications	OECD
48.	Igor	Nuk	Online Communications Manager	OSCE
49.	Alex	Souto-Maior	Web Officer	OHCHR

## Annex 4: Documents consulted

In addition to documents listed below, the evaluation team consulted numerous CoE websites and the Web Resources webpage of the Web Consulting and Design Unit.

CoE, CM, (2013), Report of the external auditor on the consolidated financial statements for the year ended 2012, CM (2013)100.

CoE, DC (2006), Communication Strategy, TC-INF (2006)3revE, 19 October 2006

CoE, DC, Web Consulting Unit (2016), CoE, DC, Web Consulting Unit (2017), Situation end 2016

CoE, DC, Web Consulting and Design Unit (2017), Situation by end 2016

CoE, DC, Web and Audio-visual Division (2017), Social media strategy – a proposal

CoE, DC (undated), Guidelines for use of social media at the Council of Europe

CoE, DC/DIT (2016), Standard Web Project Process

CoE, DC/DIT (2016), Création/Migration de site Web; Modèle : Fiche projet Web

CoE, DGA (2012), POST Project Plan – Using Social Media in Recruitment (2012-2013)

CoE, DGA (2012), Proposal for Using Social Media in Recruitment

CoE, DGI (undated), Editorial Guiding principles for DG1 news and social media

CoE, DGI (undated), Guiding principles for DG1 Websites

CoE, DGI (2016), Evaluation report of DG1 digital presence in 2016

CoE, DGI (2016), Online Content Strategy for Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law

CoE, DGI (2016), Social Media Programmation and Planning

CoE, DGII (2016), DG Democracy Communications Strategy

CoE, DGII (2016), DG Democracy Communications Task Force: summary of decision

CoE, DGII (2016), DG Democracy Communications Task Force: Concept Paper on New Communications Tools on Democracy

CoE, DIO (2017), Work Programme for 2017 of the Directorate of Internal Oversight

CoE, ODGP (2016), Communication strategy 2016-17

CoE, ODGP, (2017), Communication plan guidelines, Project Management Methodology

CoE, ODGP (2017), Communication Toolbox, Project Management Methodology

CoE, PACE (2013), Web 2.0 Communication Strategy for PACE

DC, TC-INF(2009), Road-map for the implementation of the Communication Strategy; Progress as at 31 December 2008

CoE, TC-INF (2011), The Communications Directorate: New priorities, new structure, TC-INF Thematic co-ordinator on Information Policy, TC-INF(2011)<sup>1</sup>

Ketchum (2014), Final Report: Council of Europe Social Media Activities

UN Joint Inspections Unit (2015), Public Information and communications policies and practices in the United Nations system, JIU/REP/2015/4.

## Annex 5: External survey – additional graphs

The following graphs are from the external survey of CoE website users and additional to those found in the body of the main report.

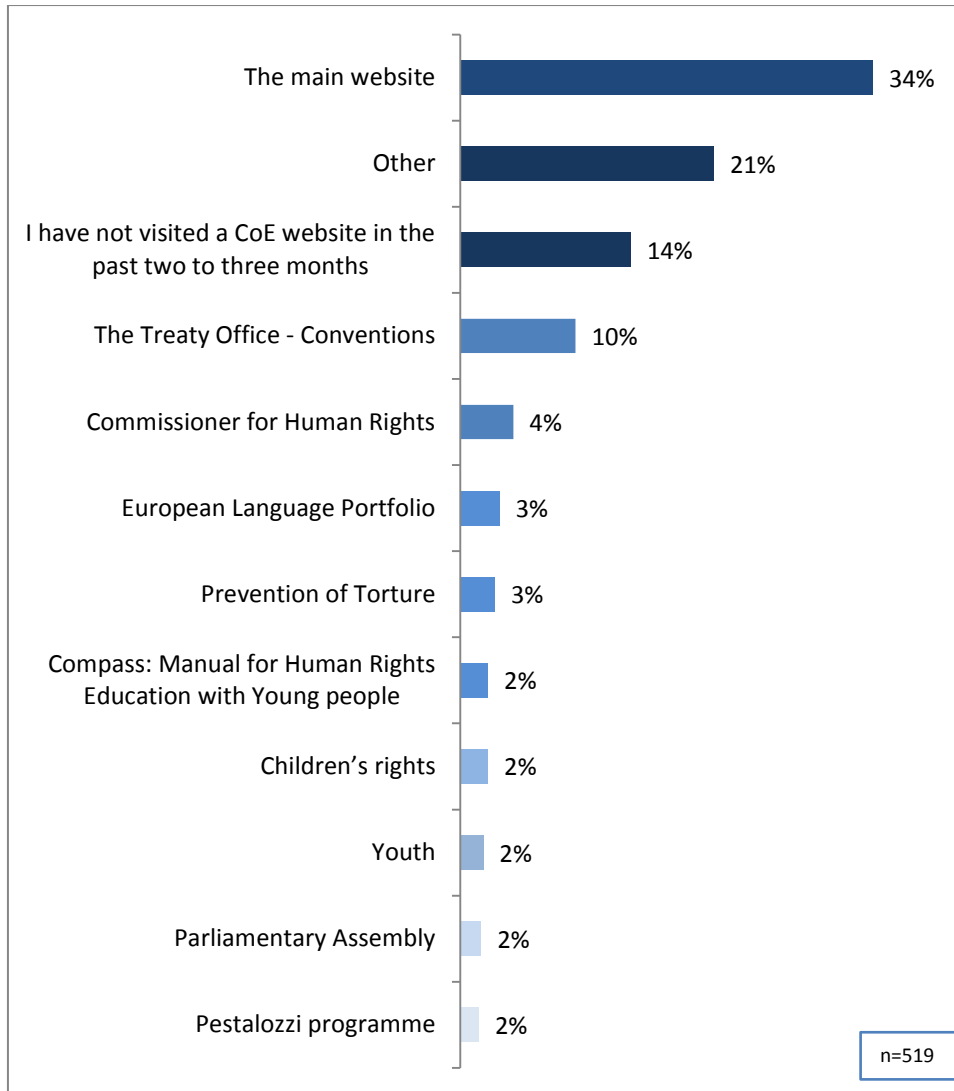


Figure 16: User survey: select the website you visit the most (source: evaluation)

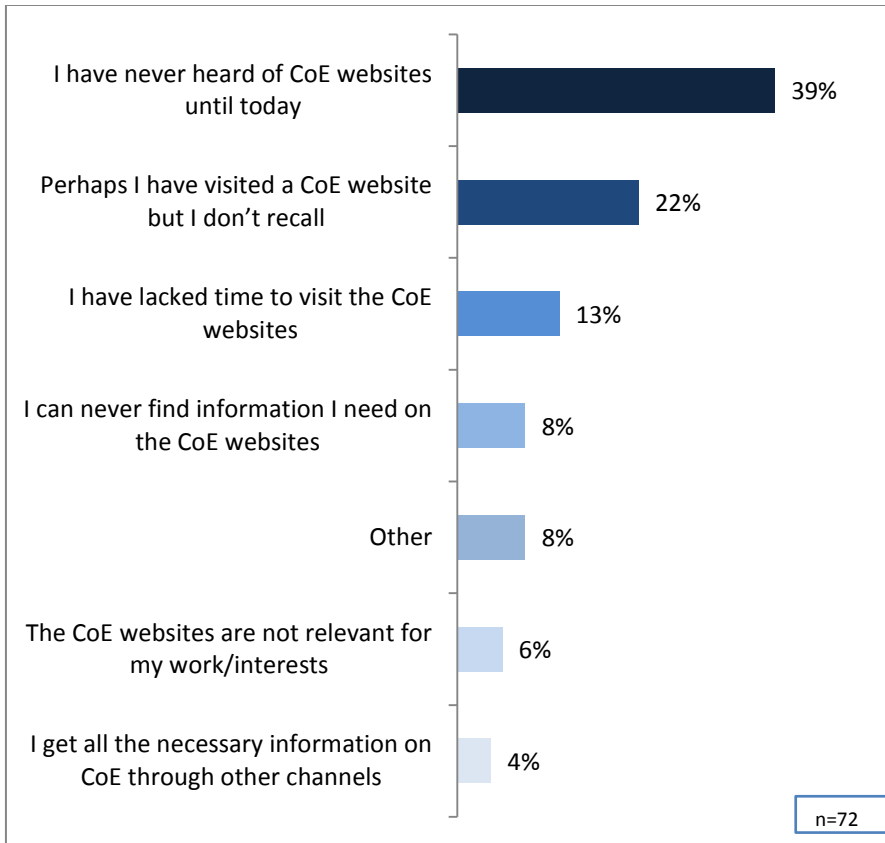


Figure 17: User survey: Reasons why have not visited a CoE website recently (source: evaluation)

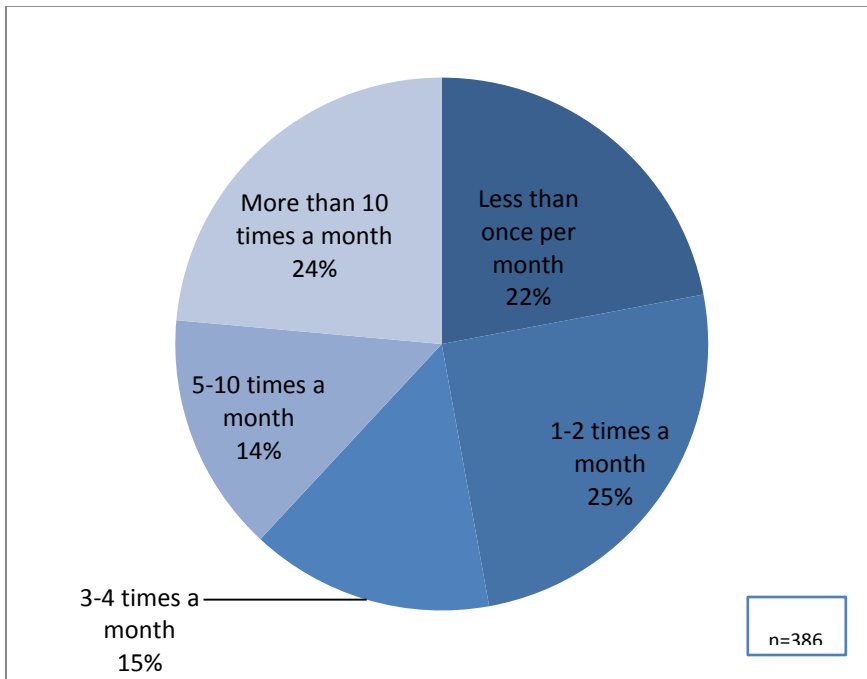


Figure 18: User survey: frequency of visits to a CoE website (source: evaluation)

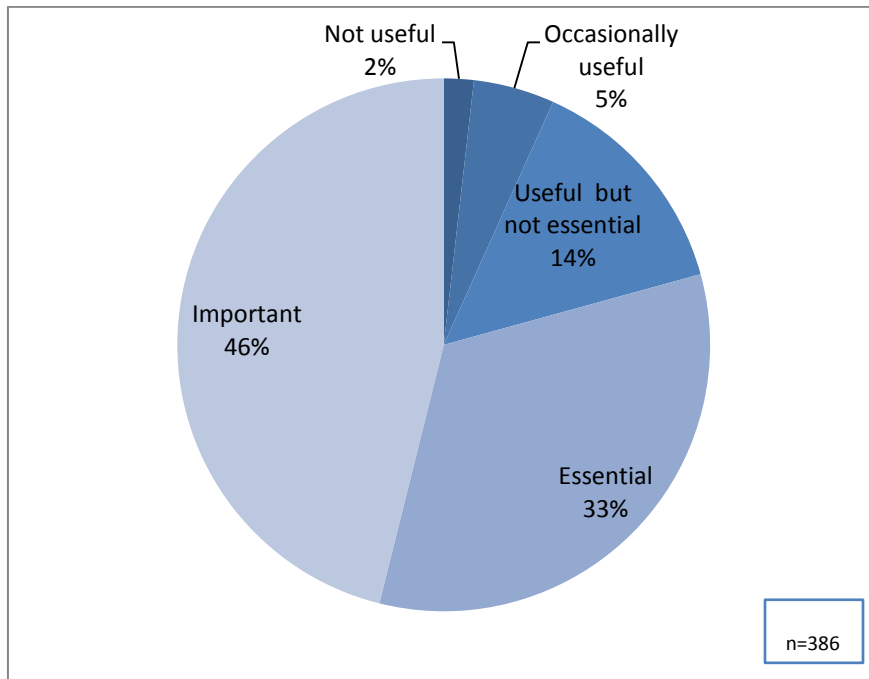


Figure 19: User survey: utility of CoE website (source: evaluation)

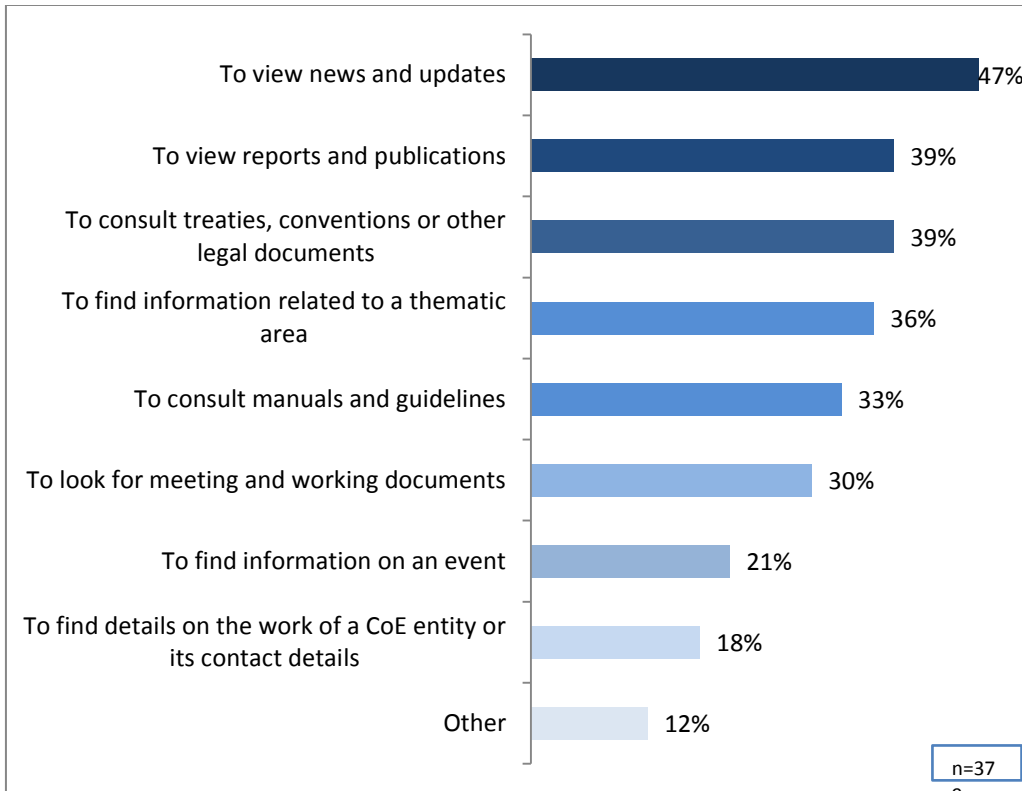


Figure 20: User survey: purpose of last visit a CoE website (source: evaluation)

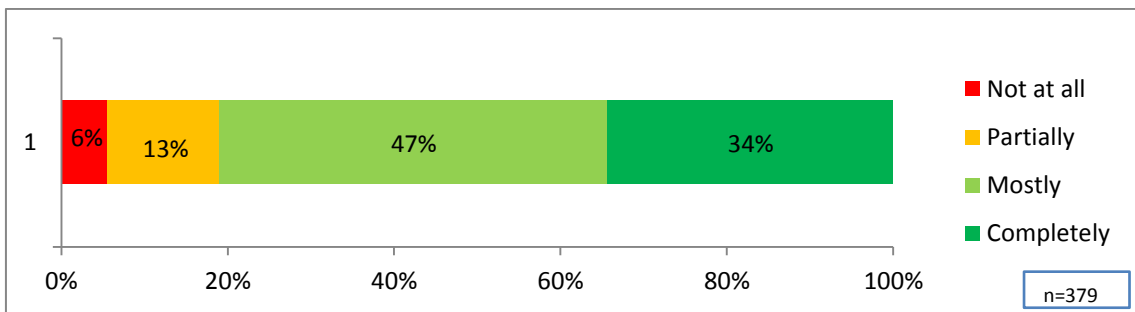


Figure 21: User survey: extent to which goals achieved during last visit (source: evaluation)

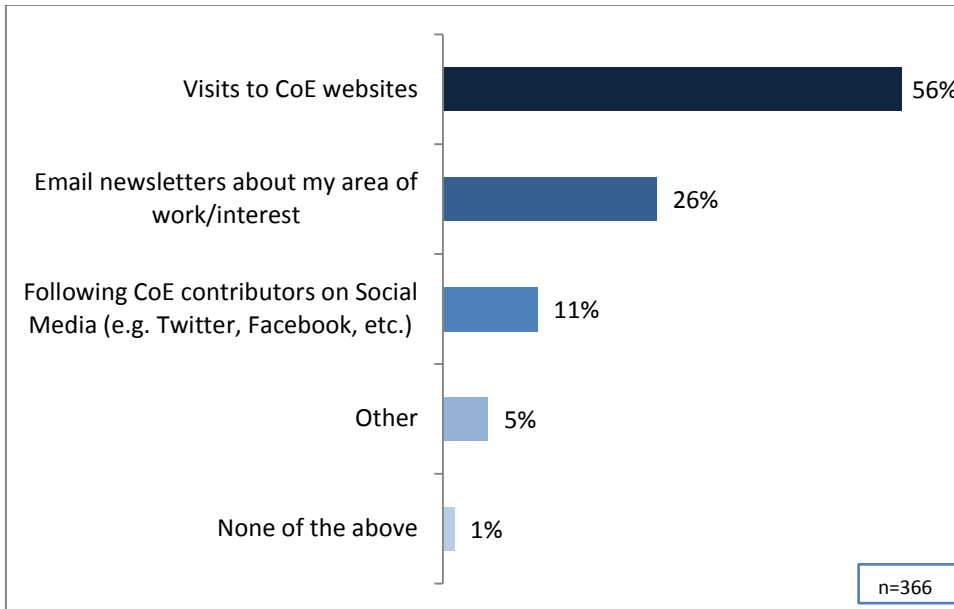


Figure 22: User survey: preferred digital way to stay in touch with the CoE (source: evaluation)

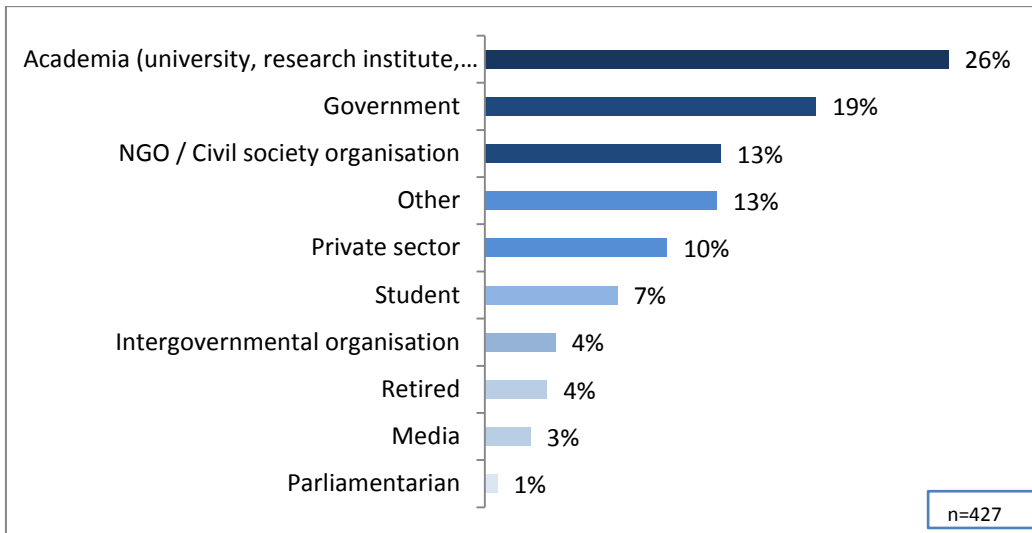


Figure 23: User survey: type of organisation of survey respondent (source: evaluation)

Country	Number of Responses	Country	Number of Responses
Other	58	Bosnia and Herzegovina	6
France	41	Armenia	6
Italy	27	Lithuania	6

Romania	22	Denmark	5
Greece	20	Albania	5
United Kingdom	19	Malta	5
Spain	19	Bulgaria	5
Germany	18	Cyprus	4
Belgium	16	Finland	4
Portugal	15	Poland	4
Ukraine	13	Republic of Moldova	3
Turkey	13	Estonia	3
Switzerland	10	Czech Republic	3
Russian Federation	9	Azerbaijan	2
Ireland	8	Slovenia	2
Netherlands	8	"The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"	2
Austria	8	Slovak Republic	1
Norway	7	Liechtenstein	1
Sweden	7	Andorra	1
Serbia	6	Montenegro	1
Croatia	6	Georgia	1
Hungary	6	Luxembourg	1

Table 4: User survey: country of survey respondents (source: evaluation)

The following graphs are figure 4 (rating of key factors) by each of the 11 top visited CoE websites.

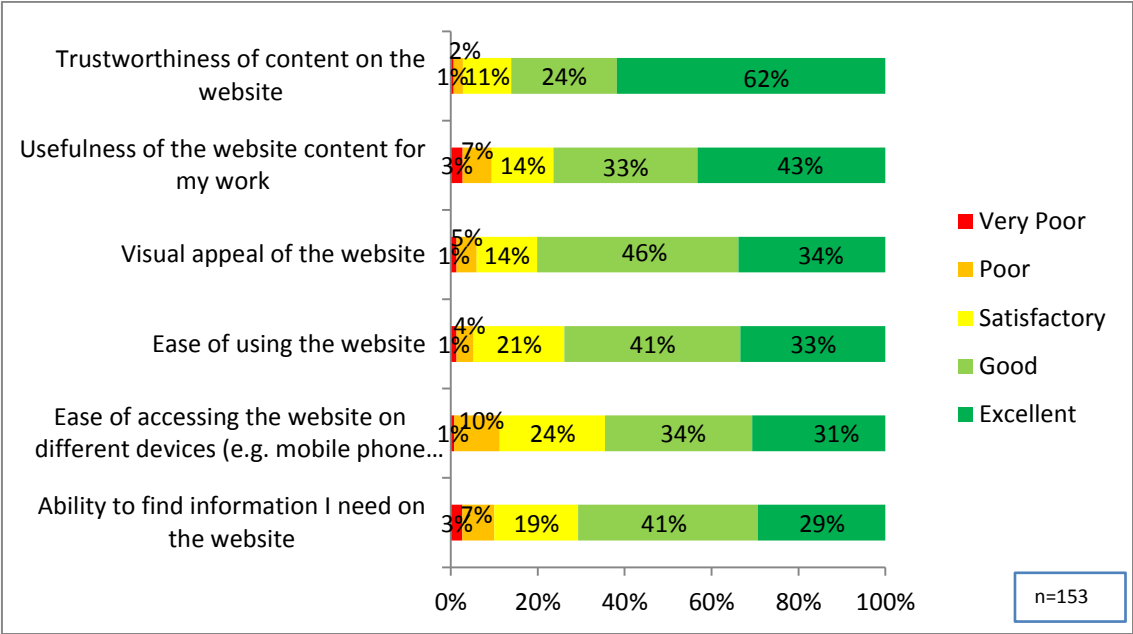


Figure 24: User survey: rating of key factors – main portal (source: evaluation)

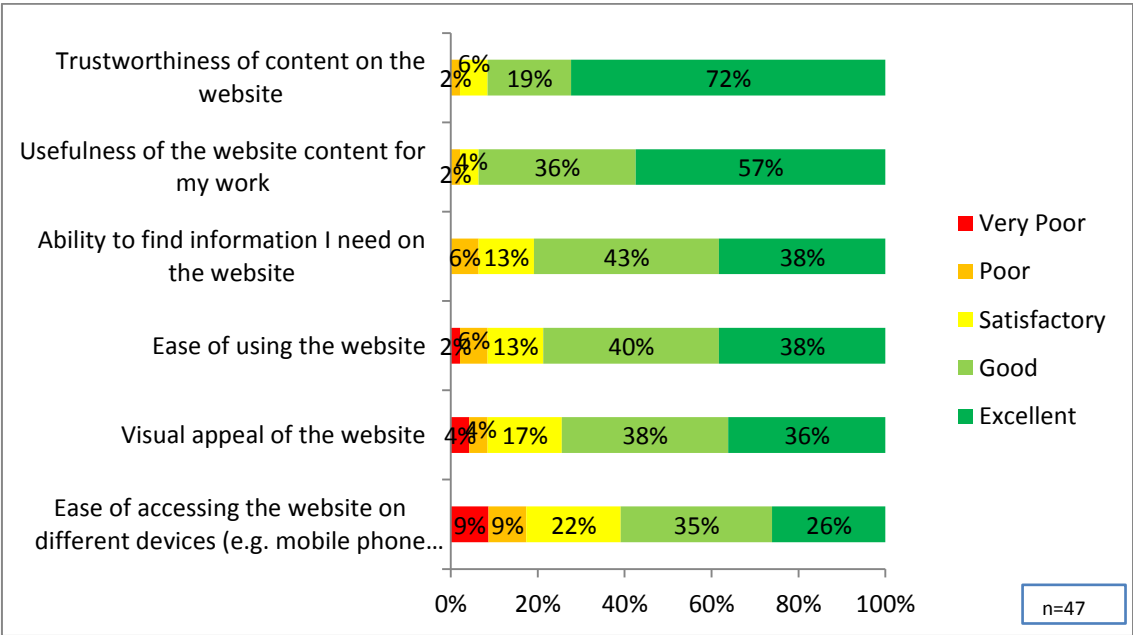


Figure 25: User survey: rating of key factors – Treaty Office (source: evaluation)

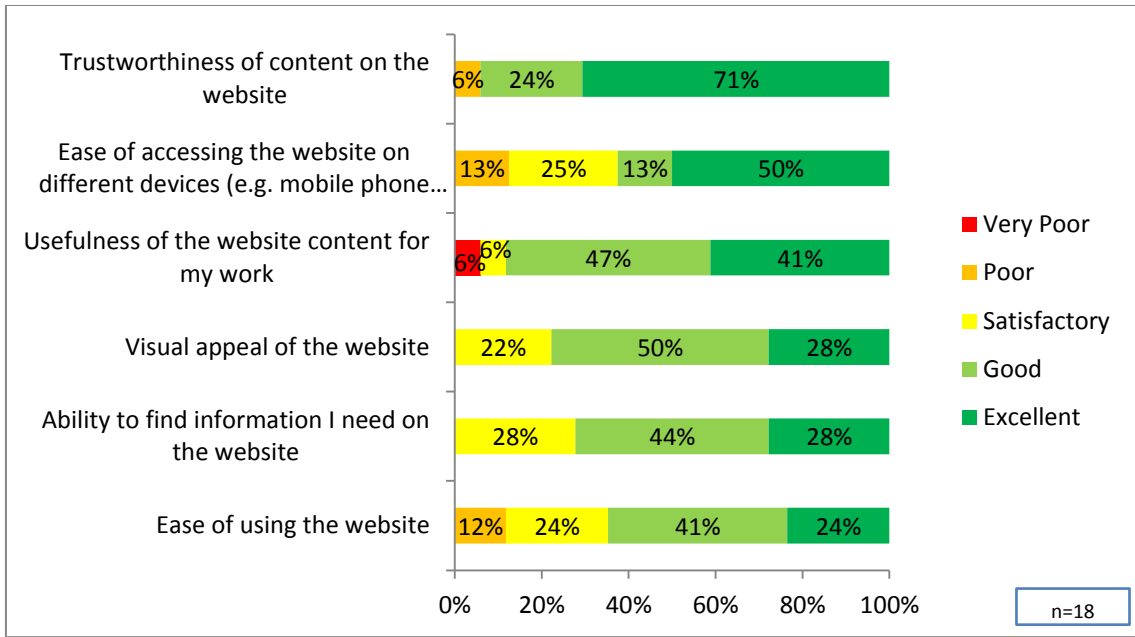


Figure 26: User survey: rating of key factors – Commissioner for Human Rights (source: evaluation)

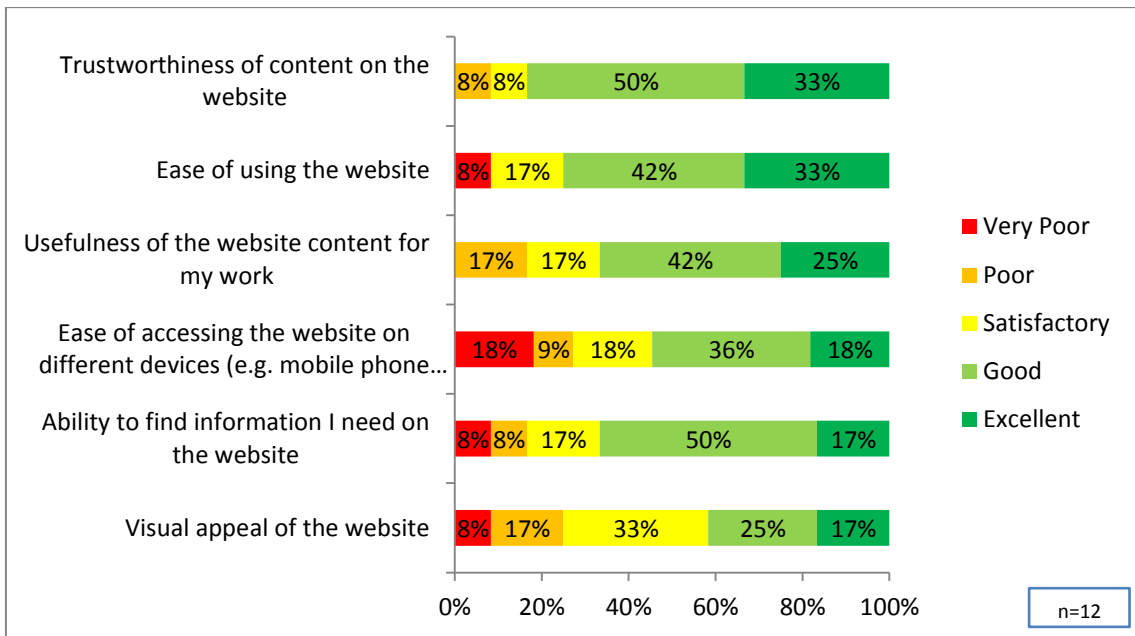


Figure 27: User survey: rating of key factors – Prevention of Torture (source: evaluation)

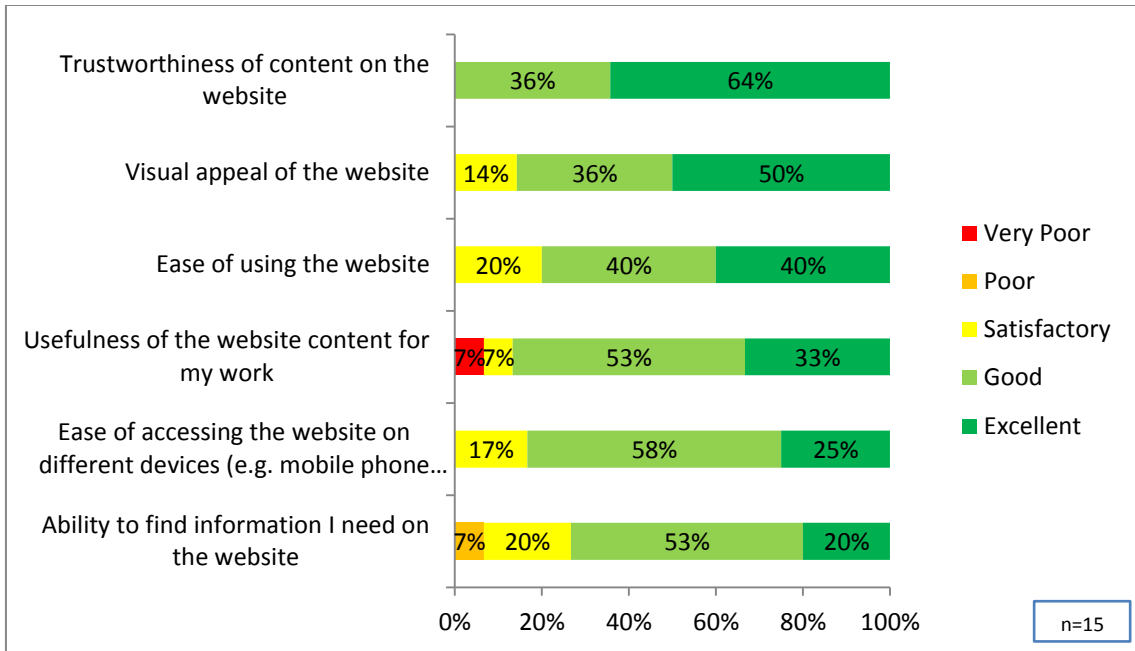


Figure 28: User survey: rating of key factors –European Language Portfolio (source: evaluation)

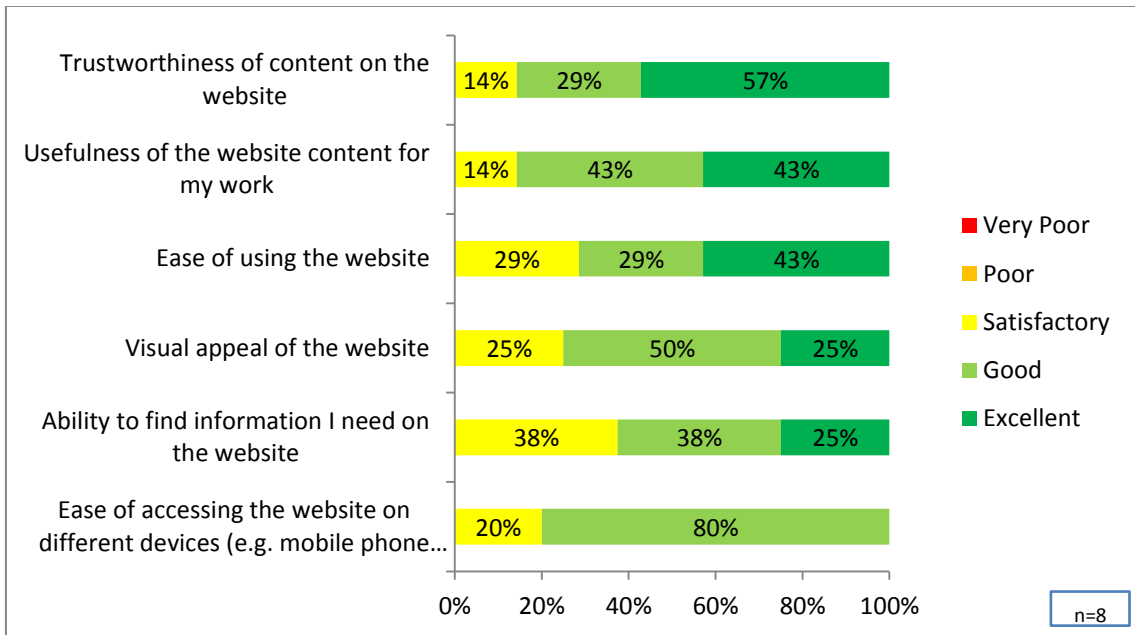


Figure 29: User survey: rating of key factors – Children's rights (source: evaluation)

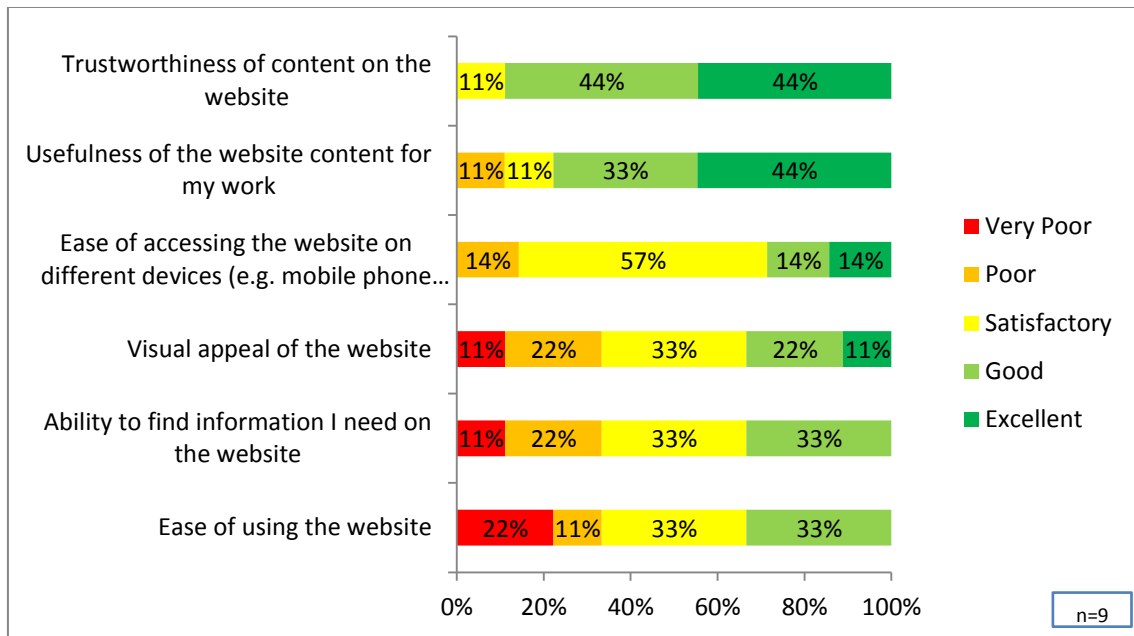


Figure 30: User survey: rating of key factors – Parliamentary Assembly (source: evaluation)

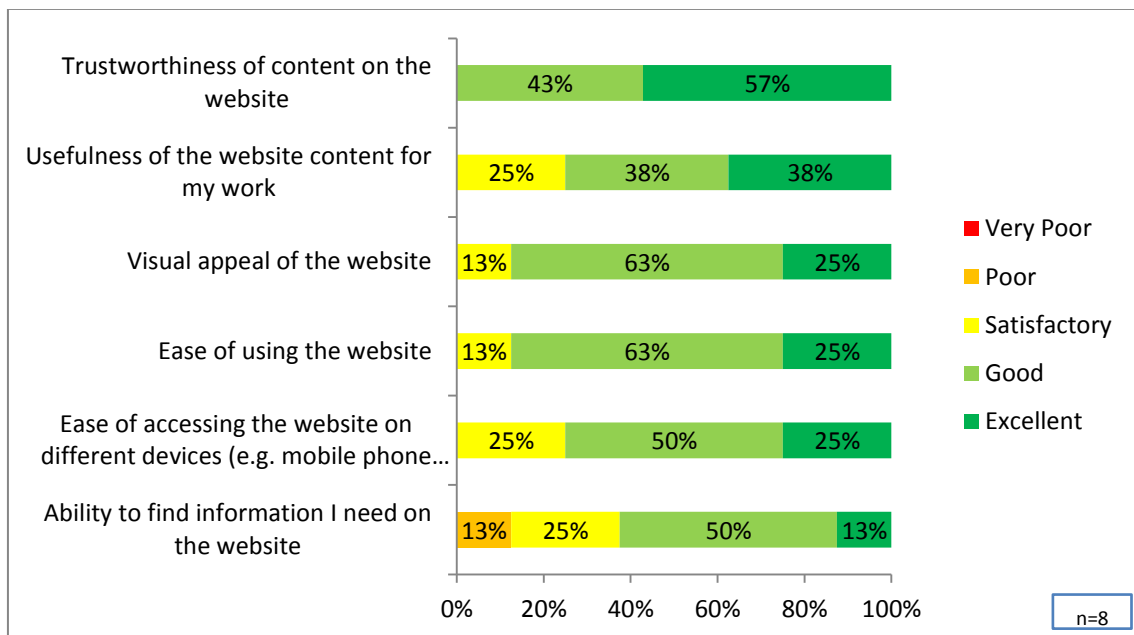


Figure 31: User survey: rating of key factors – Youth (source: evaluation)

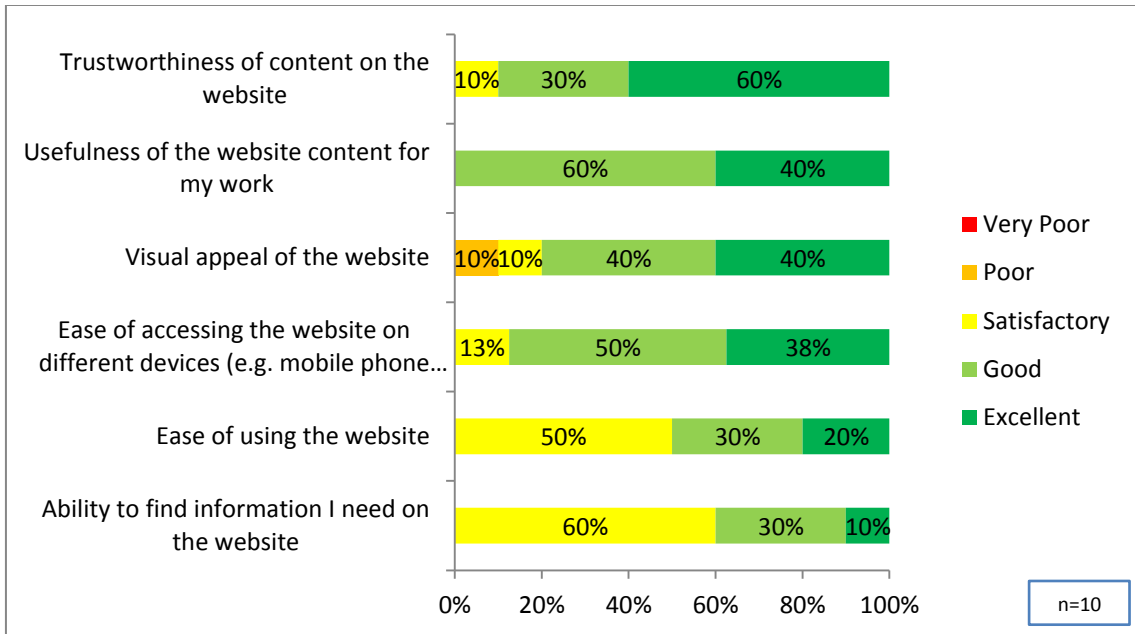


Figure 32: User survey: rating of key factors – Compass (source: evaluation)

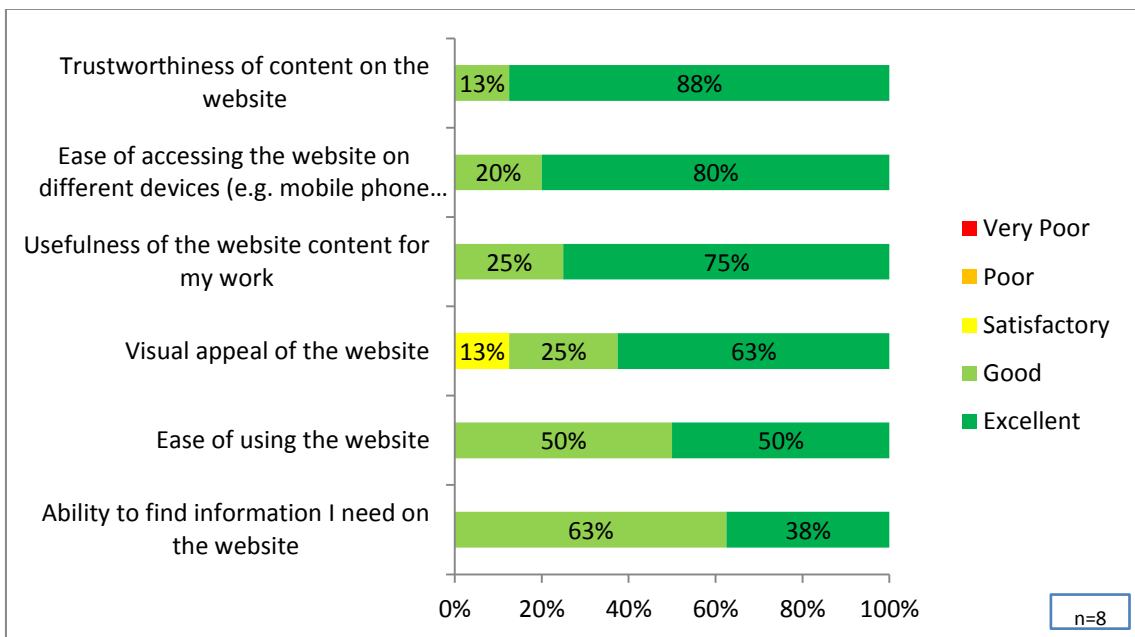


Figure 33: User survey: rating of key factors – Pestalozzi (source: evaluation)

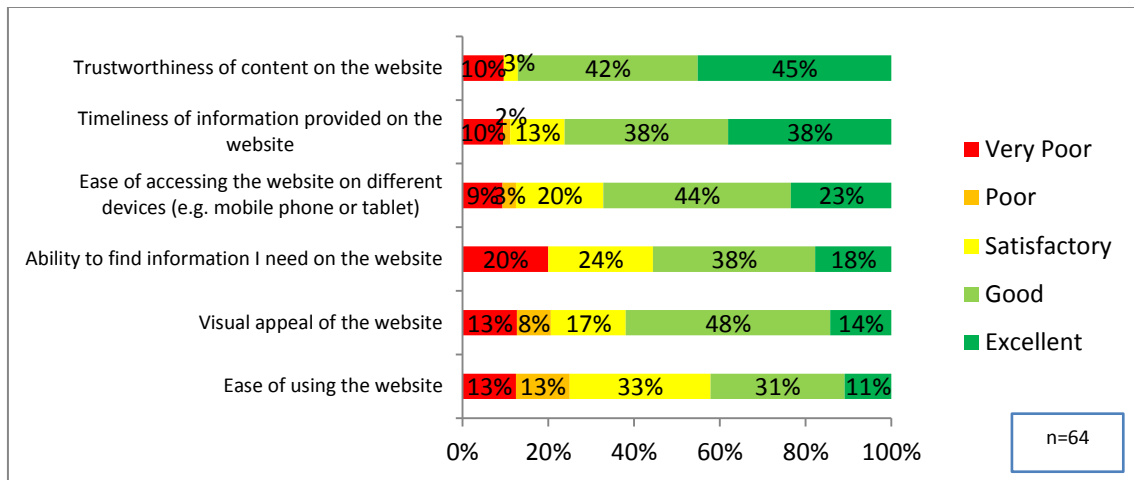


Figure 34: User survey: rating of key factors – Committee of Ministers (source: evaluation)

## Annex 6: Assessment of the communication function matrix

### Criteria and benchmarks<sup>27</sup>

Criterion	Benchmark	Data sources
<b>Organisational goals and priorities</b>	Public information and communications is embedded in strategic planning at the global, regional and national level to support the organization's strategic goals and priorities defined by Member States, taking into account organizational specificities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review of strategic documentation;</li> <li>- Review of documentation of the Department of Communications (DC);</li> <li>- Review of programme and budget documents;</li> <li>- Review of annual and progress reports;</li> <li>- Interviews with senior management and staff of the DC;</li> <li>- Survey to communication correspondents;</li> </ul>
<p>Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Are references made to public information and communication in strategic documents of the CoE or the P&amp;B? Other documents?</li> <li>2. Are references, if any, of a strategic or of an operational nature? Do references describe how public information and communication are to contribute to the achievement of the organizational objectives?</li> <li>3. Do clear priorities for public information and communication exist and are these aligned with organizational objectives?</li> <li>4. Does the reporting on communication activities to the governing bodies include a strategic analysis of challenges and solutions for the consideration of MS?</li> <li>5. Is communication mainstreamed in the operational areas of work of the organisation? Is it recognized as a full component of programmes and dealt with at the stage of planning? Are sufficient resources allocated to it?</li> </ol>		
Criterion	Benchmark	Data sources
<b>Principles of communication</b>	Public information and communications has a formal and inclusive organisation-wide framework/strategy that cascades down to the communications plans of the departments and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review of documentation of the Department of Communications (DC) and its web resources;</li> <li>- Interviews with senior management and staff of the DC;</li> <li>- Interviews with selected communication correspondents in</li> </ul>

<sup>27</sup> Based on *Benchmarks for a strategic public information and communication function in the United Nations system organizations* in: Public Information and communications policies and practices in the United Nations system JIU/REP/2015/4.

	field offices.	departments and senior management; - Survey to communication correspondents;
<p>Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Is there a corporate communication strategy/framework in place which states the overall communication goals, principles and approach to communications and can serve as a road map for the communication plans of the departments?</li> <li>2. Does the document include those essential elements: (a) statement of the overall objectives of communications; (b) key messages definition; (c) audience analysis; (d) definition of roles and responsibilities; (e) considerations regarding channels and tools; (f) monitoring and assessment? If not, is there an explicit or implicit understanding and consensus on those elements within the organization? What are the strongest/weakest elements?</li> <li>3. Are there guidelines on selected aspects of public information and communications?</li> <li>4. Are the strategic/policy documents of departments aligned with the overall strategic/policy documents?</li> <li>5. Does DC maintain an updated set of guidelines/tools/procedures? Are these available online and systematically disseminated? Are persons who are supposed to use them aware of their existence? Are they used? Are they found useful?</li> <li>6. Is there a regular assessment of CoE communication policies and practices against professional standards and best practices?</li> </ol>		
Criterion	Benchmark	Data sources
<b>Access to executive management</b>	The public information and Communications function has sufficient access to executive management to ensure its proper integration in the strategic decision-making processes of the organisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review of documentation of the Department of Communications (DC) and its web resources;</li> <li>- Interviews with senior management and staff of the DC;</li> <li>- Interviews with selected communication correspondents in departments and senior management;</li> </ul>
<p>Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Does the communication function have a direct reporting line to the chief executive?</li> <li>2. Does the head of the communication function participate in senior management meetings?</li> <li>3. Is the communication strategy/framework endorsed by the chief executive?</li> <li>4. Are there regular discussions on communications at the meetings of senior management, i.e. is it a regular agenda item?</li> <li>5. Is there a group specifically tasked to deal with public information and communication issues by setting global priorities, such as a dedicated committee, task force, working group or similar?</li> </ol>		
Criterion	Benchmark	Data sources
<b>Coherent</b>	Public information and communications	- Review of documentation of the Department of

<b>planning and messaging</b>	activities and products are delivered by all parts of the organisation through concerted planning and are based on harmonized and coherent messaging.	Communications (DC) and its web resources; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interviews with senior management and staff of the DC;</li> <li>- Interviews with selected communication correspondents in departments and senior management;</li> <li>- Survey to communication correspondents;</li> </ul>
Questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How strong is the link between DC and the Private Office? How is coherence of messages ensured?</li> <li>2. Does the mandate of DC, if any, include references to coherence of messages? Does it include references to providing support to other entities in this regard? Are the allocated human and budgetary resources sufficient to achieve these objectives?</li> <li>3. Do communication correspondents in departments have a reporting line to DC? A double reporting line?</li> <li>4. Are there regular meeting between DC and communication correspondents? Do such meetings address strategic issues, such as messaging, positioning etc.?</li> <li>5. Are there collaborative working spaces, standard operating procedures, training materials etc.?</li> </ol>		
<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>Data sources</b>
<b>Resources</b>	The organization devotes adequate and sustainable resources to public information and communications, enabling its dedicated corporate entity to coordinate, guide and perform its advisory role at all levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review of programme and budget documents;</li> <li>- Review of documentation of the Department of Communications (DC) and its web resources;</li> <li>- Interviews with senior management and staff of the DC;</li> <li>- Survey to communication correspondents;</li> </ul>
Questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the resources allocated to the purpose of communication in DC (percentage of total expenditure)?</li> <li>2. What is the proportion of HR and operational costs?</li> <li>3. Are resources spent on: a) message testing; b) campaigning; c) advertising; d) opinion polling?</li> <li>4. Are resources spent on regular professional development?</li> <li>5. Have budget allocations changed in the recent years?</li> <li>6. Does the volume of resources have an impact on the ability of DC to fulfill its role?</li> <li>7. Does the budget of operational Directorates include resources allocated to communication? Do programmes funded by extra-budgetary resources include such allocations?</li> <li>8. What are the required skills for persons working on communications?</li> </ol>		

9. What resources exist on communication in the field offices (human and budgetary)? What is the level of expertise on communication in the field offices?		
10. To what extent are the communication responsibilities clearly defined for the person responsible?		
Criterion	Benchmark	Data sources
<b>Internal and external communications</b>	The organisation integrates internal and external communications into a holistic approach, recognising the role of non-communication staff in public information and communications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review of documentation of the Department of Communications (DC) and its web resources;</li> <li>- Interviews with senior management and staff of the DC;</li> <li>- Interviews with selected senior management from other departments</li> </ul>
Questions: 1. How is it ensured that the entire staff of the organization is aware of its key messages and engages in communication with the general public? 2. Is there systematic communication with the staff?		
Criterion	Benchmark	Data sources
<b>Training</b>	The organization offers regular public information and communications training, in order to refine the competencies of public information and communications officers as well as of other staff communicating on behalf of the organisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review of documentation of the Department of Communications (DC) and its web resources;</li> <li>- Review of internal training catalogue;</li> <li>- Interviews with senior management and staff of the DC;</li> <li>- Interviews with selected senior management from other departments</li> </ul>
Questions: 1. Does internal or external training exist to keep staff skills up to date? Who is it offered to? Is it mandatory? 2. Is the available training satisfactory? 3. What is the training framework for communication correspondents in the other directorates? In field offices? 4. How are good practices from the communication field taken into account by CoE communication team?		
Criterion	Benchmark	Data sources
<b>Monitoring and oversight</b>	Public information and Communications activities and products are monitored and evaluated on a regular basis to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review of documentation of the Department of Communications (DC) and its web resources;</li> </ul>

	<p>assess their impact on intended audiences. Good practices and lessons learned are identified and help management to shape future public information and communications initiatives of the organization.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review of programme and budget documents;</li> <li>- Review of annual and progress reports;</li> <li>- Interviews with senior management and staff of the DC;</li> <li>- Interviews with selected senior management from other departments;</li> <li>- Survey to communication correspondents;</li> </ul>
<p>Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Are the communication approach, function and its products subject to a systematic review/ (self-) assessment/ evaluation?</li> <li>2. To what extent are the metrics used to monitor performance of communication activities results-based? How are targets identified?</li> <li>3. How are the results of monitoring reported and used? Lessons learnt? Good practices?</li> </ol>		

## Annex 7: Workflow mapping of web and social media processes

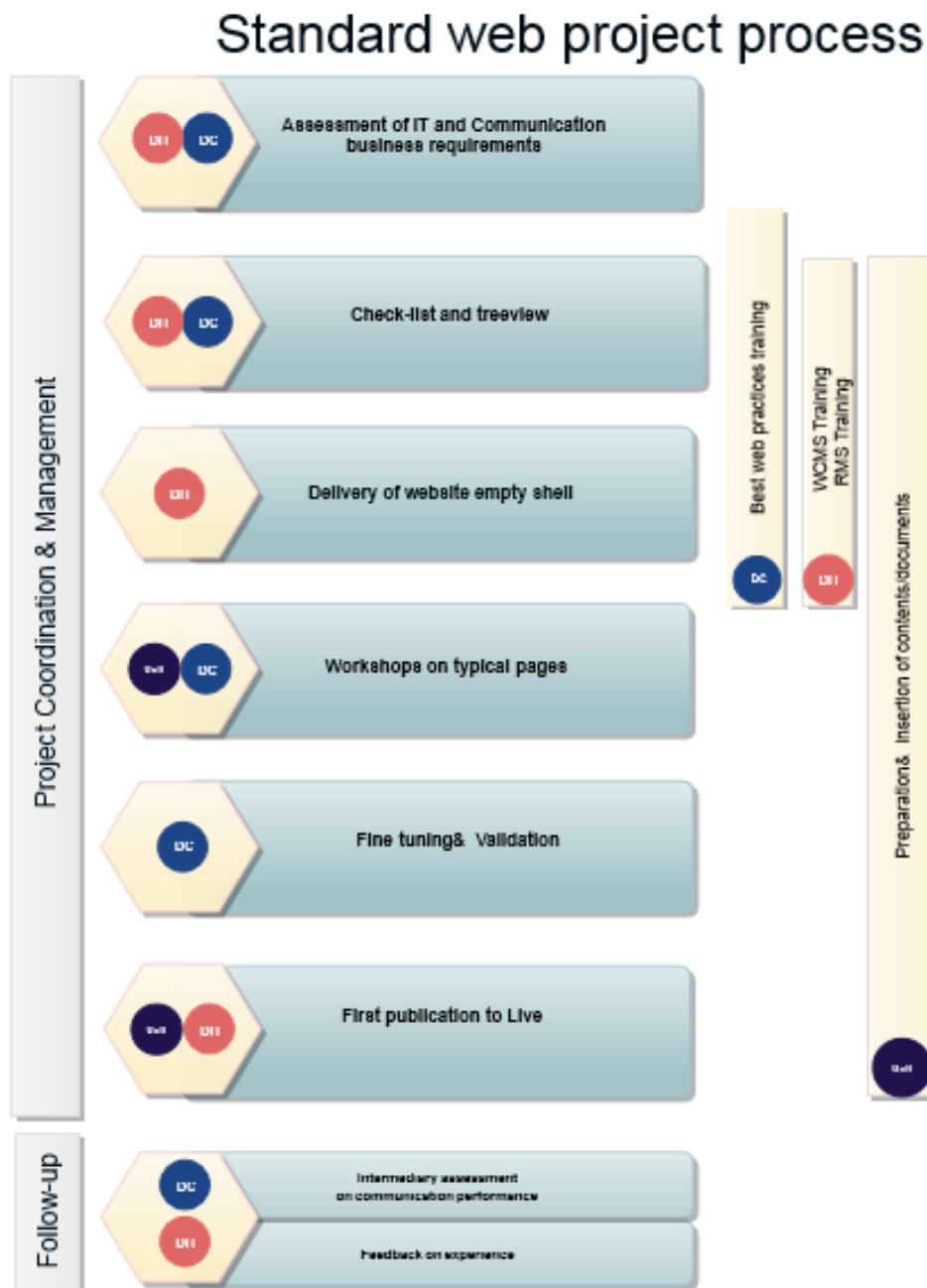


Figure 35: process map for creating websites (source: standard web process document, DC, 2016)

Responsible:

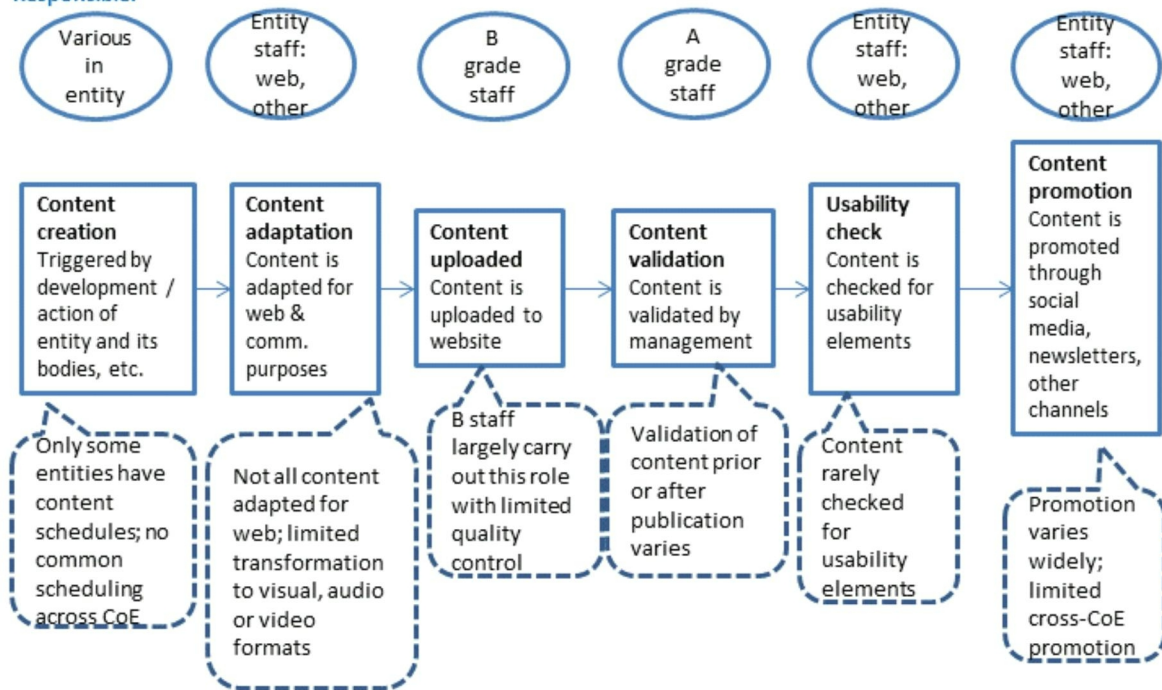


Figure 36: Generalised workflow for publishing web and SM content within MAEs

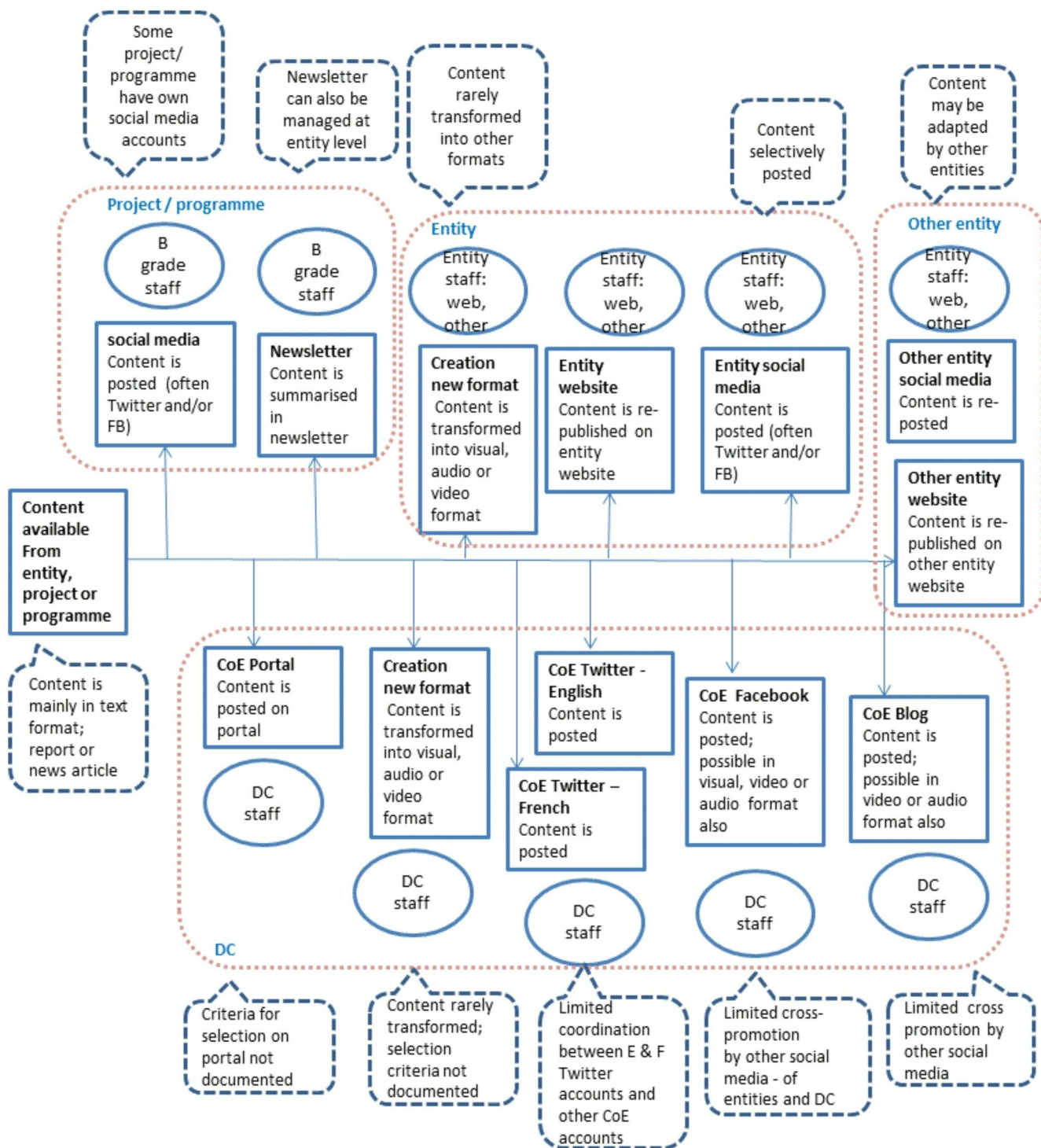


Figure 37: Workflow of promotional channels for web and SM content of MAEs

## Annex 8: Benchmarking summary for four organisations

Four organisations were selected for the benchmarking study: The Organisation for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE), The World Health Organisation, The Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), and The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). These four organisations were selected based on their complex structures, subject material (e.g. human rights) or both. Below is a summary table with detailed tables for each organisation found in Working Paper 2.

	<i>CoE</i>	<i>OSCE</i>	<i>WHO</i>	<i>OECD</i>	<i>OHCHR</i>
<b>Structure/ governance</b>	Communications Director is spokesperson and reports to Secretary General.	Head of communications reports to Director of the Office of the Secretary General.	Communications Director reports to Executive Director.	Communications Director reports to Secretary General.	Head of Communications reports to the Director of External Outreach - reports to the Deputy High Commissioner.
<b>Communications strategy</b>	Broad priorities exist but no documented strategy.	Existing strategy supports activities of organisation and chairmanship.	Recently developed communications strategy (less than one year old).	Communications priorities linked to Secretary General who is also spokesperson.	High level strategy exists with objectives and targets for both communication and social media.
<b>Web strategy</b>	Web strategy in draft form; social media plan for DC alone exists.	Digital strategy adapts to rapid changes and developments in digital communication.	Web and social media strategies exist.	Currently no formal web or social media strategy.	
<b>Web presence</b>	One central website (portal) in five languages and over 190 websites.	One central website in 18 languages. Field web presence embedded in main site, aligned graphic design and look & feel.	One website covering all entities of organisation in six languages.	One main website available in English (and partly in French). In parallel, an advanced iLibrary for formal publications and OECD.Stat for statistical datasets.	One central website in 6 languages incorporating all entities and field presences.
<b>Web approach</b>	Central portal and decentralised approach with a consistent look & feel encouraged.	Centralised, HQ team checks content before published.	Decentralised for English but centralised for the other 5 languages (for language coherency).	Decentralised with common direction set.	Centralised, HQ team manages all web content.
<b>Social media</b>	Main accounts managed centrally; every unit manages own social media presence.	Decentralised. Heads of institutions asked to take responsibility for content.	Managed centrally.	Decentralised social media approach.	Managed centrally.
<b>Total staff: HQ comm staff: Web/SM staff:</b>	2362 62 11	3462 8 3	8029 50 15	2500 160 (~90 work on documentation - iLibrary) -	1085 18 7
<b>Annual Budget</b>	534.6 million	166 million	1979 million	440 million	223 million

<i>(USD)</i> <b>Total comm budget:</b>	6.8 million	1.6 million	20 million	30 million	-
<b>Metrics</b>	Piwik analytical platform. Performance indicators at output-level.	Usability study every two years. Google analytics.	Google analytics.	Few metrics in place for digital, currently being developed.	Google analytics, results based managements system (Performance in place.
<b>Challenges</b>	Decentralised approach; cohesion across entities; complex structures.	Resources; complex structures; varying communications priorities.	Some of those working on building websites lack web experience; developing two way communications	Balance between priorities of corporate centre and entities.	Lack of content and governance strategy.

**English edition**

*Council of Europe : Evaluation of digital  
communications and access to information*

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be translated,  
reproduced or transmitted, in any form or  
by any means, electronic (CD-Rom, Internet, etc.)  
or mechanical, including photocopying, recording  
or any information storage or retrieval system,  
without the prior permission in writing from the  
Directorate of Communications (F-67075  
Strasbourg Cedex or publishing@coe.int).

Image(s) used under license from  
Shutterstock.com

Published by the Council of Europe  
F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex  
**www.coe.int**

© Council of Europe, 2018

The goal of the evaluation was to contribute to improving the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the CoE's digital communications. Therefore, it focused on the public websites and social media (SM) activities of the organization and on the overall communications structure as this is directly linked to this process.

Overall, this evaluation found that the CoE has progressed in digital communications by implementing a common content management system (CMS) on the majority of websites, expanding into new formats, establishing a broader SM presence, growing its online following and developing a more consistent and coordinated web "look and feel". The evaluation findings indicate that the CoE's digital content was appreciated and perceived as trustworthy and useful for its key audiences. However, the findings also indicated that issues linked to **strategy, coherence, usability, roles and responsibilities, as well as coordination and resources** have impeded the CoE digital communications process in achieving its full potential in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency.

Based on these findings, the evaluation recommends that the Directorate of Communications (DC) provides more strategic direction and guidance for communications within CoE, places high priority on measuring web performance, provides enhanced coordination of communication across CoE and works with the Directorate of Information Technology (DIT) and MAEs to standardise and encourage a common web publishing workflow and to focus further on improving the user experience on CoE websites. It also recommends that DC, DIT and MAEs with the support of the Directorate of Human Resources (DRH) clarify the roles and responsibilities for staff working on web and SM. Finally it is recommended that DC and the MAEs allocate appropriate resources to support web and SM work.



[www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int)

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.