

Evaluation of Visibility of EU external action

Final Report
Volume 1

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EU external action**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
1.1 Purpose of the Evaluation	1
1.2 Background of the Evaluation.....	1
1.3 Methodology	1
1.4 Analysis of the main findings for each Evaluation Question	2
1.5 Main Conclusions and Recommendations.....	5
2. INTRODUCTION.....	9
2.1 Synthesis of the Commission’s Strategy and Programmes	9
2.2 Context	11
2.3 Purpose of this Evaluation	12
3. METHODOLOGY	15
3.1 Introduction.....	15
3.2 Judgement Criteria & Indicators	15
3.3 Data & Information Collection.....	16
3.3.1 Thematic Studies.....	16
3.3.2 Media Coverage Analysis.....	17
3.3.3 E-Survey.....	18
3.3.4 Interviews with Brussels-based actors.....	20
3.3.5 Eurobarometer reports analysis	21
3.3.6 Case studies of specific events and partnerships.....	23
3.4 Methods of Analysis	24
3.5 Methods of Judgement.....	26
4. MAIN FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS	28
4.1 Findings from the Thematic Studies and the other Data Sources.....	28
4.1.1 Findings from the Thematic Studies.....	28
4.1.2 Case studies of specific events and partnerships.....	40
4.1.3 Findings from other sources	45
4.2 Answers to each Evaluation Question.....	48
4.2.1 EQ1: The image of EU external action	48
4.2.2 EQ2: Do the Visibility communication priorities achieve their objectives?.....	50
4.2.3 EQ3: A single, clearly defined Visibility strategy for EU external action?	51
4.2.4 EQ4: Perceptions of the benefits of EU external action	52
4.2.5 EQ5: Coordination between the EU institutions and with the EU Member States?	54
4.2.6 EQ 6: Coherence of message across external and internal policies?	56
4.2.7 EQ 7: Value added of the EU as a global actor in major international fora?	58
4.2.8 EQ8: Adequacy of EC resources to carry out the visibility strategy	60
4.2.9 EQ9: Stakeholder perceptions of results relative to the costs	61
4.2.10 EQ10: Translating visibility strategies into action plans.....	62

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	63
5.1 Conclusions.....	63
5.1.1 The image of EU external action is generally in line with pre-Lisbon official priorities	64
5.1.2 Communication work on EU external action lacks overall direction and leadership.....	65
5.1.3 Working in partnership with others is essential but there is a trade-off in lower EU visibility	68
5.1.4 The image of EU external action varies geographically as well as by constituency.	69
5.1.5 The nature of the EU imposes constraints that impact on its visibility	70
5.1.6 The resources for promoting the visibility of EU external action have been adequate	71
5.2 Recommendations	72
5.2.1 Reaffirm, renew and strengthen the established image of EU external action	72
5.2.2 Provide stronger central direction and leadership for communication work on EU external action.....	73
5.2.3 Agree that ‘working in partnership’ is an intrinsic part of the image of EU external action and a core message for communication	74
5.2.4 Manage sensitively geographic and constituency variations in the visibility of EU external action.....	75
5.2.5 Pay special attention to the impact on visibility of the EU’s specific nature	76
5.2.6 Review the distribution of resources for promoting the visibility of EU external action particularly at the level of EU Delegations	77
5.2.7 Other specific recommendations for each theme	78
5.3 Summary of key conclusions and recommendations.....	80

LIST OF BOXES, FIGURES AND TABLES

Box 1: Analysis of EC policy on Communication and Visibility of EU external Action (2001-2010)	11
Box 2: The Evaluation Questions (EQs)	14
Box 3: Implication for EU visibility of a conflict sensitive approach in conflict and conflict prone areas.....	33
Box 4: E-Survey examples of Actions speak louder than words.....	65
Box 5: Example of coordination mechanism under Commission (Barroso I, 2005-2010)	66
Box 6: Comments on EuropeAid’s Communication Strategy: Making a Difference – February 2012	67
Box 7: Sharing visibility on budget support.....	69
Box 8: The role of EU Delegation staff as spokespeople.....	75
Box 9: Joint integrated strategies can provide a better basis for communication work	77
Figure 1: Data collection sources	27
Table 1: European Newspapers consulted	17
Table 2: Search methodology	17
Table 3: Questions used in the E-Survey	19
Table 4: Responses per continent and organisational type.....	19
Table 5: Eurobarometer surveys and EU development assistance	22
Table 6: Summary Table of Principal Conclusions and Recommendations.....	80

VOLUME 2 – ANNEXES PART 1

ANNEX 1:	TERMS OF REFERENCE
ANNEX 2:	THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
ANNEX 3:	THE EU LEGAL FRAMEWORK: THE EXTERNAL ACTION OF THE EU
ANNEX 4:	INTERVENTION LOGIC
ANNEX 5:	STANDARD FORMAT FOR COLLECTING EVIDENCE IN RELATION TO THE EQS
ANNEX 6:	THE ORGANIZATION OF COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE COMMISSION
ANNEX 7:	COUNTRY SELECTION
ANNEX 8:	GUIDELINES FOR THE THEMATIC WORK
ANNEX 9:	EVIDENCE FROM INTERVIEWS WITH EU OFFICIALS IN RELATION TO THE EQS
ANNEX 10:	REPORT FROM INTERVIEWS WITH CIVIL SOCIETY
ANNEX 11:	LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

VOLUME 3 – ANNEXES PART 2

ANNEX 12:	MEDIA COVERAGE ANALYSIS
ANNEX 13:	E-SURVEY – SYNTHESIS REPORT
ANNEX 14:	THE PARTNERSHIP WITH THE UNITED NATIONS
ANNEX 15:	EUROBAROMETER SURVEY
ANNEX 16:	CASE STUDY: TUNISIA
ANNEX 17:	BIBLIOGRAPHY

VOLUMES 4-9: THEMATIC REPORTS ON THE SIX THEMES

VOLUME 4:	THEMATIC REPORT ON CRISIS AND FRAGILE STATES
VOLUME 5:	THEMATIC REPORT ON FINANCIAL & ECONOMIC CRISIS
VOLUME 6:	THEMATIC REPORT ON FOOD CRISIS
VOLUME 7:	THEMATIC REPORT ON MIGRATION - PART 1: MALI & PART 2: LAMPEDUSA
VOLUME 8:	THEMATIC REPORT ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY
VOLUME 9:	THEMATIC REPORT ON ENVIRONMENT, BIODIVERSITY AND DEFORESTATION

ACRONYMS

ACP	Africa Caribbean and Pacific countries
AIDCO	EuropeAid Co-operation Office
AfDB	African Development Bank
ALA	Community financial instrument for support to Asia and Latin America
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
AU	African Union
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CCCA	Cambodia Climate Change Alliance
CCE	Climate Change and Energy
CCI	Cross-Cutting Issue
CEPs	Country Environmental Profiles
CFA	Comprehensive Framework of Action
CIGEM	Information and Management Center on Migration
CODEV	Committee on Development
COM	Commission Communication
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSP	Country Strategy Paper
DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the OECD
DCI	Development Cooperation Instrument
DE	Germany
DEL	EU Delegations
DG	Directorate General
DG CLIMA	Directorate General for Climate Action
DG COMM	Directorate General for Communication
DG DEV	Directorate General for Development
DG ECFIN	Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs
DG ELARG	Directorate General for Enlargement
DG ENV	Directorate General for Environment
DG JHA	Directorate General for Justice and Home Affairs
DG JLS	Directorate General for Justice, Freedom and Security
DG RELEX	External Relations

DG TRADE	Directorate General for Trade
DK	Denmark
EEAS	European External Action Service
EC	European Community - European Commission (when referring to Lisbon)
ECB	European Central Bank
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Office
EDF	European Development Fund
EIB	European Investment Bank
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
ENPI	European Neighborhood Partnership Instrument
ENRTP	Thematic Programme for the Environment and Sustainable management of Natural Resources
EP	European Parliament
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
ERD	European Report on Development
ERIC	External Relations Information Committee
EQs	Evaluation Questions
ERF	European Refugee Fund
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
EU	European Union
EUD	Delegations of the European Union
EUR	Euro
EUMM	European Union Monitoring Mission
EUroCLIMA	Climate change regional cooperation Programme
FAFA	Framework for Action Financing Agreement
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FIP	Forest Investment Program
FF	Food Facility
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade
FR	France
FSTP	Food Security Thematic Programme
FW	Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner
GAERC	General Affairs and External Relations Council
GCCA	Global Climate Change Alliance
GCFM	Global Climate Financing Mechanism

GEEREF	Global Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GNI	Gross National Income
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
HQ	Headquarters
HoM	Head of Missions
HR	Human Rights
HR of FASP	High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
HR/VP	High Representative/Vice President
HLTF	UN High Level Task Force
I&C	Information and Communication
IFF	International Financing Facility
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
IS	Instrument for Stability
IL	Intervention Logic
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization.
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration
JEU	Joint Evaluation Unit
JMDI	Joint UNDP-EU Migration and Development Initiative
LA	Local Authority
LAC	Latin America and Caribbean
LDC	Least Development Country
LRRD	Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development
MCA	Media Coverage Analysis
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreements
MEDA	European financial instrument for the implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership
MEUR	Million Euros
MME	EU-Africa Partnership on Migration and Employment
MMEIA	Ministry for Malians Abroad and African Integration
MTR	Mid-Term Review
MS	Member State

NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIP	National Indicative Programme
NSA	Non-State Actor
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreements
PCD	Policy coherence for development
PD	Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness
PL	Poland
PSC	Political and Security Committee
RG	Reference Group
RIC	Relax Information Committee
ROM	Results-Oriented Monitoring system
RSP	Regional Strategy Paper
SEAs	Strategic Environmental Assessments
SEC	Commission Staff Working Document
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SPP	Spokesperson Service
TACIS	Technical Assistance for the Commonwealth of Independent States
3 Cs	Coordination, Complementarity and Coherence
TEU	Treaty of the European Union
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
ToR	Terms of Reference
TT	Think Tank
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCSD	United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNECLAC	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNHLTF	United Nations High Level Task Force
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
V-FLEX	Vulnerability Flex Mechanism
VPA	Voluntary Partnership Agreements
WB	World Bank
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development
WTO	World Trade Organisation

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Purpose of the Evaluation

The mandate for this study was to undertake an evaluation of EU external action as managed by three DGs: DG RELEX, DG DEV and DG AIDCO. The Terms of Reference identified two main objectives (ToR, Feb 2010, Section 1 – reproduced in Annex 1):

- To provide an overall independent assessment of the visibility of the Commission’s external action
- To identify key lessons to improve current and future Commission strategies on visibility.

The ToR also set out the temporal scope, 2005 to 2010, and a geographical scope that is essentially global with the exception of the EU enlargement countries. Stakeholders from both inside and outside the EU, in both partner countries and global organisations, were to be covered. The main element to limit the focus of the study was the designation of six themes which were to be the object of thematic studies involving six field visits to different countries (listed below – section 1.3).

Finally the ToR also asked for the evaluation to be forward looking, providing lessons and recommendations concerning visibility and also on coordination within the EU and on coherence within the EU and internationally.

1.2 Background of the Evaluation

The Evaluation was commissioned by the former EuropeAid Joint Evaluation Unit on behalf of the limited group of external relations DGs identified above to cover their areas of work and was therefore not expected to cover trade, macro-economic policy or humanitarian aid. On the other hand the ToR do stress the importance of looking at the coherence of policies and how the full set of EU policies is perceived by stakeholders.

The Evaluation is set in the context of the EU’s switch to the Treaty of Lisbon, which entered into force on 1 December 2009. The external services were reorganised with the EEAS becoming operational in January 2011 and DGs DEV and EuropeAid merged to form the new DG DEVCO-EuropeAid.

The basis of the evaluation is thus the work carried out by the Commission largely prior to the reorganisation, but the recommendations have to be set in the current post-Lisbon context. The key foundation policy document identified for the study is the 2006 Draft Communication from the External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner: “*The EU in the World: Towards a Communication Strategy for the European Union’s External Policy, 2006-2009*” (C[2006]329).

1.3 Methodology

A first element in the methodology of the evaluation was to agree a definition of visibility with the Reference Group for use in this study. This was agreed as: “*The awareness and perception of the image of EU external action among EU and non-EU stakeholders resulting from EU communication activities or from other actions that have an impact on this image*”.

Another early task was the definition of 10 Evaluation Questions (see below). As a group of questions they look first at audience perceptions of EU external action and the quality of these perceptions (EQs 1,2 & 4). EQ3 looks at the internal unity of purpose on visibility in

the Commission. The next two questions (EQ5 & 6) examine issues of inter-institution collaboration on visibility and coherence. The last three covered resources and implementation.

In order to cover the broad scope of the subject matter, the evaluation team decided that in addition to the six prescribed thematic studies, it was important to use a variety of other data sources. These included media coverage analysis, an internet based attitudinal survey or 'E-Survey, interviews with three categories of Brussels based actors and Case Studies of specific events and partnerships (The EU's reaction to the influx of migrants to Lampedusa in early 2011, the EU and the democratic uprising in Tunisia, and the EU-UN partnership).

To conduct the six thematic studies and choose individual countries to visit for each of them the thematic experts first undertook a desk study of the Commission's programmes in the sector concerned. From this they identified one programme or initiative with a fair degree of visibility. Countries where these initiatives should be visible were then identified. From this short list a balanced and geographically well-distributed selection of 6 countries for field missions were chosen. The six themes and the corresponding initiatives and countries visited were:

1. Crisis & fragile states: conflict prevention & peacebuilding – *Peacebuilding in Georgia*
2. The current financial and economic crisis – *The use of V-FLEX in Grenada*
3. The food crisis – *The use of the Food Facility in Kenya*
4. Migration – *The CIGEM project in Mali*
5. Climate change and energy – *The GCCA in Cambodia*
6. Environment, biodiversity and deforestation – *The FLEGT programme in Indonesia*

1.4 Analysis of the main findings for each Evaluation Question

The ten EQs and the summarised responses reached for each one are listed below:

EQ1

How well does the image of the external action of the EU perceived by stakeholders correspond to the key issues outlined in the definition and objectives of this external action and to the image the EU seeks to convey?

The EU is seen as a generally positive player in international affairs. The image of EU external action that emerges is roughly in line with the core values and broad objectives of the TEU on external action. This image is stronger among elites but European citizens do demonstrate a strong understanding of certain aspects such as EU support for development cooperation. There was, however, a strong scepticism on a perceived gap between rhetoric and reality among informed groups close to home such as CSOs, think tanks and journalists in Brussels. In the media there is a fairly widespread perception that EU external action is often slow, incoherent and heavily influenced by member state national self-interest. Views from beyond the EU tend to be less critical and perceptions vary from theme to theme.

EQ2

How well do the visibility communication priorities (Key communication messages for Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner, i.e. why, what and how) achieve their objectives?

The responses to this EQ were mixed, but elites do recognize some of the main priorities for the visibility of EU external action suggesting these priorities achieve their objectives to some extent. Informed groups, both within the EU and outside, are however critical of what

the EU actually achieves in its external action priority areas and thus often treat the image the EU seeks to create for itself with some scepticism. The gap they perceive between communication and reality on the ground then undermines their image of the EU.

EQ3

To what extent does the EC view itself as implementing a single, clearly defined Visibility strategy to achieve an agreed public image for its external action?

The Commission is fairly united on its communication work on EU external action. It has internal coordination mechanisms in place and there is reasonable unity on core messages. Nevertheless there is no recent overall visibility strategy and different services are approaching the question in different ways. Since the post-Lisbon reorganization no effort yet seems to have been made to draft a new overall EU external action visibility strategy.

EQ4

How well do stakeholders perceive the benefits of EU external action and not just its main features?

The responses here were mixed, though on balance positive. Perceptions of benefits are however very much associated with project success so the state of advancement of projects or programmes is an important factor. The benefits of EU external action can be hidden if EU support is provided through a partner or through budget support.

In certain sectors of EU external action different benefits are seen by different groups: on development EU funding is clearly widely perceived as a benefit by a wide range of stakeholders. In trade EU member states see the benefit of EU action. For foreign policy the benefits are not so clear because they depend largely on the EU speaking with one voice and the general perception was that this is not often the case. For EU development cooperation European citizens recognise the overall expected benefit, but have little awareness of its concrete results, and at the same time they would like to know more.

EQ5

To what extent is the EC's visibility/communication work coordinated and complementary with that of the EU Member States, Council and Parliament?

In the country visits there was generally a perception of reasonable to good coordination between the EU institutions and sometimes with the EU Member States though not in all cases. On the other hand among journalists in Brussels there was a lot of criticism on this. The perception of coordination also varied between topics and was seen as generally low on sensitive questions such as migration or EU on reactions to the Arab Spring. Coordination between the EC and the EEAS seems to work better than with the Council Secretariat. Close observers such as the press, CSOs and think tanks point to the lack of coordination and disagreements with the Member States as a major problem that undermines the EU's image. This also comes out from some of the thematic studies.

EQ6

Are the EC's messages coherent across different EU external action and internal policy areas?

Incoherence is not identified as a big issue by many stakeholders and notably by EU officials. Of course many stakeholders are also not sufficiently well informed to perceive contradictions and EU officials as a group are probably more accepting of incoherences than others. However, well-informed external stakeholders do see this as a major issue

undermining the EU's visibility and in certain key sensitive areas such as those relating to human rights, democracy, migration and trade there are clear problems of policy coherence which become much more generally and widely perceived. Not surprisingly incoherence is more common in areas where competence remains with Member States. CSOs and journalists are the most alert to and critical of policy incoherence and see this as a major issue that seriously undermines the EU's image.

EQ7

How far does the perception of the value added of the EU as a global actor emerge clearly from its presence in major international organisations/fora?

There are two parts to the response to this question. On the one hand there is the question of the EU's image as an actor in UN and other international fora, on the other hand there is the question of EU visibility in relation to the partnership with the UN often at the field level.

In international fora: In terms of the EU's image in debates at the international level evidence suggested that the EU had a generally positive image in five of the study's six thematic areas. All the thematic studies except for migration, found that the EU was perceived as a positive force in the international arena with a clear added value and considerable potential to increase further its role as a global actor. Some went as far as to say that the EU often underestimates its visibility and influence in the international community and specifically within the UN. However, two elements limit that positive image. First, regular divergences in views between EU member states reduce and even undermine the EU's value added and position. Second, the negative vote on EU representation in the UNGA was interpreted as a warning that the EU should be more aware of the way it is perceived in the international community. The EU is sometimes seen as unduly arrogant and as taking the support of others for granted.

In partnerships with the UN in the field: The second aspect of the response to the EQ also arose in several of the thematic studies where the EU was providing substantial funding for projects implemented by the UN. For visibility this clearly emerged as problematic with perceptions in the EU institutions and in the UN often quite starkly opposed. Among a wide group of stakeholders UN run projects funded by the EU are regularly seen as UN projects and this is hard to avoid. At the same time the UN in general is making a real effort to follow the visibility guidelines in the FAFA and there are signs of regular improvement.

While following the agreed visibility guidelines is important there were also signs that too much insistence on them has negative side effects for the EU's visibility. This is often seen as heavy handed and unreasonable given that, while the EU may well be one of the larger funders of a project, it is usually not alone and other donors also feel entitled to some visibility. There is also a view that giving too much visibility to donors can undermine the UN's image of neutrality and impartiality, which is part of the UN's value added and often a good reason for it to be the implementing agency in the first place. The best way for the EU to get visibility from its partnership with the UN is not necessarily to insist on more 'stickers and flags'. Rather providing more core funding to UN agencies might provide a stronger visibility 'return' to the EU within the UN.

EQ8

How far are the resources mobilized by the EC adequate (human resources, budget) to carry out its visibility/communication strategy?

In the Commission and for the EEAS the resources available for visibility/communication do not seem to be a major problem, though their being split up by programme at country

level may not always be ideal. In EU Delegations themselves the funds for communication work are limited as the bulk of the resources is with programmes and projects. This clearly leads to big variations in quality. Some EUDs feel they would be better equipped to tackle visibility properly, if they had more funds. Another key finding was that as EUDs now have a more political role under Lisbon, there is a need to review their communication strategies and resources.

EQ9	To what extent are the results in terms of stakeholder perceptions commensurate with the cost of conveying the messages both in financial and organisational terms?
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It proved difficult to get a definite answer to this EQ as the data available does not permit a strict cost-benefit analysis, but the impression gained was that efficiency seems reasonable and there is no indication of excessive spending on communication. The one exception were some CSOs who felt too much is spent on communication relative to the impact on visibility.

EQ 10	How effectively do EC external action staff from different services translate the visibility strategy they are expected to implement into action plans that are consistent amongst each other?
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Visibility action plans exist at quite a number of levels from EU institution services in Brussels, down to EUDs and within programmes and projects. Although there are high expectations since the institutional reorganisation in 2010-11 there is as yet no indication of a common visibility strategy for EU external action involving both DEVCO and the EEAS or indeed other services. The overall impression therefore is that the translation of strategies into action plans is quite piecemeal and variable. At the country level there are also indications of lack of follow through, so quality varies considerably at lower levels. In particular there are difficulties with getting unitary messages and images in country when project budgets provide the main source of funding for visibility work. Within individual services, officials see themselves as reasonably effective, there is apparent enthusiasm to improve quality and focus more on communicating results. There is also openness to learning more from others. Yet there is no indication of clear central guidance or leadership.

1.5 Main Conclusions and Recommendations

The main conclusions and corresponding recommendations are summarised in the first table below and then, in a second table, action points are proposed for each recommendation:

Summary Table of Principal Conclusions and Recommendations

	Conclusions	Recommendations
1.	<p>The image of EU external action is in line with pre-Lisbon official priorities</p> <p>The public image of the EU's external action is substantially in line with what the EU itself has sought to promote. Stakeholders are however often critical of the quality of the EU's image and feel there is often a gap between rhetoric and reality.</p>	<p>Reaffirm, renew and strengthen the established image of EU external action</p> <p>The EU should reaffirm, update and strengthen, but not necessarily seek to substantially change, the visibility strategy for its external action. Efforts should be made to improve the quality of that image however, particularly by communicating more on results and by avoiding raising unrealistic expectations.</p>

<p>2.</p>	<p>Communication on EU external action lacks overall direction and leadership</p> <p>This is particularly true since the post-Lisbon Treaty reorganisation. While there are some efforts to re-establish internal coordination (ERIC) and on communication strategy there is still no strong sense of central leadership or of a new overall EU external action communication strategy emerging.</p>	<p>Provide stronger central direction and leadership for communication work on EU external action.</p> <p>A single overall communication strategy for EU external action with complementary sectoral strategies is needed. The EU should also ensure regular close coordination on communication between services and establish an urgent action cooperation mechanism. Finally it should coordinate EU external action communication messages with Member States.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>Working in partnership with others is essential but there is a trade-off in lower EU visibility.</p> <p>Partnerships with other organisations (UN, governments, NGOs, etc.) are vital in EU external action, but there is a trade-off as visibility then needs to be shared. This remains a source of tension and too much insistence being put on EU visibility can undermine the effectiveness of the cooperation and the sense of ownership felt by partners.</p>	<p>Agree that ‘working in partnership’ is an intrinsic part of the image of EU external action and a key message for communication</p> <p>One of the key features of the way the EU works in international affairs is its continuing effort to work in partnership with other actors. The EU should therefore recognise ‘working in partnership’ is core to both its existing image and its approach to external action, and build its external action communication strategy around this principle. At the same time it should accept that some reduction of its own visibility is a by-product of such partnerships that can even in itself be positive. EU senior management should provide clear leadership on the balance of the trade-off they expect in this area.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>The image of EU external action varies both geographically and by constituency</p> <p>While certain high profile features of the EU (e.g. the €) are known around the world, the image of the EU’s external action varies from place to place and among stakeholders. Some of the EU’s closest and best-informed observers are the most critical.</p>	<p>The EU needs to manage sensitively the geographic and constituency variations in the visibility of EU external action.</p> <p>The EU’s world-wide network of Delegations are a major asset in this respect. In Europe, communication with informed and critical audiences closest to home need to be tackled with particular care and attention.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>The nature of the EU imposes constraints that impact on its visibility</p> <p>The specific nature of the EU imposes certain constraints on its visibility and image. For instance problems of internal competition for visibility between EU actors continue, a lack of cooperation and coordination between the EU and the Member States in external action, remains a key problem and policy coherence is a more of an issue for informed external observers than officials often seem to think.</p>	<p>Pay special attention to the impact on visibility of the EU’s specific nature</p> <p>EU external action officials from all different services and institutions need to be very aware of the importance of projecting a single EU image. Promoting a well-coordinated EU image with Member States is highly desirable and should be a key objective for all officials and particularly those in leadership positions. Close attention should be paid to policy coherence both in practical terms and in terms of external images and messages.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>The resources for promoting the visibility of EU external action have been adequate.</p> <p>No strong evidence on inadequacy of resources for communication surfaced from any of the sources consulted. On the other hand the distribution of resources, particularly at the country level, does raise some concerns, with EU Delegations seemingly have too few resources in some</p>	<p>Review the distribution of resources for communication work particularly at the country level.</p> <p>Examine in particular the need for EU Delegations to perhaps have more resources and adequate expertise directly at their disposal. The funding of communication and information work in EUDs should also be reviewed in the light of their new political functions under the Lisbon</p>

cases and not all implementing agencies using the funds they are given well.	Treaty.
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Summary Table of Action Points per Recommendation

Recommendations and related Action Points	
1.	<p>Reaffirm, renew and strengthen the established image of EU external action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Clear political strategies and messages</i> are an essential foundation for effective communication work. • <i>Actions often speak louder than words:</i> Focussing on communicating results is therefore a sensible strategy that emphasises the EU's ability to deliver. • <i>Avoid raising unrealistic expectations:</i> Too much emphasis on the scale of EU funding or its potential role as a major global player, raises expectations which then cannot always be met. That in turn undermines the credibility of EU external action. • <i>Finely tuned, accurate and appropriate communication</i> is essential in politically sensitive areas of work such as conflict or migration that may even call for less, not more, EU visibility.
2.	<p>Provide stronger central direction and leadership for communication work on EU external action.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A single overall communication strategy for EU external action</i> is urgently needed to replace the Draft Communication of February 2006 to cover all aspects of EU external action. • <i>Complementary sectoral communication strategies</i> can be built around this overall strategy • <i>Ensuring regular close coordination on communication between services is vital</i> at both headquarters level and in terms of common clear messages for the EU Delegations. This is particularly required between the EEAS and DEVCO, but should extend to other DGs. • <i>Establish a rapid reaction cooperation mechanism</i> for agreeing communication messages and proactive strategies in reaction to external events. • <i>Coordinate EU external action communication messages with Member States.</i> This is essential as external observers do not always differentiate between the EU and individual MS.
3.	<p>Agree that 'working in partnership' is an intrinsic part of the image of EU external action and a core message for communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Adopt 'Working in Partnership' as a key communication message</i> and a positive value to promote as part of the desired image of EU external action and of its public diplomacy • <i>Provide instructions on 'shared visibility' in the EU's communication strategy and guidelines</i> that promote the 'working in partnership' message • <i>Strengthen the listening side of the EU's public diplomacy</i> so as to avoid the danger of appearing as overbearing or as taking partners' support for EU positions for granted.
4.	<p>The EU needs to manage sensitively the geographic and constituency variations in the visibility of EU external action.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ensure communication strategies are well adapted to specific contexts</i> by making sure they are based on a solid local understanding of the situation and context • <i>Make full use of local knowledge in EU Delegations</i> in adapting communication to specific contexts. • <i>Design specific communication strategies for selected well informed and critical audience groups.</i> These can be useful communication relays, but they need to be treated appropriately as they can also quickly spot the gaps and inconsistencies.

5. **Pay special attention to the impact on visibility of the EU's specific nature**
- *Maintain a single clear common communication strategy* ideally for all EU institution services
 - *Insist on a single EU image* in all circumstances certainly at the level of EU institutions and wherever possible also with EU Member States
 - *Consistently play down differences between different services and institutions* and wherever possible seek to issue joint EU statements that minimise differences between particular EU figure heads
 - *Pay close attention to maximising policy coherence* both in practice and in terms of external perceptions.
 - *Ensure good on-going internal communication* between staff responsible for different sectors/policies.
 - *Use to the full existing tools for creating coordinated positions among Member States*, such as Council working groups many of which the EEAS now chairs.
 - *Establish a dedicated mechanism to promote coordinated communication* on EU external action with Member States.
 - *Use Head of Mission meetings and exchanges to ensure coordinated communication* on EU external action with Member States in country.
 - *Build on existing joint integrated strategies* and include a communication element from the start.
6. **Review the distribution of resources for communication work particularly at the country level.**
- *Review EU Delegation access to and control over resources for communication* on cooperation activities in country and whether they have enough resources for new role under the Lisbon Treaty.
 - *Learn the lessons from the experience of the Indonesia EUD on pooling communication budgets* and assess if this provides a useful model for other delegations to adopt.
 - *Ensure EU Delegations have adequate capacity to monitor programme implementers use of communication funds in programme budgets.*

2. INTRODUCTION

This is the Final Report of the Evaluation of the Visibility of EU External Action. It brings together the main findings and conclusions to be drawn from all the different sources used to collect evidence during this study. The core of the study revolved around six Thematic Studies, each with an associated desk report and field visit, that examined the visibility of EU external action in six areas identified in the Terms of Reference. The individual reports of these six Thematic Studies are provided in the annexes volumes (volumes 4-9). Their main conclusions are brought together here in this overall final report along with the conclusions of a number of other data collection exercises that each also have their own individual reports in the annexes.

A particular feature of this Evaluation has been that it has taken place over the cusp of a major Treaty and organisational change in the European Union. At the start of the study the Treaty of Nice was in force. As from February 2010 the Treaty of Lisbon came into play. One of the major aspects of this treaty change has been an reorganisation of the services of EU external action with the creation of the post of High Representative of Foreign and Security Policy combined with that of Vice President (HR/VP) of the European Commission responsible for EU external action and the parallel creation of a new *sui-generis* service: the European External Action Service or EEAS under the High Representative's authority. The Evaluation has therefore had to take account of these changes. Much of the material collected clearly relates to the past arrangements however as the new arrangements are now in place for nearly a year it has also been possible to collect insights into what can be expected in the future.

2.1 Synthesis of the Commission's Strategy and Programmes

The visibility of EU external action clearly needs to be built around the objectives of this external action, that in turn is rooted in the Treaty of the European Union. A comparison of the relevant TEU articles in the Nice (Articles 8 & 11 ff.) and Lisbon (Articles 3 & 21) versions is conducted in the Inception Report (Section 1.1) for this study. A major difference between the two versions of the Treaty was the 'pillar structure' which split the Union's external actions into two categories (Pillar I: Intergovernmental: Covering CFSP and Defence; and Pillar II: Community: For development, humanitarian aid and economic and financial cooperation) disappears in Lisbon giving a more organic and coherent structure to EU external action. This also provides the basis for the establishment of the EEAS that has its roots in both the intergovernmental and community sides and is headed by a political nominee that is both High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (Council) and a Vice President of the Commission responsible for External Relations (HR/VP). In terms of the objectives of EU external action the Nice Treaty defines specific objectives for each area of external action though it does put an explicit accent on the consolidation of democracy and human rights; whereas in the Lisbon Treaty Article 3 specifies at a global objectives level that '*the Union in its relations with the wider world shall uphold and promote its values and interests*', the values themselves having been defined earlier in Article 2. Article 21 then goes on to list a series of more specific objectives in different fields of external action (see Annex 3 for details).

The organisation of the communication tasks inside the European Commission and how these relate in particular to EU external action is explained in Annex 6. The key feature is that the communication activities of the Commission's external communication activities comes under the responsibility of a trio of three actors: (i) the Members of the Commission and their cabinets, (ii) the Directorate General for Communication (DG COMM) and within them the Spokesperson Service (SPP) of the Commission and (iii) the other Directorates

General and their communication units. Up to and including 2010 the relevant DGs for external relations were DG RELEX, DEV and AIDCO. DG TRADE and DG ECHO, although both active externally, were to be considered outside the scope of the study¹. Since the reorganisation prompted by the Lisbon Treaty in early 2011 the two services to be considered are DG DEVCO and the EEAS. Coordination between the different services was provided for by monthly meetings of the RIC (Relex Information Committee) which has since evolved, with a hiatus of several months, into E-RIC, the External Relations Information Committee.

The Inception Report examined (Section 1.2) a series of documents² on communication from the Commission going back over the last decade. The conclusions reached are reproduced in Box 2 below. These official documents show that at the start of the new Millennium the Commission as a whole is preoccupied with the need to stimulate public debate in Europe on European affairs this is closely linked to the need to improve the governance of Europe itself and not specifically related to EU external action or any specific policy area. In 2004 the rejection of the draft European Constitution clearly gives added impetus to this debate and prompts the Commission to produce the “*Plan-D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate*” (COM[2005]494) which is noteworthy in communication terms because it recognises for the first time the need for two-way dialogue between European citizens and the Commission. The interest in improving communication for the Commission as a whole intensifies in 2006 with the publication of the “*White Paper on a European Communication Policy*” (COM[2006]35 final) but it also starts to acquire an external action aspect with the Commissioner for External Relations, Mrs Ferrero-Waldner issuing a draft communication to her colleagues in the Commission on “*The EU in the World: Towards a Communication Strategy for the European Union’s External Policy, 2006-2009*” (C[2006]329)³. This document remains the definitive statement on the Commission strategy on visibility of EU external action as no new overall communication strategy document has been produced since. It is apparent therefore that the concern with the visibility of EU external action was part of a wider concern in the Commission that the EU was insufficiently understood both within the Union among its citizens to enhance democratic accountability and more widely in the world

¹ This is made clear in the very first paragraph of the Terms of Reference for this evaluation

² The documents considered for the analysis were the following:

- COM(2001)354 - 27.6.2001 “*A new framework for co-operation on activities concerning the information and communication policy of the European Union*”;
- COM(2002)350 - 2.10.2002 “*An information and communication strategy for the European Union*”, COM(2004) 196 - 20.4.2004I “*Implementing the information and communication strategy for the European Union*”;
- COM(2005)494 final - 13.10.2005, “*The Commission’s contribution to the period of reflection and beyond: plan-d for democracy, dialogue and debate*”;
- COM(2006) 35 final - 1.2.2006, “*White paper on a European communication policy*”;
- SPEECH/06/59 - 02-02.2006 “*Benita Ferrero-Waldner European Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy speech The EU in the World*”;
- C(2006) 329 2.2.2006 Draft Communication from Mrs Ferrero-Waldner to the Commission, “*The EU in the World: Towards a Communication Strategy for the European Union’s External Policy, 2006-2009*”;
- COM(2006)278 8.6.2006 “*Europe in the World — Some Practical Proposals for Greater Coherence, Effectiveness and Visibility*”;
- COM(2007)568 final EN 3 10 2007 “*Communicating Europe in partnership*”;
- SEC(2007)1742 EN 21 12 2007 “*Communicating about Europe via the internet. Engaging the citizens*”;
- 2005 “September 2005, DG EuropAid “*EU visibility guidelines of external actions*”;
- April 2008/July 2009 European Commission “*Communication and Visibility Manual for EU External Actions*”;
- 22.09.06, European Commission United Nations, “*Joint Action Plan on Visibility*”.

³ This Draft Communication does appear to have been approved by written procedure in February 2006, but all versions of it still refer to it as a ‘Draft Communication’.

where the EU is felt to have a generally positive image but its role as a global actor is not well understood nor how this is underpinned by its values and objectives.

The 2006 Draft Communication also identifies clearly (a) the targets of the communication strategy inside and outside Europe; (b) the communication key questions (**why** does the EU have an external policy, **what** defines the EU as an actor on the world stage and why acts in the way it does; **how** does it deploy its instruments around the world; (c) the communication challenges; and (d) the specific tools to use. It also refers specifically to Visibility stressing the need for the results of EU external action to be visible: *“In third countries, EU external assistance suffers from a lack of visibility, either because little publicity is given to the action, or because the identity of the donor is unclear”*.

It is this strategy document therefore that is used as the basis for this evaluation.

Box 1: Analysis of EC policy on Communication and Visibility of EU external Action (2001-2010)

Conclusions from Inception Report (Section 1.2)

After considering the evolution of the concepts of visibility, information and communication over the years from the official Commission documents analyzed above, the evaluation team found that:

- Communication becomes a policy in its own right in 2005.
- Visibility (first time term is used is in 2006 in Ms. Ferrero-Waldner’s speech – Feb 2006) is considered as a consequence, among others, of Communication activities. Specifically, communication should be seen as one of the activities to carry out in order to achieve visibility.
- Visibility evolves from a static Visibility concept (logos, stickers etc.) towards a dynamic Visibility, meaning a Visibility influenced by actions.
- Visibility is linked (without detailing how) to democratic accountability internally (towards EU citizens and EU Parliament), and to mutual accountability externally (Third countries citizens and governments). Visibility is *“aim[ed] at achieving greater consensus and coherence by informing, mobilising public support and building accountability mechanisms”*. However, the inference that visibility automatically correlates with greater consensus and coherence, with mobilization of public support but building accountability is to be seriously questioned.
- Outside the EU, the objective is to explain the EU’s policies and activities, as well as its underlying values and objectives, to current and potential opinion-formers as well as to the broader audience of the interested public at large. This entails an enhanced role of the delegations to pursue an active role in EU public diplomacy. Within the EU, the overall objective is to engage in a more open dialogue with citizens and to better respond to their expectations, contributing to a fuller understanding of the EU’s external policies, instruments and concrete action.

More specifically, the “EU faces communication challenges in a number of priority areas which need to be addressed: Global solidarity, Enlargement, European Neighbourhood Policy, Africa, Strategic bilateral relationships.”

2.2 Context

The context of the period in which this visibility strategy was formulated was therefore one of increasing concerns about the ‘democratic deficit’ between the European institutions and the European public. While this was broader than just EU external action there was nevertheless a feeling that Europeans needed to better understand what the EU was doing in the world and why, not least as a question of democratic accountability and but also because their support for this action was deemed important for its success.

Equally a major EU objective of the time, that is still a concern today, was the wish to strengthen the EU's external action and enhance the Union's influence on global affairs. While part of the response to this was institutional (the creation of the EEAS, etc.), another means to this end was increasing the visibility of the EU. The EU was felt to be poorly known and understood internationally and improving its visibility could therefore increase the influence it would wield.

These concerns are also evident in the work of policy institutes (Lynch, 2005⁴) and academic work of the period (Lucarelli, 2007; Chaban & Holland, 2008⁵) which highlight both the uncertainty over the EU's identity and the lack of knowledge of the EU internationally and discuss the need for the EU to develop a pro-active public diplomacy strategy aimed at enhancing both the EU's image and its influence internationally. This literature suggests that the continuing evolution of the EU, its particular character which cannot be equated with that of a nation state and the apparent 'democratic deficit' between European citizens and elites over the purpose of the EU are all factors which complicate the image of the EU and make it harder to communicate.

On the institutional side the period under review is marked by a strong debate, leading up to the introduction of the Lisbon Treaty, on the need for the Union to strengthen its external action, by improving internal coordination and policy coherence, by bringing together and creating greater synergies between the different EU and institutions and services responsible for this action. The most visible aspect of this is the creation of the EEAS and the establishment of the HR/VP post, but internally the establishment of the EEAS also includes new processes aimed at bringing services in the Commission that traditionally worked quite separately more closely together. There is thus an effort to systematically link foreign policy and development policy in the programming of external support and the effort made to have only one set of country desks. Even beyond the Lisbon Treaty process the past decade has been marked by various efforts to create greater unity in the Commission's external action work, the creation of a group of external action Commissioners during the Prodi and Barroso I Commissions, the establishment of a single DG responsible for aid implementation, EuropeAid, in 2001, or again the efforts from 2005 to improve policy coherence for development (PCD) being just three examples. Underpinning all these efforts is the notion that greater coherence and unity of purpose in EU external action would increase its effectiveness. This is in itself a response to the widely held view that the EU was complex and disorganised with different services and institutions pulling in different directions. The visibility of the EU external action was thus seen as hampered by an institutional problem that also undermined its effectiveness.

2.3 Purpose of this Evaluation

The main objectives of this evaluation are defined in the Terms of Reference (section 1) from February 2010. They are:

- *“To provide the relevant external co-operation services of the EC and the wider public with an overall independent assessment of the visibility of the Commission's external action;*
- *To identify key lessons in order to improve the current and future strategies of the Commission on visibility.”*

⁴ Lynch D, 2005, *Communicating Europe to the world: what public diplomacy for the EU?*, European Policy Centre Working Paper No.21, EPC, Brussels.

⁵ Lucarelli, S, 2007, *The European Union through the eyes of others*, European Foreign Affairs Review 12 (3): 249-270; Chaban, N and Holland M (eds.), 2008, *The European Union and the Asia-Pacific: Media, public and elite perceptions of the EU*, Routledge UACES.

The Terms of Reference narrowed down the scope of the evaluation (section 3.4) as being primarily to focus on six themes:

1. Crisis and fragile states: conflict prevention and peace building
2. The current financial and economic crisis
3. Food crisis
4. Migration
5. Climate change and energy
6. Environment, biodiversity and deforestation

In other words the task of the evaluation is partly descriptive (what visibility does the EU's external action have?), partly assessment (could this visibility be better?) and partly a lessons learning exercise to see what might be done to improve the visibility of EU external action. While this task clearly has a generic dimension to it, the themes provide a more specific focus on six key areas where the EU is active externally. These themes are all on-going concerns in international affairs, that cross over several policy areas. They are thus neither strictly 'foreign policy', 'development policy' or 'security policy', but rather impinge on all three (and indeed others such as 'humanitarian policy') and therefore prompt an approach that looks at EU external action in an integrated manner.

The Inception Report and the Desk Report both contain discussion on the concepts of visibility, communication and public diplomacy that are used extensively in this study. The conceptual framework as finally defined in the Desk Report is reproduced in Annex 2 to this Final Report. For our purposes here it is useful to retain from that discussion the working definition of Visibility as formulated for use in this study: *"The awareness and perception of the image of EU external action among EU and non-EU stakeholders resulting from EU communication activities or from other actions that have an impact on this image"*.

At an early stage in the evaluation process, the Reference Group agreed with the evaluation team on a set of ten Evaluation Questions. These are presented in Box 1 below.

The logic of these Evaluation Questions (EQs) starts from the Treaty base for EU external action and the internal Commission communication strategy document in place at the time and poses questions on whether the image of EU external action that these propose corresponds to what audiences perceive (EQ1 and EQ2).

The next few questions deal with a number of issues that are seen as possibly affecting the visibility of EU external action, that were identified at the start of the study:

- EQ3 addresses the question of internal unity of purpose in the Commission's pursuit of visibility for EU external action.
- EQ4 looks at the quality of the messages not just transmitted but perceived by audiences.
- The next two questions deal with the issues of complementarity (EQ5) and coherence (EQ6), that is inter-institutional collaboration on visibility on the one hand and the consistency of messages transmitted across different EU policy areas on the other.
- EQ7 addresses a specific visibility problem related to the fact that the EU often works in international fora and its external action is often executed with or by international organisations and in the process, it is often argued, the EU may find its own visibility diluted or reduced.

The final three EQs deal with the practical questions of the resources available for and organisation of the visibility of EU external action.

Box 2: The Evaluation Questions (EQs)

1. How well does the image of the external action of the EU perceived by stakeholders correspond to the key issues outlined in the definition and objectives of this external action (Nice Treaty: Art. 8 & 11; Lisbon Treaty: Art. 3 & 21) and to the image the EU seeks to convey?
2. How well do the Visibility communication priorities (Key communication messages for Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner, i.e. why, what and how) achieve their objectives?
3. To what extent does the EC view itself as implementing a single, clearly defined Visibility strategy to achieve an agreed public image for its external action?
4. How well do stakeholders perceive the benefits of EU external action and not just its main features?
5. To what extent is the EC's visibility/communication work coordinated and complementary with that of the EU Member States, Council and Parliament?
6. Are the EC's messages coherent across different EU external action and internal policy areas?
7. How far does the perception of the value added of the EU as a global actor emerge clearly from its presence in major international organisations/fora?
8. How far are the resources mobilized by the EC adequate (human resources, budget) to carry out its visibility/communication strategy?
9. To what extent are the results in terms of stakeholder perceptions commensurate with the cost of conveying the messages both in financial and organisational terms?
10. How effectively do EC external action staff from different services translate the visibility strategy they are expected to implement into action plans that are consistent amongst each other?

The first two EQs are therefore very much about identifying what visibility EU external action has and whether this corresponds to what the EU authorities would like. The findings related to these two EQs should provide the basis for part of the answer to the first overall objective of the evaluation.

The next group of EQs relate to issues that may impair EU visibility. Findings on these should provide useful indications for future visibility strategy. Along this line the third EQ starts to tackle a first dimension of the question of disparate actors pulling in different directions and here specifically whether the European Commission has managed to build a strong sense of internal unity around its visibility strategy for external action.

The fourth EQ addresses the question of the effectiveness of the visibility strategy by looking at whether the EU's communication work does not just raise awareness of the EU, but also succeeds in educating stakeholders about why the EU is acting externally and the positive benefits of this action. In other words do stakeholders perceive the EU as having a positive effect on global affairs and specific concerns such as the food crisis?

The next two EQs (EQ5 and EQ6) then move to another level of the unity of purpose discussion. EQ5 addresses the wider institutional complexity of the Union and asks whether the different institutions (the Commission, Council and EP) and the member states make an effort to work together on communication and EU visibility. This responds to the view that around the world stakeholders find the EU hard to understand because the different EU actors do not work in synergy and that this has a negative impact on the Union's visibility. On another tack, EQ6 then looks at whether a lack of coherence between different EU policies is problematic for the visibility of its external action.

The seventh EQ on the visibility of EU action in international fora is important for various reasons. First the EU in its external action declares itself as a strong supporter of ‘effective multilateralism’. Second, this support has a major practical dimension with the EU channeling much of its international assistance through the UN, its agencies and other international organisations. Third collective action through the Union in international fora and organisations is seen by many of the EU’s internal stakeholders as an important way of increasing European influence on global affairs.

The final set of three EQs seek to examine some of the practical dimensions of the EU’s communication work: the resources available (EQ8), the effectiveness of their use (EQ9) and whether strategies are followed through into practically actions plans that are then implemented. It is hoped that findings on these questions will provide the basis for some more organisational and practical lessons.

These ten Evaluation Questions form the spine around which the whole evaluation is organized. They are used for the six thematic studies and as the basis for all other data collection work. They also form the framework for the presentation of the findings and the conclusions.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The Terms of Reference for the Evaluation stipulates six themes each of which is to provide the basis for a thematic report to be annexed to the Final Report (see Annexes’ Volumes 4-9). However in discussion with the Reference Group during the Desk Phase it was agreed that given the nature of the topic, tackling it simply from the angle of the 6 themes would not provide an adequate response to the objectives. Rather, a certain amount of generic data related to overall EU external action was also required, partly to address some of the Focus Issues listed in section 3.5 of the ToR and partly to get a broader sense of the views of a number of the Target Audiences listed in Section 3.2. Equally it was felt that a couple of small case studies of specific events and partnerships to see how the action of the EU was perceived in each case would prove useful. These data collection exercises are outlined in section 3.3 below.

3.2 Judgement Criteria & Indicators

The 10 Evaluation Questions were used as the basis for all the data collection exercises including the six themes, the small specific case studies and the generic data collection exercises. However, not all the ten EQs were used in each case and a choice was made depending on their relevance to the data sources and being addressed and the resources required.

Equally, while a set of Judgement Criteria and Indicators were agreed with the Reference Group for all the ten EQs during the Desk Phase, it was recognised that given the diversity of the different themes and other data collection exercises that these would be built and adapted to suit the specificity of each exercise.

For each data collection exercise including the thematic reports a standardised format for each EQ (Annex 5) showing both judgement criteria and indicators was used as a tool to collate the information collected. These are included in the relevant annexes.

3.3 Data & Information Collection

As indicated above in addition to the 6 thematic studies stipulated in the ToR it was deemed necessary to conduct number of additional data collection exercises and case studies, these included:

1. A media coverage analysis
2. An internet based attitudinal survey or 'E-Survey'
3. Interviews with three categories of Brussels based actors (Civil society organisations consisting of NGOs and Think Tanks, EU officials, Journalists)
4. Analysis of relevant Eurobarometer reports
5. Case Studies of specific events and partnerships
 - a. Lampedusa – The EU and the influx of migrants in early 2011
 - b. Tunisia – The EU and the democratic uprising
 - c. The EU-UN partnership

The rationale and methodology for each of these was discussed in the Desk Report. Individual reports for each of these can also be found in the Annex volumes. In each case there is also an explanatory note explaining the methodology used in greater detail. A few key methodological points should be retained in each case. These are indicated below along with any obstacles encountered and any key limitations.

3.3.1 Thematic Studies

The principal limitation involved in the thematic studies was that it was only possible to make one country visit for each theme. While this in-country study was clearly an important feature of the methodology in that it allowed for data collection in situ in places where the EU was active in the thematic area, the difficulty was then in building a 'thematic' report on this one country case. Methodologically this meant that it was important to prepare the thematic study well before departure, staying as much as possible at the level of the overall theme and then use the country visit as a means to verify impressions gained in the preparation rather than as an assessment of what was taking place in that country. Extensive thematic preparatory reports were therefore provided in the Desk Report.

The choice of country for each theme was also important and received systematic attention in the Desk Report. On the one hand the country chosen had to be both relevant to the theme and have relevant action being undertaken by the EU that could be studied. As well as choosing a country an effort was therefore also made to identify an event or programme relevant to the theme, which involved the EU in some way and which might be expected to create visibility for the EU and attract public attention. On the other hand it was deemed important to have a range of different types of countries so as to reach as wide as possible a range of stakeholders across the world.

In each country visit the thematic experts were not only expected to conduct a somewhat classic set of interviews with different types of stakeholders to collect a range of views from different angles, but also to seek to do a limited media coverage analysis. In other words it was felt important to hear the opinions of different stakeholders and understand their perceptions of the EU and of EU action in the relevant thematic area, but also to look at how the EU's action was represented in a sample of local media as an indication of the visibility achieved. Methodological guidance was provided to the thematic experts on how

to conduct such a media coverage analysis in a systematic and objective manner, but it was recognised that a lot depended on in-country conditions and the degree to which relevant media had archives that could be accessed and searched relatively systematically using key words and for specific periods related to the event or programme which was expected to create visibility for the EU.

3.3.2 Media Coverage Analysis

In addition to the efforts made to analyse relevant media output in each country visited for the six themes a European Media Coverage Analysis (MCA) was conducted. The plan was to base this on articles selected from 4 newspapers in each of 5 EU countries and languages (FR, DE, UK, DK and PL). In addition the New York Times was used to provide one example of a media external to the EU. It was hoped to have in each case the two largest circulation quality papers and the two largest circulation tabloids, but practical limitations (comparability of newspaper culture between countries, public access to archives, search facilities, etc.) in different cases meant that in the end the analysis had to concentrate on the highest circulation quality newspapers. The 20 European newspaper covered were therefore as follows:

Table 1: European Newspapers consulted

Country	Newspaper
FR	Liberation, Le Monde, Le Figaro, La Croix
DE	Frankfurter Allgemeine, Frankfurter Rundschau, Die Welt, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Bild Zeitung (online version)
UK	The Guardian, The Daily Mail, The Daily Telegraph, Financial Times
DK	Berlingske, Politiken, Information, Jyllands-Posten
PL	Gazeta Wyborcza, Superekspress, Rzeczpospolita

The searches were done based on key words and for periods relating to particular events chosen in relation to the six themes and the Tunisia case study as listed in the following table.

Table 2: Search methodology

Theme	Country	Thematic key words (1)	Event / Programme	Period
Conflict and Fragile States	Georgia	Crisis, Conflict, Peace	Conflict with Russia & post-conflict process	1 – 28 August 2008
Climate Change and Energy	Cambodia	GCCA, adaptation, climate change, energy	Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA)	15 May – 5 June 2010
Environment, Biodiversity and Deforestation	Indonesia	FLEGT (or Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade), VPA, illegal logging, fair trade	Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT)	1 – 28 May 2011
Migration	Mali	Migration, CIGEM, Lampedusa	CIGEM	1 - 28 April 2008
Financial and	Grenada	Vulnerability FLEX,	Vulnerability FLEX,	15 – 29 Dec. 2009

Economic Crisis		financial crisis, budget support	financial crisis, budget support	+ 2 – 16 Sept. 2010
Food Crisis and Food Security	Kenya	Food Facility, food security and food prices	Food Facility / food crisis	1 – 28 May 2011
Major international event	Tunisia	Democracy, human rights, freedom of speech	Democratic uprising	5 – 12 Nov. 2009 + 1 – 21 Jan. 2011

Note (1): Besides the thematic search words one of the following terms also had to be present in the article: “European Union”, “EU”, “European Commission”, “the EU Delegation” “EC” or the term “Europe”, the “European Parliament”, “the Council” or any of the 27 EU member states.

The result of these search were mixed. On the one hand a large number of very useful articles were identified for two cases (Georgia: 603 and the second period for Tunisia: 165). On the other hand, only 3 articles were identified for Indonesia and none for the other cases⁶. Consistency checks were conducted to check for possible biases or mistakes on these latter cases. These checks and the fact that there is a strong consistency in coverage per topic across all the newspapers, with all providing several articles on the Georgia case and most of them on Tunisia, suggests that the methodology was sound so that either the combination of key words and periods used in several of the cases was perhaps too specific or simply that there was no media interest in the topic as defined. Limited resources did not permit reruns of the MCA for the cases that did not produce results to find a more productive selection of key words, instead it was decided to restrict the analysis to the two searches that had delivered good results.

The two events that did yield good results in the media search provide some very rich findings for analysis as will be seen below. Of particular interest, is that the two cases are also distributed in time and therefore different arrangements for the management of EU external action: with one (the 2008 security crisis in Georgia) falling under the provisions of the Treaty of Nice and the other (the 2011 democratic uprising in Tunisia) falling under the provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon.

3.3.3 E-Survey

This survey covering 5 of the EQs in simplified form was sent to 4,031 civil society e-mail addresses worldwide. Just over 5% of these contacts (221) took up the invitation to follow the link to the survey website and complete the questionnaire, which is well within the normal response patterns for this type of survey. The E-Survey is reported on in Annex 13.

The questions used were based on the EQs, but had to be simplified as they had to be immediately understandable without further explanation and ensure the respondent was not put off from answering by wording that was too complex and took time to understand. The questions used were as follows:

⁶ A detailed breakdown of the number of articles from each newspaper is provided in the MCA report in Annex 12.

Table 3: Questions used in the E-Survey

Question	
EQ1	In your view, how does the overall image of the <i>EU's external action</i> correspond with the key issues outlined in the Lisbon Treaty?
EQ4	How do you perceive the added-value (benefits) of <i>EU external action</i> :
EQ6	To what extent are the EU's messages coherent across different external action and internal policy areas?
EQ7a	What image do you have of the "EU as a global actor" in international affairs in general?
EQ7b	What image do you have of the "EU as a global actor" based on the role it plays in major international organisations?

Respondents were asked to rate their view on a scale from 0 (lowest) to 4 (highest) and the data collected is therefore in the form of average rating per question. For EQ4 they were also invited to respond at a general level and in relation to the 6 themes. Respondents also had the opportunity to make observations and give examples after each question and this yielded a rich source of interesting comments which are synthesised in the report.

The following table gives an overview of the responses broken down by type of respondent and continent.

Table 4: Responses per continent and organisational type

	NGOs	Academia/ research	Media	Other	Not specified ⁷	No data ⁸ provided	TOTAL
Europe	53 (60.2%)	51 (58.6%)	5 (71.4%)	12 (48%)	5		126 (58.8%)
Africa	22 (25%)	23 (26.3%)	1 (14.3%)	12 (48%)	2		60 (28%)
Latin America and Caribbean	6 (6.8%)	4 (4.7%)	-	-	-		10 (4.8%)
North America	4 (4.5%)	5 (5.7%)	-	-	-		9 (4.2%)
Asia	3 (3.5%)	4 (4.7%)	1 (14.3%)	1 (4%)			9 (4.2%)
Australia and Oceania	-	-	-	-	-		0
Did not provide data						7	7 (not counted)
TOTAL	88	87	7	25	7	7	221

⁷ As organizational type was not a compulsory question, respondents were able to omit answering this question. This results in more responses per region than per organizational type.

⁸ The respondents were asked to provide first content inputs, and only then their geographic and organizational origin. 7 respondents left the survey after providing content inputs. These seven respondents were not included in the computation of regional and organizational analysis.

The majority of the respondents are senior staff members of their organisation and are well informed about EU external action. Their profile is as follows: 68% have a senior position within their organisation and 27% are at mid-level. 57% indicate having a high familiarity with EU external action, 38% have an average familiarity and 5% replied that their familiarity is low. The majority is working on, or has experience with fragile states and crisis (48%) while the areas 'finance and economic crisis'; 'food crisis'; 'migration' and 'climate change & energy' are each known to approximately 30% of the respondents. Only about 18% are familiar with environment, biodiversity and deforestation.

The E-Survey report in Annex 13 provides a scoring per EQ that is based on the weighted average of the answers received⁹. The report lists the aggregated data per EQ and further details of the disaggregated data per EQ and per region are listed in its annexes. The open replies to the EQs are also synthesised in the summary report per EQ and full written replies received are listed in one of its annexes.

The following limitations need to be taken into account when looking at the E-Survey data:

- The majority of contacts that received the invitation to participate in this survey are from Europe (48%) and Africa (36%). Contacts from the other regions are between 2% and 7%.
- In all the regions, the majority of contacts originate from NGO's (45%) and think tanks/ research institutes (39%). Some 7% come from media and another 7% from other types.
- The responses, as summarised in Table 4 above, broadly reflect the different amount of invited contacts per continent and organisational type. The somewhat lower response percentage for some continents, if related to the invited contacts, can be broadly explained by the less developed internet connectivity that applies in particular to Africa.

3.3.4 Interviews with Brussels-based actors

3.3.4.1 Civil society organisations

This group of interviewees is a key group of 'multiplier' persons, who are by definition Europe specialists in their domain and have access to wide networks often extending worldwide. Within these networks they act as resource person on the EU and focal points to which other network members often relate comments back about the EU. Their opinions of the EU are therefore partially based on direct and quite intense exposure to the EU and comments on the EU made by wide constituencies.

For this part of the study 13 structured interviews of about 1 hour each and 1 focus group discussion with Brussels civil society organisations with a European focus were held. The selection of respondents was based on a balance between (9) NGOs, in particular development umbrella organisations and those that specifically cover the different themes, and (5) external actions think tanks. In addition, a balance was sought between 'general experts' and 'thematic experts'. In most cases directors were interviewed, unless it was felt another member of staff was more appropriate, either because they were specifically focusing on EU external action or because they were an expert in one of the 6 themes.

The information collected from these interviews is presented in the standard form EQ grids in Annex 10.

⁹ For example, the EQ question 1 on the Lisbon Treaty could be rated with 'highly corresponds' (4 points), 'corresponds fairly well' (3 points); 'corresponds in a limited manner' (2 points); 'does not correspond' (1 point) and 'do not know' (0 points). The number of replies per rating was multiplied with the points per rating and divided by the total number of replies received.

Whereas the interviews showed that there was large consensus on a few key issues, there was great diversity in much of the results and examples given. This might be a consequence of the broad selection of stakeholders (e.g. thematic experts generally refer to their own field) and broad framing of questions, which was necessary for the interviews.

3.3.4.2 [EU Officials](#)

A first set of interviews with EU officials was done early in the study as part of the desk study phase and were reported on in the Desk Report. These interviews were done before the establishment of the EEAS and the reorganisation of the Commission' external action services. A second set of more systematic interviews to gain responses to the EQs was done in September-October 2011 with the officials in the newly organised services. Some continuity was observed but in most cases new personnel was in place, their answers therefore to the questions therefore depended on the extent with which they were familiar with the past communication and visibility work of the services either from personal experience or based on the handover they had had from predecessors filling more or less equivalent positions.

These interviews cover several categories of officials but included essentially a range of staff from the communication units in the Commission external action services, Council Secretariat and the European Parliament, the spokesman service of the Commission/EEAS. While it is important to get the views of officials it is clear that there is only a limited number of persons inside the institutions who are able to provide accurate answers, as most of the question require a multi-institutional experience and general overview. The other way to counter this problem is to interview several officials in different positions and then triangulate the information collected.

A full list of interviewees is provided in Annex 11 and the results of these interviews are collated in the standard EG grids in Annex 9. A note on the structural organisation of communication work inside the Commission is provided in Annex 6.

3.3.4.3 [Journalists](#)

In the Desk phase a dozen journalists based in Brussels were interviewed. These EU correspondents are clearly very influential in terms of the selection and transfer of messages from the EU institutions to the media. The selection of these interviews was done to ensure a representative sample from some large and some small EU member states and a couple working for media outside the Union.

The full list of those interviewed is provided in Annex 11.

Their aggregated responses to the individual EQs summarised in section 5.2 of the Revised Desk Report are integrated in the EQ response tables in the next section.

3.3.5 *Eurobarometer reports analysis*

The evaluation team looked at 55 Eurobarometer surveys (Standard Eurobarometers¹⁰, Eurobarometer Special Surveys¹¹, Flash Eurobarometer Reports¹², Qualitative Studies¹³) over the period 2000-2010, as reported on in Annex 15.

¹⁰ The standard Eurobarometer survey, which was established in 1973, is mainly intended to gather EU citizens' perceptions of: (i) the life in the EU; (ii) the EU and its citizens; (iii) the EU today and tomorrow.

¹¹ Special Eurobarometer reports are based on in-depth thematic studies carried out for various services of the European Commission or other EU Institutions and integrated into the Standard Eurobarometer's polling waves.

For this evaluation the Standard Eurobarometers are of limited use as they focus on the EU citizens' opinions and expectations towards issues of relevance for their life within the EU and less attention is given to the image of the EU in its external action. From this point of view, only three EB surveys – EB 63, EB 66 and EB 67 - take this dimension into account by asking two fairly general questions about whether EU citizens are in favor of the common foreign policy; and their opinion on the EU's role and place in the world compared with that of the United States. These two surveys do not provide an insight into the citizens' real knowledge and perceptions of the EU external action, however through the comparison EU-US we can get some indirect indications on the areas where the EU is considered to act more positively.

Apart from the Standard Eurobarometers, there are some two dozen surveys (Special Surveys and Flash Reports) that measure the perception that the public has regarding EU policies in specific domains. These surveys (listed in Annex 15 table 1) have been considered as part of the 6 thematic studies of this evaluation to check if they included indications of relevance for EU external action¹⁴.

There are also some six surveys that give useful insights on the EU citizens' views towards the broader EU external assistance's agenda, with particular reference to the *EU's role in development cooperation*. These are listed in the table below.

Table 5: Eurobarometer surveys and EU development assistance

Eurobarometer Special Surveys (EBS)				
Ref	Wave	Title	Documents	Year
353	EB73.5	The EU and Africa: Working towards closer partnership	Report	11/10
352	EB73.5	Europeans, development aid and the Millennium Development Goals	Report	09/10
318	EB71.2	Development Aid in times of economic turmoil	REPORT	10/09
286	EB67.3	Citizens of the new EU Member States and Development Aid	REPORT	09/07
222	EB62.2	Attitudes towards Development Aid	REPORT	02/05
184		L'aide aux pays en développement	REPORT	04/03

By looking into these six surveys it was possible to identify some evidence on how the EU public opinion perceive the EU external assistance and its priorities (EQs 1), its main features, justification and role on the global scene (EQ 2), as well as its benefits (EQ4). Some indirect indications on these issues from the Standard Eurobarometers EB 63, EB 66 and EB 67 were also used. The evidence from these surveys is therefore integrated in the EQ summary tables in Section 4.2 of this report.

¹² Flash Eurobarometers are ad-hoc thematic telephone interviews conducted at the request of any service of the European Commission. They mainly deal with EU internal policy issues.

¹³ The qualitative studies investigate in-depth the motivations, the feelings, the reactions of selected social groups towards a given subject or concept, by listening and analyzing their way of expressing themselves in discussion groups or with non-directive interviews.

¹⁴ See volumes 4-9 of the Annexes.

3.3.6 Case studies of specific events and partnerships

3.3.6.1 Lampedusa – The EU and the influx of migrants in early 2011

This case study was conducted by the migration expert on the team and was seen as complementary to the migration thematic study. It is reported on in Volume 7 with the migration thematic study.

Media coverage analysis was the main tool used to document the case. This was not linked to concrete projects financed in Lampedusa, but rather aimed to identify the main reactions and perceptions of the press and the general public at a more general and political level.

The main challenge in conducting the analysis was making a selection of the more relevant articles among the huge number available through the press at national (Italian) and international level. The time period¹⁵ taken corresponds to the increase of the flow of migrants debarked to Lampedusa following the events in Tunisia and Libya and to the related discussions among the EU and the Member States on how to tackle this emergency. Media sources documented extensively the whole process. After a wide preliminary search, we focused down on four major Italian newspapers covering different political views (*“Il Corriere della Sera”*, *“Il Giornale”*, *“Libero”*, *“La Repubblica”*) and the sample was thereby limited to 50 articles.

The Italian media coverage was complemented with research and analysis of international media to check European and international perceptions of the Lampedusa case and the image of the EU in this context. This analysis was based on 40 items from various sources but mainly from: *“TV5 Monde”*, *“France 24”*, *“Le Figaro”*, *“Spiegel Online”*, *“EU Times”*, *“The Economist”*, *“New York Times”* and *“Reuters”*.

3.3.6.2 Tunisia – The EU and the democratic uprising

As outlined in the report in Annex 16, the methodology for this small case study was relatively simple so as to work within the resources available. It was conducted by the communication expert on the study team and therefore had a very specific communication focus. It consisted of three main elements:

- Background and analysis of possible tailor made communication strategies
- Analysis of Tunisian media coverage of the EU as well as media coverage of Tunisia in selected EU member states. This was done at two moments in November 2009 and in January 2011.
- Interviews with officials in the EU Delegation, the cabinet of the Commissioner for the European Neighbourhood Policy and the relevant communication unit in the EEAS.

What makes Tunisia a particularly interesting example is the fact that the EU has maintained an increasingly close and advanced partnership with the country for many years while it has been controlled by a totalitarian regime allowing very little freedom. There has been tight control of the media and of civil society and their links with the outside world. There have never been free and fair elections in the country until 2011 and human rights have been seriously violated for many years. At the same time there are solid reasons for the EU’s close collaboration with Tunisia which has stimulated the country’s positive economic, social and educational development. It was deemed therefore that the case could provide valuable lessons and insights into EU visibility and public diplomacy strategies in such a constrained environment.

¹⁵ 5-month period: February 2011 (rise of arrivals on Lampedusa) – June 2011 (Council Conclusions on: *“Borders, Migration and Asylum - Stocktaking and the way forward”*)

3.3.6.3 [The EU-UN partnership](#)

The report for this case study is in Annex 13. The material for this case study was based on an analysis from three sources:

- Data emerging from the thematic studies in cases where the thematic experts collected material on the EU-UN relationship
- A discussion with the director and two deputy directors of the UN representative office in Brussels
- Data from DG DEVCO on visibility issues arising in the EU-UN relationship based on the External Action Monitoring Reports for 2009 and views expressed on the issue by officials from the Communication Unit in DG DEVCO.

It had been hoped to also do short case studies of some of the EU's other strategic partnerships particularly at a national, but, as explained in Annex 13, this proved impossible due to lack of available materials.

3.4 **Methods of Analysis**

The principal method of analysis employed in the Evaluation is to compile the data from different sources around each EQ in two stages. This is first done source by source basis which is the basis of the individual reports from each source in the annexes. There are thus reports for each of the thematic studies, but also for each of the other data collection exercises. Information from all these various sources was then combined, cross-referenced and cross-checked so as to serve as a basis for developing the argumentation. Throughout this process the principal standard tool used for compiling the data are the grids for each Evaluation Question.

The next stage is to pull out from each of these reports the principal conclusions reached EQ by EQ and compile these in individual tables for each Evaluation Question. These are to be found in the next Chapter under section 4.1.

A number of EQs posed specific methodological challenges so the approach taken to each of them is summarised briefly as follows:

1. Both **EQ1 and EQ2** required the collection of responses from a wide range of stakeholders so as to get a representative sample of views from different types of actors and to allow for triangulation of opinions. Moreover, the scale of the evaluation did not allow for a specific opinion poll to be conducted with the general public and so it was important to target proxy stakeholders in touch with broad constituencies of different wider groups of stakeholders. Opinion leaders such as journalists or CSO leaders were particularly important in this respect. The Media coverage analysis and the E-Survey are also important sources here.
2. **EQ3, EQ8, EQ9 and EQ10** are more internal questions for the EU officials both at Headquarters in Brussels and in Delegations. At the same time for **EQ3** it is also valid to question well informed external actors as to whether or not they feel the Commission does achieve a coordinated approach, as officials may feel they are progressing well on this account while external observers may have a different impression.
3. **EQ4** is similar to the first two EQs in that it requires a wide range of views and information from as many different stakeholders as possible. The added problem here is to check for evidence that stakeholders have not just heard the messages about the

EU but have sufficient understanding to analyse their impact (the benefits). Respondents therefore need to provide examples of benefits in a proactive manner.

4. **EQ5** (Is visibility work of different EU institutions complementary?) A consistent and coherent visibility strategy is a condition for building a coherent image of the EU. In order to grasp the perception of the image of the EU external action it is necessary to assess whether there are complementarities or contradictions between the messages and the visibility work of the different EU institutions. For this both internal and external views are important: on the one hand do the officials in the institutions themselves feel there are problems of coordination and complementary? On the other, what do external stakeholders think? The two positions can then be contrasted and compared. We must also recognised that there are only a limited number of actors inside the institutions who are able to provide accurate answers, as the question requires a multi-institutional experience and general overview. Even though the formulation and scope directly addresses the aim of the study, the nature of the questions limits the number of stakeholders in a position to contribute to the study.
5. For the question on policy coherence (**EQ6**) it is important to get both an internal and external view: do officials see a coherence as a problem and then how is then perceived externally.
6. **EQ7** on the visibility of the EU when working in or with international fora or organisations has two aspects to it. On the one hand it is about how the EU is perceived as an actor in international fora such as the UN or major international conferences. On the other hand there is the question of direct cooperation on the ground that arises with the EU as a major funder of UN agency programmes and the visibility the EU acquires in such contexts. For this both internal (to the EU and to the UN) and external perceptions are important and efforts were made to get representative examples of views from each of these different angles and in different contexts (in-country and head offices).
7. As indicated above **EQs 8, 9 and 10** are part of a group of primarily internal questions to address to officials though it is also interesting to see if some better informed external stakeholders are able to provide an external assessment on them. These three questions are important for addressing the input, i.e. the concrete means used by the respective DGs to carry out their visibility/communication strategy. In addition, they have the potential of leading to a better understanding of the place the visibility strategy takes in the DGs' relevant action plans and the political endorsement of communication and visibility in the DGs management (Director General, Directors and Heads of Unit). The latter is an aspect that has been explored through the interviews with EU officials.
8. **EQ8 and EQ9** relate to resources and efficiency. A decision was taken early on in the study not to conduct an inventory and also no objective way of measuring efficiency was identified. Instead the responses to these questions rely on a simple triangulation technique of comparing a sufficient number and variety of internal views from different sources and checking for consistency.
9. The question of the cost benefit ratio (**EQ9**) is crucial but particularly difficult to address. From a communication point of view, it needs to be acknowledged that it is often difficult to define a satisfactory result in proportion to a defined cost. Quantitative criteria can be certainly considered, for instance the number of people reached by a given action (such as the number of viewers of a cinema spot or the number of readers of a newspaper article), however unlike other areas, qualitative

criteria often plays a key role (the level of perception of the message, the memorization, etc.). In other words, to answer this EQ will be complex in a number of cases as it is difficult to define with precision the threshold by which one reaches a satisfactory result.

10. The assessment for **EQ10** is based on what evidence officials could show of strategies and action plans again triangulating across a number of internal sources both in Brussels and in Delegations.

3.5 Methods of Judgement

As can be seen from the previous sections in this Chapter 3, the Evaluation builds up considerable evidence from a variety of sources. The purpose of this is to provide as broad as possible a base for the judgements to be made on the answers to the EQs. The six thematic studies form the core of the data collection. They focus on one theme each at both a general level through desk study and at country level. To tackle the theme they also focus down further on a representative action or set of actions taken by the EU in the relevant thematic area. As seen above each thematic study involved a range of data gathering approaches including document study, interviews with a variety of different types of actors and where possible some media coverage analysis at country level.

The complementary value of the other principle sources can be summarised as follows:

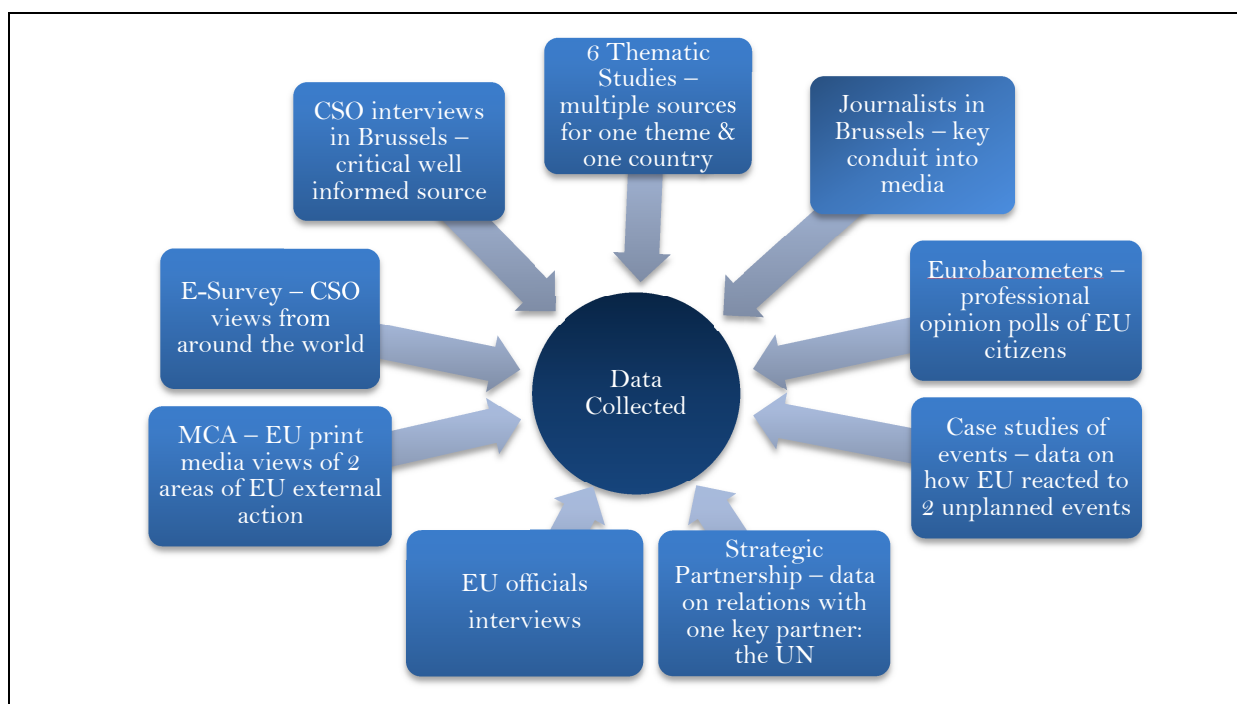
- **Media Coverage Analysis** – Permitted the team to take a systematic and objective look at how print media from a sample of EU member states represented the EU around a specific topic. The MCA produced very good material on two topics: the Conflict prevention theme in relation to Georgia and EU actions around the ‘event’ of the Arab Spring and specifically the democratic uprising in Tunisia.
- **The E-Survey** – Gave the team information from a sample of informed civil-society actors from around the world on a limited number of questions. This was the only data collection exercise with global coverage.
- **Civil Society interviews in Brussels/Europe** – This is an influential group of highly informed sources with close day to day to knowledge of EU external action and extensive networks that reach across Europe and beyond that inform their opinions and which they in turn keep informed. They are also among the most critical of audiences in following the visibility of EU external action.
- **EU Officials** – Are clearly an important source to get basic facts and information about how the EU conducts its communication activities including changes from the pre- to post-Lisbon organisation of the services. But they also served an important triangulation purpose by helping the team to confirm certain point and identify variations in views from different parts of the services and EU institutions.
- **Journalists in Brussels** – This is another well informed and critical group. Their particular importance is that they act as the major conduit for the EU to channel information on and perceptions of the EU external action into the media.
- **Eurobarometers** – These provide a source of professional polling information on how the EU is perceived by European citizens. Some of their coverage relate to EU external action.
- **Case studies of specific events** – The added value of these case studies was to see how EU external action was perceived in cases where the EU had to react to unplanned events over which it had no control. Two such studies were done. In

both cases these were related to other data collection exercises to so as to strengthen the information base. The first was the Tunisian case for which data was also collected via the MCA. The second was the Lampedusa case that relates directly to the migration theme.

- **Strategic partnership with the UN** – Strategic partnerships form one aspect of the EU’s approach to external action. The partnership with the UN is an important one that is world-wide in scope and covers a wide range of topics. It also poses particular problems in terms of visibility for the EU. Data for this emerged from a number of the thematic studies and this was combined with data from interviews and documentation.

The subject of the visibility of EU external action is vast and multifaceted with many different stakeholders involved. So, overall, by using these different tools, as graphically represented in Figure 1, it has been possible for the Evaluation Team to collect data from a wide range of different stakeholders, in different contexts, on different aspects of EU external action and a wide variety of different situations. Overall in addition to documentary evidence and reports consulted, some 260 interviews were conducted, 220 people responded to the e-survey and over 1000 media reports were reviewed during the course of the study. This provides a very solid evidence base and a good foundation for the cross-checking and verification of data.

Figure 1: Data collection sources



To bring all this data together the single tool of the EQs has been systematically used throughout all these different data collections exercises wherever possible. The information from each source has therefore been distilled down to provide findings on each EQ. Clearly it is impossible to calibrate according to one single system the relative importance of all the particular bits of data from all different sources. Judgement is therefore required principally at two different levels: first in the aggregation of the data within each source and second in the combining of the responses to each EQ from the different sources.

4. MAIN FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The main findings of the Evaluation are presented in two sections in this chapter. The first outlines the main messages emerging from each of the Thematic Studies and from the other data sources. The consolidated findings related to each of the Evaluation Questions are then presented in the second section.

This progression from findings by source to findings grouped by EQ with the source still made apparent but consolidated in a single response to each EQ, illustrates well the broad coverage of the data collection exercise, the way message from different data sources complement and often reinforce each other.

4.1 Findings from the Thematic Studies and the other Data Sources

4.1.1 Findings from the Thematic Studies

4.1.1.1 Environment – Indonesia

The full report from the Thematic study on the *Environment, biodiversity and deforestation* based on the desk study and the field mission to Indonesia is provided in Volume 9.

The desk analysis highlighted the growing importance and integration of environment as a theme in EU external action, especially over the last decade. This was evident in:

- Cross-cutting initiatives and mainstreaming into development cooperation,
- The enhanced participation and contribution of the EU to global environmental policies and to the implementation of multilateral agreements (i.e. UN environmental conventions) in partner countries, and
- The promotion, harmonisation and implementation of EU thematic programmes through diversified and adapted funding instruments.

A key step to increase EU's role as a global player in the environmental community was the adoption in 2006 of the ***Thematic Programme for the Environment and the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources including Energy (ENRTP)***. This became the EU leading strategic and financial instrument applicable at global level and aimed at complementing in a more flexible manner the measures implemented under national and regional cooperation programmes.

With a consistent and increasing allocation of funds (~550 million Euro in the period 2007-2010) ENRTP allowed the financing of diversified initiatives of global and regional importance, reaching a wide range of beneficiaries and involving multiple partners, thus enhancing EU visibility across the globe.

Within the ENRTP it was then agreed to select as a case study the programme entitled "**Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT)**" a EU-led global initiative to fight illegal logging in developing countries. It represents a joint commitment from the EU and developing countries based on Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPA), between partner countries and the EU which support trade in legal timber produced according to standards defined through a multi-stakeholder dialogue and subject to independent audit. FLEGT involves stakeholders in the forest and timber value chain in the country of origin and in the market destinations, promoting shared responsibility between suppliers and buyers. A budget line for FLEGT is included in ENRTP. In the 2009 ENRTP Review, the FLEGT sub-programme was positively assessed in terms of communication and dissemination, as regular contacts are kept with the beneficiaries and yearly meetings are

held in Brussels bringing together EC representatives and project stakeholders to exchange experiences and lessons learnt and further disseminate the best practices. In addition, 2011 is the International Year of Forests and this represented an opportunity for raising awareness on Forest-related initiatives world-wide. The reasons for selecting Indonesia as the country to visit are reviewed in Volume 9.

The principal findings identified in that report are as follows:

1. The image of the EU as a global player in this thematic area has been enhanced thanks to:
 - a. Proactive participation in global environmental fora and events
 - b. Its technical and financial contribution to the implementation of UN conventions and MEAs in partner countries and regions
 - c. Coherent approach in enhancing environmental mainstreaming and integration in development cooperation
 - d. Delivery on its external action through diversified instruments
2. FLEGT has generated high visibility among concerned stakeholders and the media
3. Intensive and diversified communication campaign by EUD around the launch of the FLEGT VPA and using the presence of a VIP (Commissioner de Gucht) meant visibility in Indonesia was high even among audiences not directly involved in forest and environment issues.
4. The EU's leadership, harmonized approach (EC+MS) and consistency around FLEGT has also given EU a high visibility in Indonesia.

At the thematic level the study also reached 5 overall conclusions

- C1. The image of the EU as a global player is enhanced when acting at international level with coordinated political commitments and operational response, demonstrating the coherence and relevance of EU external action in the environmental sectors
- C2. A diversified portfolio of cooperation instruments and the participatory approach adopted by the EU in defining and implementing cooperation strategies contribute to the credibility of EU external action and is considered by many stakeholders its main added value.
- C3. Effectiveness and impact of visibility actions are enhanced when combining corporate communication with result-oriented communication linking specific programmes outputs to strategic and global objectives emphasizing the different aspects and their linkages according to target groups interests and communication purposes .
- C4. Integrating communication resources in strategy planning and programme approaches can effectively contribute to achievement of intended results and favour participation and empowerment of target groups.
- C5. The use of appropriate and tailored communication tools in accordance with stakeholders expectations and capacity may prove to be a key factor in determining perceptions and EU overall visibility

Overall therefore this thematic study suggested that EU external action has considerable positive visibility in the environment field and that the way the FLEGT programme had been managed at country level in Indonesia had further enhanced that impression.

4.1.1.2 Food Crisis – Kenya

The full report from the Thematic study on the *Food crisis* based on the desk study and the field mission to Kenya are in Volume 6.

The global food and financial crises of 2007 and 2008 that pushed an additional 115 million people into hunger, highlight the severity of the hunger and poverty problem that has challenged the world for decades, and was worsened by the world economic recession of 2009. At the G8 summit of July 2008 the president of the European Commission, Mr. Barroso committed an amount of € 1 billion to respond to the food price crisis and this was therefore chosen by the Evaluation as the case study to examine the EU's response to the food crisis.

After President Barroso's announcement and following some further inter-institutional debate a financing facility for a rapid response to the crisis caused by volatile food prices in developing countries was therefore proposed by the Commission and adopted by the European Parliament and the Council in December 2008¹⁶. The € 1 billion EU Food Facility aims to respond to food insecurity in 50 countries worst hit by the high food prices and the economic crises. The Facility was designed as a complement to the European Union's existing development policy instruments and particularly sought to address the potential gap between short-term emergency aid and medium to long-term development cooperation interventions.

In the way it was announced at the G8 the Food Facility was from the start at least partly aimed at creating visibility for EU external action. In its implementation most of the Food Facility funded projects have developed a communication/media coverage/visibility plan¹⁷ according to the FAFA Visibility guidelines in the case of IO-UN projects, or to general EC visibility guidelines for other agencies such as the World Bank and NGOs. It was particularly stressed to IOs that communication activities should be documented in progress reports. The implementation of this FF programme has thus resulted in numerous communication activities at field level. The case of Kenya was chosen in consultation with the Reference Group principally because of the range of Food Facility projects in the country; these included: projects implemented by the World Bank, by the UN (FAO), by the African Union at a regional level (the International Bureau of Animal Resources) and by NGOs.

The principal findings from this thematic study were that:

1. The EU Food Facility (FF) visibility is not as strong as it should be according to the several Visibility guidelines (EC general and EC IO-UN), and the various contractual agreements with the stakeholders (FAFA for IO-UN, Convention with EC HQs for WB and RO).
2. The variety of FF stakeholders using the EU Visibility guidelines appears to limit overall EU visibility for several reasons. In particular different implementing agencies interpreted and implemented the visibility guidelines in different ways and with varying degrees of success.
3. Yet EU visibility was nevertheless strengthened by the methods, tools and systems selected for the FF projects. Moreover, the design of these projects in tackling the effects of the food price crisis has improved the EU's image in terms of its ability to speed up regular project operations on food security.

¹⁶ EC/2008/ regulation 1337, OJ L 354/62 of 31.12.2008.

¹⁷ Interim report on Measures Taken; Accompanying document to the Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council {COM (2010) 81 final}; 12.03.10.

4. The Kenya example shows that there is one visibility plan per stakeholder because there is one FF project implemented by IO-UN/FAO, one by the WB, one by an RO and one per each of the 4 NGO projects. In total there are thus seven visibility plans for the Food Facility in Kenya.
5. The case study concluded that there was a relative lack of *coordination* of the visibility efforts for the FF at country, EC HQ and UNHLTF (UN High Level Task Force) levels.

The thematic study also reached a number of overall conclusions:

1. The fragmented and sometimes incoherent message produced by the Visibility action plans is more due to an improper visibility management than to the variety of guidelines and projects. The lack of harmonization in the EU Visibility guidelines is not a problem at project level, but can reduce the overall image of the EU at country level.
2. The adoption of the Food Facility Regulation improved the EU's image by demonstrating its ability to react rapidly and substantially to food security problems in developing countries caused by the food price volatility of 2007/08. The FF projects were also implemented relatively rapidly after the Regulation was adopted and an effort was made to use EU visibility guidelines to prepare visibility action plans.
3. The visibility action plans of the NGOs contracted from the EC HQs under the FF Call for Proposals links the visibility of the EU with the specificity of their activities (logo, stickers, Tee shirt) and results (information board on project sites, publication). The NGOs contracted locally by WB, IO and RO for implementing FF projects have supported the EU visibility from the visibility plans of these organizations. Messages have been fragmented according to organization objectives.
4. While media involvement has encouraged visibility at the international level (using the logo "Food For Life" of the EU/FAO) its role is hazardous as it has not been the logo for all the FF projects at country level.

While this thematic study concluded that overall the visibility of EU external action had been enhanced by its response to the food crisis, it also identified various practical failings and obstacles at the country level that if properly resolved might have strengthened that visibility even further.

4.1.1.3 Crisis and fragile states, conflict and peace building – Georgia

The full report from the Thematic study on *Crisis and fragile states: conflict prevention and peace building* based on the desk study and the field mission to Georgia are in Volume 4.

The EU is a major player in crisis and fragile states: conflict prevention and peace-building and this area is one of the most significant components of EU external action. In terms of breadth of policy scope and commitments and instruments, investment of financial resources, and development of its policy and normative framework the EU is second only to the United Nations (Sherriff, Gourlay, Hohmeister and Koeb, 2010). It is also an area of EU external action where there has been a steady increase in the level of financial resources devoted to it from 2001 to 2010.

In addition the Lisbon Treaty elevates the scope and ambition of EU external policy to a new level. Its chapter on external action even opens with an article on principles. Somewhat mirroring the doctrine of the 2003 European Security Strategy, the text captures

fundamental values, such as human rights and democracy, as well as aspects underlying the EU's much referred to "soft power". The Treaty recognises conflict prevention as an objective of EU external action. The CFSP is explicitly referred to as having both civilian and military aspects, and the High Representative of the Union has an explicit role to ensure both are coordinated. Both the EU and EC champion an "integrated approach" that seeks to blur both the lines between EC and EU as a whole and between the EU and other international actors (see ADE 2010). This inevitably leads to some blurring of visibility as well.

The start of the new millennium was marked by a drive for an **EU-wide** conflict prevention policy. Visibility and political sponsorship was brought to this by the then EU Presidency of Sweden and the personality of Swedish Foreign Minister Anna Lindh supported by the then High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana (Council) and EU Commissioner for External Relations at (DG RELEX) Chris Patten. This resulted in the EU Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflict (also known as the Gothenburg Programme) in 2001 agreed by the Council (European Council 2001).

Despite the importance of an overarching policy and normative framework it is clearly specific crises, conflict situations and failed states that gather the most visibility for the EU in this particular theme. The EC and EU responses play themselves out in particular geographic contexts. From 2005 to 2009 the crises, conflicts and state fragility in the specific regional contexts of the Caucasus (e.g. Georgia), Middle East (e.g. Lebanon, Israel/Palestine and Iraq), West Horn of Africa (e.g. Somalia) to name just a few were high on the EU agenda eliciting multiple initiatives with an impact on visibility. But apart from these high profile cases the EU also engaged in most conflict and fragile contexts globally throughout the period. It would therefore not be an accurate representation of the EU's approach to visibility in this theme just to focus on globally "high profile" cases. Indeed in many of these cases the EU and EC visibility may be less because of the actions of other international players such as major individual EU member-states, the United Nations or the United States, not to mention regional powers.

The principal findings of the thematic study drawn from the desk study and the country visit to Georgia are as follows:

1. In country it is generally difficult to differentiate between the EC and EU with the entire EU benefitting or "suffering" from EU visibility efforts that may or may not be coherent with each other. There is some differentiation at elite/journalist level between the action of different EU member-states, some of which are clearly viewed as more "pro-Russian" than others, but there is little or no differentiation made between EU entities (different Commission DGs, EEAS, EUMM, EUSR-Georgia, EUSR-South Caucasus).
2. The EU lacks visibility in this thematic area not so much because of visibility actions but rather because of its inability to achieve outcomes. In Georgia this is intensified by the high expectations Georgians had of the EU/NATO in solving the conflict or decisively coming in on the side of the Georgians. For direct stakeholders the EU is seen as a credible and reliable partner including in the areas of conflict prevention and peace building. Yet for them it is the EU's diplomatic action and financial resources that give it credibility not its specific visibility actions.
3. The EU needs a coherent political strategy at the country level around which visibility actions can "cohere". This was one of the strongest messages emerging from the Georgia case study. Without this coherent EU political strategy for Georgia there is a lack of direction and purpose to visibility and it becomes more of a

box ticking exercise or one that is an end in itself, which is not very strategic and tends to lead to an inefficient use of resources.

4. EC/EU visibility is somewhat diluted in working with international partners particularly UN agencies. INGOs seemed to be better, more cost effective and creative than UN agencies in bringing about EC/EU visibility in their projects funded by the EC in Georgia. This seems to be partially because they saw distinct added value in being clearly associated with the EU while the UN wants to appear sometimes more neutral. Yet the UN is a crucial implementing partner for the EU in Georgia in the field of crisis & fragile states.
5. At times, to achieve outcomes, there may be good reasons to have less, diminished or no EU visibility in this thematic area, although at other times the converse can also be true. That is strong EU visibility may actually be positive in some circumstances for achieving outcomes in conflict prevention and peace-building, whereas in others no or more limited visibility will be required. This therefore implies a need for differentiated responses.
6. The EU would be more visible if it challenged the government in Georgia on certain issues. Most interviewees wanted the EU to be more visible in this way.

Box 3: Implication for EU visibility of a conflict sensitive approach in conflict and conflict prone areas

Current EU visibility guidelines from 2010 note in reference to the World Bank Group and the United Nations that, “Factors such as insecurity, or local political sensitivities may hinder information activities in certain crisis zones and, in extreme cases, it may be necessary to avoid visibility altogether. Some actions require a high level of political neutrality...”¹⁸ In Georgia and in further interviews with expert agencies the importance of EU visibility requirements being “conflict sensitive” was repeatedly stressed. That is EU visibility actions must be planned, implemented and evaluated with their impact on conflict dynamics as a key consideration. At worst the un-conflict sensitive implementation of EU visibility requirements can put implementing partners at personal risk, or exacerbate existing delicate on-going processes. In Georgia the evaluation found that the EU Delegation had adapted to be more conflict sensitive in its visibility requirements (particularly in Abkhazia) and this was appreciated by implementing partners.

The visibility of EU external action in the area of Crisis and fragile states: conflict prevention and peace-building does not necessarily abide by standard rules and approaches. As this thematic study showed the area is a sensitive one to work in because of the political nature of such situations and inevitably this affects visibility issues. Thus at times maintaining a lower profile and not seeking visibility may be a useful, even crucial, tactic whereas at other times bold action with high visibility (for instance on confronting particular actors) can be important. Conflict sensitivity in visibility work is therefore a vital consideration. Being seen to work with partners can also be important for success, which tends to mean the visibility of individual actors has to be shared. Equally desired outcomes are often hard to achieve and unpredictable and in the process visibility can also suffer. Identifying and maintaining a clear political strategy provides the best basis on which to build a strong EU visibility strategy.

¹⁸ European Commission, 2010. Communication and Visibility Manual for European Union External Actions, Europeaid, Brussels, p. 12 & 15.

4.1.1.4 Financial crisis – Grenada

The full report from the Thematic study on the *The current financial and economic crisis* based on the desk study and the field mission to Grenada are in Volume 5.

Developing countries were severely affected by the financial crisis that originated in the developed world in late 2007 in a variety of ways. Private capital flows to developing economies deteriorated significantly in late 2008 and early 2009: for example, portfolio equity flows declined or even reversed; many bonds issuance plans were put on hold; foreign direct investment fell for the first time in a decade; and international bank lending experienced a significant decline. Moreover, remittances slowed down after a period of remarkable growth. Trade prices and volumes also declined dramatically, especially in countries with a high degree of trade openness and exports concentration, and highly dependent on crisis-hit markets. The impact of the crisis on growth, poverty reduction and political stability was significant. Indeed, economic growth in emerging and developing economies dropped from more than 8% in 2007 to just 2.6% in 2009. Moreover, an additional 89 million people were pushed under the extreme poverty line (below \$1.25 a day) at the end of 2010, while citizen discontent led to public oppositions, social unrest, increased violence and criminal activities in several developing countries.

The European Commission was a key player in the global response to the crisis. On 8 April 2009, the Commission issued a Communication¹⁹ which included a set of 28 comprehensive, timely, targeted and coordinated measures which aimed to honour EU's aid commitments and leverage other resources; act counter-cyclically; improve aid effectiveness; cushion the social impact and support the real economy; and work together for governance and stability.

Some of the initiatives taken following on from this Communication provided good opportunities for the EU to publicize its actions. For example, the Commission frequently highlighted in its press releases that the Vulnerability FLEX (V-FLEX) was the first targeted action introduced immediately after the G-20 Summit in London, while some EU Delegations allocated small amounts for advertising the mechanism through web and press releases in beneficiary countries. The V-FLEX also received broad coverage by international organizations' websites and publications: the UNCTAD mentioned the V-FLEX in the *Least Developed Countries Report 2010*²⁰, while the World Bank and Commonwealth Secretariat acknowledged it on their websites²¹. Media initiatives on the V-FLEX were also undertaken to varying degrees in beneficiary countries²² through press coverage, TV and radio appearances by local Ministers and EU representatives, public information sessions and many others. In a similar way, the participation of the EU in several high-level meetings and international fora received fair media coverage in particular through institutional statements and websites.

¹⁹ European Commission (2009), "Supporting developing countries in coping with the crisis" (8 April), COM(2009) 160 final. Brussels: European Commission.

²⁰ See UNCTAD (2010), "The Least Developed Countries Report 2010. Towards a New Development Architecture for LDCs", chapter 5: [HTTP://WWW.UNCTAD.ORG/EN/DOCS/LDC2010CH5_EN.PDF](http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/LDC2010CH5_EN.PDF); and also chapter 6: [HTTP://WWW.UNCTAD.ORG/EN/DOCS/LDC2010CH6_EN.PDF](http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/LDC2010CH6_EN.PDF)

²¹ For the Commonwealth Secretariat see:

[HTTP://WWW.THECOMMONWEALTH.ORG/FILES/190326/FILENAME/12EXOGENOUSSHOCKS.PDF](http://www.thecommonwealth.org/files/190326/FILENAME/12EXOGENOUSSHOCKS.PDF); and for the World Bank see: [HTTP://WEB.WORLDBANK.ORG/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTABOUTUS/PARTNERS/WBEU/0,,CONTENTMDK:20407257~MENU PK:581151~PAGEPK:64137114~PIPK:64136911~THE SITEPK:380823,00.HTML](http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTABOUTUS/PARTNERS/WBEU/0,,CONTENTMDK:20407257~MENU PK:581151~PAGEPK:64137114~PIPK:64136911~THE SITEPK:380823,00.HTML)

²² For example, in terms of press coverage the V-FLEX received particular attention by the Caribbean media such as Caricom News, Spicegrenada.com, West Indian News, Dominica News Online, Caribbean Business Journal, Anguilla News, Caribbean Antigua, The Courier, and several others. Related links are provided in Annexes in Volume 5.

Among all the initiatives undertaken by the Commission to support developing countries in coping with the financial crisis, the ***Vulnerability FLEX*** mechanism was thus identified as the most suitable for testing EU visibility in this Evaluation.

The V-FLEX is an *ad hoc* EUR500 million shock facility created for a two-year period only (2009-10) to help the most vulnerable African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries to maintain priority spending, particularly in the social sectors. The V-FLEX is implemented according to a demand-based approach which involved a number of actors within the EU (namely the DG DEV, DG AIDCO, the Commission Delegations and the EU Member States that sit on the EDF Committee) as well as outside (ACP governments who are required to submit the request for V-FLEX support, and International Financial Institutions which contribute to assess country eligibility). The V-FLEX funds are disbursed in the form of budget support²³ according to a discriminatory approach. In other words, only those ACP countries that satisfy the criteria were eligible for receiving V-FLEX support. In 2009 EUR326 million were allocated to 15 ACP countries, while in 2010 EUR 264 million were allocated to 19 ACP countries.

As explained in Volume 5 Grenada was chosen for the case study, because it compared well with the users in terms of the way it made use of V-FLEX support and because its use was accompanied by relatively intense media attention.

The principal findings from the thematic study on the financial crisis are as follows:

1. The EC has been a key player in the global response to the crisis, introducing comprehensive, timely, targeted and coordinated measures to cushion the human impact of the crisis and boost economic growth in developing countries.
2. The EC was the first to introduce a tailored shock facility in response to the crisis in comparison with the World Bank and the IMF and did so immediately after the G-20 Summit in London. This was widely recognised at the international level including in the IFIs and the international community
3. During the financial crisis the EU and its external actions such as the V-FLEX achieved a rather good visibility at the global level as well as in beneficiary countries. Thanks to its quick and timely response to the crisis, the EU gained significant media attention at the international, regional and local levels, and was recognized as a key global player in stabilizing the international financial system. It also enhanced its image as an important and reliable partner able to provide quick support in times of crisis.
4. In Grenada there is a positive perception of the EU and its external actions. People welcomed the V-FLEX and, more generally, EU cooperation and news on the EU tends to be positive. Several initiatives to enhance the visibility of the V-FLEX were promoted by both the Government and the EU Delegation. Government officials and to some extent non-state acts were well aware of EU support during the crisis, even though most of them (with the exception of civil servants at the Ministry of Finance) only knew about the V-FLEX in very general terms.
5. The knowledge and understanding of the V-FLEX appeared instead to be rather limited among the general public. This seems to be partly due to the fact that the EU provided information in a way that was not easily accessible, did not engage with ordinary people nor provide information on how EU V-FLEX funds affected the life of the average person.

²³ Sing and Karasek (2010) argue that in 2009, due to tight time constraints, the V-FLEX funds were delivered mainly through general budget support, while in 2010 the Commission could be more selective in choosing between general budget support and sector-specific budget support.

6. More generally, ordinary people do not know enough about the EU and its historical relationship with Grenada, but some good initiatives to overcome this issue are undergoing.
7. Government officials and the EU Delegation considered the V-FLEX a timely and useful mechanism to support public spending in a period of crisis. However, there is consensus on the fact that the procedure for delivering the V-FLEX was not adequate. Government officials would have also appreciated a higher level and length of support.

Overall therefore this thematic study concluded that the EU gained considerable positive visibility and international recognition for its response to the problems of developing countries during the financial crisis of 2007-2009. Most of this visibility was among well informed elites in the countries concerned and the international finance and development sectors, though at the same time there does seem to have been a general non-specific enhancing effect to the image of the EU among the wider population in concerned countries such as Grenada.

4.1.1.5 Climate Change and Energy – Cambodia

The full report from the Thematic study on the *Climate change and energy* based on the desk study and the field mission to Cambodia are in Volume 8.

The EU has been considering what to do to properly address “climate change and energy” (CCE) for more than 15 years. In doing so it has found resources; created structures; generated capacities; and has then ensured reasonable visibility of these efforts. The growing importance and integration of climate change (CC) into EU external action, especially over the last decade, is evident from a variety of actions taken, many of them visible to external stakeholders, such as:

- The use of EC resources within the EU to make reductions in carbon emissions, through individual Member States actions and the European Emissions Trading System. The progress of these programmes means that the EU overall can appear to external stakeholders as a responsible and leading actor on the global stage making a real contribution to mitigate climate change.
- The establishment of DG CLIMA leading to enhanced participation and contribution of the EU to resolve responsibly the EU’s own carbon emissions issues; support climate financing; and respond robustly to international negotiations processes.
- Establishing a series of policies and resolutions that mandate and organise responses, such as requiring the EC to pay attention to climate change, both through mitigation and adaptation in development. This translates into a long-term EC commitment to make climate change a cross-cutting issue mainstreamed into development cooperation.
- Building on the CDM, these policies and resolutions provide frameworks for targeted support to developing countries to encourage them to follow a low-carbon emissions growth pathway.
- Attention paid to CC and CCE as policy coherence issues, requiring efforts by all participants in EU external action, to reduce any policy clashes that may emerge. This improves stakeholder perceptions, to the extent that policy dissonances are reduced.
- In consultation with UNFCCC, the EU has defined programmes and financing frameworks (such as GCCA) that apply resources to make effective the EU’s contribution to developing countries’ prioritised climate change actions.

- Support for policy dialogue with developing country partners on the implementation of programmes in partner countries with direct benefits such as improvement of internal adaptation knowledge and networks and negotiating capacities in the UNFCCC processes.
- Promotion, harmonisation and implementation of EU thematic programmes through diversified and adapted funding instruments, such as ENRTP that supplies the vehicle for GCCA; or regional programmes like EuroCLIMA.
- Support for the development of scientific capacities through engaging European researchers and institutes with developing country partners to improve the quality and flow of relevant climate risk information.

A key step towards an increased role of the EU as a global actor on climate change follows the adoption in 2006 of the *Thematic Programme for the Environment and the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources including Energy (ENRTP)*. With funds of nearly 550 million Euro in the period 2007-2010, ENRTP finances diverse initiatives of global and regional importance, among which climate change initiatives such as the Global Climate Change Alliance which was chosen as the most appropriate programme for this thematic study.

The Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA) was launched in 2007 by the European Commission to strengthen dialogue and cooperation on climate change between the EU and developing countries most vulnerable to climate change. This group included, in particular, the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The GCCA acts as a platform for dialogue and exchange of experiences between the EU and developing countries on climate policy and on practical approaches to integrate climate change into development policies and budgets. The results of the dialogue and exchange feed into the discussions on the post-2012 climate agreement under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and in the technical and financial cooperation supported by the GCCA. GCCA provides technical and financial support to developing countries to integrate climate change into their development policies and budgets and to implement adaptation and mitigation interventions. The technical and financial cooperation in turn informs the policy dialogue and exchange of experiences between the EU and developing countries.

Cambodia was selected for the case study as it was among the first to get support under the GCCA since 2008. Cambodia was also involved in a GCCA regional conference along with 7 other Asian countries in Bangladesh in May 2010. The Cambodia CCA (CCCA) Multi-Donor Trust Fund launched in February 2010 amounts to US\$ 8.9 million.

The principal findings summarised from the report are as follows:

1. Any programme can only legitimately be made visible once real results have been achieved, and once these have been combined to generate benefits that are 'worth talking about'.
2. As yet, until the new management of the GCCA Support Facility roll out their new visibility strategy in 2012, little systematic attention has been paid to the issue of GCCA's visibility. Effectiveness and impact of visibility actions are enhanced when combining corporate communication with result-oriented communications, which link specific programme outputs to strategic and global objectives. This is a good prospect now that CCCA and GCCA are working on the subject.

3. The EU is known internationally in the climate change field, not just as a supplier of finance, but also as a highly active player, pushing with considerable political will for a post-Kyoto agreement. Within Europe and internationally, the EU is known as an entity that takes environmental concerns and climate change seriously both by MS and in development cooperation, placing considerable emphasis on addressing climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well as energy efficiency and security.
4. Integrating communication resources in strategic planning effectively contributes to achievement of intended results, and favours participation of target groups.
5. The absence of clear political strategies in many cases is causing difficulties with visibility strategies. Involvement of delegations in ensuring coherence in the visibility of EC-UN partnerships is currently insufficient. Delegations are occupied with a great number of programmes and initiatives to implement, and often do not have specific experts assigned to EC-UN cooperation. As shown by CCCA, a common approach for visibility with EC-UN cooperation across GCCA's programmes is lacking. Delegations need training about the contents and objectives of EC-UN cooperation and the messages to be transmitted.
6. The EU is one entity to most people in third countries, with an EU image that is largely positive. This should be built on by focussing on continued good work in development cooperation, but could be enhanced by using different communication modalities (i.e. radio) and developing messages that generate more sophisticated understandings of what the EU is and stands for.

4.1.1.6 Migration - Mali

The *Migration* theme was tackled in two different ways. First a desk study and field mission to Mali similar to the other five themes was conducted. Secondly it was decided to look at the event in 2011 that dominated much of the press debate on the EU and migration: the suddenly increased influx of migrants from North Africa to the Italian island of Lampedusa. For ease of reference the reports of these two studies are both provided in Volume 7, which thus gives all the material on migration from the Evaluation. The principal findings of the study on migration on migration Mali are presented in this section; and are followed immediately afterwards by those for the 'Lampedusa event'.

Since the mid-1990s the EU has been seeking to integrate migration issues into the Union's overall relations with third countries. From the approval of the Amsterdam Treaty (1997) and the conclusion of Tampere Council (1999) the external dimension of migration has been included in the European Union external action.

The Tampere European Council laid the foundation for a common EU immigration policy that included an important external dimension. The Council stressed the need for more efficient management of migration flows and the importance of involving and cooperating with third countries (i.e. transit and destination countries) in border management policies. The conclusions underline for example the need to develop "information campaigns on the actual possibilities for legal immigration, and for the prevention of all forms of trafficking in human beings". They further call for "assistance to countries of origin and transit to be developed in order to promote voluntary return as well as to help the authorities of those countries to strengthen their ability to combat effectively trafficking in human beings and to cope with their readmission obligations towards the Union and the Member States". They invite the Council "to conclude readmission agreements or to include standard clauses in other agreements between the European Community and relevant third countries or groups of countries".

The approach agreed in Tampere was confirmed in 2004 with the adoption of The Hague Programme²⁴, which sets the objectives for strengthening freedom, security and justice in the EU for the period 2005-2010.

Since Tampere this ‘external dimension’ of migration has been growing. There has been rapid evolution in the EC’s external engagement with migration issues, characterized in general by a re-orientation from considering migration as primarily a security problem to one that considers it more as an area of opportunity for constructive cooperation with Third Countries in pursuit of mutually recognized policy goals.

The core component of this strategy is the *Global Approach to Migration* consisting of three components: (i) management of legal migration, (ii) prevention and reduction of illegal migration, and (iii) promotion of links between migration and development in the interests of the country of origin. Since its adoption in 2005, the Global Approach has been at the centre of the EC’s engagement and the subject of further Commission Communications as detailed in Volume 7.

For the *migration* theme the case study agreed with the Reference Group is the analysis of the EDF-funded project in Mali, the *Information and Management Centre on Migration (CIGEM)* a state of the art research and policy analysis organization dealing with practically all areas of migration. The Centre is the operational element of an agreement arising out of the new Global Approach signed by the European Commission, France, Mali and ECOWAS in 2007. Its establishment was supported by a series of communication activities and a considerable range of materials for study therefore existed. Mali is also at the crossroads of both south-south migratory routes between sub-Saharan and Northern Africa and south-north routes to Europe.

Although CIGEM was originally intended as an information and orientation centre for migrants, a lack of results forced a rethink. The resulting change in objectives and activities in late 2010 allowed it to (i) increase the National appropriation of the Centre by the MMEIA (Ministry for Malians Abroad and African Integration) and (ii) by focusing more on the support to dialogue and consultations element for the planning of National migration policy; (iii) training and capacity building for internal labour market with linkages with national agencies.

The press gave a lot of space to the training component of CIGEM, since the lack of specialised workforce is seen as a cause of unemployment in the country. Generally CIGEM is better perceived and appreciated for the support to national strategy and for the professional training activities which is however considered still too limited respect to the needs of potential and return migrants.

The findings of the thematic study on migration are as follows:

1. *General*

- a. The EU is most known and appreciated for its contribution and work in the development area. There is a very positive perception of the EU for cooperation, but less as a political actor in the migration sector. EC communication and visibility activities alone are not sufficient for generating stakeholders’ views on EU external action, rather its image is mostly created and influenced by the positive or negative results of EU interventions and of their benefit or otherwise for the people or for the specific target groups at national level.

²⁴ Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament of 10 May 2005 – The Hague Programme: ten priorities for the next five years. The Partnership for European renewal in the field of Freedom, Security and Justice [COM(2005) 184 final – Official Journal C 236 of 24.9.2005].

- b. In non-member states, a high level of visibility in a sensitive policy field such as migration, can be perceived as the EU wanting to impose its policy and priorities.
- c. At the country level it is difficult to differentiate between the EU level and the MS, with the entire EU “suffering” more than benefitting from the perception of the MS and their actions in the migration field. Differentiation tends to only really occur at the level of government and of elites

2. *Specific to CIGEM*

- a. The strong pressure from the European partner to implement the CIGEM project rapidly resulted in some neglect of the minimum requirements of good preparation of an innovative and politically sensitive intervention of this scope.
- b. In giving this intervention the form of a centre meant to “manage” migration issues, the project created disproportionate expectations in the media about the services it could actually provide. CIGEM is still struggling with this initial image, which does not enable it to reach its audiences in an optimal manner.
- c. CIGEM has so far been dependent on the users who come to the Centre. It has not reached out to its wider target audiences and has essentially reproduced the logic of a central institution waiting for potential users to come forward. Although it listens to their needs, the services offered are considered limited and without much effect on beneficiaries.
- d. Since CIGEM began to take better account of the specific problems of migrants expelled and deported back to Mali, it has been able to address significant issues such as emergency shelter and support to the first successful reintegration, and has contributed effectively to the piloting of a task force on this topic. However, the proposals made by this group have not yet been implemented.

The thematic study thus showed how EU visibility around a sensitive political issue is not easy to manage. The intentions of the EU can easily be misinterpreted, actions by member states in the same field can confuse the image conveyed unless great care is taken on coordination and policy coherence and a poorly formulated, but high profile project can further complicate the EU's visibility. At the same time the example also shows corrective action taken within such a project based on more careful attention being paid to the services that are needed by external stakeholders can in due course lead to improved visibility.

4.1.2 *Case studies of specific events and partnerships*

4.1.2.1 Lampedusa – The EU and the influx of migrants in early 2011

The 2011 surge in migrants from North Africa to Europe via the Italian island of Lampedusa attracted considerable media attention and is a good example of the type of unexpected event that the EU has to react to and manage proactively without being given time to prepare. The case is also interesting because it involves issues of policy coherence between external action and internal policy and involves several member states (with different interests) as well as the EU as a whole. The principal findings are as follows:

1. The media coverage around the Lampedusa immigration emergency in 2011 delivers two clear messages:

- a. The difficulties in managing the migration crisis and in giving a common response was seen as a crucial test for the European Union
 - b. The existence of mixed positions among EU actors
2. The EU reaction to the influx of immigrants in Southern Europe in 2011 was an additional extraordinary test, alongside the economic crisis and the intervention in Libya, of European cohesion and policy and the result has been very mixed
3. There were some signs of a coherent EU external action in the migration and development field during the flows of migrants to Lampedusa following the Arab turmoil, but this coherence was not that visible in the media. For instance the EC actions to support the democratic transition and the economic reforms in Tunisia were only briefly mentioned in press articles.
4. The European Commission invests a lot of financial resources on migration, notably within the Union, but the projects and activities are not well known, especially by the general public.

This additional case study on another aspect of migration further illustrates the visibility problems arising in this politically sensitive area as a result of two issues: (i) a lack of coordination and agreement between the positions and public positions of different Member States and with the Commission; and (ii) the importance of ensuring coherence between different areas of EU policy be they external or internal.

4.1.2.2 Tunisia – the EU and the democratic uprising

The report of the Tunisia case study is available in Annex 16.

Tunisia gained independence in 1956. Its 1959 constitution has been amended several times, most recently in 2002. The country was ruled for 23 years by President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali who took power from Tunisia's first president in a bloodless coup d'état in 1987. A parliament with close to 90% of the members representing the president's party RCD constituted the legislative power. The constitution confirms the independence of the legal system, guarantees the freedom of expression, assembly and religious practice as well as gender equality and respect for minorities.

The political situation has remained stable in the country until the end of 2010 and the process leading to the departure of president Bent Ali on 14 January 2011. However, the stability was achieved through a combination of measures that were claimed to be justified in order to protect the country against fundamentalist movements from the neighbouring countries but also suppressed political opposition to the president and the RCD.

Although many NGOs exist, close scrutiny and state funding strictly limited their independence. Similarly both state and private media were strongly controlled. A few private sector media owned by the president's family were licensed but there was no room for independent journalism. Journalists critical of government were prosecuted and self censorship prevailed. A substantial number of political opponents were imprisoned.

Growing unemployment among young people with university education and quite big economic differences between the densely populated wealthy coastal regions and the poor rural regions in the interior of the country provided the background for the first revolution in the Arab world.

Tunisia was the first South Mediterranean country to sign an Association Agreement with the EU in 1995. The agreement constituted the legal basis for cooperation and partnership and established a free exchange zone between the two. Besides free exchange of products it also specified conditions for investment, competition and other economic issues as well as

cooperation in the political, economic, social scientific and cultural domains. The political dialogue established by this agreement covers political questions (international, internal, human rights and democracy) as well as questions of migration and other issues of common interest.

Funding allocated from the European Commission to Tunisia, indicates that for 1995–2008 cooperation has concentrated primarily on the macro-sector of public sector and economic reforms while governance and civil society has had very low priority. However, from 2007 on EU-Tunisia strategic cooperation documents and indicative programmes have focused on four principal domains: (i) fundamental economic reforms for growth, (ii) development of human resources, (iii) improvement of the environmental framework and (iv) improvement of the democratic context and good governance.

A recent evaluation of EC cooperation with Tunisia (*Évaluation de la coopération de la Commission européenne avec la Tunisie* from May 2011) stressed the need to improve dialogue with civil society on national development priorities and enable its access to funding from thematic budget lines as well as through the regional EuroMed cooperation focusing on partnerships between non state actors and the EU.

What makes Tunisia a particularly interesting example is the fact that the EU has maintained an increasingly close and advanced partnership with the country for many years, while it has been controlled by a totalitarian regime allowing very little freedom. There has been a tight control of the media as well as of CSOs and their connections with the outer world. There have never been free and fair elections in the country; human rights have been seriously violated and thousands of persons have been brought to prison for religious and political reasons. At the same time there are solid reasons for the close EU collaboration with Tunisia, which has stimulated the country's positive economic, social and educational development and which could even be claimed to have contributed to the downfall of the dictator.

Evidence from the study does suggest that the EU Delegation has tried through local media to strengthen its positive visibility as a substantial funder, while the Delegation has not been very significantly critical of the regime in public. Equally there was no indication that the actual communication and political actions of the EU Delegation amounted to a dedicated public diplomacy strategy to subtly encourage a genuine and gradual transition to democracy in Tunisia while taking into account EU's economic, security and political interests in maintaining good relations through such a process of change. As a result it seems likely that the EU's external action is perceived by Tunisian citizens as promoting EU core values in other countries but not in Tunisia.

Judging from the media coverage analysis and the interviews at the EU Delegation it also seems clear that there have been significant discrepancies between the messages communicated by the EU and by its member states. Particularly in the pre-revolution phase in early January 2011 some member states were presented in the media as opposing the democratic movements while the EU in the local media appeared neutral and the European Investment Bank positive to the development. While the local media did not always reflect the intended information from the EU Delegation, Tunisian newspaper readers remained unaware until the first two weeks of January that EU statements were censured in the local media.

In summary the overall key findings to emerge from this study include the following

- EUD Tunisia has tried through local media to strengthen its positive visibility as a substantial funder, but for the years leading up to the departure of President Ben Ali, has the EU not been very critical of the regime in public.

- EUD Tunisia has apparently not tried to engage in public diplomacy to subtly encourage a genuine and gradual transition to democracy.
- Based on the media coverage analysis it seems likely that the image that Tunisian citizens have of EU external action is that the EU promotes its core values in other countries but not in Tunisia.

4.1.2.3 [The EU-UN Partnership](#)

The full report of the effect of the EU-UN Strategic Partnership on the visibility of EU external action is provided in Annex 14.

The EC's 2003 Communication "*The Choice of Multilateralism*" (EC 2003) claims that 'incontestable advantages' could be derived from linking the universal legitimacy of the UN with the economic and political weight of the EU. Commission assistance is provided through a wide range of UN agencies and programmes. EuropeAid annual reports routinely mention no fewer than 38 UN bodies. Yet it is not only the downstream intervention activities undertaken by the EC and EU but also the upstream political and diplomatic actions with and through the UN (and the visibility of these) that are important for gaining outcomes. This is important beyond the UN as the EU has often been criticized in many diplomatic situations particularly crisis situations of being a "global payer rather than a global player" (see for example, European Parliament 2010)

In 2008, the Commission commissioned an evaluation on the external cooperation with partner countries through the organisations of the UN family that also covered the question of visibility. The evaluation covered the period from 1999 to 2006 during which EU visibility requirements were evolving from a focus on static visibility to concentrating on the awareness of key players. The evaluation found that the Commission did not lose visibility of its funding at country level vis-à-vis national authorities, EU Member States and other donors by channelling it through the UN. Yet it also found that the Commission's visibility requirements created problems in the field because there were differences in perception on when visibility requirements had been fulfilled which also had to do with the lack of clarity on the requirements as hardly any contribution agreements specified specific visibility requirements beyond the FAFA. Other donors also criticized the EU for its emphasis on visibility that they perceived as taking funds away from the actual project and by compromising the UN's neutrality.

The Commission has since made an effort to improve the clarity of visibility requirements and has emphasized a focus on dynamic visibility. EC and UN adopted joint visibility guidelines in April 2008²⁵ covering both static and dynamic visibility and providing a template for Communication and Visibility Plans to raise the awareness of specific or general audiences of the reasons for and impact of the UN-EU cooperation. The UN and EU publish an annual Partnership Report of which six have already been published on the joint website. Commission analysis carried out on the basis of the 2010 External Assistance Management Report shows that EU visibility through the UN is generally improving.

Findings of this evaluation

A number of the thematic studies undertaken for this evaluation produced evidence on the EU-UN partnership and the effect it had on the visibility of EU external action. This can be summarised as follows:

²⁵ The guidelines were preceded by a joint action plan on visibility signed in 2006 which emphasized the importance of communicating on the wider partnership between UN and EU.

- *Kenya*: The UN's FAO implements an EU food facility project to enhance livestock production to make Kenya more food secure. When the project was launched in 2009, Commission and FAO agreed a visibility plan and strategy for the EU Food Facility in Kenya, including key messages and the target audience. The FAO contracted a PR company to manage the plan and develop a brand for the projects but it emerged the visibility of the project was reduced by poor performance of this local contract and reports in the media failed to mention the EU as a donor for the project. The project did achieve some static visibility through T-shirts etc. and created some dynamic visibility through radio training sessions. Interviewees considered the budget too small for a professional media campaign. Overall however, despite the difficulties, EU-FAO collaboration was perceived as positive.
- *Georgia*: The thematic study looked at the EU's visibility with regard to crisis and fragile states. An EU funded project to stabilise living conditions of internally displaced persons implemented by UNHCR was chosen for closer examination. In the different regions where the project was implemented, official opening ceremonies were held in 2009 and 2010 where families received keys to their new homes. For these ceremonies a joint EU-UNHCR press release was issued and the events were covered in the local media. All public events and publications were coordinated with the EU. The final report on the project describes cooperation between the UNHCR office and the EU Delegation on visibility as close. For static visibility, plaques, billboards and key rings were produced and a booklet in English and Georgian was produced.

UNHCR interviewees in Georgia noted that the EU-UN relationship had a clear added value for both sides. Beyond cooperation on projects, EU and UN cooperate in their dealings with the Georgian government. The EU is very present (and known) at government level in Georgia. The EU's visibility requirements were described as very demanding (more elaborated than any other donor's) and extremely time consuming and in their view the EU attached too much importance to it. The interviewees were not always sure that the way the EU was trying to achieve visibility had the hoped for effect in winning public support. The EU was most visible in governmental negotiations, but this did not trickle down to the "people".

- *Mali*: In the area of migration, one project was being implemented by UNDP as part of the Joint UNDP-EU Migration and Development Initiative (JMIDI) and another (to do with the transfer of diaspora knowledge) was part of the Migration and Information Management Centre (CIGEM). The UN-EU relationship was found to not be strategic in Mali and rather based on ad-hoc agreements to channel funds through the UN. In the area of migration moreover, UNDP does not have a specific added value. Both projects respected the EU's visibility requirements but were generally perceived as UNDP programmes. This was also a finding of the JMIDI evaluation report, which noted that whereas the visibility of the projects in country were high, the EU's visibility was low.
- *Cambodia*: The Cambodia Climate Change Alliance examined in the thematic study is supported by a Climate Change Trust Fund to which both UNDP and EU contribute. UNDP and UNEP also provide technical support. The consultant found that the EU's relationship with UNEP and UNDP was not highly strategic at country level, but rather was more pragmatic with a clear problem solving approach. Also in Cambodia, the EU's visibility requirements were a concern for UNDP which have led to differences between the two parties.

In addition to the findings from the country visits for the thematic studies interviews were conducted with UN in Brussels. From this it emerged that the EU is regularly seen by UN staff as too focused on visibility actions to the extent that it at times risks forgetting the importance of substantive action as the principal source of creating visibility. Apparently no other contributor to the UN is as focused on visibility as the EU. Yet the EU already has a strong image within the UN that it underestimates. The UN often faces the problem of having to explain to other donors in jointly funded projects, why the EU should get more visibility whereas they are given none and this does not help the EU's image. UN staff also see a potential danger in the UN giving too much profile to donors and member states that fund its projects, as this may then be seen as compromising the UN's impartiality.

To improve and ensure EU visibility through the UN, they propose that it would be more strategic for the EU to concentrate less on project funding and rather on making core contributions to UN agencies like it already does for the FAO. This would then have the effect of the EU being systematically listed as a core contributor in all reports and giving it a say on management. It was suggested this would result in considerable visibility for the EU in the international community.

Conclusions

Compared to the 2008 evaluation, visibility requirements in the EU-UN agreement seem to be clearer, but are still widely seen as cumbersome. Although the UN largely meets its requirements, the EU still receives limited recognition at the level of the general population, though the EU continues to be visible at the governmental/donor level. Within the UN system other apparently donors continue to be frustrated with the EU's insistence on its visibility. Evidence from several countries questioned the ability of the EU to win over stakeholders because projects continued to be seen as UN projects even though they were heavily EU funded. Within the UN the EU's added value in the international setting was seen as its engagement (in cooperation with the UN) with national governments. This might not result in much visibility but it did have impact. In the view of UN officials, the EU already has a strong image in the UN which it underestimates and its visibility in international organisations could be better achieved as a core contributor, rather than through stickers and events. Evidence also suggested that many stakeholders felt that budgets available were not sufficient to carry out substantial campaigns, but were also not convinced that they should be increased and recommended that the EU should rather focus on substantive action, which would naturally lead to more visibility.

4.1.3 Findings from other sources

a. CSO and Think Tank Interviews in Brussels

The CSO and TT representatives in Brussels are a well-informed group, essentially well disposed towards the potential of the EU in external action, but very critical in their views of its image and visibility. They are familiar with the main messages the EU wants to convey about its external action even though they do not know the Draft Communication per se.

The main issues they highlight include a strong emphasis on a perceived gap between rhetoric and reality with EU external action aimed at achieving many things but actually delivering much less. They see disagreements between the EU institutions and the Member States as a major source of these problems. They are very aware of policy coherence as an issue. They see delivery as more important than communication work in creating the image of the EU, though they also recognize communication and dialogue with the EU institutions as important.

This group is also interesting because they act as highly knowledgeable 'EU resource persons' for very extensive civil society networks that spread across the globe. Based on these contacts they judge that levels of awareness of the EU drop rapidly as one moves away from Brussels. They also report that CSO in many countries have poor experiences in dealing with EU Delegations and see them as lacking in openness.

b. European Officials interviews

Officials in the external action services seem to be fairly united on the image that the EU needs to create for its external action and this corresponds well to the policy. By and large they also seem to feel they have the resources they need for their work. Inside the EC they have coordination mechanisms. There is less unity on communication strategy with different services formulating their own strategies and having their own ways of working. The fact that the media still operates at a national rather than a European level is clearly problematic though can be managed by working directly with media HQs in capitals and not relying just on the Brussels press corps. Where there is more variety of views is around the need to coordinate across EU institutions. Thus coordination between the EC and Council Secretariat seems to be limited and with the EP very limited. The relationship with the UN can be problematic in certain areas (development, foreign policy) but less in others such as trade which suggests this is also related to the degree of unity and coordination with the EU.

c. Journalist interviews in Brussels

Overall, this group expressed very sceptical view of the communication and visibility efforts on EU external action. Three main factors seem to be behind this:

- Lack of coordination and, at times, competition for the limelight between institutions and particularly with Member States,
- EU own interests economic and trade messages tend to dominate over more human rights and global solidarity image of strategy
- Disorganisation between EC and EEAS following latter's establishment (interviews conducted early 2011 at a moment of major changes)

d. Eurobarometers

The main messages on EU external assistance from the analysis of the Eurobarometer Special Surveys for the period 2000-2010 are the following:

- **Widespread endorsement of the EU's mandate to carry out development actions.** A wide consensus prevails over the *justification* of providing development cooperation outside the European Union territory: around 90% of Europeans citizens find development activities to be very or fairly important. Europeans supportive views on development aid are apparently shaped by a strong value basis and sense of moral responsibility for helping those in need, but also by a very clear recognition of self-interest motivations and of the importance of the priorities pursued through development aid.

Not only are Europeans highly supportive of development aid, but they also consider that the *cooperation among EU members brings added value* when pursuing the goals of combating poverty (76% of Europeans) and that the EU should honour its commitments of increasing the level of aid (50% and 14% even declare that the EU should go beyond them). In other words the *EU enjoys the full confidence of its citizens in its role as an aid actor*.

- **Lower visibility of the EU role as development aid actor relative to the UN and the World Bank.** Despite the legitimacy of EU aid and the fact that the EU provides the biggest share of global ODA, a majority of respondents believe that *the United Nations (27%) and the World Bank (19%) are in the best position to aid developing countries.*

This reflects a **communication challenge** that the EU seems to be facing when it comes to its visibility and conspicuousness as a development aid actor. Even with the strong support and pro-EU cooperation stance of the European public, the largest aid donor of the world is still under-recognised by its citizens probably due to a low understanding of EU concrete activities, funding and tangible results of EU development assistance and, as a result, of the role played by the EU on the global scene.

- **Low awareness, but high expectations: Europeans want to know more about development cooperation.** The strong justification of development cooperation is accompanied by a good understanding of the priorities of intervention, in line with the central goals identified by the EU policy, and with the conviction that EU aid and other EU policies can make a difference for the lives of the poor.

This however does not mean that EU citizens are well aware of EU activities in this field. Although there is no direct question to assess the awareness of EU activities, we can deduce a limited knowledge of what is done at EU level since 42% of Europeans declare that coverage of the EU in their national media is lighter than it should be and would like to be more informed.

Another question on the knowledge of MDGs reveals that almost three-quarters of Europeans have never heard of them. Europeans understand the big challenges faced by developing economies and the priorities of EU development cooperation, but do not perceive how the EU is fighting global poverty. The issue of the *democratic accountability* of the EU deserves more consideration.

e. E-Survey

The main findings from the E-Survey were:

1. Replies from Europe more negative than replies from Africa on all questions
2. Scoring on the coherence of the EU's messages is below the average point for the e-survey replies
3. The overall image of the EU's external action only partially corresponds with Lisbon
4. Scoring on the added value/benefits of EU external action is above overall average – open comments received suggest that EU humanitarian assistance in particular is seen as of high added value.
5. The EU is seen as having some added value on 4 of the 6 thematic areas, above average on the Crisis, fragile states and conflict theme and below average on migration
6. Scoring is above average for the EU's role as a global actor both in international affairs in general and in international organisations
7. Open replies (comments) mostly provided by informed respondents tend to be more negative than the scoring.

f. Media Coverage Analysis

The main messages emerging from the media coverage analyses for the selected periods of Tunisia and Georgia were:

1. Tunisian and Georgian cases attracted attention of press probably because they took place over some time and were issues of broad international concern relating to peace and security and freedom of expression. The other cases chosen however seem to have been too specific or of less international interest and did not attract the attention of the press even though limited communication actions were taken.
2. Two cases provide interesting insights/contrast on how EU comes across under Nice arrangements (Georgia 2008) and then Lisbon (Tunisia 2011) – there are some indications of improvement between the two in terms of EU having a clearer image because of the presence and statements of the HR/VP.
3. Conclusions of the MCA analysis are presented by EQ

4.2 Answers to each Evaluation Question

Each of the Evaluation Questions is answered in turn below. Below the overall response a summary table is provided for each EQ with the summary response from each source.

4.2.1 EQ1: The image of EU external action

EQ1	How well does the image of the external action of the EU perceived by stakeholders correspond to the key issues outlined in the definition and objectives of this external action (Nice Treaty: Art. 8 & 11; Lisbon Treaty: Art. 3 & 21) and to the image the EU seeks to convey
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To this first EQ a positive response can be given, with the EU seen as a generally positive player in international affairs. The image of EU external action that emerges from across the different sources is roughly in line with core values and broad objectives of TEU on external action. This image is clearly stronger among elites than among the general population. European citizens however do demonstrate a strong understanding of certain aspects of EU external action such as EU support for development cooperation. There was however a strong scepticism on the gap between rhetoric and reality identified among informed groups close to home such as CSOs, think tanks and journalists based in Brussels and in the media there is a fairly widespread perception that EU external action is often slow, incoherent and heavily influenced by member state national self-interest. Views from beyond the EU tend to be less critical than those from within the EU. Whether the perception is positive or negative also varies from theme to theme. On migration issues, for instance, it is particularly negative.

EQ1	Image of the external action of the EU perceived by the stakeholders	
Responses	Sources	
In Indonesia perception of EU by stakeholders corresponds to the image of an important and global player with whom cooperation can be established on multiple sectors and on global objectives (MDGs).	Indonesia	
EU's image in Cambodia is of a positive, proactive, ethical and responsible development partner to the Government and to civil society, especially in relation to education, human rights trade partnerships and the environment.	Cambodia	

Though it is less know in the climate change field, it is still seen as an effective and capable donor that mainstreams CC issues and ensures they are systematically addressed.	
Most direct stakeholders aware in general terms about EU and its V-FLEX financial support to Grenada during global financial crisis. However, in certain circles at least EU external actions during the crisis enhanced the image of the EU as a reliable partner able to provide quick support in times of crisis.	Grenada
The EU is broadly perceived in line with definitions and objectives of external action. Yet may relate more to expectations of population and elites in Georgia than specific actions taken by the EU in terms of visibility.	Georgia
Principal stakeholders are aware of EU Food Facility funding even though visibility actions are not systematically undertaken.	Kenya
<p>Many local stakeholders and migration actors in Bamako are aware of CIGEM and of the EU funding. Among the general public it is not well known.</p> <p>In general, CIGEM was not successful in explaining its role and in reaching the relevant targets. The image perceived did not correspond to the one expected by EU.</p> <p>CIGEM has been presented as an over ambitious project, but despite substantial funds spent for communication activities, the objectives and activities of CIGEM have not been well understood by the local actors. The national stakeholders did not see the consistency of the objectives of the Centre with the tools and services provided to achieve them.</p>	Mali
The prevailing image is that of a divided Europe, guided by national priorities. These seem to have negatively affected the public perception of Europe, in Italy in relation to the response to the Lampedusa events, but also internationally. The Italian public expected more support from EU to respond to the sudden influx of migrants after start of Libya war as well as a single and united voice from other EU member states.	Lampedusa
Tunisia media coverage indicates readers must be aware of emphasis EU puts on its core values and yet EU is also seen to not give much emphasis to this in Tunisia itself (double standards?).	Tunisia
Through the EB surveys, EU citizens demonstrated a good understanding of the definition of EU external assistance and its priorities. This is also accompanied by a strong support for the EU as an aid donor that clearly shows the recognition that EU development cooperation has – according to the EU general public – a positive impact on developing countries.	Euro-barometer Surveys
Broadly speaking media recognize that EU works to promote key elements of EU external action as stated in TEU and the media are broadly supportive of this but they are also critical of the way this is done and the progress achieved. Thus EU external action is also perceived by the media as unsatisfactory, incoherent, slow, tedious, informed by national self-interest and not corresponding with the ambitions that the EU has set itself in the Treaties.	MCA
Overall image of EU external action only partially corresponds to Lisbon Treaty issues, though views from outside the EU are somewhat less critical than inside.	E-Survey
Well aware of intended image of EU external action but find image conveyed	Brussels

is quite different as it focuses more on economic and trade issues than human rights and democracy.	journalists
There appears to be no difficulty with EU officials not having understood what the EU is seeking to convey as an image of EU external action. At the same time there is a generally held view among EU officials that apart from a small well-informed group of people in or closely connected to Brussels, wider stakeholder groups have a limited image of EU external action that does not go beyond the broad lines. This is felt to be at least partly because the European media do not convey an accurate or sufficiently detailed image. Officials feel the EU has a generally positive and benign image though low visibility and its image is strongest in aid dependent countries.	EU Officials in Brussels
CSOs are well familiar with the image of EU external action that the EU wants to convey but very critical of the actual practice and results achieved which they feel do not match up to the rhetoric. They thus have a positive image of the EU's intentions and the resources it make available for development but are incritical of what they see as incoherence. They also feel the EU is not good at dialoguing with CSOs.	CSO & TTs in Brussels

4.2.2 EQ2: Do the Visibility communication priorities achieve their objectives?

EQ2	How well do the visibility communication priorities (Key communication messages for Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner, i.e. why, what and how) achieve their objectives?
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The responses to this Evaluation Question were mixed, but elites / opinion leaders at least do seem to recognize some of the main priorities for the visibility of EU external action suggesting these priorities do achieve their objectives to some extent. The why, what and how of the communication priorities are however blurred for many stakeholders and not widely understood. Informed groups, both within the EU and outside, are however critical of what the EU actually achieves in its external action priority areas and thus often treat the image the EU seeks to create for itself with quite some scepticism. The gap they perceive between communication and reality on the ground then serves to undermine the image of the EU in their eyes. On one aspect of the Unions external action agenda, that is EU development cooperation, European citizens certainly support the legitimacy (why) of this action, but are far less clear on its features (what) and modalities (how).

EQ2	How well do the visibility communication priorities achieve their objectives?	
Responses	Sources	
In Indonesia the communication work of the EUD does appear to be achieving its objectives with the stakeholders and enhancing image of EU.	Indonesia	
EU actions on CC and Energy are now large components of EU external action, and the EU is broadly seen as doing its fair share. The EU is seen clearly as an active player, but in the changing world with increasing relevance of BASIC countries, the EU's historical background is something of a hindrance. The EU's traditional approach to climate financing and development cooperation is less attractive, given the other options on the table (eg. in Cambodia's case China).	Cambodia	

Budget support nature of V-FLEX made it difficult for the EUD to promote the programme to wider public.	Grenada
The why, what, and how of EU external action visibility priorities are somewhat blurred and not widely understood in Georgian context. Almost all actors interviewed (and much of the media reporting) thought the EU should more visibly challenge the government.	Georgia
The visibility communication priorities are partly achieved in terms of “Acting together”. In the meantime the stakeholders also recognize the EU as a global player because the Food Facility delivers stability and improves the resilience of local markets and prosperity with food security at the household level.	Kenya
Global solidarity objective came into conflict with MS reluctance to find a common EU solution for migrants fleeing the war in Libya.	Lampedusa
Europeans share a strong sense of the legitimacy of EU development cooperation, which is justified by the importance attached to this policy and its priorities and to the rationale behind development assistance (i.e. self-interest motivations), but not by a thorough knowledge of EU concrete activities and funding in this domain and, more generally, of the role played by the EU on the global scene. As a result, other IOs (the UN and the World Bank) are considered to be better placed to tackle the big challenges of development.	Euro-barometer Surveys
Evidence suggests priorities are achieved in broad terms, but there are variations between the why (generally well communicated) the what (hard to trace as so diverse) and how (difficult to answer because of limited information given by the media).	MCA
Interviewees in several countries questioned the ability of the EU to win hearts and minds of stakeholders because projects continued to be seen as UN projects despite EU funding.	UN Partnership
Did recognise the purpose of EU external action and the need for it, but see the EU and the member states as very divided on foreign policy. Very sceptical about the impact of the visibility/communication activities of the EU.	Brussels journalists
Officials by and large appear to agree with the priorities which seem to be well internalized in a general way, though many are not familiar with the Draft Communication. There is a recognition that as transparency becomes an important issue, there will be a need to be less selective in what is communicated.	EU Officials Brussels
It appears that the external action visibility communication priorities are to some extent achieved in that this group recognizes them without much difficulty. However, the group are generally very critical of the EUs communication work and sufficiently well informed to compare the communications of the EU with the actual results of the EU’s programmes and see a gap of which they are very critical.	CSOs & TTs in Brussels

4.2.3 EQ3: A single, clearly defined Visibility strategy for EU external action?

EQ3	To what extent does the EC view itself as implementing a single, clearly defined Visibility strategy to achieve an agreed public image for its external action?
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By and large the Commission is fairly united on the communication work it is doing on EU external action. It has internal coordination mechanisms in place and there is reasonable unity on the core messages. Nevertheless there is no recent overall visibility strategy and different services are approaching the question in different ways. Since the post-Lisbon reorganization no effort yet seems to be being made to draft a new overall EU external action visibility strategy.

EQ3	To what extent does the EC view itself as implementing a single, clearly defined Visibility strategy to achieve an agreed public image for its external action?	
Responses	Sources	
EU has succeeded in conveying the image of a single institution.	Indonesia	
EUD does seem to be implementing a single clearly defined visibility strategy. The implementation of the communication strategy for the wider GCCA by the Support Facility in Europe has been lacking however though it does seem to be taking off now.	Cambodia	
The EUD itself is quite self-critical and notes it is not implementing this, but also feels that this is difficult to achieve in the absence of a clear EU political strategy in Georgia and given the different mandates and priorities of different EC entities.	Georgia	
While differences in strategies and approaches between services in the EC are apparent there are also mechanisms to encourage collaboration both between the services (ERIC) and within the Spokesman service. However, there were also some indications that some individual officials tended to feel that in practice their priority was to promote the messages of their section, unit or boss, suggesting the existence of some element of competition despite efforts to promote a more unified message. DG DEVCO is currently drafting its own communication strategy and it is not yet clear how this will be integrated into the single broader strategy. The EEAS were thinking of doing the same although this appears to have been put on hold for the time being.	EU Officials Brussels	

4.2.4 EQ4: Perceptions of the benefits of EU external action

EQ4	How well do stakeholders perceive the benefits of EU external action and not just its main features?	
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The responses to this question were mixed, though on balance more positive than negative. Perceptions of benefits are however very much associated with project success so the state of advancement of projects of programmes is clearly an important factor as are poorly defined project objectives. Benefits can be hidden if EU support is provided through a partner or through budget support.

In certain sectors of EU external action different benefits are seen by different groups: on development EU funding is clearly widely perceived as a benefit by a wide range of stakeholders. In trade EU member states see the benefit of EU action. For foreign policy the benefits are not so clear because they depend largely on the EU speaking with one voice and the general perception was that this is not often the case. For EU development

cooperation European citizens recognise the overall expected benefit, but have little awareness of its concrete results, at the same time they would like to know more.

EQ4	How well do stakeholders perceive the benefits of EU external action and not just its main features?	
Responses	Sources	
Stakeholders clearly see economic benefits of FLEGT.	Indonesia	
The benefits of the EU action on climate change in Cambodia are not very tangible to stakeholders yet, but the programme is still new and experiencing some start up difficulties.	Cambodia	
General public and even some ministries not really aware of what the V-FLEX support made possible, rather they associated these programmes with the Government rather than the EU. This would appear to be largely due to the budget support nature of the V-FLEX which inevitably reduced EU visibility.	Grenada	
It is not EC visibility actions alone that generate stakeholder views of EU external action. The majority of the population do not come in direct contact with the EU. But the EU is seen as credible and reliable partner by elite/journalists/implementing partners and “EU” visibility can be a benefit in itself in Georgia as it adds extra credibility and weight to funded actions in most circumstances.	Georgia	
The stakeholders of the Food Facility (FF) are often not aware that funds for the project originate in the Facility. The FF is considered as a transitional tool that is not well perceived by the stakeholders because project documents shows there is no exit strategy foreseen for most of the projects. It is a limitation of the EU visibility as it cannot emphasize any substantial medium and long term benefits to the stakeholders. When not too fragmented, the communication is too wide, as a logo “Food for Life” hardly bring any substantial understanding for the local stakeholders.	Kenya	
At start, ambitious project and poorly defined objectives at CIGEM were hard to communicate so benefits not clear. This contributed to a negative image for the EU.	Mali	
The benefits of EU action on migration in Southern Europe were not evident in the press or to the public during the Lampedusa emergency. Rather media coverage in Italy indicated public dismay at EU rejection of request for help and support in dealing with migrant influx and Italian public confidence in Brussels dropped from 60% to 42% (in Jan-April 2011 period)	Lampedusa	
The European general public has little awareness of the concrete actions and tangible results of EU development cooperation and would like to learn more, namely though better press coverage.	Euro-barometer Surveys	
The benefits of EU external action do come out a bit in the media in both the Georgia and Tunisia cases. In the former the positive economic effects of EU support for Tunisia are recognized but this support is also seen as delaying the advent of democracy. In the Georgia case there are distinct differences between different EU media with some being more positive than others, reflecting considerable differences of view from one EU country to another.	MCA	

Scoring of added value / benefits of EU external action is above the average of the e-survey replies.	E-Survey
Certain topics are easier for stakeholders to perceive the benefits on than for others according to EU officials. Thus Trade is an area where EU member states readily see the benefits of a EU level approach. Foreign policy is more difficult however and partly because it often involves a long-term process with only limited moments when there is a clear result. For Development there is a need to be more results oriented and to communicate better on results. EU officials have a variety of practical difficulties in communicating with stakeholders via the media but these do not seem to be un-surmountable.	EU Officials Brussels
This group are well informed of the benefits of EU external action but they are also highly realistic about them and do not depend only on EU communication work to inform their judgement. They feel EU external action has definite benefits such as giving its stakeholders a stronger voice in global affairs that can be used to defend the interests of disadvantaged groups. However, they also feel the EU could do much better in this respect. As a group they also see EU funding as a major benefit.	CSOs and TTs in Brussels

4.2.5 EQ5: Coordination between the EU institutions and with the EU Member States?

EQ5	To what extent is the EC's visibility/communication work coordinated and complementary with that of the EU Member States, Council and Parliament?
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In the country visits there was generally a perception of reasonable to good coordination between the EU institutions and sometimes with the EU Member states though not in all the country studies. On the other hand, as might be expected, among journalists in Brussels there was a very critical view of this question. The perception of coordination also varied between topics and was for instance seen as generally low on sensitive questions such as the migration issue or the EU on reactions to the Arab Spring.

Coordination between the EC and the EEAS seems to work better than with the Council Secretariat. The EP works very independently, but this is seen as understandable given its role in the democratic process.

Close observers such as the press, CSOs and think tanks point to the lack of coordination and disagreements with the Member States as a major problem that undermines the EU's image. This also comes out from some of the field studies.

EQ5	To what extent is the EC's visibility/communication work coordinated and complementary with that of the EU Member States, Council and Parliament?
Responses	Sources
Communication around FLEGT, and the EUD plus MS harmonized approach has clearly created an image of a single market with harmonized regulations and standards	Indonesia
EUD cooperation with MS is generally good. To some extent the repositioning of the EU's aid portfolio with respect to that of the larger MS is important, as there is still a tendency for MS to want to communicate that it is they that are doing things, not so much the EU. This requires changes in the	Cambodia

way MS view their external action, and whether or not they are viewed as competing with the EU's.	
The position of the Council in relation to the financial crisis was generally in line with that of the European Commission.	Grenada
There is no evidence that the EC's visibility/communication work is coordinated with that of EU MS, Council or the EP in Georgia. There is some political coordination through EU HOMs and action of the EUMM HOM. The EU is widely seen as not bringing its full collective weight to bear on relevant issues because it is not speaking with one voice or consistently (including by EU stakeholders themselves).	Georgia
EU and MS perceived to have different messages on migration, even though CIGEM is a joint project between EU and some MS.	Mali
Clear MS divisions on how to handle suddenly increased influx of migrants particularly as many migrants wanted to move on to Northern Europe.	Lampedusa
Significant discrepancies between messages communicated by EU and MS. In first three weeks of January 2011 the EU (Commission, Council, EEAS, EUD and EP) did not comment on events in Tunisia. Only the EIB is quoted as stating its financial support for the new democracy.	Tunisia case
Georgia case suggests EC's visibility and communication work was complementary with that of the Council and EU MS (no evidence on EP). But Sarkozy was more visible as President of the EU Council at the time (rotating presidency), which tended to eclipse the visibility of the EU itself.	MCA - Georgia
Tunisia case: Ashton and Fülle did timely communication work but messages from France were not coherent with rest of EU and France was the object of considerable negative comment. For the EU institutional image the HR/VP attracted most visibility in the press particularly in the first part of the democratic uprising.	MCA - Tunisia
See almost no coordination in communication and messages between the different actors within the EU – EEAS, Council, EP and MS. More attention paid to finding compromises than to defining strong, unified messages. Some actors resist others taking a strong role for fear of being sidelined. They often feel there is no quick and coordinated communication from the different EU actors	Brussels journalists
Although interviewees accepted principle that EU should coordinate across institutions on communication on external action it is apparent that the mechanisms to do so have only patchy coverage and a lot depends on personal and ad-hoc contacts. There does not seem to be an overriding drive or leadership to coordinate actively across all institutions in this specific field though there is a central inter-institutional coordination mechanism that is not related to any specific sector. EC-EEAS coordination mechanisms are being established. Links between them and the Council Sect are not formalized though there are some ouvertures. Vis à vis the EP there is even less coordination except at specific moments – e.g. when MEP delegations are travelling.	EU Officials Brussels

<p>As a group interviewees felt there was a lack of coordination on visibility between the institutions with the biggest problem coming from Member States lack of interest in coordination and general disagreement amongst themselves. They also have little apparent interest to promote the EU as such. They also feel further improvement could be made in the coordination of visibility between Van Rompuy, Barroso and Ashton. On the other hand, given its role in the democratic process, they feel it is normal that the EP should have different views from the other institutions.</p>	<p>CSOs and TTs in Brussels</p>
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4.2.6 EQ 6: Coherence of message across external and internal policies?

EQ6	Are the EC's messages coherent across different EU external action and internal policy areas?
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Incoherence is not identified as a big issue by many of the stakeholders and notably by those most closely involved such as EU officials. Of course many stakeholders are also not sufficiently well informed to perceive contradictions and EU officials as a group are probably more accepting of incoherences than other stakeholders. However, well informed external stakeholders do see this as a major issue undermining the EU's visibility and in certain key sensitive areas such as those relating to human rights, democracy, migration and trade there are clear problems of policy coherence which become much more generally and widely perceived.

Not surprisingly incoherence issues are also more common in areas where competence remains with Member States such as foreign policy and less in others where the competence is entirely with the Commission, such as trade. CSOs and also journalists are the most alert to and critical of policy incoherence and see this as a major issue that seriously undermines the EU's image.

EQ6	Are the EC's messages coherent across different EU external action and internal policy areas?	
Responses		Sources
EU promotes FLEGT to fight against illegal logging, but also imports other products (palm oil and biofuels) that are seen by some to encourage massive deforestation. More could be done to communicate EU positions on sustainable NRM and contribution to implementation of UN environment standards		Indonesia
No evidence of incoherence in policies and interlocuteurs did not have a sufficiently sophisticated knowledge to identify any.		Cambodia
Generally stakeholders did not have a sophisticated enough understanding of the details of EU internal and external policy areas to pick up inconsistencies amongst them. Yet some elite journalists did think the EU is not consistent in its actions towards Russia (trade and visa free travel). Thus Russia is reported as being given preferential trade and visa arrangements by the EU over Georgia even though the EU heavily criticised Russia's conduct in the Georgian-Russian conflict of 2008. These "inconsistencies" are picked up in the Georgian media and cited as inconsistencies.		Georgia
The Food Facility is considered as a rapid instrument to respond to a specific		Kenya

<p>problem of Food Price Crisis in developing countries. However its implementation process has shown some incoherence with EC external policies resulting from a top down process of EU HQs consultation with the EUD that may be in contradiction with the decentralization process of responsibilities from EU HQs to EUD. Its origin may also be incoherent with EU internal policy to promote bio-ethanol production has been closely link to the soaring of food prices in 2007/08</p>	
<p>Perceived lack of coherence between joint EU message CIGEM tried to convey and migration policy (shared competence) of some MS (France, Spain)</p>	Mali
<p>Contradictions between external EU MS support to Libyan resistance and the Member States' divided attitude on refugee flows. Global solidarity objective came into conflict with MS reluctance to find a common solution.</p> <p>The EC seemed to be a weak actor in relation to these events, more attentive to trying to accommodate the fears and priorities of different MS than in expressing a common position.</p>	Lampedusa
<p>In both the Georgian and the Tunisian cases a number of incoherent policy messages emerged. In both cases these also related to divergences in views between MS and with the EU institutions indicating a lack of consensus at particular moments in time.</p> <p>In the Georgian case these related to the EU's policy towards Russia relative to that towards Georgia. In the case of Tunisia during the Ben Ali years the EU's support to the economic development of the country was seen as being at odds with EU supposed support for human rights and democracy. Then in January 2011 support for the democratic uprising started to be voiced by some EU MS, Mrs Ashton and Mr Füle, while France continued to strongly support the Ben Ali regime for quite some time.</p>	<i>MCA</i>
<p>During time of Ben Ali regime EUD felt obliged to downplay its human rights and democracy messages</p>	Tunisia
<p>EU's economic and trade messages often in conflict with its human rights and democracy messages</p>	Brussels journalists
<p>Scoring on the coherence of EU's messages across different external and internal policy areas is below average</p>	E-Survey
<p>By and large EU officials do not seem to see lack of coherence as a major problem for the visibility of EU external action that needs to be resolved, though they do recognize that the EU's trade interests can be a problem for other policy areas (foreign policy, development). Agriculture is also cited. Otherwise there can be contradictions between relations with different countries if these have different interests.</p>	EU Officials Brussels
<p>The EC's messages are generally not considered coherent across different EU external action policy areas. Incoherence and discrepancies between rhetoric and practice are a key theme for this group and they see these has having a very damaging effect on the EU's image. Most acknowledge that incoherence is also an issue for national governments and they can see there is a need for the EU to defend its own interests, but they do feel there is a major problem her. Trade is cited as the area where most problems of policy incoherence come up.</p>	CSOs and TTs in Brussels

4.2.7 EQ 7: Value added of the EU as a global actor in major international fora?

EQ7	How far does the perception of the value added of the EU as a global actor emerge clearly from its presence in major international organisations/fora?
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There are two parts to the response to this question. On the one hand there is the question of the EU's image as an actor in UN and other international fora, on the other hand there is the question of EU visibility in relation to the partnership with the UN at the field level.

In terms of the EU's image in debates at the *international level*, evidence suggested that the EU had a generally positive image in five of the six thematic areas. Migration was the one exception, but in all others the thematic studies found that the EU was perceived as a positive force in the international arena with a clear added value and considerable potential to increase further its role as a global actor. Some interviewees even went as far as to say that the EU often underestimates its visibility and influence in the international community and specifically within the UN. However, two elements emerged that were perceived as limiting that positive image. First, regular divergences in the positions held by different EU member states were seen as reducing or even undermining the EU's value added and the strength of the overall EU position. When the EU is united, such as in the area of trade, there are less negative visibility problems in international fora (e.g. in the WTO), than in other areas such as foreign policy. Second, the negative vote on EU representation in the UNGA was interpreted as a warning that the EU should be more aware of the way it is perceived by others in the international community. There was a feeling that the EU was sometimes seen as unduly arrogant and as taking the support of others for granted.

The second aspect of the response to the EQ also arose in several of the thematic studies *where on the ground the EU was collaborating with the UN* and providing substantial funding for projects implemented by the UN. This clearly emerged as a problematic area with perceptions in the EU institutions and in the UN often quite starkly opposed. Although officials are well informed of the involvement of the EU, among a wider group of stakeholders UN projects funded by the EU are regularly seen as UN projects and this is hard to avoid. At the same time the indications were that the UN in general is making a real effort to follow the visibility guidelines in the FAFA and there are signs of regular improvement. UN officials are also clearly very aware of the guidelines and sensitive to criticism in places where there have been problems about their implementation.

While following the agreed visibility guidelines is important there were also signs that too much insistence on them has negative side effects for the EU's visibility. This can be seen as heavy handed and unreasonable as, although the EU may well be one of the larger funders of a project, it is usually not alone and other donors also feel entitled to some visibility. There is also a view that giving too much visibility to donors can undermine the UN's image of neutrality and impartiality, which is part of the UN's value added and often a good reason for it to be the implementer in the first place. Not everyone is convinced that the best way for the EU to get visibility from its partnership with the UN is to insist on the widespread use of 'stickers and flags'. In some respects providing more core funding to UN agencies might provide a stronger visibility 'return' to the EU within the UN than project funding.

EQ7	How far does the perception of the value added of the EU as a global actor emerge clearly from its presence in major international organisations/fora?
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Responses	Source(s)
EU external action in environmental sector in perceived by stakeholders as a	Indonesia

direct contribution to solving global challenges and meeting international commitments	
The EU is known internationally in the climate change field as a funder and as a highly active player pushing for a post-Kyoto agreement. In Cambodia contribution of EU alongside other actors on climate change is understood by stakeholders but not perceived more widely among general population. The UNDP, UNEP and EC relationship is not highly strategic at country level but is based on a problem solving approach. Partner countries and organisations often find it difficult to see the EU as a donor in its own right and start talking about the contribution of organisations such as the UN.	Cambodia
The V-FLEX contributed to enhancing the visibility of the EU as an important global actor alongside the IMF and World Bank as other actors active on global financial crisis. Cooperation with these IFIs during the crisis raised EU profile as a key global actor and international awareness of EU external actions.	Grenada
EU loses visibility working through the UN in Georgia – INGOs are generally more creative in carrying EU visibility forward. While more can be done to reduce this problem with the UN, it is an inevitable trade-off. Working through international organisations or other partners can certainly add value but will always detract from EU visibility.	Georgia
The EU image at international level benefited from its capacity to respond rapidly by mobilizing funds and preparing a Regulation that delivered a wide range of supports to reduce the effects of the 2007/08 Food Price Crisis in 50 countries.	Kenya
EU cooperation with UN in some sectors good but no real value added in migration sector. UN respected visibility rules but projects they run with EU money seen as UN projects.	Mali
From both cases (Georgia and Tunisia) it is clear EU has a role to play in international affairs and it is regularly mentioned alongside other international organs such as major powers, NATO and UN. The visibility of EU as an international actor is more prominent in the case of Georgia under the lead of Mr Sarkozy in the Presidency and in the absence of other actors. In Tunisia the role of the EU is less clear in the media.	MCA
The EU's added value in the international setting seen by UN as its engagement (in cooperation with the UN) with the national government. This may not bring about much visibility but does have impact. In the UN staff's view, the EU already has a strong image in the UN which it underestimates and its visibility in international organisations could be better achieved as a core contributor, rather than through stickers and events.	UN Partnership
Do not see that the EU has yet become a stronger actor internationally as a result of the Lisbon Treaty. Added value of the EU as a global actor will only become really visible if MS allow the EEAS to play a stronger role in international fora and organisations.	Brussels journalists
Scoring on the image of the EU as a global actor in international affairs is rather positive and was also positive on the potential role the EU could play as a global actor in international organisations in the future .	E-Survey

<p>The EU relationship with the UN and International Organisations is not always easy but tends to vary from one sector to another. In trade the leadership of the EU is clear and so it is well recognized in the WTO. In development the EU has no such leadership, the EU also uses the UN as one channel for its aid and the EU-MS also support the UN agencies in a similar fashion in parallel. The relationship is thus inevitably more complex and despite the Commission taking active steps to organize the relationship and conclude a clear agreement with the UN (the FAFA) there is still a need to monitor that and continue to push it though there is a slow positive trend to ensure the EU does get more visibility out of the funds it supplies to the UN. In foreign policy there are examples of specific issues or cases where the EU has take a lead and is recognised for that.</p>	<p>EU Officials Brussels</p>
<p>Most interviewees in this group felt the EU had a relevant role in the international arena, but they question the image, actual role and real power of the EU. Equally within the context of multilateral fora they feel the EU has a mixed role. On the one it is good it supports multilateralism and the work of IOs but on the other as a block of states that decides its position internally first, it can be inflexible in negotiations. The actual power of the EU in international fora is questioned and what is seen as its often arrogant attitude is criticised. The initially negative UN vote on EU representation is seen as a sign that other countries are also critical of this and are starting to challenge the EU more.</p>	<p>CSOs and TTs in Brussels</p>

4.2.8 EQ8: Adequacy of EC resources to carry out the visibility strategy

EQ8	How far are the resources mobilized by the EC adequate (human resources, budget) to carry out its visibility/communication strategy?
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In the Commission and for the EEAS (as provided by the Commission) the resources available for visibility/communication do not seem to be a major problem, though their being split up by programme at country level may not always be ideal. In EU Delegations themselves the funds for communication work are clearly limited as the bulk of the resources is with programmes and projects. This clearly leads to big variations in the quality of communication work. Some EUDs can therefore feel they would be better equipped to tackle visibility issues properly, if they had more control over these programme visibility funds. An example of this being done successfully by one EUD on a pilot basis was identified. Another key finding was that with EUDs acquiring a new more political role under Lisbon, there is a need for a review of their communication strategies and resources.

In the Council Secretariat resources for communication work are much more restricted.

A final point that emerged under this EQ was that a lack of a clear policy or political strategy may be more of a hindrance to good communication work and effective visibility than a lack of materials resources.

EQ8	How far are the resources mobilized by the EC adequate (human resources, budget) to carry out its visibility/communication strategy?	
Responses	Sources	
EUD has adopted a pilot approach to communication work in Indonesia by contracting an external communication company to cover all the EUD's	Indonesia	

communication work and funded by a budget compose by pooling small amounts of funds from each project communication budget as well as the centrally allocated by HQ. In other words the latter did not provide adequate resources on its own by it was possible to supplement these.	
No interviewees expressed the view that the resources allocated to the EUD for visibility were inadequate. The media coverage achieved of CCCA-related event was reasonably effective in reaching target audiences and intended objectives, apart from the failure to get coverage of the 2010 GCCA Asia conference.	Cambodia
No additional human resources or specific budget was allocated to the EUD for communication work around the V-FLEX, but the programme was promoted by both the EUD in Barbados and the EDF Support Services Unit of the Ministry of Finance in Grenada.	Grenada
The resources were seen as adequate. What was cited as a more crucial obstacle is the lack of a clear political direction.	Georgia
The resources mobilized by the EC may be considered as adequate in term overall funding per country or per agency. The inconsistency in the communication and message are more due to an absence of FF strategy at country level..	Kenya
CIGEM budget adequate for communication and visibility work. With advent of EEAS communication work needs to change and so budgets for EUDs and their visibility strategy should be reviewed	Mali (ppt)
The media work of the EU REPER in Italy is well resourced and professional	Lampedusa
A total budget of Euro 10M p.a. is estimated as available for C&I work/visibility actions for EU external action. Human resources at HQ level include about 30 people plus a spokesperson for each Commissioner. On going efforts are made to provide training and back-up advice and materials for Press and Information Officers in Delegations. The resources are therefore substantial and their adequacy is not put in question by interviewees. Equally human resources are not seen as a problem.	EU Officials Brussels

4.2.9 EQ9: Stakeholder perceptions of results relative to the costs

EQ9	To what extent are the results in terms of stakeholder perceptions commensurate with the cost of conveying the messages both in financial and organisational terms?
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It proved difficult to get a definite answer to this EQ as the data available does not permit a strict cost-benefit analysis, but on an impressionistic level the efficiency seems reasonable and there is no indication of excessive spending on communication coming through. The one exception to this are CSOs who feel too much is spent on communication relative to the impact this has on visibility.

EQ9	To what extent are the results in terms of stakeholder perceptions commensurate with the cost of conveying the messages both in financial and organisational terms?
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Responses	Sources
EUD seems to have been able to cover the costs of communication work adequately from its existing budget.	Grenada
EUD seems to be efficient at conveying messages to elites/journalists and to those that are recipients of EC funds (either implementing partners or beneficiaries). Some questioning if EU was “reaching” popular perception through mass media.	Georgia
The result’s of the EUD’s visibility actions, in terms of stakeholder perceptions do seem commensurate with the standard costs of conveying the messages.	Cambodia
Unrealistic project (CIGEM) initially made communication difficult, but with changed project objectives the effectiveness of the communication actions could improve.	Mali
EU C&I officials clearly feel their efforts achieve a degree of impact even though they recognize the difficulties of working in an environment where all media are nationally based apart from Euronews which the EU funds itself. They thus believe they are having some impact and do take steps to monitor this. They use a good range of methods with the website being the most important and the EDD another key tool.	EU Officials Brussels
A number were critical of the cost of EU communication events relative to the visibility achieved. Interestingly however, the EDD do give rise to positive reactions (even though these are high cost events) which suggests that there may be some value added specifically in the EU organizing the EDD.	CSOs and TTs in Brussels

4.2.10 EQ10: Translating visibility strategies into action plans

EQ 10	How effectively do EC external action staff from different services translate the visibility strategy they are expected to implement into action plans that are consistent amongst each other?
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Visibility action plans clearly exist at quite a number of levels from EU institution services in Brussels, down to EUDs and within programmes and projects. Although there are high expectations since the institutional reorganisation in 2010-11 there is as yet no indication of a common visibility strategy for EU external action involving both DEVCO and the EEAS or indeed other services such as DG CLIMA. The overall impression therefore is that the translation of strategies into action plans is quite piecemeal and variable from one service to another. At the country level there are also indications of lack of follow through in visibility strategies and action plans, so quality varies considerably at these lower levels. In particular there are difficulties with getting unitary messages and images in country when project budgets provide the main source of funding for visibility work. Within individual services however officials see themselves as reasonably effective, there is apparent enthusiasm to improve quality and focus more on communicating results. There is also openness to learning more from other organisations. Yet there is no indication of clear central guidance or leadership.

EQ 10	How effectively do EC external action staff from different services translate the visibility strategy they are expected to implement into action plans that are consistent amongst each other?
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Responses	Sources
Some action plans do exist. Implementing partners are also assisted in developing their own visibility action plans for specific funded projects by EUD which is appreciated.	Georgia
GCCA policy documents do not yet exist with clear communication and visibility objectives and implementation strategies, with contributions from both DEVCO and CLIMA. With the recent consolidation of the EU's institutional architecture it can be expected that more coherent communication and visibility will become effective between DEVCO/CLIMA, the geographical Directorate, EEAS and the GCCA Support Facility.	Cambodia
There is no FF Visibility overall strategy at country level as there are various EC visibility plans managed under different rules by various stakeholders implementing the FF. There is no overall FF Visibility strategy guidelines and plan at country level for all FF stakeholders.	Kenya
New common EU communication plan from DEVCO and EEAS not yet defined.	Mali
None had seen or read any EU external action communication strategy. Several were very critical of what they see as a restrictive policy to share information with journalists only through specifically designated persons (eg. spokespersons). They often get the sense EU staff with relevant information are not allowed to speak to the press.	Brussels journalists
EU officials see themselves as being reasonably effective in their work on C&I. They want to focus more on communicating results and they are aware that there are other organisations they can learn from.	EU Officials Brussels

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

Having provided the findings in the previous Chapter and built this up into answers to each of the Evaluation Questions, this chapter seeks to bring this evidence together into six overall conclusions and then derive recommendations.

The overall picture that emerges from the study is that EU external action has a relatively positive image that in substance terms is more or less in tune with what officials were seeking to prioritise for the period under review (2006-2010). However, many close observers are critical of the quality of that image, feeling that the EU should be more modest about its actual level of achievement in these areas. Various specific constraints with which the EU has to work due to its unique nature are identified and recognised by informed respondents as having an important impact on the visibility of EU external action. Much evidence emerged on issues of visibility within the context of partnerships (with the UN, with partner country governments, with NGOs, etc.) and this is clearly a major source of tension that would justify some more clear thinking and leadership. The availability of resources for communication on the other hand did not emerge as a major issue, though how resources were used or by whom was more of an open question. Finally on the implementation of strategies and plans, while communication work at the programme level has continued reasonably well, at an overall EU external action level there are signs that the reorganisation of the EU external services has resulted in a rather worrying hiatus in terms

of an overall sense of purpose on communication activities. There is little sign that this is yet being fully addressed.

These overall conclusions therefore suggest half a dozen key conclusions:

1. The image of EU external action is in line with pre-Lisbon official priorities.
2. Communication work on EU external action lacks overall direction and leadership.
3. Working in partnership with others is essential but there is a trade-off in lower EU visibility.
4. The image of EU external action varies both geographically and by constituency.
5. The nature of the EU imposes constraints that impact on its visibility.
6. The resources for promoting the visibility of EU external action have been adequate.

These six key conclusions are developed more fully in turn in the next section. In each case the conclusions are linked back to the relevant EQs and related findings and subsequently. So as to maintain the logic of the argument, each conclusion will be used as the basis for formulating a single recommendation as portrayed in the adjacent diagram. At the end of the chapter a box with a summary of conclusions and recommendations is provided.



5.1.1 The image of EU external action is generally in line with pre-Lisbon official priorities

As indicated above, the overall picture that emerges from the study is that EU external action has an image that in substance terms is more or less in tune with what officials were seeking to prioritise for the period under review (2006-2010), but that many close observers are critical of the quality of that image, feeling that the EU should be more modest about its actual level of achievement in these areas. In many cases respondents felt that the achievement of results in the EU's external action is what has the biggest impact on the image they had of the EU.

Based primarily on the findings used to respond to EQ1 (Image of EU external action), EQ2 (Impact of the EU's visibility priorities) and EQ4 (Perceptions of benefits), the following conclusions were reached:

- i. *The image of EU external action* that emerges from various sources in terms of its principal features at least seems to be broadly consistent with the visibility/communication priorities defined by the European Commission external services (as defined in the Ferrero-Waldner Draft Communication, 2006). Evidence suggests also that internationally the EU's image is broadly positive. However, closer to home among well informed stakeholder groups, there is a strong view that in practice the EU often fails to live up to this image. Thus while the contours of the image may be consistent, the quality of the image itself can vary from one stakeholder group to another. Moreover, it becomes clear reading through the

evidence that the rationale for the EU to have an external action is not called into question and that there is apparently a widespread consensus around the types of issues the EU should be addressing externally and these correspond well with those identified as priorities by the Commission.

- ii. *Actions speak louder than words* was a common refrain from many sources with informants regularly suggesting examples of how the EU's image was much more influenced (both positively and negatively) by certain highly visible things the EU was seen as doing, rather than by more stickers and flags on every single small project. In other words results were more important than communication work in creating the right image and than in the latter a sense of proportion has to be maintained and efforts to improve visibility had to be well focused on the right targets. At the same time of course, communicating on these results is necessary if stakeholders are going to perceive them.

Box 4: E-Survey examples of Actions speak louder than words

The international e-survey sent to a wide range of NGOs and media contacts provided good insights on how stakeholders who are active in international cooperation, both from Europe as well as from the South, perceive the EU and recognize its actions.

Most clearly, EU external assistance actions in response to humanitarian tragedy prompted positive comments and are seen as having an added value as compared to other actors. Assistance to fragile states and peace building also attracted positive remarks. This picture was echoed in various European articles on the international engagement of the EU collected and analysed in the context of our media coverage survey, notably the media articles that reported on the Georgia crisis and on how the EU got involved.

- iii. *Raising unrealistic expectations* is another frequently cited problem with many informants talking about the EU promising things that it then cannot deliver. This leads to disillusionment and claims of hypocrisy.

5.1.2 Communication work on EU external action lacks overall direction and leadership

The overall conclusion on the implementation of communication activities is that while there was a reasonable level of organisation and sense of purpose before the reorganisation of the EU external action services there was then a lull of perhaps 2 years in which no central sense of purpose or direction seems to have been promoted on visibility and things are only slowly starting to pick up again. Thus the fact that EU external action, some six years later, is still working to a communication plan promoted by Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner in early 2006 is a source of concern as many things have moved on in EU external action field. On the other hand with the major institutional reorganisation of EU external action that has taken place in the past two years this is not entirely surprising. What is perhaps more troubling is that the evaluation evidence suggests that there are currently no plans to issue a new communication strategy document at the overall EU external action level but rather that different services are planning to prepare their individual strategies. Thus DG DEVCO has already produced their own communication strategy (see Box 5 below for some comments). The communication priorities it identifies, while valid in themselves, really need to be linked into a set of wider overall EU external action communication priorities.

The resurrection of the RIC, now ERIC, coordination mechanism in the autumn of 2011 after a one year hiatus is also positive. There is clearly expertise and enthusiasm for improving communication work in the services, but the main missing ingredient would seem to be a lack of leadership and an urgent need to build up a common sense of purpose and strategy for improving the visibility of EU external action around which the efforts at different levels could then coalesce effectively.

Based on findings for many of the EQs, but particularly from EQ10 (Translating visibility strategies into action plans), EQ2 (Impact of the EU's visibility priorities and EQ8 (Resources for EU visibility) we retain the conclusions that:

- iv. *Communication work is best done when political priorities are clear:* This emerged as a very strong message in one thematic study, but is a point that also underlies problems identified in several of the others and indeed in the case studies around events. The point may be obvious, but is worth repeating: clear political strategies are the best basis for identifying strong messages around which to build effective communication campaigns
- v. *The actual conduct of communication activities by the EU* appears to be generally reasonably good though far from perfect. As we have just seen an overall lack of resources is not perceived as a major constraint. The still prevalent overall external action strategy paper from 2006 is now somewhat old and needs to be updated to take account of new institutional realities. So far this does not appear to be happening. Many action plans do exist and these relate more or less closely to the overall objectives and priorities established in 2006. Quality strengthening efforts are underway, though it is also recognised that the EU's communication efforts could be much improved. Practical day to day coordination on external action communication within the Commission services and the EEAS now seems to be being re-established after the 2011 restructuring of the services and seems to operate well though there are some indications that its reach is not as extensive as it might be. Moreover, coordination with other institutions (Council secretariat and EP) seems poor and generally non-existent with Member States. There also appears to be no rapid reaction mechanism for coordination on communication in reaction to external events. Overall, this piecemeal approach to renewing communication strategy and the still tentative approach to internal coordination, combined with no evident outreach to other institutions leads to the conclusion that there is currently a leadership vacuum on the communication of EU external action that still needs to be filled.

**Box 5: Example of coordination mechanism under Commission (Barroso I, 2005-2010)
“Organising communication/visibility activities around the creation of Projects Team”**

Migration & Asylum Communication Plan 2008

Each year the Commission decided on a list of communication priorities that involve communication planning and activities in the different relevant Directorate Generals depending on the priority theme selected. The Directorate General of Communication (DG COMM) leads this process.

In relation to the different subjects identified as priority an inter-service group called *Project Team (PT)* was created. The Project Team had the role of coordination of the communication plan and of the activities of the different Directorate Generals involved. The PT also had a specific budget to spend on the implementation of the planned activities.

In 2008 “*Migration & Asylum*” was among the Commission's planned communication priorities.

The communication plan was based on a holistic approach to migration whereby the EU policy on immigration and asylum is presented as a comprehensive package of measures that take into

consideration all the different aspects of immigration and asylum, notably legal and illegal migration, the needs of third countries, integration, and asylum as well as security aspects/border control.

Coordination across the Commission

Inter-service coordination essentially took place in the dedicated project team (PT) on Migration which involves DG JLS (now HOME), DG COMM, DG DEV, DG RELEX, (now EEAS) and occasionally DG EMP. The PT on Migration also aimed at developing coordinated actions with the FRONTEX Agency and with the Committee of the Regions. Last but not least, the PT aimed at coordinating closely with the Commission Representations (a dedicated network of contact of contact person has been developed) and the Europe Direct Relays.

Close coordination was also developed with the French Presidency of the European Union through the French Permanent Representation in Brussels and through the Commission Representation in Paris.

A set of key messages was developed in the context of the PT by DG JLS and served as a thread to the campaign.

(The detailed description of the communication strategy is provided in the thematic report on migration Volume 7, part 1 page 10/11)

- vi. *Positive signs of progress:* Despite the lack of leadership at an overall level just identified there are some positive signs that, post-Lisbon, there appears to be a move in the right direction as far as the visibility of EU external action is concerned, though this is very much work in progress and the road is not smooth given the institutional diversity, the range of policies covered and the often fragmented interests of the EU actors. That being said, conducting this study over a period in which there has been considerable institutional change and the general image of the EU as a whole has been badly dented by the on-going crisis of the Euro, has also underlined that perceptions change fast and tend to be dominated by the most recent events. As a result it is often hard to pick out longer-term trends and such conclusions need to be put into perspective.

Box 6: Comments on EuropeAid's Communication Strategy: Making a Difference – February 2012

The EuropeAid Communication Strategy was drafted in late 2011 and agreed in early 2012 just as this Evaluation was in its final reporting stage. It was agreed therefore to simply compare the Strategy with the Conclusions and Recommendations of the Evaluation.

On a critical note this comparison brings out the following:

- First, and most obviously, this is a strategy just for DG DEVCO whereas this study recommends that an overall EU external action communication strategy is needed, to which complementary sectoral strategies, such as this one for development cooperation, can then be linked.
- Another striking feature of the Strategy is that it makes no reference to the importance of the EU working in partnership in its external action. The only reference to partnership comes in a reference to the implementation of communication work (pgs.9-10), which, though clearly a valid strategy to pursue, does not address the question of how to best communicate on the EU's partnerships in its external action. There is no reference to the partnership with the UN and partner governments are referred to simply as stakeholders.
- In the absence of any discussion on how the EU works with partners the idea that 'working in partnership' could be a message in itself would be difficult to place within this Strategy document and would require a fairly substantial rethink in approach.
- The Strategy also does not emphasise the importance of communicating a single EU image and, in the absence of that, the reference to strengthening the EuropeAid brand on (pg. 6) could be taken as meaning that it was more important to ensure that EuropeAid stands out from other EU actors.

More positively, the Strategy pursues the same line as the Evaluation on the following:

- There is a strong emphasis on the need to communicate on results and impact (pg. 3 ff.)
- Equally there is a specific instruction not to focus on the amounts of money involved (pg. 3). It is suggested that large figures remain abstract to most people. On the lines of this study, a further justification would be that talking about large sums of money can create unrealistic expectations. This is a danger highlighted by the Evaluation as best avoided as unmet expectations can undermine credibility.
- A strong emphasis is also placed on the need for good coordination on communication across the Commission and with the EEAS and Delegations (pgs.3-4).

The EuropeAid Communication Strategy does provide leadership on communication and clear strategic thinking which is a major plus and it reaches some similar conclusions as this study, but now that the post-Lisbon reorganization of the external action services has settled down there is an urgent need to agree an overall EU external action communication strategy. The 2011-12 EuropeAid communication priorities are, not surprisingly, development cooperation messages (1. Communication on results; 2. The Agenda for Change, and 3. Funds for development in the MFF – pg. 5) which, though valid in themselves, are of a different order than the overall EU external action visibility priorities set by the Draft Communication from 2006. These development communication priorities could usefully be put in a broader context that a new overall set of EU external action communication priorities could provide.

5.1.3 Working in partnership with others is essential but there is a trade-off in lower EU visibility

In much of its external action work the EU works in partnership with other organisations be they partner country government, civil society organisations or international and multilateral organisations. In development cooperation in particular the EU is not an implementer of projects and programmes, but rather relies on channelling its aid through these different partner organisations. This often has a clear impact on EU visibility and is a source of frequent tension between the EU and its partners. At the same time partnerships are an important *modus operandi* for the EU, if not an intrinsic part of the way it works, so a clearer settlement of this issue could be useful.

Evidence on partnerships and their impact on visibility emerged from a number of the thematic studies and particularly under EQ7 (The EU as a global actor in major international fora) and a little under EQ2 (Impact of the EU's visibility priorities):

- vii. *Working in partnership with other organisations* inevitably reduces EU visibility at least to some extent, because there is a need to 'share visibility' and the EU cannot expect to claim all the attention or get the full credit. However, such situations are by their nature a trade-off with the EU choosing to go into such relationships because of the benefits from the value added contributed by the partners. In some cases (eg. budget support, or support in sensitive political situations) reduced EU visibility may even be critical for the success of the support provided. The drop in EU visibility can be mitigated to some extent through dialogue and careful management of established agreements, but each case needs to be handled according to its specificity and local circumstances.
- viii. *The use of the general budget support* modality clearly diminishes EU visibility in the general public eye, but this has to be offset against the positive value of greatly increased country ownership. There is also some evidence that the use of this modality results in the EU acquiring some positive visibility among local elite groups who are informed about the support.

Box 7: Sharing visibility on budget support

The example in the thematic study on the financial crisis of the *budget support* provided to the Government of Grenada under the V-FLEX arrangement is a good example of how a partner government and the EU can share visibility. While the general population in Grenada had little or no knowledge of the details of the V-FLEX support, the government was seen as finding solutions to the financial crisis thereby increasing ownership and confidence. At the same time the EU was generally known to be a reliable partner to the country. Inside government circles where the details were known, this image of reliable EU support were even stronger and more specific, and at the international level, the impact of the V-FLEX instrument and the speed with which the EU had acted were well known and commended by leaders in the international financial institutions.

- ix. *Working with the UN* at the project level reduces EU visibility as with other partnerships (see point ii. above), though clear advances have been made in managing this issue through careful application of the FAFA. Both organisations need visibility as they are both dependent on their member states and on public perceptions of their work. In many circumstances the UN is an essential partner for the EU with its own specific value added. That added value partly depends on the public perception of the UN as a neutral and impartial organization with worldwide membership including from developing countries. The visibility of the EU working in multilateral fora can be good and this is probably the more important issue. Various sources, though not all, are relatively positive on the EU's work in international organisations and the image it creates though the EU is also sometimes seen as self-centered and even arrogant which backfires. In sectors where the EU is united (eg. trade) there is correspondingly less difficulty with the EU's image as an actor.

5.1.4 *The image of EU external action varies geographically as well as by constituency.*

From various sources it was apparent that while certain high profile features of the EU, such as the Euro, are known around the globe, the image of the EU and of its external action inevitably varies from place to place and between stakeholders. Clearly it is not possible with such a study to provide a precise mapping of these variations, but a couple of key factors were identified particularly in the responses to EQ1 (Image of EU external action), EQ2 (Impact of the EU's visibility priorities) and EQ4 (Perceptions of benefits), these are:

- x. *Distance softens the image, but EU positions on sensitive issues are noted:* In Africa and also in Asia and Latin America the image of the EU generally appears to be better than in Europe itself – though it does depend a bit on the topic. Topics such as trade and particularly migration result in more negative images, while humanitarian action and work on peace and security shape a more positive image. The EU's long-standing track record on development cooperation is clearly a strongly positive influence on the Union's image. In all the country visits the overall image of the EU external action also emerges as relatively positive and in Georgia very positive.
- xi. *Close EU observers are the most critical:* Brussels based journalists are one of the most critical and sceptical groups about EU external action, but actual articles in many European newspapers are relatively positive. On the other hand there is considerable negativism about the EU in the UK media and in the one American paper surveyed (the New York Times) whose coverage emerged as very critical. CSOs and Think Tanks are also critical observers who can see behind the

communication efforts of the EU and have a basis for comparing rhetoric with reality and point out the differences.

5.1.5 The nature of the EU imposes constraints that impact on its visibility

The EU is a particular state construct unlike any other. Various specific constraints with which the EU has to work due to its unique nature are identified and their impact on the EU's visibility is recognised by well-informed respondents. This emerged in the findings for EQ3 (Are officials promoting a clearly defined single image), EQ5 (Coordination between EU institutions and with Member States) and EQ6 (Policy coherence). From these the following conclusions were drawn:

- xii. *The specific nature of the European Union* imposes certain constraints on its visibility and image. Several examples of the challenges this imposes emerged during the study. Among these we should recognize that the EU's unique nature as a state construct (not a nation state but also not a traditional multilateral organisation) means that it often has to explain its own nature and identity (which, to further complicate things, is also regularly changing) in a way other state organisations do not. This is not helped when at times parts of the construct pull in different directions or seem to deny its importance to themselves. Another example is the fact that the leadership of the Commission is appointed and not elected. This weakens their popular legitimacy inside the EU, but more importantly in communication terms, means that commissioners cannot be counted on to be attractive personalities for the media and the public in the way elected politicians usually are, nor necessarily have personal images that go beyond their own member state. Political leaders at national level can also have poor media images, but at the European level these are easily magnified. A third example of the way the nature of the EU imposes particular communication challenges is the fact that in development assistance (and indeed even more in humanitarian assistance) the EU is a funder, but not an implementer. It is thus regularly not on the front line, but somewhat in the background. On the other hand, to counter this, is the fact that it has a network of Delegations around the world that is among the largest of any state or multilateral organisation globally. Its scale and the resources it deploys means that its presence is widely visible.
- xiii. *The problems of internal EU competition for visibility* between different actors within the EU system is certainly an issue in Brussels and in some of the countries visited. However, this does seem less serious at the country level where the tendency to work together as one-EU vis-à-vis the external world appears to be stronger. Personalities certainly play an important part but this is not the only issue. In Brussels, some press and information officials clearly feel in competition to promote their particular leader or institution and feel very limited or no responsibility to promote a unified EU image. This rather worrying finding is also picked up by external observers. The leadership is probably not strong enough on this issue. Coordination on messages exists within each institution, but inter-institutional mechanisms to build consensus on key messages or agree them fast in an emergency are lacking.
- xiv. *Cooperation and coordination between the EU and the MS* on unified messages is clearly often an issue though there are also cases of them adopting consistent messages. Differences quickly emerge when national interests are at stake and when immediate reactions are required to political events. It takes time to build a consensus message yet the media require responses much faster. There are some small indications that the Lisbon Treaty arrangements (EEAS+HRVP) do really

allow consensus and a single unified EU message to emerge faster than under the Nice arrangements. Based on the number of times this issue of EU and Member State coordination came up in just about all the evidence collection exercises, it is clear that this is probably the single most important constraint faced by the EU in improving the visibility of its external action.

- xv. *Policy Coherence* is perhaps more of an issue for visibility than most officials seem to think. Of course, all state organisations have problems with policy coherence, but these are more acute for a large and complex construct with multiple actors such as the EU. While it is true that the general population is not sufficiently informed about the EU and its policies, close observers such as the Brussels press or CSOs are very aware of instances of policy incoherence. The relatively well-informed respondents to the E-Survey, many of them at some distance from Europe, for instance gave a more negative score on policy coherence than on all other questions. Policy coherence thus clearly remains a source of concern for informed people and something that has an important impact on the EU's image. Sometimes particular issues such as the degree to which the EU really pursues its 'values' (eg. human rights, democracy) or its policies in sensitive area such as migration, do achieve higher levels of public awareness and contradictions can become quickly apparent. The EU's trade and economic interests in particular are seen to take priority over 'values' when there is a clash. Some feelings of political 'bias', with the EU being seen to favour some groups or countries more than others, also emerged in one case.

5.1.6 The resources for promoting the visibility of EU external action have been adequate

At an early stage in the evaluation agreement was reached not to do a systematic inventory of all the funds the services for EU external action spend on promoting visibility²⁶. This decision does seem to have been well justified, as a first overall conclusion reached on resources was that there seemed to be enough financial resources for communication work and the issues emerging were more around how they were used and by whom. In terms of human resources most Delegations visited appeared to have one communication and information officer and staff shortages were, by and large, not raised as an issue. Thus no strong evidence on inadequacy of resources surfaced from any of the sources consulted.

On the other hand two points did emerge at the country level: first on the distribution of resources and secondly on the need to review resources for the new post-Lisbon context did emerge. Thus EU Delegations seemingly have too few resources in some cases and not all implementing agencies are using the funds they are given well. Equally it was argued in several cases that with the new more political role of Delegations under the Lisbon Treaty they will have a greater need for resources for communication. EQ8 (Resources for EU visibility) and EQ9 (Results in relation to costs) address this topic and were answered on the basis of findings from various sources.

The conclusion emerging from this evidence can be summarised as follows:

- xvi. *Resources for visibility/communication* broadly seem to be adequate as this did not emerge as a real issue, but their distribution does cause some difficulty at times. It is clearly important that each funded programme should have a visibility budget, but EUDs may then not have many resources at their direct disposal. Some EUDs

²⁶ The reasons for this decision are explained in the Inception Report (page 51). Essentially they related to the difficulties of calculating the total amount spent on visibility because these vary considerably from one programme to another and there is no fixed proportion.

are experimenting with pooling budgets and also with hiring outside expertise. Their visibility strategy, action plans and budgets also need to be reviewed in the context of their changing role under Lisbon and this may well require an increase in resources. Human resources and expertise for communication are apparently available, though even among the 6 countries visited this did vary considerably between EUDs. Although most EUDs visited had one communication and information officer this appeared to be more adequate in some places than in others, with practical evidence of inadequacies in some cases and the hiring of support from external communication consultants in others. HQ are making systematic efforts to promote training opportunities, encourage the exchange of experience through promoting networks of communication staff and provide expertise on an on-going 'help-desk' basis. In some cases EUD staff were specific that, rather than a lack of finance, the biggest problem they faced in doing communication work was getting approval on a clear EU political strategy in a particular situation and then political agreement on the messages and priorities to be pursued in communication work. The use of visibility/ communication funds by partners implementing projects was clearly very variable however and the thematic studies highlighted various difficulties that partners experienced in achieving strong visibility results.

5.2 Recommendations

A number of different recommendations emerge from different parts of this study and can be found in each of the individual reports. In this overall report however, the recommendations are directly linked to the overall conclusions summarised in the previous section. The six overall conclusions just listed thus each suggest a number of key recommendations grouped according to the same six topics. Where specific recommendations emerged from the thematic studies these are highlighted in text boxes.

5.2.1 *Reaffirm, renew and strengthen the established image of EU external action*

The conclusion in the previous section that the image of EU external action is generally positive and broadly consistent with the communication strategy from 2006 suggests that there is a strong basis on which to build. At the same time there is an evident need for renewal in line with post-Lisbon Treaty realities. The main recommendation should therefore be to reaffirm, update and strengthen the strategy. This may not necessarily require substantial change, unless there is a wider strategic decision on the need to alter the EU's image.

On the other hand more thought could usefully be put into the quality and some of the details of the image that the EU leadership seeks to create for EU external action. Emerging from the conclusions of this study one can in particular stress that any future communication strategy should recognise the importance of:

- *Clear messages:* Having clear political strategies and messages are an essential foundation for effective communication work. This also links directly to the next recommendation on leadership.
- *Actions often speak louder than words:* Successful initiatives and project implementation is the best advertisement for EU external action. Focussing on communicating results is therefore a sensible strategy that emphasises the EU's ability to deliver.
- *Avoid raising unrealistic expectations:* Putting too much emphasis on the scale of EU funding or its potential role as a major global player, raises expectations which then cannot always be met. That in turn undermines the credibility of EU external action.

- *Finely tuned, accurate and appropriate communication* is particularly essential in politically sensitive areas of work such as conflict or migration where achieving outcomes may at times even call for less, rather than more, EU visibility.

Specific recommendations from individual thematic studies:

- **Conflict:** The EU should be mindful of the expectations it creates by its visibility actions. In crisis states and fragility seeking conflict prevention and peace building outcomes should be where the overwhelming focus should be placed. Visibility actions by themselves could be counter-productive if there is a credibility gap from what the EU “claims” as outcomes and its contribution and what people/elites both experience and perceive as the EU’s contribution to outcomes.
- **Migration:** Communication work should closely reflect actual policy and political outcomes in order not to mislead target groups. For achieving policy outcomes there may even at times be good reasons to have less visibility. Keeping a lower profile is sometimes preferable in order to avoid raising unrealistic expectations of what the EU can do.

5.2.2 Provide stronger central direction and leadership for communication work on EU external action

In the post Lisbon Treaty context the urgent need in terms of the implementation of communication strategies is to provide stronger overall leadership for a common EU approach to communication and visibility for EU external action. This is becoming an urgent priority that can also have major political consequences in strengthening the effectiveness of EU external action.

A number of important steps can be identified to put this into action:

- *A single overall communication strategy for EU external action* is urgently needed to replace the Draft Communication of February 2006 to cover all aspects of EU external action.
- *Complementary sectoral communication strategies*, such as the new one from DEVCO, can then be built around this common strategy and provide the greater level of detail that may be required in each policy area.
- *Ensuring regular close coordination on communication between services is vital.* This is required at both headquarters level through such common fora as E-RIC, and in terms of common clear messages for the EU Delegations. This is particularly required between the EEAS and DEVCO, but this coordination also needs to be extended to other relevant DGs such as DG COMM, DG TRADE or DG MARE.
- *Establish a rapid reaction cooperation mechanism* for agreeing communication messages and proactive strategies in reaction to external events. This mechanism should be able to involve all relevant DGs, but also extend to other EU institutions such as the Council Secretariat and ideally also to the Member States.
- *Coordinate EU external action communication messages with Member States.* This may be a more ambitious undertaking, but ultimately this is essential as external observers do not always differentiate between the EU institutions and individual Member States. Achieving such good coordination at country between EU Heads of Missions, is a first practical step that is perhaps most obvious. Ideally, the basis for such EU-wide coordination, should be Member States agreement on the single overall communication strategy for EU external action listed above. Existing tools such as

the Council working groups, correspondent networks and HoMs meetings in the field should be used to their full potential.

5.2.3 Agree that ‘working in partnership’ is an intrinsic part of the image of EU external action and a core message for communication

One of the key features of the way the EU works in international affairs is its continuing effort to work in partnership with other actors. This occurs at all levels, from its support to *effective multilateralism* and its extensive norm setting work at the international level, through its cooperation with most governments around the world, right down to its work with civil society actors or human rights defenders. Moreover, the idea of partnership is very much the hallmark of its internal construction as a Union and therefore intrinsic to the international image of the EU.

At the same time this study has shown that ‘working in partnership’, while clearly a sound approach that increases the effectiveness of EU external action, also imposes a trade-off in terms of reduced visibility for the EU because of the need to ‘share visibility’ with the partners. It is also apparent that if this is not sensitively managed it can create tensions.

The proposal is therefore that the EU should recognise ‘working in partnership’ is core to both its existing image and its approach to external action, and build the EU external action communication strategy around this principle. Rather than officials continuing to struggle with something that many of them see as making their job more difficult, ‘working in partnership’ should be seen as a positive value that needs to be brought forward and emphasised in all communication work.

Clearly the EU needs to go on paying attention to how visibility is managed with its partners and pushing the implementation of joint agreements such as the FAVA and the Joint Visibility Guidelines and Action Plan with the United Nations as well as the joint EU-UN website and annual report so as achieve the joint visibility that they aim for. But the EU should also accept that some reduction of individual visibility is a by-product of such partnerships and not necessarily a bad thing in itself: joint visibility also conveys a positive image. Equally there needs to be greater understanding of the visibility needs and other constraints of partners. For instance the neutral image of the UN is part of its value added that can be an advantage for the EU. Equally the greater ownership by partner country governments associated with budget support may mean less visibility for the EU but can greatly improve the chances for development outcomes. There is therefore a need for balance on the question of how to achieve visibility in partnerships and the EU senior management should provide clear leadership on the balance they expect. Agreeing that ‘working on partnership’ is one of the core messages of EU external action would be a clear way to provide that leadership.

The visibility opportunities available through different types of partnerships, such as providing core contributions to UN agencies rather than just programme funding, should also be seriously explored.

‘Working in partnerships’ is also evident in EU cooperation at other levels and with different types of partners. EU support to governments through the use of the *budget support* modality is perhaps the most evident example of an effective strategy that increases ownership and accountability and where the trade-off in terms of sharing visibility that has to be accepted by the EU is very apparent.

An important priority for visibility EU is at the higher level of actions in international fora. Here the EU is generally seen in a positive light with the potential to do more and can clearly stand out as a major global player in specific areas that it chooses. Such areas (e.g.

environment or climate change) provide important opportunities that should be taken advantage of in communication terms. At the same evidence shows the EU can also make mistakes at this level which can have a major impact on its image and care should therefore be taken to ensure it is not seen as overbearing and arrogant or as taking others for granted.

Specific actions to put this recommendation into practice could include:

- *Adopt ‘Working in Partnership’ as a key communication message* and a positive value to promote as part of the desired image of EU external action and as an element of its public diplomacy
- *Provide instructions on ‘shared visibility’ in the EU’s communication strategy and guidelines* that promote the ‘working in partnership’ message
- *Strengthen the listening side of the EU’s public diplomacy* so as to avoid the danger of appearing as overbearing or as taking partners’ support for EU positions for granted.

Specific recommendations from individual thematic studies:

In certain thematic areas different examples of such opportunities should be considered:

- **Environment:** The visibility of EU external action in the environmental sectors and the EU image as a global actor can be further strengthened by valorising the EU contribution to the achievements of global commitments such as UN environmental conventions and proposing suitable approaches within its diversified cooperation instruments.
- **Conflict:** (1) Ensure that UN agencies and their implementing partners follow visibility guidelines and monitor this closely, but accept that some loss of EU visibility may be an acceptable “trade off” as the UN is a crucial implementing partner that adds value beyond merely visibility. (2) Acknowledge good work in the INGO/CSO field to reward and incentivise performance in terms of visibility.
- **Migration:** EU and Member States should have a more coherent approach on how to communicate in policy areas of shared competence in a non-member country, especially where MS have an important mandate such as on migration.

5.2.4 Manage sensitively geographic and constituency variations in the visibility of EU external action

The EU has a global reach with Delegations and activities around the world yet the EU’s image varies and in each place the context and space for communication work is different. So while this means it is important for the EU to have a central external action visibility strategy that defines a global image, this also points to the need for EU communication and visibility work in any given context, to be based on careful study of how the EU and its actions are perceived locally. In other words good knowledge and understanding of these variations is vital and an important basis for designing targeted and effective local communication strategies.

The EU’s many Delegations are an important resource in this respect as they provide the infrastructure on which a detailed local knowledge of each national context can be built. Delegation staff have a variety of skills, expertise and local multi-actors contacts. Every effort must therefore be made to use this resource effectively and encourage internal exchange of knowledge and expertise in the formulation of locally sensitive communication strategies.

Box 8: The role of EU Delegation staff as spokespeople

As an example of good practice in increasing the EU’s “voices” at country level it is useful to note the

experience of the EU Delegation in Georgia. In interviews during the case study field visit it was established that EUD staff, including contract agents, were encouraged and had the authorisation to speak to journalists on topics within their areas of competence. Additional support was given by the press and communication officer to these staff as requested. EU Delegation staff and contract agents highly appreciated this level of trust and flexibility shown by the senior management of the EU Delegation.

On the demand side the Tbilisi based members of the media interviewed were also extremely positive about the level of access they had to staff across the EU Delegation it being a recurring positive theme in almost all interviews with this target group. Obviously Georgia is a particular case of a very pro-EU country in which there exists a largely positive press corps, so a measure of caution may be required in replicating this open practice without taking other specific contexts into consideration. But clearly the fact that EU Delegation staff had this greater responsibility was appreciated both by themselves and by their interlocutors in the media.

In Europe informed audiences or stakeholders closest to home need to be tackled with particular care and attention. While these are often sympathetic to the concept and overall objectives of the EU, their close knowledge means they can be among the most critical and their extensive networks of contacts (in some cases stretching around the world) can mean they have a far-reaching impact on others.

Specific actions to implement this fourth recommendation could therefore include:

- *Ensure communication strategies are well adapted to specific contexts* by making sure they are based on a solid local understanding of the situation and context
- *Make full use of the local knowledge in EU Delegations* in adapting communication strategies to specific contexts.
- *Design specific communication strategies for selected well informed and critical audience groups.* Well informed stakeholders can be a real asset as communication relays, but they need to be treated appropriately as they can also quickly spot the gaps and inconsistencies.

5.2.5 Pay special attention to the impact on visibility of the EU's specific nature

There is little one can do about the specific nature of the EU, the constraints this imposes and the impact that this can have on the EU's image. It is best to simply accept this as a given and rather focus on being carefully attuned to the difficulties such features can cause and be prepared to tackle them with set responses. In particular it is useful to:

- *Maintain a single clear common communication strategy* ideally for all EU institution services (cf. Recommendation 2 above)
- *Insist on a single EU image* in all circumstances certainly at the level of EU institutions and wherever possible also with EU member States
- *Consistently play down differences between different services and institutions* and wherever possible seek to issue single and/or joint EU statements and messages that minimise differences between particular EU figure heads
- *Pay close attention to maximising policy coherence* both in practical terms and in terms of external perceptions.
- *Ensure good on-going internal communication* between staff responsible for different sectors and policies (cf. Recommendation 2 above).

Achieving a coordinated EU image with the Member States will be one of the most difficult aspects of a single EU image to achieve as it is largely beyond the reach of EU institution

officials to influence to any great extent. However, it is a vital issue and one to which all officials need to devote energy. In particular it is important to:

- *Use to the full existing tools for creating coordinated positions among Member states, such as Council working groups many of which the EEAS now chairs.*
- *Establish a dedicated mechanism to promote coordinated communication on EU external action with Member States.*

For EU Delegations encouraging such unity of purpose among EU member state representations in country is probably one of their most important tasks in terms of building up an effective image for EU external action. Agreeing joint and integrated response strategies (see Box 9 below) for any particular context, upon which a joint communication strategy can then be built, is probably an essential starting point.

- *Use Head of Mission meetings²⁷ and exchanges to ensure coordinated communication on EU external action with Member States in country.*
- *Build on existing joint integrated strategies and ensure they include a communication element from the start.*

Box 9: Joint integrated strategies can provide a better basis for communication work

In certain particularly challenging contexts for external action the EU institutions and member states have started to devise and agree integrated strategies, such as the recent Framework Strategy for the Horn of Africa (Nov. 2011) and the Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel (March 2011).

In principle these provide integrated frameworks from which a joint EU communication strategies could be drawn. Yet these integrated strategies are the exception rather than the norm and it remains to be seen whether the actors involved can effectively use these strategies as foundations on which to base more integrated and coherent EU external action messages.

5.2.6 Review the distribution of resources for promoting the visibility of EU external action particularly at the level of EU Delegations

Review the distribution of resources for visibility and in particular re-examine whether EU Delegations do not need more resources than they control themselves. Ensure a minimum level of staff dedicated to communication work with adequate expertise in each Delegation

The funding of visibility work in EU Delegations should also be reviewed in the light of their more political role under the Lisbon Treaty. This change is likely to warrant more resources for public diplomacy.

Action points should therefore include:

- *A review of EU Delegation access to and control over adequate resources for communication on cooperation activities in country and to look at whether they have enough resources given their new more political role under the Lisbon Treaty.*
- *Learn the lessons from the experience of the Indonesia EUD on pooling communication budgets and assess if this provides a useful model for other delegations to adopt.*

²⁷ By 'Head of Mission meetings' we refer to in-country coordination systems between the EU member state missions and the EU Delegation. These can be held at the level of the Heads of Mission themselves but clearly can also be conducted at the level of officials in the missions dealing with different specific issues.

- *Ensure EU Delegations have adequate capacity to monitor programme implementers use of communication funds in programme budgets.* While it is important that programme partners devise and manage their own visibility programmes with the funds allocated for this purpose, EUD staff need to have the time and capacity to support and work with them in this so as to ensure the benefits of this communication work are maximised.

Specific recommendation from one of the thematic studies:

- **Environment:** The pilot initiative by EUD Indonesia on the pooling of project funding for communication should be evaluated so as to provide clear indications on its replicability in the country and elsewhere and possibly provide models and guidelines for future application.

5.2.7 Other specific recommendations for each theme

Various more detailed recommendations on the implementation of visibility strategies and actions emerged from some of the individual thematic studies:

Food crisis:

1. The Visibility of the Food Facility should be coordinated at country level to improve coherence and harmonization.
2. The preparation of the visibility plan should stay under the responsibility of the implementing agency and its implementation
3. Consistently develop EU communication and visibility action plans according to a Food Facility strategy at country and regional levels. Countries where rural development and food security are not focus/priority sectors could benefit from sharing experience of the EU strategy in countries where these are focus sectors.
4. Visibility action plans should be prepared according to a unified communication integrated in a FS/FF strategy defined at national/regional and/or international level.

Environment:

Coordination on communication priorities should be addressed as an integral component of strategy building (for country and regional cooperation) and be included as a cross-cutting issue in project design, implementation and monitoring. This should facilitate mobilization of appropriate technical, human and financial resources and allow for improved monitoring and evaluation of policies, strategies and programmes.

Conflict and conflict prevention:

1. Coherence of action and messages is necessary to maintain credibility so this should flow from an agreed EU political strategy. The EU in its visibility actions should not spend time or resources in differentiating its different aspects and be aware that all “EU” actors will be perceived as one entity.
2. The EU visibility guidelines place a strong emphasis on the importance of “conflict sensitivity” and “risk management”. That is that EU visibility must be planned, implemented and evaluated with its possible impact on conflict dynamics as a key consideration. If in the initial phases EU visibility is regarded as a risk that could damage potential goals or at worst put implementers and those participating at risk

then a differentiated response must be allowed with limited or no visibility²⁸. There must be no unyielding requirements to follow EU visibility guidelines if specific reasons can be presented why they may be counterproductive for conflict prevention and peace building aims or the safety of staff or implementers.

3. It is recommended that EU makes conflict sensitivity a requirement of its visibility guidelines in conflict and conflict prone areas applicable to all actions of itself and its implementing partners including international and local civil society.

Climate Change & Energy:

1. Appropriate and tailored communication tools in accordance with stakeholders expectations and capacity is a key factor in determining perceptions and EU overall visibility. The medium of radio should be more significantly deployed when attempting to communicate on a mass scale, as the reach of radio stations and user-ship is far higher than for newspapers.
2. To enable education about what the EU is and what it does in Cambodia, the EUD could consider approaches such as support to a series of talk-back shows or similar radio format, to discuss what the EU is, what it is made up of, and how it is helping.
3. Coordination on communication priorities should be addressed as an integral component of strategy building (for country and regional cooperation) and be included as a cross-cutting issue in project design, implementation and monitoring.

Financial crisis:

Despite positive visibility around its actions on support to developing countries the financial crisis, EU communication and visibility actions are still far from reaching the general public in some beneficiary countries such as Grenada. In order to overcome this issue, it would be advisable for the EU to use a simpler wording and put more emphasis on the benefits of EU support when providing information on what it is doing. Moreover, interviewed people in Grenada suggested that the EU might develop brochures on its structure, history and activities to be circulated in key places (e.g. schools, libraries, etc.), increase its engagement with NGOs, involve more and on a regular basis the local media, and might also promote more initiatives such as discussion programs on TV, workshops, documentaries, and sites visits. Journalists also felt that the EU could communicate more with the local media on a regular basis.

Migration theme:

General

- The EC should learn the visibility lessons from the experience of designing a project such as CIGEM, negatively marked by the fact that a new policy approach was turned too rapidly into a support intervention to a particularly sensitive area.

Specific to CIGEM

- Migration is an important issue that is very much in the public eye in Mali. There are visibility benefits therefore to be had from the EU extending and amplifying the support provided to civil society in this area, either to meet the needs of specific categories of individuals and groups affected by migration through CIGEM or independently.
- In visibility terms it would be valuable for the EU to combine better migration with development strategies where it has excellent records, allowing for migration issues to

²⁸ The EU's Communication and Visibility Manual, 2010 (p.17) allows for exceptions to be made for security.

be fully integrated into local development interventions driven by the on-going decentralization process in the country.

5.3 Summary of key conclusions and recommendations

For ease of reference and to support the logic of the argument the most important key points from the above discussion on conclusions and recommendations have been summarised in the table below.

Table 6: Summary Table of Principal Conclusions and Recommendations

	Conclusions	Recommendations
1.	<p>The image of EU external action is in line with pre-Lisbon official priorities</p> <p>The public image of the EU's external action is substantially in line with what the EU itself has sought to promote. Stakeholders are however often critical of the quality of the EU's image and feel there is often a gap between rhetoric and reality.</p>	<p>Reaffirm, renew and strengthen the established image of EU external action</p> <p>The EU should reaffirm, update and strengthen, but not necessarily seek to substantially change, the visibility strategy for its external action. Efforts should be made to improve the quality of that image however, particularly by communicating more on results and by avoiding raising unrealistic expectations.</p>
2.	<p>Communication on EU external action lacks overall direction and leadership</p> <p>This is particularly true since the post-Lisbon Treaty reorganisation. While there are some efforts to re-establish internal coordination (ERIC) and on communication strategy there is still no strong sense of central leadership or of a new overall EU external action communication strategy emerging.</p>	<p>Provide stronger central direction and leadership for communication work on EU external action.</p> <p>A single overall communication strategy for EU external action with complementary sectoral strategies is needed. The EU should also ensure regular close coordination on communication between services and establish an urgent action cooperation mechanism. Finally it should coordinate EU external action communication messages with Member States.</p>
3.	<p>Working in partnership with others is essential but there is a trade-off in lower EU visibility.</p> <p>Partnerships with other organisations (UN, governments, NGOs, etc.) are vital in EU external action, but there is a trade-off as visibility then needs to be shared. This remains a source of tension and too much insistence being put on EU visibility can undermine the effectiveness of the cooperation and the sense of ownership felt by partners.</p>	<p>Agree that 'working in partnership' is an intrinsic part of the image of EU external action and a key message for communication</p> <p>One of the key features of the way the EU works in international affairs is its continuing effort to work in partnership with other actors. The EU should therefore recognise 'working in partnership' is core to both its existing image and its approach to external action, and build its external action communication strategy around this principle. At the same time it should accept that some reduction of its own visibility is a by-product of such partnerships that can even in itself be positive. EU senior management should provide clear leadership on the balance of the trade-off they expect in this area.</p>
4.	<p>The image of EU external action varies both geographically and by constituency</p> <p>While certain high profile features of the EU (e.g. the €) are known around the world, the image of the EU's external action varies from place to place and among stakeholders. Some of the EU's closest and best-informed</p>	<p>The EU needs to manage sensitively the geographic and constituency variations in the visibility of EU external action.</p> <p>The EU's world-wide network of Delegations are a major asset in this respect. In Europe, communication with informed and critical audiences closest to home need to be</p>

	observers are the most critical.	tackled with particular care and attention.
5.	<p>The nature of the EU imposes constraints that impact on its visibility</p> <p>The specific nature of the EU imposes certain constraints on its visibility and image. For instance problems of internal competition for visibility between EU actors continue to exist. A lack of cooperation and coordination between the EU and the Member States in external action, remains a key problem and policy coherence is a more of an issue for informed external observers than officials often seem to think.</p>	<p>Pay special attention to the impact on visibility of the EU's specific nature</p> <p>EU external action officials from all different services and institutions need to be very aware of the importance of projecting a single EU image. Promoting a well-coordinated EU image with Member States is highly desirable and should be a key objective for all officials and particularly those in leadership positions. Close attention should be paid to policy coherence both in practical terms and in terms of external images and messages.</p>
6.	<p>The resources for promoting the visibility of EU external action have been adequate.</p> <p>No strong evidence on inadequacy of resources for communication surfaced from any of the sources consulted. On the other hand the distribution of resources, particularly at the country level, does raise some concerns, with EU Delegations seemingly have too few resources in some cases and not all implementing agencies using the funds they are given well.</p>	<p>Review the distribution of resources for communication work particularly at the country level.</p> <p>Examine in particular the need for EU Delegations to perhaps have more resources and adequate expertise directly at their disposal. The funding of communication and information work in EUDs should also be reviewed in the light of their new political functions under the Lisbon Treaty.</p>