EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
DRAFT BUDGET OF THE EUROPEAN UNION FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2014

DRAFT AMENDMENT

TABLED BY: Marietje Schaake, Morten Lokkegaard

SECTION (**delete options not used**):
III: Commission

Heading: Heading 3							
Line n°: 1603770X							
Line Title: Preparatory Action Share Europe Online							
	Commission - DB 2014		**Council - 2014**		**Amendment**		**New amounts**	
	Commit.	**Paym.**	**Commit.**	**Paym.**	**Commit.**	**Paym.**	**Commit.**	**Paym.**
Appropriations					1.750.000	875.000	1.750.000	875.000
Reserve								

NOMENCLATURE (**delete options not used**):
a) Create the following new line: 1603770X

REMARKS (**delete options not used**):
Add the following:

Social media and the internet have changed access to information and communication between people drastically. The EU institutions should improve the way they use these ground-breaking tools. EU institutions can use social media networks and online platforms in more innovative ways. There is no joint communication policy between the various EU institutions on the use of these tools. Moreover these tools are still too often used as a way to simply spread a message, while they offer the opportunity of horizontal conversation between politicians and the people they serve and represent. In contrast to other media (TV, radio, newspapers), the internet (and social media in particular) should be used to allow citizens to interact: to provide policy makers with ideas and to start discussion on different visions on policy proposals or projects.

The EU must adapt to the online reality in its communication strategy. The EU must allow EU citizens to interact and to contribute. EU communication is at present unfortunately still very much a top-down process that lacks interaction and adaptation to the possibilities that new media bring. Even if the user rate of social networks in Europe is circa 90% (among internet users), the EU's communication strategy is not yet embracing social networks, internet and mobile services to improve access to information on EU policy or to involve European citizens. Some MEPs and Commissioners may be using social networks very actively, yet the main EU institutions can do a lot to open up, to include citizens better and to make information available, searchable and sharable.

Share Europe Online has successfully run as a pilot project since 2012, receiving positive reactions from stakeholders at both the central institutional level and from the national offices implementing the project.

The pilot project aimed at improving the way EU institutions use these new media, focussing on their local offices in Member States. The project introduced the practice of social media community management in the EP Information Offices and Commission Representations in order improve the provision of information to citizens online and make EU related information more accessible. An important objective was to build the offices' capacity for enhanced activity on social media by upgrading their staff's skill-base through training and coaching by the appointed community managers.

The pilot project has contributed to narrowing the gap in EU institutional communication via social networks in local languages and on local platforms, thanks to increased and more coordinated activity of the involved offices. Making accessible EU related content which is appealing, relevant to the national community and optimised for social sharing is leading to increased levels of interaction. This is not only

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fostering dialogue between the EU and its citizens but also between the citizens themselves.

The reach and influence of the institutions' activities are increasing thanks to more targeted communication and partnerships with opinion leaders and local actors including grassroots and civil society organisations. This allows extending the debate on European topics to a much larger public and broadening the European public sphere.

Through better insight into the conversations taking place on social media, the institutions are also improving their ability to listen and take stock of the concerns of citizens who are increasingly organising themselves on these networks. Share Europe Online aims to facilitate interaction and access to information, and not to send out opinions about the EU in a top down manner, which risks being perceived as propaganda.

The budget of the preparatory action 'Share Europe Online' should serve to consolidate the positive practice started under the pilot project in order to complete the upgrade of skills and facilitate further organisational change. The aim is to bring the EP Information offices and Commission Representations to the level of expertise required to fully take advantage of the possibilities offered by social media to foster interaction with citizens.

As in the pilot the preparatory action should be implemented involving people within the EU institutions as well as through involving outside experts, civil society and grass roots organisations. Implementation of the project should take place on the basis of jointly agreed working methods between the involved EU institutions.

The rise of social networks has led businesses to create the job of 'community manager'. Community managers act as an interface between a company and its clients, they "spread the good word about the company in a language that is specific to social networks, they manage virtual communities and understand and respond to their needs" (http://www.colpis.cat/files/documents/388_material.pdf). With this preparatory action, EU 'community managers' introduced in the 'Share Europe Online' pilot project could continue to make information about the EU accessible and to represent the various EU institutions or independent information about the EU and its proceedings.

´Share Europe Online´ should integrate (parts of) existing programs such as EU direct, Euronews, the various web platforms, communication strategies and archives of EU information. Furthermore, the preparatory action could continue the work already undertaken under the pilot project 'Share Europe Online'.

- JUSTIFICATION -
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NB: Max. 500 characters .

This action will allow the EU to be more efficient, to save on budgets, to better reach out to young constituents and to better be informed about what EU citizens expect or want. Through the increase of interaction and the use of open data, a dialogue will be fostered not only between the EU and its citizens but also between the citizens themselves. It would connect Europe's institutions to citizens and make it more accessible to the rest of the world as well.