

**EP COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR THE
2009 EUROPEAN ELECTIONS
COMPLEMENTARY DECENTRALISED EE09 ACTIVITIES**

SPEECH BY

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Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen. I am very pleased to be here this morning and inform on the European Parliament's plans for the 2009 European elections.

After listening to Alejo's introduction, I will say few words on the election activities that are planned in the 27 Member states.

The institutional campaign will be conducted under a single strategy with a single message, common in all Member States.

However, the key to any campaign's success is its implementation at decentralised level.

Of course, we wish to reverse the low turn out trend of the past elections. In 27 Member States around 375 Million voters can decide on the composition of the new European Parliament. It is fundamental to do our best in bringing Europe closer to people and people - to Europe.

The key thing is to speak the language that people speak. Not only in terms of official languages, but also in terms of feelings, political and cultural differences from one Member State to another.

An EU-wide communication campaign can only work if adapted to national and regional contexts. We therefore give great importance to how this single European elections strategy will be carried out in the Member states.

Our Information offices are the main actors on the ground. They have been closely involved with adapting the campaign's strategy, message and instruments to the national characteristics.

Let me just pause to greet them since they are following this event live in Member State capitals.

The Information Offices have invested particular efforts in gaining cooperation from national, regional and local partners. It is the way to ensure that Parliament's message reaches out to the largest number of citizens. Ensure that citizens are duly informed about the European elections and about what's at stake.

I would like to highlight some instruments we will use. Starting from 1st of April, Parliament's Poster campaign will appear in many countries, followed by street installations. An interactive multimedia studio - called Choice Box - will be set up to allow the citizen to record video messages and send them to Europe. You will be able to see a prototype of the choice box a little later.

We will communicate loud and clear that the European Parliament is important for the citizens and that their voice counts in the European Union. Every voter has a choice to make: *It's your choice! - Deine Entscheidung!*

All communication instruments will give the political parties the possibility to engage in the debate and to put forward their positions.

I would like to give you an idea of the dimension of the campaign. Posters will be placed in around 15.000 billboard sites in over 100 cities and towns all around the European Union. Street installations will travel to more than 100 cities and towns. Numerous street events are also planned.

To reinforce and broaden the impact of the outdoor campaign, public transports networks will be used to spread information packages in countries such as Czech Republic, Estonia, Denmark and Finland.

Particular attention will be given to reach citizens through the national and regional press via ads in newspapers. In addition, a number of seminars for regional and local media will be organised in most Member States.

To emphasize the decentralised aspect of the campaign, a number of road shows and country tours will be organised in several Member States bringing directly to cities and towns all over Europe the campaign and its message. In particular, road-shows have been put in place in the UK, Ireland, Spain and Portugal. For the first time the Parliament is doing its best to cover all regions.

To conclude, Parliament's campaign may not be perfect. However, within its budget, it has been designed to cover different communication channels and to maximize the chances of reaching the citizen, no matter where he or she lives.

Before giving the floor to Francesca Ratti, let us set the scene for you by showing you a short video which shows in a couple of minutes the work invested by Parliament staff into putting the campaign together.

Thank you.