

Brussels, 12 February 2009

Commission re-launches Europe Direct information network

A second generation of the Europe-wide network of Europe Direct information centres for 2009—2012 was launched today. The new network will extend possibilities for citizens to get practical information and advice on exercising rights in the European Union. The general public will be able to turn to one of the 500 information centres to get their specific questions on EU matters answered. The Europe Direct centres will also provide feedback from citizens to the EU institutions, and actively promote local and regional debate on EU topics.

“For the last four years, the Europe Direct information centres have been bridging the gap between the EU institutions and the general public. In view of the upcoming European elections, today’s launch of the renewed Europe Direct network is an important initiative in our efforts to communicate more effectively on European issues,” said Commission Vice-President Margot Wallström, in charge of Communication Strategy.

Hans-Gert Pöttering, President of the European Parliament, said: "In June European citizens will decide who will represent them in the European Parliament for the next five years. MEPs vote on issues which affect us all – from consumer protection to regulation of the financial markets. But many people know little about their role. Europe Direct Information Centres can help citizens learn more, and in so doing, motivate them to use their vote."

The Europe Direct information centres in the Member States are one of the European Commission's means of providing outreach for the general public at local level. The services of the centres are free to the general public. The Europe Direct information network was first launched in 2005. The centres will receive an annual grant of up to 25 000 Euros from the European Commission for their EU information activities and will have to provide at least 50% co-financing.

Press Enquiries:

<http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/pdf/Decision-de-la-Commission-EN.pdf>

http://ec.europa.eu/europedirect/index_en.htm