Systems and services for eParticipation in News creation and distribution: The WEB DEP Project

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WEB DEP
WESTERN BALKANS DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

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The WEB.DEP Concept

The primary aim of WEB.DEP is to establish **an important communication & information management network** hosted by the National News Agencies of three Western Balkan countries

The project involves policy makers and stakeholders from Western Balkans such as relevant Governmental and Local Authorities, Public News Agencies and citizens into the eDemocracy processes, **supported through a unified web based environment, under a set of specified procedures and a common code of ethics**

Innovative Role of News Agencies

As media organisations, news agencies act as go-between Government/ Citizen

In this case, using conscious code of ethics to….

- Present the news "unedited" and "uncommented" (facts not opinions)

- Involve stakeholders (e.g. government and experts)

- Manage (moderate) forum

- New democratic context = big change for news agencies (relationship government & citizens)

WEB.DEP Consortium & Duration

> **Project Coordinator**
>   - Athens Technology Center S.A. (Greece)
> **Academic Partners**
>   - National Technical University of Athens (Greece)
>   - Napier University (UK)
> **EU News Agencies & Journalists Associations**
>   - Journalist Union of Macedonia & Thrace Daily Newspapers (Greece)
> **Western Balkan New Agencies**
>   - Albanian Telegraphic Agency (Albania)
>   - Macedonian Information Agency (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)
>   - Telegraphic Agency of New Yugoslavia (Serbia)
> **Governmental Organisations**
>   - Counsel of Ministers of Republic (Albania)
>   - Secretariat for European Affairs (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)
>   - Ministry of Internal Affairs (Serbia)

Starting Date: 01 January 2007
Finishing Date: 31 March 2009

WEB.DEP Influence Model
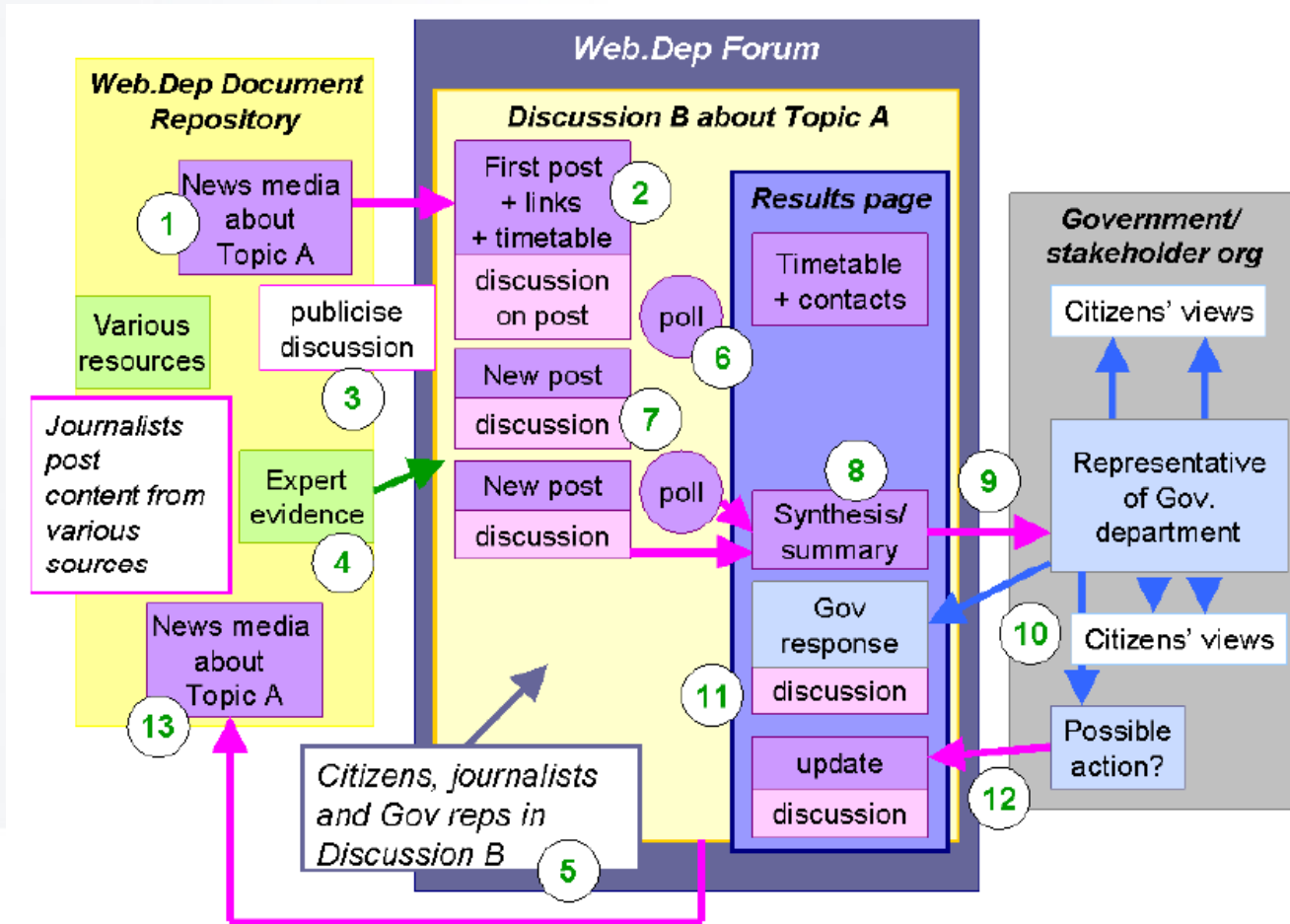
WEB.DEP Current Status

Communication Network established in the three Western Balkans Countries, involving in total:

- ✓ 3 National News Agencies

- ✓ 18 Governmental Organisations

- ✓ About 30 Journalists

A large number of Citizens in each Western Balkan Country is also targeted

Main Features of the WEB.DEP Communication Environment

WEB DEP
WESTERN BALKANS DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

➢ **3 WEB.DEP Local News Portals in local (one in each Country)**
  ✓ News by date and category through a News Management System
  ✓ Photo Gallery
  ✓ E-Polls

➢ **3 WEB.DEP Local Forums (one in each Country)**
  ✓ Discussions by date, category and linked to News in the Portal
  ✓ Discussion Results (closed discussions)
  ✓ E-Polls

➢ **WEB.DEP Central Forum (located in Greece)**
  ✓ Discussions by date, category and linked to News in the Portal
  ✓ Discussion Results (closed discussions)
  ✓ E-Polls

  All Portals & Forums are interconnected

WEB.DEP Forum Structure

Albanian forum

Managed by: ATA

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia forum

Managed by: MIA

Serbian forum

Managed by: Tanjug

Good discussions are summarised and started in the English- Language forum

English-language forum
Language: English
Managed by: ATA, MIA
 and Tanjug
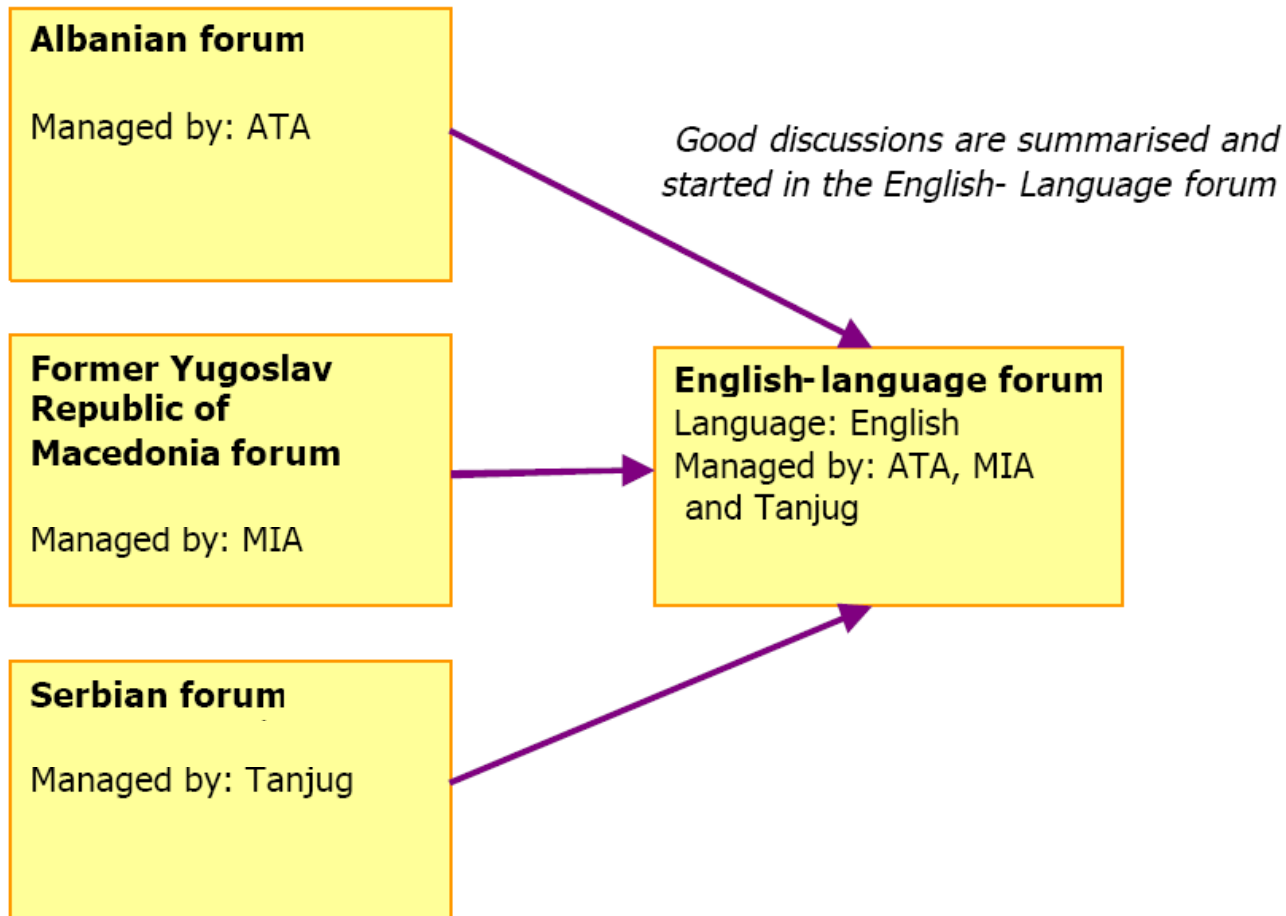
Thematic Areas

- **Art & Culture**
- **Economy & Business**
- **Education**
- **Environment**
- **Human Rights**
- **Labour**
- **Life Style**
- **Regional Development**
- **Science & Technology**
- **Social Issues**

ATA managed portal (Albanian portal)

http://www.ata.gov.al/web-dep

MIA managed portal (FYROM portal)

http://www.web-dep.mia.com.mk/MIA

Central (English-language) forum

http://central.web-dep.eu

Conclusions: What is there to gain?

- **Improve situation in the region (democracy, relations within and between countries)**
- **Many salient issues also unresolved in developed regions (e.g. moderation, identity, language)**
- **There are obvious roles available for media in eGovernance projects**
- **Possibly interest, engagement and fun**

Next Steps

- **Continuous dissemination activities in order to promote the WEB.DEP into the wider users' community**

- **Core evaluation period of the project results (September 08 – March 09)**

- **Organization of 3 National Workshops (October in Tirana, November / December in Skopje, November / December in Belgrad)**

Thank you for your attention!