**Workshop:**

**Is the mailing list an efficient way of keeping in touch?**

**What other format could be useful?**

The working group discussed the effectiveness of our ComNet mailing list, which is sent out either by EI staff from the Com unit, or from members of the ComNet network.

Participants agreed on several positive features of the list:

* Its format seems adequate
* The recipients are in general the right people to address
* The content is interesting and informative

Unfortunately, this does not seem to lead to an active engagement from the side of the recipients, which is the main reason why this workshop is being held at the ComNet meeting.

In order to look for possible causes, participants looked at what the mailing list could be lacking:

* One participant pointed out that there was no way to have a ‘history’ of the exchanged messages, in a forum-style fashion
* Some of the recipients (albeit not the ones belonging to the unions represented at the workshop) seemed to be the wrong people to address in relation to communications matters (general secretaries, international secretaries).
* Language could be a problem in some cases (i.e. English only, Spanish only)
* Empirically speaking, the emails trigger little interaction and engagement (see above)
* The e-mail list is a rather impersonal way of interacting with each other

The discussion then moved on to look into different communication alternatives like whatsapp and facebook, which foster interaction among the recipients and the sender(s), versus the mailing list or the website which were considered to be more static and ‘purely informative’. It was agreed that for a better communication within ComNet, both interactive and informative means were necessary to engage the network.

In this sense, the impersonal character of the network was addressed. During ComNet meetings, only a few of its members can ultimately travel to the meeting venue and get to know their peers. This then leads to a relative lack of empathy or engagement when receiving information. They key for improving the communications within ComNet would hence be to improve the mutual knowledge of its members. If interactions take place on other channels, the mailing list will automatically be a more active ground.

It was suggested to create a **facebook group** for ComNet, which would allow members to interact on both formal and informal levels, exchange information and get to know each other.

It is possible to sign up to a facebook group with a private account, or with the account that the trade union provides, and privacy settings can be adapted accordingly.