30 YEARS OF

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES

Club of Venice
1986-2016

30

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This book was published in November 2016 on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Club of Venice.

Published with the financial support of the Belgian State (Chancellery of the Prime Minister), the Government Offices of Sweden (Communications Division), the Government of the Italian Republic (Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Department for European Policies), the Ministry of General Affairs of the Netherlands (Public Information and Communication Office) and the European Parliament.

Government Offices of Sweden

Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri
Dipartimento per le Politiche Europee

European Parliament

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Coordination: Philippe Caroyez, Hans Brunmayr, Vincenzo Le Voci

Responsible editor: Belgian State – Chancellery of the Prime Minister
Legal deposit: D/2016/9737/10
November 2016
Graphic design: Fabienne Bonnoron

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FOREWORD

Sandro Gozi

Today with this book we wish to celebrate a smart idea of the then General Directorate for Information in 1986 and the political will of the then Secretary of the State of the Presidency of Ministers Giuliano Amato who allowed its official launch.

Thirty years on, that idea remains still very necessary. The Club of Venice, in fact, aims to connect the dots between communication experts from EU member states and EU institutions, as well as between representatives of science, communities and civil society. The Club of Venice is an informal network, although fully recognized providing an highly valuable service to the European system as a whole. From ethics to civil society, from the web tools to press freedom, from crisis communication to the crisis of communication or to climate change. These were just some of the issues dealt with in recent years.

We are convinced that the European Union means first and foremost sharing: sharing information, strategies, analyses and proposals. In a nutshell, we are firmly convinced of the deep value of communication exchange and coordination in Europe. That not only reflects one of the basic values of our Continent, but it is a necessary golden thread among its countries. Only by carrying on along this road we will be able to deal at best with the crises Europe is facing today from migrants to the economic crisis, from the fight against populism and nationalism to the relaunch of the European project.

Only with a shared approach to communication we will be able to convey to the public opinion the importance of belonging to the Union. In times like these where it seems easier for some to build walls of barbed wire and turn their back aeay from solidarity,
it is if the utmost importance to better communicate Europe, within and outside its borders. Thirty years of Club of Venice have meant more than eighty meetings all over Europe and every year, in the autumn session, a meeting in Venice. For thirty years with the same spirit, informal and oriented to the best communication possible on Europe, its values, its history and, above all, its future and its common challenges. This
year, with a very special attention to the upcoming anniversary of the sixty years of the Treaties of Rome.

Actually, this not "only" an anniversary, but an unique opportunity to relaunch the European process, to strengthen the link between citizens and institutions, starting with the achievements we have reached through our common project.
Communicating with passion, clarity and effectiveness is key to reach our goals. And we will always be able to rely on the valuable contribution of the Club of Venice to this end.

Thanks to all the friends of the Club and especially to the Chairman Stefano Rolando.

SANDRO GOZI
Secretary of State for European Affairs and Politics. Italy.

INTRODUCTION

Thirty years dedicated to a certain idea of Europe

Stefano Rolando

Goals and dreams

30 years is the age that usually convinces career parents not to wait any longer before having a child. 30 years mark the central story, so the high reflector, of each challenging career. Roughly speaking, 30 years are now substantial route of the greatest historical revolution of communications, that is, the history of the web.

Such examples enable us to understand - *we earthly beings*, governed by a limited life expectancy - that 30 years are, in fact from the earthly point of view, a long-term, complex, important period.

When our partnership - the Club of Venice - reached the age of 25, in 2011, that seemed a remarkable achievement. We made a publication of 268 pages, filled with colour photographs, with many contributions. Before the arising crises could bring us few unpleasant jokes, we made a real celebration. President Herman van Rompuy sent us a letter with truly flattering spirit and language. We had not even been to the moon, but that letter authorizing it to think about it.

Now we got to 30 years! We enjoy good health because - as everyone knows - the *Club of Venice* is not a "material" organization, does not have a budget, does not administer resources and careers, does not balance its membership in relation to its decision-making capacity. Simply because *it has no decision-making capacity*.

Since we are a "non-Club" it is now really difficult to explain why, after celebrating our 25th birthday with a book of 268 pages, we should do more and better for the 30th.

In the preface to the 25-Year book, five years ago, my friends Aurelio Sahagún Pool and Hans Brunmayr, a Spaniard who trained within the anti-franchism and an Austrian who trained in the Austro-Bruxelloise diplomacy, wrote a line of withering truth about the inconsistent and at the same time consistent nature of *the Club of Venice: "the Club of Venice was born with modest aims and great dreams".*
Yes, apparently modest purposes, but big dreams.

Here is the key. What purposes? Not to mediate, not to decide, not to negotiate, not to prevail, not to convince, not to win...but rather: to know, to know each other, to check, compare, expand, emulate, promote, de-stereotype, bring closer, ask, listen ...

What contribution to Europe?

But Europe - as we have learned well - is the art of making, within procedures.

To contribute to "building Europe" we chose the path of reducing procedures only to the rule of the *equal dignity of the word*, that is, to the *equal footing*. And we chose an immaterial "do" pointing to "Europeanize" psychologically

Stefano Rolando and Mike Devereau,
General Director of the Central Office of information, in the 90s.

the responsibility of operators aware of their duty of loyalty towards the nation that created them.
If we had to deal with electrical standards, equipment, food production, IT consulting, these "rules" would be nothing but fragile themes to organize occasional Rotary dinners. But one is not capable of lasting thirty years for a buffet.

What makes the rules for harmonizing approaches, visions and professional perimeters a good Europeanist investment is that we deal with a delicate, very delicate good: the *institutional communication*, which 40 years before the birth of the Club of Venice was the artillery of an immense fratricidal war and throughout those 40 years had contributed to divides owing to policies based on national jealousies.

Our new young generations

During these last 30 years ours and our officials' job profiles have changed.

Compared to individuals appearing in waterproof cloths with upturned collar - as in the images of Humphrey Bogart's movies - belonging among the 40s and 50s half-political journalism and half-espionage, we have represented a pro-European values generation, coming out of business and legal schools similar to each other, eager to modernize the public administrations in which we were being recruted.

Now - thirty years after - thousands of multi-lingual children, with mixed nationality families, with cultural and educational mobility experiences - what we call the *"Erasmus generation"* - have become the central body of organizations that look alike anthropologically and are no longer willing to barter for no reason freedom, peace, law and reason as default constraints of any "state" to serve.

For this generation, knowing, comparing, measuring and learning are increasingly the right way to "do Europe." We have invested on the future of a profession, hoping one day to find that generation in our place. In the several meetings opportunities promoted by the Venice Club - from Malta to Tallinn, from Poreč to Vienna, from Istanbul to Athens (as well as in the historical capitals of the founders of Europe) - we sau this "generation Erasmus" growing and consolidating itself. Our anthropological goal is reached.

Not everything is solved

It is fair to ask ourselves whether we also achieved the political and institutional goal of a real rapprochement between institutions and citizens, as well as of a communication genuinely service- and social-oriented and not supporting propaganda.

Here the discussion is necessarily diversified, by country and by themes.

I recalled many times that the Club of Venice drew its inspiration from the approval by the European Summit in Milan in 1985 of an important file, in addition to the single market. It was the "Europe of citizens", entailing many measures aimed at bringing institutions and society (among many, the "Erasmus" invention), which was also foreseeing the creation of more cohesive operational and professional structures capable of acting within a range of skills that had to be renewed. Inspired by this reasons and by those stimulations, we were ready since 1990 to open the doors to colleagues from Eastern Europe who were coming out of communism and were still only countries candidate to the EU membership.
We cannot say that the potential that Europe could express to boost a modern civil and social culture of government communication has reached all the goals would be something denied by the reality on which we are still debating. Especially in recent years of complaints against an aphasic Europe, victim of its crisis of identity. We were helped by technology, it is true. But I believe we haven't yet established a credible and consistent pact with citizens in which the European *civitas* everywhere implies an adequate participatory status.

10th anniversary celebration

STEFANO ROLANDO
Professor at IULM University (Milan), President of the Club of Venice, President of the Milano Branding Committee, Former Director-General of Information at the Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

Nevertheless, the gap between achievements and unresolved issues is the same reason that keeps our sessions open, in that experience that, five years ago, the president of the EU Council Herman van Rompuy judged "the great role in your Club discussions with a number of concrete proposals for improving communication on the European Union and towards the citizens of governments and institutions".

New recent conflicts around Europe

These past five years have given rise to new fronts of conflict around Europe and at the same time new paths of specialization and professional refinement: safety, military and terrorist crises, coping with migration, public diplomacy, public branding, data management, participatory capacity in the management of social policies - just to name a few examples. Communication has made steps towards logics and techniques that should now be shared heritage and not background for new dividing lines.

We regret having temporarily separated our fate from English colleagues, whose work has been throughout the '900 reference for high professional quality for European public communication. So much is alive me personal memory of the general manager of the UK Central Office of Information Neville Taylor who was, in 1986, among the strongest supporters of the foundation of this *Club of Venice*, as strong as his successors supported continuity - I would mention here Mike Devereu and Mike Granatt among many. I wish they continue to participate in our works and share our paths, learning and teaching as we all have mutually done in this way. I am sure that our Secretary-General Vincenzo Le Voci will work in this direction.

Perceiving together serious problems of our time

Just a final note. Last year we were invited by Greek colleagues and friends to Lesbos to appreciate very closely the relational and communicative complexity (in addition to the organizational, health-related, safety-wise and legal) due to the migratory pressure generated by wars, violence, famine , poverty and insecurity (the same factors throughout the history of mankind, as explained and told us by the Bible). On that occasion we understood that it is difficult to reason together when a country like Greece last year had to bear a pressure of 10% migrants compared to its population as well as Italy (7%), while the European average was 0.4%.
<u>But it was very important to be there together.</u>
Likewise, it was important to be in Istanbul or in Brussels after the terrorist attacks but it was important as well to be in Milan in the framework of a huge Expo devoted to the global issue of agro-food and environmental sustainability.

We did not do "professional tourism." We shared the symbolic condition to perceive "together" serious problems of our time which then can have a distinct narrative forms, but - as far as we are concerned - are binding our ethics to see some common sources of those stories.
When Aurelio and Hans wrote about *our limitations* but also about *our dreams*, they wanted to recall exactly this spirit.

The cardinal virtues of the Club of Venice...

Philippe Caroyez

Ce matin-là nous étions particulièrement secoués dans le bateau-taxi, qui nous conduisait de l'arrière du « Luna » à l'embarcadère de l'Isola di San Giorgio… alors qu'aperçu peu après de la fenêtre de la Fondazione Giorgio Cini, le retour du « motoscafo » sur le Grand Canal nous paraissait soudainement si calme.

That morning we were particularly shaken in the water taxi that took us from the back of the Hotel "Luna" to the pier of the Isola di San Giorgio... when, shortly after, seen from the window of the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, the return of "motoscafo" to San Marco and Canal Grande seemed suddenly so calm to us.

No doubt, those moments shared with colleagues of the Club can summarize on their own - metaphorically - what meetings of the Club of Venice have been able to bring to national and European public communicators: the necessary distance, but also the relativity of their positions and experiences, when they are compared, confronted, and shared.

The Club was founded by Stefano Rolando, then young Director-General for Information at the Presidency of the Italian Council of Ministers, who had the idea following his country's EU Presidency in 1985, with the aim not to lose the benefits of contacts established during this mandate. It met for the first time in Venice in 1986, when the nine EC Member States had just become twelve, by welcoming three "young democracies". This explains the particularity of the Club which is based around concerns and professional exchanges, while remaining informal, and without official structures. It is surely what makes its originality and interest: what is sometimes a (relative) "weakness" can also be its real strength.

The other national services of the member countries rapidly joined the core group, as well as representatives of European institutions, which from the beginning have been associated as "guests". A representative of the Council of Europe has also been present for some time.

The informality of the Club has enabled open discussion, without complacency, and in particular, welcoming representatives from the information services of the candidate countries before the enlargement waves of 1995, 2004, 2007 and 2013. Fruitful cooperation was born and still continues with the other candidate countries. Reflection and exchange on a professional basis have been a constant concern and a requirement to avoid the "temptation" by "diplomats" and other "spokespersons".

The Club has achieved a lot in this area, sharing views on the common "national" themes (health, employment, traffic safety, ...), on Community topics (the Treaty of the Union, the introduction of the euro, the European elections, enlargement and integration, the EU Constitutional Treaty, ...), on more recent cooperation issues (crisis communication and public health, fight against terrorism, ...), without neglecting the inter-institutional EU policy concerning information, communication and cooperation with member countries in this context (Citizen's first, PRINCE, Memorandum of Understanding, "Plan D" ... up to the introduction and abandonment of the "Management Partnerships" model).

In 2005 the Club also managed to set up the Internet platform "Venicenet", which today is THE data base of the Club and its main coordination tool, and from 2013 it revamped and re-started publishing the quarterly communication review "Convergences" (after a first pioneeristic phasis in the late 80s.

For 30 years, communicating in Europe and communicating on Europe, steadily improving this system of communication and continuing to create a better environment for communication professionals: without a shadow of a doubt these are the "4 cardinal points" that guide the Club of Venice's endeavours to carry out its work and address its concerns.
The course has tended to vary over the time, ever since the group was created over 30 years ago …with the focus being more on Europe than in Europe, more on ("new") distribution channels than the profession. It is

The Club of Venise... of the North.
Plenary meetings 1997 et 1998, Bruges.

not important. The course being steered will change once again but the horizon will stay the same!
All of our meetings bring us back to the fact that all these points are or should be linked.

Let us first of all consider the **profession**, which is pursued in the light of the twin-track duty of loyalty towards the institutions and towards citizens … This is not always a painless process, unfolding as it does in the midst of a challenging environment, often a legacy of propaganda, where a participatory deficit has been identified, owing to the absence of any genuine public debate or any interactive dimension.

Public communication people therefore need a regulatory (public communication legislation, ethical framework…) and professional (professional status, training, specific recruitment policy, structure of the profession…) framework to guarantee and promote their role and activities as the critical interface between
the authorities and citizens.

These issues are frequently discussed within the Club. Stefano Rolando points to the lack of consistency in this area, and, in the final analysis, the lack of progress over time … the (national) political model often wins out against the professional public communication model. In this respect, he notes that the model most generally accepted and championed by researchers and professionals, involving a status, an ethical framework, an assessment of the communication initiatives, pre-testing and post-testing … is the least common one in the professional structure of public communication at state level.

This bitter conclusion is shared by a great many stakeholders.

Next comes the issue of **communication** and constantly seeking to make changes for the better. Two recent national experiences are noteworthy in this regard: the United Kingdom in the midst of its structural and organisational changes based on streamlining services, measures and means, a process that seems all to familiar in the light of what other governments have embarked upon, and the Netherlands and its recent debate on current and future trends in the field of public communication.

In the case of the United Kingdom we note the striking example of a legislation introducing the requirement to make an assessment of public communication campaigns and initiatives. This approach should not only excite a great deal of interest but spark off a debate on what direction to take with the outcomes standards: a quasi-fiscal perspective (a "return on investment") or one focused on social relevance/effectiveness.

Over in the Netherlands, our colleagues have adopted both a research-oriented and participatory approach to considering developments in the field of public communication, its current and future trends. Lastly, moving in the opposite direction of "being modern" with the (imminently even more) "new means of communication" and the leap forwards represented by the propensity towards the "all social networks" approach (which has not spared the European institutions), the very foundations of the public communication system are being called

into question: participation, interaction, explanation, transparency, the responsibility of the authorities and citizens…so that both sides engage in a dialogue.

Then comes, **communicating on Europe**.
We have already expressed our dismay about the European Commission's sudden and incomprehensible decision for the management partnerships, forged in order to undertake joint communication activities, to be (unilaterally) discontinued on 31 December 2013.
There is no going back on this decision, in spite of the protests made by nearly all the Member States, and relayed within the framework of the Club. As some parties were at pains to point out, the important thing is to ensure the continuation of the momentum initiated and the achievements made during the partnership's more than five years of existence. It is equally important for the national information services and the representations of the European Commission and the European Parliament in the Member States to shoulder their responsibilities by working together to develop ongoing consultation and cooperation procedures for the purpose of creating joint or coordinated information channels and initiatives.
Management partnerships have given way to strategic partnerships, that are more specific … It is up to all sides to make the necessary efforts (obviously including financial efforts) to maintain the momentum of the communication initiatives, on a multiannual basis, and in terms of their preparation and follow-up as part of a consultation process.

This does not mean the responsibility of the European institutions and, in particular, the European Commission is diminished.
Quite the opposite.

The Member States and the European institutions are urged to launch a large-scale debate on the questions, means, procedures and the ultimate aims of "Communicating Europe in Partnership".

But finally the main contribution of the Club is definitely for those who have the privilege to attend, the spirit that peers have instilled, namely the constant concern to develop and implement a professionalized and democratic public communication.

By **"democratic"** we mean: what is of general interest, non-partisan and to serve the public or the necessary public debate. There are "questions" that have always been, if not central, at least regularly underlying our relations: the statute of public communication in our countries (whether guaranteed or not by law, regulated or not), the structure of our national services (more or less "close" and depending on those in power or ever "changing", according to the ruling majorities) and our missions (mostly media-oriented, or rather turned towards the citizens) fuelled our early discussions.
The prospect for enlargement to 25 countries with the integration of the former "Eastern Bloc" oriented the debate on the "democratic transition". Then came the move to 27 and 28 Member States and other enlargement opportunities that revamped the debate on the integration and gave it new meaning, including for communicators (identities, branding, public diplomacy, neighbourhood communication, ...).

"Professionalism" is both the answer to the democratic will and its guarantee.
In addition to discussions on case studies, the work of the Club has always included, as a "leitmotiv", a reflection on the methods and means as well as on the profession itself of "public communicator" and its functions. Over time, from "demoscopia", as our Italian friends say, to decentralised distribution of brochures, through call centers, communication below and above the line, Internet and Web 2.0 and today's social media ..., resources and distribution channels were analysed and their respective virtues were compared, with a view to limiting the

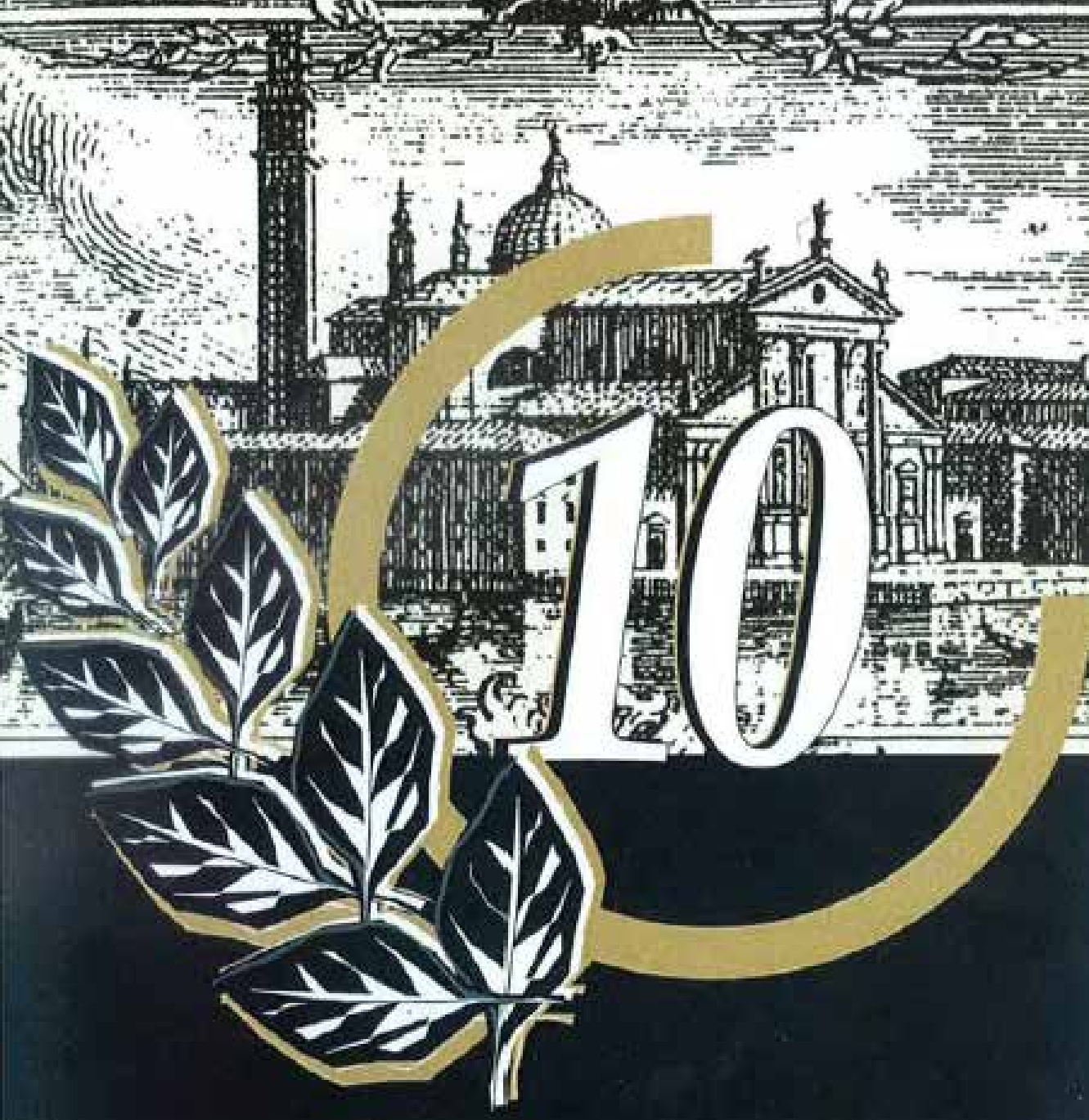
PHILIPPE CAROYEZ
Philippe Caroyez, adviser in the Directorate-general External Communication of the Chancellery of the Belgian Prime Minister, is editor of the review of the Club "Convergences".
He has been a member of the Club of Venice since 1992.

distance between public institutions and citizens. We have seen that it is not always the case, that campaigns are not systematically evaluated ex-ante and ex-post and, often, the ratio between the financial resources and the real impact is unfavourable.

During these 30 years, the Club has continued to emphasize the need for recognition, by academic circles and by the states themselves, of the profession and the necessary lifelong training for "public communicators"; all of which must be realized in a regulated environment, granting effective right of public access to information, organization of public communication and ethics.

However, we must admit that, if the spirit of the Club has contributed to achieve concrete results via its members (as the French "Ordinance" on public communication or the Italian law No. 150 or the "Code of Ethics for Federal Communicators " in Belgium), it did not manage to convince the Convention to include an article on the citizen's right to information in the draft EU constitutional treaty.

After 30 years, views, best practices and contributions exchanged are important; it remains however to preserve the achievements of the Club, to support and promote ever more extensively the result of its meetings. Maintaning proximity and regular exchanges between officials in charge of the national communication services and delegates of the Council Working Party on Information; a new development of the "VeniceNet" platform on a cooperative basis, even the creation of a website; frequent thematic meetings with the presence of national experts; and major initiatives such as the annual "EuroPCom" conference organized by the Committee of the Regions and supported by the Club, are indeed concrete prospects for the future.



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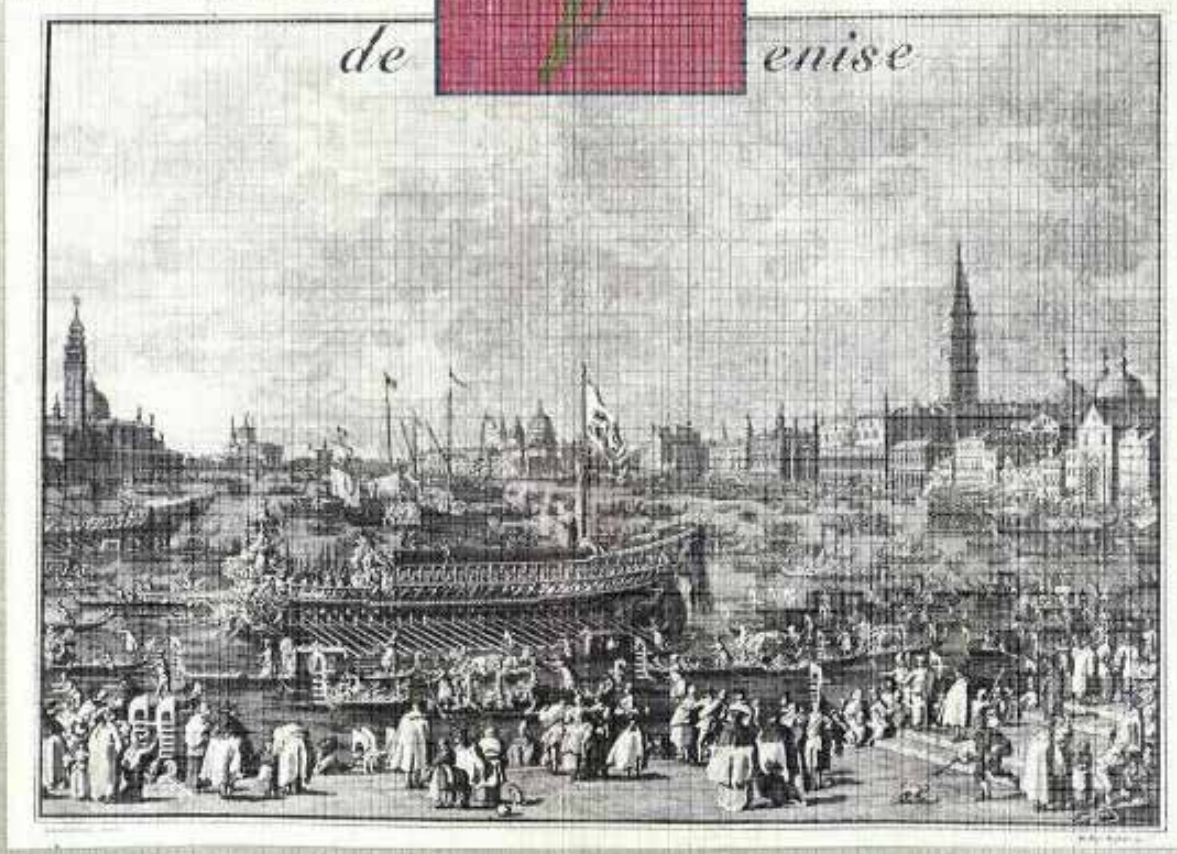

Club of Venice
1986-2011

25 Years of Public Communication in Europe

Fighting against fear and winning back confidence in Europe

Aurelio Sahagún Pool

It is a commonplace to write that we are living critical times in Europe, and yet, never before since the second world war, have Europeans known such an unstable political environment. The effects of globalisation, have changed the economic, political and social situation in which Europe finds itself.

Immigration, the terrorist threat, the decline of purchasing power, the feeling of insecurity, the apprehension of an even more difficult future for our children are the visible causes of a fear that is destabilising the complex construction of the Union. Fear has seized big parts of population in all the countries of the Union.

Unfortunately, this fear comes at the exact time when the representative democracy that we know is also subject to a deep crisis, partially due to the technical revolution of social communication, which gives every citizen the impression to be protagonist of the political future at any moment, to be judge of each government decision, to be witness of abuses by the political class, and able, through a pseudo- anonymity of all kinds of 'tweets' to 'let rip' an abusive rhetoric. Everywhere, politicians are looked upon with suspicion. There are situations such as in Spain where the political structure is questioned by independence movements in Catalonia, whilst the two political pillars of the yet young Spanish democracy, the PP and the PSOE, are unable to reach a government agreement. Bur also in the other European countries, the rise of populistic right-wing and left-wing political movements is significantly altering the traditional political structures. Political leaders are tempted to off-load their most ponderous responsibilities onto others. As a result of this the European institutions are frequently and unjustly blamed for shortcomings caused by national politicians. Sometimes the situation is aggravated through the use of exceptional methods, such as referenda, the favoured false medicine of governments weakened by the accumulated effects of the crisis.

One key factor in this revolution, is the increasing popularity and instant multiplication of inter-individual communication which is spread everywhere. Everyone who has a cell phone, can receive from and transmit to everyone personal ideas, but far more often, sentiments, slander and abusive rhetoric. The unfortunate result is no longer the renaissance of the Greek agora, but noise and turmoil of a populistic mass always ready to lynch any person or institution.

We are claiming a renewal of our representative democracy through a more direct one in which citizens have the opportunity to react on any pronouncement or decision taken by the politicians elected to do this work. However, what is really happening is a degradation of the political institutions on which all democracy is founded. The populists play on people's fears, and offer answers that are as simplistic, as they are risky. They lead their populations towards greater dangers than those they pretend to protect voters from.

Brexit is such a very serious consequence. Nobody can ignore that the exit of the United Kingdom from Europe will not only signify a serious problem for British citizens, but also a harsh blow for the construction of a strong Europe capable of confronting with confidence the difficulties of a world- wide revolution of a magnitude never seen before in our history.

Faced with insecurity and fear, societies react by entrenching themselves in old symbols of identity. This is a reaction that knows no bounds. It starts with reconstructing national frontiers, followed by building up regional barriers and at the end we risk watching History from atop the walls of the ruins of our castle.

Fear, of which the causes are very real, can be utilized or manipulated and can thus threaten to destroy everything Europe has built ever since the Treaty of Rome. The historical challenge and duty we must fulfil for our future generations is to respond to this menace by establishing a strong, democratic Europe founded on the same principles that made her an example of tolerance, liberty, social progress and culture for several decades. This task can only be accomplished by a fluent cooperation between the entirety of the Member States and the European institutions.

AURELIO SAHAGÚN POOL
Aurelio Sahagún Pool is one of the founding fathers of the Club of Venice. Communications Advisor, former Communications Director for the Spanish Prime Minister in Moncloa. He was the creator of the Venice Club logo (a detail of the main facade of St. Marco, symbol of a city crossway of peoples and cultures, with a yellow lion on a blue background with sparkling stars). Aurelio lives in Valencia and continues to be one of the most enthusiastic sources of inspiration for the Club.

It is also a complicated task of communication involving both any and all political as well as administrative structures of the Union.

Here lies the extraordinary challenge: In a world where communication is at its new-found pinnacle, the means at the disposal of the institutions and their political representatives to efficiently carry out their communication duties are already outdated. It is indispensable that we modernize these instruments.

The first condition for this renewal is to recognize that transparency alone will not suffice. We must be listened, understood and be capable of convincing citizens. There is a necessity to surpass the loud jabber of publicities, propaganda, heavily simplified messages spreading wrong impressions, the slander and false information that incessantly assault the minds of our citizens. This is a herculean task, but a necessary one.

The instruments of communication the institutions utilize must also be enhanced and further refined. The notorious neutrality of the European communication services facing the spectrum of political opinions must not include inaction towards opinions of either euro-sceptical or anti-European nature. The primary objective of the communicators working at all levels of political and administrative structures must be to truly reach out and connect with the entire population.

This is the task that awaits all current and future public communicators. The question as to how we can attain this goal successfully has always been at the heart of the Club of Venice's meetings. These assemblies unite the Member States and the European institutions' communication specialists around a unique 'table de réflexion' inspiring them in their endeavours to communicate in a way that responds to the concerns of our citizens and contributes to restore the general public's faith in Europe.

Sharing best practices in communicating on Europe for the sake of all its citizens

Zvonimir Frka-Petešić

Soon after Croatia started its accession negotiations with the EU in 2005, I had the honour as the then spokesperson of the Croatian Mission to the EU in Brussels to join the Club of Venice and to become its first Croatian member. Since the accession talks are an unprecedented process for each and every country as well as a rare challenge for its civil servants, a strong public interest in EU related issues naturally emerged at that time in Croatia. In this context, the membership of the Club and the shared experience and expertise by its older members had been extremely helpful for me. At that time, colleagues from countries which just joined the EU in previous enlargements were of great help, providing me with invaluable insights on how to best communicate on some of the most sensitive EU issues. This encouraged me to initiate the organisation of a successful workshop of the Club on Communicating pre- and post-Enlargement, held in Poreč in November 2009.

The aim of that meeting, hosted by the Croatian Government, was to discuss the experience of countries which became members of the EU during one of the three previous enlargements (1995, 2004 and 2007), as well as that of Croatia in its ongoing negotiations, and finally to identify in a very practical way the best practices in communicating on EU issues. Following a series of intense and fruitful discussions, the joint findings of the meeting were summarized in the form of a Guide on Communicating Enlargement.

Two years later, when I took over the Directorate-General for Support to Croatia's EU Accession Process in charge, in particular, of the Croatian EU accession referendum campaign, I just realised how this Club of Venice's Guide had proven to be priceless in complement to our national EU Communication Strategy. And it certainly played a key role in letting more than two thirds of voters back Croatian EU membership, in the midst of Greek crisis, enabling Croatia to join the EU in 2013. Similarly, when I became Head of the Public Diplomacy Service of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, the vast experience gained in this field by the other EU member states again proved to be very useful for a newly independent state such as Croatia, which still needs to assert its identity on the international stage. If only for these reasons, I cannot be but thankful to the Club and its members, many of whom have become friends. But beyond this invaluable help, the Club has also given substance to the spirit of European solidarity and cooperation in the best possible way: unselfishly, with sincere friendship, great competence and steadfast dedication.

ZVONIMIR FRKA-PETEŠIĆ

Zvonimir Frka-Petešić is the Ambassador of Croatia to Morocco. Before being posted in Rabat, he served as Director of the Public Diplomacy Service in the Croatian Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs. Prior to that, he was at the helm of the Directorate-General for the Support to Croatia's EU Accession Process, where he was in charge of the referendum campaign for the accession of Croatia to the EU. He served in Paris as well as in Brussels where he was the spokesperson of the Mission of Croatia to the EU during Croatia's accession talks. A pioneer of online institutional communication in the Croatian diplomatic service, he has been the editor-in-chief of several websites and print publications. A former member of the Steering Committee of the Club of Venice, he holds a post-graduate degree in geopolitics from the University of Paris VIII.

At a time when Europe needs to affirm its unity and its desire to move forward so as to meet the citizens' expectations and to rise to the daunting challenges it faces, the Club of Venice bears more than ever the heavy responsibility to help European policy-makers to better communicate on Europe in all policy areas. Indeed, for any Government, communication plays a key role in informing the public and in explaining the rationale of its policy. Since communication paves the way and prepares the ground for the measures that are about to be taken, in our democracies there could be no successful political action without prior and effective communication. Yet the Club's expertise is so vast and varied in all fields of public information and communication that, if the EU did not have the Club of Venice at its disposal, it would urgently need to be invented. So for the benefit of the European project and its appropriation by European citizens, I wish lively and fruitful meetings to all its members for many years to come!

"Opening the space" and developing together

Heike Thiele

When I started my appointment as Head of the external communication department two years ago, the German Foreign Service was new to the Club of Venice membership we had inherited just before from the Federal Press office.

But I learned quickly that the Club of Venice is more than its title that sounds promising like a good holiday feeling - the Club as an informal institution, but first and even more important, its members provide key benefits for our daily work in communication. Diplomacy needs to adapt in breathtaking speed to the changes in communication. Applying new social media, exploring new communication strategies and coordinating with communication agencies has indeed become our daily business.

The Club of Venice not only provides up-to-date information on new applications and developments in social media but also manifold opportunities for insightful professional exchanges with colleagues and experts alike. The timing and subjects of the meetings could sometimes not be more to the point – a workshop on communication strategies during the refugee crisis and a journey to Lesbos were just two recent examples. The journey in which our colleague and former CoV member Beate Grzeski participated provided the opportunity to see the life and facilities for refugees and the daily challenges the local authorities were faced with when handling the growing influx of people on the island. The journey to Lesbos facilitated a deeper understanding of the issues at stake and enhanced the capacity to communicate about the acute refugee situation with first-hand knowledge initially pushed by the workshop in Brussels. I can only commend the Club of Venice for creating the idea and taking the effort to coordinate and organize such events for such a large group of busy people.

Communication is a key issue, for each Member State to the EU and for the EU itself, speaking in our own countries and abroad. We need to cooperate to enhance the outreach of our communication, to make us heard and understood. We need to exchange on instruments, methods and experiences on European levels and last but not least to develop together new ideas about how we can bring our common messages to the heart of people, especially in times where the European idea is under pressure.

The Club of Venice opens the space for these tasks and I am very honoured and thankful that my job has provided me with an entry-card to this group of like-minded professionals.

I would like to extend the very best wishes of the German Foreign Office to the Club of Venice for its auspicious 30th anniversary – may there be many happy returns in plenaries and network workshops!

HEIKE THIELE
Since 2014, Head of the external communication department, Federal Foreign Ministry, Germany.
Before then, she filled diplomatic posts in Kinshasa, Brazzaville, Sanaa and Caracas. Former German Ambassador (2004-2008) in Niamey/Niger.
She owns an Executive Master of Public Management from the Hertie School of Governance.

About Dutch dykes and dunes: the power of smart cooperation in communication

Erik den Hoedt

The Netherlands has always been a country of highly individual persons and distinctive groups, working closely together. Cooperation lies in our genes. Some say it is because of the water. A substantial part of our country lies below sea-level and it has always been bare necessity to work together to keep the water out and to survive. Certainly this explanation is far too simplistic. But the management of water is a nice metaphor for the way government communicators have been working more closely and successfully together over the past years.

There are two major means to protect a country against the sea: dykes and dunes. Dykes are made by man, dunes are made by nature. The former are the result of strategic planning. Once in place, they need careful maintenance, but their effectiveness is highly predictable. The behaviour of dunes is far less clear. They are volatile by nature. By planting beach grass they are more or less kept in place. Metaphorically 'dykes' stand for the classical, bureaucratic (in the good sense of the word) way of organising activities, 'dunes' for the incremental, less formal way. Both forms are nowadays needed to be successful.

My organisation, the Public Information and Communication Office (DPC), acting as a shared service for all our ministries, is in its genesis a perfect example of a dyke. It is the result of rational consideration and careful planning. Our operating procedures are well structured and transparent. At this moment we provide the following services:

- Running the public information and communication call centre;
- Managing the central public websites;
- Developing online communication strategies and infrastructure;
- Coordinating and evaluating campaigns;
- Purchasing advertising space for communication (online, paper, outbound);
- Providing audio-visual services;
- Communications Research;
- Expertise and training centre (The Academy for Government Communication);
- Managing the external and internal pool of communication advisors;
- Managing the portal for internal communication of the central government;
- Procurement of communication services.

10 Years ago most of these activities were carried out by all ministries individually. Budget cuts and the strong belief in the benefits of cooperation led to sharing more and more activities, adding them to the service portfolio of DPC. Recently we have made a review of the past 10 years and we concluded that all of the original objectives were met. To give an impression 10 years ago the average central communication directorate had a staff of approximately 75 employees. Nowadays it is around 40. They perform the same tasks as before but a lot of the actual work is now organised via DPC. By restructuring the work and by clever outsourcing some activities we

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Director of the Netherlands Public Information and Communication Office.
Erik den Hoedt studied Human Geography at the University of Groningen.
Since 1984 he has worked for the Dutch Central Government in several management functions in the fields of statistics, internal organization and the last ten years in government communication. Since 2010 he is director of the Public Information and Communication Office of the Netherlands. The aim of the Office is to enhance the effectiveness of government communication and to provide the citizens of the Netherlands with relevant information from the government.

managed to do all the new work with fewer people and only a modest increase in budget (far less than the enormous savings at the ministries). The recognition by the people we are working for, citizens and the staff of the ministries, has been rising steadily over the past years.

There are several reasons for this success. Firstly all the reshuffling of work - the transfer of activities to DPC and the partial outsourcing via DPC to the market - has been done step by step and in a controlled manner. Secondly our position as part of the Ministry of General Affairs/Prime Minister's Office, and our governance model (we are steered by a commission of the Council of Directors of Communication) mean that DPC is in the heart of central government communication. DPC works for and on behalf of the communication directorates. This is not just a slogan, it is truly felt this way by our partners. The third reason is the high professional level of our staff, both in DPC and in the ministries. In the last chapter of this book you will find an article on how we constantly work on improving the capabilities of our employees to adapt to changing circumstances and new challenges.

Dykes however are not always the best option to protect a country against the sea. Nor is the classical way of organising activities necessarily the best option for successful cooperation. I use the metaphor of dykes and dunes to illustrate that we often have the tendency to over-organise. Our societies and organisations are becoming more and more complex. To keep up with the growing complexity we normally react with measures and tools to maintain (direct) control, resulting in more rules, more red tape and less professional autonomy. We see this on all levels.

DPC is part of a conglomerate of government organisations serving a complex, multi-layered society. I am sure that we can further improve our performance by building a few more 'dykes'. For example we can spend more time on evaluation and we certainly could strengthen our risk management. Long-proven methods like quality models and tools can help us here. But I am sure that the real step forward in further enhancing the quality of our work and thus improving the effectiveness of government communication lies in making more use of the intrinsic energy that is flowing through my organisation, the ministries we work with and the society we serve. Metaphorically speaking we should look where and how the dunes are being formed and where we should put the beach grass to keep them in place.

Managers like me are conditioned to *plan* and *act*. This is still an important part of the job, but sometimes it is even more important to *watch* and *wait*. Modern professionals are far more autonomous than some twenty years ago. But this does not mean that they are not willing to seek cooperation. People like to work together and they always look for ways to cooperate. But they don't like to be pushed by their bosses or by procedures. Instead of more rules, procedures and direct control we should encourage professional autonomy. Investing in knowledge, awareness, dedication, balancing organisational and individual goals and putting trust in our staff is the best option to keep in control and to achieve our goals.

DPC is not just an organisation. It is a network of 150 people working closely together with each other and with their fellow-workers at the communication directorates of the ministries. Therefore DPC is a network within a network. Often we speak of the communication directorates and DPC together as a *virtual* DG communication of the Dutch government. And even this network is far bigger since we all work together with policy makers, institutions and self-organised groups in society. Certainly, I feel part of the European network, the Club of Venice in particular, a perfect example of a *'dune organisation'*.

A network cannot be controlled by strict protocols and procedures. A network has 'to breath' to be effective. My main task is to take away the obstacles that hinder a full breathing. Of course I am blessed with such an excellent staff at DPC, but I challenge every colleague – in my own country and in Europe - to build fewer dykes and have a keen eye for where the dunes are being formed. Just watch and wait and plant the beach grass at the right spot at the right time. You could well be surprised at how easy the life of a manager can be.

Italy and the Club: a 30-year-long partnership from Venice to Venice, and beyond

Diana Agosti

An evergreen format

In 1986, promoting intergovernmental communication in Europe within a new, inclusive, collaborative frame was a brave choice and in some ways a visionary one, which continues to prove, after thirty years, highly strategic for the Italian Government for all those who care about the European project.

Born under the auspices of the Italian Presidency of the EU Council, the project started at the initiative of the government's Director General for Information, Stefano Rolando, and the first session of the Club, at the Cini Foundation in Venice, saw the participation of the then European Commissioner to Culture and Information, Carlo Ripa di Meana. Since then, the Club is the ideal forum for a free exchange of ideas and experiences, study and professional development, attended by an increasingly large number of information and communication experts from EU Member States and institutions, as well as from other countries of geopolitical interest.

It is no coincidence that the Club of Venice was founded in Italy, in the lagoon city that has always been a gateway to Europe and a crossroads between East and West of diplomatic, economic and cultural exchange, a city that all along its ancient and recent history has proven to be in many ways a political laboratory for modernity.

For 30 years now, it is in the Club of Venice, that European communicators have found an opportunity to discuss, compare, give rise to or evaluate new ideas and initiatives without officially representing their country or institution, but only in the interest of these.
This is the reason why the Italian Government supports the Club and feeds the tradition of organizing the autumn plenary session in Venice, or at least in Italy.
I am personally pleased that the Department of European Affairs, responsible for the coordination of the Italian communication on Europe, is steadily engaged in the activities of the Club, also as a Member of the Steering Committee.

New sites for new ideas

Experiencing personally and "on the spot" cases to be discussed can enrich also those who are well nurtured with experience and knowledge. This is why we deemed it could be significant to hold last year's autumn plenary session at the Milan Universal Exhibition EXPO 2015.

From the choice of location, to the building of the agenda and the organization of the technical visit to the EXPO site- which closed the two-day meeting -, everything was designed and managed in a spirit of effectiveness with the support – also the economic support – of the EU Parliament and Commission and thanks to the timely and constant networking action of the Council. The contribution of the EXPO team, which also provided a highly representative key-note speaker for the debate as well as experts for the technical visit - in the most crowded days of institutional events and visitors' entries - , was an asset.

For years, the Club's autumn sessions have been carried out with the aim of addressing strategic issues for Italy and topics of geo-political interest for both EU and non EU countries, on which the Club's members are called to provide information and discuss freely without the constraints of official gatherings. In plenary meetings as well as in thematic sessions, European integration, freedom of information, ethics, environment and climate,

education, cooperation with civil society, migration, crisis communication are recurring themes of debate and in - depth analysis.

During the last meeting, the intervention of Alex Aiken, director of communications of the British government, but also that of Roberto Arditti, director of institutional relations for EXPO, focused on a crucial issue for European communicators: in these times of uncertainty for the Union, communicators should consider that general debates on the values of the EU are to be linked to direct and empathetic messages, which take into account EU citizens' everyday experience and communicate real perspectives.
This need is particularly felt in Italy, a founding country of the Union, that more than ever is engaged in this task. It is not by chance that, during our semester of Presidency of the EU Council in 2014, we dedicated a conference on 12-13 September to "The promise of the EU" and held in Rome the Club's autumn session (13-14 November). We should start by mending the relations between countries and institutions, relaunch debate on Europe's short and long-term future, reshape Europe's identity. For now and ever the values of the Union should be given new life and be supported by policies closer to citizens; equally clear, simple and consistent should be communication on Europe, and based on listening and dialogue.

Knowledge and experience serving future strategies

On many occasions, Secretary of State to European Affairs, Sandro Gozi, has reaffirmed the commitment of the Italian government for a less bureaucratic and more "socially oriented" Union and encouraged authorities to strengthen institutional cooperation, in particular in the field of communication. In particular, he has often mentioned and praised the work of the Club of Venice, seen as a standing and effective cooperation model.
Celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Club, rightly in Venice, where it was born, is an opportunity to take stock of the historical milestones marking our path. Since 1986, the Club's action was intertwined with the history of European integration, across the Europe of 9, 12, 15, 24, 27, and finally 28 Member States…and now we are awaiting the follow-up o the UK referendum on the EU membership.
Moreover, for thirty years the Club was probably the only place where an open and concrete debate on Europe could develop freely and out of the official circles, with no costs other than those of management, that , moreover, are shared among organizers.
Also thanks to this experience and these results, the event of November 2016 in Venice is a further opportunity to look forward to the future of the Club and of European public communication. In order to be effective, communication should be ever less "delivered to" people and ever more "done with" people. Institutional communication should include actions promoting active citizenship and inclusive discussion.
In this perspective, the roadmap mapped out by Secretary of State Gozi in October 2015 in Milan, leads to the event planned in Rome on 25 March 2017 for the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome, when we will focus on the very identity of the European Union and give voice to European citizens.

Towards the 60th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome: engagement and cooperation

In Venice, the Department for European Policies will present a first outcome of the inter-institutional cooperation that was promoted in the belief that no celebration is appropriate in difficult times, but that institutions and civil society must work together to build a common path and stimulate objective consideration of the anniversary and let citizens - especially young students - play a primary role, even through their elected political representatives.

The idea of creating an inter-institutional group sharing plans and pooling communication initiatives for the 60 years of the Treaties of Rome was born within the National Committee for the technical evaluation of EU acts, established by Italian Law n. 234 of 2012. Representatives of the Presidency of the Republic, the Chambers of Parliament, Ministries, Departments of the Council of Ministers, regional and local authorities, the representatives

60 YEARS OF THE TREATIES OF ROME

in Italy of the European Commission and Parliament and pro-European associations are members of the working group, which meets regularly, convened by the Department for EU policies, to discuss ideas to be developed and ongoing initiatives.

Furthermore, the Department has already published on the institutional website www.politicheuropee.it a special section on the 60 years of the Treaties of Rome, which collects all information about the programme, including the calendar of events and directions for the use of the official logo, chosen through a school competition.

The Department, in addition to collaborating with Italian and European institutions and with civil society, has already shared ideas and initiatives with other founding members and with the Member States holding the 2016-2017 Presidencies of the Council of the EU.

Also for the balance of this operation the collaboration of experts, and - as we did last year in the for the Expo Milan - , we hope to discuss, comment and evaluate in 2017 the results of this strategy, together with the Club's friends.

DIANA AGOSTI

Graduated in Political Science with the maximum score from the University of Rome "La Sapienza", Diana Agosti joined the Public Administration in 1984.
Her first post was at the DG for intellectual, artistic and scientific property of the Prime Minister's Office - Presidency of the Council of Ministers. Her career took place almost entirely within the Presidency and, over the years, she was selected for the direction of number of offices where she operated in the field of editing, interinstitutional relations and human resources.
From 2001 to 2003 she has served as Director of the Internal Audit Service of the Ministry of Finance. After leading the Department for Interinstitutional Relations and that of Human Resources and Technical Services, in 2014 she was nominated Head of the Department for European Policies: the Department is a complex administrative structure including two DGs, a special Unit for EU infringements and a detachment of the Financial Police for the fight against EU frauds; it ensures administrative support to the political action of the Secretary of State to European Policies.
She is the author/editor of number of publications and studies on public administration, social communication, transparency and public access to documents.

Deliver, create and inspire

Alex Aiken

There is perhaps no area where the challenge to government has changed so much in the last few decades as communications. And few areas where the challenge will be continue to be as relentless and unpredictable in the decades to come. Communications is moving at light speed.

In the past, sources of information were few and easily controlled. Citizens had the choice of a few television channels, a slightly larger number of newspapers maybe, and once an effective campaign was created, it was relatively easy to gain success.
For our marketing colleagues in the UK, it was simple. All they had to do was pay the required price to advertise during the commercial break of the most popular soap opera and the message was guaranteed to hit home - whether that was encouraging the audience not to drink-drive, or to persuade them to choose a certain soap-powder.

Those certainties are now a smoking ruin. Our citizens, our customers now have a virtually limitless number of places they can go to be entertained or informed and where we as communicators must go to look for them. We have all sorts of tools that allow us to better focus our messages and campaigns on the people that need to hear them if they are to be effective. We even have insights from behavioural science that will increasingly allow us to influence our targets in more precise and effective ways. But when we do find those targets, we also discover that they are more media-literate, less deferential and perhaps more cynical about accepting any message coming from the government at face value.

This is the new world that is forcing us to ask hard questions about what we do and why we do it. Add to that the cost pressures, which the cross-Europe climate of austerity is forcing on all government activity, making all of us justify what we do, and change is not an option.

Government communications has a long history in the UK. The first campaigns were almost 150 years ago, suggesting that citizens should save for their old age. But the principles have been consistent. Even during wartime, the mission of government communicators was to honestly and effectively inform our stakeholders, the entire public, about what the government was doing, why it was doing it and how the government could help them improve their lives.

To make government communications effective in our new era, it is necessary to hold these principles more closely than ever before. How we do things must change in the future, but we also need to be clearer than ever about what we do and why we do it.

By 2010 it was clear in the UK that we were in danger of losing touch with both the "what" and the "why" of our business. And it was far from obvious that we were at all certain about "how" we should do things. Government communications at the start of this decade was a bewildering labyrinth of over 800 websites and 200 logos with more than a £1 billion being spent without much monitoring of whether it served our citizens well.

Today we have just one web platform, GOV.UK, one corporate identity system with ruthless brand-protection, and we have cut the cost of communications by a half while still delivering world-class campaigns like GREAT. All communications activity must prove its worth. That is the same for multi-million pound campaigns or a minor press release by a low-profile ministry.

The new Government Communication Service (GCS) is absolutely key to imposing this discipline and responding to the challenge. It covers 3,000 staff working in marketing, media and internal communications in 300 public agencies. All of them are responsible for professional standards and our shared vision of exceptional public service communication, set out in our annual Government Communication Plan, whose implementation is tracked, assessed and evaluated throughout the year.

Underpinning this is our commitment to a new, more rigorous model. This required five steps. First we had to define the end-state.

1: A communication service that delivers.

Creating a responsive, accountable and effective communication service meant challenging colleagues, the directors and heads of communication in ministries and agencies across government, to deliver a higher quality of professional practice. Working with those colleagues as peers, we defined our goal as providing an exceptional standard of public service communication effectively delivered and efficiently executed by educated communicators. Most key to that was the value that needed to be placed on professional development. Our teams would be expected to demonstrate communications impact and value for money. Rather than uncoordinated, sporadic activity we now focus on the campaigns model; defining a campaign as "a planned sequence of communications and interactions that use a compelling narrative over time to deliver a defined and measurable outcome". This can be simply explained as OASIS – standing for Objective, Audience, Strategy, Implementation and Scoring (Evaluation). A common, tried-and-tested approach to each problem which communicators are asked to assist with would not just bring focus but allow similar approaches to be followed throughout government.

2: Understand the future – as far as we can

It is easy to say the world is changing, but much harder to predict the impact that will have. So it was necessary to commission a report into the Future of Public Service Communications, based on the wisdom of a wide-ranging panel of experts from across the public sector, private industry and academia. The report's conclusion can be summarised thus: As the pace of technology change will only quicken, professional communicators must adapt or become obsolete. Without mastering skills of data utilisation, algorithm-based content systems, behaviour change and state of the art marketing techniques we will be left behind and ignored. This report recommended better use of social marketing to "nudge" our audience, leading to the creation of a behavioural insights team, which in addition to serving government now trades independently, and mandated that our campaigns follow the EAST principle – that they are easy, attractive, social and timely for our audiences.

To better understand data we are creating a real-time digital campaign dashboard. Each of our member-teams has a Performance Hub, which shares and assesses data. We also needed to build alliances, meaning stakeholder engagement must be at the heart of our work. We also needed to start creating better, more shareable content, which will engage not just individuals but also be of sufficient quality to be adopted and diffused by third party content creators - including the resource-hungry mass media. The pioneering work of UK departments covering defence and international development shows the potency of this approach in these contexts.

3: Create a Modern Communications Operating Model (MCOM) and a rigorous evaluation framework

The Future of Public Service Communications meant we could move forward knowing that at least we were asking the right questions. But two frameworks launched in late 2015 provide the blueprint for UK government professional communication practice. MCOM sets out to unify our professional practice with four interrelated themes:

I. Media and campaigns: Few governments will thrive if they do not have functional relations with traditional media. But the new model provides constant reminders of the importance of the campaign goal and the range of communication techniques, not just media, that can reach the audience

II. Internal Communication: We deliberately placed Internal Communication at the heart of the new model to emphasise now that staff engagement in many large organisations needs to be improved if business goals, including downsizing, are to be achieved. Using the Engage for Success model we now emphasise that staff need a compelling corporate story to engage them in their roles, as well as sharing with the vast number of external contacts that any large organisation will have. Communications is a two-way process, so staff also need to have their voices heard and acted upon, managers who strive to understand staff motivation and the shared understanding that their employer will act with integrity and honesty.

III. Stakeholder engagement: Every organisation needs to understand who are the people who can shift outside perception of it and impact on successful delivery, i.e. the most important partners, friends, and even detractors. This requires the disciplined process of mapping and understanding exactly who and where these 'stakeholders' are. The task is then to build trusted relationships based on shared purpose. This is a part of our work where technology may make it easier to understand who is talking and what they are saying, but direct engagement on a human level remains key.

IV. Strategic communication: Effective planning and evaluation of our work goes to the heart of our drive to establish communications as a credible discipline that has parity with the other professions serving government. It is what lends the professional credibility that gives communicators the right to speak at the top decision-making level of any organisation. To support this the GCS first published its evaluation framework at the end of 2015 following consultation with an expert panel from the public and private sectors as well as academia.

4: Deliver public impact

Models and reports can set the standard but the test of our work is the campaigns we deliver. The annual Government Communications Plan allows scheduling of 25 priority campaigns in a coordinated way across government departments to reach targets audiences and its progress is reviewed each quarter by the Ministerial Board for communication.

One of our most successful projects has been the GREAT Britain Campaign. It was launched in late 2012 to promote the United Kingdom abroad by capitalising on the legacy potential of the 2012 Olympics. The campaign involves the participation of a range of government departments and is active in 144 countries across the globe. It has a strong digital element, monthly evaluation and a skilled campaign team to manage the work. To date, in return for a government investment of £100 million the campaign has secured a confirmed economic return to the country of £2 billion.

5: Train and inspire communicators to lead.

Leadership is at the heart of effective communications. We believe that good professional communicators will inspire and motivate those around them by virtue not just of their energy and commitment but their competence and grasp of the latest thinking. So continuous professional development lies at the heart of our mission. The GCS now provides 2,000 training places each year, focusing on campaign technique, digital communications and evaluation. Every member of the GCS is expected to complete four pieces of professional development each year. We have a series of successful leadership schemes from the 'Early Leaders' programme for junior staff to our 'Inspire Programme', validated by a UK university for potential directors of communication. These programmes increase our capability but also the professionalism and reputation of communicators across government. The final confirmation that communications is finally earning its right to sit at the top table when it comes to the UK civil service is the creation of the elite Government Communication Service Fast Stream, launched in 2015. For the first time, the absolute cream of graduate talent will able to specialise as government communicators, joining more established professions like the diplomatic service.

Every country needs its own solution, and faces different challenges. There is no size that will fit all of us. But there are certain points which I think should be applied to any debate about the current role of communications and its future, lessons which our colleagues in the private sector have perhaps understood for longer, even if very few of them will ever face the constant scrutiny and ultra-high stakes that come with government. Modern communications demands rigour, professional discipline and the highest regard for sharing and understanding what works best. That means that we cannot expect to be handed multi-million pound budgets with no evidence that our campaign will achieve its goal, or any evaluation to prove that it has indeed done so. We also need to embrace the pace of technological change, rather than fixate on particular technologies. Change will be constant, all encompassing, disruptive and unexpected. We need to ride that wave rather than be drowned by it. Preparing for change means that how we look after our people and how we set our expectations of them in terms of constantly refreshing their skills will be key. As leaders we need to let them make mistakes sometimes, to experiment - perhaps, even, to be playful, just as long as they are always learning. That is how we will ensure that government communications remains a force for adding real value, building trust and improving lives.

ALEX AIKEN

Alex Aiken is the Executive Director of Government Communications. Based in Downing Street and the Cabinet Office, Alex is the most senior communications professional in the Civil Service. His role covers government communications strategy, management of the Cabinet Office and No.10 operation and leadership of the profession.

He was Director of Communications & Strategy at Westminster City Council, 2000-13. At Westminster he built a team that was recognised to be the best in local government and created a successful consultancy operation providing services to other organisations.

Before joining Westminster he held senior posts at Conservative Central Office, leading the Party's Campaigns Unit from 1999-2000 and the Press Office between 1995 and 1999. He has trained politicians and officials in newly democratic states around the world in communications techniques. He lives in Pimlico, London with his family.

National convention on the european union: open debate on Europe in the Czech Republic

Igor Blahušiak & Kateřina Merklová

Traditional forms of EU communication usually have their goal of unilateral provision of information to citizens. However, the Czech Government seeks to take further steps to create genuine citizens' understanding of the EU affairs and to engage them in formulation of the Czech EU policy. Membership of the Club of Venice has proven to be a valuable contribution in these efforts, as a source of inspiration from other Member States and the EU institutions. Sharing best practices and inspiration models through the Club was one of the key elements that helped in designing new platform of the National Convention on the European Union.

Taking further step in the EU communication

Government information system on the EU has already a long tradition in the Czech Republic. Soon after joining the Union, the so-called Integrated Information System was established in 2005. 13 Eurocenters in all regions of the country, portal Euroskop.cz and toll-free line Eurofon have proven to be worthy tools in provision of information on the EU.

However, during 12 years of membership, landscape for the EU communication changed. Citizens increasingly demanded more structured and in-depth communication and involvement in EU affairs. Therefore, when stepping in the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic in 2014, the intention of Bohuslav Sobotka´s Cabinet was to intensify dialogue on European issues with stakeholders, experts and the public. For this reason, in November 2014, the Government in cooperation with EU-focused think-tanks launched the National Convention on the European Union as a permanent venue for debate on European issues in the Czech Republic.

The Czech Republic was thus following several European countries with its Convention-like national dialogue on EU affairs. Inspiration and experience from other Member States of the EU, collected through platforms of peer cooperation such as the Club of Venice, was one of the key elements that helped greatly in initial discussions on the design of the National Convention platform.

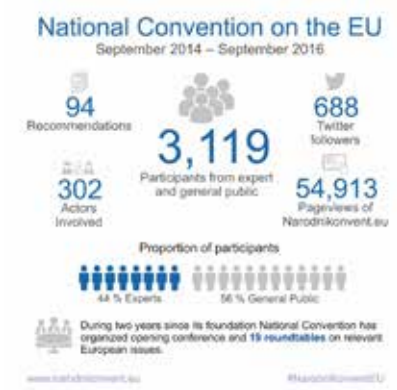
Unique platform to engage stakeholders and citizens

This platform is unique thanks to its bringing together a broad range of actors: policy- and decision-makers, Members of the European Parliament elected in the Czech Republic, representatives of state authorities, social and economic partners, the Permanent Representation of the European Commission in the Czech Republic, scholars, NGOs, representatives of enterprises of all sizes, and other stakeholders.

Regularly convened, **roundtables** thematically focused on major relevant issues represent the principal occasions for discussing and formulating the Czech EU policy. A set of recommendations formulated by their participants represent valuable inputs in Czech government's positions to relevant EU proposals and initiatives.

High-level **conferences** are also a significant part of the National Convention. Attended by high-profile national and foreign guests, the conferences discuss specific Czech priorities in the EU such as introduction of the common European currency in the Czech Republic.

Taking in account its efficiency, reach and impact, the project exceeds the Government´s initial expectations; it allows to conduct a constructive debate and to build a broad consensus on the Czech priorities within the EU. Having achieved a very positive reception among stakeholders and citizens, it provides the Government with concrete recommendations formulated by a wide range of experts.



In total, a total of 19 expert roundtables on various EU-related topics, 2 high-level conferences, numerous public debates and seminars, as well as some press events were convened as of 1st September 2016. More than 3,000 participants from 302 entities took part in the discussions. The main outcome is 94 recommendations of the Czech EU policy.

Joint ownership of the project

The Convention is strategically managed by the **Coordination Council**. This body is composed of representatives of the Office of the Government, the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs, both Chambers of the Czech Parliament, social partners and think-tanks dealing with EU affairs in the Czech Republic.

The Coordination Council convenes at least twice a year and selects topics the Convention will discuss in the upcoming period. The final mix of issues embraces a wide range of current as well as strategic EU agenda – from TTIP, circular economy, Energy Union and the European Social Pillar to more abstract discussion on multi-speed Europe or the role of national parliaments in the EU.

A high level of expertise is ensured by selection of an **independent expert coordinator** for each roundtable, chosen on the basis of an open tender. Ranging from think-tanks, universities to expert platforms, these organizations are responsible for the preparation of discussion papers as well as for the drafting of conclusions of the roundtables.

NATIONAL CONVENTION

The positions of selected stakeholders - ministries, NGOs and experts - are also presented at the sessions. Nevertheless, the main part is devoted to an open discussion with all interested participants. Following picture shows distribution of affiliations of the participants in the expert roundtables.

The outcomes – recommendations to the Czech Government –summarize the views presented and provide the consensual voice of the participants. The recommendations are then disseminated in expert communities, sent to media, published on the web and submitted to the Committee for the EU in the Office of the Government.

Further steps: the Convention goes local, international and public

While the roundtables are venues for expert debates, the public has many opportunities to participate in public events of **other formats** (workshops, discussions, lectures) held on specific Convention's topics. Organised in **every region** of the country by the network of Eurocentres, their aim is to acquaint public with the current EU proposals, "translate" them into a non-expert language and to listen and gather relevant opinion of the public.

Experts from abroad are also invited at specific occasions to enrich the debate with international perspective and to share best practices. For instance, participants of the roundtables on Digital Single Market or Circular Economy had an opportunity to acquaint themselves with British or Danish experience. The Convention also welcomed high-level international speakers, such as

Members of the European Commission, Mr. Valdis Dombrovskis and Ms. Marianne Thyssen, or vice-president of the European Economic and Social Committee Jane Morrice.

A dedicated **Public Relations Coordinator** of the Convention promotes the activities. He cooperates with local journalists and administers website www.narodnikonvent.eu. Social networks accounts on Twitter and Facebook, together with Youtube channel proved to be successful means to share the results of the discussions with the wider public.

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Igor is also responsible for governmental strategies on EU information provision in the Czech Republic and participates in developing new communication narratives. Having helped shaping the concept of the National Convention platform and being a principal legal advisor of the project, he has been involved in the project since its beginnings.
Prior assuming his responsibilities in EU communication field, he led a team of Coreper I coordinators of EU policies in the Office of the Government. He regularly gives lectures on EU affairs and European law in Czech universities. Igor is an author of analyses of EU legislation and many articles on EU institutional and constitutional law, holding Master's degrees in Law and in European Studies and a PhD. degree with honours in International and European Law.

COMPETENCE, CAPACITY BUILDING, ETHICS AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

Public policy and effective communication : it only works as an inseparable pair

Sean Larkins

Introduction

Public policy can never be delivered successfully without effective communication. Alongside legislation, regulation and taxation, communication is one of the four key levers of government, but it is rarely understood fully within government – and it is seldom used to its full potential.

The world around us has changed fundamentally. The public's desire for connection and personalisation has forced big shifts in behaviour and media consumption. How we consume information is increasingly mobile-based, two-way and visual. The reliance on press officers, media management and one-way reactive communication belongs to the past, not the present.

This change in communication habits has been accompanied by a shift from an age of 'deference' (when we looked to our priests and our community elders, to national governments and national religions) to an age of 'reference' (when we were more likely to listen to our friends and our families) and on to an age of 'proximity' (when we feel a stronger, deeper connection with people who share similar interests to us and, increasingly, whom we may only ever meet online).

Adapting to this requires us to look again at the competence of government communication teams; how we build capacity; and how we move from reactive to proactive, strategic communication.

The state of play

Global research into the future of government communication carried out by WPP's Government & Public Sector Practice, contributed to by Club of Venice members, and to be launched at the World Economic Forum at Davos in 2017[1], suggests that mobile technology and social media have combined to make citizens more powerful than ever before.

Citizens now have almost unlimited access to information. They can broadcast their opinions widely (regardless of accuracy). They can garner support on issues from likeminded individuals faster than the speed at which even the nimblest administration can respond. They have more up-to-date tech than most governments. As a result, the historic monopoly of governments in providing information and advice has been swept aside.

At the same time as citizens have become more powerful, they have become more fearful. The public feel more apprehensive in 2016 than perhaps at any time since the end of the Cold War. The global financial crisis, the danger of terrorism, the fear of immigration and perceived erosion of national identity, the threat of unemployment

1 *The Leaders' Report: the future of government communication*, to be published January 2017

and insecure employment, the escalating costs of housing have all, in many countries, served only to highlight the limits of democratic governments in meeting rising public expectations.

OECD[2] figures show that, on average, only 40% of citizens trust their government – that's about the same percentage as people who say they trust journalists and bankers. Our research highlights a global pattern of disengagement and disenchantment that is fuelling the rise of extremist parties and movements. Increasing numbers of citizens appear reluctant to listen to and engage with mainstream. They are increasingly attracted to demagogue politicians from the fringes of society. As one of our respondents put it: "the authority and reputation of government is being eroded all over the world. Citizens are beginning to doubt whether government can make a positive difference in their lives. We are working on the false assumption that people will believe what we say. Look at Brexit – you can make rational arguments but people respond to the emotion because a 'belief in the facts' isn't there anymore."

Citizens are afraid, disillusioned, and have loud alternative voices they can turn to thanks to social media. How then can government communications retain relevance and impact? Building trust has to be at the heart of government communication competency. Trust is not only a fundamental requirement of democratic legitimacy: a high level of trust in government influences positive behaviours (like eating healthily). It encourages consumption (vital in an era of slow growth and financial uncertainty). It even leads to a faster response from citizens and businesses in a time of crisis.

How should governments respond?

How and why governments need to communicate has changed – but their communication structures and skills have not. Governments need to recognise the limitations of carrying on communicating as many do today – broadcasting too many issues at the public with insufficient thought given to any sense of overarching priority or strategy. As another respondent to the research put it: "great campaigns rely on cross-government work, but government communication is showing only incremental improvements in co-ordination".

So the first response must be to recognise the importance of adopting a whole-of-government approach to communication – in effect bringing in the discipline and focus that drives private sector organisations into the public realm. Inconsistency leads to confusion which in turn fuels a lack of understanding and trust.

The UK Government, for example, introduced greater co-ordination and control to communication by developing a single government narrative, a cross-government communication strategy focused on a limited number of cross-government priorities, and a unified government identity so that it is easier for citizens to understand who is communicating to them, about what, and why. This breaking down of silos across government – and, importantly within Ministries – is vital to overcoming the layers of clearance and bureaucracy that slows down the speed of response.

Secondly, governments need to change how they communicate. A focus on one-way broadcast messages, often dominated by the written word and from the government rather than the citizen perspective, limits the degree to which the public feel connected to those who govern them. In the 'age of proximity', distance is no longer the best option for exerting influence: it is closeness and connection that now contributes to respect.

In Canada, for example, the government of Justin Trudeau has recognised the need for it to play a part in existing online community conversations, rather than constantly starting its own.

Traditionally, government communication functions have focused on managing media coverage of their policies. Our research shows an increasing realisation that governments need to:

- Run long-term, strategic behaviour change communication campaigns, using paid, owned and earned media;
- Manage citizen engagement across multiple touch points for digital public services;
- Interact with citizens directly on social media, which calls for high quality, rapid content production;
- Build an emotional connection with audiences, particularly through storytelling;
- Integrate communications across on- and off-line channels;
- Disintermediate the media – in effect, harness the power of digital influencers and reduce the reliance on journalists.

So it's time to lose the press officer. A number of governments such as South Korea have already broadened out the skill sets of their communicators – including creating communications practitioners with skills in multiple disciplines. Government communicators are increasingly likely to have the skills of a data analyst, content

2 www.oecd.org/gov/trust-in-government.htm

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designer, movement builder, and listener. But how many of us are recruiting the insight builders, behavioural scientists, algorithm builders, and coders that will drive government communication into the future?

Thirdly, changing structures and increasing skills will achieve nothing without a clear strategy for communication, as well as a clear communication strategy. Communication needs to move from being a 'shared service' to a strategic one. Communicators need to have a seat at the policymaking table. Only by influencing policy development – and evaluating success against policy objectives rather than just communication objectives – will we ever get to the point where communication is seen as an investment rather than an expense.

This is increasingly the norm in countries like Singapore and the UAE and means government communicators need to demonstrate how many people have changed their behaviour because of what they do; how the campaigns they've run have reduced costs-per-transaction; and how the information they impart has increased user satisfaction, completion rates, and digital take up.

This all sounds relatively simple, but the reality is different. Government is of course complex. The challenge of cost reduction has depleted government communication team. The task of increasing public trust depends not just on the relationships built by government communication teams but also on the relationship between the citizen and politicians. And as yet another of our respondents commented: "'Telling the truth to the citizen is now electorally in the minority in Europe. We've inherited a culture of propaganda; the most poisonous propaganda today is use of silence, omission and opacity. People feel marginalised; it is a crisis of information and truth that separates institutions from people".

So in a time of crisis, what role should the Club of Venice play?
An interviewee in our research said that communication functions in government are often "staffed by people with little communications experience or political training." This sentiment was echoed too frequently. So build on the successes that countries such as Estonia, the Netherlands and the UK have had in professionalising communication: there is a clear role for Club members to champion communication as a core strategic function of government – one of the four levers of government delivery and a key component of the policy-development process, rather than a poorly-understood back room shared service.

The Club of Venice is perfectly placed to co-ordinate the exchange of best practice and case studies at more junior levels, not just at senior levels. Many of the best examples of public communication identified during the research come from Europe, but we have also seen innovation and inspiration from Africa, North and South America, Asia and Australasia. Use your combined expertise to set benchmarks. Share the tools that have already been proven to work. This will add to the professionalisation agenda.

Finally, we know that the next trends in communication technology are already on the horizon. Increasing personalisation, voice recognition, artificial intelligence and virtual reality all have the potential to transform not just government communication but also the relationship between the governed and those who govern them. The Club should be leading this drive: it is too important for it to be a bystander.

The next episode. The Academy for government communication

Miriam van Staden & Paulijn de Bruijne

Government communication is a profession, and government communication workers are professionals. Like every profession, ours is subject to constant change, and like all professionals, we must adapt to the changes of our profession.
If we are to be effective and reliable in our efforts to inform, consult and involve citizens, we must invest in capacity building, and we must do so together. The academy for government communication in the Netherlands was founded almost fifteen years ago, to do precisely this. Where our profession is unique to the government, we make sure our colleagues have a place to learn the trade. We support the ministries by bringing professionals together to share experiences, reflect on successes as well as failures, and explore new horizons in government communication. The Academy is part of the Dutch ministry of General Affairs.
In this article we describe the history and development of the Academy, and present where we are now: a full service learning center ready to serve the communication professionals of the central government in their professional growth.

A brief history...

Looking back on the past fifteen years, we discern several stages in the development of the Academy. Various factors have contributed to this development. Of course, our discipline has changed: enter the online media, enter visual communication, for example. Secondly, the way professionals find information to learn and develop is different now. When askedhow they find knowledge and advice, their answer now is: 1. by Googling the internet, 2. By asking a colleague, 3. By scanning a book or magazine. Spending a day in a classroom is not the default option anymore. Thirdly, budget cuts, leading to a reduction in ftes from 16 to just 6, have forced the Academy to explore new ways to organise our work.

Roughly speaking there are three 'stages':

- 2002-2009: the development of a training centre
  During the first years of its existence the Academy had to earn its position mainly by developing and 'selling' training programmes. Participants were civil servants from national, local and international authorities, including both communication professionals and policy makers. In addition to a training programme for individual participants, the Academy offered large in-company programmes to ministries.

- 2010-2012: focus on knowledge management and outsourcing of training programmes
  A large cut-back in staff forced the Academy to prioritize. We entered into a partnership with a private training company, to organise the in-company training programmes and all activities for local authorities. The Academy focused on communication professionals in the central government, and the professional issues they are concerned with in their daily work. They stimulate innovation by bringing professionals together in communities of practice. All courses for communication professionals are organised in a professionalization programme, which offers training for all disciplines at all levels. The role of the Academy workers has shifted from being experts and teachers, to facilitators of professionalization and knowledge managers.

- 2013 – 2015: towards a community of communication professionals
  The Academy has further explored the opportunities of community management. We have set up an online social network that offers professionals a place to to ask each other questions, post interesting material and get to know each other better. With over 2500 members (and counting), the online community has become a popular platform and online 'meeting point'. In addition, the Academy still offers the training programmes, as well as offline network meetings, and is sparring partner for the directors of communication of all ministries. Academy workers now often take a role as community manager, trainer and consultant.

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The whole package

So, on the eve of our 15th birthday, where do we stand?
Currently, the academy offers courses for professionals in the various disciplines (speechwriters, spokespersons, advisers, communication researchers), but there are also courses on topical developments in the field, such as visual communication and social media strategy.
In addition, we invest in community building, through network events on relevant issues, and through an online community where colleagues help each other and share their expertise.

MIRIAM VAN STADEN
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But we are taking professionalization one step further. Recently, we developed specific tools to facilitate the development of our high potential workers and stimulate employability. These tools are meant to help the managers and their employees, to discuss professional development and mobility.
The toolkit now includes the following:

- Profiles based on professional competences: for a number of disciplines we have described the abilities required to fulfil the job. The result is a set of profiles, that can be used in human resource management, for job advertisements and in reviews.
- 360 degree feedback survey: we developed an online feedback tool based on the profiles,. Communication professionals organise their feedback by completing a survey, and inviting colleagues to give feedback by filling out the same survey,. The scan report can be used as input for a discussion about further professional development. The Academy uses these scans in the intake procedures for trainings.
- Communication pool: The Academy is home to a 2 year-pilot for a 'communication pool' for employee-vacancy matching on temporary, internal jobs. This pool is the ultimate instrument to support communication professionals to broaden their horizons and increase their employability.

The next episode...

We have developed all these instrument in close cooperation with the Information Council and with the communication workers. Our joint ambition to be cutting edge in government communication has been cardinal to our success. As well as some limited funding (2.000.000 euro) for 6 fte and expenses, which we deploy cleverly working together with experts and market players. Are we satisfied? Yes… and no… because we always look what's next…
The Academy now provides a full set of instruments to boost the development of our workers and of our profession. We are ready to meet the challenges that Erik den Hoedt outlined earlier. The question is what is the most effective strategy to go forward. Professionalization has always been voluntary, thinking of employability may still seem luxury. However, fully trained staff is urgently needed. Is it time to make professionalization mandatory? Is the profession ready to step professionalization one step further?
We are ready for the next episode. Now it is up to the directors of communication to take full advantage of the possibilities.

Professionalism in government communication matters. Much!

Nada Serajnik Sraka

Does professionalism in government communication matter? The answer to this often posed question should be just yes. Why? Professionalism of government communication is important not only in delivering the effective and responsible communication but also in providing the stable infrastructure, the strategic mindset and competence to cope with the most complex issues of our globalized and interconnected world.

Professionalism justifies profession

'To be professional', 'to act in a manner of professionalism' are terms and phrases much used in all working environments, also in public sector and on the field of public communication. What does it mean to be professional? How professionalism (of public/ government communication) is acquired? Who is responsible for maintaining the professionalism? Is professionalism in government (communication) possible at all?

Research studies show that the concept of professionalism may mean different things to different people. In practice, professionalism is understood as an expression of professional expertise, quality of work and a responsible approach to work (ethical behavior, autonomous and credible functioning, respectful attitude to clients, employers and colleagues). Professionalism refers to occupational behavior and practices of workers who not only have full-time jobs but also possess a clear sense what their work is about and when it is effective (Schinkel and Noordegraff 2011, 68).

Professionalism is related to professions rather than occupations. The term profession is reserved for more structured and complex occupations that work at the autonomous base, act in accordance with the code of professional ethics, developed by their profession; self-regulation and control over services are expected. Its practitioners master highly demanding knowledge and skills, and are devoted to a long-term systematic and regular education. Members of a certain profession are constantly demonstrating the importance of their services to others and the public good. In order to develop the profession and assure its status in the social division of labor the professions establish their professional organization and professional culture, develop professional language, try to control entry into their profession, and also determine the mechanisms of professional promotion.

Most of today's occupations display many of the characteristics of mature professions (i.e. medicine or law), but many still have not yet attained the status of (mature) profession. Wilensky (1964) identifies three professional categories: new professions (e.g. management), quasi-professions (e.g. public relations, advertising), emerging professions (teachers, journalists, nurses) - these are called 'semi-profession', professions with an informed professional profile.

Professionalism is closely connected with the professionalization, the process through which occupations try to achieve the status of a profession. In this process, the norms and qualifications for representatives of the profession are established, creation and transfer of knowledge is provided, skills are certified, relations are managed. Professionalization of a specific occupation, and the process of development and consolidation of its position in society, depends on the sector in which the occupation occurs, on the needs an individual (or a group) can meet, and on the resources managed by members of a profession. Professionalization does not happen by itself, it requires self-awareness and self-organization of an occupation.

In studying professionalism, the scholars try to recognize how different professional attributes define a profession and distinguish the professions among themselves (i.e. by knowledge, autonomy, ethics, organization). Other researchers focus on what professions or professionals do in everyday life, how they earn and maintain their social status, which professions win social approval, how the professions control their work and their relationship

with other actors.
In the last decades, the studies of professionalism have been put in the context of organizational change, driven by the managers, markets or bureaucratic impulses. Some raise the question whether we are witnessing the emergence of a new professionalism that pushes the traditional professional values (expert knowledge, professional judgment, independence, mutual support and trust between actors, peer supervision) in the background and exposes the organizational values (standardization procedures and practices in the hierarchy of decision-making, accountability for results, organizational control) and wonders what professional and institutional power the practitioners must have to resist the dictates of capital or the state and establish the right balance between professional and organizational values (Evetts 2011).

Professionalism in public sector

Professionalism has been debated also in public sector and in state administrations following the essential changes in the roles of state and public sector. The scholars attribute the changes to various influences, e.g. globalization, social reforms, information technology, neoliberal concepts of less government, economic depression and fiscal pressures on budgets, distrust of citizens in government performance. Public sector reforms may be only one source of change in modern government, but they seems to be among the most influential. The first reforms started in 1980s in the United Kingdom and spread in many democratic countries. They varied from state to state; the content and implementation were often modified in accord with the institutions and traditions of the relevant state.
The first wave reforms (i.e. New Public Management) tried to introduce corporate management techniques in the public sector to increase the quality and efficiency of public services. Their focus was on reorganizing administrative bodies to approach leadership and management according to business methods. The changes aimed to contribute to more modern organization and functioning of public administration, long-term financial effects, cost savings in public expenditure, better quality of public services and transparency of public administration. The principles of new public management included also professionalism which was often understood in a broader sense, mostly as the promotion and introduction of new organizational principles.
The second wave reforms (i. e. New Governance) started at the beginning of the 21st century and concentrated on the new types of governance. They consisted of attempts to develop and manage joined-up series of networks and partnerships in which the state and other organizations depend on each other and exchange resources in order to achieve their goals. The emphasis of the second wave reforms was on building and maintaining long-term relationships, on activating the civil society and on providing settings in which public sector bodies could engage various shareholders to participate as partners in policy making and policy implementation (Bevir 2007, xxvi – xxxi).

The professionalism in government communication

Naturally, when we apply all the findings to the field of government communication, more questions than answers arise. What are our professional criteria; are they universal or do we have some specifics of our own? How professionalized is the domain of government communication? How important are professionalism and professionalization for our work and its outcomes? Are we able to enforce our professional criteria and values in our daily work or are we forced to subordinate them to organizational values related to many specific conditions in state administrations?

At the government level, two different processes take place: the political and the administrative. The relationship between politics and public administration is the relationship between the making and implementing of decisions. The division into political and administrative part is also reflected at the level of communication. The intersection of politics and public administration places government communication between political

communication and public communication. The line between the two is very thin. Political communication is defined as "persuasive communication coming from politicians explicitly or implicitly striving for political power, image and electoral points" (Gelders and Ihlen 2010, 60). Public communication is "a duty of an administration towards the citizens of the country and if it can be perceived to be politically neutral, it can have credibility among the public which it genuinely seeks to provide with added value. A good relationship between politicians and public communicators has the best chance of working for the benefit of the public and that in its turn serves both the politicians and the public administration both of which need the consent and the good will of the people to continue to function without serious problems. It is not easy relationship and it needs apart from mutual respect, trust and goodwill, constant adjustment and clear boundaries. " (Gavrielides 2013, 19-20).

Considering the professional status and positions of government communication, we assume that government communication developed to the level of an emergent occupational field and professionalism eventually has become an issue. The practices and patterns of behavior show some specific professional attributes (i.e. specialized theoretical and practical knowledge, systematic and regular training, the increasing complexity of knowledge and skills, job standards, statutory or administrative-regulation). As in many occupational fields, there are also efforts to professionalize the occupation. Governments which are aware of the role and significance of open and transparent communication with citizens have taken steps to professionalize the communication function. Authorized and trained communication experts or organizational units (communication offices/departments) maintain communication between government and publics, and plan and coordinate the flow of information between the government and its public, and work according to standard rules.

How professionalism looks in practice?

The data on the status and the extent of professionalization of government communication function in different states or comparisons among European countries are rare. Some of available ones reveal similarities, but also differences in positions, roles, areas of activities and competence (CoV Study 2005; Nordfors 2011). Public communicators are public servants who conduct their tasks based on professional standards and work independently of the decisions of political parties. Political advisors are responsible for the political part of communication and are drawn from the politically-appointed staff. They are part of the cabinet team and their jobs are terminated after the end of the government's term. But even in high developed democracies with long tradition in government communication we can notice attempts to revamp the communication infrastructures and de-evaluate professional principles.

Ten year after the first CoV research, "Europe is increasingly revealing inequalities in the field of public communication. Some countries have adopted laws in this field and some have not. Some have expanded and integrated their communications functions and others are adopting a sectoral approach. Some have set up a mandatory framework for impact assessment and some haven't. Some have set up communication centrally-oriented models and others have chosen a de-centralised model. There are those who develop a journalistic approach and those who opt for a relationship oriented one" (Rolando 2014, 5).

Many find the questions, whether a certain work practice is considered an occupation or a mature profession and what are its characteristics, irrelevant. They consider much more important whether practitioners behave like professionals, in accordance with professional criteria and prove that their work is effective, efficient and responsible, that the outcomes of communication activities contribute to the organizational success.

Organizations are continuously forced to improve their performance. They try to identify characteristics of excellence, benchmark their own performance along these dimensions, and focus on weak points to improve and outperform. Excellence is evaluated differently on various theoretical models. ECM researchers claim that excellence is 'based on the internal standing of the communication department within the organization

(influence) and external results of the communication department's activities as well as its basic qualifications (performance). Influence is justified by advisory and executive excellence, where senior managers take the recommendations of communication department seriously and communication advisors are invited into the strategic planning process. Performance is qualified by success of communication activities and the competence of the communication staff' (ECM 2016, 110).

The ECM 2016 shows that excellent communication departments have been more engaged with big data analysis and are better qualified in the field of social media. They are better aligned to the top management. Professionals spend less time for operational work, they put more effort on coaching and consulting other members of the organization with a highly significant focus on advising and enabling top executives. Excellent departments employ communicators with stronger management skills which are good in strategic positioning and managing relationships, information and human resources. They offer training in the technical, business, management and communication realm. They also focus on conveying knowledge and not merely communication skills (ECM 2016, 109).

In this concern, the differences between the countries may be greater. In some environments, communication function has been upgraded to the level of a strategic function, playing essential role in the processes of policy making and decision making. In other environments, the communication function is hardly considered of strategic importance. The prime responsibility of communication remains assuring mostly the media relations and online communication.
Delivering media relations and information management in order to generate publicity, create a satisfactory public image, as well as reduce the adverse media coverage are far from the demands of today's highly complex life. Citizens and the experts are critical to these practices; they understand them as a political promotion, persuasion and publicity for the transmission of political or partisan views of politicians. Public organizations are expected not only to be effective in the traditional sense of producing results, but to be transparent with the regards to procedures and held accountable for the working and policy making procedures that provide the qualitative products or services. The perceptions and expectations of citizens about governmental operations are not only determined by the quality of these operations but also by public communication regarding these operations. Many of government's tasks cannot be accomplished without effective and responsible government communication that exceeds publicizing decisions. For becoming truly beneficial, communication should be a part of democratic process of interactive policy-making in which government involves citizens, business entities and many societal organizations in policy-making process in order to prepare and implement better laws or policies.

Professionalism is individual and collective

On normative level, so far, so good. The vital question is who is responsible for the implementation of professionalism in practice.
Professionalism is individual and collective. On the individual level, it refers to professional criteria and values (i.e. expert knowledge, professional judgment, independence, mutual support and trust between actors, peer supervision). The practitioners acquire the necessary skills and internalize the values through a process of regular and supplementary education and regular work. On a collective level, development and implementation of the fundamental attributes of a profession, i.e. proficiency (body of knowledge), the autonomy of operations, professional standardization, ethics (accomplishment of ethical rules) are crucial.
Professionalism begins with each individual, but he/she can hardly develop his/hers expert potential to the full extent without much support of the profession itself. A large part of responsibility for the development of a profession and its consolidation in our organizations and in the society lies in the hands of national and

international professional organizations and associations. Many of us may be the members of domestic or international professional associations, but usually they pay little attention to government communication. Individual governments need to develop their our capacities for creating multi-faceted communication function and highly competent communicators. There are just a few countries that institutionalized the specialized training for communicators and civil servants and established regular co-operation with academia to develop the specific body of knowledge.

And what for the rest? Club of Venice remains an immensely important source of information, inspiration, relevance, sharing of experiences and developing relationships between European government communicators. Club of Venice, despite its informal organization, has grown into a strong and relevant professional organization that is increasingly contributing to the development of professional standards and values of governments communication and providing key benchmarks for the advancement of our profession.

In the past decade, digitization, mediatisation and new demands in business and society have changed communication management dramatically. Also the conditions for the work of communication professionals have altered significantly. Professionalism cannot be understood just a matter of good organization or a promotion of good practices any more. Sanders (2011) claims it should entail normative standards, if we want that "it matters not only to scientific community but also to policy makers and our fellow citizens". Gregory (2015) is even more clear " professionalism is not just about doing the implementation work well, it's more about a strategic mindset that places learning at the centre and is focused on making a difference to how organizations behave and how society functions.

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Communication horizons: some obvious shifts leading to inevitable change

Zigurds Zakis

We are living in a time when digital tools and platforms have increasingly revolutioned societies, media, culture, creativity, storytelling, politics, economy, work and almost every other aspect of our lives. These are not just incremental developments, the ways we do things – gather information, learn, form our opinions, compete, organize communities, run countries and create value for our citizens – are starting to change fundamentally.
In the last decades of the Mass-media Age, the role of communication professionals (us) was mostly reduced to creating and delivering messages and stories to "target audiences" (them). The approaches that worked (or seemed to work) in the Mass-media Age – press releases, one-directional "media plans", "information campaigns", all based on pushing content towards people in a way only mass media allows – are losing efficacy and most probably will become niche approaches for particular situations.
The dynamics of the situation call for a set of new or significantly updated competencies from all communication professionals and demand completely new capabilities from all communication organizations, units and agencies, both internal and external.

Four obvious shifts to address

There are a few, very simple, obvious shifts in media, culture and communication that are changing the very nature of our work and also the way we should approach the communication of our governments.

First: from the dominance of one-directional communication, from the "saying things to them" approaches of the Mass-media Age, **we are moving back to an Age of Conversation**.
We are provided with tools and platforms that allow people to communicate directly with other people inside the groups they choose to be part of and with people they trust. But nobody is entitled to say anything to 'them' unless they have earned the right to be part of the group.
Creating, running and maintaining conversations, and taking part in existing ones requires a different set of competencies and skills. New approaches must be used to plan open-ended campaigns, to dynamically react to ever-changing developments and to balance campaigns with ongoing, continuous communication.
Listening to conversations and identifying whats important in peoples lives and what are their challenges could sometimes be more important than saying anything, because we can only be part of these conversations by building relationships, adding value to them and creating extraordinary experiences.
Mass media will not disappear, it is becoming less and less "mass" and less and less "media" for "telling things to people" and its role is changing. Communication is returning to its roots – and so should we.

Second: we all are facing an over-abundance of information. Over the last few decades, information has become one of the biggest pollutants in our lives. Let's admit it – people do not need more information. Therefore, the primary job of communication professionals is to simplify. Then we have to add some emotional and aesthetic layers so that our narrative has a better chance to get through the noise and to influence our audience. But simplicity is the key.
I would actually argue that calling a campaign an "information campaign" in most cases is a sign of incompetence (or of a totally uncritical attitude to one's work) either on the part of the communication "professionals" or the people responsible for the result and strategy. Yes, it is bureaucratically safe, but it rarely delivers results.
"EU information campaigns" (or campaigns that, in order to meet all the bureaucratic requirements, are becoming bland and boring, and therefore totally ineffective) often are among worst examples. In most cases, they neither change what people think and do, nor create a stronger emotional link with their audience.
In a time when information has become a commodity and anyone can find whatever information they need in a matter of seconds, public communication campaigns are an inefficient way of delivering information, particularly if people have no actual interest in the subject. And generally, audiences ignore anything that is not interesting or valuable or relevant to their particular situation. Even worse, they will have an antagonistic attitude to any superfluous information.

There should be information-delivering infrastructure behind every campaign, providing opportunities for any person interested in the topic to dig deeper and find out more of relevance to them. But campaigns should be used for what they do best – dramatizing issues or exaggerating consequences, good or bad, in order to create interest or polarize audiences into starting conversations. Or just telling stories that change attitudes and lead to changes in behaviour. Purely information-based or hyper-rational approaches rarely do.

Third: "social platforms", not "social media". We are social beings and social networks have been a part of our live for eons; digital technologies exponentially increase their visibility, reach, speed of communication and efficiency, and allow new ones to be easily created and managed for any purpose.
I believe it is a mistake to call social networks "social media". They are not just another set of "media channels" that allow us "reach people" and "deliver messages and information" to them.
Try to think of social networks as "social platforms" and approach them as such, and your job will become more interesting and I would suggest, easier. We can use social networks as platforms for listening, for igniting conversations about issues that are important to people or for helping people and groups to organize themselves to achieve particular goals and improve their lives. We can ask people to participate in improving our services and, if the issues are important to them, they will. But it is very hard to "deliver messages" that are different from what we are doing in social platforms.
In my experience, effective utilisation starts with one very simple change– eliminating the phrase "social media" from our professional vocabulary and replacing it with "social platforms".

And finally, video and interactivity are changing the ways we learn, communicate, tell stories and create value for people. Video, animation, interactive charts, dynamic data visualizations and other visual-storytelling tools are underused as a primary means of spreading our stories in place of ineffective press releases, textual statements and speeches to camera.
But no longer is it just about recording a "video version of a press release" – the over-abundance of information also applies to video content and nobody is interested in just another recorded lecture or "talking head". At its best, video – professionally made in all aspects – helps tell the story in a compelling way, saves the audience's time, not wasting even a second, and uses a variety of techniques to engage the viewer not only on a rational, but also on an emotional level.
Combined with interactive options, video delivers rich, visual storytelling in a variety of formats and provides every viewer with an opportunity find their own unique way to navigate the story, to choose the depth and breadth of information and experience they require to form their own opinion.

Five principles

How do you plan a campaign in this day and age? There are many formulas and every professional should really develop their own. I will share five principles I try to follow and am attempting to convince my clients to adopt.

1. **Every campaign, big or small, should, at this time, be treated as an integrated campaign.** Every great integrated campaign starts with a well thought-through strategy – from critically defining the role of communication and finding the insight to build on when briefing and inspiring the creative team and orchestrating all the activities. Smart strategy is the key to great creative work and to the integration of all the elements in an effective campaign.
2. **Brutal simplicity.** In a time of over-abundance of information and total channel fragmentation, our job is to simplify and to create experiences. Great, effective campaigns are typically based on great customer insight, so that their central idea can be both told in 140 characters and developed into in-depth case studies. If you cannot express the idea or your strategy in 140 characters, it is more than likely that the idea is not yet good enough.

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3. **The story, not information, is central.** If communication is returning to its roots, we have to become even better storytellers, crafting stories that are relevant and compelling to our audience, consistent over time and adaptable to all contexts.
4. **Utilise all the senses.** This is mandatory, not an option. Pictures speak louder than words, so a story told in a visually attractive way will, in most cases, be more effective than just a written story. But if people can play with our story to experience different scenarios and to look at it from different, sometimes unexpected angles by themselves using interactive options, the impact will be much deeper and broader. Again, the main thing is to remember is that we are in the business of creating experiences, not just providing more information to people.
5. **Creating value is at the centre of everything we do.** This means always starting with the questions "how can we make people's lives better and simpler?" and "how can we make our societies and countries more effective in serving the needs of our people?", not with "what do we want to say them?". This is an imperative in our time and a most intuitive rule. Our work should always start with conversations and digging beyond understanding what is important to our audience. When we do things that are important to them, communication is easy. Then it is just a matter of not forgetting to tell stories about what we are doing, but also about why we are doing it.

Communication Professionals Today and Tomorrow

Communication has always played a fundamental role in creating value for people, in strengthening societies and groups, in motivating organizations and countries to achieve more. In the emerging era of networked economies and hyper-connected societies, in times of global crises which are testing the limits of relations, diplomacy, negotiations, resilience and resistance, and when even sophysticated communication tools are available to everybody, the importance of communication can only continue to grow significantly everywhere and the value of professional, strategically thought-through and creative communication will in parallel grow exponentially.

The world of professional communications is changing and we have to change with it. All of us – from the most experienced professionals to narrowly focused specialists – have to continually update our knowledge and skills, our views on what works and what does not, to keep up with the times. Pro-active, personal professional growth should be a mandatory requirement for anybody who wants to be a contributor to a contemporary communication team.

A new breed of communication professionals – from experienced communication strategists and creatives to user-experience experts and multidisciplinary project managers – will be needed to create and maintain efficient communication in the contemporary world of dynamic, open-ended campaigns and decentralized storytelling. We have to learn to co-operate and to build alliances, to brief and inspire our partners to great work, to evaluate their work for the best possible result and to manage co-operation with many ambitious partners.

But most importantly – we have to aim for excellence in every piece of communication, to create extraordinary experiences and extraordinary value for our audiences. Because if we lose that "something extra", all that is left is just the "ordinary". And our audience is no longer prepared to accept the ordinary from anybody.

Communicating Europe in Italy: the role of the department for european policies

Fiorenza Barazzoni and Barbara Altomonte

Structure and coordination

The Italian government, similarly to several other countries in the EU, coordinates communication functions on the basis of the competences of its structures: the Ministry of Health communicates health, as does the Ministry of Education in the field of education, and so forth.

Furthermore, there is a coordination of the institutional communication, politically entrusted to the Sottosegretario di Stato all'Editoria, who is empowered by the President of the Council of Ministers and assisted, at administrative level, by a structure of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, the Department for Information and Publishing.

Annually, in November, the administrations of the State are required to elaborate their communication plan for the following year, to be delivered to the Department for Publishing. The communication plan, on the basis of policy documents, proposes to the political authority to adopt a Government communication plan, which coordinates every single proposal and initiative. Due to their social utility, the projects which are part of the Government communication plan are entitled to free broadcasting on radio-television public networks, and are supported both technically and, if necessary, economically at the central level.

Institutional communication, by law, is about dialogue with citizens and the other institutions, using direct tools, on the Internet or through consultation, events, exhibition and campaigns. The same law provides that communication activities have to be coordinated with information activities, which are also addressed to citizens, but through the media: press, radio and TV.

Such institutional structure, summarized in a nutshell above, is regulated by a provision, which in Italy is called "framework law": Law No 150 of 2000. A vast and general planning enabled us, so far, connecting all institutional and political activities of the State. However, such an ambition to universality is faced with many practical difficulties, despite its theoretical solidity.

For instance, the organization of communication for competences should not be taken for granted, and administrations have to collaborate on many topics, which are closely related to civil society: sports, for which a structure of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers is competent, concerning students (competence of the Ministry of Education) but also disabled people (competence of the Ministry of Social Policies) and youth in general (competence of a structure of the Presidency separated from the one competent for Sports); drug addictions are concerned with the Ministry of Health but also with the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Social Policies, and so forth.

The coordination of strategies, tools and timing of institutional and political communication is another aspect that requires constant efforts and commitment.

To conclude, within the framework of Law there are other actors of institutional communication (supranational institutions, local bodies, associations) but the communication activities are not regulated, unlike the administrations of the State. Hence, also this coordination is co-delegated by political and administrative leaders.

Communication on EU topics is physiologically part of this institutional framework, and the Department for European Policies experiences its complexity, pros and cons.

A Department for Europe

The Department for European Policies supports the President of the Council of Ministers - or the delegated political authority - in managing the relations between the Italian Government and the European Institutions.

One of the main tasks that the Department encompasses is information and communication on EU, especially on

the access of citizens to policies, programs, opportunities and rights. Furthermore, through the National SOLVIT Center, the Department supports citizens and firms signalling cases of incorrect application/implementation of European law by Public Administrations of the Member States; through the assistance centre on professional qualifications, the Department informs and supports citizens for the recognition of professional qualifications and free provision of services in the EU; as a national Coordinator of the IMI system, it facilitates the collaboration among relevant authorities on issues related to the Single/internal market.

Communicating/(informing (on)) Europe to citizens has been a task of the Department since 1987, even after the latest rearrangement in July.

Such responsibility is no easy task, within the framework of Italian institutional communication in a regulatory landscape, which, quite reasonably, aims at extending the participation of institutions and citizens during the phases of formation and implementation of European regulations. Since the end of 2012, this law has organically regulated the Italian mechanisms of institutional participation to formation and implementation of EU regulations and policies.

Under this law, an additional duty has to be fulfilled: in the annual report (General Report) to the Parliament, the Government is required to outline the communication and capacity building strategies on the EU activities and the Italian participation in the EU for the following year.

Coordination and Institutional Projects

We consider the 30th anniversary of the Club of Venice a prelude to the 30th anniversary of the Department in 2017.

Within this timeframe, reflecting upon the dynamics and changes of institutional communication in Europe is fundamental from different perspectives.

Over the last years, generally perceived as a period of crisis of the European project, it has proved pivotal questioning the extent to which communication has changed, as well as citizens have, and discussing the adequacy of our tools and strategies in the present and future situation/scenario.

If, despite the rejection of the European Constitutions, the British referendum in favour of Brexit and in the midst of the debate on terrorism, migration, "United in diversity" continues to be the EU motto, it is possible to say that in Italy this motto has become a rule, especially for institutional communication.

The possibility of dialogue with other communicators and of sharing experience and knowledge is an important asset to enhance our strategies and communication projects, which are carried out with a huge commitment, rather than huge financial resources. It is no surprise that participating and organizing sessions and workgroups of the Club of Venice is one of the communication functions ot the Department overtly listed in the internal organisation acts.

As said above, the Department is required to collaborate with the Italian institutions within the governmental field, by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, which communicates the Italian position (?) in Europe (through the permanent Representation in Brussels) to the Department of Information and Publishing. Together with such Department, which has included "Europe" in the Government communication plan of 2016, we set up two communication campaigns in Italy and concentrated on the "60th Anniversary of Treaties of Rome logo" project.

In order to develop a structured teaching of citizenship and the European Constitution together with teachers, and to outline the strategies and communication projects by interacting with students, not only does the Department

coordinate with the Ministry of Education, University and Research, but also with the Italian representations to the Parliament and European Commission, through a specific Programme Agreement. We invest in education/(school), by offering a project to teachers and students. This project, for each grade level (primary school, middle school and high school) offers tools, training activities, but also games and contests, through a digital platform, which is annually renewed and upgraded in Italian and English.

Furthermore, with the purpose of encouraging the knowledge of the opportunities offered by the EU funding, and developing skills to create an informed community of central and local administrators, citizens, associations, firms, we organise training and information seminars in Italy, in collaborations with experts recognised by the European Commission. At the same time, in order to enable local bodies discussing Europe and dialoguing on such topic with citizens and students, we organise events and exhibitions on the history of European integration and citizenship.

Those are key moments for the training of the administrative personnel involved, who, on-the-spot and online, encourage the knowledge of the mechanisms of eligible State Aid, new public procurement rules and anti-fraud measures at the EU level.

In conclusion, thanks to the forthcoming 60th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome, which will be celebrated in 2017, a broader coordination phase with Italian and European institutions, national/regional/local bodies and civil society has been launched.

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She also worked at the OECD Public Governance Directorate, at the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), at the Direction Générale de l'Administration et de la Fonction Publique of the Prime Minister Services of France and for international law firms.
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BARBARA ALTOMONTE
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Social license to operate: positioning and the communication professional

Some reflections on how communication practitioners might apply this potentially useful model

Guy Dominy & Kevin Traverse-Healy

In this brief article we discuss how the 'Social License to Operate' model/concept might be useful to public sector communication practitioners. The Social License to Operate is a perhaps underused tool from the world of corporate public relations. We argue that it is a framework that is particularly helpful in today's world where social media means public opinion can shift and coalesce with alarming rapidity. Further, we argue that – with some adjustment – the model can be a valuable tool for the public sector communication professional.

We suggest that, by extending the basic idea of the Social License to Operate with recent thinking on positioning, a more nuanced version of the model can be developed. The key to this 'extension' is making more explicit the idea that while organisations can lose their 'Social License to Operate', the more common occurrence is the need to renegotiate the license. This we argue is particularly relevant to public sector communication.

Perhaps the 'founding father' of Social license to Operate was Arthur W. Page, the vice president of public relations at the USA's telephone giant, AT&T from 1927: *...all business in a democratic country begins with public permission and exists with public approval*" (Page 1942).

However, Social License to Operate (SLO) as a named concept is one that emerged largely in the extractive industries in response to 'social risk' (Moffat and Zhang, 2014), although arguably there is earlier Public Relations literature, such as Page, that refers to the concept of a 'License to Operate' without naming it. At its simplest, Social License to Operate refers to the need for (in the original use) companies to – at the very least – secure the tacit acceptance of the communities they operate within in addition to any formal legal permissions. In addition to the extractive industries, those involved in ethical business have been increasingly interested in the concept - linking it with ideas of Corporate Social responsibility (CSR). The Ethical Funds Company, for example, has offered a definition:

> *...outside of the government or legally-granted right to operate a business. A company can only gain a Social License to Operate through the broad acceptance of its activities by society or the local community. Without this approval, a business may not be able to carry on its activities without incurring serious delays and costs.* (The Ethical Funds Company, 2015)

The idea has already been extended to reflect the fact that this 'Social License to Operate' may be granted with different levels of enthusiasm on the part of the community (See Figure 1, after Thomson and Boutilier 2011).

Figure 1: Social License to Operate

It is worth noting the mechanisms by which the Social License to Operate is lost can vary from, at one extreme, violence through to boycotting products and services and even employment. Such actions can cause organisations to voluntarily shut themselves down.

Examples where a company has lost the Social License to Operate recently include the newspaper the News of the World in the UK which closed its own doors in response to sustained criticism over infringements of privacy. In the public sector we see a long history of where states have effectively lost their license to operate - including the British Empire from early revolts against it in America to its withdrawal from Africa and Asia from the 1950s. More recently, the collapse of the Soviet Union and associated states can – arguably – be attributed to the loss of their Social License to Operate as can the collapse of a number of North African states in the 'Arab Spring'.

But, according to John Morrison, executive director of the Institute for Human Rights and Business:

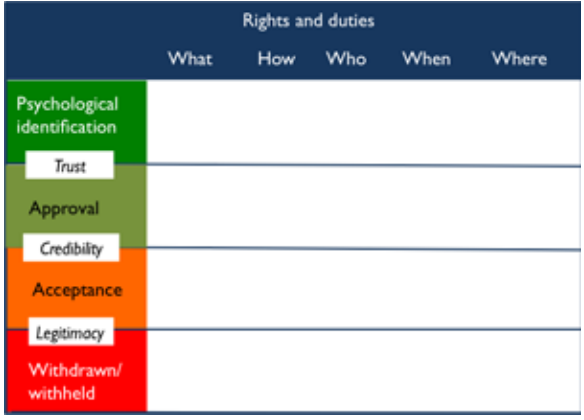

Figure 2: Social License to Operate as cluster of rights and duties

> *It is much harder to point at examples where the social license remains robust as the symptoms are far subtler – but there are examples of where activities have enjoyed strong social legitimacy.* (The Guardian 2014)

Morrison goes on to give examples of the Gap clothing company on child labour and the Kenyan mobile 'phone company Safaricom but warns:

> *Social licence can never be self-awarded, it requires that an activity enjoys sufficient trust and legitimacy, and has the consent of those affected.*

The idea that an organisation – even a government – can lose its Social License to Operate is a very simple one. Arguably it is too binary, too black and white, to be particularly useful to public relations practitioners in modern states.

Melanie James discusses the potential application of 'positioning theory' to public relations (2015). She summarises an organisation's positioning as a 'cluster of rights and duties' (James, 2015; 35). The 'rights' can be seen as what the organisation has permission from society to do. The 'duties' can be seen as how society desires the organisation to carry out those tasks we consider it appropriate that they carry out (see Figure 2). So, for example, a bar or club might have a formal license to serve alcohol at specific times and to specific age groups and other formal requirements might restrict the noise from patrons but more broadly the club will need the tacit approval of the community for its type of clientele and their behaviour i.e. how and to whom it serves alcohol.

The Social License to Operate then can be more usefully seen as a license to carry out certain activities (rights) in specific fashion (duties). In our newspaper example, newspapers have the 'right' to publish stories about individuals but have 'duties' to protect the privacy of individuals. Even more specifically we appear to assign a different importance to the privacy of celebrities as against ordinary people and, particularly, victims. It would be interesting for Club members to suggest examples from their own experience.

This model, we suggest, is a more useful framework for public relations practitioners in the public sector – allowing us to 'map' what our government has a social license to do – rights – and how it should be carried out – duties – if you like. The traditional tools of public opinion research, stakeholder surveys, media monitoring and more modern social media tools – buzz monitoring – enable us to populate our map and detect when the world outside's expectations are shifting and we might need to act to defend or renegotiate our rights and duties. The framework this model offers can also help us develop our narrative. By identifying what is causing the issue is actually **what** we are doing, the **way** that we are doing it or the way we are **communicating**, we can better design a narrative to protect our Social License to Operate.

As an illustration, there is currently a lot of comment about the taxation of corporations. We (the people) grant government the right to collect taxes. Implicit – in modern states at least – is the requirement that these are collected 'fairly' – including from international businesses. However, what is considered fair is something that evolves. It seems as if increasingly the 'public' are beginning to insist on a renegotiation of what they want when it comes to the collection of taxes – especially from successful corporations seen to be paying little.

Despite rhetoric about 'rolling back the state', there has been a trend towards the extension of modern government's Social License to Operate (see, for example, the ever increasing role for the state in discouraging unhealthy behaviours and adopting 'positive' attitudes'). We might argue that we can also identify areas where the Social License to Operate is 'at risk' today. The recent referendum in Scotland on the Union between England and Scotland suggests that that particular institution is at risk – and that spectre is returning.

The exact nature of the Social License to Operate that the European Union functions within has always been subject to debate as a relatively new institution. Nonetheless, within the UK at least, the EU's Social License to

Operate was itself at risk and the referendum result showed that the 'license' was not renegotiated to better fit public opinion in Britain – or, arguably, that the actual 'license' was communicated accurately during the debate.

Finally, we suggest that this is one more argument for the communication director to sit at the 'top table'. The Social License to Operate is fundamental to an organisation's very survival and it is the communication function's natural orientation and responsibility to look outside the organisation. We suggest that this extended version of the Social License to Operate gives the modern communication professional a suitable framework for organising and identifying actionable insight from this 'environmental' scanning.

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Inspiring times for EU communication professionals

Reijo Kemppinen

We, at the General Secretariat of the Council, are proud to have been able to provide administrative and secretarial support to the Club for many years already. During this time we have met and exchanged views with many colleagues from the Member States of the EU and beyond. Interesting discussions have taken place and, we have learned from each other.

In particular, I'm very grateful to those members of the Club who, over the years, have served in the Steering Group. Without their ideas, energy and enthusiasm the Club would not exist today.
As one of the older war horses I'm sure I'm not alone in thinking that being a communication professional today is perhaps more exciting than ever. Never before has the speed of technological change brought forward so many new ideas and opportunities. Every day brings in new things to study. Every young person we recruit is someone I can actually learn from.

And nowhere are the challenges more inspiring than in the world of EU communication. Just think. They tell you it is about war and peace. But if the only war you know is the one you have read about, is it a wonder that people today ask what the EU really stands for? Think, communicate.

We tell them EU is about prosperity. That globalisation is good and free trade even better because it makes everyone even more prosperous. Does it? Why should someone who has little money, no education and no job believe us? Think, inform.

Everywhere people are asking the same questions. Who is not afraid of uncontrolled migration? How can I calmly accept that details of my personal profile and behaviour are shared with businesses and foreign authorities? Who does not look twice when a person with a veil and long dress comes close, carrying a bulky suitcase? Would I sit in a car that has no driver?

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Reijo Kemppinen joined the European Commission in 2000 as a spokesman in external relations working for Commissioners Pascal Lamy and Chris Patten. In 2004 he was appointed the principal Spokesperson of the Commission as well as the Spokesman of the President Romano Prodi.
Before joining the Commission, Reijo worked for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland as a Commercial Counsellor and from 1995 as the Press Counsellor and Spokesman of the Permanent Representation in the EU. He was the press officer of the Delegation that negotiated Finland's entry to the EU.
Reijo Kemppinen started his career as a journalist working for the MTV 10 O'Clock News in Finland and later on for the daily newspaper Uusi Suomi as the News Editor. He set up and managed the newspaper's office in Brussels from 1990 to 1992 also acting as a correspondent for BBC News in Finnish.
Reijo is Knight, First Class, of the Order of the Lion of Finland and has published several books about the European Union, European Monetary Union and Belgium.

Discuss, communicate.

Modern communication is about sharing. It is about accepting that no single truth governs all, that the benefits of the membership of the European Union are not evenly spread. Not everyone wins all the time.
All this I believe should give us cause for reflection also within the Club. The informal character and value of our cooperation should never be put to question. We need this great asset when we deal with the challenges that lie ahead of us.

Of course we cannot tackle every problem. Resources are limited and therefore we need focus. Some challenges are so big that we have to do more than meeting on a regularly basis. The one day seminars we had recently on terrorism and crisis communication are perfect additions. But I feel we can even do more, by speaking to each other on the phone more often and use video-conferencing. Not as a substitution for our face-to-face meetings, but as an addition.

General Secretariat is happy to continue to be involved in the work of the Club. Perhaps sometime in the near future we will have the opportunity to reflect on these issues together.

Public communications between projecting values and feeding populism

Vuk Vujnovic

Europe's concurrent and overlapping crises have clearly affected the political, social and economic cohesion across and within European nations, leading to the rise of populism and propaganda in public and political discourse to levels unprecedented in recent decades. Furthermore, the constantly evolving nature of today's interconnected world is putting additional pressure on public communicators to play a fundamentally different role in their societies, one that goes far beyond traditional public information.

Overall, this paints a gloomy picture for public communicators. On the one hand, while being ruled by considerations of accuracy and political correctness, they are expected to navigate through an environment increasingly saturated with populist or propagandistic discourse that shows little regard to decency or truth. On the other, they are faced with a growing demand for technological innovation, speed, responsiveness and simplicity from the increasingly interconnected and disinterested communities.

One could rightfully argue that facing the hurdles that undermine the effectiveness and call into question the very purpose of institutional communication qualifies as a major crisis of the profession and that the time is ripe to reinvent public communicators' role in modern societies.

In an effort to make themselves valuable to their public leaders in an increasingly complex and intimidating environment, public communicators risk losing their credibility and purpose, unless their actions remain firmly rooted in ethical considerations. Those ethical considerations are the defining element of the profession, which separates it from corporate or political communications, marketing or any other art or skill that seeks to mobilise people for particular interests, rather than for public good. In the scores of seemingly similar communication-related trades, only public or institutional communicators have the responsibility and privilege to provide a public service for common good. Needless to say, ethical considerations and norms are central to this concept.

Public communicators have every reason to take pride in this important social role. However, high ethical standards are not just the source of pride, they are also the source of strength, as they give public communicators the sense of purpose and credibility, which is their most valuable currency. Yet, strangely enough, there are very few reference points as to what ethical public communication actually is, and what principles and standards should apply.

A group of public communicators from South East Europe have tried to provide a contribution to this end. Inspired by the spirit of cooperation and sharing in the Club of Venice, government communicators from 9 countries of South East Europe came together in Budva, Montenegro, in 2012 to adopt the so-called Budva Declaration, the region's fist transnational declaration of core professional and ethical principles of government communication. This declaration, which has become the founding document of South East Europe's association of government communicators – SEECOM, argues that presenting public policies in an understandable way, encouraging dialogue between public authorities and citizens and enabling public participation in policy making will inevitably improve the quality of public policies and in turn advance democracy.

According to the peer consensus reached within the SEECOM network, ethical public communication goes far beyond the requirement to provide citizens with truthful information. If, in the case of public communicators, providing a public service means enabling people to make informed opinions and decisions, then clearly 'telling the truth' to someone who does not listen or is not interested will not suffice. Therefore, it is public communicators' ethical responsibility to capture people's attention and inspire their interest to engage in public life. Trying to attract people's interest and to win popular support exclusively by providing information is simply not a cost-effective way to spend taxpayers' money. While not many people are excited to be at the receiving end of public communication, many are likely to be interested in having a say in how public policies are shaped and delivered, if given an opportunity for meaningful engagement.

VUK VUJNOVIC
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Public Affairs Specialist, Mission of Montenegro to the EU, Brussels
Graduated from the Faculty of Philology at the University of Belgrade, Serbia. Over the past ten years, Vujnović occupied a number of senior positions in government communications, including as Head of the Montenegrin Government's Public Relations Office. He currently works as Public Affairs Specialist at Montenegro's Mission to the European Union in Brussels. He is also a co-founder and Secretary General of the South East Europe Public Sector Communication Association (SEECOM). Vujnović developed a number of initiatives promoting citizen engagement in policy making, including the Citizens'Voice, South-East Europe's first government e-petition website. He also designed and managed the public engagement campaign "Be Responsible" winning the Open Government Partnership's Golden Award in New York in 2014. In recent years, he spoke on the topics of public communication, good governance and public diplomacy at events in the United States, UK, Belgium, Italy, Turkey and throughout South East Europe.

This gives public communicators a new major social responsibility, which is to act as catalysts for public dialogue and engagement with civil society and citizens, in order to help their governments to create policies that are more in tune with people's actual needs, expectations and concerns. In today's Europe, this mission is ever more important, since meaningful and productive dialogue between governments and citizens is a critical element of political stability, social cohesion and economic progress in our societies. It is worth noting that many of the bad things currently happening throughout the world are directly associated with the lack of such dialogue and the inability of societies to bridge deep political, ethnic or religious divides. The recent challenges facing the entire European continent show that Europe is not immune to these woes either.

Acute mistrust in government, combined with chronic political divides and a lack of institutional avenues for citizens' to make their voice heard, has been known to lead to civil unrests or even violent conflicts. In the 'good scenario', lack of meaningful dialogue and productive collaboration with citizens simply nurtures political polarization and citizens remain excluded, disengaged or plain indifferent. All this makes the mission of reinventing the role of public communicators in modern societies that much more important. The belief that simply having free and easy access to multiple sources of information enables people to make informed opinions and decisions resembles the obsolete economic notion of the free market as a panacea for all society's ill. In times when information is abundant and attention and interest are scarce, when people are fearful of many of the life's uncertainties and wooed by political opportunists, populists and propagandists, the role of public communicators as instigators of public dialogue and engagement with civil society and citizens is pivotal in helping governments to create policies that are more in tune with people's actual needs, expectations and concerns.

However, in order to live up that major role, the credibility of public communicators needs to be firmly anchored in the ethical standards and principles of the profession. This also brings home the crucial importance of the Club of Venice as the unique pan-European forum where public communicators from across Europe learn and share with each other how to make public information more accessible, understandable and interesting to people, how to listen as much as they speak and how to engage citizens in public policies.

Integrity, impartiality and public interest.
Government communication should be performed in a way that preserves the integrity and impartiality of public institutions and serves the public interest.
Government communicators should always act in a way that sustains the public's long-term trust and confidence in government information and communication.
(An extract from the Budva Declaration)

EU StratComs in the East and South; challenges and perspectives

Giles Portman & Michael Mann

In the introduction to her recently-unveiled blueprint for European Union Foreign Policy, the 'Global Strategy', High Representative Federica Mogherini wrote: "To the east, the European security order has been violated, while terrorism and violence plague North Africa and the Middle East, as well as Europe itself."

Against this difficult backdrop, the Strategy calls for a major boost to the EU's strategic communications: "We will improve the consistency and speed of messaging on our principles and actions. We will also offer rapid, factual rebuttals of disinformation. We will continue fostering an open and enquiring media environment within and beyond the EU, also working with local players and through social media."

Surrounded by regions facing unprecedented political instability and facing the challenge of huge migratory flows, the EU's communicators face an immense challenge. Yet, it is one we need to step up to like never before. In that, we are fortunate to have a High Representative with a clear understanding of the importance of 'StratComs' as an inherent part of the diplomatic and political process.

It has been just over a year since work began in earnest within the European External Action Service to take on the twin challenges of Russian disinformation and the radical narratives being propagated by organisations such as Da'esh both outside the EU and within.

The East Stratcom Task Force was set up at the request of the March 2015 European Council, which tasked Mrs Mogherini to submit, in cooperation with EU institutions and Member States, an action plan on strategic communication in order to address Russia's ongoing disinformation campaigns. The Task Force's role is to help communicate EU policies towards the Eastern Neighbourhood more effectively; to help support a stronger media environment in the region, especially in the Russian language; and to improve the EU's capacity to forecast, address and respond to disinformation. It began as a team of nine, drawing expertise in strategic communications, the EaP region and the Russian language from the EU institutions and seconded experts from Member States. It's now expanded to eleven.

Most of the Task Force's resource has been focused on positive communication. It has deliberately not branded this work as its own, instead providing its support and expertise to Delegations (and on occasion Member States) to deliver as close to the target audience as possible. The result has been significant increases in audience and impact. In particular, the Task Force has worked with Delegations to introduce new communications concepts, designing products which engage as well as inform. It has helped update their communication strategies, better to identify key policy issues, events, messages and audiences. And then it's supported these through a limited number of priority, tested messages, promoted via more effective social media strategies and better products. Much of the output has been quick-time, short-term and tactical, giving visibility and support to one off events, visits or announcements. Increasingly, the focus will move to fully fledged communications campaigns, which will be helped by pooling the visibility components of EU projects into single communications contracts. The Task Force is also managing a pilot project in Georgia aimed at developing new online tools and practical methods for improving project communication. Looking ahead, the Task Force's positive communications focus will stay on Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova; on developing output on Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus; and on Russian language outreach.

Under its second objective (media plurality) the Task Force has played a discreet, supportive role in promoting a more pluralistic and independent media environment in the region. A year on and things are happening: a new Baltic Centre for Media Excellence in Riga, a Russian Language News Exchange in Prague, increasing Member State support and the launch of the Commission's new €8m OPEN Media Hub programme. The Task Force has given its expertise to these initiatives through its participation in various steering committees. And it has mapped Member State and Commission activity to share information, encourage best practice and partnership, and avoid duplication.

The Task Force has also made a difference of its own through launching the EEAS's new Russian language web pages, supported by a new Russian journalists' network and newsletter. This has filled a gap: for the first time, the EU is communicating from headquarters in Russian, providing real time, accurate information on EU foreign policy backed up by off the record briefings. We're seeing a clear appetite for this, across the Russian language media spectrum.

Objective three – addressing disinformation - is the Task Force activity that has received the most public attention. Over the year the Task Force has created: a network (the EU "mythbusters"); a brand ("EUvsDisinfo"); recognised and regular products (a weekly Disinformation Review and Digest, in Russian and English); new social media profiles (Twitter reaching 500,000 impressions per month, Facebook growing fast); an audience (the newsletters alone are read up to 20,000 times a week); and major endorsements. Fundamental to this success has been giving the Task Force the freedom to operate outside the confines of a formal EU product, to create something that is not typically "EU" and bureaucratic.

But disinformation continues: it comes from state media, extremist websites, GONGOs, think tanks and trolls. It is targeting the West, Europe, the EU, its policies and politicians (if anything, increasingly). It exploits the challenges Europe faces, finding a ready (and probably growing) audience among the disillusioned and anti-establishment. It sows doubt, divides societies and turns our principles of free speech and balance against us. So we need to move from short term identification of disinformation to longer term and more easily searchable trends, analysis and forecasting (as the Task Force's planned new anti-disinformation website will do). And we need to recognise that this is not just a foreign policy problem but a domestic EU challenge which needs a cross institutional/government approach.

Alongside this work in the east, the Task Force South was established by the EEAS in spring 2015, after EU foreign ministers called for 'improving its strategic communication, developing an outreach strategy to the Arab world, including developing counter-narratives to terrorist propaganda, promoting fundamental rights, and taking into account the increasingly frequent use of the internet

in radicalisation, engaging through social media and enhancing communication in Arabic'.
The Task Force seeks to develop and promote positive, alternative narratives to those propagated by Da'esh, foster dialogue and cultivate mutual respect between Arabic-speaking and European communities, especially among their youth, and to promote EU policies and projects in the region. In this, in coordinates closely with the EU Delegations in order to strengthen existing ties and highlight shared values. The Task Force South does much of its work through the EU's network of Delegations because these have Arabic-speaking staff with detailed knowledge of the local communications environment and of which messages will resonate with each identified audience. The reinforced work of the Task Force builds on the excellent Public Diplomacy the Delegations have carried out for many years, but attempts to adopt a more strategic approach, linking established communication practices with the EU's political priorities both regionally and in each individual country.

In June 2015, the Task Force produced an advisory report which fed into Mrs Mogherini's contribution to the European Council with an initial set of 30 recommendations. Since then, the Task Force has mapped existing outreach and communications tools, developed a business plan, implemented some of the June recommendations, and assisted the Delegations to put together detailed communication strategies which are now being rolled out. The EEAS has considerably increased the press and information budget for Delegations in the Arab world this year. Among other things, efforts have focused on strengthening their social media presence in the region, producing more content in Arabic, and focusing on young people to establish their concerns and to explore which narratives would work best where. The work of the Task Force complements a number of other, similar activities, including the project 'Strengthening community resilience to radicalisation and recruitment – MENA',

funded by the European Commission, launched in late 2015 in Tunisia and working hand-in-hand with local NGOs on different approaches to tackling radicalisation. Similar projects are planned in other countries in the region. The EEAS Stratcoms Division also has links to the Communications Cell of the Global Coalition against Da'esh, which works principally on developing direct counter-narratives and debunking some of the myths put about by the Da'esh propaganda machine. The Task Force South thus plays a key role in coordinating the many different strands of work going on in the EU against the threat posed by the increasingly sophisticated communications of radical groups in the Arab world.

The EU has often been guilty in the past of seeing communications as an after-thought to the political and diplomatic process. However, the work going on in two Task Forces for the east and south is clear evidence of a step-change in its attitude to strategic communications as a necessary response to the huge challenges it faces.

What's the goal of the East Stratcom and South Task Forces? Ultimately, it's that we don't need them any more: that the EU has got better at explaining its own policies, and no longer faces a constant disinformation attack, that negative and destructive narratives in both the new and traditional media are a thing of the past. A year on, it is clear that much remains to be done. Yet, while the task remains daunting, we have learnt much, become vastly more sophisticated in what we do and already made a real difference.

GILES PORTMAN

Giles Portman has been Head of the East Stratcom Task Force in the European External Action Service in Brussels since September 2015. The Task Force was established by the March 2015 European Council to improve communication of EU policies in the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood, help strengthen the media environment and media independence in the region, and improve the EU's capacity to anticipate and respond to disinformation. Before this, he worked for 12 years on EU-Turkey relations, as chair of the EU enlargement working group that negotiated the opening of Turkey's EU accession negotiations in 2005; as Deputy Head of Mission at the British Embassy in Ankara; and as Adviser on Turkey at the EEAS. He has also worked as a diplomat at the UN in New York and in Prague, and as EU communications adviser and speechwriter to a former UK Minister for Europe.

MICHAEL MANN

Michael Mann has been Head of Division for Strategic Communications at the European External Action Service since March 2011. In this capacity, he is responsible for communications activities both at EEAS headquarters and across the network of 140 EU Delegations around the world. From March 2011 to November 2014, he was also Chief Spokesman to Catherine Ashton, the EU's first High Representative for foreign affairs and security policy/Vice President of the European Commission. Between 2002 and 2011, Mr. Mann worked as a spokesman for the European Commission, covering a number of different portfolios. Prior to joining the EU, he had a career as a journalist, focusing on EU affairs, working for media including The Financial Times, Reuters, Bloomberg and European Voice. He was also a regular contributor to TV and radio, notably for the BBC.

RELATIONS WITH CIVIL SOCIETY AND GOING LOCAL

Communicating Europe in partnership: involving organised civil society

Peter Lindvald-Nielsen

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC[1]) is a long-established institution set up under the Treaty of Rome. The Committee will celebrate its 60th anniversary in 2018. Being a grown-up in institutional terms, it is a relatively young member of the Venice Club. As a small advisory body, the EESC benefits from its membership of the **Venice Club** by learning from best practice and by building up networks that make for improved synergies and help the Committee reach out to European citizens. The web platform **Venice net**, the newsletter **Convergences** and **seminars** and **workshops** are valuable tools for us.

To expand its communication capacity, the EESC draws on the experience and skills of its members. This policy area is currently managed by one of the Committee's two vice- presidents and its communication strategy is worked out by a Communication Group made up of 9 EESC members.

In the course of discussions in the Communication Group, it became clear that the European public cares little about institutions. People want to know what is actually happening on the European scene –all the more so if this is presented from a national or regional angle.

For that reason, the Communication Group decided that the EESC should launch a project: **"Going Local"** – Communication on the ground. EESC members are engaged in organising- and participating in events in their own "constituency" in their own language. Inspiration are gathered from networks available via the Venice Club and alone during the first 6 months of 2016 we have carried out more than 150 local activities involving around 1/3 of our members.

We also focus our efforts on young people by giving them the opportunity to meet Committee members on their home ground and talk about real and tangible issues. As a result, we have organised up till now 8 events specifically geared towards young people, called **Your Europe Your Say**. This is not in any sense a groundbreaking novelty as our friends in the European Parliament regularly stage sessions for young people, as do many

1 The EESC in a few words
What is the European Economic and Social Committee and what does it do?
It is a European advisory body. It has members from all the EU countries, representing different economic and social sectors in society: employers, workers, NGOs and various other organisations. In the European decision-making process, its role is to advise the other European institutions (the European Commission, Council of the European Union and European Parliament). The EESC gives them its point of view on particular issues, in documents known in euro-speak as "opinions".
Who are the EESC's members?
The 350 members come from organisations throughout the 28 EU Member States. Each member belongs to one of the Committee's three major groups, "Employers", "Workers" and "Various Interests". Their job is to work together to reach a consensus, so that the Committee can issue "opinions" that reflect the interests of the greatest number.
Why is the Committee's work important?
Through the various civil society organisations represented by the EESC, ordinary people in Europe can make their views heard and influence decisions taken at European level.
Want to find out more?
Surf our websites: http://www.eesc.europa.eu

national parliaments. Nevertheless, the innovative thing from the Committee's point of view was to have EESC members go out to schools before the pupils' visit to Brussels and engage in real dialogue with the young people on a specific, tangible issue. For the 2016 edition the focus was on migration and for 2017 we plan to use the 60th anniversary of the signing of the treaty of Rome to provoke a discussion on the future of Europe. The organising these events, the EESC draw on the examples set by its friends from the Venice Club. For instance, the European Commission took on board a German government idea and launched a project called Back to School, whereby, in connection, say, with a country holding the EU presidency, government and EU officials, including ministers and commissioners, would go back to their old schools to discuss European issues. In the EESC, as well as actively supporting the Commission's **Back to School** project, we took the idea even further and had our members visit to the winning school in each Member State. Visits that, as a bonus, brings good local media coverage.

Often using Speakers and Moderators from the Venice Club membership, the EESC Communications Department organises an annual **Civil Society Media Seminar**. The Seminar gathers around 150 Communications and media representatives of the EESC's host organisations, EESC members, National Economic and Social Committees and similar bodies, other EU institutions, journalists and journalist organisations. The 2015 edition focussed on the Millennium Development Goals, while the 2016 edition will focus on Migration. The aim of the event in 2016 is to discuss and debate how Communication tools and the media have been instrumental in telling the story of migration across Europe.

After the events, we have normally had the privilege of presenting our experience at a Venice Club workshop or plenary. Hopefully we have inspired our friends in the Member States and the other institutions by showing that, even though we are getting close to 60, we are still young in spirit and full of fresh ideas.

PETER LINDVALD NIELSEN
Peter Lindvald Nielsen, Head of the Communication Department the European Economic and Social Committee (www.eesc.europa.eu).
Previously he was Communication Officer at the European Commission, Head of Unit in the Commission DG Development, Deputy Head and Acting Head of the Commission Representation in Copenhagen, Member of the private office of the Danish Environment European Commissioner, Administrator in the Commission DG for Customs and indirect taxation, and official in the Danish Customs and Tax administration.
Academic Background: Business Economist from "Handelshøjskolen i Aarhus"

Innovation in EU communication: online courses (MOOC) on regions, EU institutions and policy-making

Wolfgang Petzold

Regions and cities in Europe are becoming increasingly involved in EU policy-making and implementation. Although the extent to which local civil servants are involved in European affairs differs from one Member State to another depending on its level of decentralisation, many will find themselves working on European programmes and networks at some time or another.

At the end of 2014, the European Committee Regions (CoR) became the first EU institution developing a massive open online course (MOOC) to support regional and local authorities and officials navigating their way through the EU's sometimes complex institutional set-up and decision-making process. This project was included in the Committee's 2015 communication plan, which increasingly puts the focus on digital communication. Due to its success, the CoR joined forces in 2016 and will launch a second MOOC on the "EU budget and funding for regions and cities" in October 2016.

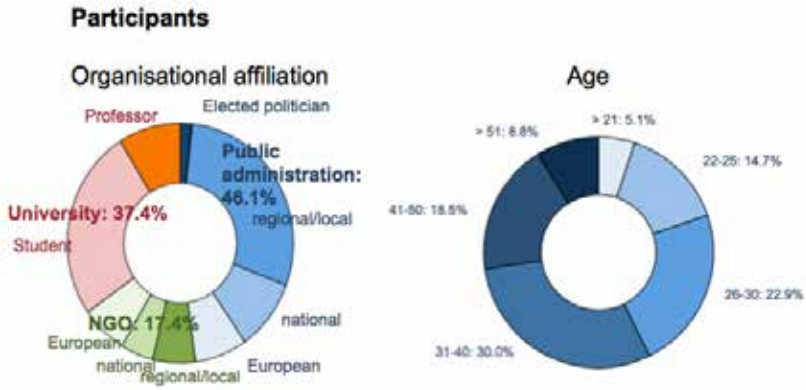
This article focuses on the first course opened on iversity.org, an e-learning platform with an international audience, in October 2015 and ran for eight weeks. A total of 9 500 participants from over 70 countries enrolled. About two thirds of them were representatives of local, regional, national or EU authorities and NGOs. 17% of them completed course presenting a high completion rate when compared to MOOCs offered by the private sector and universities. On average, participants spent three hours a week on the course material. In the final evaluation, 83% said they were satisfied and would be interested in following a subsequent course on EU and regional affairs.

Evidence suggests that the first edition could be followed up with a course on both basic and specific content. This course could be co-created with local stakeholders and co-produced with other EU institutions. The second edition should also make use of synergies with contributions from events and conferences such as the European Week of Regions and Cities. In the long term, online courses could also be more aligned with the EU agenda and the policy cycles that matter most to the regions and cities of Europe.

Course design and delivery

The course design began in March 2015 with a survey conducted by the Committee amongst its key contacts and "clients" received 1,200 replies within a short time span of five working days, confirming that there was interest in a course on regions, EU and policy-making, including among people with little or no experience of online learning. Responses indicated a need to focus on eight key topics: EU Institutions and legislation; the role of regions and cities in EU affairs; EU Cohesion Policy and Structural and Investment Funds; research and innovation and the role of regions and cities; EU environment, climate change and sustainable development policies; free movement and migration; EU competition policy and state aid; and the EU budget, programmes and projects. The course was designed as an eight-week modular course, delivered in English and including a variety of learning aids such as video lectures and expert interviews, factsheets, infographics, live debates (with Q+A sessions) with experts from the EU institutions, regions and academia, which were web-streamed from the Committee, and learning resources such as web-links to more topical in-depth information. A weekly quiz helped students to check their learning progress.

The production of the course materials and learning aids for the selected eight key topics (see annexe I) began in May 2015. In June 2015, four expert panels (each composed of 2-3 discussants and a moderator) were set up and filmed. In June and November 2015, four other experts were interviewed and filmed for the course chapters. In parallel, eight factsheets and eight infographics, one for each thematic chapter, were prepared and validated. Finally, eight expert panels were set up for the live debates, which were held at lunchtime every Friday throughout the course. In total, over 50 experts, including European and local politicians, as well as experts from EU Institutions and academia, contributed to the course. (Annexe II).



Throughout the production period, an ongoing communication campaign kept key stakeholders, partners and the target audience informed about the launch of the MOOC. The campaign consisted of a dedicated website, printed and electronic leaflets, targeted emailing campaigns, two promotional video clips, a social media campaign (Twitter, Facebook), event-specific promotion campaigns and direct contacts.

The course was hosted on the iversity.org e-learning platform. Registration opened on 1 August 2015. The course started on 19 October 2015 and each consecutive week featured a new thematic chapter for students and provided unlimited access to all course materials. The course followers could also monitor their study progress on the platform. No written assignments were included but course participants had to take a quiz at the end of each chapter. About 7 000 students enrolled at the beginning and, by the end, 9 500 had signed up.

Throughout the course, followers posted more than 150 questions relating to the course subjects on the discussion forum provided by the platform. The Committee course team selected about 10 questions for each of the weekly thematic Q+A sessions, which had a live audience of 10-50 people on the Committee's premises, and a live-stream audience of 70-200, depending on the topic and time. Recordings of these debates were available on the course platform and the Committee's website, and to date have had between 400+ and 2 300+ views each.

The last course chapter was concluded on 11 December 2015 but the course remained accessible until the end of February 2016 to followers who had registered before the end of 2015. At the close of the course, on 31 December 2015, a total of 8 500 students had registered. A statement of participation (subject to a pass mark of 80%) was issued to 17% (1 500) of them.

Slightly more women than men followed the course. The highest percentage of followers were in the 31-40 age group (25%), followed by the 26-30 age group (23%) and the 41+ age group (22%). Most participants were from Belgium (10%), followed by Spain, Germany and Italy (9%), Greece and the UK (5%), France and Romania (4%). Overall, the course had followers from over 70 countries.

Student evaluation survey results

Two surveys carried out by the Committee and by the Iversity-platform at the end of the course gathered further data on and feedback from the course followers. However, with 280 and 400 responses respectively, the representativeness of the findings below remains somewhat limited.

The Committee's survey focused on the organisational affiliation of followers and their satisfaction with course content and delivery. Of the 280 respondents, 48% worked for a public authority. One third of these were from a regional or local authority (28%), 14% from for a national ministry and 6% from an EU body. A further 24% were students and 12% held a teaching position. Finally, 13% of survey respondents worked for a local, regional, national or European NGO. The respondents' age corresponded to the general age profile and gender distribution (more women (58%) than men (42%)). Most had followed all the course chapters ("followed completely", variable between chapters 1 to 8 varied from 77% to 88%).

The vast majority of respondents (77%) found that the course had fulfilled their expectations. All the chapters were considered to be very interesting, with the lowest score of 54% for "very interesting" going to the chapter on EU competition policy and state aid, and highest score of 77% for "very interesting" going to the first chapter on the EU institutions and legislation. Of the different learning aids, the factsheets were considered the most interesting (83% "very interesting"), followed by infographics (76%) and lesson videos (74%). One in ten followers had made contact(s) with other course followers, for example in the course discussion forum, or during the live Q&A sessions, or finally via the Facebook group formed by some of the most active MOOC followers. Finally, most (86%) respondents said they would be interested in following another course on the EU and its regions should such a course be offered.

The iversity online learning platform conducted an extensive student satisfaction survey after the course. 83% of some 400 respondents were very satisfied with the instructor's (the Committee's) performance (61% very satisfied, 22% somewhat satisfied) and with the platform (71% very satisfied, 16% somewhat satisfied). Most were likely to take another course by the same instructor (53% very likely, 30% some-what likely), and to recommend the instructor to a friend (50% very likely, 28% somewhat likely).

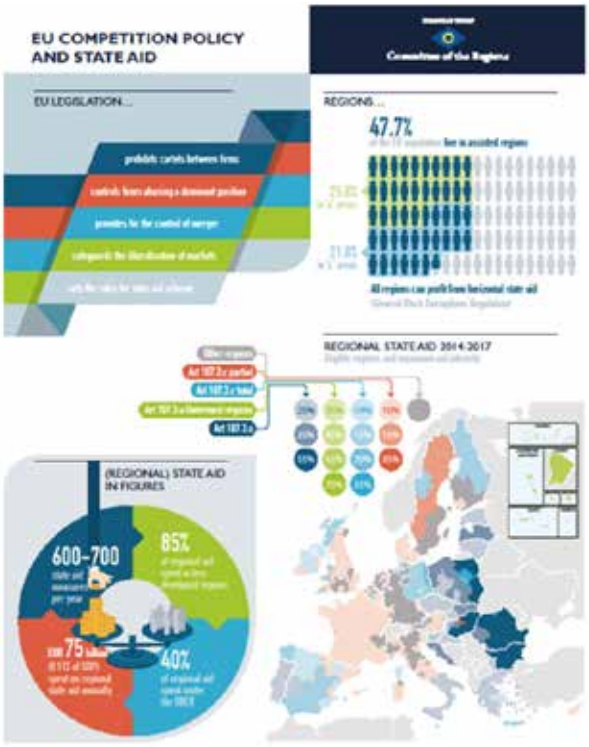
The course content was assessed as factually accurate (66% agree, 26% somewhat agree) and well-structured and organised (65% agree, 25% somewhat agree). The most common goals for participating in the course were "to gain a broad overview of the subject" (37%) and "to acquire professionally useful skills" (34%), followed by "to study the subject in depth" (16%). Most respondents found that the course had allowed them to achieve their original goal (55% agree, 38% somewhat agree). The biggest obstacle to achieving the goal seemed to be lack of time (40%), followed by quality of content (12%). The majority estimated that they had the necessary prior knowledge for the course (52% agree, 30% somewhat agree). The respondents had spent an average of three hours a week on the course.

Conclusions and follow-up

Outreach to and feedback by course followers confirm that online courses have the potential to increase interest in and knowledge about the European Union and regional affairs and can contribute to administrative capacity-building at local level. They also present an additional channel for targeted EU communication and can create synergies with other tools of communication such as web-based information, social media, and events. As web statistics confirm, online courses seem to reach a relatively young - and possibly distant - audience with regard to EU communication. Finally, the cost efficiency of MOOCs points towards further developing this channel and experimenting more with interactive online tools, including the co-creation of their content.

Web statistics also confirm that the 2015 MOOC had a significant impact on the Committee's institutional web communication. Despite the fact that the MOOC information page was not put online until May 2015, it was by far the most visited page of the year, with 13% of all page views, followed by the homepage (6%), and the information page on traineeships (3.5%). While the MOOC itself was run on an external platform and the Committee's page contained only static information about the course, the latter had a high return rate, apparently from the MOOC's Twitter account for the most part, which gathered 800+ followers.

With regard to quality, it appears that the concept worked well, mainly due to the fact that the MOOC provided a variety of experts and sources from all EU institutions. In the evaluation, however, remarks were made on the quality of the debates, which were judged as not sufficiently controversial. On the production side, a number of lessons were learned including with respect to the preparation and editing of the experts' interviews and debates and the production of factsheets, the format of which will be used for other CoR information campaigns and tools in the future. A number of course followers suggested that the content needed to be more specific on the most relevant topics, e.g. the implementation of the European Structural and Investment Funds, the use of EU financial instruments, and "hot topics" such as migration. Moreover, it became clear that future MOOCs could profit from a more journalistic and inter-institutional approach, based on storytelling, and from the co-creation of content with the help of potential users. Finally, offering an EU-wide course for local officials in several languages would definitely improve its outreach and impact.



WOLFGANG PETZOLD
Wolfgang Petzold is deputy director for communication at the European Committee of the Regions, the EU's assembly of regional and local representatives in Brussels. Between 2001 and 2008 he was deputy head of the communication unit of the European Commission's Regions and Urban Policy DG. Being a sociologist, worked for more than 15 years as on official on EU policies including for a regional ministry for economic and European affairs. He published several books and articles on EU cohesion policy and lectures at the University of Applied Sciences in Bremen since 1999.

Based on the success in 2015, a second edition is planned from 31 October to 9 December 2016, although it will remain accessible to 'latecomers' throughout 2017. This year's course has been co-created by the European Investment Bank and two Directorates-General of the European Commission (Regional and Urban Policy, Budget). The MOOC will comprise six main themes – each online for one week and requiring about two hours of study time – focusing on the EU budget and how it is spent. The course tools, including videos, live debates, factsheets and quizzes, will balance the basic theory behind EU funding, procedures and evaluation with hands-on information from practitioners on project design and delivery.

Module 1 will present the role of regions and cities in EU affairs, with a focus on financial matters. In module 2, an overview of the current EU budget will be followed by details of the budget cycle, results, transparency and investment related activities. Module 3 takes a closer look at European Structural and Investments Funds and their implementation. The European Fund for Strategic Investments and other European Investment Bank instruments are covered in module 4, including
good practices and networking. EU programmes, procedures and agencies linked to regions and cities are presented in module 5. Finally, module 6 will consider the mid-term review of the EU's 2014-2020 budget and post-2020 prospects.

The 2015 course will be available free from the French platform "France université numérique (FUN)" and participants can register at:
https://www.fun-mooc.fr/courses/CoR/114001/session01/

More information: www.cor.europa.eu/mooc

Is democracy fit for purpose?

Millicent Ragnhild Scott

In western Europe democracy emerged during the 19th and 20th centuries as the process of choice for selecting national governors. It came to replace the birth-right power of monarchy and aristocracy to rule, or in some cases to legitimise the power of the monarch. In the UK for example, the democratically elected House of Commons together with the aristocracy and appointed House of Lords and HRH the Queen form Her Majesty's Government. In eastern Europe, after the fall of communism, democracy has emerged as the system of governance for nearly a quarter of a century, this with strong support from those other European countries already using democracy and extolling its virtues. Democracy is also the system that we foisted on the post-colonial world, India, Africa and others, the system that Britain, America and others export like religion – with little or no consideration for existing customs, traditions or systems of organisation. On the eve of the Athens Democracy Forum, I ask:

Why democracy?

The purpose of democracy is to legitimise power. It identifies the rulers and provides a mandate for them to make decisions. It assumes that people are more likely to remain subjugated to a system and to people that they feel they have themselves had a hand in selecting. This is what leads politicians to make wild promises during an election (or referendum) campaign which they often fail to live up to after the event. However, democracy is, as Churchill (Hansard, 1947) put it, "the worst form of Government except all those other forms that have been tried". At least for those of us who espouse it. It also has its limitations, not least because to do it well – to really engage the people in self-governance – requires skill, magnanimity and courage, both by the rulers and by the people.

Is it fit for purpose in the UK in 2016?

Democracy does not work if it is simply a case of replacing the mandate to one group with that of another once every five years. It does not work if once in power the democratically elected fail to act as those who elected them expected them to act. This is where democracy fails, where political parties have taken over from imperial monarchies, creating dynasties of power. When in power they are able to create the type of democracy that will enable them to retain or regain their power: making constituencies follow voter intention lines, or social class lines; creating and defending an electoral system which favours larger, already powerful parties; selecting voting procedures that favour their existing voters and carefully selecting who is able to participate in the democracy. There are many, many more examples.

Time to look for another solution?

But how do we ensure that people have genuine power at the same time as delegating this power to an elected representative and while retaining democratic accountability? Democracy is different from ochlocracy, mob rule, but the two are easy to confuse.

The greatest weakness of democracy must surely be that it relies on people knowing – and caring – about democracy itself. People have to engage with it for it to work. It is dependent on every voter engaging with every issue – alternatively on every voter disengaging from issues, but trusting their representative to make decisions on their behalf. The problems with both these situations should be immediately apparent.

Democracy is a means of government whereby not only do people have the power to choose how they are governed, but they also have the knowledge and skills to do so wisely – to step up when they are useful and step back when they are not and to have the insight and wisdom to be able to tell the difference.

Do we prepare people to be democratic citizens? No. We have next to no citizenship education either for adults or children. We have no ministry for citizenship and democracy. We have no adult classes for democratic participation. We have no culture of teaching/learning about democracy in our society. We have no media who help inform and deliberate…

MILLICENT RAGNHILD SCOTT
Millicent is director of operations at The Democratic Society. She has spent over a decade working on increasing citizens' engagement with policy making and bringing people into democratic processes, variously working for the European Parliament, Scottish Government and standing for the UK Parliament.

We need to reimagine a way for people to engage with society and to govern through co-decision, co-creation and kindly, inclusively, wisely and magnanimously. Not selfishly or spitefully. Not because they want power, but because they want to do good for society and in the greatest possible sense. To do that we need democracy that is kind, that listens, but also that engages people in constructive dialogue and supported decision-making.
We have a very long way to go.

How can open data help democracy?

Michelle Brook

It's always good to read about open data and democracy in a mainstream newspaper , but often the focus of the pieces are too narrow, and it was in this case. While exploring broadly the idea of apps for democracy and open data, the focus was on voting as the main means of democratic engagement, without exploring how else citizens can engage in politics or policy making, and the article didn't touch upon how to help citizens understand and use the data that is being made openly available.

At the Democratic Society, we believe that people should be engaged meaningfully in decision making more substantially than through the exercising of the right to vote taking place once every five years. While voting is a crucial part of a representative democracy, it is not the end of democratic engagement. Once elected, governments should be actively listening to, and working with, citizens, to develop policies and services.
The reasons for this go beyond just a democratic imperative – although this is obviously important – to the fact that it provides opportunity for public officials to tap into the collective expertise of the public; gaining insight to which they would not otherwise have access.

There are a range of activities that local and national governments carry out to listen to, and engage with, citizens. These range from the standard consultation model – in which a government department or body releases a survey, asking a set of questions around a set of proposals for either a policy or service – through to much more hands on approaches, like participatory budgeting. In addition, there are many other methods and approaches described in the open policy making manual.

If governments want to move away from the criticisms often levelled at consultation and engagement exercises – one of which is that consultations are often carried out as a tick box exercise, rather than a genuine attempt at hearing from the public – they could do far worse than consider how to ensure that consultation and engagement attempts are genuinely informed by relevant data, which is released under an open license, and presented in a way that allows citizens to explore it and understand it.

We are seeing an ever increasing number of government data sets being released openly – as any quick look at data.gov.uk will tell you. And this release of open government data is often held up as a public good, and as a democratic good. The evidential narrative being that this open data allows people to hold governments to account, and to better understand what government is doing.

However, what this narrative fails to address is that the vast majority of people don't know how to use the data that is released, don't know that this data is being released, and either wouldn't have the time or inclination to use this data. This means that the main beneficiaries of open data are those individuals, journalists, and companies who have significant data skills – which is not the vast majority of citizens.

This evidential narrative also fails to address that the fact that the data sets being released are those which government choses to release; either because they are comparatively easy to release, there are existing business cases to justify the cost of organising and releasing the data, or as a result of lobbying from the open data community or big organisations. While there are mechanisms that exist for individuals to request data sets be made openly available, these routes do not seem well known to many who would benefit from using public open data.

So how can we make open data more useful and valuable for actual citizens?
One thing that would be really transformational would be for the change we are seeing around increasing citizen participation and engagement in policy making, to be combined with the open data movement.

MICHELLE BROOK
Michelle originally trained as a scientist, and subsequently worked in science policy, increasing conversations between academics and policy-makers to develop better policy, before choosing to move away from a focus on 'elites' to amplify citizen voice and involvement more broadly She has a strong interest in technology, digital, and open data, and explores how these intersect with democratic questions, including how to enable a greater degree of civic participation, how to ensure a greater degree of government accountability, and how governments can share information and data with their citizens.
Michelle has recently completed a discovery phase research project for the UK's Government Digital Service, providing recommendations to the UK Government on how the experience of consultations can be improved. She is the head of Demsoc's Manchester hub.

As local and national governments engage or consult citizens on policy proposals or changes to service delivery, I'd like to see like to see these bodies releasing open data sets relevant to the issues or services they are consulting upon. And I'd like to see opportunities to be made available for citizens to explore the data that don't require them to have technological skills, or to know much about open data full stop. At a local government level, this may include releasing the number of times a bridge is used by pedestrians and bicycles at various times over the course of a day, when consulting about whether access to a bridge should be widened. This data release could then be accompanied by a small event, inviting local residents and other citizens who use the route to come and explore the data, alongside civil servants and other interested individuals with relevant data skills, providing citizens with the opportunity to both learn some additional skills, and to gain additional insight to inform their opinions to respond to the engagement exercise. It would also act as a way of raising awareness of open data to communities and groups who have not previously come across it.

At a national level, running these events may be more challenging – it would be expensive and difficult to run events in all possible locations across the UK. However it shouldn't be too onerous to go so far as to release data that have been used to inform the policy proposals, or are more broadly relevant to the consultation.

These proposals would result in open data sets that are embedded and connected more strongly to the process of helping to inform public decision making, rather than just data sets that are easy to release, or seen as desirable by individuals and organisations external to government. This can then allow more informed and honest conversations to take place, resulting in citizens who can be more effectively engaged in consultation activities, and civil servants and elected representatives having more useful and informed responses from which to build any policy proposals or service design changes.
That, to my mind, is one way open data could certainly benefit democracy.

Engaging citizens in the EU processes – the MEUSAC experience

Vanni Xuereb

The Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee (MEUSAC) was first set up in 1999 as a consultative mechanism between government, the social partners and civil society that ensured widespread involvement in the accession negotiations between Malta and the European Union (EU). Following Malta's entry into the EU on May 1, 2004, MEUSAC was re-activated and entrusted with a wider remit that includes consultation on EU policy and legislation, providing assistance on EU funding programmes, and disseminating EU related information.

Hence MEUSAC is the government entity responsible for EU Information in Malta. Such a role is complimentary to its other two roles since the information that MEUSAC seems to communicate focuses mostly on EU policies and laws as well as on the funding programmes that support the EU in achieving its goals.
For a number of years, MEUSAC was the Intermediary Body entrusted by the Maltese Government with the implementation of the Management Partnership with the European Commission. When the Commission decided, for budgetary reasons, to end the programme in all Member States, an ad hoc arrangement was concluded with the European Commission Representation in Malta that seeks to carry on 'communicating in partnership'. This partnership is also in place with the European Parliament Information Office in Valletta with which MEUSAC collaborates on a wide range of initiatives.
One example of the collaboration with the European Commission Representation is the joint initiative undertaken in view of the 21st Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held in Paris last year and the Agreement that resulted from the COP21. Prior to the Conference, MEUSAC and the Representation held a series of workshops and conferences entitled 'From Climate Change to Climate Action'.

The collaboration has been extended to focus on the implementation of the Paris Agreement.
These events aimed at reaching out to various sectors of society including non-governmental organisations, academia, constituted bodies, the business and financial sectors, diplomats as well as students in order to engage with these important sectors since initiatives to combat the negative effects of climate change need to be supported by action taken locally and individually. MEUSAC seeks to communicate in different ways and with different sectors of Maltese society. From time to time, TV spots are produced and broadcast on local television stations.

A monthly newsletter is produced and distributed with the leading English language newspaper in Malta. Moreover, MEUSAC officials regularly contribute articles in local newspapers and participate in programmes on radio and TV. MEUSAC has also been making its presence felt online with an up do date website – www.meusac.gov.mt – as well as an active facebook page - https://www.facebook.com/meusacmalta and twitter account - https://twitter.com/meusacmalta. MEUSAC also has a channel on You Tube - https://www.youtube.com/user/meusacmalta.

Moreover, MEUSAC has two dedicated websites – one is the online EU citizens' toolkit http://www.e-rights.eu whereas the other - http://www.tommy-rosy.eu/ - contains resources developed for the four episodes of an EU educational cartoon which MEUSAC produced through the Management Partnership.
Various info sessions are held on different topics some of which consist of high level events in which local and foreign dignitaries

participate. In May 2015, MEUSAC organised a debate on the future of Social Dialogue in Europe in which the Vice President of the European Commission responsible for the Euro and Social Dialogue, Valdis Dombrovskis, also participated. In June 2015 MEUSAC hosted a public lecture by the then Polish Undersecretary of State for Parliamentary Affairs, European Policy and Human Rights, Henryka Mościcka-Dendys, on 'The EU as a Global Actor – Challenges and Opportunities'.

In many of these events, MEUSAC works very closely and collaborates in organising events with the embassies of the Member States accredited to Malta. It also collaborates with other embassies in Malta such as with the Embassy of the United States of America on issues of common interest such as the TTIP.
MEUSAC is currently collaborating with the Italian government on a series of public events entitled 'From Rome to Lisbon and beyond' aimed at engaging citizens in a discussion on the future of the EU. The latest of these events was a public meeting held in August 2016 with Sandro Gozi, Italian State Secretary for European Affairs.
At the start of the new presidency, MEUSAC holds a public dialogue on the Programme and Priorities of the incoming presidency of the Council of the EU. In January 2016, the event focused on the Programme and Priorities of the Trio Presidency of the Council of the European Union for the period 1 January 2016 – 30 June 2017. The Trio is made up of The Netherlands, Slovakia and Malta. The State Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, Ivan Korčok, and the Secretary General in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, Renee Jones-Bos presented the programme and priorities of the Trio Presidency of the Council of the European Union entitled Taking forward the Strategic Agenda.
MEUSAC has also acted as the national coordinator of the European Year for Development, 2015 and as the national contact point for the European Year for Citizens in 2013. The work programme for the EYD2015 consisted of a mix of events targeted at different sectors as well as an information campaign spread over the year.

The highlights of the year included a half-day conference on development education aimed at reaching out to the local educational sector with a view to increase the level of awareness on development among schoolchildren; a debate with University students on 'Reaching Out to Girls Today, Empowering Women Tomorrow'; a half-day conference on 'Peace and Security' and a business breakfast on 'Responsible Business: A New Approach to Corporate Social Responsibility'. MEUSAC continues to collaborate informally with other EYD national coordinators in other Member States in order to promote the post-2015 global and EU development agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals in particular.

Schoolchildren are often the focus of numerous activities. MEUSAC collaborates with the Foundation for Educational Services in the government run skolasajf summer club. For a number of years, MEUSAC has been responsible for organising fun-filled activities for the children taking part with the ultimate aim being that of communicating positive messages about the EU.
2016 has been marked by preparations for the presidency of the Council of the EU which Malta will assume for the first time on January 1, 2017. MEUSAC is supporting the team working on the presidency both in Valletta as well as in Brussels particularly in promoting the programme and activities of the presidency.

The Maltese presidency will coincide with a particularly challenging time for the EU particularly in view of 'Brexit'. The latest statements by the government of the United Kingdom indicate that the mechanism laid down in Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union will be triggered during the Maltese presidency. Moreover, during the Maltese presidency, the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome will be marked. In this scenario, MEUSAC will be actively engaged in promoting a forward looking debate on the future of the EU. Moreover, MEUSAC will be intensifying its communication campaign in terms of reaching out to citizens in an effort to explain how the EU is leaving a positive impact on their life.

The spring 2016 Eurobarometer indicated that 84% of Maltese citizens feel that they are EU citizens, well over the EU28 average of 66%. 53% know what their rights are as citizens of the EU (EU28 52%). 52% of respondents felt that they tend to trust the EU (EU28 33%). 41% of respondents stated that the EU conjures a very positive image (EU28 34%). In general, Maltese respondents appear to be well informed about the EU and supportive of the EU and of Malta's membership.

Despite this fairly positive attitude in Malta, communicating about European issues remains a challenge particularly in the current scenario with, apart from Brexit, issues such as migration and security constantly on the agenda and the problems the EU faces in responding collectively, coherently, credibly and constructively. Support for the EU and for EU membership remains high in Malta, however, our challenge is one of retaining such levels of support as well as helping to reignite enthusiasm for the European project.

Communicating about the EU is also intimately linked to MEUSAC's role in steering a consultation process on EU policy and legislation. Through such process, the government has the opportunity of involving stakeholders in the formulation of Malta's position on various issues on the agenda of the Council of the EU. It is a structured process. MEUSAC has a Core Group that brings together senior government officials, representatives of the political parties, social partners and civil society to discuss EU issues having national implications. For instance, twice a year, a meeting is held with the Prime Minister to discuss current topical issues on the agenda of the European Council. The Core Group is also the forum that the government is utilising to involve stakeholders in the preparation of the 2017 Council presidency. Besides the Core Group, MEUSAC has nine sectoral committees more or less mirroring the EU Council formations, and organises open consultation sessions on draft EU legislation as well as on the transposition of directives into national law.

MEUSAC also engages with citizens by informing and advising on EU funds. Whilst serving as a point of reference whereby citizens

and organisations can obtain information on the various EU funding programmes, MEUSAC also provides technical assistance to local government and non-governmental organisations in actually applying for EU funded projects.

Throughout these past eight years, MEUSAC has worked to minimise the distance between the EU and its processes both at the level of the institutions as well as in terms of the national processes involved. 2017 is being seen as a year for consolidation as well as an opportunity for a renewal of MEUSAC's commitment to its key functions and role to serve as a bridge between Maltese society and the EU.

VANNI XUEREB

Dr. Vanni Xuereb is the Head of MEUSAC.

In May 2008 he was entrusted with the task of spearheading the process for the re-activation of MEUSAC as an instrument for Government to consult with the constituted bodies and with civil society on EU-related issues, disseminate information, and provide support with regard to EU Programmes. Dr. Xuereb is a graduate in Laws from the University of Malta, having submitted his LL.D. thesis in 1988 entitled "The Law Governing the External Relations of the European Communities – A Mediterranean Perspective". He then pursued post-graduate studies in European Law obtaining a Diploma in Advanced European Legal Studies from the College d'Europe in Bruges, Belgium in 1989.

Dr Xuereb's career has centred on EU affairs. He served as Legal Research Officer at the Permanent Delegation of Malta to the European Communities and as Legal Consultant on EU Law to the then Malta External Trade Corporation, now part of Malta Enterprise. He also practiced as a lawyer, specialising in financial services and EU Law. Between 1999 and 2007, Dr. Xuereb was advisor to the Church in Malta on European Affairs.

Dr Xuereb is a member of the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) and of the Experts' Forum of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). He is also a regulor contributor to the Times of Malta.

On May 12, 2015, Dr Xuereb was created Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Mérite of the French Republic in recognition of his role in bringing Malta closer to the European Union.

PUBLIC OPINION: TRENDS AND EXPECTATIONS

Being relevant in changing societies

Rita Timmerman

The role of government communication professionals is changing and we have to adapt to our ever changing societies: we have to be relevant. On November 13th 2013 Erik den Hoedt, director of the Dutch Public Information and communication office, in his speech to the club of Venice made clear what being relevant means: "Communication is no longer about explaining or selling ideas and policies. It is in the heart of policymaking itself. It is therefore important that we are relevant. Not for our own sake. But for the sake of the people we serve."What are these changes in society? And how could or should we react to them? How can we be relevant?

In 2013 the Dutch Public Information and Communication office made a study on trends that they and other experts thought to have direct implications for government communication.

Seven clusters of trends were distinguished. These trends reflect the Dutch situation, but for sure they will be illustrative for other countries in Europe as well.

Seven clusters of trends

Less government, more personal responsibility - who should and can do it?
National and local government is taking more of a back seat as a result of changing tasks and public spending cuts. People are assuming more personal responsibility for sorting out their problems. This is a new scenario, which requires expectation management: in other words, the government must make perfectly clear what it does and does not represent. At the same time, it has to facilitate self-reliance and solidarity, while continuing its traditional role as a safety-net provider. People in low-skilled groups must also be afforded opportunities to contribute. Such people are less capable of participating in society and the bar for personal responsibility is very high
for them.

From authority to network player – where do you fit in? Traditional institutes are no longer the voice of authority, largely because people are so much better informed. A network society with more horizontal and temporary connections has emerged. Power relations are shifting inside and outside Europe and necessitating new styles of government, with the emphasis on unifying rather than hierarchical leadership. As just one of the players in the network, the government will have to find other ways of framing and communicating policy.

The 'mediacracy' is set to play a pivotal role in this process as more and more debates take place in the media and on the public stage.

More public disclosure – what do you share?Society wants open government. People expect transparency about policy and accountability for motives, choices and outcomes. The government must pro-actively publish relevant

information – not just in response to requests under the Freedom of Information Act (Wet openbaarheid van bestuur) – and make other data available. These 'open' data will not only provide a clearer idea of the workings of government but create openings for better services and new undertakings in the process.

An authentic story, also told elsewhere – how do you come across? People need true leaders, individuals and organizations with a vision and a logical and coherent story. That story is being told more and more through other channels: communication partners, platforms and branded journalism. Sometimes other channels come across as more credible because they are closer to the public or to interested parties or simply because they are more logical. Communication is emerging more and more as the binding factor.

New engagement – when do people engage? The number of initiatives that people are undertaking outside the government, especially on their own patch, is growing all the time. A sort of hands-on democracy is materializing in which people tackle issues together. People also engage via protests, solidarity and crowdsourcing. If the government wants to get something done, it would be best advised to latch on to public initiatives and facilitate input. In plain terms, government participation instead of citizen participation. If you want to influence behaviour, you should provide opportunities to this effect. New technology can assist.

Mind shift – how do we view the world? Assets are no longer the be-all and end-all. People no longer sit back and watch the world go by when they retire. Nine-to-five is a thing of the past and we don't even have to show up at the office to get the work done. The old, long-standing institutions and lifestyles are fading and being replaced by sharing, anti-consumerism, flexible jobs and energetic senior citizens. The sharing of services and goods is a particularly strong trend. New ways of looking at the world are opening up opportunities for new styles of government.

Changing connections – how can we still reach each other? Mobile internet is burgeoning. The tablet, amongst other things, has enhanced the importance of images and infotainment. TV is still the most popular channel of communication; second screen (viewable simultaneously on the Internet) is catching on. Established channels, such as TV and newspapers, and also word-of-mouth are still relevant. Fragmentation in the use of media is, however, necessitating a cross-medial approach in government communication in which the potential of every medium is exploited to the full. Conversation will be the central style of communication: listening, monitoring and interacting online and offline, with meaning emerging through contact and storytelling. The trends were used to define three long term ambitions for Dutch government communication: Being helpful: provide 24/7 tailormade information to all citizensBeing clear: about government decisions and responsibilities Being professional: a highly qualified, flexible and effective organization Next to that the trends were widely used by ministries, implementation organizations and municipalities in their own communications, to address bigger and smaller societal issues.

Personalized and user friendly information.
In the past two years the Dutch government has paid a lot of attention to user centered information for all citizens. Information on websites has to become less general, which means it has to be better linked to the specific situation and information needs of citizens. In a network society government needs to connect and work together with citizens. This means the customer journey of citizens searching for information becomes a central element in designing the government information service.

The customer journey is assessed by explorative research and web statistics of the current websites. Also in between, smaller adaptations on websites are assessed by citizens in so called User Experience labs. Themes like 'retirement age' and 'renting a house' were adapted in this way on the central government website Rijksoverheid.nl. Of course the information needs of citizens do not always match with the information government provides.

RITA TIMMERMAN
Rita Timmerman, senior research consultant, Dutch Public Information and Communication office. Ministry of General Affairs

Therefore it is possible for citizens to have a conversation with the government via e-mail, telephone and via social media (Twitter) and apps (What's app). And sometimes other channels, closer to citizens, are used to provide the information, like intermediate parties and for instance online social influencers to address youngsters. In this way the Dutch government works on being helpful pro-actively, giving 24/7 tailormade information.

For 2017 we plan to regauge the trends, which are still relevant and what new trends do we see? A sneak preview on what we see in Dutch society today, and with elections coming up in march 2017, we think will be important themes for the campaigners and the new government: 'Not in my backyard': there are concerns about immigration, threats of terrorist attacks and news about this travels fast. This makes people more concerned about their safety and the way we live together. Also it makes people more aware of the freedom and prosperity they live in themselves, which they prefer to keep and defend if needed. 'Parallel worlds': there is a growing sense of urgency to close different gaps in society: rich - poor; pessimists – optimists; city – countryside; policy makers – citizens; those who want to help refugees – those who want to close the boarders – and the biggest group: those who are confused and do not know; and probably there are even more gaps. Further growth of these gaps should be stopped. At the same time people want to feel appreciated, acknowledged and want to be part of a group of people who feel or think the same as they do. But this is still a sneak preview. In the coming months we will be collecting our insights and trends using deskresearch and our professional network of experts inside and outside government. They are all important sources for relevant trends in society. We are pleased to share them with you again in 2017, so we can become even more relevant to the citizens we serve.

Evolution of the EU's public opinion and expectations

Aleyda Hernández Laviades

Since its inception, the EU has gone through several defining stages in its history and its institutional and political structure, affecting a wide range of issues: the strengthening of the institutions, the first direct elections to the European Parliament in 1979, successive enlargements, the signing of various European Treaties, the opening of borders between Member States, referendums and the introduction of the single currency. Nevertheless, the evolution of the European Union has also been shaped by the external events that have taken place during periods of economic and political difficulty such as the collapse of the Soviet bloc, international wars, oil crises, monetary instability, and, since 2008, a global financial and economic crisis.

The Standard Eurobarometer, a survey established in 1973 and conducted twice a year (in spring and autumn), and the special Eurobarometers have ever since enabled changes in European public opinion to be measured among an ever-increasing number of Europeans as the various enlargements have taken place (from nine Member States in 1979 to 28 in 2013). The European Parliament's Public Opinion Monitoring Unit charged TNS opinion to carry out an exploratory study to analyse changes in European public opinion over time on a number of issues. The first version of this study was carried out in 2013 and has been updated yearly since to take into account the latest figures[1].

This interesting research provides essential basic information on the evolution of public opinion over time and the results are presented on a timeline, in order to measure the perception Europeans have of the EU through its major steps, being institutional, political, economic and social.

So far, the main findings about public opinion's evolution for over 40 years (from 1973 to 2015) shows the following:

- Major institutional and political events in the EU generally improve public perceptions of the Union. This is particularly true of enlargements and elections to the European Parliament.
- In spite of the various crises, Europeans are clearly attached to Europe when it comes to EU related fundamental issues.
  1. Since 1973, the feeling that membership of the EU is a "good thing" remains in a majority.
  2. Since 1983 and reaching a peak in 2015, a majority of respondents have felt their country has benefited from membership of the EU.
  3. The view that what unites the citizens of the Member States is more important than what divides them is clearly held by a majority of Europeans: it was the case in 2008, in 2009, in 2013 and in 2015.
  4. A majority of Europeans still believe that they would be better protected against the crisis if their country adopted coordinated measures with other Member States, rather than individual measures. However, the latter have increased significantly since 2009.
  5. Between 2009 and 2015, the EU remained for Europeans the player best able to deal effectively with the consequences of the financial and economic crisis.
- Moreover, the analysis over time shows the overriding influence of the economic and social context on public opinion. This is very well illustrated by the financial and economic crisis which began in 2008, prompting a sharp decline in indicators of support for the EU, they have started to increase for the last two years though.
  1. Unsurprisingly, since autumn 2008, the European economic situation is perceived as "bad", even though this perception has improved positively since 2013 as well as the expectations of Europeans for the next twelve months.
  2. Trust in the European Union and its institutions started to decline from spring 2010 onwards. The May 2014 elections brought an improvement, however.

1 www.europarl.europa.eu/atyourservice/en/20150630PVL00107/Major-changes-in-European-public-opinion-with-regard-to-the-EU

3. The image of the EU deteriorates significantly from 2011, when the economic crisis became a crisis of the public debt of the Member States. However, since autumn 2013, there has been a gradual increase in the number of respondents having a positive image of the EU.

The European Parliament and the European Commission's public opinion surveys are a fountain of information that is freely accessible for public communicators to use. It allows for an EU-wide picture in addition to a national perspective and their socio-demographic analyses are an endless source of inspiration and direction to decide on how, when and where to deliver the messages our institutions wish to deliver.

Looking ahead, the Parliament carried out a Special Eurobarometer on "Europeans in 2016: Perceptions and expectations, fight against terrorism and radicalisation"[2].

As an innovative approach to the traditional surveys and independently of how knowledgeable European citizens are about the powers and responsibilities of the EU, it seemed interesting to ask them, firstly, about their perception of EU action in a number of areas and, secondly, about what they expect of the EU.
The results show that Europeans feel that EU action is largely insufficient in most of the fifteen areas suggested to them and that a massive majority of citizens would like the EU to intervene more than at present in these areas. Concretely we could identify the following areas:

A. Areas where EU action is perceived to be insufficient and where greater action is desired

Firstly, the economic and financial crisis together with its social consequences and associated scandals continues to be of great concern to Europeans. Thus the survey shows that:

- as regards the fight against unemployment: 69% of respondents consider EU action to be insufficient and 77% would like to see the EU take more action;
- as regards the fight against tax fraud: 66% consider EU action to be insufficient and 75% would like to see the EU take more action;
- as regards health and social security: 50% consider EU action to be insufficient and 63% would like to see the EU take more action;
- as regards economic policy: 44% consider EU action to be insufficient and 52% would like to see the EU take more action;
- as regards agriculture: 43% consider EU action to be insufficient and 50% would like to see the EU take more action.
- as regards industrial policy, however, opinion on EU action is divided, with 37% considering it insufficient and 36% considering it adequate. 47% consider the EU should take more action in this field.

Secondly, the consequences of the migration crisis directly affect respondents. A majority of respondents consider EU action insufficient:

- on the issue of migration: 66% consider EU action to be insufficient and 74% would like to see the EU take more action;
- on the protection of external borders: 61% consider EU action to be insufficient and 71% would like to see the EU take more action.

On external action, security, defence and European values, EU action is considered to be insufficient. Thus:

- as regards the fight against terrorism: 69% consider EU action to be insufficient and 82% would like to see the EU take more action;
- as regards security and defence policy: 51% consider EU action to be insufficient and 66% would like to see the EU take more action;
- as regards the promotion of democracy and peace in the world: 51% consider EU action to be insufficient and 68% would like to see the EU take more action;
- as regards foreign policy: 40% consider EU action to be insufficient and 50% would like to see the EU take more action.

Some months after the signature of the Paris climate agreement (December 2015), the environment continues to be an area in which greater action by the EU is felt to be desirable. In this field of **environmental protection**: 52% consider EU action to be insufficient and 67% would like to see the EU take more action.

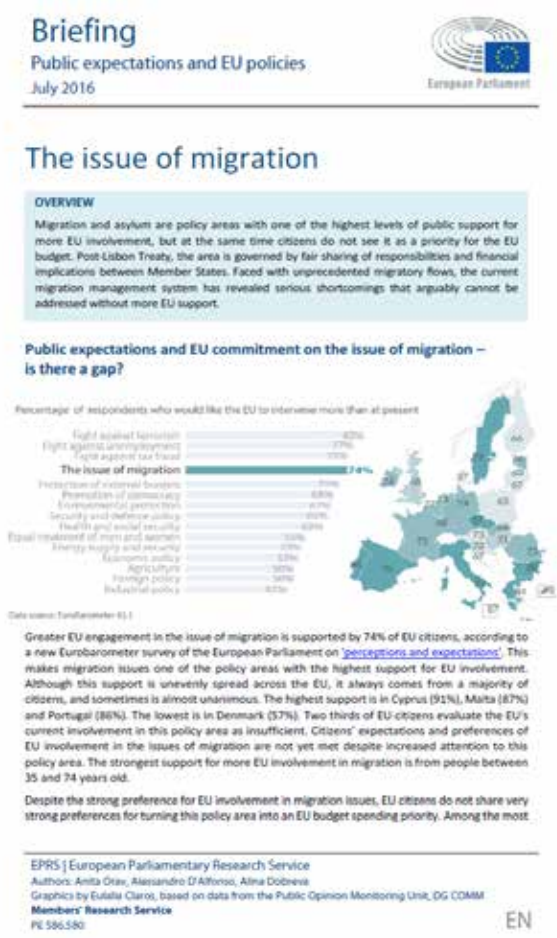
2 www.europarl.europa.eu/atyourservice/en/20160623PVL00111/Europeans-in-2016-Perceptions-and-expectations-fight-against-terrorism-and-radicalisation

B. Areas where EU action is perceived to be adequate but where greater EU action is desired

At EU-result level, EU action is considered to be 'adequate/about right' in two areas:

- as regards the equal treatment of men and women: 48% of respondents consider that EU action is adequate. Nevertheless, 55% would like to see the EU take greater action in this area.
- as regards energy supply and energy security: 45% consider that EU action is adequate; but 53% would like to see greater EU action.

When the European Parliament received the results of this survey it immediately put the EP research services together to develop thematic briefings about each of these issues to identify what had really had been done by the EU in these fields to be able to contrast it with the perceived reality of citizens. The outcome of the exercise is an excellent source of information at everyone's disposal that can help address these issues concretely[3].



Briefing

Public expectations and EU policies

July 2016

European Parliament

The issue of migration

OVERVIEW

Migration and asylum are policy areas with one of the highest levels of public support for more EU involvement, but at the same time citizens do not see it as a priority for the EU budget. Post-Lisbon Treaty, the area is governed by fair sharing of responsibilities and financial implications between Member States. Faced with unprecedented migratory flows, the current migration management system has revealed serious shortcomings that arguably cannot be addressed without more EU support.

Public expectations and EU commitment on the issue of migration – is there a gap?

Percentage of respondents who would like the EU to intervene more than at present

The issue of migration 74%

Greater EU engagement in the issue of migration is supported by 74% of EU citizens, according to a new Eurobarometer survey of the European Parliament on 'perceptions and expectations'. This makes migration issues one of the policy areas with the highest support for EU involvement. Although this support is unevenly spread across the EU, it always comes from a majority of citizens, and sometimes is almost unanimous. The highest support is in Cyprus (91%), Malta (87%) and Portugal (86%). The lowest is in Denmark (57%). Two thirds of EU citizens evaluate the EU's current involvement in this policy area as insufficient. Citizens' expectations and preferences of EU involvement in the issues of migration are not yet met despite increased attention to this policy area. The strongest support for more EU involvement in migration is from people between 35 and 74 years old.

Despite the strong preference for EU involvement in migration issues, EU citizens do not share very strong preferences for turning this policy area into an EU budget spending priority. Among the most

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Authors: Anita Orav, Alessandro D'Alfonso, Alina Dobreva

Graphics by Eulalia Claros, based on data from the Public Opinion Monitoring Unit, DG COMM

Members' Research Service

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The positive takeaway of this special survey is that citizens still have high expectations from the EU. However, it shows also that we are still far behind in the citizens' perception of what the EU actually does. Therefore, the conclusion to this reflection should be that there is still a lot to do in some areas but also in letting people know what has already been done.

ALEYDA HERNÁNDEZ LAVIADES

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3 www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/top-stories/20160824TST40022/eurobarometer-survey

COMMUNICATION TOOLS: WEB COMMUNICATION, SOCIAL MEDIA AND FUTURE ORIENTATIONS

To be a successful communicator, learn what motivates your audience

John S. Verrico

The underlying goal of any communication is to encourage others to take some sort of action. Whatever it is you want them to do – buy something, do something, vote, behave a certain way, take their medications, evacuate, volunteer, pay taxes, or clean up their room – you need to understand their motivations. Communications must be strategic to address those motivations or your message will never get through.

Before you set out on a communications campaign, analyze your target audiences, know who they are, know what makes them tick. Ask the question: What would motivate them to take the desired action?

This is not always easy to answer. As a matter of fact, understanding motivation has been the eternally elusive golden fleece of corporate executives, advertisers, political leaders, front-line supervisors, and parents of teenagers. How do you motivate people? If you try to generalize, you are doomed to fail.

First, you must understand the three principles of motivation:

1. **You cannot motivate people.** Perhaps a shocking thing to say in an article about motivation, but it is important to understand that you cannot force people to be motivated. Motivation is individual, personal, and comes from within.
2. **All people are motivated.** While this may be also somewhat hard to swallow when you consider the frustrations we may face when trying to get people to do things we want or need them to do, we need to know that everyone has their own reasons for what they do (or don't do).
3. **People do things for their own reasons,** not yours. People are not motivated by external factors, but by how they interpret those things, and what values they place upon the various potential outcomes. Their reasons may make no sense to us based upon our values, but make perfect sense to them because of theirs. There is actual behavioral science behind this. First posited in 1964 by Victor Vroom, a professor at the Yale School of Management, what has become known as "expectancy theory" states that an individual decide how to behave or what to do based on what the expected outcome would be and the desirability of the outcome.

It may seem an exceptional challenge, but knowing these facts from the start can steer you in the right direction when analyzing your audience and trying to figure out how to get them to do the things you want them to do. Here are some tips for developing your strategy.

Put yourself in their shoes

If you were your audience, why would you want to listen to you? Why would you be interested in reading what you put out? Why would you be motivated to take the action you ask? It's the "What's in it for me?" factor from the perspective of the audience.
This analysis isn't always easy. You must:

- Separate yourself from your own message, product, company, organization, and even your own social standing.
- Forget your goals and whatever benefits that you will ultimately reap if your message has the effect you are hoping for.
- Ask others. Ask your mother. Better yet, ask people from your target audience.

Make it their choice

You cannot motivate someone else to do something they don't want to do. But what you can do is create an environment that encourages ownership of the idea – which in fact will allow people to motivate themselves.

- Create choice wherever possible so people feel they have more control over the decision.
- Make it personal whenever possible.
- Respect people – nothing motivates a person more than when they feel respected.

Ask why five times

"Why" is the most powerful question you can ask. Asking why leads to understanding the root cause of an issue.

In problem analysis, many industries recommend the practice of asking why five times. Toyota uses this method to analyze mechanical failures or manufacturing issues. High-tech companies use it to understand how a virus infects a computer. Each **why** leads you closer to the cause of the problem. Here's an example:

Why did you stop singing?
Because I keep coughing.
Why do you keep coughing?
Because I have an irritation in my throat.
Why is your throat irritated?
I inhaled some smoke.
Why did you inhale smoke?
Because the room was full of smoke.
Why was there so much smoke?
Because the theater is on fire.

Each **why** reveals more detail about the real issue. So now we know if we want the performer to continue singing, we need to put out the fire in the theater first.

Although there is no set rule for five being the magic number, it is usually considered the minimum in identifying the cause of a problem or the root of motivation. There can easily be more to drill down deeper into the situation.

Every communications strategy should focus heavily on the **why**. But **why** is not only the most powerful question to ask, it is also the most powerful answer. Knowing **who, what, when, where**, and even **how**, are all pieces of information that help to illustrate or categorize a thing, event, function, or request, but people will not take action until they know **why** they should.

The premise of an ancient proverb will help to illustrate this point:

"Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime."

While this proverb is very profound, there is still a missing piece of critical information.

Explaining **who, what, when**, and **where** is merely informing someone. Telling our fisherman **who, what, when**, and **where** about catching fish provides him information that he may or may not know how to act upon.

Including an explanation of **how** is considered training. Teaching him **how** to bait the hook, cast, and set the hook provides training. So now our fisherman knows **what** to do and **how** to do it for himself. But this still does not mean that he will be fed for a lifetime.

The critical missing element is **why**. Without understanding **why** he should fish, there is no motivation for him to put his new skills to work. Teach him, however, that fish is food and that he would starve unless he catches his own fish to eat. Now our fisherman has all the information he needs, he can understand it, relate to it, and make his own decisions about how to use it.

This is true education. The best teachers provide all the information – especially the **why** – so that the student can understand it and make his or her own choice about how to apply it. Top organizational leaders do the same thing. They openly provide all the information so that followers can make their own choices and take personal ownership of the mission. This is a critical difference between managers and leaders. In her books and training seminars, leadership coach Shiela Murray Bethel notes this difference: "Management is the **how-to**; leadership is the **why**."

Whether your audiences are internal or external, if you hope to understand them and influence their decision to act – whether you want them to work, buy, vote, or clean up their room – is to ask and answer the critical question **why**.

JOHN VERRICO

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The importance of "being social" – The Federal Chancellery of Austria and its social media activities

Susanne Weber

Introduction: The power of social media in political communication

Social media has become popular because it lacks the central control of information found in a one-way traditional media communication system. Politicians, the media or public administration no longer control the dialogue, instead they take their cues from social media. As a consequence, political communication increasingly knows no (more) boundaries. It forms communities of people who, without even meeting each other, are in connection because they are in communication. Thus, for better or worse, social media as a two-way communication system is becoming more and more powerful. Thus, social media is moving more and more into the centre of smart governmental communications plan.

One of the first world leaders in embracing "new" social media like Instagram or WhatsApp platforms was Barack Obama. The most popular Instagram photo of a politician shows a "Thank You" picture after his re-election in 2012, taken by The White House photographer Pete Souza.[1]

Why are politicians, but also public services and public administrations increasingly joining social media platforms? First, social media allows digital citizens to get the "inside" perspective of politics whilst being "outside". Then, growing platforms such as SnapChat, WhatsApp or Instagram are a way to reach out to younger audiences, that´s to say, audiences that largely ignore traditional media such as TV or radio. Last, politicians get the opportunity to appear in a more personal, emotional way, especially via visual social media content.
Of course, we all learned – and discussed at the Club of Venice meetings several times –about the risks of communication via social media, such as loss of control, misuse by political competitors, trolls, questions of data protection, intransparent algorithms of the platform providers, need of additional resources and last, but definitely not least, additional know-how. This is all true and should not be underestimated. But, on the other hand: Do we really have the choice to stay social media abstinent? Our finding is that this is a rhetorical question. The answer is no – because it´s 2016!

Within the Club´s framework, the Federal Chancellery made very transparent on different occasions that we had to face (less) ups and (more) downs during our very first years of social media network presence. None of the risks mentioned before could serve as the main reason for that, but rather a tremendous lack of authenticity, the use of inappropriate tonality and a limited scope of action (please look at the lessons learned at the very end of the article).

The Austrian case: Instagram and facebook

Following a government change in May 2016 and the resignation of Werner Faymann as Austrian Federal Chancellor on May 9th, 2016, Christian Kern was sworn in as Federal Chancellor of Austria on May 17th, 2016. On that occasion, the Federal Press Service – amongst other things in charge of the social media activities – decided to modernize the social media presence. In the following, the facebook and Instagram presence of the Austrian Federal Chancellery shall be analyzed.[2]

The Federal Chancellery on facebook: https://www.facebook.com/Bundeskanzleramt.at/
Launched in May 2016, fb.com/Bundeskanzleramt.at by now has over 9.000 fans or page likes (as of September 29th, 2016). A clear line has been drawn between party-related content and content offered by the Federal

1 Cf. "World leaders on Instagram 2016" by Twiplomacy. URL: http://twiplomacy.com/blog/world-leaders-on-instagram-2016/ [29.09.2016]

2 Whilst the Federal Chancellery of Austria is not present on SnapChat, twitter or WhatsApp, the Austrian Federal Chancellor Christian Kern himself takes care of his personal twitter account https://twitter.com/kernchri (state of play: September 29th, 2016).

Chancellery: Whilst the personal facebook page of Christian Kern (https://www.facebook.com/bundeskanzler.christian.kern/?fref=ts) is managed by SPÖ (the Social-Democratic Party of Austria), the Federal Chancellery´s facebook page is taken care of by a social media team at the Federal Press Service (division within the Federal Chancellery). Therefore, http://www.facebook.com/Bundeskanzleramt.at focuses on government-related and therefore "neutral" information, e.g. information on the weekly Cabinet meetings and its results.[3]

Moreover, the facebook page of the Federal Chancellery not only informs about the activities of the Federal Chancellor Christian Kern, but also about the Federal Minister Thomas Drozda and the State Secretary Muna Duzdar in the Federal Chancellery. Within the Federal Chancellery, they have particular duties: The Federal Minister is responsible for Arts and Culture, Constitution and Media), whilst the State Secretary is tackling the issues of diversity, public administration and digitalization. The facebook page fb.com/Bundeskanzleramt.at also keeps track of the public events and activities of the government and government policies, with a main emphasis on the Federal Chancellor, the Federal Minster and the State Secretary.[4] Both the Minister and the State Secretary run their own pages, enriching the portfolio of communication tools with additional personal content.

The facebook page of the Austrian Federal Chancellery should also help to modernize the public perception and image of public servants. For that purpose, regular "behind the scenes"-posts offer glimpses into the work of departments and divisions of the Austrian Federal Chancellery.[5]

Facebook is also used for thematic campaigns launched by the Austrian government, e.g. #GegenHassimNetz, a hashtag campaign against online hate-speech with testimonials by widely known Austrian VIPs such as actors, scientists, politicians etc.[6]

Audiovisual content proves to be highly successful on facebook, for instance, a very short video clip setting the Federal Chancellery rooftop flag at half-mast out of solidarity after the terrorist attacks in Nice, France, in July 2016.[7] Another example is the video of a speech delivered by the Austrian Chancellor Christian Kern at the Viennese "Rainbow Parade" in June 2016, thereby showing his support to the LGBT community.[8] The video had an overall reach-out of 1.397.661 users, nearly 600.000 clicks to play and more than 7.600 "likes" (or other reactions; nearly 6.000 "shares").

3 Cf. facebook post on the weekly Cabinet meeting of September 27, 2016. Copyright infographic: fb.com/Bundeskanzleramt.at (Copyright photo: BKA/Andy Wenzel). URL: https://www.facebook.com/Bundeskanzleramt.at/photos/a.1114687228554270.1073741830.1111174602238866/1208204972535828/?type=3&theater [29.09.2016]

4 Cf. facebook post informing on one of the Federal Chancellor´s "Regional Days" (Bundesländertage, visits to the main Austrian regions), here to be seen in Styria (Steiermark). Copyright photo: BKA/Andy Wenzel. URL: https://www.facebook.com/Bundeskanzleramt.at/photos/a.1114687228554270.1073741830.1111174602238866/1209346989088293/?type=3&theater [29.09.2016]

5 Cf. facebook post presenting the staff of the department on European Council affairs within the Federal Chancellery. Copyright photo: BKA/Andy Wenzel. URL: https://www.facebook.com/Bundeskanzleramt.at/photos/a.1114687228554270.1073741830.1111174602238866/1139800942709565/?type=3&theater [29.09.2016]

6 Cf. facebook post showing the Austrian actor Serge Falck participating in #GegenHassimNetz. Copyright photo: BKA/Andy Wenzel. URL: https://www.facebook.com/Bundeskanzleramt.at/photos/?tab=album&album_id=1162445833778409 [29.09.2016]

7 Cf. Copyright video: BKA/Hans Hofer. URL: https://www.facebook.com/Bundeskanzleramt.at/videos/1151224071567252/ [29.09.2016]

8 Cf. Video screenshot. Copyright video: BKA/Hans Hofer. URL: https://www.facebook.com/Bundeskanzleramt.at/videos/1134179073271752/ [29.09.2016]

The Federal Chancellery on Instagram: https://www.Instagram.com/bundeskanzleramt.at/
As is the case with the facebook page, the Instagram account of the Austrian Federal Chancellery is up and running since May 2016. As of September 29th, 2016, www.Instagram.com/bundeskanzleramt.at accounts for nearly 7.900 follower. The Instagram account now has interaction rates (key performance indicators) similar to the Instagram accounts of Angela Merkel or Barack Obama, according to a monitoring analysis in July 2016.[9]

One of the aims of the Federal Chancellery´s Instagram account is to offer "good", that´s to say, high-quality pictures taken by the professional photo team. As a consequence, the Instagram account should develop a striking visual brand presence, attracting attention of media and communication professionals. The Instagram presence is not used for making exclusive political announcements, but to stand out by its premium visual content and its "unusual" photo shots ("behind-the-scenes" photographs not seen on other platforms, artistic/creative photos or personal photos). One of the recent examples is a snapshot of Federal Chancellor Christian Kern doing sports in New York´s Central Park while attending the General Assembly of the United Nations in September 2016[10]

The account is run by the Federal Press Service (photo and social media team) and shines a light not only on the Federal chancellor, the Federal Minister and the State Secretary, but also on activities of the Federal Chancellery itself, e.g. a night-long "Open House" at Viennese museums ("Lange Nacht der Museen") on October 1st, 2016, with the Federal Chancellery as participating institution.[11] The hashtag #visitbka ("bka" short for "Bundeskanzleramt"), created by the social media team, should help to authentically portray the Federal Chancellery as an open house for Austrian citizens.

The "open house" policy of the Austrian Federal Chancellery also became apparent in July 2016, when an "instawalk" at the Federal Chancellery – a sort of a guided tour for (professional/amateur) photographers, documenting their experience on Instagram – was organized in cooperation with "Instagramers Austria". One of the great advantages about Instagram is the ability to tag photos. When everyone in the group uses the same tag, it creates a montage of photos that represent the collective experience. For example, on the first instawalk in July 2016, we had everyone use the hashtag #visitbka on their photos.[12] The effort to reach out to specific target groups and to make use of influencer marketing strategies will continue in the future, for example at the "Open House" event ("Tag der Offenen Tür") on October 26th, 2016, the Austrian National Holiday.

Of course, "classics" such as pictures from governmental meetings, conferences, summits, bilateral visits etc. are also shown on Instagram, whilst always maintaining the "premium-quality" direction.

9 Cf. Wiener Instagram-Monitor 3/2016. July 2016. Copyright: Philipp Schneider. URL: https://sastre79.files.wordpress.com/2016/07/instagram-monitor-juli-2016.pdf [29.09.2016]

10 Cf. Federal Chancellor Christian Kern running in Central Park, New York. Copyright photo: BKA/Andy Wenzel. URL: https://www.instagram.com/p/BKnqwKVBEv9/ [29.09.2016]

11 Instagram post showing the premises of the Austrian Federal Chancellery branded with "Lange Nacht der Museen" logo and posters. Copyright photo: BKA/Andy Wenzel. URL: https://www.instagram.com/p/BK5Xy5UBY4k/ [29.09.2016]

12 #visitbka tagged content on instagram. URL: https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/visitbka/ [29.09.2016]

10 conclusions for government communicators – Thoughts from the field

- **Don´t be afraid to try new things. Thinking outside the box proves to be crucial. Since May 2016, we are busy "trying things out", which also means that the corporate culture is changing. If something works, fine. If it doesn't work, we´ll try other things, we "try better". After some time, experience makes you more sure of what will work – and what will not – than before. But be aware that there´ll always be surprise if you´re dealing with social media.**
- **You can´t make it all alone. Social media is "social" and therefore, quite naturally, team work. Social media activities require time, financial and human resources. First, time, because building up and running a successful social media platform is not a matter of a few hours or days – it´s a matter of months, perhaps years. Second, financial resources, because professional and continuous monitoring/analytics services pay off, and you´ll sometimes make use of ads. Social media is not for free. And third, human resources, because new technologies require new skill-sets of your staff.**
- **It´s all about visual, it´s about "living the moment". Short videos, live videos (e.g. periscope), emotional videos etc. – the emphasis nowadays is on the visual, which is key to gripping attention by users. According to the Twiplomacy analysis quoted before, only 4 out of 5 Instagram content posts by politicians are videos – but they significantly outperform static content such as photos or infographics pictures. This trend for "visual paradises" on Instagram and other social media platforms for sure is going to grow on the short and long term.**
- **Involve "non-experts". Try to reach out to other departments and divisions within your institution. Try to build up "liaison" or contact points. Try to build up a "loyal" community interested in your efforts. Talk about your activities, and make others talk about your activities. Try to be open to the ideas of others.**
- **Monitoring is essential. Don't underestimate monitoring. Monitoring will provide your institution with quantifiable, but also qualitative performance indicators of your own activities, but also the activities conducted by other ministries and institutions. Monitoring allows you to be alert and to be able to strategically plan your content.**
- **Personalize your posts. Content becomes more personal and user reactions more friendly if you show "faces". Users sympathize with "ordinary" people "like you and me". Thus, "behind-the-scenes" posts should involve not only politicians, but also staff – make their work be seen. Official events or government activities thus get a more personal face(t). Make users get a modernized, "up-dated" image of bureaucracy.**
- **Try to stay up-to-date. Against the background of an ever changing technological landscape and sometimes speedy decision-making processes at governmental level, furthering and updating your social media skills is essential. This involves formal training, but also informal activities. You and your social media team should continuously keep track of trends and tools.**
- **Admit faults. As for crisis communications, be prepared to "shit storms". Do not hesitate to admit errors, let your fans/followers know there is a problem and keep them updated. Non-information is not an option. And, don´t react instantly, out of pure emotion.**
- **Be responsive. Users appreciate reactions to their comments. It´s not about "perfect" reactions, it´s rather about continuing communication between you and your audience. Seeing comments or questions on a facebook page that have gone unanswered for days, weeks, or even months can be a huge deterrent for potential new fans. Reply to any and all comments, whether they've been left on your posts or directly on your page.**
- **Best Practice sharing: Share your "best practices" within your institution, but also amongst social media managers from other public administration entities and on other levels (local level, European level). Hear from other professionals who are experiencing many of the same successes and challenges in this field.**

SUSANNE WEBER

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Towards a (more) social government

Milko Vlessing

When the Club of Venice was founded, Europe was still divided. We had to wait another three years for the Berlin wall to fall as well as for the word firewall (for computers) to come into existence. The Internet as we know it now did not exist. Thirty years later, the possibilities of today's Internet are almost unlimited and internet has become inseparable from our life, as everything and everyone is constantly "connected".

Not only has the technological development of the internet been rapid, humans have also evolved rapidly. It was 30 years ago still common to walk mostly upright. Nowadays we mostly live in a state of heads bowed over the latest gadgets. I'm very curious in that regard where mankind will be in 30 years, and how the government will have developed its communication with its population.

The fact is that in 2016 citizens expect the government to be helpful and social. A government which is close to its population and which can be contacted through the preferred channels of its audience. And not only reactive but also proactive. A government that has its affairs in order: Its information easily available and in an easy to understand format. A government that is transparent.

Astonishingly, not so long ago people were satisfied with a government website that was tinkered together by an official with amateur ICT skills running the website on a second rate server.

Things are clearly different now. The whole communications web chain now needs the collaboration of a series of different specialists. The output of all the professional efforts of managers, communication consultants, UX designers, researchers, scrum masters, product owners, developers, community managers etc. should surely by now fit perfectly to the users' needs government-wide?

However, the most recent joint programme of all government communication directorates 'Government Communication New Style (ONS)' dates from the pre-social media era.

Nevertheless, this program has led to some positive developments: fewer but better government websites, including in 2010 the merging of the major ministerial websites into one consolidated and much appreciated website: www.rijksoverheid.nl.

Yet the number of sites within the central government is still quite high. For instance, the central government in the Netherlands has more than 1,000 websites. In itself, this number is not a problem; but that this is done without a comprehensive government-wide coordination, is problematic.
The chance that web users would consider this loosely affiliated group of 1000 websites as a coherent whole is close to zero. Leaving aside the question of whether taxpayers' money is used carefully in this way.

A positive development is that these websites are increasingly being realized on a government-wide platform. DPC (Office for Information and Public Communication) has launched this shared platform (www.platformrijksoverheiddemo.nl) in 2014. Currently nearly 200 websites have migrated to this location. The specific knowledge and expertise is bundled together and the owners of the websites can primarily concentrate on making the web content fit the needs of a well-defined target audience. These websites must comply with all security standards and criteria for accessibility. Previously, this proved to be almost unattainable. Another great advantage of central implementation, management and development are the massive government-wide cost savings.

The aforementioned joint programme "Government Communication New Style (ONS)" did give guidelines for website development within government services, but no government-wide framework nor directive for social media use. In the years that followed it was' everybody for himself'.

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Meanwhile, there are some good examples available in the use of social media channels for public communication.
For example, citizens can go on Twitter and get correctly formulated answers to their questions concerning different aspects of the public administration such as Tax Services and Public Works. These public services apply high user-friendly quality standards (opening times, response times, quality of response, tone of voice).
Similarly, online communication is used for building and maintaining networks, for example the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science's Facebook page "Parents and school together."
The government also has a well-functioning social media channel (@rijksoverheid) where citizens can get professional and quick answers to their questions about all the themes relating to the national government.

But if people have a question (or complaint) which they do not address by chance to the website @rijksoverheid they don't get an answer. At the same time, we see that the central government is hardly represented on Facebook, even though a very large part of the target group can be found there. However, a more proactive form of web-care is possible and would also suit a cooperative and helpful government.

In the area of social media application, the differences within the government services are vast. The possibilities of social media are often under-utilized. Although we have been using these online communication tools for years and possess enough experience, it sometimes seems as if we still have difficulties to surpass the experimental phase. The gap between what the general public expects, and what the national government provides is increasing. A government-wide vision with guidelines for online communication of government services and a framework for minimum quality standards are still lacking.

At the same time I experience an enormous willingness and enthusiasm at all levels for interdepartmental cooperation, to share knowledge and to learn from team leaders.

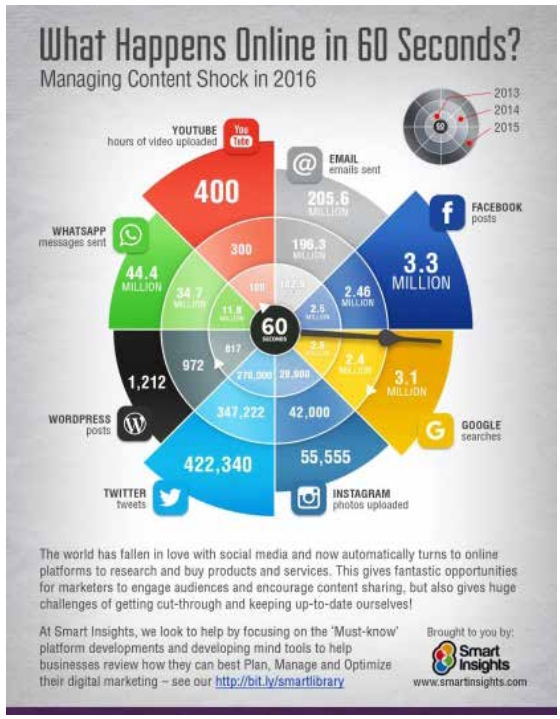
It's also fantastic that this is precisely what the Club of Venice has already been doing for 30 years: encouraging cooperation and knowledge exchange between European member and candidate countries. Congratulations and on to the next 30 years!

Time to think again about how you use social media?

Guy Dominy

A short summary and some thoughts on the White Paper 'Dealing with Social Media's Engagement Decline'.[1]

This short article is an update of my review of 'Dealing with Social Media's Engagement Decline', a white paper produced by GovDelivery (a major player in public sector communications) at the end of 2014. I also consider briefly some of the implications and how I believe the white paper could prove most valuable to the reader. This article considers the source, the context, the tactics advocated in the white paper before highlighting some of its implications and ending with a suggestion on how you might make the best use of it, suggesting that, two years on, it is perhaps even more relevant for us as government communicators.



The context for the white paper is the erosion of the 'organic reach' - those who see your posts 'naturally' - of social media platforms. The paper describes how this is here already with Facebook where content filtering means that organic reach is now around 10 per cent or lower and likely to decline further. In other words, if you have 10,000 fans you can only expect 1,000 of them to see any given post. Of course you can pay to reach more people but then it is no longer free. The paper also suggests that this will happen with Twitter. Of course this 'monetisation' of audiences follows from what is increasingly understood as the key to success for online businesses – that building 'mass' is vital to commercial success and requires upfront investment. It should also come as no surprise to those familiar with perhaps the dominant business model for media companies – that of attracting, packaging and 'selling' audiences to interested third parties. As both online and media organisations, we should expect social media platforms to seek ways to monetise the users (i.e. audiences) that they have succeeded in growing.

The paper helpfully suggests four tactics you can use to respond to this. The paper frames these as elements of 'exit strategy'. However, the suggestions are really helpful even if it is not an exit strategy. I believe the phrase the paper uses earlier 'navigating the rapid decline in organic social media reach' is more helpful way to think about these tactics. You should not be thinking about 'exiting' social media rather revisiting the role social media plays in your channel strategy.

The four tactics suggested are to: (1) prioritise email for reliable reach; (2) post to grow your email database; (3) take advantage of page traffic; and (4) use competitions to drive participation. Each of these is described and illustrated in the white paper.

1 https://www.govdelivery.com/resources/dealing-with-social-medias-engagement-decline/

It is unsurprising that an email supplier suggests that you prioritise email for reliable reach. This does not make it untrue or unhelpful. If you own your email list, you can decide who you want to communicate with and when. It is also yours, which means you don't lose people unless they ask to be removed from your list. One of the risks that the paper highlights is that, with social media platforms 'monetising eyeballs', your organic reach is subject to unexpected changes. You cannot rely on it in the same way you can rely on your email database to provide reliable reach.

GUY DOMINY

Perhaps less obvious is the potential to use your posts, page traffic and competitions to capture email addresses. These three are powerful ways of integrating your use of social media with email. In particular, they suggest three ways to (1) maximise the value of any existing investment in social media; and (2) take advantage of some of the inherent characteristics of social media.

This white paper is thus a really timely wakeup call for us all to consider the role of social media in our engagement strategies. More than this I think it reminds us to consider first principles. We never should have been using social media just because it is free. We should be matching the characteristics of channels to the requirements of audiences and messages to determine which channels are most appropriate. And, of course, social media was never free. It always required an investment of time. The erosion of organic reach highlighted in this white paper makes it easier to see social media for what it is rather than as simply a free channel.

The white paper also reminds us of another first principle. Go where your audience is. Social media remains – and is likely to remain – a place to find individuals who might want a more structured pattern of engagement with you (such as through email). The white paper helpfully sets out some clever ways to maximise this. One issue that faces us all is the use of the term engagement. Too often we use it lazily. What does it mean for you? One useful categorisation is used in the social media training provided for UK government communicators. Here they talk about five activities that you might use social media for: (1) listening; (2) explaining; (3) engaging, defined as encouraging people to share and comment, responding in forums; (4) convening; and (5) curating. When you explore more deeply exactly what you are trying to achieve you can see that even within social media different platforms can be used for different purposes. Fundamental to the development of your channel strategy is investing in determining exactly what engagement means to your organization!

When I began in (marketing) communications the effectiveness of combining television advertising to 'prime' an audience for direct mail, and the use of postcard or telephone reminders was already established. Today we need to be developing strategies where social media is used in combination with our website, email and text to drive the behaviours we want to see. These will inevitably need to be fluid strategies combining these different 'online' channels in ways that suit increasingly demanding audiences increasingly expecting an 'always on' service. A brief look at what happens on the internet every 60 seconds (see infographic from Smart insights) reveals the role email plays with over four times as many emails sent as WhatsApp messages. Even allowing for the large proportion that are undoubtedly spam – though recent figures suggest spam is at a twelve year low with less than half email being spam according to security firm Symantec reported by the BBC last summer – this is still a huge amount of relevant targeted communication that email accounts for.

This paper is not arguing for an abandonment of social media, but rather for recognition that email has a complementary part to play in any modern fluid online communication strategy. As suggested in UK social media training, social media offers us a perhaps unprecedented opportunity to listen to (some of) our audiences, allowing us to tailor our messages to immediate concerns. For example, one UK regulatory agency scans social media for comments about its regulations enabling it to quickly public clarifications where required. As noted in the GovDelivery paper, we can also use social media to capture email addresses allowing us increasing control over our ability to reach the audiences that matter to us and that want to hear our messages. Again referring to the curating role for social media we can use email to steer interested people to our curated material. Increasingly we need to be thinking about how these different channels work together and move beyond social media as simply the 'free' channel.

I would like to finish this brief article with one specific call to action. What immediately struck me when reading this paper is that it would be a really useful stimulus for a good discussion about an engagement strategy. Get everyone in your team to read it – it won't take long, it is clearly written and accessible – as homework before a brainstorming session about the online/digital element of you engagement strategy. It remains relevant, perhaps it is even more relevant as the trends it refers to are trends we should expect to see continuing. Reading the paper should get everyone thinking.

MEDIA FREEDOM

Media in turmoil – and how about trust in politics?

Christian Spahr

Media freedom and diversity are matters of course, at least in the European Union. Or not? What many citizens – at least in the "old" member states – would have taken for granted not long ago, has become less self-evident. This has to do with three developments: Increasingly difficult media markets and working conditions of journalists, citizens questioning the role of professional media in the context of social media and political crises, and enduring or rising pressure on media in "new" member states. Moreover, PR personnel also have a share in this trend, as the rapport of forces between journalists and PR managers has dramatically changed.

According to the NGO "Freedom House", global press freedom declined to its lowest point in 12 years in 2015. Main reasons are seen in pressure by political, criminal and terrorist forces. Also in Europe, the situation has deteriorated. Most of the South East European countries, as well as Italy and Ukraine, are only ranked as "partly free" by Freedom House. The other big NGO issuing such rankings, "Reporters Without Borders", sees good conditions for media freedom only in Scandinavia, the German-speaking countries, the Benelux states and Ireland. Most of the other "old" EU members still have a "satisfactory" situation, but the picture has darkened.

Whether West or East, North or South, one strong trend affects all media landscapes – the growing budgetary constraints. Due to the internet revolution, citizens have more sources of information, and most of them for free – an economic disaster for traditional media who, for a long time, ignored or underestimated the challenges. With dramatic consequences: Staff had to be reduced in many media outlets, and in the same time, the pulse of news making and news consumption has been boosted. Today, much less journalists produce much more news, and this inevitably leads to lower quality. Not necessarily lower quality of the written text itself, but a loss in depth, because there is less time and (wo)manpower for research. In individual countries, flagship media manage to maintain strong investigative teams, as "Der Spiegel" or "The Guardian". Others form new alliances amongst each other to make good reporting affordable. But especially smaller or regional media are more and more faint (and young professionals earn less and less or have to work as freelancers without adequate social security). Weak newsrooms are less immune to PR content and other forms of influence.

The economic crisis comes together with a crisis of confidence. In a recent survey of a regional German public broadcaster, 60 percent of the citizens of Bavaria suspected that unwanted opinions are faded out in professional media. 65 percent expressed the opinion that journalists can't always publish what they think. This study released in May 2016 was influenced by the refugee crisis, during which mainstream media were partly criticised for euphemising the situation. In the same time, social media are challenging the credibility of professional media. Increasingly, political content is being viewed on social networks. By their algorithms, Facebook and other platforms tend to show to their users predominantly news that fit their interests, or the interests of their friends. Despite the open and global character of the web, a growing number of users roam in a filtered bubble of unisonous messages, depending on their own political preferences and personal environment. Thus, facing

up to different opinions on a daily basis may not be self-evident any more in future, as it used to be for a majority of newspaper readers and TV viewers in the analogue times. Controversy may be in danger.

By the way, the figures of the Bavarian survey are not so far from results in South East Europe. According to surveys done by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS), only 28 percent of Romanians believe in the independence of media (published 2015), and only 12 percent of Bulgarians (2016). In the press freedom listing of Reporters Without Borders, the EU member state Bulgari, has dropped from rank 35 to rank 113 out of 180 countries within ten years.

In some new member states and candidate countries, especially in South East Europe, the difficult economic situation of the media is accompanied by strong ties between industry and politics as well as weaknesses of democratic institutions and civil society. The above mentioned press freedom rankings can cause the misunderstanding that critical journalists are oppressed by the state. This is true in individual cases, and each of these cases is to complain about.

But more often the pressure on journalists comes from the framework conditions within the media sector. Many traditional media, especially TV and newspapers, are in the hands of media moguls who own them as an instrument of pressure. These media owners are not publishers in the traditional sense; they are not interested in earning money with good journalism. They are PR entrepreneurs and invest consciously in loss-making media. Their interests lie in political and economic influence to be used for their own purposes, and tacit agreements with politicians are part of the concept. Sometimes it is difficult to tell whether politicians are more afraid of oligarchs or vice versa. On top, many media outlets depend on state advertising. The climate of interdependence makes it difficult to enforce legal provisions or self-regulation in the media, for example if it comes to transparency of ownership and paid content, limiting monopolies and fostering ethical standards of reporting. In a KAS survey in Bulgaria in 2015, every third journalist said that in their media outlet it is not possible to report about certain topics, persons or companies – or only with a pre-set tendency. This is especially unfortunate as numerous citizens in South East Europe still need to be convinced of the advantages of democracy and open societies. Weak media are a fertile soil for authoritarian tendencies.

On the other hand, South East Europe and other young democracies or transitional countries are becoming laboratories for alternative, more independent journalism models under difficult circumstances. In different countries of the region, non-for-profit investigative projects have been formed, often with financial support of the EU or US organisations. Some of these groups or their members cooperate with larger international networks like the "Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project" or have been part of well-known investigations like the "Panama Papers". However, few citizens are willing to pay or donate for quality journalism and independent projects in this region often depend on Western donors. The KAS Media Program South East Europe itself doesn't finance individual media but offers training for investigative reporters as well as for young professionals who aim to become start-up entrepreneurs online.

The global weakening of journalism goes in line with a strengthening of political communications or PR in general. According to an analysis of one of the German media associations (DFJV), 48,000 full-time journalists were facing up to 50,000 PR employees in the country in 2014. The United States Department of Labour even counted 4.6 PR experts per journalist in 2014. Communication professionals nowadays have overall better working conditions than professional journalists. This makes it easier to manipulate media and to benefit from their weakness – at least short-term. But in modern democracies, political communicators have to be aware that they need journalists and media managers as partners – in the long run at least. Who will trust messages distributed via media who don't enjoy credibility? This question remains and should encourage spokespersons to adhere to ethical standards of their own profession – more and more national and international associations

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of PR professionals have defined such guidelines. Amongst others, the South East Europe Public Sector Communication Association (SEECOM) who published the "Budva Declaration" in 2012.

Journalism is in turmoil, to a big extent due to the digital revolution, and needs to re-invent itself. The politics should be a reliable partner to media by respecting its own democratic limits. Although the internet challenges professional media so much, it also encourages citizens to publish their standpoints and ask for accountability. The plurality of opinions in democratic societies nowadays depends on the freedom and quality of both professional journalism and a public dialogue online, as well as limits of political interference. In future membership negotiations, the EU should carefully observe the media situation, because it needs a functional and pluralistic media landscape as inherent part of its political model.

Media freedom today

Oliver Vujovic

Freedom of communication and expression through media (press freedom or media freedom), are the most important elements of a democratic society.

As we all know, journalists and the media should not make political compromises, respond to a party whip or answer to those who control the media. The reality, however, is different. Very often journalists and media are not only under the influence of politicians, business-persons, companies and media owners, but also swayed by religions, military forces or other social groups. Media, especially new media, frequently publish information without checking the facts or the source. On a daily basis, we see examples of self-censorship and soft censorship. Also, the "classic censorship" by governments, individuals in power or military forces is still very prevalent. Most politicians try to enter partnerships with journalists, influence media and control public radio and TV broadcasters.

Is it even possible, in this day and age, to speak of a country in Europe, or anywhere in the world, for that matter, with no form of pressure on journalists and media? The answer is a clear NO. The best we can do is speak about countries with, relatively, free media. Often the problem is not simply direct state pressure, but media owners who are developing the media as a service to groups in power.

Some European countries, like Belarus, Russia and Turkey, are especially affected by state pressure on journalists. But in EU countries, as well, we have clear violations of basic standards of press freedom. Some new EU countries concentrated on improving press freedom before becoming EU members, but after they joined the "EU family" statistics showed an increase in the pressure placed on journalists. A big problem in many "new" EU countries are threats and attacks against journalist who are investigating corruption. Missing transparency in ownership of media is still a problem in many European countries. In many states defamation is defined both as a civil tort and a criminal offence. Criminal defamation laws cannot be justified and are problematic in regard to free expression. Even if they are applied throughout Europe with moderation, criminal defamation laws still cast a long shadow and only their removal is an acceptable option. A rise to political power of media magnates is also extremely worrying. In some countries, especially on a local level, the same person who is in political power also controls or owns the media and, simultaneously, big local companies.

As practice shows, the European Union has no capacity to punish EU governments who do not respect media freedom.

Furthermore, journalists are not always professional about their work – this was visible in the reports in British media before Brexit. We have reports from conflicts and wars – as products of embedded journalism. Information is not always checked. Often media reports are not products of sound journalism. Even in daily reporting journalists are sometimes parts of a propaganda campaign.

To remedy the still existing strong pressure on media freedom, journalists must work together more closely; cooperating across borders and among colleagues, but also promoting investigate journalism. Press freedom organisations and groups still play a very important role in every country.

The press freedom work of most press freedom organisations should focus on following areas:
1. Promoting safety standards in public and within media organisations and establishing protection mechanisms;
2. React in case of an attack or threat
3. Taking action to end impunity (impunity in journalist murders);
4. Removing the threat of criminal sanctions against journalist by national legal regulations;
5. Changing the laws that are not according to international recommendations and standards (by Council of Europe (CoE), Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and others);

From the streets in Istanbul (Istiklal Caddesi street)

6. Fighting against legal and administrative restrictions that gravely affect the dissemination of news;
7. Supporting better access to information.

Systematic collection of information is a key element of any research study and of the work of press freedom groups, but mere figures don´t provide enough insight into press freedom threats. It is the analysis of such figures that can shed some light.

Protection of online journalists, has become increasingly important in the past decade. How vital online media are, is documented by SEEMO research conducted in 12 EU and non-EU countries in Europe. According to these findings, over 70% of the population form their political opinions on the basis of information and opinions presented on national TV channels and online media.

The problem is, there seems to be no absolute agreement to what constitutes online journalism. However, online journalism has developed in many countries to become the most important area of journalism. Therefore, press freedom organisations today should provide a platform for on-line journalists to report threats, harassment, and abuse. They should also clearly map out all the threats. This includes governmental restrictive legal frameworks against free online work and Internet Service Providers' (ISP) rules against on-line journalists, which should help detect and monitor these abuses.

The 15 biggest threats to media freedom today are:

1. Murders, threats and violence against journalists by state or non-state actors, very often stemming from persons close to business-oligarchs, with the aim of silencing reporting;
2. Use of criminal defamation and similar laws against journalists;
3. Detention of journalists;
4. Control of media by advertisers;
5. Pressure on editors and journalists by media owners;
6. State control of regulative bodies and public radio and TV broadcasting;
7. State censorship, but also soft-censorship and self-censorship;
8. Use of state security against journalists;
9. Use and abuse of religious and cultural sensitivities;
10. State control of the Internet;
11. Not respecting rights of minorities and diverse social groups;
12. Use of secrecy laws and other forms of limiting access to information;
13. Lack of transperency in regard to media finances and ownership;
14. Lack of media ethics codes or codes not put into practice;
15. Bad working conditions for journalists.

For each country in Europe, at least 2 - 3 of the above points are in practice. In some European countries, we can even speak of all 15 points being the reality. Also, the problems that we have today with terrorism should never be used as an excuse for not respecting press freedom. It is possible to fight terrorism and respect media freedom at the same time.

OLIVER VUJOVIC
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Communicate in times of crisis

Philippe Caroyez

Communicating in response to THE crisis...

The Club of Venice has been examining 'crisis communication' for many years now. During that period, we have given presentations and hosted discussions about operational or communication models and strategies and about the 'solutions' (institutions, systems, communication initiatives) they give rise to in the Member States of the European Union and their practical application in actual crisis or crisis-prevention situations.
There have been crises relating to public health ('mad cow disease', bird flu), the environment (nuclear accidents, the Eyjafjallajökull volcano eruption) and earthquakes (L'Aquila) as well as humanitarian crises (the 2004 tsunami, illegal immigration) and political crises (hooliganism, the aftermath of 9/11). Each of them has had an impact on policies and institutions (crisis centres) and helped to shape public communication (prevention campaigns, targeted information about risk areas, emergency plans requiring communicator involvement, European stress tests, warning systems, and so on) – yet it is far from certain that all the relevant lessons have been learned from these crises when it comes to public communication. As evidence of this, we have only to consider the continued low use of connectivity when issuing warnings and passing on information (not to mention geolocation of nationals … an area in which the Italian Civil Protection Department has been leading the way for some years).

However, we had never addressed the issue of communicating about more general crisis situations of an economic, financial, social or even institutional nature, in other words communicating about THE crisis...
We finally had an opportunity to do so, thanks to an initiative of our Greek colleagues, in Athens in March 2014. The location was of course symbolic: Greece has faced a particularly acute crisis, to the extent that it has become emblematic of the crisis that has affected many other European countries, its shockwaves and solutions and the relationship between national authorities and the supranational bodies involved, such as the European institutions.
No doubt the reason we have waited until this moment to do this is because we needed a degree of hindsight, some tangible signs of recovery and some belief that things would get better, before we could get down to the analysis and the commentary.

Public communication is not to be confused with government policy: at best, it is only one element (albeit a necessary one) of such policy.
The primary role of public communication is to inform, present, explain and promote understanding ... and then to convince or reassure.
However, the crisis is only 'straightforward' in its effects (at least its immediate effects), while its causes (insofar as they are all identifiable) are more complex and are indeed a huge challenge for communicators. Moreover, the measures adopted to deal with the crisis are not always immediately 'readable' or even understandable at first glance (as reflected in the rejection of austerity, the unpopularity of measures and institutions, irrational

behaviour, short-term ineffectiveness and longer-term measures, ideological blurring, interventions by international bodies and imposed measures, etc.).
The crisis is inevitably a time when messages and communications proliferate (from sources including the media, politicians, various pressure and special interest groups, the general public, economic and financial players, the international press, the foreign press and international bodies) and debate intensifies.
It is therefore a time of major tensions, when institutions (in the broad sense) and their ability to tackle the crisis are called into question.
It is also, in a way, an opportunity to take a long hard look at the system and get to grips with some of its characteristics: sudden (and unexpected) vulnerability, loss of confidence on the one hand and of credibility on the other (with the rise of various forms of populism and anti-democratic parties, as well as Euroscepticism), heightened social tensions, increased poverty and a deteriorated standard of living and services (such as public services, including social security), the powerlessness of institutions in certain areas and the questioning of public administration, the primacy of economic over political considerations, the damage done to international reputations and the emergence of 'forgotten players' in roles that are not always welcomed or that are perceived in a negative light ('Europe', national banks, and so on).

Public communicators (and indeed all public players) therefore find themselves in a very difficult position, facing situations of heightened tension as well as, in many cases, big budget cuts, making it hard to carry on with business as usual. This predicament may be exacerbated by a lack of preparation, a failure to establish protocols and roles governed by a professional, ethical or statutory organisational model.

When public and political communication are to play their own role (always a delicate balancing act, especially if there is no model to follow), the temptation will be for the political one to take precedence. There may be no other option but to instill and therefore to convince and reassure. Under such circumstances, since its time frame becomes shorter, communication assumes more than ever a potentially vital strategic importance, between a silent approach (which is part of the process) and agreed sound bites.

However, this does not mean that public communication officers are becoming less important or losing their role – at least, let us hope and trust not.

Meanwhile, we ought to bear in mind our "duty to call things by their name"...

To use an elliptical formula, recent 'tragic events' have darkened the social climate, not to say cast a shadow over our lives.
We have *all* "been Charlie" and we hope many will continue to "be Charlie".

Individual citizens and society as a whole are in shock; public policymaking, including its very foundations (its legitimacy, its 'strength', its values, its institutions, the common basis of our way of life), has been hit in all its dimensions – and public communication has been no exception.
New threats have caused additional worries and a feeling of growing insecurity. A change that has taken place gradually, almost imperceptibly, but which nevertheless plays a significant role in the strategy of terrorist groups, is that they are now resorting to propaganda activities which make effective use of modern communication techniques, maximising their impact and taking advantage of the power of dissemination and persuasion of social networks.
Without losing sight of the effects of a context characterised by social and economic difficulties (and even cultural issues), as well as by geopolitical tensions and conflicts, some analysts actually regard this trend as the mainspring of the influence exerted on the behaviours of those who, in Europe and beyond, slip into radicalism or sympathise with the arguments underpinning it.
In addition to basic security and prevention measures and provisions arising from broader concerns relating to education and social wellbeing, these same analysts point to the need for public communication policies and actions aimed at countering this influence on its own ground. By setting 'They tell you' against 'in reality', juxtaposing propaganda images with images of the (dreadful) reality (and even playing on the contrast between colour and black-and-white images), the TV advertisement which was commissioned by our colleagues from the French Government Information Service (SIG), and which was viewed by many people outside France, illustrates this position and unreservedly embraces it. The very aim of this initiative – which, driven by its initiators' courage and determination, was launched in the space of a few days under particularly difficult circumstances (and which of course was not the only communication initiative we have seen[1]) – was to afford citizens a means of deconstructing propaganda and uncovering its insidious mechanisms. Some may have seen in this an intentional form of 'counter-propaganda'; and perhaps we are here touching upon a phenomenon we have lately observed

1 See the website www.stop-djihadisme.gouv.fr (in French).

(from the viewpoint of the public communicator) and analysed in the Club plenaries and seminars: the debate (or discourse) has been shifting, to some extent, from the policies adopted, planned or required, to a debate on the 'conditions' for these policies to be implemented – and this also applies to the official communication actions carried out or to be put in place in this context.
How can we act effectively and wisely without stigmatising any group (including in the language and images of communication)? How can we fully inform the public without indulging in voyeurism and without giving a propaganda platform to those who are seeking one? How can we simplify things without falling into caricature? How can we make citizens attentive and vigilant without fostering psychosis or encouraging them to inform on each other? How can we regulate the Internet and social networks without undermining fundamental civil liberties? And so the list goes on…

It is both legitimate and indeed absolutely essential to raise all these questions in a democracy, and they are questions that all those confronted by them (particularly politicians, journalists and public communicators) have to tackle and respond to in their activities.
The exercise of this professional and ethical responsibility is not however a simple task when we are aware, as Albert Camus wrote, that *"to misname an object is to add to the evils of this world"*[2]. It is important, however, that the debate (or even meta-communication) on these issues (which can give rise to a sense of urgency) does not paralyse action or confuse our understanding of the social challenges facing us.

« Make waffles not war »[3] ...

The Club of Venice dynamics are increasingly inspired by today's priorities. From Milan to Lesbos, we never stopped drawing inspiration from and exchanging our professional experiences with regard to concrete priorities such as climate change, the world's food supply, fight against radicalism and recruitment, the UK referendum on the EU, mass migration and related humanitarian crises.
Mixed feelings pervaded us when moving from a positive approach when dealing with COP 21 and EXPO 2015's favourable winds to tackling the fight against radicalism and to the very disturbing refugee and migration crisis. This new scenario puts our most fundamental values under the microscope and we are running the risk of seeing a dangerous breach in our countries' unity.

More than ever, public communicators must be closely connected to policy makers , since time is running short and we are facing very urgent priorities. The recent tragic events that have affected us, in particular the migrant crisis and the terrorist acts perpetrated in Paris and Brussels, provide the clear evidence of this unavoidable need. Public communication definitely needs to quickly regain proximity to political communication.
The increasing development of new communication tools such as social media is having a clear impact on the media and journalists approaches. Everyone feels the need to "be present, participate and join the debate", not always in a tangibly interactive scenario. This generate expectations – and illusions – among the audiences and also among the policy makers; who believe that this process can be fully operational with relatively limited financial and human resources. But crisis communication requires adequate planning, monitoring, and surveillance of the information flow to prevent the rise of untrustworthy information sources, misunderstandings and confusion.

Sudden, long-lasting crises have a strong impact in terms of investments, since in those cases communication must be permanent and also focused and tailored to the specific audiences' worries, their needs and their expectations from the public authorities.
After Paris and Brussels, Belgium has been experiencing internal and external turbulences[4] which are testing the country's stability. After the disarray and disorientation, it was time to examine the intrinsic reality (through a commission of enquiry) and to deal with the increasing concerns and economic turbulence affecting public sectors particularly hit by the security breaches (transportation, commerce, tourism, conferences and cultural life, etc.), especially in the Brussels region[5]. This situation has a very negative impact on citizens' confidence in the public authorities – a very big issue in terms of external and internal reputation.

2 « Mal nommer un objet, c'est ajouter au malheur de ce monde ». Albert Camus. Sur une philosophie de l'expression [On the Philosophy of Expression], in Poésie 44. Œuvres complètes, Volume I, La Pléiade, p. 908 (English translation available in A. Camus, Lyrical and Critical Essays, London: Vintage, pp. 228–241).

3 A sentence read in the spontaneous "memorial" built up in "Square de la Bourse" (Brussels) after the tragic events of March 2016..

4 We need to concentrate strictly on our field of action. Of course it is not our intention either to put a curtain of silence over the victims of those horrible events nor to forget about all those who showed great solidarity towards them or are committed to safeguard citizens' life and security..

5 Among the measures taken, are the reinforcement of security levels in public places and transportation, the reinforcement of police services, support to the economy and to single sectors, B-FR and European cooperation...

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During the Belgian Presidency in 2010, Philippe Caroyez was involved in the creation of EuroPCom. He is a member of its Advisory Board.

Communicators have to face the demise of the country's image, which usually takes time to be enhanced but doesn't take too long to be, sometime irreparably, compromised[6]. What is particularly striking, is a double mechanism which, on the one hand, has to face an immediate decline of the political machine (resignations, late decisions, increased bureaucracy, strikes, weakened public services), and on the other hand, shows a sort of "Belgium bashing"[7] owing to the negative connotation in foreign media reports and the consequent change of public opinion trends towards Belgium as a brand, to the advantage of other countries and cities.
But things are moving and a reaction is being noticed. Apart from commemorative events, several image-promoting initiatives are being carried out or planned in different sectors of public life, often fostered by corporate associations and individuals through new initiatives often publicized through the social networks and other web platforms. The mottos "Life continues" and "Living together" are being spread, also using where appropriate a dose of Belgian humour[8].

The Belgian federal[9] authorities are of course informing their citizens on a regular basis of the new security measures, along with the necessary encouragement and reassurance that big efforts are being made to restore the degree of comfort which will enable citizens (both local population and tourists) to feel protected in all the different aspects of their daily lives. Belgium remains the 10th top country in a list drawn up by the Reputation Institute. The Federal government has just decided to implement a set of communication activities in this regard, to be carried out within the country and abroad.

6 As stated by the Head Administrator and the Federation of the Belgian Enterprises (FEB), "confidence is gained drop by drop, but gets lost by litres".

7 Part of the French press and political class have defined Belgium the "active hub of Jihadism". "Politico" and the New York Times define it as "a failed state"..

8 See in particular #proud Belgium; #dinning in Brussels and #Sprout to be Brussels.

9 Belgium is a federal state composed of three communities and three regions.

Crisis communication - outline and general principles

Mike Granatt

Introduction

Crisis is a constant feature of the modern world, and seemingly on the increase. It can be sparked by many causes including political turmoil, natural disaster, technological failure, economic catastrophe and social stresses. The Club of Venice is a unique forum, allowing Europe's most senior communication practitioners to exchange their experience and lessons freely and frankly. This is a brief résumé of the concepts, mechanisms and techniques involved in crisis communication gleaned from our constant discussions. The examples quoted here focus on UK arrangements and guidance, but only because the author is most familiar with them. However, they reflect many similar and equally effective arrangements elsewhere in the EU, and indeed in global institutions such as the World Health Organisation.

It is worth noting that variations between Member States and institutions are usually the result of local factors. These include the historical relationship between the media and government institutions, local conventions, and available resources.

The new problems of the 21st Century

The concepts of "crisis" and "emergency" are often confused. An emergency calls for immediate action to save life, remove danger, or save property. Even so, most emergencies can be planned for, and are routinely handled by the emergency services, the media and governments.

Crisis is quite different. It is about systemic disruption, and so the increasingly complex nature of modern life is a fertile breeding ground for crisis.

By its nature, a major crisis can threaten the company, community, government, or nation affected. It is sequence of moments when matters can turn for better or worse. Risks and options must be assessed without delay; and decisions must be made. If this is not done, the crisis will spread, moving outwards in space and time, changing its nature as it travels.

So why, if we can see all these things, is crisis on the increase? It is not because individual, unpredictable crises have become more probable. It is because the highly connected and increasingly complex nature of the modern world is the perfect breeding ground for improbable and unpredictable events.

In other words, the very nature of modern life has increased the likelihood of crisis. Social science calls it "network society", an economy dependent on many interacting networks. These can be physical networks (such as transport, trade, and energy); electronic networks (such as communication, news, finance, and data); or human networks (organizations, communities, and individuals - all transmitting mood, rumour, and behaviour). Crisis travels through these networks, jumping from one to another, changing and manifesting itself in very different ways, gaining energy on the way.

For example, take a crisis seen several times in recent years – a sudden apparent shortage of road fuel causes queues at filling stations, paralyses daily life, disrupts daily routines, and threatens the economy of the nation. Typically, it starts with unexpected news of a fuel shortage, or possible shortage, perhaps caused by a strike, or the rumour of a strike. Almost immediately, there are queues at the filling stations as people dependent on their cars or other vehicles take action to protect their daily needs. Television news programmes show the queues. Disquiet spreads. The filling stations have strictly limited capacity, and the delivery system is fragile; economically efficient design means it is optimised for normal consumption – it cannot cope with the sudden, huge surge in demand.

Consider how the crisis changes its form, moves, deepens, and propagates, First, it appears as information

spread by word of mouth and through electronic networks. Then it transmutes into mass behaviour – thousands of people make the rational, simultaneous decision to fill their tanks. Then its wavefront moves again, as the surge in demand disrupts the fuel supply chain. It travels outward, gaining energy, as businesses and services and the road system are disrupted. It moves further outward, this time into the future. Confidence is damaged. Trust in the supply chain fails, and the public ignores pleas from authority to stop buying fuel and to let the system rebalance. And as the nation's reputation for stability falters, tourists cancel their holidays, and investors change their plans.

But while all crises are different, their essential nature is the same. They rob us of time, move with disorienting speed, spread in unexpected ways, and cause widespread disruption. Without an effective response, crisis leads to systemic failure, and effective public communication is a vital component of that response.
The next section of this article describes the mechanisms and techniques of crisis communication. Diagrams 1-7 illustrate many of the key principles involved.

Trust and other considerations

Trust is the most valuable weapon in the communicators' armoury. Universally, factors for trust include:

- Timeliness, openness, consistency, and readiness to listen
- The use of trusted sources to deliver messages.

The public's trusted sources include the news media (TV, radio, some newspapers), the emergency services, independent experts, familiar institutions, family doctors, friends, family and personal experience.

It is also universal that unusual messages are not immediately believed. Even if the source is trusted, people seek confirmation from other sources. It is therefore essential that crisis messages are delivered and confirmed by many sources, which requires a strong co-ordination mechanism and excellent internal communication.

Furthermore people will only tend to believe a message if the source and delivery channel are trusted, and the tone of voice is appropriate. It is important to engage the mainstream media in emergency planning and arrangements because they are often the public's most important trusted sources, and the most effective channels available for transmitting government information and advice.

Since 1996, the UK has had public information and warning partnerships which bring together government officials, emergency services, and the news media. These media emergency forums meet regularly to discuss arrangements which ensure a smooth flow of advice and guidance for the public in a crisis, while not interfering with the media's freedom to report the news.

Operationally, the UK government maintains a central news co-ordination centre (NCC) which is initiated during any major crisis, civil or terrorist related. It has a very small permanent staff, which is strengthened by press officers from across government whenever necessary. It becomes the focus for coordinated communication and for the creation, assessment and adjustment of the communication strategy. It reports directly to the government's ministerial crisis management committee, known as COBR, and the director of the NCC attends COBR with other senior officials.

Essential tools for analysing communication needs and formulating plans are the universal factors which arouse fear in the public – the so-called "fear factors" - and those which trigger media stories. (They are shown in the accompanying diagrams.)

All too often, the word panic is used to describe public reaction to a crisis. In fact, all research shows that panic among the public in a crisis is both rare and preventable. A prime method of sustaining public calm and confidence in the face of risk and danger is risk communication. Its key rules are well proven:

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1. Beat rumours: communicate early, engage frequently
2. Be truthful, candid, open, transparent. Develop realistic expectations. Explain that information may change.
3. Acknowledge dangers. Frame issues with context, examples and analogies.
4. Build public dialogue; listen well, treat people's fears seriously and answer their questions.
5. Co-ordinate authoritative voices. They must use the same message with the same tone of voice.
6. Demonstrate action and progress; give the media access to the evidence.
7. Give advice and information to help people help themselves.

The following considerations should guide the use of both the mainstream and social media:

- Develop public information and warning partnerships; hold regular forums.
- Brief media in advance on incidents handling and involve them in exercises and planning
- Provide priority contact telephone lines
- Provide expert commentators
- Establish authoritative and useful voices in the social media space before any incident including a forum on Facebook and familiar tags on Twitter as well as a secure, resilient website with prepared information and advice pages.

Most breaking news stories now start with reports from citizen journalists – members of the public who broadcast news via social media using their mobile phones. Indeed, about a third of young people never use mainstream media for their news – a lesson for the future of all communication, not just crises.
Finally, a few final points to remember:

- It was once said that "A lie will go round the world while the truth is pulling its boots on" and that was before e-mail.
- Trust and credibility are difficult to grow and very easy to destroy.
- Beware the credibility gap - treat people as adults, and remember that panic is rare and preventable.
- The learning cycle and effective leadership are critical in crisis management

And never forget that silence is toxic. If we do not engage, we cannot influence.


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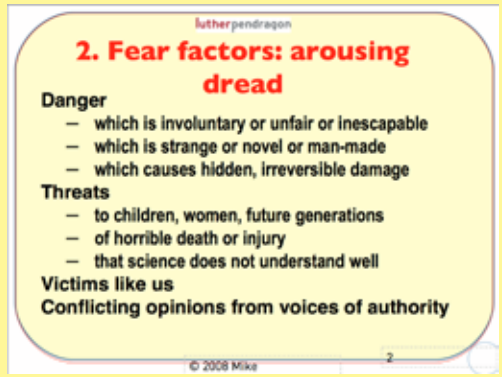
1. Messages: the trust hierarchy
Source
Who said this?
Channel
How did it reach me?
Tone
How does it sound?
Content
What does it say?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2. Fear factors: arousing dread
Danger
– which is involuntary or unfair or inescapable
– which is strange or novel or man-made
– which causes hidden, irreversible damage
Threats
– to children, women, future generations
– of horrible death or injury
– that science does not understand well
Victims like us
Conflicting opinions from voices of authority
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3. Media triggers: what makes news
Blame: who is guilty?
Secrets, cover-ups & lies
Images: vivid and dramatic
Human interest: heroes, villains and victims, particularly if they seem familiar
Connections with famous people or issues
Conflict between people, nations, ideas, cultures
Signal value: "Does this mean we could be next?"
Big numbers: of victims, or money, or both
Sex and crime
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4. Risk communication guidance
Preparation
1. Invest in public and internal trust every day
After disaster strikes
2. Beat rumours: communicate early, engage frequently
3. Be truthful, candid, open, transparent. Develop realistic expectations. Explain that information may change
4. Acknowledge dangers. Frame issues with context, examples, and analogies
5. Build public dialogue; listen well, treat people's fears seriously, and answer their questions
6. Co-ordinate all authoritative voices: they must use identical messages and the same tone, at the same time
7. Demonstrate action and progress through media access
8. Give advice and information to help people help themselves
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5. Learning & decision cycle
Monitor media and moods
Collate information
Assess progress and risks
Prepare options
Prepare delivery
OBSERVE
ORIENT
ACT
DECIDE
Communicate decisions and deliver actions
Review assessments
Decide actions


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6. Using mainstream media
Preparation
Develop public information and warning partnerships; hold regular forums
Brief media in advance on how incidents handling
Involve media in exercises and planning
Delivery
Provide priority contact telephone lines
Provide expert commentators
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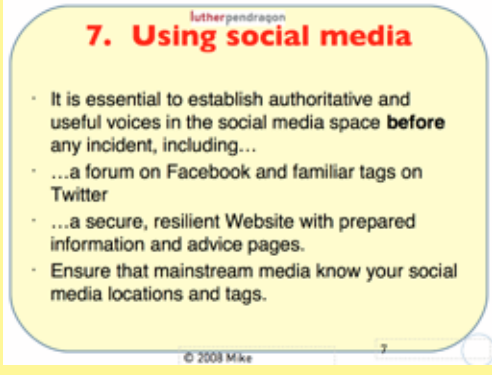
lutherpendragon
7. Using social media
It is essential to establish authoritative and useful voices in the social media space before any incident, including…
…a forum on Facebook and familiar tags on Twitter
…a secure, resilient Website with prepared information and advice pages.
Ensure that mainstream media know your social media locations and tags.
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Crisis communication work process. Achieving an even more professional communication discipline[1]

Hugo Marynissen, Stijn Pieters, Peter Mertens, Benoît Ramacker & Bert Brugghemans

This article describes a clear and specific vision of the work process that needs to be implemented in order to communicate quickly and effectively during crisis situations. It is a blueprint, which needs to be applied both within the communication discipline and by the communicators of other (government) enterprises and organisations. The crisis communication work process (CCWP) is founded on many years of observation and evaluation of real and simulated crisis interventions and on numerous scientific insights resulting from recent empirical research.
The authors hope that this article will inject even greater professionalism into crisis communication.

The CCWP revolves around four challenges which crisis communication teams must overcome successfully in order to merit and maintain their key position within crisis management:

- To merit and claim a mandate;
- To move away from a 'gut feeling' approach and provide strategic advice based on enriched information;
- Crisis communication is only effective if it interfaces with the mental thinking patterns adopted by those with whom one communicates;
- Crisis communication is a separate discipline with various specialisations.

Before

The CCWP initially considers two dominant criteria during a crisis situation: on the one hand that which, for simplicity's sake, we refer to as the 'reality', i.e. the crisis as such – the events taking place in the field that crisis management is focusing on, and on the other hand the 'perception of this reality', how the crisis is progressing from the perspective of the population (victims, those affected directly and indirectly, the area in question, stakeholders, the press, the man/woman in the street, etc.). Crisis communication works within this area of interaction; between perception and reality, between appreciation and crisis management. Moreover, crisis communication is associated with what we refer to as the information vacuum (Marynissen, Pieters, Van Dorpe, van het Erve & Vergeer, 2010).

A typical phenomenon at the start of any crisis is that there is both a lack of necessary information required to fully and clearly communicate and an extremely high demand for information from the press and people directly and indirectly affected by the crisis. This discrepancy between supply and demand, or information vacuum, has only increased in recent years. In order to reconcile these two opposing states (i.e. perception versus reality, and no information versus an increasing demand for information) a crisis communication work process (CCWP) was developed to facilitate a structured, organised approach and rapid, effective response. First and foremost this work process aims to acquire a clear insight into the perceptions that abound in the 'outside world'. These perceptions are then analysed and registered in line with the specific communication requirements of the population, those affected and other stakeholders. This information is used to formulate strategic advice in terms of the communication strategy that needs to be adopted. The main points of this advice are subsequently submitted to the authorised decision makers (Pieters & Eeckman, 2015). Once approved the strategy is converted into communication activities, which are assessed once again and their impact analysed. The cyclical process of advice formulation, implementation and follow-up then starts again.

1 This is the translation of the bookchaper: Marynissen, H., Pieters, S., Mertens, P., Ramacker, B., Brugghemans, B. (2015). Het Werkproces Crisiscommunicatie. Naar een verdere professionalisering van de communicatiediscipline. In: Devroe et al. (Eds.) Zicht op first responders. Handboek bij het beheer van evenementen en noodsituaties in Nederland en België. Maklu: Antwerpen – Apeldoorn (pp. 267-288)..

Crisis communication challenges

Communication in general is often considered a necessary, but not particularly difficult, challenge within an organisation. After all, isn't it something we can all do? Crisis communication is approached in a similar fashion. It is not always considered a fully fledged discipline and will still have to overcome several specific challenges in order to be taken seriously. These often genuine concerns relating to operational issues are listed below:

A mandate is not merely given, you have to claim and earn it

All too often communication representatives are people with a high degree of empathy (Breakwell, 2007). They are exceptionally good at identifying with other people's feelings and lives and consequently know how to adopt the right tone of voice when formulating messages (Shockley-Zalabak, 2009). However, this empathic approach also works to their disadvantage. As a result they tend to formulate more questions than answers within a crisis team and get too absorbed in the rational dynamics within the team. This means that instead of taking the initiative they meekly wait until they are allocated a mandate or specific task (write a press release, organise a press briefing, etc.). Typical for a policy team is that it operates as a so-called high performance team (White, 2009), which consists of members with a very distinct experience and knowledge profile, who are focused on a specific common objective. When it comes to crisis management this common objective obviously focuses on physical, local operations in the field. If a team member is not totally committed to the common purpose, they may not be given a mandate or their mandate may be removed. This is exactly where problems involving communication representatives frequently occur; they are often not perceived as high performing by members of the policy team because of the idea that communication is not an operational discipline that 'saves lives' or that communication advisors are not familiar enough with the concept of crisis management. Within this context communication tends to be viewed as an optional extra rather than a fifth discipline[2] , which all too often results in crisis communication being sidetracked.

Ignoring gut feelings

Further to the above we have also noted that communication advisors often rely on gut feelings. Their advice as to whether or not to communicate, using specific messages and/or resources, is usually based on experience and emphatic ability. And that is exactly where the problem lies. Within a high performance policy team decisions are made on the basis of data and verified information, not on the strength of intuition. Obviously decision making processes always involve a degree of experience/expertise (Brugghemans & Marynissen, 2013), in which case we would call it informed decision making. Quite apart from the fact that advice based on gut feeling can in some cases be very valuable, we need to move away from this purely emotional approach. A communication advisor who wants to maintain a professional approach, contribute dynamically to a high performance team and claim a mandate, first needs to collate, analyse and submit data in a clear format in order to provide persuasive proof of a concrete strategy (which is referred to as 'enriched information' (Brugghemans, Milis & Van de Walle, 2013)). Ultimately they must be able to take effective action to achieve the desired result employing specific communication tactics. Efficient communication is achieved by transmitting enriched information from the crisis communication team to the policy team, which results in a validated communication strategy, which in turn is fed back from the policy team to the crisis communication team.

People are not "receiving" messages

Communication professionals will have studied a number of communication models during their training. They always involve a sender, a receiver, a message, a medium, potential misinterpretation of the message and a feedback loop in communication. However, recent research in communication sciences has shown that these

2 Relief organisations in Belgium refer to 'information given to the population' – i.e. crisis communication – as 'Discipline 5' or 'D5'..

communication models are 'wishful thinking' (Van Woerkum, 2011) and that messages as such will not encourage alternative behaviour or thinking (Marynissen, 2013). First and foremost communication must interface with the mental perceptions of the crisis, and the way in which it is handled, amongst those directly affected by the crisis, the press or the population (Johnson-Laird, 1983). Moreover, the communication team must be aware that in times of crisis 'everyone' communicates, often in an over-simplified and sweeping manner. That is when it is vitally important for a government authority or other organisation to claim a position of trust by tapping into the prevailing mental thinking processes and thus becoming a reliable source of information. It is crucial, therefore, for a crisis communication representative to know which dynamics are developing (in the field, at policy level, amongst stakeholders and the population), how to properly anticipate and react to them, and what the strategic consequences are.

Crisis communication is more than 'communication plus'

Crisis communication is a separate discipline encompassing much more than what is involved in day to day government, business or marketing communications. Crisis communicators not only need to have a clear insight into the various work processes that are presenting themselves (Marynissen, Pieters & Van Achte, 2014) (in terms of public support services, coordination and (business) processes), they also need to be able to distance themselves emotionally from the events that are unfolding. A crisis communication representative must also be able to quickly and effectively process information and know how to convert it into strategic advice in line with operational support and strategic policy choices, all within the turbulent, rapidly changing context that is typical of a crisis. At the same time the operation of the communication team needs to be organised, i.e. tasks distributed and monitored, information numbers activated, etc. at a time when the demand for information from social media, the press and those affected by the crisis is most pressing. Looking at this list of challenges it may well seem that a person capable of taking charge of crisis communication is a rare bird indeed, someone every organisation is looking for. Someone who has the necessary skills with respect to business processes, social developments, taking command, showing empathy and (we almost forgot) communication strategies. Indeed experience has taught us that such people are hard to find. They need to be trained. Crisis communication is consequently not a task for one individual, it is a task package for an entire team.

Social context

The environment in which we operate has moved on and changed dramatically over the past decade. Civilians have become more active and more assertive, a receiving as well as a contributing party, not only as a result of the onset of social media, but also because of the shift in public relationships. You could even argue that social media took off because of the sociological developments that have occurred amongst the population in recent years. In the past an organisation would decide whether or not it was faced with a crisis situation, which entailed safeguarding its reputation, managing the media, minimising the extent of the crisis and issuing press releases. Those days have gone! Nowadays it is the civilian rather than the organisation who decides whether there is a crisis (Marynissen et al., 2010). It is the perception of a crisis that determines the communication method, which no longer focuses on the key message but rather on the key questions, which are mainly raised by those affected.

If the civilian's (external) perception of the crisis is the same as that of the policy team (internal), there will be few problems. A typical example is the shooting incident in the supermarket in Alphen aan den Rijn (the Netherlands) on 9 April 2011 (NOS, 2011). It was clear from the outset that several victims had been affected by this incident. Apart from looking after those directly affected and their nearest and dearest, crisis communication is a relatively straightforward task at that point in time; no one except for the crazed gunman is guilty, no one needs to be convinced and there is no need to change mental perceptions. However, if there is a significant difference between the perceptions of the population and those of the crisis organisation, crisis communication

has a critical role to play (Van het Erve, 2014). This discrepancy can be two-fold.

In the first scenario: let us assume that the crisis team does not consider the situation serious, but the press and the population consider it an extremely serious incident. In that case there is a greater risk of the communication method not tying in with the perception amongst the population and the media. Again we refer to the shooting incident in Alphen aan den Rijn in 2011. The Accident & Emergency department in the local hospital initially took in six wounded victims of the gunman and consequently did not consider it a serious situation as they have to deal with three times that many injured people on an average Saturday night. So it was business as usual and there was no need to invoke emergency or crisis procedures. Nevertheless, the entire press corps, led by CNN, was stationed at the entrance to the hospital. And they had questions, more questions than the hospital normally deals with on an average Saturday night.

A second possible discrepancy relates to a situation which the crisis team considers extremely serious, but the population and/or the press are not worried about the incident. A typical example is the subsidence on Friday 5 June 2013 in the port of Antwerp, near Total Antwerp Olefins, which is located alongside the Antwerp Total Refinery (De Standaard, 2013). Both the people on site and the policy team were all too aware of the potential huge risks involved. If one of the subterranean pipelines had burst the resulting calamity would have been disastrous. But no one in the 'outside world' appeared to be too concerned about this potential hazard. Both the traditional press and social media remained exceptionally quiet. In situations such as these the crisis communication team has to alert the population without causing undue anxiety, and issue appropriate instructions (e.g. to stay away from the site on Scheldelaan).

Finally, a third possible difference in perception is a situation in which both the crisis team and the outside world consider the event a crisis, but for totally different reasons. Again both have a different perception of the same event and it is up to the crisis communication team to tune in to the perception of the outside world.

The following four types of crisis situations all have one thing in common in terms of communication: the crisis team is aware of both perspectives and starts by listening, interpreting and anticipating.

The specific sociological developments that have occurred in recent years have made it even more important for communicators to listen to questions and concerns prior to rolling out a communication strategy (Pieters & Eeckman, 2015). This way crisis communication will be more to the point, by making connections with the perceptions and emotions of those affected.

Some of the questions crisis communication teams need to address include:
- Who will bring this discrepancy to the fore?
- How do you measure it?
- What value should be attached to perceptions and emotions?
- How can you quickly and effectively establish a position in the apparent chaos of exchanges and information surrounding a crisis situation?
- What should you do in order to ultimately be considered a source of official, accurate and relevant information?

These are justified questions to which the crisis communication work process should provide answers.

Crisis communication work process

Crisis communication is set against two dynamic backgrounds: the perception in the 'outside world' on the one hand and the reality of the developing crisis within the crisis team on the other hand.

The CCWP as illustrated, clearly shows how communication can link the two together.

Analysis of the external perception

The CCWP commences with awareness, by analysing the perceptions and concerns present amongst civilians and those affected by a crisis. This external perception analysis aims to convert data into strategically relevant, enriched information (Brugghemans et al., 2013), which can then be processed into useful tools for strategic advice (Van Achte, 2014) to policy makers. The analysis can be split into three consecutive stages:

1. Collation of basic data,
2. Extraction of strategically relevant data,
3. Interpretation of this strategically relevant data, which produces enriched information for strategic consultation in the policy team.

Various types of enriched information pertaining to the crisis (text, audio, video, photos, conversations etc.) need to be captured and classified on the basis of three fundamental themes: information, activities and attitudes (Peters et al., 1997). The method used in this process is referred to as 'IBS' (Vergeer, 2014), an acronym for:

- Information: What do people already know about the crisis and what else do they want to know? Which information requests have not, or not yet, been properly addressed? On which subjects does the crisis team need to provide more, or possibly less, information?
- Behaviour: How do both those involved and those affected handle the situation? What behaviour amongst those affected deviates from what is expected or instructed, and why?
- Sense-making: What kind of emotions does this crisis invoke? How serious is the perception of the events? How are the imposed measures perceived?

The following incident clearly illustrates this analysis technique and its significance. In March 2014, during the morning rush hour, a shell dating back to the First World War was found in an empty apartment building in the centre of Antwerp. Because DOVO, the army bomb disposal team, had to be called in to render it safe and remove it, more than 150 residential properties (apartments and houses) had to be evacuated. The busy thoroughfare near the apartment building also had to be closed to all traffic for a while. Social and traditional media were awash with rumours and questions. How does a bomb end up in an apartment at the heart of Antwerp? Was it malicious intent? What about public transport? Are the buses still running or being diverted? How do I get to work? To school? To my children's nursery? And why does it have to take so long? Within fifteen minutes two analysts had examined more than 1,000 messages on the basis of the IBS principle. Photographs of local residents and online press releases were also collected and practical recommendations concerning communication were issued. They were relatively simple (i.e. explain what the shell was doing there and how it was discovered, advise everyone to avoid the area, refer to the most up to date online information issued by the bus company, and make it clear the shell has been safely removed and the danger has passed) but based on the concerns circulating at that time.

Strategy and advice

The perception of those affected is used as a basis for the strategic advice concerning crisis communication that can be coordinated with the policy team. Using the results of an in-depth data analysis (i.e. not purely relying on gut feeling!), and the operational information available within the crisis team, the difference between perception and reality can then be offset.

Once again the IBS model is used to formulate this strategic advice (Vergeer, 2014):

- Information: Which information (operational, individual impact, etc.) is needed to specifically inform those directly and indirectly affected? How can this information be distributed most effectively?
- Behaviour: Which advice or instructions concerning what action to take do those affected require in order to prevent further calamities and return their personal situation back to normal? Which actions are now handled by the emergency services and authorities? How will all this be presented?

- Sense-making: How can understanding and compassion be conveyed, proactively and in terms of specific messages? How and by whom will this be conveyed?

Approach and development

The next task involves implementing these communication activities. This is handled by various specific disciplines within the crisis communication team, including spokespeople, editors, telephone operators, web care specialists, etc. In 2007 the Belgian Crisis Centre of the Federal Public Service for Home Affairs had already identified 25 tasks and five coordinating disciplines for crisis communication (Ramacker & Mertens, 2007). The crisis communication work process is still based on the main points of this crisis communication guideline, but translates them into a workable process with four disciplines, executed by five roles (see Teamwork, role and task distribution).

Providing these activities are implemented correctly they will have a positive impact on the perceptions of civilians affected in the 'outside world'. This effect is then identified as a positive development in a subsequent external perception analysis, which is used to update strategic recommendations. This positive effect can then be enhanced further and/or the focus can shift to newly identified issues.

The following example illustrates a case involving a Belgian hospital appearing in the press because of a very unfortunate incident. Several months after having undergone an operation a patient suddenly started to suffer serious stomach complaints. An examination established that two pairs of scissors had been left behind in his abdomen. They had been 'forgotten' after the operation. The patient in question demanded substantial compensation and contacted the press to add momentum to his claim. No need to second guess the results. The hospital immediately came under attack and various stories emerged concerning former alleged mistakes in the surgical wing (SW). The press cited a report by the Vlaamse Zorginspectie (VZI – Flemish Care Inspection), which also questioned the quality policy in the hospital's SW. The press also knew that VZI was at that time in the process of screening the hospital. Nothing unusual in itself, were it not that these types of screenings only take place every five years and this particular hospital was being re-visited after two years. It was this fact in particular that threatened to tip public opinion about the quality of the care in this hospital to 'questionable'. However, the hospital had successfully analysed any questions and concerns amongst patients and other people affected and had formulated a clear and transparent communication strategy on the basis thereof. This strategy was then implemented across the board. The General Manager invited the press and provided full access to the VZI report, which was published in its entirety on the hospital website. Patients were approached individually and their questions answered. An overview of the most frequently asked questions was also published on the website with an appropriate response. As a result rumours and ambiguities suddenly faded away, including the misunderstanding that there was a link between this incident and the new screening process. The introduction of transparency and the right resources led to a positive outcome.

Coordination and organisation

And finally, this crisis communication work process also incorporates a coordinating role, which primarily involves setting up and mobilising the team. This coordinator also has to interface with other communicators involved in the crisis (e.g. from other organisations or services), organise the various components of the work process (analysis, strategic advice and implementation) and task distribution, and manage, motivate and monitor the crisis communication team.

The operations of the crisis communication team managed by the coordinator, which are based on the so-called S.A.D. principle (a consultation system also applied by the policy team and in the field, making it easy to interface), result in the formulation of strategic advice.

- See phase: listing the perceptions circulating amongst those affected. Team members who, as part of their task, are in contact with the 'outside world' gather their findings. The results, the perception, is compared

with the reality and the current operational vision and actions as defined by the policy team.

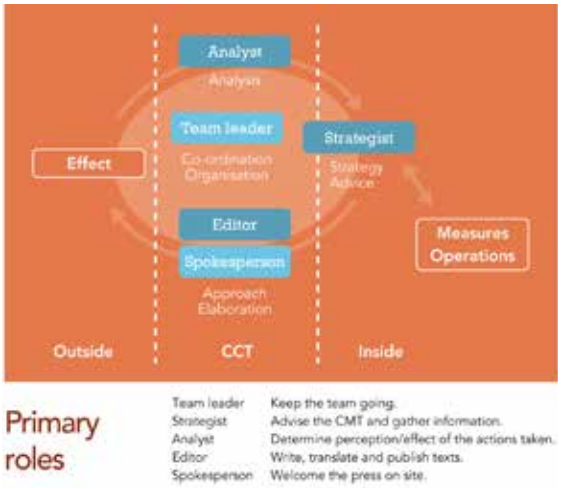
- Appreciate phase: defining the available options and resources, identifying and including missing information in order to balance the two aspects (perception and reality),
- Decide phase: formulating strategic advice. Establishing the relevant key criteria and, upon approval by the policy team, implementing them in detail in communication campaigns.

Team work, role and task distribution

Crisis communication is not a task for a single individual; it requires continual cooperation between the various members of a team. In order to manage crisis communication successfully team members do not necessarily have to gather in the same location. A decentralised approach is perfectly feasible, particularly during the initial hours.

A standard crisis communication team incorporates five specifically defined roles:

- Analyst: produces an analysis of perceptions circulating amongst those affected and formulates preliminary advice to initiate the communication strategy.
- Strategist: mainly operates as part of the policy team. However, together with other members of the communication team, determines the eventual strategic advice concerning the targeted communication method. The strategist then coordinates this strategy with the head of the policy team. He/she also continually shares the most recent operational update on other support disciplines from the policy team to the communication team, in order to be able to respond to identified and expected questions with relevant operational information.



- Team leader: coordinates and manages the communication team, works in close cooperation with the strategist, organises internal and external consultation opportunities and ensures that the communication strategy is implemented.
- Editor: person in charge of written output based on the previously defined communication strategy.
- Spokesperson/Press contact: person in charge of oral output based on the previously defined communication strategy.

A crisis demands flexibility and a healthy dose of improvisation when implementing procedures and setting up crisis teams (Borodzicz, 2005). In the event of a highly complex crisis situation, which generates a lot of interest, a crisis communication team consisting of five members is no longer sufficient. In such cases it is often necessary to issue multilingual (press) releases, have an additional spokesperson in the field, use a team of analysts or a call centre, etc. When this happens the Analysis and Approach/implementation functions require additional personnel, with a coordinator for each function. In that case we refer to primary and support roles and only the primary roles attend crisis communication (S.A.D.) consultations.

Meeting process

To ensure that that such a team operates effectively[3] a rigid time schedule must be maintained, keeping a sound balance between consultation and task implementation. It is an acknowledged problem in both crisis communication and crisis management teams that the speed at which new information or developments present themselves, can force a team to remain in consultation mode, virtually preventing it from taking effective action. There is also a risk that both teams, communication and policy, start to move in different directions or are simply no longer coordinated. In order to prevent this happening the communication team employs a so-called meeting process.

This meeting process is split into two phases (Pieters et al., 2014):

1. A Consultation phase, with scope for collective consultation between all primary roles on the basis of the S.A.D. principle;
2. An Individual phase, with scope for the individual implementation and monitoring of tasks and preparation of the next consultation.

This meeting process must be observed (a key requirement) by all teams involved in the management of the crisis (the policy team, communication team and teams in the field). They must also stick to a rigid work schedule, which monitors how specific agreements are effectively translated into actions that, in terms of crisis communication, have an impact on the perceptions and concerns circulating amongst those affected.

As such crisis communication is often a good indicator of the organisational approach. Crisis communication cannot solve underlying shortcomings in procedures and work processes. Because of changes in society, with a strong emphasis on the speed at which information is conveyed, this can clash with longstanding work methods and visions.

Link with policy team

Crisis communication and crisis management are two physically separate processes, despite the fact that they continually keep pace and coordinate with one another. This could best be compared to other relief disciplines, which have specific operations to undertake during an intervention, but which continually coordinate at both an operational tactical (in the field) and coordinating strategic level (in the policy team).

With crisis communication it is important that enriched information is sent to the policy team via an analyst and communication strategist, and that a communication strategy is validated on the basis thereof, which is fed back to the communication team for implementation. This gives the policy team an insight into the perception 'outside' and the ongoing efforts of the crisis communication team to balance this perception. The communication strategist plays a key role in this process, with a physical presence in the policy team.

In this respect it is also important to note that policy makers should take account of the fact that the crisis management team cannot be disbanded before the crisis communication team. Alongside psychosocial support, crisis communication remains crucial (and sometimes becomes even more important) when the crisis management process has come to an end. Without an active crisis management team, which where necessary continues operating on a smaller scale, the strategist can no longer access the necessary operational information in a structured manner. There is a real risk that crisis communication is delayed as a result, in which case the crisis communication team and consequently crisis communication can potentially slow down or even come to a halt.

3 We sometimes refer to it as "keeping a team on the move", because the CCWP as illustrated constantly rotates with one function following on from another.

In order to facilitate effective communication the strategist must have appropriate qualifications in what is called communication ambiguity (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2007). This implies that communication can create a highly diverse information flow, which often leads to different interpretations of the same phenomenon. The communication team must be aware of, and outline, this ambiguity and formulate precise comments and advice. A typical example of communication ambiguity relates to the speculation at the end of 2014 concerning a possible electricity shortage in Belgium as a result of the decommissioning of several nuclear reactors, with the associated risk of a so-called blackout. The rumour mill in both traditional and social media speculated on the causes (information), possible consequences (behaviour) and potential remedies (behaviour). This type of speculation covers a wide spectrum ranging from real concern to scaremongering and silly jokes (sense-making), which points to major differences in interpretation. That is where communication has to distinguish between major and minor issues in these interpretations, outline the precise relationship between speculation and perception and formulate an appropriate strategy.

Conclusion

The fact that the communication discipline must develop and advance is not just a legal obligation; providing those affected by a crisis with information and advice as quickly, effectively and professionally as possible is also a social responsibility. The proposed crisis communication work process offers both policy makers and communication professionals the right framework and methodology to execute this task accordingly. Even though major efforts have been made in recent years by both the Belgische Algemene Directie Crisiscentrum (ADCC - Belgian General Management Crisis Centre) and the NCC (Netherlands Crisis Centre), and many Dutch Regional Security areas, to significantly improve the operations of crisis communication teams on the basis of this work process, there is still ample scope for further advancement. If we really want to develop crisis communication as a true cornerstone of crisis management, all crisis communication professionals, with support from the various policy making levels, need to join forces. The foundations have been laid. What is needed now is continued effort to instil greater professionalism into the crisis communication discipline.

BENOÎT RAMACKER

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Since January 2014 he coordinates Team 5, a network of communication people responsible for supporting Belgian authorities in communicating during major emergency situations.

Owing to his sound expertise (crisis Management and Communications, Corporate and Strategic Communications, Media Relations, Public Relations, Social Media and Change Management), Benoît has been involved in major crisis management events occurred within and beyond his country (nuclear, flood, transport, pandemic, pipelines, terrorism, etc.).

He is the author of several publications on Risk&Crisis Communication.

As co-author, Benoît is the reference contact point for this article.

The migration and refugee crisis: a serious challenge for communicators

Erik den Hoedt, Claus Hörr & Vincenzo Le Voci

The Club of Venice recent contribution
Brussels, 9 December 2015 / Lesbos, 9 April 2016

The Club of Venice started to tackle the migration file at its plenary in Rome in November 2014, welcoming an excellent presentation from the communication staff from the Italian Ministry of Home Affairs and several contributions from the countries most directly exposed to the waves of migrants. At that stage, the Mediterranean area was particularly affected by the phenomenon. Subsequently, the plenary meeting held in October 2015 in Milan provided an insight into the dramatic evolution of this issue. (See a separate article in this issue of Convergences)

Since then, the problem has increasingly taken a much wider dimension. It affects every country in Europe and every institution owing to its strong connections and burden - and responsibility-sharing implications. Migration must always be closely considered and associated with asylum, relocation, health, education and human rights. Large-scale migration is indeed considered a crucial crisis management test by all communicators. The Club recently organized two events to discuss this issue. The former was a joint seminar held in Brussels on 9 December 2015, co-organised with the Council Working Party on Information (WPI) and the latter was the seminar organised in Lesbos on 9 April 2016 in close collaboration with the General Secretariat for Media and Communication of the Hellenic Government.
Let's start with the most recent one.

Lesbos seminar

It was a very intense and moving experience for all of us, as communicators and as human beings.
As indicated in our introductory address, we witnessed a human tragedy and an emergency which we had previously only seen on TV or on a web screen in the comfort of our own homes or offices. The tragedy of people fleeing their houses and home-land, leaving behind almost all material possessions for the hope of a better life. People like us, with hearts and minds and the over-riding aim to protect their loved ones. Just like us. But unlike us, many of them don't have a government or infrastructure that can or at least tries to protect them.
In every tragedy there are people who take advantage of the situation, and this one is no exception. Smugglers, extortionists, and swindlers try to profit from the human misery to make a quick buck. But there are always more people around who want to help. In Lesbos we spoke with some of the key players who deserve our deepest respect. Unfortunately, they cannot solve the problems which lie beneath the tragedy.

The Club members and the other colleagues from other organisations who joined the seminar were there together in our role as professional communicators. We have different backgrounds, different cultures, different countries and institutions. But we have one common goal: effective communication.

Many of us met in Brussels last December in the joint meeting of the Club of Venice and the Council's Working Party on Information. It was the first time that we discussed the communication aspects of the refugee and migration crisis. It was fruitful, but we knew it was only the beginning. That we had to continue our conversation. In the Lesbos round table organised right after the explanatory tour with the cost guard and the overwhelming and intense visit to the Moria and Kara Tepe camps, we had to face two main challenges:

- The first was "How can we enhance the cooperation between EU institutions and Member States". This aspect deals with policy coherence, information strategy and information reliability;
- The second aspect was "How can we improve the outreach of governments' and institutions' communicators to civil society and citizens".

We are most grateful to all participants who honoured this challenge and engaged altogether in very constructive discussions, putting all their professionalism at the service of an extremely important cause.

Our debate in Lesbos enabled to identify a number of key avenues of thought which will inspire our future steps as communicators to help in this regard:

- Consider the refugee and migration crisis as a global issue that requires global solutions and cannot be solved on a "national responsibility" basis.
- Consider that this crisis cannot be managed without proper communication and information mechanisms.
- Keep the MS communicators informed on a regular basis of the progress made in the implementation of the EU information strategy set up according to the European Council conclusions of 9 November 2015, and following the EU-Turkey agreement of 19 March 2016.
- Urgently extend access, and the distribution of reliable statistics to all competent authorities in the Member States (operating under the PM umbrella, MFA and Ministry of Internal Affairs and Justice). Ensure and extend awareness of who the key contact points in the specific areas are.
- Elaborate a roster of reliable information sources (web portals, statistical docs., weekly/monthly reports, etc.) which government communicators could use to become acquainted with concrete and realistic figures, to inform/advise their political authorities and speak with their audiences.
- Draw due attention to preventing possible data misinterpretation by public audiences.
- Pursue discussion of the communication aspects in both formal (Council WPI) and informal (Club of Venice) frameworks, with a view to further discussion in the future Club plenaries and joint seminars, as deemed appropriate.

Brussels seminar on 9.12.2015

The main starting point to inspire discussion in the joint seminar was the implementation of the conclusions adopted by the Justice and Home Affairs Council on 9 November 2015. Among others points, this Council stressed, the urgent need for a common information strategy and for the reinforcement of the information sharing mechanisms within the EU Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR). (Covered by the Club in Vienna last summer).

The debate was organised in three panels: 1) National, including local audiences; 2) Audiences in countries of origin and transit; 3) European approach.

Participants recognized that the phenomenon was going to have heavy consequences on the economic and social life of Europe and that communicators, like politicians, have a huge task. The urgency is very present, since the refugee and migrants crisis has a strong impact on governments' and institutions' agendas.

Focus was given to a number of key issues:

- Explaining rules and communicating measures of internal protection, including resettlement, relocations and return operations;
- Use counter-narratives as appropriate;
- Inform about the prosecution of criminals and smugglers;
- Act quickly, sharing relevant information on the Member States' and institutions' communication approach and exchange views on the most viable models to facilitate the cooperation process.
- Slovenia and the Netherlands presented their respective national communication models which enabled them to lead an inter-ministerial coordination and assure strategic planning, implementation and harmonisation of communication activities in the field. They also highlighted their close collaboration with humanitarian organisations and NGOs and the importance to mobilize opinion leaders in most affected local communities.

Moreover, they referred to the need to be fully engaged with the social networks and have disseminated information material in all public spaces; visit local communities and meet with local authorities, to identify adequate speakers to deal with domestic and foreign media, to prevent misperceptions and prejudices, to organize media visits.

Reference was made to a German Task Force's awareness raising campaign in Afghanistan, which worked with local testimonials to explain why the natives of that country should refrain from leaving it. The campaign was organised in cooperation with Deutsche Welle (international public broadcaster) and had excellent results (more than 500.000 reactions per Facebook post in Afghanistan). Germany also highlighted the importance to collaborate with NGOs and humanitarian organisations, who are the best placed to operate on the ground. It was also underlined that it is crucial to build reliable information hubs accessible to all audiences and increase communication through local media, social media and diaspora testimonials (families of migrants already well settled and integrated in the EU).

The Commission referred to the task assigned to it by the JAI Council of 9 November, to *"define, as a matter of urgency, a common information strategy addressed to asylum seekers, migrants, smugglers and traffickers aiming at (1) discouraging migrants to embark on perilous journey and to have recourse to smugglers, (2) explaining how EU rules on the management of external borders and international protection operate, including resettlement, relocation and return, (3) disseminating counter-narratives to the ones being used by the traffickers and smugglers of migrants, (4) informing about criminal prosecutions against traffickers and smugglers and (5) informing about return operations.*

Accordingly, the three core elements of the information strategy defined by the Commission can be summarised as follows:

- An assessment phase implemented by an external contractor, to analyse the main communication channels (with special focus on social media), map transit and asylum trends and identify those countries where the strategy can have a real added value.
- A content-production phase which would take due account of multilingualism and will build on already existing material (to avoid duplications), with messages to be defined jointly with Member States.
- A dissemination phase through the social media and traditional media, by means of institutional and non-institutional channels (initially through EU delegations and agencies, then also through the IOM and the UNHCR), with Member States playing a central role.

<u>The seminar, which was attended by over 100 specialists, identified many challenges and elements for cooperation:</u>

- Lack of adequate information sharing may induce national authorities to adopt more cautious approaches and sometimes even step back from initial commitments.
- Need for more EU-level coordination, with full involvement of - and cooperation with national authorities. Member States need to be increasingly involved in joint communication activities; working in partnership will facilitate decision-making and effectiveness in particular when operating under emergency conditions.
- Need to refrain from playing 'beauty contests' or blame games, since all decisions on relocation and resettlement were taken in Brussels, by the Member States.
- Continuity in the information provision towards national audiences and in maintaining a constructive approach taking into account the human rights perspective.
- Communication and politics will continue to be strictly correlated and influenced by the ongoing emergency rescues and subsequent humanitarian aid needs.
- Need to increase cooperation between central authorities and municipalities. Central authorities should seek more local engagement for the provision of information and to provide easier ground for communication (local briefings, joint activities, etc.).

- Monitor the impact of media reports which amplify divergences and be ready to provide objective answers.
- Mutual trust in the cooperation with NGOs, to make sure that communication goes in the right direction (avoid mis-information); this means "not only telling, but also listening". Need to exploit the enormous know-how of humanitarian organisations' and NGOs'.
- Responding to the root causes of migration flows requires a broad approach and strong cooperation with and between countries of origin and transit.
- Communicating to audiences in the countries of transit and origin requires appropriate internal and inter-agency coordination and prior identification of 1) Trustworthy counterparts in the third countries concerned that could help spread messages; 2) Identification of the target audiences; 3) Choice of the appropriate communication tools, and in particular full engagement in the online activities.
- Need to promote multilingualism, in particular when informing and communicating through social networks and TV/radio.
- The intercultural perspective must not prejudice social dynamics and reduce engagement. It is not about maintaining a positive image for migration at all cost, but about managing an unprecedented crisis for the whole of Europe, which requires a collective effort and a strong hand from the communication angle.

The participants emphasized the importance of coordination of messaging and interagency agreed lines of policy, before giving people more factual information on the situation in general and the legal situation in the EU. It was also highlighted that the key players should explore ways and means to strike a balance between official and non-official communication channels, paying due attention to the authenticity and credibility of speakers and messages.

The Commission DG HOME invited participants to share existing information material from which to draw inspiration for content production.
The Member States' representatives attending the event were invited to indicate existing national channels that could be used to disseminate content and messages. Reference was made to a questionnaire circulated by the General Secretariat of the Council on 1st October 2015 aiming to collect this feedback through the existing network of the EU Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR) network.

Conclusions

The key objectives of the Club discussion on this topic remain to share relevant feedback, identify challenging aspects and contribute to exploring avenues for concrete cooperation among communicators.
Once again, it appeared evident that migration cannot be managed without communication. Moreover, the information should be clear, accurate and tailor-made according to the audience's profile, and information-sharing and coordination are pre-conditions to strengthen the existing networks, and reach out to citizens more effectively.

The Club continues to monitor this priority topic and will take it on board at the Venice plenary in November 2016. We are determined to pursue the debate and our exchange of experiences also in future thematic seminars to be organised in the coming months.

Managing the migration crisis

Lefteris Kretsos

Executive Summary

Crisis Management has rarely been an easy task for those involved in Communication, even more so in issues such as migration, the nature of which is complex and multifaceted.

In the end of 2015 and through the first months of 2016, Greece was at the centre of international media attention due to the refugee/migration crisis. This crisis reached its peak during the first quarter of 2016, when an unprecedented number of refugees/migrants' arrivals was recorded, posing a serious challenge to the competent authorities.

The communicational aspect of this crisis and the ways in which it was addressed are demonstrated through this brief, yet comprehensive, article.

Crisis Contextualization

i) Facts and Figures

The following figures offer a concise view of the issue at hand.

- Since 2015, more than 1 million refugees and migrants have arrived in Greece through the Turkish coast.
- A record number of 847,930 arrivals was registered from January 1st, 2015 to December 31st, 2015.
- 150,703 refugees/migrants arrived in Greece during the first quarter of 2016; 40,574 were rescued at sea.
- 52% of the individuals that entered Greece via the islands come from Syria; 25% come from Afghanistan and 16% come from Iraq.
- On February 2016, minors and children constituted the major part of refugee/migrant arrivals (40%).
- On October 17, 2016, the number of refugees/migrants within the Greek territory amounted to 60,496. Half of them are accommodated in the Eastern Aegean islands (mainly Lesvos, Chios, Samos and Kos) and in Northern Greece, while 9,000 are registered in accommodation places provided by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

ii) Policy priorities

The Greek government is particularly sensitive on issues pertaining to the protection of human rights, within the provisions of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. To this end, a special emphasis is placed on the principle that individuals fleeing persecution and war should be protected and well received, following a humanitarian approach.

Furthermore, the Hellenic Republic has stressed the fact that the refugee/migration crisis is a European and global one, therefore entailing the need for solidarity and shared responsibility, through the adoption of common reception policies. Global issues require global solutions and cannot be solved on a "national responsibility" basis.

Following the sudden closure of Greece's northern neighbors' borders in February 2016, tens of thousands of refugees/migrants were left stranded in Greece, leading to a set of priorities for the government:

1. New hosting facilities, in order to accommodate people in dignity and provide them with safety and healthcare
2. New structures for asylum procedures
3. Close collaboration with UNHCR, NGOs, volunteer groups and local communities
4. Upgrade of the flow and timely delivery of information both to domestic and international audiences.

Crisis Communication

i) Main Challenges

Greece's main communication challenges following the aforementioned closure of northern borders and the entry into force of the EU-Turkey agreement (March 2016) include:

- Responding to Greek/international media questions / clarifications / requests on rapidly changing data.

- Reassuring national and local public audiences about facts in often strained for locals and refugees/migrants (Lesvos, Idomeni, Piraeus).
- Arguing against the alarmist rhetoric of "amalgams" between terrorists and refugees/migrants/asylum seekers (especially after the Paris-Brussels attacks).
- Providing accurate information to refugees/migrants in order to convince them to move to organized facilities and discourage them from following illegal and dangerous paths to northern Europe.

ii) Target Audiences

Target Audiences encompass:

- International Audience > media, think tanks, NGOs, International Organizations for Human Rights and Refugees
- National and local audience > national and local media, key players in local communities, where sharp changes are experienced (e.g. Idomeni, a village of 100 inhabitants suddenly received 13,000 refugees).
- Refugees / Migrants > accurate information concerning their rights, relocation programs etc.

iii) Coordinating Bodies

Coordinating Bodies include:

a) Coordinating Body for the Refugee Crisis Management

- A Coordinating Body for the Refugee Crisis Management has been established, acting as an inter-ministerial steering group, with the participation of competent Ministers.
- The Executive branch of this inter-ministerial steering group is the National Coordination Centre for Border, Migration and Asylum Control (ESKESMA), responsible for gathering information and providing daily records incorporating all the new data for evaluation.
- A Spokesperson has been designated for daily updates and regular media briefings.

b) Ministry of Health Coordinating Body

- The National Health Operations Centre (EKEPY) has established a Coordinating Body for the immediate and effective response to arising needs, such as epidemiological surveillance, collecting data from settlements and refugee reception centers across the country.
- EKEPY receives updates around the clock from the Hellenic Police and the Hellenic Coastguard, from all refugee sites and reception, registration and identification centers, enabling the activation of health intervention mechanisms.

iv) Spokesperson and Press Office for the Coordinating Body for the Refugee Crisis Management

The Spokesperson and the Press Office of the Coordinating Body for the Refugee Crisis Management have assumed the crucial responsibility to provide timely and accurate information on refugees/migrants to Media. Their activities include:

- Organizing press conferences
- Publishing daily data in Greek and in English, on refugee flows, on the website of the Secretariat General for Media and Communication (www.media.gov.gr)
- Issuing press releases and tweets through the account > @RefugeecrisisGr
- Organizing individual interviews with Greek and International Media

v) Secretariat General for Media and Communication

The Secretariat General for Media and Communication, which is responsible for the promotion of Greece's image abroad, is also informing international media on the refugee crisis by:

- Responding to media requests for data collection, interviews, filming etc in cooperation with competent authorities.
- Monitoring international media publications, drawing reports and conducting relevant surveys.

- Providing a specialized screening mechanism for the international media coverage of the refugee crisis – press clippings for the Hellenic Republic's services.
- Producing informative material through its news bulletins, webpages and social media in English, French, German, Italian, Spanish and Arabic.
- Communicating Greece's positions and actions to international public opinion through its Press and Communication Offices, located in 22 countries (articles, statements, speeches etc)
- Providing the Communication Representative of the Coordinating Body for the Refugee Crisis Management with the necessary infrastructure.

vi) Informing refugees/migrants

As outlined above, the Greek Government aims at providing reliable information to refugees and migrants as to their rights and obligations. Thus, Greek authorities are:

- Distributing brochures to refugees/migrants about the availability of transportation means and accommodation facilities within the country.
- Dispatching interpreters and translators on-site and installing Public Address Systems for various announcements.
- Broadcasting Arabic news bulletins on public TV/Radio. Furthermore, an Athens News Agency webpage in Arabic was launched, in order to keep refugees/migrants informed.
- Establishing wi-fi internet connection infrastructure in all accommodation facilities, with a default access to the Athens News Agency webpage in Arabic, so as to ensure that refugees/migrants have access to direct and constant flow of information.

LEFTERIS KRETSOS

Dr Lefteris Kretsos, Head of the Secretariat General for Media and Communication of Greece, holds a PhD in Employee Relations and, until his appointment as Secretary-General for Media and Communication, was a Senior Lecturer of employment relations and human resource management at the University of Greenwich (Greenwich Business School, Department of Human Resources and Organizational Behaviour).

Earlier in his career he worked for the Greek Trade Union Congress and the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions as national correspondent for Greece.

Furthermore he has participated in several European research projects and other academic and policy consultancy activities concerning employee relations, social rights, inequality etc. His latest co-edited books "Radical Unions in Europe and the Future of Collective Interest Representation," and "Young Workers and Trade Unions" were published in 2015.

Dr Kretsos prepared the analytical report Alexis Tsipras presented in Brussels in 2013 regarding the negative effects of memorandum agreements in the Greek economy and society. He has published his research and ideas in a number of distinguished academic journals, conferences and professional/public policy making institutions.

The added value of crisis communication networks: staying active and sharing

Elpida-Melpomeni Chlimintza & François Théron

About all that we think we know well…

Crisis is, nowadays, widely considered as a period of discontinuity and it is usually attributed a non-routine, unstable, less understood and urgent character. These disruptions instigate the need for equanimity. The overcoming of these *breaking points* and the attaining of stability is where crisis communication applies. Towards this end, it becomes a platform for shared cognitive meanings to be introduced and shared value commitments to be shaped so as to appease the tensions deriving from the disruptions and introduce incentives to overcome them.

About the efforts we are making to comprehend the complexities of our environment

The Integrated Political Crisis Response arrangements (IPCR)

The IPCR was put in place to provide the means to facilitate the information-sharing, the decision-making process and the coordination of the response - within the Council - to major natural or man-made, cross-sectorial, disasters at a strategic, political level.

The main *tools* provided by the IPCR to facilitate the Presidency of the Council of the European Union and assist the Member States, are namely:

- the informal roundtables that allow the Presidency to delineate the crisis and manage emerging relative issues,
- the IPCR web platform that, as a one-stop-shop, allows all stakeholders to post and search for pertinent to the crisis information,
- the Integrated Situational Awareness and Analysis (ISAA) report drafted by the European Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) that depicts the critical situation on a weekly basis based upon facts and figures provided directly through existing networks by the Member States or by related agencies,
- the central IPCR 24/7 contact point, established within the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC), at the DG ECHO of the European Commission.

The IPCR may assume a monitoring and an activation mode (information-sharing and full-activation mode). The monitoring mode allows information-sharing on crises on a voluntary basis, as in the cases of Syria/ Iraq, the Nepal earthquake, or Ebola.

When the IPCR is activated, it instigates information-sharing on a crisis-page on the web platform where an ISAA is produced and uploaded. Information-sharing mode may be triggered by the Commission, the EEAS and the General Secretariat of the Council (GSC) as well, under certain circumstances.

IPCR full-activation requires a coordination by the Presidency provided through the preparation of informal roundtables. These discussions held amongst stakeholders delineate the developments with regard to the ongoing crisis and provide the stakeholders' assessment of the situation at hand. These insights are then shared with and acted upon by the COREPER and the Council.

The activation of the IPCR may be requested by a Member - State, the Presidency or when the Solidarity Clause (Article 222 of the TFEU) is invoked. The latter stipulates that the EU and its Member States should act jointly if a Member State becomes the target of a terrorist attack or the victim of natural or man-made disaster.

The IPCR was sanctioned on the 25th of June 2013 by the Council of the European Union. On the 30th of October 2015, during the Luxemburg Presidency, the IPCR was activated in information-sharing mode for the very first time, in view of the refugee and migration crisis. Ten days later, with the blessing from the Justice and Home Affairs Council, it was fully activated.

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Elpida Melpomeni Chlimintza is a seconded national expert to the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union. As communication expert, she was appointed senior Media Officer of the Hellenic Fire Corps (HFC)/ General Secretariat for Civil Protection in the Ministry of Interior & Administrative Reconstruction; editor-in-chief of the journal of the HFC "Fire Review" and co-editor of the official webpage of the HFC; head of International Relations at the HFC Headquarters and in charge of HFC's social media accounts.

FRANÇOIS THÉRON
François Théron was assigned by France to the General Secretariat of the Council (GSC) as Seconded National Expert from 2012 to October 2016. Member of the French Prime Minister office, he has served in the General Secretariat for National Defence and in the Government Information Service. He also previously served in the French Ministry of Defence, in the OSCE and in the United Nations. During the last four years he worked for the Civil Protection Unit of the Directorate-General Foreign Affairs, Enlargement and Civil Protection of the GSC, where he focused on political management of major crises, in the framework of the EU Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR).
François Théron holds a LL.B and has graduated from Sciences Po (Public Service section). He also occasionally lectures in France for the Ecole nationale d'administration, the Ecole des officiers de la gendarmerie nationale, the Institut national des hautes études de la sécurité et de la justice and the Institut régional d'administration de Lille.

The informal Crisis Communication Network (CCN)
Within the IPCR, a network of crisis communicators was introduced as crisis need not only be operationally well responded to but also well managed when communicating pertinent information to all stakeholders involved as well as the public.

The IPCR Preparedness Policy highlights the importance of communication to the aforementioned groups in times of crisis, with a special emphasis on the need for a specific communication preparedness. It also underlines that the co-ordination of communication in the IPCR context is an interactive process under the lead of the Presidency, with the support of the Member States and of all relevant EU agencies.

In that perspective, the informal network of communication experts was created so as to allow the exchange of experiences, the sharing of best practices and the fostering of good working relationships, particularly since the IPCR was activated to facilitate the response to the refugee and the migration crisis.

On the IPCR *"Communicators' Toolbox"*, crisis communicators may instigate, amongst other *key* issues, the:
- sharing of lessons learnt from antecedent emergencies or crises and, consequently, the sharing of best practices and faux pas
- exchange of suggestions with regard to ongoing (activation mode) and potential crises (monitoring mode)
- sharing of contingency and crisis communication planning at a strategical and tactical level
- contribution to the planning of related exercises
- uploading of documents, presentations, audio-visual material towards motivating co-interlocutors to provide inputs with regard to those issues raised
- updating of existing crisis communication practices, and/ or
- contribution of the impact of the media to the public opinion at a national/ international level

This network does not replace existing networks of communicators set at different levels between key stakeholders. The aim of the CCN is to facilitate the IPCR crisis communicators of diverse sectors to be able to work together in times of crises; especially when it provides them the means to prepare during periods of equanimity. This network is informal and result-oriented, based on a voluntary participation.

Hence, it is being perceived as enhancing a shared understanding of national crisis communication strategies and tactics whilst cultivating the grounds for an inter-organizational sense-making of the rational of organizational crisis communication planning and implementation.

The CCN was activated in December 2015 in order to provide support to the strategic task force for information-sharing on the refugee and migration crisis that was set up by the DG HOME of the European Commission. The Member States took this opportunity to share best practices on the IPCR web platform.

Dealing with a common problem

Paul Azzopardi

Illegal migration

Illegal immigration constitutes a serious concern for Malta which, at 1200 persons per square kilometre, represents one of the highest population densities in the world.

Malta retains a strong and long standing commitment to help those who are in need of protection also in line with its millennial tradition of hospitality. Malta will respect its moral and legal duty to protect genuine refugees as well as those entitled to humanitarian assistance as provided by international humanitarian law. However, the rights of such groups must not be undermined by criminal international organisations which exploit their plight for illegal financial gain.

Malta will continue to raise international awareness in the European Union and its Member States and in the international community as a whole, on illegal immigration and human trafficking and smuggling. It shall continue to call for effective action to combat illegal immigration in a holistic and thorough manner.

Malta will continue to work towards resettlement of refugees and persons with valid humanitarian status and the repatriation and reintegration of illegal immigrants. Malta will also continue to support development action in the countries of origin, and increased development assistance for those countries that honour their international obligations to accept back illegal immigrants. In the context of the European Union, Malta will continue to seek more rigorous application of Article 13 of the Cotonou Agreement and related articles. Malta will also continue to seek increased policing of borders.

Migration: a credibility test for EU

We hear a lot about this phenomenon, its roots and consequences. The truth is that managing migration has become a credibility test for the EU. Failing is not an option. Unfortunately, there is no easy solution to this human crisis, indeed human tragedy. There are only ways and means of managing it better.
Ironically the issue of migration came to the fore this year – after the mushrooming of the Syrian refugee crises and its effect on several leading central European states. A few years back, when the issue of migration was affecting only southern EU states, migration was not that much of a priority to most EU Member States.
Now there is a more acute awareness of the importance, of unity among states. Migration is not a situation which can be handled by the EU alone but requires a global approach.

EU must be united to convince international community

The issue of migration has cross-border implications. Indeed the EU must be united in order to convince the international community, that this is a matter of global responsibility. Malta believes that there should be a clear message in favour of a global compact on sharing responsibility for refugees and for safe, regular and orderly migration within a framework of a strong and coherent response from the international community to the growing global phenomenon of large movements of refugees and migrants.

Solidarity with those in need of international protection

Malta acknowledges the work carried out by the EU Commission since the launch of the EU agenda on migration in the past year, and the faith it restores in Brussels and its willingness to give this issue its due importance. Yet, the road ahead is long, complex and marked with hurdles.

We trust that the current attempt on the reform of the Common European Asylum System will start taking a tangible shape. The need for a system that is resilient and can withstand future challenges is quite pressing.

PAUL AZZOPARDI
Paul Azzopardi took up the Directorship of the Department of Information (Office of the Prime Minister) in December 2015 after having been posted to this Department by Government in October 2005 to manage the media aspect of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Malta in 2006 and replicated again in 2015. As manager for International Services and Media at the Department of Information, Mr Azzopardi was mainly responsible for all the major events having a high media profile, both locally and internationally.

Common EU problems, common EU solutions

The concept that common EU problems require common EU solutions is slowly gaining ground. In migration management, the EU has started to put into practice concrete actions, with the latest being the proposals to enhance border control in a smart manner.

Border protection smartly

Border protection is at long last getting the attention of nations across the continent. In this regard, Malta appreciates the compromise reached on the proposal with regard to the European Border and Coast Guard agency.
The new agency will have a stronger role in the return of illegal migrants and will also have the necessary resources to draw upon should a member state request assistance. Aimed at providing a rapid reserve of border guards to a country in crisis, the agency needs to be able to draw on a minimum of 1,500 experts that can be deployed within four days. In its implementation process, each state will be expected to pledge contributions.

To date there is still a divergence of opinions among EU Member States regarding the issue of illegal migration. It will definitely not be easy for the Maltese EU Presidency to reach a consensus on certain European legislative proposals that are currently on the table in a bid to address the migration crisis.

The EU still lacks efficiency in the area of return and readmission although the Communication on establishing a new Partnership Framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration, presented by the European Commission on the 7th of June, aims to tackle the root causes of the phenomenon and is therefore a step in the right direction.

This proposal should be implemented together with the Action Plan agreed upon during last November's Valletta Summit on Migration. During this interim however concern is growing over the increase in the number of migrant fatalities in the Mediterranean.

According to the UNHCR, this year alone, more than 2,500 people have died trying to cross the Mediterranean to Europe. This is a significant increase, when compared to the 1,855 in the same period last year and the 57 of the year before.
Will the EU Member States remain a spectator to this human plight?

Communicating together

As government communicators, we welcome the added value of the events organised by the Club of Venice on this complex issue and we are ready to pursue discussions in the coming meetings.

Central Europe and the refugee question: cooperation, not confrontation

Gabi Gőbl, Christian Kvorning Lassen, Marko Lovec, Milan Nič & Paul Schmidt

Policy Recommendations

1. To tackle the refugee and migration question a cross-border multi-level dialogue needs to be fostered not only between governments and public authorities in Central Europe, but also between civil society players and the media.
2. A counter-narrative has to be told offering a broader – not only security based – perspective and explaining the complexities.
3. In reply to the perception of a single, unsupportive Central European block the societal and historical particularities of Central European countries have to be emphasized, explaining the backgrounds and countering stigmatization.

Abstract

The uncoordinated approaches in Central Europe in dealing with the increased arrivals of refugees during summer and autumn of 2015 have put the region into the spotlight of public attention. A new split in Europe was widely proclaimed. With the closure of the Balkan route in March 2016 and the implementation of the EU-Turkey action plan the numbers of arrivals have decreased. However, those expecting these steps to be the solution of the refugee and migration question will be severely disillusioned.

Taking into account the particularities of Central European countries, obligatory quotas – as proposed by the European Commission - are not the most promising solution at this moment. The focus should rather be on possible common ground – such as substantial financial aid on the spot, commitment to common external border management, the functioning of Schengen as well as legal ways to request asylum from outside of the European Union. Quotas could be left for discussion at a later stage. But further actions can be taken now to promote future integration capacities in the region. These should also include an intensified cooperation among NGOs and media across borders, the joint promotion of a counter-narrative and stronger partnerships between the civil society and governments. In the end, the refugee and migration question is a cross-border challenge, which does not go away by closing borders. It can only be confronted together.

A new split in Europe?

Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia are five countries in Central Europe, whose total size covers about half the area of France[1]. Their capitals are in many cases located closer to each other than major cities within their respective countries. Their citizens do not only share parts of their history, but also many aspects of their culture and traditions. Also in economic terms, the five countries are strongly interconnected. It comes, thus, as no surprise that these countries are often confronted with similar regional challenges. Still, solutions are in many cases drafted on a national level only and proximity does not prevent misunderstandings. This became particularly obvious in the late summer of 2015, at the peak of the refugee and migration policy crisis. Some countries started to wall themselves in, while others decided to suspend the Dublin agreement or open borders. In the end, it led to the impression of a new split in Europe.

Various "shades of grey"

While all five countries definitely have their differences, it has been obvious from the very first moment that things are not as black and white as media and politics liked to draw them, but rather reflect various "shades of

1 France has a total area of 643,801 km2, while Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia in total cover an area of 325,074 km2. http://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/326957/umfrage/flaechen-der-eu-laender/.

grey". It can therefore be helpful to take a look at the various country situations in some more detail.[2]

Among the five countries, **Austria** is the only target destination receiving more than a hundred thousand refugees and migrants. 85,505 people have applied for asylum in 2015.[3] Up to 37.500 might follow in 2016.[4] Many individuals as well as civil society organizations have provided help to refugees. Consequently, other European neighbors were criticized for their lack of solidarity.[5] However, there is also a perception that neighboring countries – among others – have not been sufficiently consulted ex ante. After the incidents in Cologne at the end of 2015 resistance in Austria towards further asylum seekers increased. On the political level, discussions how to tackle the issue intensified ever since bringing up topics like social benefits and the needs-based minimum benefit system.

In **Slovenia** – rather a transit than a target country – a humanitarian view prevailed when the influx of refugees and migrants increased in summer of 2015. The country already contributed to the Italian search and rescue operation Mare Nostrum. While Hungary's decision to build a fence at the Slovenian border was heavily criticized by both the general public and the government, Slovenia did not oppose the relocation quotas and the decision by Germany and Austria to suspend the Dublin regulation. Perceptions of a chaotic "handling" of the transit from Croatia towards Austria in autumn 2015 as well as security concerns[6] have strongly influenced public opinion. Faced with immigration pressure and criticism at home, government responded by focusing on security aspects of the issue. With the Balkan route closed and the EU-Turkey action plan in place, humanitarian aspects are back on the agenda, even though concerns about challenges such as long integration periods and fear of mass integration still exist. In Slovenia civil society and charity organizations also played a crucial role in providing humanitarian aid. Today the number of refugees Slovenia decided to take in is still small.[7] Focusing on positive experiences, especially of some smaller Austrian municipalities, individual Slovene municipalities felt encouraged in welcoming refugees.

In **Slovakia**, heated statements of political leaders making international headlines and the country's vehement rejection of the mandatory quotas earned the country a notorious reputation of a quota-refusing Muslim-cautious place. However, this perception is not entirely objective either. Despite the often very harsh political rhetoric, the Slovak government has done more than it is being publicly credited for[8], and also the civil society has been mobilized. In summer 2015, Slovak civil society launched the "Plea for Humanity" campaign, which attracted support from major celebrities, athletes, corporations and the President. But not only established humanitarian NGOs were there to help. Hundreds of self-organized and non-institutionalized volunteers went to the Balkan route and/or to Austrian reception centers to provide their share of assistance. After the 2016 national election campaign, the fierce political rhetoric has calmed down. The current Presidency of the EU Council should provide a window of opportunity for more constructive actions[9].

Despite the fact that the **Czech Republic** has little actual experience with refugees and migration[10], mainstream media increasingly depict a picture of dire consequences of Muslim migration. A stance that is also represented by main actors of Czech politics as President Zeman, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Babis, and Minister of the Interior Chovanec, who are pushing a strong anti-immigrant position while Prime

2 For more details see: Joint Solutions for Common Challenges in Central Europe: Cross-Border Cooperation in the Refugee Crisis. http://oegfe.at/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Joint-Report_CBC_Refugees.pdf.

3 Eurostat Pressemitteilung 44/2016: Asyl in den EU-Mitgliedstaaten: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/7203837/3-04032016-AP-DE.pdf/9fcd72ad-c249-4f85-8c6d-e9fc2614af1b.

4 Financial Times: German president backs refugee quotas as Austria sets first cap: http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/14eab1c2-bf6d-11e5-846f-79b0e3d20eaf.html#axzz4FVVEfkue.

5 A recent OEGfE-survey shows that the majority of the Austrian population has little understanding for the "refusing attitude of some neighboring countries regarding the admission of asylum seekers". 36 per cent agreed to the restrictive position of the neighboring countries, whereas 60 per cent did not support this practice (4 per cent "don't know/not specified"). Tel SWS 240, March 2016, N=519 respondents throughout Austria.

6 Between summer 2015 and March 2016 800,000 people crossed the Western Balkan route, which is almost half of Slovene population. At the peak of the crisis, up to 12,500 refugees and migrants entered Slovenia each day, while total police force of Slovenia numbers half of that. http://oegfe.at/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Joint-Report_CBC_Refugees.pdf.

7 260 asylum seekers in 2015; 485 asylum seekers in the first quarter of 2016. Eurostat Pressemitteilung 44/2016: Asyl in den EU-Mitgliedstaaten: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/7203837/3-04032016-AP-DE.pdf/9fcd72ad-c249-4f85-8c6d-e9fc2614af1b.

8 E.g. the small Slovak border town, Gabcikovo, has been hosting on a rotating basis 500 Syrian asylum seekers based upon an agreement with the Austrian government, 150 Iraqi Christians have been resettled from the Mosul area, Slovak officers have been sent to the European Asylum Support Office in Greece and NGOs have been supported financially and organizationally in their "Plea for Humanity"

9 Slovak government has already pledged 200 spots on a "voluntary" basis and committed to a "sustainable" migration policy. However, the implementation of this promise is yet to be delivered.

10 1,235 asylum seekers in 2015; 360 asylum seekers in the first quarter of 2016. Eurostat Pressemitteilung 44/2016: Asyl in den EU-Mitgliedstaaten: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/7203837/3-04032016-AP-DE.pdf/9fcd72ad-c249-4f85-8c6d-e9fc2614af1b.

Minister Sobotka is characterized by a more moderate approach. Of those refugees arriving in the country, the most dominant group though are Ukrainians[11], who blend in much more easily than refugees from the MENA[12] countries. Thus, the Czech resistance to migration primarily revolves around Muslim immigrants rather than any type of immigrants[13], although opposition to migration in general has increased as a corollary to the former.[14] Nevertheless, civil society players in the capital and some larger cities, and in particular groups of students, are trying to combat the fears of the "known unknown". Little attention is paid to potential positive effects of migration: especially due to the growing economy – the Czech Republic has the lowest unemployment rate in Europe[15] and is in an acute demand for labor – a gap that could also be filled from the pool of migrants.

In comparison, **Hungary** is politically probably the most rigid country. Already in January 2015 Prime Minister Orban launched a – still ongoing[16] – coordinated campaign that demonized migrants as a threat to national security. FIDESZ's hold over Hungarian politics effectively negates the power of traditional actors that can resist an anti-migration rhetoric and policies: the judiciary (under government control), the parliamentary opposition (weak and fragmented), and the media (either government controlled or engaging in self-censorship). Civil society is left to counteract government actions and to promote a pro-refugee frame, but does not possess enough social capital to be effective on its own. However, these asymmetrical power relations forced refugee-help groups and grass-root movements to adopt new approaches.[17] As the centerpiece of these efforts local civil society assisted refugees along the border and in Budapest's transit zones, established during the summer of 2015. Here, civil society effectively had to take over the state's responsibilities and showed never before seen activism and resolve.

The way forward

The various national developments clearly demonstrate different degrees of acceptance and experience with the influx of refugees and migrants in the countries concerned, as well as the need to establish sustainable networks for a smooth cultural and economic integration. Without the necessary political and societal support on the ground, an open and cooperative regional dialogue and the willingness to meet international obligations, the implementation of mandatory quotas is doomed to fail. Moreover, reality shows that many refugees simply would not want to stay in some of the countries[18] mainly due to missing networks, lower asylum acceptance rates, inferior country reputation and partly due to the different social systems[19].

Instead, the focus should rather be on possible common ground – such as a commitment to financial aid on the spot and a common external border management, the functioning of Schengen as well as legal ways to request asylum from outside the EU.

To improve the level of acceptance of refugees in Central Europe, special attention should be given to civil society actors. In all five countries, civil society has provided help to refugees being well aware of the fact that order and control has to be maintained. Still, these players act in different political settings and often in an uncoordinated manner, having poor access to media, public attention and financial resources. Knowledge about and contacts with like-minded NGOs in the neighboring countries are limited.

- It is therefore essential to step up **cross-border cooperation among NGOs and other civil society players**. Much more needs to be done to facilitate a better understanding and develop communication strategies that add value to the efforts of NGOs in each country. Concrete actions could include the exchange of best practices and transfer of already tested solutions, as well as information regarding political, legal and societal developments. The organization of bi- or multilateral citizens' dialogues can also strengthen the cross-border

11 Ibid.

12 Middle East and North Africa

13 http://domaci.ihned.cz/c1-64371570-uprchliky-ze-syrie-a-severni-afriky-v-cesku-nechce-70-procent-lidi-ukazuje-pruzkum

14 http://cvvm.soc.cas.cz/media/com_form2content/documents/c1/a7549/f3/pm160422a.pdf

15 Eurostat (2016): Unemployment rates, seasonally adjusted: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Unemployment_rates,_seasonally_adjusted,_May_2016.png

16 Referendum on refugee quotas in Hungary: http://www.nepszavazas2016.kormany.hu/

17 Zalan, E. (2016): Hungary's satire party takes on migrant referendum: EU Observer: https://euobserver.com/news/134869

18 In the Czech Republic, for example, an incident of 89 repatriated Iraqi Christian refugees, of which 25 subsequently fled to Germany to apply for German asylum after withdrawing their asylum applications in the Czech Republic, have further compounded the prevailing view in Czech society that refugees are economic migrants first and fleeing war second, which has exacerbated the strong anti-immigration bias.

19 Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (2013): Warum Deutschland? http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Publikationen/Forschungsberichte/fb19-warum-deutschland.pdf?__blob=publicationFile REACH: Migration trends & patterns of Syrian asylum seekers travelling to the European Union (2015): https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=11112 (PDF)

dimension. In the end, a mapping of the various networks and actors of NGOs, charity organizations, grassroots as well as individual and church related initiatives would be meaningful. Civil society organizations should thus intensify their efforts to receive support from the European level, while the European Commission should expand its programmes and resources to finance cross-border cooperation on this issue.

- A negative agenda tending to capitalize on the public fear of the unknown has led to a situation in which migration as a whole is mainly perceived as a threat. Civil society therefore needs to create a **counter-narrative** providing wider perspectives, be they historical or derived from neighboring countries. As NGO's and even international organizations are often pigeonholed as biased, "public champions" - such as journalists, artists and viable politicians - should be addressed and equipped with data, numbers and views to effectively confront populism. Migration and security threats thereby have to be unlinked, especially by making clear that security is not only compatible with European values, but that it is a European value. Integration success stories[20] should be used to tell the stories of migrants and refugees on an individual basis, rather than as a collective entity. Furthermore, NGOs should jointly counter the radicalization of political language and the detrimental effect terminology may have, including the identification and sanctioning of hate speech.
- Although **governments and civil society are mutually dependent on each other,** they increasingly set off in opposite directions. Civil society organizations should strive to become active partners to governments and vice versa by raising awareness of problems requiring public policy responses. Whereas civil society should clearly define their role, the government authorities may consider using civil society organizations as a credible bridge to the general public. Special attention should be placed to windows of opportunity such as post-election periods or the current Slovak EU presidency.
- Civil society should help to contribute to **higher journalistic scrutiny** by intensifying contacts with media, providing know-how and media training for media representatives and connecting journalists from the various countries. A balanced view of developments – giving equal attention to opportunity rather than risk analysis – would be welcome.

As the view of a single, unsupportive **Central European block** is spilling over to other areas of European politics, it seems essential to explain the different underlying motives and promote societal change, without allowing to be held hostage by sometimes unidimensional and populistic governmental action. In the end, the refugee and migration question is a cross-border challenge for all of us. It can only be confronted together.[21]

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20 E.g. the promotion of „integration ambassadors" in Austria is a case in point: https://www.zusammen-oesterreich.at/startseite/

21 Göbl, G., Kvorning Lassen, C., Lovec, M., Nic, M., Schmidt, P. (2016): Why Central Europe needs a unified strategy for tackling the migration crisis. LSE EUROPP Blog: http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2016/08/15/why-central-europe-needs-a-unified-strategy-for-tackling-the-migration-crisis/ Göbl, G., Kvorning Lassen, C., Lovec, M., Nic, M., Schmidt, P. (2016): Zentraleuropa: Kooperation statt Blockdenken. Der Standard: http://derstandard.at/2000042490708/Zentraleuropa-Kooperation-statt-Blockdenken

Counter-terrorism and strategic communications: How to shape the debate?

Christiane Höhn

The EU supports Member States in the fight against terrorism. The Media Communication Strategy adopted in 2006 with a view to the "Implementation of the EU's Radicalisation and Recruitment Action Plan" and the revised EU's Anti-Radicalization and Recruitment Strategy and guidelines adopted in 2014 provide strategic guidance with regard to the communications aspects of counter-terrorism.

The EU has recently strengthened its efforts in this domain, which are a priority:

- on 12 February 2015, in the aftermath of the Charlie Hebdo attack in Paris, the Heads of State of Government called for *"communication strategies to promote tolerance, non-discrimination, fundamental freedoms and solidarity throughout the EU, including through stepping up inter-faith and other community dialogue, and narratives to counter terrorist ideologies, including by giving a voice to victims"*;
- on 24 March 2016, after the Brussels attacks, Justice and Home Affairs Ministers issued a statement to *"continue to develop effective preventive measures, especially by improving early detection of signs of radicalization at local level and by countering the rhetoric of Daesh in particular through communication strategies and the development of robust rehabilitation programmes. The Radicalization Awareness Network and the Strategic Communications Network will further enhance their support to practitioners, civil society and Member States in this regard. The Commission will intensify work with IT companies, notably in the EU Internet Forum, to counter terrorist propaganda and to develop by June 2016 a code of conduct against hate speech online."*

The EU is supporting Member States in various ways with regard to communications in the context of the fight against terrorism. The environment in which communication takes place has dramatically evolved.

- Daesh has commited attacks in Paris and Brussels, as well as against civil aviation. Daesh inspired attacks such as the massacre in Nice and the killings in Munich underline the high terrorist threat within the EU.
- Given the serious military setbacks Daesh has been facing in Syria and Iraq, it needed to show successes elsewhere. This led to a greater terrorist threat in Europe.
- Daesh has set up a planning cell in Raqqa which is training and directing terrorist operatives in Europe.
- Social media communications by Daesh remains impressively strong. It is worth to remember that we counted 100 000 tweets alone in the first couple of hours after the Brussels attacks in March.

Meanwhile, more than 1.5 million refugees from Syria have arrived in Europe since summer 2015 and there have been indications that Daesh is using the refugee flow to smuggle terrorist operators inside Europe. It was reported that Salafist organizations were trying to recruit refugees. Integration of refugees will be a major challenge. Right wing and populist parties, which are getting stronger in elections in various Member States. And Salafism and Islam have become a topic of public discussion.

This mix of issues is the background against which governments need to communicate. Of course it is extremely difficult to do this. Communication challenges go way beyond discouraging youngsters to travel to Syria. To remain relevant, **governments have to address those core issues the citizens care about**.

But **how to shape the debate?**

How can we help raising the right questions without playing into the hands of the extreme right?

How can we address Islam without creating divisions between Muslims and non-Muslims or contributing to radicalization? Daesh wants us to create such divisions in our societies and benefit from them to play on the narrative of exclusion, ***"we and them"***.

To solve a problem it is important to name it. If we are silent, if we don't name problems, others will do it for us and governments risk being regarded as less relevant. **How do we talk about the issues without encouraging racism and stereotypes?**

CHRISTIANE HÖHN
Dr. Christiane Höhn is the principal advisor to the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator.
Her previous assignments at the EU were transatlantic relations and non-proliferation and disarmament.
Prior to joining Council of the EU in 2004, she was a researcher at the Max Planck Institute for International Law in Heidelberg and an affiliate at the Center for Public Leadership, Harvard Kennedy School of Government.
Christiane holds a PhD in international law from Heidelberg University, an LLM from Harvard Law School and the two German State examinations in law. She has published a book and several articles in international law and international affairs.

At the core this is about the identity of people and our societies.

We need to continue to share experiences, to carry out a thorough and frank debate, and to exchange views on what is the right strategy to communicate about all these issues; what has been done so far? What has worked, hasn't worked? What are your greatest challenges? Is there a particular approach that communication specialists from governments and institutions feel was a special success? What is the room for working together to address this challenge?

As government communicators, in addition to shaping "the general broad approach", have you been able to identify and support credible voices in communities vulnerable to radicalisation? What are your experiences? There is a lot of evidence to suggest that such individuals are potentially far more influential than Governments related to some of the issues. For example, the brother of one of the suicide bombers from Brussels Airport has just won the gold medal at the European Taekwondo championships and gave a press conference recently - this is a powerful example of successful integration and a positive role model.

The importance of strategic communications has also been recognized by the anti-ISIL coalition and the Council Conclusions on Daesh, Syria and Iraq of 23 May 2016. One of the working groups of the anti-Daesh coalition under the leadership of the UK is developing strategic communications material other partners can use. It would be very useful to exchange experiences and information material produced to raise awareness, educate, contrast and prevent threats, from which other partners can draw inspiration. In addition, the Syria Strategic Communications Advisory Team (SSCAT which has changed its name to European Strategic Communications Network or ESCN and is financially supported by the Commission) has engaged with many EU Member States on the relevant strategic communications challenges.

In this context it is also important to mention the contribution of the EUROPOL multi-linguistic monitoring of terrorist content on the internet (Internet Referral Unit) and the work especially of the communication and narratives working group of the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) supported by the European Commission, as well as the Commission's planned Empowering Civil Society Initiative for counter-narratives in the context of the EU Internet Forum.

It is crucial to share lessons learned and inspiring ideas on the key players' experience, working with the SSCAT and the anti-ISIL coalition and with all other proactive partners to build on positive examples that could help reinforce cooperation in this field.

I trust that the Club of Venice meetings will continue to provide opportunities to exchange and learn from each other. We are just at the start of this generational challenge which will define our societies for the decades to come.

Research-based messaging on countering violent extremism

Leonie Sheer

The Dutch government supports its approach of combating violent extremism with a research based message house that stimulates a coherent government communication on the issue. This article gives an insight view on the making of this message house.

Intro

In 2014 the Dutch government launched a comprehensive action programme to combat jihadism (violent extremism). This was a reaction to the rise of global jihadism and the threat it poses on national security. The programme contains a big set of measures to combat jihadism and is lead by the Ministry of Security and Justice and Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, in cooperation with many other government organizations.

On the one hand, the programme focusses on the fighting and weakening of jihadism in the Netherlands by means of repressive measures. For example, hard action against anyone who commits violence, fuels hatred, recruits, travels to jihadist terrorist territory or returns, or oversteps the mark in any other way. On the other hand, the programme focusses on preventing a person from radicalising, by means of preventive measures, mostly in a joint effort with local communities and police, social workers and families. An example of preventive initiatives is a programme with peer educators for schools to raise awareness about the way (social) media work and how to be critical of what you read and belief. Another example is the creation of a facility that supports families of radicalising and radicalised youths. It is important that radicalization is countered as early as possible.

For good and unambiguous government communication on combating jihadism a message house was composed. The message house is part of the communication strategy of the action programme. The message house provides a common starting point, which national and local authorities can use in their communication on combating jihadism and the action programme. The message house supports a clear and strong narrative of the government about the integrated approach to Jihadism It is important for the government to show unity and collectively know what direction and what words we choose, to create and enhance support for its programme and prevent polarization. With this we ensure that we do not create or enlarge differences unintentionally, and thus perhaps even contribute to radicalization. This is especially important against a backdrop of a growing anti-Islam sentiment and us-them thinking.

Making of the message house

A message house is a set of messages around a specific theme, including the proof for those messages. A message house exists of three parts:

- The roof of the house is formed by the core message.
- The pillars that keep the roof up are the supporting messages, that further explain aspects of the core message.
- The foundation of the house is formed by the proof. This is the support for the supporting messages, that shows that these are actually based on something.

In practice mainly the core message and supporting messages are used. The proof is used, for example, when there are questions to be answered or when extra explanation is needed.

The message house on the comprehensive action programme to combat jihadism contains the following core message and supporting messages (short version):

Core message: explanation what the action programme is about.
Supporting messages:
1. Why it is a problem
2. It's a communal problem which needs a joint approach
3. We need a broad range of measures

4. We're tough on jihadists
5. It is impossible to guarantee 100% safety
6. Why online combat of jihadism is important
7. Jihadists do not represent Muslims

The message house was composed by the National Coordinator for Security and counterterrorism, in cooperation with policy- and communications specialists from a broad group of government organizations involved with the action programme. It was affirmed by the cabinet of ministers, in order to create as much commitment possible for the use of the message house in government communication.

Research played an important role in the realization of the message house. There was an extensive search for a suitable frame and the words and messages were all qualitatively and quantitatively tested. It was of importance to know whether the messages would sort the desired effects with the different groups within the Dutch society: understanding of and support for the programme.

The basis of the message house had to be a common frame: a common thread for the communication on the action programme, with room for own accents. Firstly, research was done on existing external frames (in which way does the media and public opinion speak about the issue and programme) by an inventory of weekly media analyses. This yielded a number of dominant frames. The mainstream frames were:

- The national security frame: jihadists are a danger for the Dutch rule of law. Strong measures are needed to protect the national security.
- The conspiracy frame: the Islam and the presence of big groups of Muslims form a threat tot the Dutch society. The threat of jihadists proofs this.
- The 'don't tar with the same brush' frame: the one million Muslims in the Netherlands should not be treated and looked upon in the same way as the small group of jihadist fighters. Jihadists have nothing to do with the Islam, they are terrorists.

Subsequently, the minimal preconditions for the internal (government) frame were researched. These included: acceptable for people who adhere to the national security frame and the 'don't tar with the same brush' frame, acceptable for Dutch Muslim communities , inclusive and not enlarging existing differences.

Then most important elements of the frame were defined by policy advisors as well as communications specialists at joint sessions. The combination of both policy and communications professionals proved to be very useful for all parties involved. Qualitative research was used to find out how Dutch citizens (Muslims and non-Muslims) judged the different aspects of the frame. There were several target audiences of the research: the general audience, people not adhering to a mainstream frame, people adhering tot the three mainstream frames and Muslims. Among the aspects that were researched were: how can we best define the phenomena jihadism? What is the effect of the use of certain (combinations) of words? Which values and emotions that exist are best to address? How is the government's performance perceived?

A few examples of the findings on the use of words and definitions:

- Jihadism: jihad is a positive thing for Muslims. The term 'jihadism' indicates the violent pursuit of political-ideological goals.
- The link with the Islam: describe jihadists as terrorists that claim the Islam.
- Dutch Muslims: talk about Dutch Muslims or Dutch who are Muslim. Do not use the term 'Benevolent Muslims; it is offensive because of the suggestion (invocation?) that Muslims are malicious.
- Threat to our society: to describe what threatens ISIS, use the term 'society': there is a positive association and it has a binding effect. That does not apply to 'our Western democratic values.'
- No war language: do not use statements like "we are at war'. It has a polarizing effect between Muslims and non-Muslims. Talk in unifying and inclusive language, like 'we will not let this divide our society'. Is there need for stronger language, be specific on what we combat (ISIS, terrorists, etc.).

With all these findings the frame was translated into specific messages, texts and words and a message house was built. The core message, supporting messages and proof were then qualitatively and quantitatively tested among groups (Muslims and non-Muslims). Were they understandable, recognizable, meaningful, clear, simple, consistent, complete, credible, acceptable, reliable? Did they have an inclusive and binding effect? The results were used to sharpen the message house based on comprehensibility and binding.

Dissemination and use

The message house was disseminated to direct and indirect partners of the programme on the national, local and regional level, with the request to use it in their communication on the issue and programme. It was

presented in detail to spokespersons, speechwriters, directors of communication of the various ministries and municipalities that experience the issue more than others.

Within these organizations the use of the message house lies primarily with policy makers, communication advisors and directors. Policymakers can for example use it for
memos to their directors or ministers, policy plans, letters to and talks with the parliament and municipalities. Spokespersons can use it in their communication towards the media. Speechwriters can use it in speeches and other communication advisors, -employees and editors can use it for all sorts of communication. Directors and ministers can use it in speeches, interviews and other public meetings.

A special toolkit was developed and used for the dissemination, which includes the message house, background on the how and why of the message house, suggestions on how to stimulate the use and tips on terminology on the issue of jihadism.

The messages provide guidance and a framework, but are not a straitjacket. Indeed, every organization has its own role and will therefore use its own accents. In addition, the messages are intended for the general Dutch public; organizations will sometimes choose different terms for talks with foreign partners or well established professionals. However, it is recommended to stay as close as possible to the message house; these are, after all, well thought out, tested, balanced and approved messages.

Future of the message house

Violent extremism and jihadism have a place in the spotlight and that has been reinforced by the attacks in Paris and Brussels last year, the high influx of asylum seekers and the latest attacks in France and Germany last summer. As a government it is important to show unity and therefore to use unambiguous language. At the same time current events and political developments have their impact on the messages and language. Terminology can change over time. Therefore the message house has a 'version date, so that it can be customized in the future.

The use of the message house is tested every half year through analyses of the external communication by the government organizations and the frames that are used in the media, to see whether the messages are being picked up. The results of the first two evaluations show that the use of the message house is not yet as common as is desired. This will be subject of closer investigation.

The message house is a new tool and experience. It is the first time it was used for an issue on such a large scale. The process towards has been a valuable and informative experience for the NCTV and its partners and will be very useful for further communication challenges.

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Leonie started her career as a communications consultant, working for a broad variety of profit and non-profit clients. She then specialized in government communications and has since worked at the Netherlands Nutrition Centre (Voedingscentrum), the National Coordinator for Counter Terrorism (NCTb) and has been with the NCTV since 2012.

Clarity vs shadows

Peter Wilson

This short comment is drawn up on 20 October 2016, in advance of the forthcoming plenary meeting of the Club of Venice.

This week Iraqi and Kurdish forces, supported by the Global Coalition, launched a joint offensive to recapture the Iraqi city of Mosul from Daesh.

In the days following the start of the operation, Daesh has sought to portray itself as holding out in Mosul, as well as encouraging supporters on social media to disseminate propaganda claiming Daesh will ultimately be victorious, claiming it is the local Sunni population who are suffering in the operation. This is spite of the significant theological and strategic loss of Dabiq to Sunni FSA forces last weekend.

Crisis communication as essential instrument for crisis management goes together with full knowledge of the risk factors and consciousness of the topic. Events are to be communicated clearly and objectively. Nevertheless, unfortunately abuses and deviations are always possible and public communicators must be always vigilant.

In this specific geo-political scenario, following the commencement of the Mosul operation, Daesh has provided a steady drumbeat of propaganda to its supporters; updating on the latest attacks, and providing short films from inside Mosul in order to keep audiences engaged. However, beyond these battlefield updates, Daesh messaging appears to have contradicted itself a number of times during these opening days of the offensive. For example, 'Amaq released a short video earlier this week, claiming to show civilians declaring everything is normal inside the city, suggesting everyone is relaxed and even car showrooms trading as normal. However, this was published alongside other video reports claiming medical centres have been bombed, and footage of Daesh fighters patrolling the streets at night.

'Amaq has emerged as the primary channel for Daesh messaging on Mosul, with supporters encouraged to promote 'Amaq propaganda quickly in response to events. A small number of these 'Amaq video products have since featured in international news coverage, giving 'Amaq increased exposure and influence in reporting around the operation.

PETER WILSON
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Meanwhile, some of the press reporting of Daesh's propaganda and actions is unwittingly aiding the group's efforts to recruit and radicalise young people in Europe. A decision by the French news organisations Le Monde and La Croix to stop publishing photos and names of terrorists provides an international and certainly pan-European precedent for a more responsible and considered approach to reporting. The very description of "Amaq as a news agency" inadvertently lends Daesh's propaganda unmerited legitimacy".

Against this background in continuous evolution, we need to continue to share feedback, exchange best practice, draw inspiration from effective communication models and monitor communication trends in this sensitive field. There is indeed enough food for thought to deepen analysis within the Club of Venice.

Communicating climate change and EU climate action

Anna Johansson

History was made on 12 December 2015 when195 countries adopted the first-ever universal, legally binding climate deal at the United Nations climate conference in Paris. The Paris Agreement sets out a global action plan to put the world on track to avoid dangerous climate change by limiting global warming to well below 2°C and pursuing efforts to keep it to 1.5°C. The landmark agreement opened for signature on 22 April 2016 and was signed by 175 parties on the very same day, setting a new record for the most first-day signatures to an international agreement. The European Union's ratification in October 2016 ensured the deal's early entry into force on 4 November 2016 – faster than ever imagined.
Reaching an ambitious and balanced global deal was a priority for the EU, and its efforts in the run-up to and during the Paris conference helped shape the successful outcome. Communication and outreach activities both in and outside Europe played an important part in this. Following Paris, the EU has continued to show its global leadership and has been heavily engaged in international negotiations which have led to agreements for global action on international aviation emissions and climate warming gases used in refrigeration and air-conditioning equipment. Action in these sectors will make an important contribution to our global objectives.

Towards a global climate agreement

The Juncker Commission has made building a resilient Energy Union with a forward-looking climate change policy one of its top priorities. This included ensuring the adoption and early entry into force of an ambitious global climate agreement that can put the world on track to keep global temperature rise below 2°C. Scientists believe the risk of severe and irreversible impacts increases dramatically at higher levels of warming.
The EU has long been a driving force in global efforts to fight climate change. It was instrumental in the development of the two major international agreements currently in place to address global warming: the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto Protocol. The Kyoto Protocol sets legally binding emissions reduction targets, but it currently only applies to 38 developed countries representing 12% of global greenhouse gas emissions. A global agreement applicable to all and capable of responding to evolving economic and geopolitical realities was therefore urgently needed.

In the lead-up to Paris, governments from across the world demonstrated their willingness to contribute to global action to tackle climate change and accelerate the transformation towards low-carbon, climate-resilient economies worldwide. As part of the preparations for the conference, more than 170 countries representing over 95% of global emissions put forward their intended nationally determined contributions (INDC) to the new agreement. This was an unprecedented global effort. To date, 190 countries representing more than 97% of global emissions have submitted national climate action plans.
The Paris Agreement contains the key elements that the EU and its partners considered as essential features of a strong global deal. These include a common long-term goal, a five-year ambition cycle to progressively update

targets, and a transparency and accountability system to track progress against the long-term objective. The agreement also addresses other important issues, such as strengthening the ability of all countries to deal with the impacts of climate change and the mobilisation of public and private finance for climate action.

EU climate policies achieving results

The EU has been working hard over the past decades to cut its greenhouse gas emissions substantially while encouraging other countries and regions to do likewise. We have already made good progress towards our climate and energy targets for 2020. As a result of robust policies, the EU is well on track to meet its target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 20% by 2020. The EU experience also shows that climate protection and economic growth go hand in hand. Between 1990 and 2015, our greenhouse gas emissions fell by 22%, while our economy grew by 50%.

Looking beyond 2020, EU leaders have agreed on a new climate and energy framework for 2030, which also formed the basis for the EU's climate action plan (INDC) submitted in advance of the Paris conference. This includes targets to cut domestic greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40%, increase the share of renewables to at least 27% of our energy use and improve energy efficiency by at least 27%. The European Commission has already brought forward the main proposals to deliver on its 2030 climate and energy targets. These include a proposal for the revision of the EU emissions trading system which caps emissions in the energy sector and energy intensive industries, and a proposal to accelerate the low-carbon transition in other key sectors of the economy in Europe, including transport, buildings, agriculture and waste. The Commission has also presented a strategy on low-emission mobility. It will bring forward more proposals, including on energy efficiency and renewable energy in 2016.

Beyond specific climate and energy policies, climate action is being integrated into all EU policy areas. This is also reflected in the decision to dedicate 20% of the EU budget for 2014-2020 to climate-related action in Europe and beyond its borders.

The EU provides the largest amount of public money to developing countries to fund climate projects. In 2014, the EU and its Member States collectively provided €14.5 billion to help them tackle climate change. At least €14 billion of public grants from the EU budget – an average of €2 billion per year – will support activities in developing countries in 2014-2020. This is more than double the average level in 2012-2013.

Communicating EU climate action

All of the above elements set the context for the European Commission's communication activities ahead of Paris and beyond. While communicating the new global deal is a challenge in itself, it builds on the European Commission's earlier experience.

A good example is the communication campaign "A world you like. With a climate you like" carried out in 2012-2013. This EU Climate Action campaign invited citizens, companies and organisations from across Europe to share their best climate solutions, focusing on five areas: travel and transport, building and living, producing and innovating, shopping and eating, and re-use and recycling.

A key part of the campaign was the "World You Like Challenge", a contest calling for creative minds from across the EU to put their low-carbon innovations to the test. In addition to the overall winner – a Portuguese biodiversity project – the challenge also rewarded one climate solution in each of the campaign's five focus countries – Bulgaria, Lithuania, Italy, Poland and Portugal.

The campaign succeeded in reaching millions of Europeans through a variety of online and offline channels: an interactive website, social media, electronic media, and press and campaign events in several EU Member States. It also received the support of high-level politicians and celebrities and teamed up with 320 partner organisations from all sectors of society.

Over the past two years – in parallel with the international climate negotiations and in the run-up to the Paris conference – the European Commission's DG Climate Action has worked intensely to produce multilingual communication material to provide stakeholders and multipliers with information, raise awareness on climate issues and build support for climate action. These activities have also been closely linked to other recent important international events, such as the adoption of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the European Year for Development in 2015.

Communication messages and materials on EU climate action are disseminated through a variety of channels and tools. While the classic channels of **press, speeches and articles** continue to play an important role, the **focus is largely on online communication**. We also work intensely to "cross fertilise" by linking from one channel to the other for more information.

The **EU Climate Action website** allows stakeholders and citizens to learn about climate change and what the EU is doing. The site has grown to welcome visitors from countries all over the world. The biggest proportion of visitors comes from the business sector, followed by students, public administration workers and researchers. Nine non-European countries (USA, China, Canada, India, Australia, Japan, Korea, Mexico and Singapore) are among the top 30 countries for visitors to the site. Many parts of the website are available in all EU languages – and some also in Mandarin. New sections for citizens and youth further develop targeted communication approaches, focusing on what each one of us can do for the climate.

DG Climate Action has also produced a set of **six short audiovisuals** explaining climate change and climate action in all EU languages and Mandarin. The topics covered include the causes and consequences of climate change, EU climate action, EU funding for climate action, adaptation to the effects of climate change, and the Paris Agreement. We have also produced multilingual animations explaining the 2030 framework for climate and energy and the EU emissions trading system.

The EU Climate Action **social media accounts**, created in 2012, have an impressive, engaged audience, without paid promotion. The Facebook page has a more conversational style oriented to the general public, while the Twitter account provides the latest news. The YouTube channel has more than 70 videos in a variety of languages. On Pinterest, EU Climate Action is represented through more than 260 pins divided in thematic boards illustrating different aspects of climate action.

Brochures and publications on specific topics complement the range of communication products. For environmental reasons, publications are mainly available online. One of the most recent products is a magazine aimed at young people aged 11-16 explaining climate change and EU climate action, which is available in all EU languages.

How we prepared for Paris

In the months leading up to the Paris conference, work intensified. The growing global momentum for climate action was demonstrated at various events across the world, from high-level political meetings and UN negotiation sessions to climate marches gathering thousands of people in the streets of New York and elsewhere.

The communication channels and multipliers for EU Climate Action also widened to include not only media and stakeholders, but also other Directorate-Generals of the European Commission, other EU institutions, EU Representations and Europe Direct Information Centres , as well as EU Member States.

Communication and outreach activities were also organised outside Europe. The European Commission worked with EU Delegations all over the world, providing them with communication material and contributing to coordinated actions. Successful joint efforts included for example the Climate Diplomacy Day organised in June 2015 by Delegations in various countries.

The results of EU-wide opinion research also showed strong public support for climate action. The European Commission follows the evolution of European citizens' views on climate action regularly via Eurobarometer opinion surveys. According to the most recent survey published in November 2015:

- 91% of Europeans consider climate change a serious problem,
- 93% say that fighting climate change will only be effective if all countries of the world act together,
- 93 % have taken personal action to combat climate change (e.g. separating and recycling waste),
- 81% believe that fighting climate change and using energy more efficiently can boost the economy and create jobs in the EU,

Of course, Paris was just the beginning. The challenge for the world now is to build on the global impetus for ambitious action and confirm Paris as the turning point in our journey towards more sustainable, climate-friendly economies and societies.

The Paris Agreement is an important milestone, but its success ultimately depends on the implementation of climate policies in all countries.

Continued efforts will be needed to maintain the momentum created in Paris and deliver on the promises we made. Consequently, communicating on climate change and on EU climate action will play an important role as the EU and countries across the world begin to implement the Paris Agreement on the ground.

ANNA JOHANSSON

Senior Expert, Head of the External Communication Team in the Directorate General for Climate Action of the European Commission. Anna Johansson studied International Business Administration and Economics at the University of Lund in Sweden and the École Supérieure de Commerce in Paris and Marseille, France. She was part of the negotiation team during Sweden's application for EU membership, and spent four years at the Swedish Permanent Representation to the European Union before joining the European Commission in 1999. She worked on international bilateral and multilateral negotiations at the Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries before joining the external communication team in 2007 and moved to the Directorate General for Climate Action in 2013.

Anna's external communication teams have won several awards for their communication campaigns ("Choose your fish" and "A world you like") as well as for the youth magazine on climate change.

Public diplomacy and branding: re-telling Europe

Stefan Vukotić

Is there a brand of Europe?

Brand ought to be something that gives an immediate association, but it must have substance and true likeness, not just be superficial. So the brand of Italy is great food, the brand of France is haute couture, the brand of Germany is efficiency, the brand of the Netherlands is international law, the brand of Estonia is digital services, the brand of Austria is the waltz, and so on and so on.

But what is the brand of Europe, or of the EU? It's all of that, all of those brands, and more. Some Americans, for instance, often don't distinguish between Europe and the EU and view us all as a loose confederation with all these lovely traits, heritage, and values that we sometimes call brands of individual countries. I've even met some Western Europeans who are so lucky not to have to have a clue about the difference between the Council of Europe and the EU, such have been the benefits of being born in a united Europe. And this is what the brand of Europe is.

Unity of values beyond borders

Europe is a kaleidoscope of some of the world's finest dwellings, landscapes, arts, crafts, social norms, wealth. And Europe gave birth to the world's most peculiar political product — a union in which we all give up some of our powers to shared authorities in the name of peace, prosperity, friendship, and greater common good. We who waged so many wars on the world and on ourselves, we are now synonymous with safety and liberty (taking into consideration our greatly divergent views as to how these ought to be protected).

There is a reason why so many refugees and migrants choose Europe as their destination and why in many parts of the world (including my corner of Europe) this brand is a desired future — it, for the most part, is rich, safe, tolerant, cares for those in need, creates new value from vast differences, and is so colourful and interesting. That is the idea that has been at the core of Europe's political unification throughout the EU enlargement process, and that is the brand Europe still projects into the world, whether it is aware of it or not. And this is the brand that we should be proud of and that we should cherish and reinforce in two ways — by continuing doing the right things in terms of policy, economy, social protection, culture, and by communicating this both within Europe and beyond.

A person once said that the best communication is doing the right thing, but I am not sure it is entirely true. I shall in no way argue that communication is pointless without proper action, but no matter how much good we do it is going to have less impact without a story about it. The whole point of communication is to tell the world what has been done and why, which ensures our accountability for our actions, our openness to the world, the world's understanding of what we do and why, and its support if what we do is good and useful. But another

reason we communicate is to inspire others to follow suit or make changes that are necessary by hearing that someone else has done it. And in a world in which bad news sell better than good news, and are more abundant, telling the good news is never a bad thing. Good communication of good deeds restores optimism and inspires more good, at the same time helping those whose actions are communicated understand if more needs to be done or if something needs to be done differently. So we need to communicate Europe more.

Re-telling Europe to people: A forgotten story

Europe is a story that still needs telling. There are two different perceptions when it comes to the communication of Europe, quite opposite to one another and pretty much divided alongside the EU borders, and both produce similar effects: lack of knowledge about the EU and failure to appreciate the value of a united Europe. In the EU member-States, as well as the one that left the club, it is a widely held view that the public doesn't know enough about the EU and that to them it feels distant and unfamiliar. It is also perceived as hindering their development and limiting their rights and possibilities. For a person from the Balkans this looks strange. Because our view is that if anything there is too much information about the EU and it feels very close to us (you can even hear random grandmas in the fish market say that something is in such and such a way because 'it is the European standards'). For most of us here, Europe is an aspiration. We do belong to it geographically and, culturally, let's face it, we're all still the children of the Greeks and Romans. But in terms of politics, economics, social developments, we feel Europe is something we ought to catch up to, regain our place in the family (we feel it already belongs to us, we just have to live up to it by meeting a few standards here and there).

So how can these two very different starting points — the sense of detachment from Europe and a deep sense of belonging and aspiration — counter-intuitively both produce the same problem? In my view the answer is quite simple: People have forgotten the story of Europe. And this is especially true in the Western part of the continent, where people have for over 70 years lived without major conflict and many of them have been born 'on the inside,' taking it for granted. We in the Balkans, on the other hand, having experienced a recent conflict, tend to rely too much on Europe as a magic wand to solve all the problems.

Both of these views are problematic. The story of a united Europe is neither one that is long gone and unimportant nor the one that will solve everything. It is instead quite a pragmatic idea — let's take what we have in common, which is plenty, build on it a sort of cooperation and added value that will make us all better off, but also dependent on each other so we don't go to war amongst ourselves.

And this is precisely what the essence of the brand of Europe is — setting aside differences and focusing on shared values for the well-being of all.

Now, this is the explanation of Europe and, in my view, its brand. But is it recognised? Not quite in most of Europe. And I think there is a reason: there is no such a thing as a European communication policy. There is no such a thing as an EU communication strategy. There is no such a Twitter channel similar to @Sweden that would be called e.g. @Europe. There is no common European narrative. From what I understand, there hasn't been since perhaps 2010 a communication policy of the EU Commission, nor was communication part of policy-making in general at the EU level. In 2010 Twitter was considered a very mature network, Facebook has stormed the world, a country was close to becoming a new EU member, and no one at the top level saw the need to communicate the story of Europe. It is astonishing but also telling. It is telling of the fact that people working on the EU project, while aware of doing the right thing, think communication isn't necessary. I can understand and relate. It is absolutely clear to me that the European cooperation brings benefits to everyone and I can't believe I still have to explain this.

But as I said already, I do not believe it is enough just to do the right thing. What is the point of our work as communicators if just doing the right thing is enough? And we are currently witnessing that it isn't, and we are suffering the consequences. When we failed to communicate more clearly and more collaboratively when the going was good and when the stories were positive, the chinks in the armour that started showing up recently were overly communicated and brought harm to the idea of Europe. The worst of the European ways was omnipresent in the media: that we close borders, that everyone wants to leave, that too much money is spent on nothing, and so forth. But no one spoke about how much the Europeans gave to aid, development projects overseas, knowledge sharing, peace efforts. How much the EU has given to its less developed regions. In my part of Europe there are signs everywhere saying 'built by the EU,''completed with the EU assistance,' etc., but I don't remember seeing any in the EU countries (bar the few recently acceded members).

Public diplomacy: A European approach

Public diplomacy, a hotly debated term in its own right, has today come to encompass communication and

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advocacy beyond borders that is delivered directly to the citizens, bypassing any filters. It is exactly what is needed to communicate Europe. It is a cheap and effective way to spread the message of Europe in a plethora of beautiful social media formats, and to communicate it precisely to those that either feel detached from the overly bureaucratic institutions or who can't recognise the truth from the torrents of (mis) information they receive daily. And it allows for a joint effort of all those whose work or personal ambitions go in the direction of promoting the idea of European unity.

From my experience working together with European colleagues, there are many things we already do well. Formats such as the Club of Venice have given government communication professionals like myself an opportunity to meet peers from other countries and institutions and share best practices. This is the European way to do things: let's meet together, join forces, help each other, and create something better for everyone. This is what we have recognised and are trying to implement on our way of communicating the brand of Montenegro (side note: In a true European fashion, we're still working out as to what it is exactly, however, we know that we want to tell a story about Montenegro as a unique part of Europe.) — we will work with other Europeans to come up with a best way to communicate Montenegro as it works to join the EU club.

So the thing I believe we need to introduce is a more strategic and coordinated public diplomacy approach to communicating Europe in all its forms and formats. This would entail a citizen-oriented focus, avoidance of technical language, escape from the silo mentality where everyone communicates just their narrow work, removing focus from national divisions, and putting focus on European similarities and the benefits of the project of united Europe. We need first to listen to people, to understand what they want, to understand their point of view, and only then start developing our own approach. We know what our objective is — to communicate the values of Europe and the benefits of working together — but we are failing at delivering this. This is due to the fact that we haven't fully adjusted to the new reality of everyone having the means to communicate broadly. And those who produce negative messages use these means in a better fashion than we do. So we should use these tools to listen to people and to reach them at their time and venue of convenience. And we should be emotional and dedicated when doing it. Because the project we are communicating deserves passion and commitment.

Passionate about Europe

What I wish would come in the near future (I'm still young so the long term of 10 years or more seems infinitely far away to me) is a Europe-wide approach to communicating and reinforcing the brand of Europe. This would require the institutions, countries, other entities, and individuals who share this view to speak in the same voice, share the same messages, and join forces to tell the story of Europe. I would like to see us all agree together on the same narrative, but let communication be dispersed, de-centralised, and tailored to various audiences and topics, and owned by those who are experts on those audiences and topics. And going back to my point that those on the inside often miss the big picture of the brand of Europe, I think what is needed is greater involvement in this process of the enlargement countries — we are more aware on what we are missing that the EU citizens are about what they have and might lose. And we will bring our passion, the passion of those fighting for something better, fighting for a future so clearly better than our present. A future where I hope we will all be able to tell a story similar to that of my wife's friend who studied in a European country, on an EU scholarship by the way, and almost missed our wedding because she left her passport in her home country elsewhere in the EU, completely forgetting the fact that there is a part of Europe she can't get into on her ID card. Because an awesome freedom like that, like all good things, is so often taken for granted once you get used to it.

Soft power will continue to matter

Verena Nowotny

A *tour d'horizon* on soft power and public diplomacy from Latin America, Asia to the Arab world and Europe reveals some interesting shifts in the allocation of soft power and triggers a more thorough consideration about what is actually appealing to citizens around the world.

Even if one did not keep one's fingers crossed for Brazil to win the 2014 Soccer World Cup, one could not help to feel the pain of the nation when the tragedies against Germany and the Netherlands took place. For Brazil soccer is a form of soft power. Even more, it is the form of soft power that Brazil applies the most. Therefore, the loss in the World Cup was more than a sporting event; it was a loss of international prestige and a blow to the pride of the nation. The excruciating fall of the national soccer team somehow mirrors the disillusionment of the Brazilian people who were placated only for a short time by the first victories but then again expressed their strong discontent with the government and challenged the benefit of hosting such major events that come with enormous costs.

Observation no. 1: Soft power comes at a price. If people are still hungry for basic needs, you better deliver some tangible results – otherwise the soft power endeavours of a government might be turned against them.

When in May 2014, the Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang visited Africa, he could reap some rewards for China's long-term efforts in public diplomacy on that continent. Mulatu Teshome, the president of Ethiopia, was happy to converse with Li in Chinese and both Heads of State could revel in the good old days, when they were both studying at the renowned Beijing University. Teshome is one of the tens of thousands of African students who earned their university degree in China during the last decades. At the end of 2013, 33,000 Africans had been studying in China; until 2015, the Chinese government managed to push that number even higher by granting up to 18,000 full scholarships. Meanwhile, also the public TV station CCTV has been offering a master programme, which has been attended by dozens of African journalists. In general, though, China has increased its public diplomacy efforts in Africa, not only by offering education but also by investing in cultural infrastructure such as theatres or sport arenas.

Observation no. 2: The classic means of public diplomacy such as scholarships, student exchange and educating the media – still work. But you need perseverance and a long-term vision to actually experience positive effects.

What works even between so cultural diverse countries like China and the African states can also be witnessed within the Arab world, especially since the beginning of the Arab uprisings. Syria, Iraq and Egypt, once holding not only hard but also soft power, are now consumed in internal turmoil (the dimensions of Syria's tragedy are still far from being measurable). In the meantime, public diplomacy efforts of the Arab Gulf states have spiked – again using the traditional tools – and gained significant momentum. According to the World Bank, these states are today amongst the most generous donors when it comes to financial aid; a lot of this support going to neighbouring countries such as Egypt or Yemen. Financial resources also matter with regard to television production and filming: nowadays a significant proportion entertainment is filmed and recorded in the Gulf cities of Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Doha. The two leading news channels of the Arab world – Al Jazeera in Doha and Al Arabiya in Dubai – have kept themselves engaged in a heavy competition to win the hearts and minds of the Arab public.

The Gulf cities have turned themselves into globally recognized brands, while traditional Arab cities such as Cairo or Damascus have become synonymous with unrest and violence. The cities have invested heavily in museums and universities, attracting talent from across the Arab world and beyond. A survey of young Arabs found that the United Arab Emirates (UAE) topped their list of preferred countries to live in, scoring almost twice as high

as the United States. Furthermore, the Gulf cities have become major meeting points for the world, hosting large international events and meetings. Investment in smart infrastructure also pays: Dubai has become the seventh most visited city in the world and its airport is ranked the world's busiest airport, in terms of passenger numbers.

Observation no. 3: Money can buy soft power – if invested and used in a smart way. Paying particular attention to the needs of neighbouring countries definitely increases the acceptance of a broader public.

So are the Arab Gulf states good countries in terms of what they do for planet earth? No –would be Simon Anholt's answer based on his "Good Country Index". Anholt, internationally known as a strategy advisor and nation brand expert, spent years compiling an index to determine which of the 163 examined countries contributes most to the common, global good. Nations were classified across seven categories, including areas like science and technology world, prosperity and equality, health and wellbeing and within each category further sub-sets of data were compared. The winner in 2016 was Sweden, followed by Denmark and the Netherlands. The U.S. ranked number 20; outperformed by 15 European countries as well as Canada, New Zealand, Japan and Australia.
In Anholt's view, ordinary citizens should start thinking about whether countries are good or bad – and not only whether they are successful. As countries nowadays are tightly connected "people along with politicians and businesses need to start asking themselves about the international implications of what they're doing."
The idea reminds of Corporate Social Responsibility, only on a government or nation state level. Anholt stood ready to admit that. "When I first started working on this, I came up with this ludicrous tag 'Governmental Social Responsibility' because it is an exact equivalent."

Observation no. 4: Is this the long awaited tool to measure soft power and thus the effects of public diplomacy? I doubt it for various reasons:

1. The underlying data and criteria are not only partly difficult to compare but also not necessarily meaningful when it comes to a positive impact on the world.
2. An index might serve as an argument for politicians but it is not strong enough to trigger action from citizens.
3. Blaming and shaming sells well with the media, especially with regard to the immediate impact that harsh headlines and reports on today's toughest crises (migration, terrorist threats, growing Euroscepticism and nationalism) may have on public opinion. However, as everybody knows, it rarely serves as a means to change unwanted behaviour.
4. Citizens continue to reflect implications of what their country is doing when they get involved – be it as an interested citizen, as a member of an NGO, an activist etc.

VERENA NOWOTNY
Verena Nowotny, a partner at Gaisberg Consulting, served as a spokesperson for the Austrian government for more than 10 years. During her time as foreign policy spokesperson for the Austrian Federal Chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel she was also responsible for the communication during Austria's EU presidency in 2006. When Austria was elected a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for the years 2009/10, she acted as Austria's spokesperson in New York. With more than 20 years of international experience, she now supports businesses, start-ups and institutions in the areas of strategic communications, public affairs and crisis communications as an independent consultant. Verena holds a Master's degree in political management from George Washington University (Washington, DC).

Long before Joe Nye came up with the idea of "soft power", the Italian Communist Party leader of the early 20th century, Antonio Gramsci, made the distinction between two kinds of power, or as he put it, hegemony. For Gramsci, hegemony of the state was based on force, or hard power; the state must establish a monopoly over the means of violence in order to maintain order. But the allegiance to a worldview by the public must be earned and cannot be enforced. In his view, it is soft power, or the consent of the civil society, that legitimates hard power.

Also in today's world, legitimacy must be earned – partly by performance, partly by trying to win the public's consent for necessary policies. Simply labelling governments or states as good or bad will not do justice to the growing complexity of today's world of politics.

One final observation: in summer 2016, right after the UK experienced the extraordinary moment of its internal referendum on EU membership, an annual survey of international soft powers carried out by Portland Communication[1] rated the country the 2nd in the soft power global ranking system. I wonder what would have been the impact of the results of the referendum, if such a poll had been carried out in the 2nd semester of 2016.

1 http://softpower30.portland-communications.com/

Public diplomacy: relevance and reasonable perspectives in times of crisis

Vincenzo Le Voci

In his "Mentor Book" entitled "American Diplomacy 1900-1950" [1], George Kennan[2] made a perfect evaluation of the US foreign relations with a view to reflect on what was needed at that time to help preserve peace and stability in the world which had just come out of two terrible conflicts:
"I cannot refrain from saying that I firmly believe that we could make much more effective use of the principle of professionalism in the conduct of foreign policy; that we could, if we wished, develop a corps of professional officers superior to anything that exists or ever has existed in this field; and that, by treating these men with respect and drawing on their insight and experience, we could help ourselves considerably. However, I am quite prepared to recognize that this runs counter to strong prejudices and preconceptions in sections of our public mind […] and that for this reasons we are probably condemned to continue relying almost exclusively on what we might call "diplomacy by dilettantism"."

Well… after more that half a century, the issue raised by Kennan remains topical and should sound like a warning bell. Today's world continues to experience a complex combination of economic, political and social difficulties exacerbated by growing mutual distrust, extremism, outbreaks of xenophobia, nationalistic feelings and terrorist threats.

Against this background, does it have any sense to speak about "Public Diplomacy"? Does this expression still count in today's socio-political landscape? What can we, as communicators, learn from historical and current conjunctures?

In my humble opinion, today more than ever "Public Diplomacy" counts! It is mirroring nowadays' trends and is capable of adapting to evolving societies much more than one could imagine. This is indeed a very challenging field, where central governments of big and small countries, as well as regions,cities, and international organizations and institutions are striving to shape their own specific dimension. "Shape it before sharing it"…and this global engagement requires a "multitude of actors and networks" [3].

Public diplomacy, "soft" diplomacy", reputation management, traditional-cultural-social diplomacy, external educational dimension and branding are, with different nuances, part of the same business, but are increasingly challenged by three important factors: 1) lack of experience, competence and comprehension of geo-political realities; 2) lack of investments in new generations of professionals and in training; 3) the newly emerged media landscape. In other words, diplomacy always runs the risk of…arriving too late and acting weakly.

Diplomacy is a strategic science and cannot be invented. It must be built step by step and then nourished. Professionalism and share of techniques and experience can help strike the balance.

Verena Nowotny (former spokesperson of the Austrian PM Chancellor and today's communication advisor at Gaisberg Consulting and expert on Far Asia nation branding trends), has sharply pinpointed also in this Book, which celebrates the Club of Venice 30 years of tireless communication activities, Simon Anholt's statement [4] that "good public diplomacy rests on three ingredients: "strategy, substance and symbolic actions"[5].

The global attention is drawn to individual conflicts and social instabilities scattered throughout the world in

1 Edited in 1951 by the University of Chicago

2 John Kennan, US diplomat, in the last century served as Ambassador to the former Soviet Union and Yougoslavia and subsequently taught history and international affairs at Princeton University, was not only a keen observer but also a shrewd "capacity and diplomacy builder". As renowned diplomatic historian, Kennan

3 USC News, "Top 10 public diplomacy stories of 2013 reveal global trends"

4 At the Club of Venice plenary meeting in Tallinn in June 2013

5 Verena's "We don't want to be European" was published on the Club of Venice review "Convergences" n° 2

leopard spots (some erupted suddenly and unexpected, others with very deep roots in the times). The question raises how public diplomacy efforts can help individual countries and continents to
search a new way, not only to search for a new method, not to merely assert their prestige, authority and strength but rather to disseminate a culture of winning social, cultural, educational, ethical values that can be globally shared.

The recommendations made by Verena concerning the "EU's and its member states' homework to do in terms of coordination and cooperation" are an appeal to full engagement, to common sense and to commitment to act through a wide spectrum of practices.

There is a need to address any lack of strategy and vision, seeking coherence and ensuring continuity, preventing PD players and specialists in branding from getting content with scattered actions. There is also a need to draw inspiration from good examples of trans-national cooperation – for instance, progress made in bilateral share which provided random, but crystal-clear success (i.e. the collaboration in cultural field between Denmark and Egypt or between
Bulgaria and Tunisia, or the correlation between Cultural Diplomacy and Cultural Exchange in Cases of the British Council and the Korean Cultural Center) as well as from single charismatic figures (e.g. the Pope in his struggle against inequalities and for the humblest and weakest, Malala's fighting for the education dimension and for the women's role in society, Mandela's heritage as need for reconciliation, peace and human rights recognition and protection).

Whilst a system-level governance principle appears more and more difficult to apply in a planet where it is almost impossible to find harmony among neighbors, governments are at a turning point. If they wish to avoid widening gaps between central authorities and their citizens, prevent citizens' internal distrust as well as growing fears in the foreign populations, they have to be capable to analyse and understand how their messages are perceived and interpreted in their own territory and by citizens in other countries. Technology has been meanwhile providing additional "power" to communicate to other players (I would also say "professional profiles" as well), whilst action in this field was previously confined within the traditional monopoly of governments.

The world has changed and public diplomacy is increasingly acquiring new connotations. Promoting a common, corporate identity made of solid branded values is not a one-off initiative which can be launched without proper reflection, but requires a long process of self-understanding and knowledge of a country's principles and means.

Strategy comes afterwards. Setting up goals and identify target audiences comes afterwards. Only when the players are ready, if they are conscious of their vision and willing to dedicate reasonable resources, outreaching foreign audiences
can be a successful phase.

Some countries may also be more motivated than others in public diplomacy and branding efforts because of the specific national and regional realities which they are leaving – so that a high degree of collaboration on public diplomacy matters can be detected between states which are organised in a federal way (this entitles them to take particular care of important sectors of their society such as culture, economy, education which belong to their own special "territorial" competences).

Cultural events and educational exchanges are then de facto recognized (though not unanimously) as huge public diplomacy opportunities. And huge events can be catalyzers for great branding campaigns of remarkable impact (i.e. Copenhagen Cop-15 on Climate Change in 2009, Chopin's Anniversary
campaign in Poland in 2011, Croatia's EU membership referendum campaign in 2012-2013, Paris Cop-21 on

Climate Change in 2015 and its recent ratification, Milan Universal Expo "Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life" in 2015, the European Year for Development 2015, this year Scotland's claim of independence after the result of the UK referendum on Europe, the coming celebration of the 60th Anniversary of the Rome Treaties I 2017, etc.).

The Club of Venice decided to take Public Diplomacy on board in November 2007, when meeting in plenary in Rome (exceptionally convening in the capital on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Rome Treaties). Since then, it organized four thematic seminars, respectively in France (2009), Malta (2010), Poland (2011) and Cyprus (2012) – and is planning to develop further analysis and debate in this domain.

The Club plenary meeting in Tallinn in June 2013 enabled participants to pursue the exchange of feedback on today's PD trends and strategies. An ad hoc session on "reputation management" was introduced by Simon Anholt (who was one of the distinguished international experts who attended the first PD seminar convened by the Club in Paris in 2009) and enriched by a contribution from Ole Egberg Mikkelsen, former Under-Secretary for Consular Services and Public Diplomacy at the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and today Ambassador of the Kingdom of Denmark in Poland.

The plenary meeting of May 2016 in The Hague enabled the Club to share valuable information on recent public diplomacy trends, in presence of the above Danish Ambassador and of Professor Jan Melissen, PD specialist from the Clingendael Institute. Our discussions inevitably focused on the impact of today's refugee and migration crisis and increased terrorist threat on public opinion – a tremendous shift perceived in countries such as France and Belgium and in the people's sentiment abroad with regard to the security standards in those countries. Tragedies which cause a lot of disorientation and concern for the country's security and social mechanisms; they are tough tests for governance, since good reputation and citizens' confidence takes long time to be built, but can vanish or decrease suddenly in one shot, in few hours.

Conflicts, national instability and rough shifts in internal politics are the main enemy of public diplomacy, which is the first to pay the consequences of shifts in external relations. Very complex and complicated issues such as the TTIP negotiations, the Russia-Ukraine crisis, the Middle East eternal turmoil, the heterogeneous response of the EU Member States to the EU's call to sensibility to the emergency relocation of migrants and the never-ending African and Asian migratory phenomenon, the results of the UK referendum on the EU membership are empoisoning relations even among countries which had rebuilt and reinforced for centuries relations of mutual trust and cooperation. The mankind has never learned enough from history and walls are being erected 25 years after the re-unification of Berlin.

Even more worrying, according to specialists in global governance such as Jim Whitman, "human societies are manufacturing new global security risks at a faster rate than existing institutions can cope"…

How can the "pure concepts" of Public Diplomacy survive in this new "age of anxiety", when we read almost every day about disputes between politicians about their home business, between them and the international organisations that in principle they should keep close, between giants of the nuclear powers who are raising again their voices threatening each other and injecting unauspicious omens?

Right after WWII, Albert Camus in his "The Plague" warned the reader that celebrating peace was not enough and citizen had to built enough energies and be vigilant in order to prevent further evil from returning. Similarly, William Auden in 1947 launched the reflection on a cultural state of disease, of insecurity and uncertainty about the future of humanity).

How can we react, as communicators, to negative trends, contrast bashing and self-bashing, help relaunch relations and societies and contribute to making citizens proud and eager for common values, confident in

travelling abroad and feeling safe and free everywhere, knowing each other and enriching from this process of knowledge?

Traditional PD definitions shared by participants within the Club depict this topic as "direct or indirect communication of one state with the citizens of another state, engaging with key stakeholders such as political parties, NGOs and special interest groups, engaging through the media (by articles, interviews, "classic" internet presence and pro-active approach with "social media") to communicate policy goals".

Meanwhile, what is Europe doing to develop its public diplomacy network? What have we noticed during the first mandate of the new EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Mme Mogherini? How are public diplomacy principles implemented through the EU's delegations worldwide? What horizons for the new EU's Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy that she High Representative presented in June 2016 to the European Council? These are themes which the Club of Venice may envisage debating in its future meetings. The Global Strategy refers, among others, to the fact that the EU is ready to act as a "responsible global stakeholder", but also underlines that "responsibility must be shared and requires investing in our partnerships". 1 Public Diplomacy, as a precious communication player, can certainly help develop such spirit of partnership.

I remain convinced that the strength of governments and international institutions such as the EU essentially lies in their use of public diplomacy utilising "soft power", which relies on culture, values and policies.
Public diplomacy can have a strong impact on international cooperation and in relations with all ranges of audiences and stakeholders, from the closest to the most remote. It can be the key feature to earn reputation, to use Simon Anholt's expression, as a "country which does good for the world"[6].

VINCENZO LE VOCI
Vincenzo Le Voci, Secretary-General of the Club of Venice (network of communications directors from the European Union Member States, institutions and countries candidate to the accession) is a EU Council official since 1992.
He has worked on Transparency and Information Policy issues since 2001 and is currently coordinating the work of the Working Party on Information. Within the EU Council Secretariat he consolidated his experience by working for the Linguistic Division, Research and Development, Education and Culture and Staff Training Depts.
Before reaching the EU framework in 1992 he worked in the NATO as Housing Manager for the US Air Force (1985-1991).
Vincenzo writes on communication topics for books and magazines and gives lectures in communication faculties of universities EU-wide.

6 https://www.ted.com/talks/simon_anholt_which_country_does_the_most_good_for_the_world

Public diplomacy and branding

Hanna Brogren

Sweden joined the European Union in 1995, after a comprehensive national debate and, finally, a referendum in 1994. Domestic media discourse in Sweden at the time was EU sceptic or just ignored the EU dimension of news events. The morning papers, along with the Swedish radio and television, depicted the EU as an inefficient bureaucracy without a human face, that often made absurd decisions. Media reported about the EU banning bent cucumbers and wrong size strawberries from the market. There was a campaign about the EU making Swedish snus – snuff – illegal. Snus is a popular chewing tobacco, especially in northern and rural Sweden, i.e. the most EU sceptic areas.

I suppose it took the Swedish media some time to get the knack of what was going on in Brussels, Strasbourg and in the capitals of the Presidencies, and then to connect with Swedish local and national issues and government. The swedes were at the time big consumers of morning papers, with the highest subscription rates in the union, and keen followers of public service news - all in written and spoken Swedish. So, at the time the swedes pretty much relied on a EU story based on myths rather than facts.

Politically all our parties, except the Left and the Green parties, favoured the Swedish membership. During the entry campaign, the open market was the major argument for joining. Basic European values and EU´s role as peacekeeper were taken for granted. It was natural for us to join a union with shared values like human rights, liberty, equality, rule of law and the rights of minorities. And we all agree that society should be pluralistic, non-discriminating, tolerant, just and built on solidarity and equality between men and women. These values were already in our DNA. The practical side, the business advantages of the membership was the arena for arguments. But Sweden made a lukewarm entry, the referendum engaged some 80 per cent of the voters, 52 per cent yes to the membership.

As a new member state Swedish politicians and civil servants learned step by step about the work in the union; we made new friends, found alliances and reinforced old friendships, we did well in some negotiations, lost others, but tried hard to be a good member, stayed true to our values and tried to actively make the EU greater – a bit friendlier and, to us, hopefully a bit more Swedish!

Pretty soon it was time to prepare the first Presidency in 2001. What a perfect opportunity to show good leadership and to forward the joint agenda. And for educating the Swedes about the current EU agenda and the potential of the membership. To come back to the founding values and beyond the business side of the union. To work together with sustainability and employment. At the MFA we started preparing the Communication in 1999. The task for me and my team was to develop the Swedish branding and communication strategy targeted at the Swedish general public. I had a good budget and the goals for Communication and Branding were set. Our strategy was Public Diplomacy, though we didn´t use the term then. We brought the EU to Sweden by having 92 meetings in 46 cities throughout the country, including two Summits.

Sweden´s ambitious Branding and Public Diplomacy strategy stood on three legs; to be a good chair for the union and reach results within the political priorities, to bring the EU to Sweden and to bring Sweden closer to the EU. All of us focused on the bigger picture. The brand was built in two levels; the political priorities (3 E:s; Employment, Environment, Enlargement) and how we did it, we called it the "Swedish characteristics"; transparency, design, high tech, sustainability, gender equality and creativity. We stuck to our messages and tried our best to live the brand on all levels and dimensions – and carried the messages to all arenas. We designed communication to activate students locally and through our web site, we offered cultural events such as a touring lunch comedy about EU myths and we twinned villages in the 27 member and candidate countries with 27 Swedish counterparts. We wanted to get to know more ordinary Europeans and we wanted them to know us. Why do I tell this story now, 15 years later? Is this even relevant now? I like to think so. My conclusion is that it is even more important to build the brand on basic founding values that are true, accepted and authentic.

Otherwise you don´t have a chance. Social media and viral communication make it impossible to control the environment of your brand, but it can also give you great opportunities.

Since 2001 I have implemented a few more brands and communication strategies; the rebranding of the Swedish Government Offices to better reflect the constitution; positioning Stockholm as a smart and sustainable international city; and right now I am making a brand platform for an unknown but rapidly expanding suburban town near Stockholm. What did I bring along from 2001? What challenged are shared? Is public diplomacy relevant to talk about in non-diplomatic contexts?
The simple answer would be that in all these contexts the communication platform has been the brand, its simple values and working on facts.

At the Swedish Government Offices, the bottom line of the brand values was the meaning of the constitution. Our communication was designed to enhance democratic functions and transparency in an institutional context, i.e. to bring national government and the decisions they made closer to the citizen. We worked mostly through media then and used digital tools and this became a part of operations.

After that I took on the positioning of the City of Stockholm - a prospering capital city facing challenges like many other growing cities in this urban day and age. Our audiences were wide. For Stockholm, the strategy was to share experiences and knowledge and expanding it, finding synergies and managing challenges to create an environment where citizens can prosper and live the lives they dream about.
But what about values? We started from the vision for the city which was known and accepted by the city´s employees, it contained the brand promise – Stockholm a world class city. It was based on values that both the Stockholmer´s and the city officials agreed on. We needed facts to back it.

We set bold goals and started working at home, within the city administration. We needed the whole work force to embrace the vision and focus on the wellbeing of the citizens and we needed their innovative skills to improve the services. We needed this to succeed outside of Stockholm as well as to attract stake holders outside the city and abroad. We needed our brand to be authentic, to be true in the ears of both our work force, the citizens and the surrounding world.

The brand of Stockholm was built on our love for nature and commitment to sustainability, on innovation through ICT and green tech and to the welfare of the people. It reflected good self-confidence – a rather small city wanting to contribute on the global arena. Thus Stockholm was appointed the First European Green Capital the same year as it was awarded Intelligent Community of the World in New York and Sweden´s Quality Community. The brand was the values and the facts, the method to engage many and the effort to live it every day.

As I write this I am rebranding a mid-size suburban town 20 minutes from central Stockholm called Järfälla. It is an unknown town even in the county, it has a stained reputation and social challenges. But it is also expanding rapidly, thanks to great public transportation with commuter trains, and a new subway is under construction. It offers investment opportunities in housing and property and has excellent recreational values for its inhabitants, green spaces and a lake-shore with beaches and facilities for boating.

The brand goal is to attract investors and inhabitants, to make Järfälla´s citizens proud of their town and engaged in its development. The new brand platform has to build on solid values that are understood, accepted and authentic to the people living there. Our method is collecting associations and the core values by meeting a lot of people and ask them to describe what Järfälla is and could be for them. Do I need to say that the communication budget is tiny? Still, communication and the energy that comes with it will be core to the development here. It goes for both public communication and the services for citizens and for the marketing effort. We don´t

Photo Credit: Rosie Alm

know the outcome yet, and the work will continue for years to come but the idea is to have a strong and authentic brand story to engage new groups of people – both professionally and on a personal level.

Let me try to sum a few conclusions, or rather reminders that you already know:

- Branding is about catching the essence, and it has to be authentic if it is going to engage people. After all we aren´t selling fast moving consumer goods and offer no physical product.
- We are in the business of sustainability on all levels. Public brands must be able to exist in many contexts with different publics which make it all the more important to make it simple.
- The media scene and digital platforms are changing quickly and the number of messages mixed in these platforms. But people´s minds and perception remains pretty much the same.
- Successful communication is core and part of the mission and vision in both society, NGOs and the private sector. In my point of view we have to design our messages on the founding values like private companies build their marketing on their brand book.
- Branding of democratic institutions, cities and policies need to rest firmly on values that are understood, accepted and true to all stake holders; the citizens, participants, politicians, voters, investors.
- Social media means your brand will defined on and on, outside its original context. Simplicity and to hold on to the core values are key. In my mind this is the only way the brand and its values can be relevant over time and in many contexts.

The political context is about negotiations, but successful communication must be clear. This can result in contradictions in a political context. If you need to communicate in a fuzzy manner – don´t! It is better for the brand.

HANNA BROGREN
Joined the Club of Venice in 2001 then as Director of Communications at the Swedish Government Offices. Hanna believes in networking, exchanging ideas and challenging old habits that don´t serve you. Since 2015 she runs her own business in communications, management and organisation. She is a curious person constantly looking for new challenges.

Communicating Europe to citizens: more than a lip service?

Hans Brunmayr

On 16 September 2016 the leaders of 27 EU Member States met in Bratislava to discuss European common future without Britain. They adopted a declaration and a roadmap for decisions to be taken.
This « Bratislava Declaration » contains one paragraph dealing with communication :

« We need to improve the communication with each other – among Member States, with EU institutions, but most importantly with our citizens. We should inject more clarity into our decisions. Use clear and honest language. Focus on citizens' expectations, with strong courage to challenge simplistic solutions of extreme or populist political forces. »

Everybody can easily agree with this statement, but is there a chance that it will be turned into concrete action and lead to an improvement in the perception of the EU by its citizens ?
Ever since citizens started to show discontent with the EU and since their confidence in the Union and its institutions eroded, the EU and in particular the Commission have tried to find the adequate communication answer. However, the different plans and strategies which were adopted had only little impact. The most serious and concrete attempt being the « Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate » and the » White Paper on a European Communication Policy » elaborated by Vice-President Margot Wallström who tried to shape communication listening to citizens, speaking in clear language and going local. During her mandate more emphasis was given to working together with the other institutions and with Member States and mechanisms to favour such cooperation were created in the form of « Management Partnerships ».

In the last decade the EU had to face multitude of external and internal crises ranging from the economic and financial crisis, the sovereign debt crisis and the refugee crisis to political turmoil in Ukraine as well as Daesh and the spreading of terrorism to Europe. The EU appeared lacking capacity to deal with these severe problems. A sharp decline in citizens' trust in the EU was the consequence, boosting populist and Eurosceptic movements and political parties.

One could have thought that the response of EU-institutions and Member States would have been a reinforcement of endeavours to communicate Europe together to citizens. Alas, the contrary happened. The Commission shifted its priority to direct dialogue with citizens underlining above all its proper role and dismantling mechanisms for communicating Europe in partnership with Member States. Instead of showing a united image of the EU fighting successfully crisis situations citizens got divergent views from the different actors on European level putting all the accent on their proper merits and leaving the citizen with a perception of inefficiency and lack of co-ordinated strategy. The image of the Commission suffered particularly and it became again the scapegoat for all European evil.

On top of all the difficulties the EU has now to deal with the result of the British referendum on 23 June 2016 which had been called for purely internal political reasons. As Ian Bond, director at the Centre for European Reform, points out in his excellent analysis «Always look at the dark side of life », the Leave-vote was the result of decades of casual Euroscepticism from British political leaders and media. British ministers claiming credit on behalf of national Government for economic success and EU measures good for Britain and blaming Brussels bureaucrats for necessary unpopular measures.

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The defeat of the Remain-voters was clearly a failure of communication, the pro-Europeans being not able to refute false populistic arguments and to convey credible positive messages about the benefits of EU-membership.
The Brexit shock is creating an unprecedented existential problem to EU institutions and Member States. The first reactions were advocating more cohesion among the 27 and a new bold project for the EU. But soon it turned out that a big reform was impossible to achieve at a moment where opinions on how to solve the crises Europe is faced with are divided or diametrically opposite among different groups of Member States. The Presidents of Commission and European Council tried - each one on his own - to define common denominators but their efforts being frequently jeopardized by politicians in Member States who mostly for internal electoral reasons wanted to push their own agenda or who were changing positions which had been commonly agreed earlier. A striking example is the campaign against TTIP an CETA. An alliance of NGOs, trade unions and political pressure groups using exaggerated populistic or even false arguments succeeded with the help of tabloids to gain support of a majority of the population in several Member States. Leading politicians of these countries joined urging the Commission to abandon negotiations on TTIP or refusing to sign the trade agreement with Canada which corresponds fully to the unanimously given negotiation mandate. We witness an appalling hostility of media in many Member States treating the Commission as « technocrats without democratic legitimacy » who are ignoring the opinions of nation states and imposing policies violating the sovereignty of Member States. And this Brussels bashing is not only performed by populistic media but has spread to « serious « and in the past rather pro-European media. Criticizing the EU is trendy and the few defenders of its decisions and its institutions deem it necessary to apologize first before telling something positive about Europe.

So far the British referendum did not trigger a European disintegration process. On the contrary, opinion polls show that population in the 27 Member States is now less inclined to leave the EU. But, as Yves Bertoncini, director of the Jaques Delors Institute, writes, the Union is facing a crisis of "co-owners" arguing over a revision of their co-habitation rules rather than a start of a wave of exits heralded by the future Brexit. The Bratislava European Council of the 27 had the objective to give a clear signal of unity and to convey the vision of an attractive EU citizens can trust and support. But it offered above all the image of a deeply divided Union whose Member States are unable to agree on solutions for burning problems like the refugee and migration crisis. The press briefings given by leaders separately were a perfect illustration of this dramatic lack of unity and common vision. No surprise that the echo in the media and among European citizens was quite negative. People want to see results. To this end the "Bratislava Roadmap" with its list of concrete measures must be put into practice. But given the dissensions among Member States this appears far from granted.

Anyhow, for the time being "Communicating Europe to citizens" is not high on the agenda and no concrete measures are foreseen to restart common efforts and actions. But is this really astonishing? Certainly not. You can only communicate successfully in partnership if you have a shared vision. And Member States and European institutions can only win trust of citizens if they are able to present a common European project. The EU has to prove that it is not the problem but the solution. As long as this cannot be achieved, intentions to improve communication with European citizens will remain pure lip service.

The role of institutional communication and the resurgence of propaganda

Juana Lahousse Juárez

For the past thirty years, institutional communication has evolved dramatically as institutions have embraced new technologies derived from the worldwide spread use of the internet. Technology has accelerated the deep transformation that public bodies have undertaken to increase accountability and transparency towards our citizens who demand extremely high levels of access to information.

Citizens' habits have evolved and so have ours. Specialists in the field have widely written since the early 2000s how propaganda is not acceptable anymore and how citizens are hyper-informed and that globalization and access to information have made it ineffective. When five years ago we had the pleasure of hosting Simon Anholt in the European Parliament on the opening of the 2011 EuroPCom Conference, his statement on this topic was one of the takeaways of the two-day conference. He defended his idea that anyone engaging in propaganda think very little of their audience and will not get the message across, or even get the opposite outcome.

Fast forward five years and the discussions happening between communication experts have taken a completely different direction to what the Branding guru was talking about. Strategic Communications is taking a larger role each day among professionals. The role of certain countries in propagating so called news in the national media of the Member States and beyond, the troll farms posting thousands of comments with a very clear aim to discredit the EU, its Member States and, overall, western democracies, radicalisation propaganda works, populist movements successfully use propagandistic techniques without any sanction... the list goes on and on. For years we have imposed on ourselves to be factual, impartial and objective in our institutional communication. Those of us who believe in a certain ethical standard found that credibility with the public could only be built by being honest and telling things how they are. Ironically, often, the EU institutions have been unfairly accused of propagandistic practices. Every time a good news item was told, it was met with the cynicism of the media and citizens alike. Maybe the absence of visible propaganda made it easier for people to lose track of what true propaganda is.

Indeed, the overwhelming amount of information available makes it possible to fact check things. Yet, why aren't ordinary citizens doing that? Why are we seeing more and more how people get their news from the same places, usually those that support their existing beliefs? Who and what are the trusted sources? Are we able to reach out and break the communication silos people are placing themselves into? What are we expected to do when the truth is not enough anymore?

The standards we, as public institutions, have to respect because they are guarantees of the rule of law and open societies limit us greatly in our quest for solutions to these problems.

We are not dealing with a business as usual situation anymore. I would have liked to write an enlightening article outlining clear solutions to this conundrum. I am afraid my assessment of the situation is that we have hints of what could be done but have not yet found the way of making these solutions materialise at the scale they need to happen to be effective, whether it is at national or EU level.

The most preoccupying event we are witnessing within this phenomenon is that it's starting to trickle down into the mainstream communication. Politicians from traditional parties have discovered that the techniques for propaganda work in western societies still. If anything, they seem to be twice as effective when positioned directly against factual communication.

Take the example of the Brexit referendum, where it was possible for a cabinet minister to say on national television how Turkey would be joining the EU soon and that Britain didn't have a veto[1]. At the same time, on the other side of the Atlantic, we are in the middle of an extraordinarily mesmerizing US Presidential campaign that

1 It's very likely that they will join, in part because of the migrant crisis,"'Britain doesn't [have a veto]. I do not think that the EU is going to keep Turkey out. I think it is going to join." Penny Mordaun, Andrew Marr Show, BBC

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defies all that we've been brought up to believe is the best practice is communication. Fact checking by traditional media does not make up for the large amounts of people swayed by well-told lies. A well-told lie, repeated enough times, becomes popular truths. We lived it for years when dealing with certain press banging on about the shape of the bananas and we thought that would stay there, that it was the style of a particular type of media.

What would we have done at the time to stop this form of journalists from spreading? However, the responsibility does not fall exclusively on public institutions. The media's obsession to come across as non-partisan has led to situations such as the ones mentioned above, where they took equal distance between two positions, giving credibility often to positions that were simply not true. There is not an equal distance between truth and lie. It's either one or the other. One thing is to respect diverging opinions and to give them equal measure; another thing is to pretend that lies are as respectable as facts.

When the lines are blurred, when information overkill makes it hard to distinguish facts from fiction, when external powers abuse the freedoms that makes us who we are as open societies, it is time to put our heads together and come to an understanding of what the new rules of the game are. This needs to be followed by concrete actions and behaviours to be undertaken together in order to be effective without endangering the high level of freedoms that we have in the EU.

The Club of Venice has been the home for discussion and learning in public communication for 30 years. Today, its existence seems to be more needed than ever to face these challenges that are new in format but extremely old by nature. I wish I would be giving you answers but I only have questions.

Communicating Europe after Brexit: an important task for each and every one of us

Niels Jørgen Thøgersen

Politicians, political parties, civil society, citizens, media, schools, governments, EU-institutions – we all have a fundamental duty to re-think the way we deal with Europe. And especially focus on one very important issue: how do we again engage people in what Europe is and what it should be used for.

Europe and our common interests are far too important to leave to the forces of populism, xenophobia and political charlatans. The Brexit vote in June is hopefully a wake-up call for those who were not aware of that. It was remarkable – and positive – that the support for the European Union increased significantly in most countries immediately after the vote. People seem really to have understood the seriousness of the matter.

But this is not the end of the story. It is in fact the beginning. Things are not as they were before. We are more than ever entering a new era. So far Europe seems to have become the "Prügelknabe" of everybody. Brussels-bashing gave the impression of soon being a candidate for the Olympic Games. Nobody really cared – certainly not the politicians. They have constantly been "talking Europe down", blaming Europe for all sorts of failures and problems. Still some of them organized referenda about Europe – and looked very surprised, when the results of the vote were negative. As a previous president of the European Commission once said: *If you spend all week blaming Europe, you can't ask people to vote for Europe on Sunday!*

So, where to start ?
First, let's be clear on one thing: communication, even the best in the world, cannot solve this fundamental problem. To communicate you have to have something to communicate. And even more important: you have to have people to communicate with. If not, it won't work.
And one more fundamental point: never try to sell anything. Some people still think that this is the way ahead. And they tend to believe that if people have been told sufficiently many times they will "buy" it at the end. No, no, no!

What you – we – all of us – have to do is to engage people. Get us all actively involved. Engage citizens everywhere in seeing Europe and what Europe does as their matter. As their interest. As their daily life. Europe is actually a way of life. A way with peace, with opportunities, with freedoms, with challenges, with cultures, with constant dialogues and developments. Europe is not something strange down in, up in or over in Brussels. Europe is where you are. Europe and its results are your daily life – the reason why you can live as you do. But Europe is not done and finished. It is an ongoing process. A process which will be and should be decided by you and the politicians you elect. Therefore, it is of fundamental importance that we all – each in our way – engage in what Europe is and especially what it should be in the future.

But engage in what?
Right after the UK vote in June opinion polls asked people what they expect from Europe.
Here is a short overview of the activities people see as top priorities now:

1. Our external borders: The decision to create a *European Border and Coast Guard Agency* was taken mid September. It came into effect on October 6. This is a very important development to make it possible for us to abolish all internal border controls again. This is of fundamental importance to our companies and to millions of Europeans on the move. We should all know it, use it, develop it.
2. Our fight against cross-border crime of all sorts: our common *EUROPOL* is already doing a great job every day. It makes 16.000 cross-border criminal investigations every year. And from spring 2017 it will be further strengthened.
3. Our cooperation in Europe on *defending ourselves* against external enemies is more important than ever before and now also agreed on the highest level. With a more and more aggressive Russia, wars near us in the Middle East and a US with a coming new president we have to make sure that we are able and willing to look after our own security. The issue is on the agenda of the EU summits.

4. Our ageing population in Europe (20 % over 65 years in 2025 - and a declining birth rate) we need *an orderly and human way to receive people from outside* to add to our workforce in many years to come. If not, we will definitely not be able to keep our welfare as it is today. How we organize that and cooperate about it is one of the very important issues to discuss and decide in the years to come.
5. Our huge *youth unemployment* is likewise a fundamental problem, we have to get solved. This is definitely best done together, with joint and coordinated initiatives. Education, education and education. Exchange programmes for all young people for them to learn in and from other countries (a sort of ERASMUS for all). Job stimulation programmes. And efficient exchange of Best Practices in this field between countries. The new Juncker plan for a European Solidarity Corps to start before the end of this year and with up to 100.000 young Europeans by 2020 is another very interesting initiative to get young people engaged and bring them practical work experience.

I believe that these examples – and there are many more – show that it makes a lot of sense for us all to engage in these matters. Not only to know about them. But to have ideas and make plans on how they should develop, to fight for these ideas and plans, and to ensure that they work when they have been decided. This is what democracy is about. Political democracy. And Europe is politics. An ongoing political struggle on where we want to go in the future.

Now, how does communication, how does engagement come into this?
First, all *mainstream politicians and their political parties* in Europe have to take Europe seriously. They must start acting like statesmen and stateswomen and have a plan, a programme on how Europe should develop. And they also have to make a constant effort to explain what Europe is and what it means to people's daily life. They certainly do not do that today.

Second, *civil society* in all its forms and structures have to get actively engaged too. Not just now and then when a particular issue interests them, but on a continuous basis. They have the energy. They have the networks. They are very often pan-European. And they are often full of ideas and creativity. Europe should do much more to stimulate the active engagement and involvement of civil society in European affairs.

Third, *we citizens* have in my view a basic duty to get much more actively involved in what Europe does and should do. Modern communication tools make it as easy as riding a bike to get all the information wanted and to take active part in on-line debates and electronic virtual communities. See it as an important task to help on-line debates focus on real and fact-based issues. We all know that social media, esp. Facebook, are often the playground for ignorant lunatics and intolerable self-promoters. Do not let them get away with it! Use the time needed to sideline them and get the discussions and exchange of ideas back on a serious and result-oriented track. The potential of people, also across borders, is enormous. The social media are the tools to let this potential come convincingly out in the open. And it is often to the benefit of all of us.

Fourth, the *media* also have to get their act together. Especially the *public service media*. An important part of their role is to make sure that their viewers, listeners, readers and social media users are constantly well informed about what happens in society, also in other countries, what is being discussed and decided, how opportunities and challenges are developing. This is not the case today. Often the editors and journalists do not have the time or the knowledge to handle these issues. Why not think of a special ERASMUS programme for exchange of journalists across borders? It would stimulate our media colleagues. And it would certainly bring a much better media coverage of what happens across Europe.

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Fifth, we all know that engagement of young people start in *school*. How is Europe and the different countries and cultures in Europe presented and discussed in our schools today? Very little, I am afraid. Again, this is not at all a suggestion to try to "sell" Europe to the students. It is a proposal to involve them, to engage them, to make it natural for them to follow what's happening outside their own backyard and to be able to assess it and have a qualified opinion about it, also later on in life. In a few countries this already happens in a more systematic way. Why not organize an exchange of Best Practices?

Sixth, *the governments* in the EU member states also have an obvious duty to present and explain Europe and its activities in an orderly and systematic way. Their countries are so to speak the "shareholders" of Europe. They cannot just play innocent and not involved. It is also *their* Europe, *their* activities, *their* decisions, *their* problems. And they hold a wide and profound expertise on how Europe works and should work on local level. They have a fundamental duty to be constantly active in the engagement.

Seventh – and last but not least – *the European institutions* also have to refocus their approach. Press briefings in Brussels, brochures, websites, local Representations are no longer enough. Or even appropriate. They should no longer accept to be absent in the national and local debates. After all, they are supposed to be the best informed about what is going on and what is being prepared. It should be a duty for them to share all their knowledge and experience actively with everybody. They have to have two or more highly professional native speaking spokespersons in each country. Placed in or linked to the present Representations. Persons who have access to all information and who have the mandate at all times to speak on behalf of their institution. Their role should be to explain the facts, to kill the lies and to defend the EU position. On TV, on radio, in social media and in events of importance. They would in this way also become a face of Europe in what many people today consider to be a faceless, far-away thing.

It is my strong belief, even conviction, that with these initiatives it will be very likely that our citizens again will feel connected to Europe – feel its importance for their daily life and not least feel more directly involved. And furthermore, it will vaccinate and thereby protect the public at large from the dangerous germs of inward looking nationalism and post-factual populism and xenophobia. What a victory for our civilized societies that would be!

From a chequered dissent a new active and intelligent consensus

Pier Virgilio Dastoli

A new signal of the EU disintegration has emerged from the UK's referendum that took place on the 23rd of June. This disintegration has started almost ten years ago, and it's brought about by the Governments' and the EU institutions' inability to elaborate, adopt, and apply permanent solutions to transnational problems.

Those problems lie:

- in the crisis that affects multicultural societies and inclusion policies,
- in the gap between those who have substantial incomes and revenues and those who undergo the consequences of the high unemployment rate and the devastation of the European social model,
- in the increasingly widespread organised crime,
- in the curse that terrorism represent and that is combined with the lack of the right to security for citizens,
- in the uncertainty of law and of fundamental rights, starting with equality and solidarity,
- in the inability of the Union to exercise a determinant role in the international framework,
- in the European democratic deficit at the supranational level. The deficit lies in the system's inability to guarantee essential commons to its citizens.

The whole Union is affected by the crisis due to the irreversible interdependence of European economies. The peripheral States – as in Greece - have undergone both the consequences of the lack of effective social- and territorial-cohesion policies and the consequences of the one-way and non-gradualist austerity. Meanwhile, in central States, growth stopped and productive systems lost competitiveness while social guarantees faded.

The crisis has affected in particular the Countries that have decided to commit to monetary integration without framing it in a real political Union.

In both peripheral and central States, the gap between the leaders and public opinions has become wider. This has created the conditions for the birth of movements grounded in fear (precisely, on the fear of "the other", namely, xenophobia), while there was no strong European mobilisation for a real change in the EU policies and for a more democratic and federal Union and political parties didn't played the role that the Treaty has assigned them: to shape a European political conscience.

In this framework, the fact that the UK collocated itself at the margin of the European integration process (by rejecting the freedom of movement, the Schengen Agreement, the Charter of Fundamental Rights, European citizenship, the single currency and the goal of an ever closer Union) cannot minimize the effects of a decision that risks to destabilize even more the European system.

If common Institutions and Governments will not promptly define and adopt a solution, guaranteeing the achievement of the Union's objectives, instability could paralyze the European system.

The crisis does not justify exiting the Union, but instead requires to shift the trajectory toward a more political, democratic and social Europe.

Euro-scepticism was born in the UK – where, between the two World Wars, the federalist culture that has inspired the Ventotene Manifesto developed – it has crossed the English Channel, and has transformed into euro-dissenting or euro-hostile movements in almost all Member States. They represent a minority, but the grip that they exercise on public opinions has been supported by the deplorable campaigns that national leaders have promoted against the "arrogant and distant European bureaucracy".

A part of the minority of the euro-hostile movements (stronger in the European Parliament then in the nationals one), the Union has to face to a larger feeling of citizens that are disappointed, frustrated and bitter against a Europe as it is and not as it has to be. They show these feelings through a growing level of abstentions during the European elections but there are ready to move from the abstentions to euro-pessimism and even euro-hostility.

The growth of these movements and feelings isn't the cause but the effect of the EU crisis.

The communicators and the political leaders have to take up the challenge and to transform the dissent in a new form of active and intelligent consensus.

In this framework, it is significant that – according to the analysis of the vote – many young British citizens consider their future to be in the European Union. The figures regard not only the UK, but the whole European Union, and represent a call to the responsibility of the citizens' representatives both in the Member States and in the European institutions.

The figures support and strengthen the decision of the European Movement to direct its action primarily towards schools and Universities, thanks to activities such as the "Trial to Europe".

The "trial"– through education – aims at stimulating and identifying the ideas of the younger generations on a Community based on solidarity and democracy, preventing them from drifting into anti-politics attitudes manifested in the low turnout in the case of the European elections of 2014 and in the even lower turnout in the case of the UK referendum of the 23rd of June.

This action is aligned with the other activities that will take place in Italy on the 25th of March 2017, for the 60th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome signature. The European Movement will participate organising a series of activities in cooperation with several organisations that belong to the civil society.

Those activities will be planned with the awareness that the anniversary must not be confined to represent a solemn celebration, but should foster a widespread debate on the value of the European project, on the costs of non-Europe, and on the reasons that push towards the relaunch of a specific goal: the creation of a federal and democratic Community based on solidarity.

The outcome of the British referendum held on the 23rd of June strengthens the necessity and urgency of a reform of the European Union. The third action regards this reform, and the deep crisis that affects the European system makes it indispensable and urgent. The reform is necessary to ensure that the European system will be up to the challenges of the World, to fill the democratic deficit, and to govern – in the general interest of its citizens – a Community composed by the States and the citizens that will subscribe to it and increasingly integrate according to the federal model.

The reform of the Union is the only possibility to prevent or govern the potential willingness to leave the Union that will deepen the fragmentation of the Union ad within the Union.

After the British vote of the 23rd of June, the bell rings for a Union that is incapable of answering to the citizens' need and neglects the values of the rule of law. The bell tolls for the arrogance and ineffectiveness of the intergovernmental method as well as for the defects of the Community method.

In order to distance the public debate over the role of the European Union and its institutions from the exclusive domain of national political forces, and in order to foster the creation of a European public space, a reform of the election method of the European Parliament is an overriding priority. A uniform electoral procedure should be implemented, allowing for a minimal number of members to be elected on the basis of a second ballot paper, identical in all Member States, to call European citizens to vote for European parties instead of political forces within their own State but.

We need a strong and urgent revival of the debate on EU future that must involve the political parties, enterprises and trade unions partners, culture field, civil society, and especially the younger generation.

PIER VIRGILIO DASTOLI
Pier Virgilio Dastoli, former head of the EC Representation in Rome, is President of European Movement in Italy

A leap towards United States of Europe will appear evanescent if it will not be preceded by a strong popular action and an "operation truth" to restore the European citizens' consensus.

For this reason, the Assembly has decided to involve all its members - federalist organizations, trade unions, youth organizations, small and medium-sized enterprises, artisans, cooperatives, voluntary associations, schools and universities, local and regional associations throughout the territory, foundations, banking associations, the world of information and communication, consumer organizations, political parties – in a collective actions addressed to the Italian citizens to quickly create a public space for debate and active citizenship.

For this reason, the Assembly has decided to promote in spring 2017 a "General Convention for Public Communication in Europe"

The first chance to demonstrate the support to the project of a federal and democratic Community based on solidarity it's going to be in Rome, on the 25th of March 2017 with a citizens' demonstration having the objective to "alter the European course".

The support will be expressed together with pro-European organisations, organisations that belong to the civil society, youth movements and mainly the Erasmus generation, local and regional powers, Trade Unions as in the case of the European Council meetings in Milan in June 1985, in Laeken in December 2000 and in Nice in June 2001.

Une fenêtre sur l'Europe : communication de la crise ou communication en crise ?

Michaël Malherbe

Quelles sont les « Façons de parler d'Europe » ?

Publié le 3 octobre 2016[1]

Philippe Aldrin et Marine de Lassalle s'intéressent aux « Façons de parler d'Europe » des citoyens européens. Une manière de repérer plusieurs rapports à l'Europe s'inscrivant dans des expériences sociales, historiques et culturelles très différentes.

La parole décentrée ou l'Europe au-delà de soi

La parole décentrée se caractérise principalement par une propension à situer son propos sur l'Europe le plus souvent sur un plan général et à se référer à d'autres points de vue, en Europe et sur l'Europe.
Traits principaux de la parole décentrée :

- niveau élevé de politisation : un intérêt soutenu pour la chose politique qui embrasse les questions européennes;
- propension à la décentration : une tendance à construire en dehors de soi, à universaliser le point de vue sur l'Europe ;
- singularisation du point de vue : un travail d'affirmation et de revendication de la capacité à produire une opinion autonome, en démarcation des discours politiques et médiatiques.

La posture de proximité avec l'Europe correspond aux personnes qui sont capables de mobiliser des savoirs impersonnels (académiques, scolaires, médiatiques) sur l'Europe et ont une propension plus affirmée à s'approprier le territoire de l'Europe et à mettre en cohérence le débat public autour des sujets européens.
Pour ce public, correspondant aux couches les plus diplômées capable d'occuper une position décentrée par rapport à l'Europe, la communication de l'UE devrait consister à produire davantage de clarté et d'argumentation afin de maintenir leur intérêt pour l'Europe et in fine leur implication.

La parole sociocentrée ou l'Europe à partir de soi

Le point de vue sur l'Europe est articulé pour l'essentiel à partir d'un soi socialement situé et situable par rapport à l'Europe et donc autour de situations vécues : savoirs techniques spécialisés, expériences de voyages ou d'échanges culturels, vie professionnelle ou familiale.
Traits principaux de la parole sociocentrée :

- politisation sur enjeu ou sectorisée : un intérêt circonscrit pour les questions politiques qui jouxte çà et là l'Europe ;
- propension à la sociocentration : une tendance à privilégier l'univers personnel d'expérience pour développer le point de vue sur l'Europe ;
- particularisation du point de vue : un travail de justification de l'opinion référé à une « réalité » qui est souvent éprouvée collectivement contre l'irréalisme ou l'absurdité des discours politiques et médiatiques.

La posture sociocentrée vis-à-vis de l'Europe correspond aux personnes qui personnalisent et socialisent leur point de vue sur l'Europe dans un rapport plus intermittent et sectorisé. Les savoirs mobilisés pour se forger une opinion sont personnels : l'expérience, le terrain, la réalité quotidienne sont à la base d'un jugement forcément subjectif.
Pour ce public, la communication de l'UE devrait viser à répondre à leur attente de matérialité de l'Europe, à leur demande de justifications concrètes de la construction européenne afin de leur permettre de s'ancrer davantage à l'Europe.

1 http://www.lacomeuropeenne.fr/2016/10/03/quelles-sont-les-facons-de-parler-d-europe/

La parole excentrée ou l'Europe en dehors de soi

La parole reste excentrée, au sens où les fragments d'opinion énoncés se tiennent à l'extérieur de l'Europe, faute d'informations scolaires et médiatiques sur le sujet ou d'expériences et de connaissances personnelles qui ne peuvent être rattachées à l'Europe.

Traits principaux :

- distanciation politique : un sentiment d'éloignement matériel et symbolique avec la politique et plus encore avec les questions européennes ;
- propension à l'excentration : une tendance à définir l'Europe en dehors de soi, comme une fiction ;
- déprivation du point de vue : l'absence d'affirmation d'une opinion personnelle et générale sur le sujet.

La posture excentrée est la plus éloignée de l'Europe, marquée par un détachement et une distance à l'égard de l'Europe. Cette attitude doit se comprendre par l'absence de savoirs et d'expériences reliables à l'Europe. Les jugements sont donc sans point de vue généralistes ou fragmentés.

Pour ce public, plus influençable en raison de sa faible capacité à construire sa propre opinion, la doxa délivrée par les grands médias, audiovisuels et locaux constitue le moyen de peu à peu se familiariser avec l'Europe et en saisir le sens minimal.

Savoir parler d'Europe, ça s'apprend

Discuter et évaluer les problèmes européens suppose de les avoir rencontrés par l'accès aux savoirs légitimes (formation scolaire et universitaire, consultation des médias d'information, militantisme) ou à travers des expériences pratiques (activités professionnelles, voyages, etc.).

Or, ces possibilités de rencontre sont d'une part réservées à certains profils sociaux et d'autre part limitées par l'invisibilité relative des interventions et le manque d'incarnation des institutions européennes.

Du coup, le coût d'accès à l'Europe paraît généralement très élevé, y compris pour les individus bien dotés en ressources économiques ou culturelles qui, d'habitude, leur confèrent une plus grande aisance à parler politique.

Au total, les façons de parler d'Europe indiquent une « assignation statutaire » en fonction d'acquis « réservés » qui déjouent des critères socio-économiques ou culturels traditionnels.

Tant qu'une grande partie de la société ne peut pas s'exprimer sur l'Europe « avec toutes les cartes en main », toute idée de confiance ou de soutien majoritaire à l'Union européenne est illusoire.

La communication corporate européenne : qui, comment et pour quoi ?

Publié le 26 septembre 2016[2]

Evoléna de Wilde d'Estmaël dans son mémoire croise les « regards des communicants dans et autour des institutions de l'Union européenne » et s'interroge sur la démarche de centralisation et de politisation de la communication de la Commission européenne qui se traduit par une « communication corporate » risquant de « faire passer l'unicité du message avant la sincérité du projet ? »…

Génèses de la « communication corporate » : nouvelle fonction présidentielle « about the wood, not only the individual trees »

Sous la deuxième Commission Barroso (2010-2014), la communication est regroupée avec la citoyenneté au sein du portefeuille de Vivane Reding. Avec Martin Selmayr, son chef de cabinet qui avait été son porte-parole, « ils mettent en place une recentralisation des pouvoirs et des moyens de la DG COMM. C'est le début du corporate. » Devenu chef de cabinet de Jean-Claude Juncker, Selmayr obtient la « présidentialisation de la communication » à la fois plus politique et corporate. « Selmayr a vraiment été un élément déterminant de la communication des dernières années. »

Parmi les axes de communication prioritaires de la DG COMM définis dans les Méthodes de Travail de la Commission Juncker adoptées le 11 novembre 2014, la communication corporate vise à « améliorer l'image corporate (branding) de la Commission ».

L'adoption d'une approche corporate au niveau européen consistait en 2014 à « mieux faire passer les messages politiques clés en regardant au-delà des portefeuilles individuels pour communiquer collectivement sur les points importants à la Commission».

La mission principale d'un point de vue communicationnel est de « sensibiliser le public à l'UE en général, à ses valeurs et priorités politiques et aux efforts qu'elle consent pour s'attaquer aux questions d'actualité ».

Ce document affirme « qu'il est urgent » que la Commission et les autres institutions européennes diffusent avec davantage de clarté et de force les priorités politiques de l'UE, car une communication efficace des messages est essentielle pour la gestion de l'image et de la réputation de l'UE. Cette stratégie part du principe que « la communication ne peut être efficace que si la Commission parle d'une seule voix ».

Interprétations de la communication corporate : verrouillage et centralisation

À la Commission, Gilles Gantelet estime : « si par communication corporate on s'entend pour dire que c'est une communication d'une seule entité, organisée, avec les mêmes outils, les mêmes référents, et qui est beaucoup plus contrôlée, alors oui tout est en place aujourd'hui pour le faire ».

S'opère « un véritable verrouillage de la communication de la Commission : il est désormais impossible d'avoir un rendez-vous avec un expert sans autorisation préalable du service du porte-parole. » Gantelet confirme que de nombreux changements ont eu lieu ces dernières années dans la gestion des publications qui, de plus en plus, passent par la validation au plus haut niveau politique de la DG COMM ou du SPP.

Gareth Harding, ancien journaliste accrédité auprès de l'UE aujourd'hui directeur d'une agence de communication à Bruxelles considère que la communication avec le public et les journalistes a empiré depuis l'arrivée de Juncker. « Où est la preuve que la politique de communication de la Commission est une réussite, si de plus en plus de

2 http://www.lacomeuropeenne.fr/2016/09/26/la-communication-corporate-europeenne-qui-comment-et-pour-quoi/

gens se tournent contre le projet européen, et ce dans presque les pays de l'UE ? ».
Une communication unifiée signifie un contrôle plus strict, et peut donc également mener à moins de démocratie. Or, selon Harding, « toute cette idée de communication Politburo centralisée est mauvaise. La communication, c'est la création d'un débat, d'une conversation, plutôt que juste la diffusion de messages. »

Les 10 chantiers de la communication européenne aujourd'hui

1. L'UE n'a pas de visage
2. L'UE s'exprime de plusieurs voix discordantes
3. L'UE est le bouc émissaire des gouvernements nationaux
4. La sphère européenne est un système clos
5. La communication de l'UE est verrouillée
6. La relation UE-medias-citoyens est complexe
7. Le budget et le personnel qualifié posent question
8. La communication est considérée comme la source de tous les maux de l'UE
9. La nouvelle communication corporate de l'UE semble ne pas porter ses fruits
10. L'UE n'a pas une vision claire de ce qu'elle veut communiquer… ni de comment elle se définit

Communiquer l'Europe restera un exercice compliqué durant les prochaines années, et la communication corporate ne portera vraisemblablement pas plus de fruits que la communication actuelle si un exercice fort de définition du projet européen et de ses limites n'a pas lieu.

MICHAËL MALHERBE
Michaël Malherbe is a Digital Strategist at Cohn & Wolfe, an international Public Relations agency and a regular lecturer in the following master's courses: "European Studies" at the Sorbonne-Paris III and "European Affairs" of the Sorbonne-Paris IV. He occasionally also lectures for the ENA and Sciences-Po Lille. Since 2007, he has managed the blog "Décrypter la communication européenne": lacomeuropeenne.fr"

Déclaration de Bratislava : les chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement veulent mieux communiquer

Publié le 20 septembre 2016[3]

Présenté comme un sommet important permettant aux chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement de faire une « analyse commune de l'état actuel de l'Union européenne » et un « examen de notre avenir commun », la déclaration de Bratislava – de manière assez inédite – aborde l'enjeu de la communication…

Clarté, honnêteté, courage : la vision de la communication européenne des chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement

Le texte de la déclaration de Bratislava donne des indications intéressantes de la perception que se font les chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement de ce que devrait être la communication européenne :

Nous devons mieux communiquer les uns avec les autres – entre États membres, avec les institutions de l'UE, mais aussi, et c'est le plus important, avec nos citoyens. Nous devrions apporter plus de clarté à nos décisions. Utiliser un langage clair et honnête. Nous concentrer sur les attentes des citoyens, en ayant réellement le courage de nous élever contre les solutions simplistes des forces politiques extrémistes ou populistes.

À Bratislava, nous nous sommes engagés à offrir à nos citoyens, au cours des prochains mois, une vision d'une UE attrayante, à même de susciter leur confiance et leur soutien.

Comment traduire ces intentions en actions de communication pour l'UE ?

La feuille de route de Bratislava devrait inciter les institutions européennes à s'interroger sur les manières de traduire concrètement ces intentions – tant par des mesures symboliques qui frappent les esprits que quotidiennement, à chaque occasion de parler, écrire, montrer…

Sur le plan symbolique, les institutions européennes et leurs responsables pourraient par exemple s'engager à ne plus pratiquer le « no comment » lors des conférences de presse afin d'illustrer la volonté de clarté, d'honnêteté et de courage.

Sur le plan pratique, la disparition immédiate et intégrale de toutes abréviations et jargons dans les pages publiées en ligne, les communiqués envoyés et tout autre support pourrait constituer un premier pas dans la bonne direction.

Pour une fois, la communication européenne est un enjeu perçu par les chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement. C'est le moment pour les institutions européennes de ne pas les décevoir ; après tant d'année de déception pour les citoyens.

3 http://www.lacomeuropeenne.fr/2016/09/20/declaration-de-bratislava-les-chefs-d-etat-et-de-gouvernement-veulent-mieux-communiquer/

Co-creating our european future

Verena Ringler

In several Club of Venice interactions, I discussed the changing paradigm of communication, and how it has reached government and the EU-level. I believe communicators today are invited towards a radical rethink of the notion of an "audience", because the roles of recipient and giver of information are increasingly merging. In a next step, we are invited to rethink the notion of "voters" or "citizens", because the roles of policy-taker and policy-maker will also merge. We can observe that yesterday's idea of communication is changing swiftly into an idea of participation, and is on the road of developing into an idea of co-creation.
In the last years, colleagues asked me to tell them more about co-creation and its possible involvement in today's democratic life. The concept of co-creation touches the core of our relationship with the future. Let me therefore share the considerations and lessons learned in the Network of European Foundations' tenth anniversary initiative for the future of Europe, and in subsequent project work on Europe and Turkey with Stiftung Mercator in Germany.

Four years ago, the NEF invested in a futures initiative to decipher pathways out of the ongoing situation of crisis in Europe. A team of futures specialists was hired to design and facilitate a three-day "Unconventional Summit on the Future of Europe", which aimed to contribute to ways forward of and within the EU.

The following is an adapted excerpt of our article on the NEF initiative in the June 2014 edition of the Journal of Futures Studies, "Collaborative Futures: Integrating Foresight with Design in large-scale innovation processes: The seeing and seeding of the future of Europe." There, Angela Wilkinson (Strategic Foresight Counsellor, Oxford and OECD), Martin Mayer (Futures and Innovation Consultant, YouMeO), and I told the story behind the NEF initiative, at the core of which were practices of 'collaborative' and 'transformational' foresight.

The NEF starting position was that European integration, overall, was too good to fail. Convening seemingly unlikely allies in an era of crisis seemed necessary. Those allies were considered people who already play or are soon likely to play an important role towards bold decision-making, robust social peace, and thriving communal, civic, and economic life in Europe. Eventually, 50 participants were scouted and personally invited to a three-day summit. They consisted of two groups, "EU insiders" (from national and EU public administration and political bodies, think tanks, etc.) and "EU outsiders" (innovators from a range of disciplines). The approach of "scouting" is what we have since also adopted in our work with Stiftung Mercator.

The peak event of the NEF exercise took place in September 2012 at Stift Altenburg, a Benedictine monastery in rural Austria. The challenge was to create a space for a generative high-power dialogue that would go far beyond the usual conference based exchanges – something that would continue after the event in the form of multiple, ongoing collaborative actions, including spin-offs.

There was no panel and no powerpoint. The imperative was not to fix a problem that has been inherited from the past but to clarify and transform future possibilities in order to overcome inertia and sustain more and more effective collaborative action.

To this day, we position the NEF initiative as relevant to ongoing attempts to link the parallel fields of foresight, design, strategy and innovation. "Transformational foresight" practices require effective participation to redesign whole systems and enable messy (i.e. multi-dimensional) transition management. They involve a social learning process that is more similar to seeing, seeding and growing the future than engineering a new solution. Thus, we led participants in a sequence of broad and deep situational analysis using scenarios followed by a visioning-to-value creation ideation process.

Some previous efforts to link foresight and innovation appear to emphasize the promise of a "controllable" future, in which carefully managed interventions achieve predictable outcomes (i.e. engineering solutions). Other attempts connect foresight-design with innovation, in terms of more open, social processes of creative

destruction and construction, involving collaboration between different interests (i.e. inter-organizational settings that result in unpredictable, emergent changes that can be steered towards better outcomes). We suggest that linking foresight, design and innovation to create a better future through collaborative innovation and co-creation benefits from using mixed (i.e. multiple) foresight methods. The mastery of what we call the modern futures toolkit is crucial. It depends on an understanding of the strengths and limitations of a variety of futures methods, an ability to effectively tailor them to the purpose at hand and avoid conflating or confusing one with another (e.g. scenarios are not forecasts or visions).

We had fathomed that making movement in the interests of better futures for democratic societies requires a more inclusive approach of foresight to-co-creation than the conventional, linear method of speaking truth-to-power across the science-policy interface. Resolving the eurozone crisis, enabling a global energy transition and progressing global sustainable development are not simple problems but puzzling and messy situations. These challenges involve more than technological substitutions i.e. product and process innovation.

In opening up the participation to achieve 'whole' systems innovation or large scale transition management (as implied in the challenges of sustainable development or global energy systems transition), new challenges are encountered though, and lessons are learned:

- Who participates and how to frame the system of concern and interaction with its wider context? Engendering trust and forging new common ground between participants and organizations with different cultures and/or interests requires attention for constructive conflict and shared learning, rather than a simple push for rapid but shallow consensus building.
- Caution about fast futures processes is needed. Listening and learning is painful, especially for established experts who are rewarded for knowing the answer rather than asking better questions. Shared, societal learning requires immersion in often uncomfortable ideas – e.g. the future is never perfect! We felt reassured that our mix of techniques helped to overcome the natural – and often disastrous – biases of projecting current conditions into the future and seeing only what we would like to see (Sommers, 2012).
- A co-creation event is the beginning, not the end, of a process. Plausible, alternative stories about the future do not automatically create impetus for change. Instead, we suggest that to trigger societal large-scale transformations, scenarios need to be combined with other methods e.g. the visualization of a viable, new value creation system. By opening up the future as a safe space for constructive conflict, it is possible to manage disagreement as an asset and forge new common ground in a way that sustains social learning and collaborative interactions between diverse stakeholders. We also note that insights from well executed transformational foresight initiatives can fail to bring about social innovation, because too little focus is put on the afterlife of prospective sensemaking processes.
- The demand for co-creation approaches has risen dramatically in the political world and particularly now in light of the Brexit issue, where the European Commission would be in a good position to embark on a profound inclusive reflection and visioning exercise, inspired by the 2014 Review Process of the German Foreign Ministy and by different similar approaches that have been realized since on communal, regional, national and supranational levels (Open Situation Room, OECD). We look favorably towards increasing demands in that regard. And yet, we want to remind possible sponsors or organizers that multi-stakeholder settings tend to generate a high level of energy and mobilization just before and during the actual physical (or virtual) collaboration spaces (exploration, ideation, design). For a process design and facilitation team, the main challenge is rarely related to the co-production of the various stakeholders during the strategic dialogues, but rather to the creation of conditions for continued collaboration once the energizing event is over and participants move on with their lives. So, only if such events are clearly defined as steps in an overarching process, the intended transformations can take form and develop over time.

Photo Credit: ©Simon Bierwald

VERENA RINGLER

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Verena has been devising and is overlooking a large portfolio of projects in Europe and Turkey. These projects aim to strengthen European cohesion and our joint ability to act. Verena specifically encourages trust-building, co-creation, and co-operation across political parties, sectors and professions, as well as across countries, languages and generations. She aims to harness today's insights into leadership and foresight practices for tackling challenges in European integration. Verena suggests we can only solve the systemic problem sets of our time with systemic response mechanisms.

- Devising the afterlife of a co-creation event
  Change does not happen overnight and for this reason the collaborative event has to be embedded into a continuous and carefully managed (meta)change process, or afterlife. Support and sponsoring measures can range from soft factors such as branding, convening, liaising, and networking opportunities to stakeholder engagement strategies or the provision of seed funding for specific initiatives. Generally, there appears to be a kind of dynamics inherent to public multistakeholder agencies (administrations, think tanks, NGOs …) that make funding of closed loop, project based initiatives with a clear end much easier than to support open loop, on-going and iterative processes with no clear end in itself. Also, public agencies and foundations tend to fund research rather than application, yet learning with futures cannot sequence them that way. Project sponsors should therefore start to think in slightly longer cycles in a "think-test-learn-adapt" approach committing to a clearly defined level of support over the entire process chain in order to move from a single loop towards a double or triple loop learning process.

To put our co-creation experiment in the larger context, let's summarize that we are in an era of fast, interdisciplinary and agile co-creation. Also in our political and public sectors, futures methodologies can be inspired by new methodologies such as Agile/Scrum, SmartMobs, Hack'days, etc. In principle, those approaches involve a community of thinkers, doers, makers and tinkerers applying their skills and energy to accelerate the work of cause-led innovators and change makers. They are all about diverse groups of people collaborating, working in new, faster, multi-disciplinary and better ways by supporting ideas and people that are leading the way to what a flourishing 21st century society might look like. These techniques are inspired from the software development and digital world. They will spread more and more into more traditional fields. They represent how stuff gets done by Generation Y, so we should get used to it, learn, and adapt.

Les défis des communicants publics en territoire

Dominique Mégard & Bernard Deljarrie

Territoires en mouvement, interrogations démocratiques, société numérique... dans un contexte de fortes interrogations – internationalement partagées – sur la démocratie représentative et les vertus supposées de la démocratie directe et permanente, les communicants publics ont aujourd'hui d'importants défis à relever. Et comme un écho à ces défis, 30 ans après la création du Club de Venise - réseau européen - , 28 ans après celle de Cap'Com – réseau français et francophone –, les questionnements sur leur rôle et leur positionnement demeurent. Et ce, malgré une spécificité reconnue et une professionnalisation évidente...

Territoires en mouvement d'abord. La France connaît aujourd'hui, la création de grandes régions, l'institutionnalisation de la métropolisation, des regroupements intercommunaux et des transferts et réorganisations de compétences que d'autres pays européens ont connu avant elle, de façon parfois plus radicale. Comme l'Espagne dont 84% des communes ont été concernées par des regroupements, l'Italie qui a supprimé les provinces en tant qu'instances élues, la Pologne qui a créé 12 aires métropolitaines ou le renforcement des régions en Belgique et au Royaume-Uni... Ces transformations territoriales provoquées le plus souvent par le souci d'économies d'échelles ou de répartitions des charges publiques, sont souvent impopulaires, généralement mal comprises. Les communicants sont au premier rang pour expliquer, faire connaître, faire comprendre, faire accepter ces nouveaux territoires. Les nouveaux territoires bouleversent un écosystème connu, référent. En changeant les frontières et les périmètres, les réformes territoriales modifient les champs d'action et les compétences des collectivités et de leurs élus, brouillent les références des citoyens. La gouvernance intercommunale et la métropolisation en particulier, avec un suffrage indirect transforment la démocratie locale. Mais si, faire bouger les limites des territoires impacte les modes de gouvernance, cela provoque aussi quête identitaire des citoyens comme des territoires eux-mêmes. Les communicants publics aujourd'hui ne peuvent s'affranchir de travailler autant sur les processus de marketing territorial, l'image et l'attractivité, que sur le sentiment d'appartenance et la proximité qui inscrivent le citoyen dans une réalité palpable face à la mondialisation et aux transformations du monde. « *Un directeur de communication est obligé de raisonner en permanence à deux échelles*, explique le dir'com d'une métropole[1]. *D'un côté les grands chantiers, le développement économique, le rayonnement culturel, l'attractivité, la concurrence. De l'autre la proximité, le service et toutes les politiques de solidarité et de cohésion sociale.* »

Interrogations démocratiques ensuite. Chargés de l'interface entre élus, institutions et citoyens, les communicants publics doivent apprendre à renouveler et intensifier si possible les formes et les modes de relation entre citoyens et gouvernance locale. Un défi d'autant plus complexe qu'il est percuté par des réalités économiques (rationalisation des dépenses dont celles de communication en premier car plus faciles à dénoncer), démocratiques (suffrage indirect, remise en cause de la légitimité des élus, modes de participation citoyenne) et numériques (plus d'information descendante, interactivité obligée). Il y a aujourd'hui une vraie et grave crise de confiance dans les institutions. La parole publique – et politique au sens premier du terme – est de moins en moins audible ce qui pose une vraie question de légitimité et donc d'efficacité des décisions prises par les pouvoirs publics. Le travail du communicant en est amplifié, élargi à la concertation et aux expériences de démocratie participative, tant est essentielle non seulement la pédagogie de l'action publique mais aussi et surtout le maintien du lien avec la population. « *Les communicants publics ont*, soulignait Bernard Deljarrie, dans son propos d'introduction du Forum Cap'Com 2015, *ont, plus que jamais, une responsabilité particulière. N'est-ce pas à eux, communicants publics, de contribuer à porter haut et fort les valeurs communes qui permettent de vivre ensemble sur nos territoires ? N'est-ce pas à eux de participer à la construction des identités collectives et des mémoires partagées qui sont le ciment de toute société ? N'ont-ils pas à faire comprendre les changements, économiques et environnementaux qui imposent de difficiles évolutions dans les modes de vie et qui conduisent à de douloureux bouleversements sociaux ? N'ont-ils pas à contribuer pour faire vivre la démocratie, celle du quotidien et de la proximité, celle portée par les élus ? Comment, dans le contexte actuel, conduire une communication publique encore plus efficace ? Comment*

1 Laurent Riera, dir'com de la Métropole de Rennes – entretien- Les Échos – 2-08-2016

répondre aux attentes nouvelles et porter, auprès de tous les habitants, le service public et ses valeurs ? ».

Révolution numérique enfin. Une révolution qui arrive pour certains comme une réponse aux difficultés, d'information, d'échanges et de relation. Réseaux sociaux, web 2.0 et 3.0, mobilité extrême, open data et big data : l'écosystème digital donne les moyens d'un lien permanent avec (une partie de) la population. Il autorise une fluidité, une immédiateté, une réactivité, un échange, une forme de « discussion » permanente, une co-production parfois. Il permet de mettre le citoyen au centre, de le rendre acteur. Les compétences numériques sont aujourd'hui indispensables, essentielles pour tout communicant public qui ne peut se dispenser d'une stratégie digitale en sus d'une stratégie de communication globale. La complémentarité des systèmes permet techniquement la multiplicité des messages et des publics. Mais, la révolution numérique par l'interactivité qu'elle induit permettra-t-elle à terme, de rénover, revivifier, renouveler les rapports des institutions et des citoyens ? Peut-être si l'utilisation des techniques et des moyens traduit une vraie volonté de transformation des rapports avec les citoyens. Dans cette partition qui s'écrit aujourd'hui les communicants ont leur part qui est grande. Mais ils ne peuvent et ne pourront aller au bout des changements et des transformations sans une volonté politique qui, s'ils peuvent la conseiller, ils ne la commandent pas. Les communicants vivent l'ère numérique au quotidien : elle a transformé et enrichit leur métier et leurs pratiques en élargissant le champ des possibles. Mais ils ne doivent pas dans la technicité perdre la recherche du sens… Et modestement des réseaux comme le Club de Venise ou Cap'Com, nés il y a trente ans pour soutenir la naissance d'une fonction et d'une profession peuvent aujourd'hui plus que jamais permettre aux communicants par l'échange et l'organisation de la réflexion commune d'accompagner les évolutions et relever les défis qui se présentent à eux.

DOMINIQUE MÉGARD

Dominique Mégard est aujourd'hui présidente du Comité de pilotage de Cap'Com, réseau des professionnels de la communication publique et territoriale. Elle anime avec le réseau, une réflexion permanente sur l'actualité et la diversité de la communication publique.

Depuis l'origine, en 1988, elle accompagne la vie et les débats du Forum annuel. Elle a assuré, comme déléguée générale, la responsabilité de la manifestation ainsi que la création de nombreux services et actions pour et sur la communication publique dans les territoires, avant de devenir présidente du réseau qui en est issu. Bernard Deljarrie lui a succédé en 2012 au poste de délégué général, assurant la gestion, l'action et l'avenir de Cap'Com.

Journaliste diplômée du CFJ Paris, elle a exercé en PHR et pour de nombreux périodiques spécialisés en économie, urbanisme, vie territoriale et vie publique. Elle a été elle-même directrice de la communication dans une collectivité pendant huit ans. Elle a été chargée de cours plus de dix ans à l'université de Paris I Sorbonne, à l'université Lille 2 et à l'UCO d'Angers et intervient, en tant qu'expert, à la demande. Auteur de nombreux articles et d'un ouvrage paru au printemps 2012, chez Dunod « La communication publique et territoriale », elle est également co-auteur avec Bernard Deljarrie de l'ouvrage La communication des collectivités locales LGDJ, 2008.

BERNARD DELJARRIE

Économiste de formation, Bernard Deljarrie est délégué général de Cap'Com depuis 2011. Il a mené toute sa carrière au service du secteur local. Attaché à l'Assemblée nationale, puis journaliste couvrant les problématiques du secteur local, il a été directeur de la communication de la filiale de la Caisse des dépôts au service des collectivités territoriales. Il a par ailleurs été maire adjoint d'une grande ville et président de l'Association pour la démocratie locale et sociale (Adels).

COMMUNICATING EUROPE: THE EDUCATION DIMENSION

Sapere aude ("Dare to know")! European citizenship School – the "Europe is us" case

Barbara Altomonte

Teaching "Citizenship and Constitution: a strategic lever to convey Europe to the youths"

Like in most European countries, the Italian school system is made of remarkable figures: more than one million teachers from schools and universities have daily relationships with students and their families (about eight million school students and one million and seven hundred thousand university students). These data reveal how the education system is a privileged channel for direct dialogue on the EU and communication with citizens.

At the end of 2006, a Recommendation of the European Parliament and Council focused on the development of both social and civic skills, that is to all behaviors that allow people to actively and effectively […] participate in the life of increasingly diverse societies, as well as overcome conflicts […] through the knowledge of sociopolitical principles and engage in active and democratic participation".

Institutional framework and perspectives

From 2008-2009, Italy launched a national learning plan on Citizenship and the Constitution. From 2010-2011, this project was included among the objectives of official curricula in all schools degrees, in the history- geography-society courses as a transversal subject matter.

In 2014, the Department for EU Affairs and the Ministry of Education, University and Research, signed a strategic partnership with the European Commission and the European Parliament in order to develop and implement the European dimension of the matter. In the framework of this agreement, a new educational model was worked out by a pilot group of teachers, to be extended to all teachers. The signatories of this partnership shared also the long term objective to provide teachers by the year 2020 with all necessary tools to develop at school the European dimension of citizenship and civic education.

The Department for European Policies, together with other Italian and European institutions, has been developing several projects aimed at multiplying the occasions for students to improve their knowledge of European issues and debate on the subject, while giving teachers more information and teaching tools for thematic classes.

All this will be combined to the initiatives related to the 60th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome in 2017, with the aim to group initiatives under the same mark and build common synergies.

The results of this process will probably come out by the end of next year. However, it is already possible for us to set up a comprehensive idea to group such initiatives under the Kantian motto "sapere aude" ("dare to know") .

The project "Europe = us": development of a successful case

The project "Europe = us" for schools aims at spreading knowledge about the history, values, institutions, rights and advantages of being European citizens. This learning tool provides students with materials, laboratories, games, quizzes of increasing levels of difficulty in a common journey to the discovery of the European history, values, institutions and programmes. Particular focus has been put on the rights and duties connected to the EU citizenship and the Treaties.

In 2010, the Department developed an educational DVD – downloadable online - that was distributed all over the 20 regions of Italy, thus reaching more than two thousand teachers through ad hoc workshops. In five years, more than 6000 teachers joined the platform. Only in the first months of 2016 they reached the number of 7000.

New materials and tools have been developed since then on the web platform www.educazionedigitale.it/europanoi. In 2012, the European Commission mentioned this project amongst the "best national practices"; this raised the interest of other Member States, which asked to be allowed to translate the project into their own national language.

In 2013-2014, thanks to a partnership between the European Commission and Parliament and the Ministry for Education, University and Research, the content were translated into English and promoted in schools across the Union. The web platform was updated once more in 2015. Update of all the platform tools, as well as the creation of new tools is provided both in Italian and English.

In order to provide further ideas to both teachers and students, this year, we have enriched the digital platform with new educational material and activities to be carried out during lessons, including material about the 60th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome in 2017.

With this method, Italian students can be provided with in-depth learning tools on the EU and network on such issues. Further opportunities include working with their teachers to the participation in dedicated competitions, such as the Trivia contest. A prospective update of the platform in 2017 will be focused on the creation of a "social" area on the platform, where students can share and make comments on the outcome of their work under the guide of their teachers.

Contests towards the 60th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome

Towards the 60th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome, the Department together with the Ministry of Education develop and organize ad hoc contests in order to involve students and raise a creative debate on the EU.

The official logo of the celebration was chosen amongst a hundred proposals coming from schools through a competition launched in the academic year 2015-2016.

A second competition will be held during the academic year 2016-2017 involving high school students to advance videos and photos starting from a study on the Treaties of Rome. This project too is combined with the above mentioned "Europe=us" tool: the web platform will provide students and teachers with useful information for a proper participation in the competition.

High school students also have the possibility to take part in a further project promoted by the Department in partnership with the European Parliament: the 2016-2017 edition of the "New Generation EP", which this year, is focused on the Treaties of Rome.

Further competitions are planned thanks to agreement with other EU Member states and associations.

Meetings at local level

Furthermore, in the framework of the strategic partnership between Italian and European institutions, the Department for European Policies is collaborating to further initiatives dedicated to schools, which are being held this autumn, in particular under the leadership of the European Commission Representation in Italy.

These meetings (14) will go on up to spring 2017, involving 1400 teachers and many students from all over Italy. Aim of the project is to disseminate new features of the platform "Europe = us" and provide a comprehensive overview on the opportunities that Europe offers to the youths.
This events will complete the work done with schools by the Department since the beginning of 2016, through the exhibitions on European integration and citizenship.

In the first eight cities, the exhibitions arranged together with local institutions and the Europe Direct centers turned out to reach twelve thousands visitors (three thousands and five hundreds were students). As said, the European Commission Representation in Italy will participate in the organizations of the remaining exhibitions.

To conclude, in order to support the programmes for schools, the exhibition on European integration is available in a digital and interactive version (both English and Italian l) on the web platform "Europe = us" and on the website of the Department www.politicheeuropee.it .

BARBARA ALTOMONTE
Barbara Altomonte is Chief Coordinator of Communication Unit for the European Affairs Department at the Presidency of Council of Ministers since 2015 and Manager at the PCM since 2007.
Communication and Public Management Expert, journalist, she joined the public service in 1990 as a History and Philosophy Teacher, then worked as a civil servant for the Communication Unit of the Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs and the Presidency of Council of Ministers.
Specialized in Philosophy of Language, she's member of the Coordination Committee of the REI – "Rete per l'italiano istituzionale" promoted by the DG Translation of the European Commission.
Latest projects: Facebook Q&A session on free movement of EU professionals, (European Affairs Dep.); website and social media (Reg. Affairs Dep.); Visual identity for the Italian civil protection; Website, Social media, Magazine and Contact Center (Civil Protection Dep).
Latest publication: "Comunicazione di crisi e di emergenza", in "Teorie e tecniche della comunicazione pubblica", 2011.

"EU back to school" - a Romanian story

Irina Pachitanu

The EU's initiative "Back to School" - promoted since 2007 by the German Presidency of the Council of the EU, subsequently fully embraced by the European Commission and by all other EU institutions and bodies (by the Council of the EU since September 2011) - gives EU civil servants the opportunity to go back to the primary and secondary schools where they once studied and meet today's pupils and teachers. This is indeed a good chance to motivate and inspire young people across the EU to "think European".

Being the ambassador of the EU for a day means more than explaining to young people "who's who" and "who does what" in the European Institutions. It's about giving them a flesh and blood image of something that might appear too abstract at a first glance.

A couple of years ago, on the 8th of May, I paid a visit to the National College "Ferdinand I" in Bacău, the high school where I graduated (formerly known as "George Bacovia" high school), and met two classes of eleventh graders to celebrate together both the Schuman Day and the European Year of Citizenship.

My presentation touched upon several EU-specific issues meant to raise students' awareness as to what the EU institutions and EU construction as such have meant to European citizens in the last decades. I focused on general EU topics like the Single Market or the Protection of Intellectual Property, but also mentioned more "practical" issues for the audience such as the Student Exchange Programmes, which offer new, broader cultural and educational perspectives for personal development. I also used my own experience as translator to tell students how important it is to spend some time abroad and to learn foreign languages, irrespective of the career path they want to take.

When I referred to the rich multicultural experience acquired by living and working in Brussels, this stirred my young audience's interest quite a lot. They became aware of how challenging it is for the member states to strike the right balance between national interests and priorities and EU's common values to safeguard and EU's goals to be achieved. In this context, it was interesting to share views on one of the EU's main objectives and "raisons d'être" - peace - one of the most outstanding achievements after World War II, with more than 60 years without conflicts within our borders (our discussion of course covered the conferment to the EU of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2012.

Together with other two colleagues of the Romanian Translation Service of the Council who graduated from the same high school in Bacău - Cristina Mitocariu and Mihaela Poraicu - we wrote an article about our old school, our current jobs and about how our college years helped us develop our careers, which was published in a local paper from our home town. We highlighted therein how useful the scientific background acquired in a highly-demanding high school was to our linguistic studies and how the career as a translator and conference interpreter for the European Institutions is developed.

We were proud to share some details on our own experiences chosing studies which made us feel testimonials of an important historical event for her country - the Romanian Revolution of 1989 (the opening up to democracy brought many changes and one of them was the setting up of modern language sections and hard sciences). Moreover, my presentation touched upon concrete subjects which raised high interest in the young audience, such as information about competitions for jobs within the EU institutions and successful exchange programmes such as Erasmus. Students were quite interested and stimulated to raise several questions and quite happy with information material on the different institutions and the EU's policies which I circulated beforehand. It was also nice to notice that, in spite of their young age, many students already had a good basic knowledge about the EU, which made me feel even more comfortable and contributed to a very enriching interactive session.
This experience was a very good opportunity to get out of routine (typical for EU officials performing standard tasks as translators, although documents differ from each other and policies and terminologies evolve). I enjoyed speak about my work, in public (a skill that translators have fewer possibilities to practice compared to policy

IRINA PACHITANU

Irina Roxana Pachițanu, Linguistic Administrator, Romanian Language Unit, Council of the EU

Irina Pachițanu graduated the University of Bucharest, Interpreting & Translation Department in 1996, and has worked as an interpreter/ translator ever since. While in Romania, she worked for several USAID projects supporting the creation of the capital market in Romania, for the Government and for the private sector. As an interpreter, she took part in negotiations with international institutions such as the World Bank and IMF, as well as in negotiations for the privatisation of several large Romanian companies and banks. Her experience also includes the organisation of meetings, seminars, press conferences and symposia on capital markets, foreign investment & privatisation.

Based in Brussels since 2007, Irina worked as an interpreter for the Commission between 2007 and 2011. In July 2011 she joined the Romanian Language Unit of the Council of the EU as a staff translator. In her capacity as Ecofin Functional Group Coordinator, she has been involved in the organisation of topical seminars and lectures on Ecofin-related matters.

Irina holds an MA in Applied Linguistics from the University of Bucharest (1997) and a Masters in Business and Management from the Academy of Economic Studies, Bucharest (2006)

administrators) and in particular doing to the benefit of audiences from my native place. I was proud of it! Since I felt that this experience added a new dimension to my personal relations and it helped me establish new valuacble contacts. All the efforts and the time invested in this action were by all means worth it."

Later on, some of those teenagers took a trip from Romania to Brussels to visit the main EU institutions. They had the chance to visit our Council's "Babel Tower" - the LEX building, which hosts the Council's 24 linguistic units - and had the opportunity to see both translators and interpreters at work (at their desks and in the interpretation booths). This was also a good chance to become familiar with the new translation tools and technology which help translators in their day-to-day work. Being "silent witnesses" of interpreters in action and learning how the summit teams work during the European Council meetings was indeed something different and exciting to talk about, when back to their country!

In conclusion, the whole Back-to-School experience is a vivid exchange of information and emotions and a real flashback of our youth. Meeting today's students of our former primary or secondary schools is very rewarding and reassures me of the fact that the young generation from Romania and certainly from all other member countries is smart, audacious, beautiful and… European, and has a great chance to grow together and build together a better future. Motivating and inspiring young people to "think European" could be key to maintaining a pro-European attitude in the long run across Europe, against all crises and threats to all good democratic values. With more and more EU civil servants participating in the project, Back to School is become day after day one the most adequate and effective platforms to "communicate Europe" to the young generation, thus building a Europe of knowledgeable and inspired citizens.

Communication guys 4.0 – the "empowerers"

Claus Hörr

Loss of confidence in elites in general and in public institutions in particular, a new and previously unexpected quantity of information easily available to everyone, a – diplomatically speaking – generous interpretation of information by several stakeholders: all these phenomena are now part of our everyday jargon as communicators. We discuss these phenomena sometimes more, sometimes less baffled and search for ways to handle them in an appropriate way. We are confronted with new technologies – that aren´t so new anymore, by the way – we are confronted with legitimate public clamor for orientation and universal transparency – transparency given to the best of our knowledge and belief and still approached by the public with precautionary distrust – and we are confronted with an almost unbelievable speed concerning the agenda-setting of issues – issues that, once publicly addressed, immediately fade out again of the political spotlight. We are confronted with all these phenomena while, at the same time, facing a shortage of qualified and motivated staff to meet these challenges.

So, where is the journey taking us?

At the Club of Venice meetings, we have often been discussing these topics. In the foreword to the "Arena Analysis: A state of sharing – Relevant trends for government communication"[1] Erik den Hoedt[2], referring to government communication, used the beautiful metaphor of a big railway station with many platforms and track, but without scoreboards. Where is the journey taking us? And do we need scoreboards? Probably yes. Most certainly, we will need „internal" scoreboards. To deal with the challenges mentioned above, we as communication professionals will need allies to better fulfil our task which is to provide people in the member states with the best possible information. Or more precisely, to convince them that we provide information that is relevant and credible.

Allies

We do have allies. They may be the ones working in the department next to you, be it the Legal Expert, the expert at the Protocol Department or the Officer excellently handling budgetary questions. They are already there to help us get facts and figures right. But, and that´s the main point, they could provide much more support. It is of particular importance to not only provide correct information, but to also communicate it in a timely and authentic manner. These allies could communicate by themselves. Of course, communications is not the main focus of legal experts´ area of responsibilities. Some may argue that they can´t „do it all", and that´s true. But we will inevitably get to that point. Otherwise we will fail to meet the legitimate demands of our "contracting authority", meaning the public in our countries. It will be our task as communication professionals to enable

1 Dutch Public Information Service, The Hague 2013.

2 Erik den Hoedt, Director Public Information and Communications Service; Ministry of General Affairs, The Nederlands.

CLAUS HÖRR
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them, to empower them to communicate themselves. Not always, but more often. It will be our role to put them in a position to understandably "translate" specialist terms. It will be our role to reassure them and to alleviate their anxieties, to help them find the right way between absolute accuracy and comprehensibility. It will be our role to convince them of the importance of countering misinformation on a facebook page with a correct comment – and that it might even be fun to do so. As communication professionals, we will still communicate ourselves in the future. But it will get much more important to communicate internally, within our institutions, so as to establish our internal scoreboard in time.

This will obviously not be working overnight. Some will disapprove, for sure even some communication experts. Internal guidelines are needed to protect this new form of involvement, as in the case of errors and faults. Last but not least, we will have change our way of thinking in order to pass on our knowledge and experience. At the Federal Press Service, we have been gaining promising and encouraging initial experience with the Federal Chancellery´s revised and updated facebook presence since May 2016. We have already found some "allies". It would be a worthwhile goal for the Club of Venice to discuss how to succeed in managing this empowerment just mentioned.

30 years. What next?

Talking of the Club of Venice… 30 years! Highly remarkable as we talk about an initiative created out of the personal commitment of a few. I have been permitted to sit round the table since no less than two fifths of this period in time. Much has changed. The plenary meetings have become highly professional major events. The range of topics has become broader, the meeting tables larger. Meanwhile, specific workshops and seminars expand the portfolio of the Club. What has remained the same, though, is the commitment of a few. I certainly don´t want to act as voice of Cassandra, and perhaps it´s not appropriate for an anniversary publication. Nevertheless I fear that it will not take much longer until we will not be capable of doing it all. Too many responsibilities rest on the shoulders of too few. The heaviest load to carry weighs on Vincenzo Le Voci´s shoulders, but even he would not be capable of carry it all. Then, it also gets more and more difficult to face the financial challenge of organizing a plenary meeting. So, what could be done? Sometimes I feel we are too demanding with the Club. Sometimes, we also raise" wrong", or too high, expectations. To be attractive to as many as possible, we deal with a range of topics as broad as possible. This, of course, reflects the variety and diversity of the Club´s members, but inevitably leads to a certain form of arbitrariness. In the near time we should therefore discuss the Club´s goals and non-goals and their definitions, enhancing the Club´s profile. We will also need more involvement of the Club´s members. We are all involved on a voluntary basis, having jobs that leave barely space for other activities. Our aim should be to involve many among us in a little bit of the Club´s administrative work. Now there are only a few handling lots of it.

Perhaps it doesn´t take too much. In my opinion, the Club´s major contribution and greatest benefit is the open exchange of ideas on an international level, without mandate, without formalisms. We don´t need that much to make use of this USP: We agree on a topic, we meet each other and we discuss on the matter. We do not need sophisticated presentations, nor an elaborate list of speakers. We just meet with a lot of ideas stored in our mind and our luggage. The more the issue is clearly defined, the more the discussion will be focused. It depends on us. I am confident that together we will find enough issues being worth talking in detail about twice a year. Perhaps we might even quarrel over these issues, in the best sense of the word – would be funny for a change.

In this spirit, let´s look forward to the next 30 years! Happy birthday to the Club of Venice! It is good that you exist.

European information challenges in a fast-changing world

Jaume Duch Guillot

The European Union does not always thrill its citizens. Some people switch channels or turn the page when "Brussels" hits the headlines. Some people do not vote in European elections. Many ask what is the point is of a European Union that does not solve their problems. Others are confronted with referenda without having received enough factual information. From this perspective, we should consider that European information challenges belong not to the future, but to the present.

The task of the communication departments of the EU institutions is not and can never be to "sell the EU" as if it was a product. It is to support the media in their task of giving citizens pointers as to who is making the decisions, why and for whose benefit. The crises of recent years do not make this task easier. The Eurozone's public debt, migration flows, terrorism, Brexit... all overshadow historic achievements such as freedom of movement within the Schengen area, the Euro or 70 years of peace.

Communication is politics, and vice-versa

As EU communicators, our roots and our mission start here, with the political reality we have to depict. This was the case 20 years ago and it will still be the case in 20 years. Information and democracy are intimately linked. *"Press freedom, along with universal suffrage, is the thought of all guiding the government of all. To attack one is to attack both"*, as French writer Victor Hugo once said in a speech, 170 years ago.

Though as the political reality changes, so does the message we have to convey. The European Parliament has been gaining power and influence. In 2014, for the first time, lead candidates for the Presidency of the EU executive were presented by the main European political families. For the first time, voters chose the European Commission President through their directly elected representatives at EU level. The role that the European Parliament plays in the EU is increasingly similar to that which any national parliament plays in its national political system. Closer proximity to the way in which national politics develop may have stimulated media coverage, which was five times higher in 2014 than in 2009.

More responsibility comes along with increased transparency. Media coverage has grown continuously, even though the number of EU correspondents has stayed stable over the past 20 years, despite worsening working conditions. This is both an opportunity and a challenge for us, as information and communication specialists. Difficulties remain in trying to reach every single citizen. The intrinsic remoteness of the EU, the problems that citizens have in working out who does what in Brussels, the complexity of decision making or the lack of immediate effect of EU legislation all complicate Parliament's communication policy.

We now face a world in which journalists have to select what to cover, jumping from one crisis to the next. That usually leads to little coverage of attractive, positive EU news, like the abolition of roaming charges or legislation on Internet neutrality, banning plastic bags or protecting passengers' rights.

Journalists are and will remain unavoidable

Contrary to the famous song by The Buggles, video did not kill the radio star. The Internet has not killed traditional media either. In today's world, it is vital for any good communication to be able to distinguish between what is here to stay (trends) and what comes and goes (fashion). Who remembers Second Life or MySpace, for example?

Past behaviours and patterns do not simply disappear because of new trends. They evolve, and our mission is to accompany this evolution. Social media have not replaced traditional media. The profile of a journalist is changing, with the development of online media, data journalism, fact-checking initiatives, citizens' journalism, etc. However, the essence of journalism - explaining a more and more complex world to citizens - remains unchanged.

Journalism remains unavoidable for public institutions. Democratic legitimacy demands that institutions be accessible to citizens. Accessibility means transparency; and transparency means permanent contact between citizens, public institutions and political representatives. This can only be achieved with the help of the media.

More than ever, in a context of crisis and increased responsibility for the European Parliament, it is crucial to build engagement, loyalty and trust between Parliament's media professionals and journalists, striving for a common goal: informing people about Parliament's activities in an impartial, objective, in-depth way. As human beings, our relationships can never grow far if there is a lack of honest trust. This also applies to institutions building relationships with media and citizens. The tools that technology provides do help with communication issues, but it is crucial not to forget that building trust with media has at least the same relevance, if not more, as being technologically up to date.

Innovation to keep pace with fundamental trends

The preservation of high-quality press services should go hand-in-hand with embracing innovative communication. Nowadays, innovation is linked to the fast-changing internet world. The new opportunities offered by technologies should serve both relations with media and the direct contacts of an institution with citizens. Beyond information and visibility, new media can substantially improve proximity to citizens, trust in an institution, access to political players and decisions and the monitoring thereof.

To this end, Parliament's commitment to digital communication and social networks is clear. Our Facebook page has more than 2 million followers, which makes Parliament the fourth most popular institution across the globe. Our Twitter account reaches more than 9 million followers.

Furthermore, Parliament is a pioneer in using new features on social networks. A Facebook live interview with its President Martin Schulz reached almost 1.5 million viewers in September 2016, ahead of the State of the European Union debate. Parliament was also the first public institution to use Twitter Moments, a compilation of the most significant tweets allowing a more dynamic, comprehensive and visual coverage of the same debate.

By so doing, Parliament increases participation in public life. A Eurobarometer survey published in April 2016 found that 46% of young Europeans aged 16-30 consider that the use of social media "is a democratic progress because they allow to participate in public debate".

Parliament rejected the AnHYPERLINK "https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-Counterfeiting_Trade_Agreement"ti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) by a large majority in July 2012, following a mobilization of the public opinion amid fears that this international treaty on intellectual property protection could have violated citizens' fundamental rights. This mobilization would have been far less effective without social media, which served as a mobilisation tool and an echo chamber for civil society. The current transatlantic trade and investment partnership (TTIP) talks with the USA face the same challenge and the new media, halfway between representative democracy and direct democracy, should be taken into account.

Virtual reality, trend or fashion?

Innovation itself necessarily involves some risk. This has to be understood from the very outset of any action: the outcome is never certain in advance. This should not prevent public institutions daring to test new things, provided that they are able to turn the page quickly and at a limited cost if a project fails. As we say, fail quick, fail cheap, fail often.

JAUME DUCH GUILLOT
Jaume Duch Guillot, born in 1962 in Spain, is the European Parliament's spokesman and Director of its media departments. He joined the European Parliament's press service in 1990, and became spokesman of President José Maria Gil-Robles in 1997. He then headed the press service until 2006, when he was given the responsibility of representing the institution to journalists and managing all Parliament's media services.

Virtual reality may become a new field of action. The New York Times and tech companies have already developed apps and started to record in this format, while institutions such as the White House or the United Nations have taken their first steps in this as yet unexplored field.

In the European Parliament, we have just produced the first virtual visit to our headquarters in Strasbourg, in connection with the State of the European Union debate. Positive reactions and the one million views achieved in a week encourage us to keep working on this, seeing it as another form of reporting about key issues in a not too distant future. It is likely that, following the generational change, virtual reality and as yet unknown technologies will become part of these new media channels.

Elections as the main horizon of public communication

Sticking to the political reality that we have to communicate, meeting journalists' evolving needs and innovating in a fast-changing world are the three lines of action for a public institution such as the European Parliament, with one single date in mind: the 2019 European elections, the recurring landmark for a European democracy still in construction.

We should never forget the fact that quality of information, rigour and transparency are the best antidotes against the simplification, half-truths or lies that populists and Europhobes often use. The sad chapter of the "Brexit" is a clear example of how decades of too little information, or misinformation, about the European Union can cause extreme prejudice.

From now on and until 2019, the battle will be against those who want to annihilate the European construction and return to a Europe where states confronted each other and people suffered. This battle will take place on many fronts, including information, and its outcome will shape the Europe we shall have in 30 years.

And for those who doubt our capacity to re-build and re-invent relations between the people of the European Union and their democratic institutions every day, I can only reiterate the words of Jacques Delors, former President of the European Commission and visionary EU builder 30 years ago: *"Let's not forget that citizens lack neither intelligence nor good sense. They wish only to understand what's at stake for their individual and collective destiny. Why shouldn't they decide to get more involved and take part in it?"*

The state, the future and the vision of public communications in Europe

Eleonora Gavrielides

The state of play

Much water has gone under the bridge since the establishment of the Club of Venice in1986. In some ways it seems aeons since there have been quantum leaps in the sphere of public communication since and to keep pace a great deal has changed as regards the organisation and structure of the Communication Services themselves but also the way the expectations of European peoples from their governments.

If this is understood to mean that everything is just as it should be all over Europe or even in any particular one of the European states let me hasten to clarify this was not what I meant to say in any way, shape or form.

In actual fact not only is there great disparity between the specific goals and effectiveness of public communication among member states- let alone among all the states on our continent-.It is fair to say that even in the best examples we are not at a place where we can say that all that remains to be done is to continue to evolve and adapt to new needs and new opportunities while facing the day to day to challenges that come our way.

Public versus political communication

This may be partly due to the fact that our societies are currently facing significant pressures and problems of a political, economic and- not least -philosophical nature. An additional consideration is that in a number of countries strictly speaking and bona fide **public communication** is receding and a kind of communication that is more appropriately described as **political communication** is taking its place.

I do not mean to underplay the unavoidably close connection between the two or to suggest that political communication is necessarily something sinister and far removed from the interests of society. Far from it. Still, it is fair to say that Public Communication is something philosophically other, broader and at the same time more focused on the benefit for society and the citizen than political communication tends to be. Not least because the latter unavoidably has stricter chronological limits and horizons.and deals more with specifics in the sphere of political aims rather than issues on the level of values and culture.

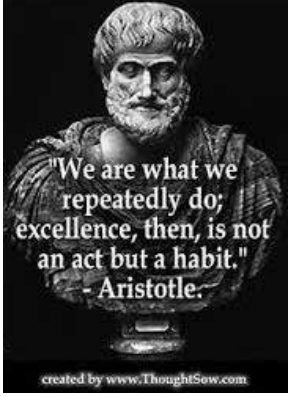
What do we need today?

In today's difficult and fluid global situation which unavoidably affects Europe, in many ways contributing to the rise of several complicated crises, it is more necessary than ever before to go to the heart of thorny issues and use communication to not only inform but have the people of our countries and Union on board in the effort to formulate an -ideally- common policy in matters that seriously affect our future as EU and as European citizens/ societies.

Such matters , to name but a few are: The refugee and immigration crisis and the way individual countries within the union or around it deal with it, the related or not related as the case may be, rise of Eurosceptisim, the still uncertain outcome of Brexit and the continuing banking and generally financial difficulties the Union and several countries within it are still struggling with. These are all crises that months ago we might have said could potentially damage the European project and threaten the future character and nature of the Union and at this point in time I fear we have to admit that they are well on the way to damaging them. Such crises would be better faced holistically, as it were, rather than piecemeal and with benefit of a joint communication plan following serious discussion of the various options and their meanings at the philosophical or even sociological level.

Beyond best practice to reaffirming values / vision

The tools to improve people's lives through our work, to be of added value in our societies which in some cases are facing serious problems on many levels, are known and are at hand. Having said this, I must also say that a factor is still missing from the equation, or at least seems to have taken a back seat when it is in fact the



most important ingredient needed to bring about the fruition of all our best intentions and efforts for our continent, our Union, our individual countries and citizens on the ground.

We have become very good at techniques and we possess the knowledge, we even have the will and- not infrequently -even the passion to do good for our societies and our world even. What then mitigates our success?

My view is that we are often swamped by the daily workload, the piecemeal work at hand and do not look further to try and fit this into the grand scheme of things of where we **ultimately want to go**. I do not mean in terms of the government five (or however many) year (s) communication plan.
I am not referring to linking every action to the political agenda of our governments. These things happen with varying success in all member states. I mean something bigger and more important than that. Something Aristotelian. My belief is that in our daily practice of public communication we involuntarily lose sight of the ultimate, bigger goal and duty. In other words **the vision**.

Our vision should be to move beyond explaining government policy and even beyond doing all that we need to involve our societies in the formulation of policy.

We need to move on to contributing to the self realisation of our societies. This includes a modicum of philosophical contemplation of what we are and what we want to be as European states and citizens, and what our rights and duties to that end should be.

We need to start taking stock of our values, beliefs and attitudes which ultimately are the stuff of our European culture and making the necessary effort to bolster them up, reaffirm them and get our governments, or communication services and our societies to recommit to them.

We need to stop focussing mainly on good techniques and on doubtless excellent and useful scientific knowledge and practice but losing sight of the big goal that we should be moving towards

My sense is that we have been far too busy and not a little confused by everything that is happening around us, trying to cope with challenges on the ground in a practical or political way and perhaps justifiably so as there has been no shortage of challenges.

Nevertheless, the truth of the matter is that practical, economic and political piecemeal action cannot address deeply philosophical matters. It cannot answer philosophical questions. And our challenge is nothing if not philosophical. We need to decide what kind of Europe it is that we want before we formulate policy and communicate it to our citizens. Most importantly we have to decide who and what we are and who and what we want to be and strive through our actions to become our ideal self. If you think this is too romantic a notion , I invite you to take a look at what the most pragmatic person who ever walked the earth, the Greek Philosopher Aristotle, has to say:

Excellence is a habit. We can formulate it, practice it and build it through our actions. The first step on that road, we might add, is to have a clear vision.

Cooperation round the axis of European values and the role of the Club.

Furthermore, the broader and deeper discussion necessary should be at least partly and significantly the work of communication services acting nationally and cooperating at pan European level. This in effect means collaboration between national communication services and involvement of the European institutions. The Club of Venice clearly has a role to play in this context.

In fact the role of the Club of Venice in this may be invaluable. It is the only European-wide professional forum that can assess the situation with professional expertise and no axe to grind. In full knowledge of the state of play not only in the EU and candidate countries but also in and across the Institutions and which can also come up with suggestions for possible communication solutions that will benefit the European people and even provide the tools to turn those suggestions into reality.

I have no doubt that the future of the Club is bright and hope that it will have the opportunities to significantly influence the future of the EU for the better.

ELEONORA GAVRIELIDES
Dr Eleonora Gavrielides is the former Director of the Cyprus Republic's Communication Service.
She took early retirement in 2015 to pursue freelance activities and academic interests in the sphere of Communication, Philosophy and Sociology and she collaborates with several Universities in Cyprus to that end.
She is actively involved in the efforts to increase inter communal understanding and cooperation in Cyprus.

Enhance relevance, innovate democracy

Anthony Zacharzewski

In the time of Trump, Brexit, and growing populism around Europe, it is a difficult time to be a democratic reformer.

We campaign for participation, evidence-based decision-making, and calm deliberation, at a time when those things seem farther from our political discourse than they have ever been.

The problem has many causes - economic, social, and political. Democratic reform can only be part of the solution, but it is an essential part. It is impossible to imagine a world in which populist pressures have been overcome, but national and European governments are still working as they do today.

Before allowing despair to take over, we should make a rational assessment of where we have succeeded. The challenges today posed by ISIS are - despite many differences - similar to those posed by the Red Army Fraction and others in the 1970s. Declining trust in government has not led to the sorts of political upheaval seen in 1968 or earlier. There is no plausible anti-democratic world power challenging democracy from a position of strength. Most significantly of all, the former Warsaw Pact countries are stable European democracies, something that only the wildest optimist would have predicted at the first meeting of the Club of Venice in 1986.

But the rapid transition to democracy could become a rapid transition away from it. The rise of populism we are seeing may just be the first murmurs of a wider challenge to democracy, driven not just by those called the "left behind" but by a combination of dislocating social and technological change, accelerating incessantly, and promising an abundance of automation and replication that might destroy the jobs of whole sectors. What is opportunity to some is a grave threat to others.

That rise of mass communication and network society is driving a transitional moment in democracy, too. Democracy is moving away from mass representation and the bureaucracy of the welfare state towards something more networked, open and personalised. Like a city that creates new suburbs but can never leave the shapes and patterns of the past behind, we cannot create this new democracy as we please, we have to manage the transition in a way that meets the needs of tomorrow's citizens, while being acceptable to those of today.

The lessons of other such transitions, 1789, 1832 or 1945, or that they do not happen easily, and the comfortable timescales of governments and establishment are easily overtaken by the speed of social change.

It is in this context, rather than its immediate surroundings, that we should read the Brexit vote. As is clear to anyone who followed the vote closely, it stood as a proxy for all sorts of concerns, particularly a concern about disruptive change, as seen through a prism of immigration. At times, the EU itself felt like a bit player in a wider culture war. More EU logos on buildings, or even better understanding of the EU would not have helped - the sense of protest is not really related to governance, it is just as powerful in nation states like France and the US.

The scale of the populist challenge, and the scale of democratic change, mean that those of us who want to see reform cannot just be innovators of the small things and the ideas around the edges, implemented where people are friendly and agree with us. We have to understand how reform happens within existing systems, how we handle the legacy of old systems, and how we reach beyond those already engaged or engageable to those whose voices are seldom heard in the public square.

There is no shortage of innovators, and there is no shortage of good ideas, but there is a serious shortage of the methods and infrastructure that will enable good ideas to scale and replicate. Innovators lack the access to government that would enable us to test at a population scale and on large issues. Democratic innovation risks becoming a sideline.

What are the routes that can lead us away from irrelevance, and enable us to work with governments and European institutions to involve people in new ways?

Start with the local. The area that people know best, and the area that they feel most able to make change, is that immediately around them. Without a strong rooting in the individual and community experiences of citizens, participation in policy can only ever be a minority interest, appealing to the single-minded and articulate educated people with time on their hands.

Understand how to reach scale through networks. National and European institutions work at far higher level than local, so they need to think about ways in which they can bring their policy decisions and implementation into the local sphere. This is more than communicating at local media or councils, it involves creating a network through which participation and two-way communication can be handled.

Find opportunities to connect people and ideas. That network will not look the same in every place, and communities will always be different from each other. Joining up existing initiatives can test them in different environments to make them more robust, and gives greater scope for development of good ideas. At the same time, exposing those with good ideas to the reality of government, and government staff to the possibility of reform, can produce insights in both directions. The Council of Europe's democracy incubator, which has its second meeting at the World Forum for Democracy this year, is a good example of this, bringing together two dozen cities currently experimenting with participative democracy and a global network of democracy experts and theorists. It is not hard to imagine this sort of initiative creating a global learning community, rooted in practical action, as has developed in the open data world in recent years.

Improve the baseline. The difference between an innovator and a reformer is that the reformer knows she has to work on the basis of the system as it is, not in a theoretical model or how she would like it to be. An important part of democratic reform is putting in simple practices in place that make baseline of government action across its whole range a little bit better every time. This is about embedding new ways of working, whether the better regulation proposals for the European Commission, which promise to involve stakeholders will deeply, as well as international efforts such as the Open Government Partnership. At local level they could be commitments to engagement and reporting back on the policy creation process. The key point is to make sure that everyone is doing two or three small, measurable, better things for democratic engagement.

Be pragmatically opportunist. Incremental improvement needs to be accompanied by bold experiments. The places where policy, policy team, politicians and potential participants are all open to new approaches are the places where more ambitious innovation can be tried, and both governments and reformers should seek them out. Successes and failures then need to be reported back, honestly, into the community, through forums like the Club of Venice, and into the wider network of democracy practitioners.

Take diversity seriously. Governments in Europe serve 500 million people, including tens of millions of disabled people, people without access to the Internet, or people with low literacy skills. Any engagement approach that does not focus on getting the widest possible range of voices, and creating multiple environments in which they feel comfortable will be no improvement on the current system. This has to go beyond merely reaching out for more participants to rethinking some of the fundamentals of how we designed democratic experiences. Many democratic reformers are rational, articulate and educated people, so an assumption creeps in that the best model for democracy is rational debate between educated and articulate participants. Is it not something that many politicians would recognise as their day-to-day experience, and it is not the way to create environments that are welcoming to those with low skills or confidence.

Understand the skills needed in government and,among the public. It is very easy to demand too much of citizens. This is most obvious when it comes to time requirements, or the demands on attention span that some democratic innovations place on their participants. However, it is also possible to assume knowledge

ANTHONY ZACHARZEWSKI
Anthony Zacharzewski runs the Democratic Society, a non-partisan membership organisation promoting participation, citizenship and better democracy. His background is in central and local government in the UK. At various times he has been speechwriter at the Department of Health; secretary to the Cabinet Committees on health, food and agriculture; lead official for first-round Sure Start projects in East London and South-West England, and project leader in the Treasury's internal think tank, the Productivity and Structural Reform Team. Anthony joined Brighton & Hove City Council as Head of Policy in 2006, where he was responsible for strategy, community relations, and sustainability. After nine months on the authority's board as Acting Director of Strategy & Governance, he left to work for the Society in February 2010. Anthony Zacharzewski has collaborated with the Club of Venice since 2012 by delivering key notes at its plenary sessions and thematic seminars on the impact of social networks in the emerging media landscape, focusing on e-democracy trends and citizens' engagement online.

that is not really there. Citizens need the subject-specific information on which they can participate, But they also need the background knowledge and skills to make participation worthwhile for both sides. Government officials, too, need to have the right skills both to create engagement opportunities, to be active participants within them rather than just standing at the back with their arms crossed, and to handle input from large numbers of diverse and engaged participants. International government co-operation, of which the Club of Venice is an excellent example, can spread training, peer mentoring and learning initiatives rapidly across national boundaries.

Finally, keep experimenting and keep talking. No one knows the one right answer to democratic reform, and no one has built the single platform that fits. It seems to me almost impossible that there could ever be a single answer or a single platform given how complex and vast the scale of global democracy is. That makes it even more important to keep experimenting, and find the solutions that work in different situations. For that not to be a endless process of reinventing wheels and small-scale innovation, we need to keep talking, governments, reformers and citizens. Through that continued conversation, and by bringing the learning out again, we can create the democratic answer to the challenge of populism, and thereby support those who are trying to deliver the social and economic answers.

Learning something new every day

John S. Verrico

The most important element for professional growth is continuous learning and networking with other professionals.

"So, you admit that you lied on your job application."
I was stunned when my boss said this to me in response to my request to attend a professional training seminar. "You were hired because you said you had skills," she said. "But the fact that you are asking for training is an admission that you don't have those skills after all."
It is rather insane to think that you could ever know all you need to know, and that you are beyond needing training.

Unfortunately, throughout my career as a government communicator, I have run into this attitude a few times, though never again to this extreme. I find it interesting and disconcerting that government agencies and private companies may readily encourage and approve training for topics such as accounting, acquisition, program management, computer skills, sales, and various trade certifications, but do not necessarily see communication as a priority.

Yet, in no career field is it more important to continually refresh our skills, learn new tactics, and network with peers as it is in the communication professions. The ever-changing landscape of media, social media, politics, and public perception of government make it necessary for us to keep up with trends, learn from each other's successes and failures, and continuously add to our toolbox of skills.

When I started working in the communication field more than 35 years ago, there were no websites, news was printed on paper or broadcast over airwaves, video was too expensive to even consider using, and social media wasn't even dreamed about. This week, my office sent out press releases directly to the inboxes of more than 80,000 subscribers, posted them on our website and Facebook pages, amplified them with 140-character posts to 100's of thousands of others through our16,000 Twitter followers, and had several thousand people view our boss giving a keynote speech at a conference through live video, and I participated in an online conference with counterparts across the country. Our career field is in a constant state of change as new advances come along in technology that provide us new channels to communicate with our publics and each other. With these new channels, come new tactics, new strategies, and require us to continuously learn new sets of skills.

Professional networking organizations such as the Club of Venice in Europe, the National Association of Government Communicators (NAGC) in the United States, and the South East Europe Public Sector Communication Association (SEECOM) understand the importance. In their own ways, they each offer critical opportunities for professional government communicators to get together, to learn from each other, and enhance their skills.

In the United States, among monthly webinars, periodic in-person training seminars, and other networking events, the NAGC holds an annual Communication School that brings together communicators from federal, state, and local government agencies for training on the latest tactics in the public and private sectors, develop skills, hear from a variety of speakers and share stories with each other. While the latest NAGC Communication School was held in Washington, DC, the annual event changes locations around the country each year so as to be more accessible to more people.

Each event offers three days of intense training sessions on speechwriting, branding, social media, briefing the boss, working with reporters, creating graphics and dozens of other topics ranging from hands-on half-day workshops, keynote presentations, and detailed break-out sessions.

The School has featured deep-dive, hands-on half-day pre-conference workshops on topics such as conflict resolution, speech writing, strategic communication plans, presentation skills, storytelling, and video production. The video workshop was designed to help people with no video skills to learn to quickly produce short video clips and b-roll from their mobile phones or other devices of sufficient quality to release to the media and public. One of the pre-conference workshops in 2016 was designed to help people transition from their former positions as journalists, or from the private or non-profit sectors, to their new role as government communicators and to understand the subtle differences.

Keynotes range from things like being innovative in the field, handling various levels of crises, rolling out major initiatives, and communicating internally. There have been plenary panels focusing on the state of the media, the future of the public affairs career field, relationships between reporters and government spokespersons, and international look at government use of digital media.

Beyond learning from fellow government communicators from across the United States, the School offers the opportunity to potentially meet and learn from our international counterparts. SEECOM Secretary General attended in the past and discussed how the government in Montenegro is engaging the public in policy decisions. One of the most significant sessions at the 2016 Communication School was a keynote panel of Club of Venice members who discussed how governments in the European Union are handling the highly emotional issue of the flood of refugees into their member states and the sensitivities of public perception about terrorism. Vincenzo LeVoci, Administrator, Press/Communication, General Secretariat of the Council, European Union and Erik den Hoedt, Director, Public Information and Communication Office, Dutch Ministry of General Affairs were joined via Skype by Dr. Eleonora Gavrielides, Associate Professor, Eastern Mediterranean University, and Former Director of Press and Information Office of the Republic of Cyprus to discuss the challenge of politics and public perceptions of these and other crises in Europe.

A popular feature of the School is a session called "30 Great Ideas in 30 Minutes." This is a rapid-fire facilitated session where the attendees take turns contributing ideas that can be described in just a sentence or two. The ideas are captured and sent out to the attendees after the School. Ideas have touched on working with freelance reporters, improving community relations, using social media as an internal communication tool, convincing the boss to recognize employees, making websites more accessible, tracking your own career progress, and effectively using humor while still maintaining professionalism and integrity.

The theme of the 2016 conference was "Shaping the Future" and many of the sessions alluded to the fact that government communicators shape the messages that form the public perception of their agencies.

A full agenda can be found on NAGC's legacy website www.nagconline.org or directly at http://www.nagconline.org/CommunicationsSchool/documents/NAGC-2016-Communications-School-Agenda.pdf. The 2017 Communication School will be held in St. Louis and information can be found on the new website: https://nagc.com/about-the-school/

Break-out sessions are held concurrently, and since people can only be in one place at one time, NAGC offers some of those sessions as part of a webinar series throughout the year that are free for School attendees and a small fee for members and non-members who did not attend the School. NAGC's Webinar Wednesdays offers monthly training topics online.

Throughout the event were many social events and opportunities for contemporaries to meet each other, share stories, and develop their own networks of fellow professionals. Of all the outcomes of the School, this is probably the most valuable.

JOHN VERRICO

The NAGC Communication School and other training offerings are open to everyone, although members do get discounts, and the Webinar Wednesday events are free for members.

The annual Communications School is also the forum for peer recognition. Each year, the NAGC holds the Blue Pencil and Gold Screen Awards competition to showcase the best in government communication efforts. Communicators from around the world submit their work to be judged by their peers. NAGC's first European winner was the Government of Montenegro in 2014, who took first place in the Mobile Communications category for their "zero grey economy" campaign. The award was accepted by Montenegro's Vuk Vujnovic.

That year was also the first time an international entry was selected as 'Best in Show.' The NAGC Board of Directors reviews all of the first place winners from among all of the 41 categories to determine which entry best exemplifies the tenets of government communication. The entry "Changing the Face of Local Government" from Rocky View County in Calgary, Alberta, Canada was selected for its humorous and humanizing approach to connecting citizens and government programs.

Rocky View County's communication manager Grant Kaiser said of the awards program, "It helps bring credibility to the profession, and strengthens the case for the clear, open communication that I believe we all strive to provide citizens. For my own organization, winning a NAGC award has been terrific for staff morale. But most importantly, it has already helped me strengthen the idea that communicators belong at the table when decisions are made, and not just called in to 'sell' those decisions afterwards."

Every entry receives written feedback from the judges who are fellow government communicators or subject matter experts in that category. You may want to consider entering your efforts into next year's competition. More information on the awards program can be found at https://nagc.com/awards/blue-pencil-gold-screen-awards/ In a separate competition, NAGC also honors the Government Communicator of the Year, selected from nominations across all levels of government. Exceptional efforts of professional communicators, elected officials or other government personnel are judged by a panel of communication professionals on the impact they have on constituents or stakeholders, and the success of enhancing the image of government. This year's winner was Bob Muir, manager of the Press Office of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, who was recognized for his straight-forward communication tactics and responsiveness to community concerns during the severe drought in Southern California in 2015.

These recognition programs and the opportunities to converge with peers help to validate our profession, continue to refresh our skills and keep us up to date on the tools and tactics available to us to promote the good work of government.

The world is dynamic and ever-changing. Just when you think you know it all or have all the skills you need, something changes. Disasters happen that require the government to respond and provide new services. The public's perception of government is in continuous flux and could shift in a moment with a single public announcement from a government official or the release of information – accurate or not.

As professional communicators, we must be continuously learning, building upon or adding to our knowledge base and skills, and sharing what we've learned with others. Whether it is from participating in a webinar, attending an in-person class, reading articles and related periodicals, participating in online discussion groups, or attending events such as the NAGC Communication School, we should never pass up an opportunity to learn something new every day.

Time to embrace communication interdependence

Kevin Traverse-Healy

Writing in the journal Foreign Affairs in 1998, US academics Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye Jnr discussed Power and Interdependence in the Information Age and posited that: "...futurists argue that the information revolution is leading to a new electronic feudalism, with overlapping communities laying claim to citizens' loyalties. But the state is very resilient. Geographically based states will continue to structure politics in an information age, but they will rely less on traditional resources and more on their ability to remain credible to a public with increasingly diverse sources of information."

Earlier still, in 1976 in fact, my father Professor Tim Traverse-Healy OBE, laid out his vision for communication contributing to a better world by embracing and "explaining and preaching the gospel of the interdependence of man" as the "only message likely to save our society from self-destruction". Sadly, we find events (not least those of recent months in 2016, 40 years later, challenging whether this concept has stuck. So, it with somewhat of a heavy heart that I present an update of my 2013 Convergences article. But, here goes.
At the plenary of the Club of Venice in Tallinn, I made reference to the age of deference giving way to an age of reference and now our being increasingly in an age of emotional proximity. I was asked to expand on that thought across the European government communication perspective in order, hopefully, to give some 'food for thought and discussion'.

The term interdependence has been around since Karl Marx used it in 1848 in relation to the interdependence - as against the old world of independent - of nation states and societies and the concept has been around even longer. Global interdependence is recognised by us all in international commerce and in dependencies in such often contentious fields such as health, food, energy and the environment. Some states, for example, are struggling to achieve or maintain a level of independence in energy in the face of dominant behaviours from those that have the natural resources. Water is another area where interdependencies dominate thinking and strategic behaviour. Tim Marshall, for example, argues that China will never back down from its occupation of Tibet largely because Tibet holds the sources of three of the main rivers (Yellow, Yangtze and Mekong) that supply China with water.

Bringing it across to our interests as government communicators, however, to what degree is our professional/science/art/craft impacted by interdependence? Are we able to communicate effectively with our national, regional and local publics if we remain isolated and independent of the actions of our colleagues elsewhere – in Europe or beyond? Does the need to make communication methods (tools, channels, media) and messages (information, narratives, messages) relevant and approximate (remember emotional proximity) to our audiences mean that we can discard without peril the communication, behaviours and imperatives of the societies in which we are gathered, such as Europe?

For I am not sure that we have really grasped the concept of interdependence in government communication across our borders. So I now explore some thoughts and possible implications of that.

First, let us look at our audiences: we will all, I think, acknowledge that the media dependency theories of the social scientists of the 1970's, such as Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur, ring pretty well as true today. Their hypothesis was that: "the more a person depends on media to meet needs, the more important media will be in a person's life, and therefore the more effects media will have on a person". If we take 'media' in its broadest sense as methods that constitute some form of communication between individuals and groups (rather than the media as old-style press/broadcast), I hope we will all agree that media dominates many of today's societal behaviours and is less and less limited by time and space. Social media on mobiles is an obvious example.

The Club has spent many of its sessions sharing experiences relating to developing techniques and tools of communication in the light of our new media world and receiving the benefit of wisdom shared. And, in my experience at least, this sharing is becoming embedded in the working cultures inside MS governments. I have twice contributed to the excellent Academy of Government Communication in Estonia and can vouch for their high level of enthusiasm for sharing and an excellent spirit of co-operation between ministries. I have found the same in Ukraine, where a somewhat desperate need to learn is based on a hope that modernity and international influence will help achieve stability in government behaviours.

The South Eastern European Government Communication Conference (SEECOM) is another initiative that continues to provide value - with agendas full of professionally useful "show and tell" subjects and top international speakers. The Club and MS government communicators are sharing across borders and this has significantly contributed to capacity building – although, for some, the joy of learning of effective new techniques is tempered with the knowledge that they have long hills to climb with their own politicians and civil servants.

What I want to ask us to consider is this: Great that we are doing it, but is it enough? Sharing – as healthy and helpful as it is (and nothing I am saying should be taken in any way to discourage more and more sharing) – is not the same as acting interdependently.

The foundation of Europe recognised that embracing interdependence could not only prevent inter-state conflict but also achieve significant economic and societal advantage. Over a half a century on and most of Europe recognises that a return to the isolated nation state in Europe is unlikely, even impossible (although the UK is trying to prove me wrong!). Have we, as communicators, reflected that in what we do? Have we been leaving it to others to do so, in particular the European institutions, while concentrating on our own audiences, our 'home and hearth' and our media?

There are, of course, many challenges to cross-border communication activities – but it is possible. The best example that I can find did, however, rely on a central EU initiative. From the early 2000s, DG SANTE started to promote awareness raising campaigns aimed at encouraging smoking cessation among the EU population. The first EU-wide campaign financed by the Commission, called 'Feel free to say no', ran from 2002 to 2004. The 'HELP' campaign ran from 2005 to 2010, and targeted in particular young Europeans between 15 and 25 years of age. 'Ex-smokers are unstoppable ' then targeted young people between 25 and 34 years of age, shifting the focus of communication from the dangers of smoking to the advantages of quitting. The latest iteration of Ex-Smokers are Unstoppable' (2014-2016), continues to help smokers abandon tobacco by making them realise the many benefits of a smoke-free lifestyle and providing a tool, called iCoach, to get them there. iCoach, is available both online and as a mobile app in 23 languages. The infographic gives some idea of its success but, briefly, one in three of its 480,000 registered users stopped smoking after three months.

There are more possible avenues for cross-border campaigns in health and other areas – both across all MS and for two or more MS to collaborate. But, rather than a convenience to reach shared campaign goals, do these campaigns prove interdependence as existing? Do you have examples of cross MS campaigns not centrally organised? If so, please share.

KEVIN TRAVERSE-HEALY
DL MA FRSA FCIPR
Club of Venice Member Emeritus, Kevin Traverse-Healy, works in international communication strategy as a consultant specialising in government-to-public communication and delivering public policy through behaviour change. Previously, he was a strategic consultant with the UK's Central Office of Information and was an external adviser to European Commission Vice-President Wallström. He is an expert on EU funded feasibility studies and evaluations and delivers training in government communication in many countries. He has authored and co-authored a number of publications on communication and its valuation and has been a visiting member of the faculty of communication science at the Università della Svizzera italiana for 17 years.

So, my fundamental questions for you to consider are these: are there, in reality, interdependencies in public sector communication as between MS in Europe that are not yet tapped into? And, if there are, how do we best accommodate them in our work? Or, am I confusing this with convergences of interest/techniques/audiences that do not involve actual dependency – in which case, shall we just carry on as we are through sharing professional knowledge, skills and experience but essentially acting nation by nation?
Money, we are all too well aware, is tight – and communication can, to the uninitiated, look like a good place to start cutting back. Under such pressure, maintaining the European dimension may seem less affordable. In my view, and I hope that the Club's membership share this opinion, that would both be a great shame - but it is not for me to decide what is and what is not appropriate.

I recognise the difficulties of overcoming national priorities and pressures in austerity but, if the answer to the interdependencies question above is "Yes", could we not adopt and act upon an outlook to our work that says: "Every time I consider what to do, I will consider not just my own country but the interdependence between what I do and the needs of fellow MS"? Could we start with migration (or, perhaps we have, force majeure, started already...)?

Could we not think of tangible ways to support our fellow MS through adapting our activities to recognise that our audiences are crossing vertical, horizontal, physical and virtual boundaries all the time?

By close collaboration, can we not at least follow our audiences – and perhaps, at some future time, get in front of them?

In that way, could we become and remain "credible to a public with increasingly diverse sources of information"?
And now to the UK leaving the EU: the whole debate is framed by most media as the UK and Europe - i.e. Europe as an entity - skipping over the fact that Europe is a community of interdependent nations whose interdependencies brought us together and our interdependencies with individual members of the community.
Here I am going to rest and leave you frustrated and without concrete propositions but in the hope that the next 30 years of the Club of Venice will see not only answers but also action. Because, I see this area a challenge to our future, just as my father did in 1976.

THE CLUB OF VENICE
ROLE, COMPETENCIES AND ACTIVITIES

What is the Club of Venice?[1]

Raison d'être
We are a private and informal forum for senior communication professionals from MS governments and the European institutions.
Our common interest is effective public communication, with an emphasis on Europe, using every appropriate channel.

Status and style
The Club of Venice is an independent club, not a European institution. It is subject only to the rules made by its members. Within the Club, all institutions and states are equal.
The Club's style is pragmatic, co-operative and informal. It relies entirely on the goodwill of its members for facilities and organisation.

Business process
The Club identifies topics of interest and mutual concern and examines them:
- to stimulate the exchange of ideas and people
- to share best practice
- to learn lessons.

The Club works through:
- its twice-yearly plenary meetings
- workshops which focus on specific issues and professional practices
- Venicenet, the Club's dedicated website.

The Club's agenda is guided by its Steering Committee, with the help of the animateurs who lead Club activities on specific topics and issues.

Key topics and workshops
For each topic of continuing interest, the Club finds an animateur from among members.
The animateur stimulates discussion:
- through workshops
- through Venicenet.

Outcomes and proposals from the workshops are reported to plenary sessions and on Venicenet.

Plenary sessions
Plenary sessions are held twice a year, hosted by a Member State.
The Club's agenda is guided by the Steering Committee in discussion with the host state. It includes:
- reports from workshops
- new topics and issues of professional interest
- future business.

VeniceNet
The VeniceNet is the Club's private website, where members share documents, data and on-line discussions through thematic forums and databases.
The animateur for each theme is the moderator for the appropriate forum.
The Club's Steering Committee provides guidance for the Webmaster whenever required.
Access to the Venicenet is granted to members and the collaborators they nominate.

1 Text finalised at the plenary meeting of the Club of Venice in Paris on 28-29 May 2009 - session on the Club of Venice's themes, working methods and procedures.

Constitutional principles[1]

The Club.

The Club of Venice is an informal group comprising the most senior communication professionals from the governments of EU Member and Candidate States; and from the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council of the EU, the European Commission, the European Central Bank, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.

The Club's mission, process and objectives.

Our mission is to promote effective government communication at national and European level for the benefit of Europe's citizens and their democratic engagement. We do this through our plenary meetings, specialised workshops, and Website.
Our objectives are:

- to strengthen professional networking, professional knowledge, and professional expertise among members; and
- to promote discussion and debate about the communication of European issues.

General membership.

The Club's general members are the directors-general or equivalent of the information and communication services of governments, and of the institutions of the EU. Their single common qualification is involvement in public communication at the most senior level. The Club makes no distinction between permanent civil servants and political appointees.

Honorary membership.

The honorary members – the Honorary President, Co-ordinator and Vice-Presidents are former general members who hold membership in their own right. They have a role in the Club's administration through the steering committee. To qualify, candidates must have attended the Club consistently for a number of years. Candidates are proposed at a plenary meeting, and elected by vote at a subsequent plenary meeting.

Members emeritus.

The status of member emeritus is awarded by the Club at a plenary meeting to former general members to recognise the contribution they have made to the Club.

The steering committee.

The steering committee comprises the general members from the host nations of the previous, pending and next plenary meetings; the honorary members; and the secretariat (currently the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union). Their role is to lead the organisation of plenary meetings, workshops and the management of other issues.

Club meetings and attendance.

Plenary meetings are held twice a year. Usually, one is in Venice (in the autumn) and the other in a EU Member State (in the spring). The steering committee organises the agenda. A planning meeting is usually held about two months in advance. Ad hoc workshops on specific issues are proposed at plenary meetings and organised in the same way. Their agenda are developed by one or two members specialist in the topic who lead a small animation group.
At any meeting, members may be accompanied by a colleague; and they may be represented by nominees, particularly relevant specialists.

Languages.

Plenary meetings usually have simultaneous translation into the host country language, French and English. Specialised workshops are usually conducted without translation services and generally use English.

The Club's Website and e-mail bulletins:

Venicenet is the Club's Website, containing documents submitted for mutual interest, discussion forums, agenda and records of meetings, and other items considered valuable. It is hosted within the internet domain europa.eu but is independent of it.
The Webmaster is currently the EU Council Webmaster, courtesy of the Council secretariat. Club members have password protected access to the site. Club members may grant access to their colleagues, but they take full responsibility for the observation of privacy and data protection.
Automatic and ad hoc e-mail bulletins are used to inform members of updates to Venicenet and news items of interest from EU Institutions.

1 Text finalised at the plenary meeting of the Club of Venice in Gozo (Malta) on 4 June 2010.

Convergences

A first editorial experience of the Club, initiated by the Belgian federal information service (SFI-FVD, Mieke van den Berghe) and the French governmentinformation service (SID, Nicole Chauvelle), consisted in the publication for a few years (1992 – 2000) of a newsletter called « Convergences ». This newsletter, printed in a limited number of copies, reported on the Club's activities. It was mainly intended for the members and their staff.

On particular anniversaries however the Club prepared more important publications, such as those for its 10th, 20th and 25th birthday. The publication for the 25th birthday of the Club went beyond commemoration and resulted in a number of feature articles. This work was widely disseminated to and by the members but also outside, in particular to the university faculties involved in communication.

Following this successful experience, the members of the Club chose to renew this initiative and adopted, in November 2011, in Venice, the principles for re-launching « Convergences » as the periodic review of the Club of Venice. This time as an electronic review, intended for the members but also for a wider dissemination and thus for a wider audience.

This review is not aimed at being the Club's « minutes » but wants to be the means of dissemination of the work carried out by the Club, whether coming from the plenary meetings, the working groups and the workshops or from contributions of members or their institutions as from experts invited to the Club's activities.
The review does of course not exclude non-members - communication officials, information professionals, researchers, students, …- for which it is also intended.

Having regard to the Club's professional concerns, the aim is to contribute as far as possible to providing continuity in its various activities and in those of its members and to share information, reflections and experiences in the field of public communication in Europe and about Europe.

The aim is not the achievement of the review in itself but a way to make the work of the Club (of its members and of their institutions) accessible and to disseminate it and also to make it better known.
« Convergences », like the Club itself, will be what its members make of it. As one of them reminded us recently: « To make it better is not only a question of using it more. It also means that we all have to contribute more".
The review is in its ninth edition.

Loutraki Declaration approved by the members of the Club of Venice on the 1st of March 2003

Club of Venice plenary meeting - Loutraki, Greece: 28 Feb/1 March 2003

Having examined the European Commission's recent statement on institutional information, and having seen the European Parliament's resolution on the same, the Club of Venice (a co-ordination of professionals in charge of institutional communication by Member States, candidate States and Community institutions – Parliament, Commission, Council – who, given the informal nature of this co-ordination, express their own personal point of view in this declaration), considers that the text to be approved by the Convention must include the principle of European Union citizens' right to institutional information, a right which is already a matter of civil culture in the life of the countries and of the people of Europe.

In this statement the Club of Venice puts forward the following suggestions to the members of the European Convention:

- European citizens have the right to information arising from the institutional system of their own countries and of European Union institutions. This presupposes access to information, transparency of information and communication and the fact that such activities are based on a spirit of public service.
- The activities of public institutions in the areas of information, communication and relations with citizens as users, whether carried out with the support of the media or through direct action, should be inspired by the principles of neutrality and subsidiarity and by a wish to promote the clearest understanding of rules, services and opportunities.
- In order to standardise the use of services, these activities should also take into account the differences which exist between citizens at a social, economic, cultural and linguistic level, as well as the differences in their ability to express their needs for information and knowledge.
- Particular attention should be given to the management of information and communication activities in relation to the process of European integration and to the rules, policies, functions and objectives in building a united Europe. All this through constant co-operation between European, national, regional and local institutions, being a prerequisite to successful communication.
- These activities should be subject to constant monitoring, controlled by suitable measures, to evaluate their impact and social effectiveness.

Chronology of the Club of Venice meetings

YEAR	DATE	VENUE	MEETING	REMARKS
1986	3-4 October	Venice	plenary	Founding of the Club of Venice
1987	16-17 October	Venice	plenary	
1988	7 June	Brussels	plenary	
1988	28-29 October	Venice	plenary	
1989	16 February	Strasbourg	plenary	survey "European Parliament and public opinion"
1989	25-28 May	Barcelona-Seville	plenary	on the occasion of the Olympic Games in Barcelona and Seville World Expo
1989	30 Sept- 2 Oct	Paris	plenary	at the occasion of the European Conference on audiovisual
1989	20-22 October	Venice	plenary	
1990	18 April	London	plenary	Presentation of the new COI statute
1990	16-18 November	Venice	plenary	
1991	25-27 October	Venice	plenary	
1992	30-31 October	Venice	plenary	
1993	13-14 May	Bonn	plenary	Discussion of the communication structure in Central and Eastern Europe
1993	5-7 November	Venice	plenary	
1994	18 March	Paris	plenary	
1994	4-5 November	Venice	plenary	
1995	26-27 April	Brussels	plenary	1st meeting with EP communicators
1995	3-5 November	Venice	plenary	10th anniversary of the Club of Venice
1996	no meeting			
1997	12-14 November	Bruges	plenary	
1998	16-18 December	Bruges	plenary	
1999	10-12 October	Santorini (Greece)	plenary	
2000	4-6 October	La Rochelle	plenary	
2001	29 Nov - 1 Dec	Venice	plenary	
2002	24 April	Brussels	informal meeting on opinion polls	
2002	13-14 June	Copenhagen - Malmö	plenary	
2002	21-23 November	Venice	plenary	
2003	27 Feb - 2 March	Loutraki (Greece)	plenary	Loutraki declaration containing drafting suggestions to the European Convention
2003	7-10 September	Venice	plenary	
2004	13-15 April	Bratislava	plenary	
2004	18-19 November	Venice	plenary	
2005	14 January	Istanbul	plenary	Preparatory meeting and first meeting in a candidate country

YEAR	DATE	VENUE	MEETING	REMARKS
2005	13-15 April	The Hague	plenary	14 April: workshops on Goverment communication, communicating Europe and crisis management
2005	3-4 November	Venice	plenary	20th anniversary of the Club of Venice
2006	10 February	Brussels	workshop	on callcenters
2006	27-28 April	Prague	plenary	
2006	16-17 November	Venice	plenary	
2007	25-26 April	Vienna - Budapest	plenary	
2007	15-16 November	Rome	plenary	50th anniversary Rome Treaty
2008	25 February	Brussels	workshop	on audiovisual and interactive communication
2008	5-6 June	Ljubljana/Postojna	plenary	
2008	21-22 November	Venice	plenary	Break-out groups: a) Capacity building b) Public diplomacy c) Code of conduct, ethics and professional statute
2009	13 February	Vienna	workshop	on management and strategic partnership agreements
2009	17 April	Brussels	workshop	on interactive Web 2.0 comm. and session on communicating on EP elections
2009	27 May	Paris	workshop	on public diplomacy
2009	28-29 May	Paris	plenary	
2009	15 October	Brussels	workshop	on capacity building
2009	19-20 November	Venice	plenary	
2009	21 November	Poreč (Croatia)	thematic meeting	on communicating pre- and post- enlargement
2010	19 February	Vienna	workshop	on management and strategic partnership agreements
2010	19 March	London	workshop	on digital strategies for public communication
2010	29-30 April	Istanbul	thematic meeting	on crisis communication
2010	2 June	Gozo (Malta)	workshop	on public diplomacy
2010	3-4 June	Gozo (Malta)	plenary	
2010	20 October	Brussels	workshop	on social media & web 3.0 and on capacity building
2010	18-19 November	Venice	plenary	Break-out groups: a) Capacity building b) Audiovisual and interactive communication c) Journalism and new media

YEAR	DATE	VENUE	MEETING	REMARKS
2011	10 February	Brussels	workshop	on web-communication & social media and communicating enlargement
2011	12-13 April	Budapest	thematic meeting	"Communicating Europe in schools" 12/04: "Teaching about the EU - LIVE": observe a lesson with English-speaking students with innovative ICT method of teaching about the EU
2011	25 May	Warsaw	workshop	on public diplomacy
2011	26-27 May	Warsaw	plenary	
2011	7 October	Brussels	joint WPI/CoV seminar on journalism	on the impact of social media
2011	10-11 November	Venice	plenary	
2012	27 January	Vienna	workshop	on management and strategic partnership agreements
2012	16 February	Brussels	joint WPI/CoV seminar	on The Next Web and its Impact on Government Communication
2012	29-30 March	Sofia	workshop	on crisis communication
2012	23 May	Protaras (Cyprus)	workshop	on public diplomacy
2012	24-25 May	Protaras (Cyprus)	plenary	
2012	4 October	Brussels	joint WPI/CoV seminar	on "Open Government in the Making"
2012	15/16 November	Venice	plenary	Spokespersons' seminar on 14.12.2012
2013	1 February	Vienna	workshop	on management and strategic partnership agreements
2013	22 March	Brussels	joint WPI/CoV seminar	on "Public communication in the evolving media landscape: adapt or resist?"
2013	6-7 June	Tallinn	plenary	
2013	14-15 November	Venice	plenary	
2014	21 February	Brussels	Seminar	on Digital Communication Trends
2014	27/28 March	Athens	Joint seminar	(with the GR Presidency and GR Gen.Sec. of Information and Communication) "Public communication: re-gaining citizens' confidence in times of crisis"
2014	5-6 June	Riga	plenary	
2014	13-14 November	Rome	plenary	
2015	26-27 March	Sofia	Joint conference	(with Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Wilfred Martens Centre for European Studies and SEECOM) "Digital Communication: New Challenges for Governments and EU Institutions"
2015	11-12 June	Vienna	plenary	
2015	22-23 October	Milan	plenary	
2015	9 December	Brussels	Joint workshop	(with the Council Working Party on Information) on communication challenges in the field of migration
2016	9 April	Lesbos	Seminar	"The refugee and migration crisis: dealing with a European problem"
2016	26-27 May	The Hague	Plenary	
2016	30 September	Brussels	Seminar	"Terrorism:ChallengesforCrisisCommunication"

Upcoming Club of Venice meetings 2016-2018

2016

Lesvos (Greece), 9 April 2016
Seminar on the migration and refugee crisis

The Hague, 26-27 May 2016
Plenary meeting

Brussels, 30 September 2016
Seminar on crisis communication (focus on counter-terrorism)

Venice, 10-11 November 2016
Plenary meeting - 30th Anniversary of the Club of Venice

2017

Brussels (or other MS' capital), early spring 2017
Thematic seminar

Malta, 18-19 May 2017 (dates tbc)
Plenary meeting

Brussels (or other MS' capital), autumn 2017 (tbc)
Thematic seminar

Venice, November 2017
Plenary meeting

2018

Brussels (or other MS' capital), early spring 2018
Thematic seminar

Vilnius, June 2018
Plenary meeting

Brussels (or other MS' capital), autumn 2018 (tbc)
Thematic seminar

Venice, November 2018
Plenary meeting

**"We sustain a fundamental democratic duty.
We strive to help the public understand
what their Government or European institution
is doing for them - and in their name.
At the same time, we strive to help our colleagues
in Governments understand the public's reaction,
and its concerns...
...our unique fellowship has been forged
by the very nature of our business."**

Mike Granatt

THIS BOOK WAS PUBLISHED IN NOVEMBER 2016
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE CLUB OF VENICE