convergences

Public communication in Europe | Communication publique en Europe

sommaire

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New convergences...

With more than 25 years of existence, the Club of Venice brings together the directors of the information services of the European Union member states and of the various European institutions as well as of the countries applying for accession.

It is a unique meeting platform and exchange place for those who are in charge of public communication in Europe. It is the informal space of their discussions and debates on public services actions which public communication must accompany - and on which public communication must report - as well as on the conditions of that communication and of its professional practice.

This unique and informal framework is not only open to outside speakers, as it has long been the case, but also outward-looking.

A first editorial experience of the Club, initiated by the Belgian federal information service and the French government information service, consisted in the publication for a few years 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 last and more recent one, 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, last November 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 project 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". ∎
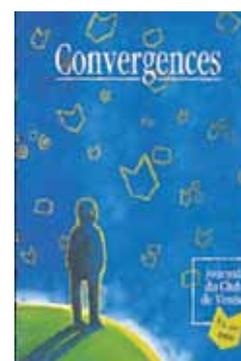
Convergences nouvelles...

Riche de plus de 25 ans d'existence, le Club de Venise rassemble les directeurs des services d'information des états-membres de l'Union européenne et des différentes institutions européennes, ainsi que des pays candidats à l'adhésion.

C'est un lieu unique de rencontre et d'échange pour les responsables de la communication publique en Europe ; c'est l'espace informel de leurs débats et réflexions, tant sur des actions des services publics que doit accompagner - et dont doit rendre compte la communication publique - que sur les conditions de cette communication et de son exercice professionnel.

Lieu unique et informel, il n'en est pas moins ouvert à des orateurs externes, comme c'est le cas de longue date, mais aussi tourné vers l'extérieur.

Une première expérience éditoriale du Club, initiée par le Service fédéral d'information belge et le Service d'information du gouvernement français, a consisté en la publication durant quelques années d'un bulletin d'information, appelé « Convergences ». Ce bulletin, tiré à un nombre limité d'exemplaires, rendait compte des activités du Club ; il était essentiellement destiné aux membres et à leurs collaborateurs.
A l'occasion d'anniversaires particuliers, toutefois, le Club a réalisé des publications plus importantes : pour ses 10, 20 et 25 ans.

La dernière, encore récente, pour le 25ème anniversaire du Club allait au-delà de la commémoration et livrait nombre d'articles de fond. Cet ouvrage a été diffusé très largement, vers et par les membres, mais aussi vers l'extérieur, notamment aux sections universitaires concernées par la communication.

Fort du succès rencontré par cette expérience, les membres du Club ont souhaité le renouvellement de cette initiative et ont adopté, en novembre dernier à Venise, le principe de la relance de « Convergences », comme revue périodique du Club de Venise. Cette fois sous la forme d'une revue électronique, destinée aux membres, mais aussi destinée à une plus large diffusion et donc à un plus large lectorat.

Sans constituer les "minutes" du Club, elle se veut le support de diffusion de ses travaux, qu'ils viennent des réunions plénières, des groupes de travail et ateliers ou encore de contributions de membres ou de leurs institutions, ou d'experts invités aux activités du Club.

La revue n'exclut bien sûr pas les non-membres, à qui elle s'adresse également : fonctionnaires chargés de communication, professionnels de l'information, chercheurs, étudiants, ...

Dans la perspective des préoccupations professionnelles du Club, il s'agit de donner la possibilité d'un prolongement à ses diverses activités et à celles de ses membres et de partager l'information, la réflexion et les expériences en matière de communication publique en Europe et sur l'Europe.

Le projet n'est donc pas la réalisation d'une revue en soi, mais une manière de rendre accessible et de diffuser les travaux du Club (de ses membres et de leurs institutions) et de mieux le faire connaître.

«Convergences», comme le Club lui-même, sera ce que les membres en feront. Comme nous le rappelait justement l'un d'entre eux : « To make it better is not only a question of using it more. It also means that we all have to contribute more". ∎

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Factsheet on the Club of Venice

Composition and Purpose

The "Club of Venice" is the informal gathering of the Directors-General / Directors / Heads of the information and communication services of the EU Member States and the EU Institutions (more precisely, the European Parliament, the Council of the EU and the European Commission)[1]. It was founded in 1986 under the auspices of the acting Italian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Since 2003, it also includes the Heads of government communication offices of the countries candidate to accession to the EU. Moreover, from 2008 to 2012 have been granted membership statuses respectively the European Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Central Bank.

The purpose of the Club is to stimulate exchange of information and experience in all fields of public information and communication.

The "Club of Venice" governance is assured by a Steering Committee, composed of a limited number of Member States' active communication directors and the Secretary-General of the Club who are instrumental in defining the activities of the Club. Its role is to establish the Club agenda, to organise plenary meetings, workshops and the management of other relevant communication activities carried out by the Club alone or in association with other peer organisations

Plenary sessions

The Club meets twice a year: usually in Venice, in November[2], and in the country holding the EU Presidency, or in another Member country willing to host the plenary on a voluntary basis, in the spring season.

The Club's plenary meetings bring the members together for presentations, discussions and a comprehensive exchange of best practice on communication topics, including communication techniques.

The draft agenda of the plenary sessions has two components:
- public communication on issues of trans-national interest;
- communication on EU issues.

The most recent plenary sessions of the Club of Venice took place in:
- Gozo (Malta) on 3-4 June 2010
- Venice on 18-19 November 2010 (hosting a debate on capacity building and the role of governmental and interinstitutional communication)
- Warsaw on 26-27 May 2011
- Venice on 10-11 November 2011 (marking the celebration of the Club's 25th Anniversary)
- Protaras (Cyprus) on 24-25 May 2012
- Venice on 15-16 November 2012

In 2010 (Gozo and Venice) the Club debate was centred on an analysis of today's role of governmental and institutional communication and on the increasing challenges for media and journalism (including the deepening interest for the development of the social networks).

The plenaries enabled to exchange fresh feedback on successful initiatives carried out by national authorities and EU institutions with regard to web 2.0 communication activities and promote the European public platform on line "Living Europe" (www.livingeurope.eu). The Club was also engaged in discussions on the implementation of "Communicating Europe in Partnership", communication on the EU Enlargement and "Communicating Europe in Schools".

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1 For a detailed composition of the new Steering Group, please refer to annex I.
2 In November 2007 the plenary meeting of the Club was hosted in Rome, since the Italian authorities decided to invite the Club members exceptionally to the capital, in the framework of the celebrative events commemorating the 50th anniversary of the signature of the Rome Treaties.

In November 2012 (Venice) the Club debate was centred on Communication in time of financial crisis and on the economic recovery, capacity building and government communication training, with particular emphasis on the agenda of the European Year of Citizens 2013 and European 2014 elections. During the meeting, the commitments in e-governance and "Open Government" approach were expressed and new challenges were identified such as the awareness-raising among policy makers and public about the new dynamics of policy making. Discussions also covered the importance of engaging mutual cooperation through interactive channels such as social media, web consultations and deliberate polling; but also by encouraging effective participation with a view to gauging the true public's view.

In the plenary sessions organised in 2011 (respectively in Warsaw on 26-27 May and in Venice on 10-11 November), the Club discussed orientations for impact assessment on communication, the impact of the Treaty of Lisbon on the role of the rolling presidencies, government and institutions' branding.

Discussion also covered the role of public communicators in a variety of crisis communication scenarios, capacity building, web data mining to capitalize from public opinion trends and key developments in the audiovisual and interactive communication.

Furthermore, the Club welcomed Croatia's presentation of the information campaign in view of the national referendum on the country's accession to the EU.

The spring plenary in Cyprus (24-25 May 2012) enabled the Club Members to share their opinions and latest news on how to pave the way for coherent communication initiatives aiming to regain the EU citizens' confidence in the European values and the rights and benefits stemming from EU citizenship, with a view to the European elections in 2014.

Discussions also covered techniques to monitor and engage in social media activities, cooperation with EU's neighbour countries in the field of communication and governmental and institutional activities to communicate EU's proximity and engagement in safeguarding public confidence contrasting the crisis.

The programme of the plenary meeting in Cyprus finally included a window on the strategy to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the Single Market throughout the whole year, recalling its achievements and present and discuss new initiatives to stimulate growth and mobilise consumers, entrepreneurs, SMEs and the young generation.

Several joint initiatives will be carried out to raise awareness of the opportunities offered by the Single Market: a competition for young people, seminars for journalists, a Single Market Week organized in all Member States and a final event in Brussels.

Seminars and Workshops

Thematic meetings and workshops are arranged on specific issues such as web communication, opinion polls, TV and radio activities, other interactive techniques, crisis communication, public diplomacy, ethics, etc

With regard to the new perspectives for communication strategies, on 20 October 2010 the Club of Venice organized a workshop in Brussels on social media and interactive communication as well as on capacity building.

This event was followed by a seminar on web-communication & social media and on communication on the enlargement, which took place in Brussels on 10 February 2011.

The new trends in online communication were also examined in a joint seminar on "The impact of social media on journalism", co-organised by the Club of Venice and the Council Working Party on Information on 7 October 2011 in the premises of the General Secretariat of the Council.

Future perspectives stemming from the increasing role played by the social network as a crucial component of government communication were discussed at a follow-up joint seminar ("The Next Web and its Impact on Government Communication") held in Brussels on 16 February 2012, with the participation of governmental, institutional and external specialists. The debate focussed on how governments and public figures are preparing for future election campaigns, on governments' engagement with social media their interplay with portals, and on new applications to deliver the "public service of the future".

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The impact of on-line information is also discussed in the context of crisis communication, another crucial topic tackled by the Club to exchange know-how and experiences on coordinated strategies to face emergencies.

A first meeting on crisis communication was held in Istanbul in April 2011 and was followed by a seminar hosted in Sofia on 29-30 March 2012, where the Club examined, among others, the freedom of press in the Balkans and the perspectives for cooperation with the public communicators from the emerging democracies of the Arab Spring world.

In 2012, a year of tough challenges, with dominating issues such as Europe's response to the economic and financial crisis and measures to ensure recovery and sustainable growth, the Club organized seven events:
- a seminar on Partnerships in the field of communication (hosted for the third time on 27 January 2012 in Vienna by the Press and Information Office of the Austrian State Chancellery);
- the two above-mentioned seminars, respectively in Brussels on 16 February (web communication) and in Sofia on 29-30 March (crisis communication);
- two meetings in Protaras (Cyprus): the 4th annual workshop on Public Diplomacy and Branding (23 May) and the spring plenary (24-25 May)
- a seminar on Open Government in Brussels (4 October)
- the autumn plenary in Venice (15-16 November)

"Public Diplomacy" continues to be among the core subjects on the Club agenda. France, Malta and Poland hosted three annual workshops (respectively in 2009, 2010 and 2011). The agenda of the 4th meeting on this challenging topic hosted in Cyprus on 23 May 2012 focussed on new techniques to rate the countries' PD strategies in their efforts to influence society and promote their identity/image/purpose worldwide.

Public Diplomacy players remain strongly engaged and interconnected to tackle concrete organizational challenges:

- study the PD strategies in progress in old and new EU Member States as well as in countries with strong or emerging economies;
- analyse comparative PD rating models and soft power trends;
- discuss on how to prepare the ground for a more efficient diplomatic action in times of financial constraints;
- extend the capacity building with a view to operate as far as possible in a coherent multi-sectoral coordination framework;
- follow closely the development of international strategies for an effective communication of the EU external policy and its possible impact on national foreign policies.
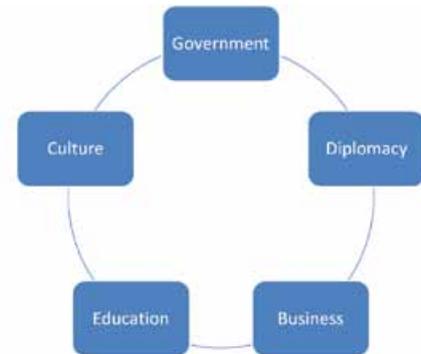
Objective soft power indicators

Finally, the last seminar which took place in 2012 on 4 October focused on Open Government/Open Data and citizens' involvement in policies development. The event was centred on the growing digital agenda and on public authorities' strategies to optimise information provision and enhance interaction with citizens and stakeholders.

What appeared evident was that the "Open Government" approach is one of the most challenging issues for government authorities and institutions. The genuine objective of "Open Government" remains to enhance transparency standards and provide user-friendlier access to information for an effective and equanimous public oversight. The Club supports and encourages Member States' increasing efforts (alone or in partnerships) in this field. ∎

Composition of the new Steering Group

Name	Country or institution	Functions
DE BAUW Pierre-Emmanuel	BE	General Director, Directorate-general for External Communication, Chancellery of the Prime Minister
den HOEDT Erik	NL	Director, Public Information and Communication Office, Ministry of General Affairs
FRKA-PETEŠIĆ Zvonimir	HR	Head of the Public Diplomacy Service, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs
GAVRIELIDES Eleonora	CY	Director, Press and Information Office, Ministry of Interior
HEIMBACH Sabine	DE	Deputy Government Spokeswoman, Press and Information Office, Federal Government
HÖRR Claus	AT	Director, Department 7/2, Press and Media Service, Bundeskanzleramt
LE VOCI Vincenzo	Council of the EU	Secretary-General of the Club of Venice Administrator, Information Policy, General Secretariat of the Council of the EU
VILLA Anna Maria	IT	Director/Coordinator Office for the European Citizenship, EU Policies, Presidency of the Council of Ministers

Composition of the new Advisory Group

Name	Country or institution	Functions
ROLANDO Stefano	IT	Honorary President of the Club of Venice
VAN DEN BERGHE Mieke	BE	Honorary Vice-President of the Club of Venice
GYARFAS FEKETE Judit	HU	Honorary Vice-President of the Club of Venice
BRUNMAYR Hans	AT	Honorary Vice-President of the Club of Venice
THØGERSEN Niels Jørgen	DK	Honorary Vice-President of the Club of Venice
GRANATT Mike	UK	Club of Venice Coordinator

What is the Club of Venice?

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. ■

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 demo-cratic 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;
- 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 an advisory committee which formulates proposals inspiring the Club in its future activities and contributes to the preparation of its meetings. 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 is composed of a limited number of Member States' active communication directors and the Secretary-General of the Club who are instrumental in defining the activities of the Club. Its role is to establish the Club agenda, to organise plenary meetings, workshops and the management of other relevant communication activities carried out by the Club alone or in association with other peer organisations (joint communication seminars, conferences such as EuroPCom, SEECOM, media seminars, etc.). The steering committee plays a role of catalyzer on the basis of regular peer-to-peer contacts, prioritizing discussion needs and stimulating members' pro-active role in the programme and, in cooperation with the advisory committee, identifying high level governmental and external speakers.

Club Agenda Focus on strategic challenges for government communication (at national, trans-national and pan-European level) and core business of the government communication directors (concrete organisational matters such as structural developments, strategies and capacity building, public diplomacy and branding, interactive dialogue with citizens, ethics and education dimension in communication).

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 of common interest from Member States and EU Institutions and bodies. ■

1 Agreement at the plenary meeting of the Club of Venice on 15-16 November 2012. Superseedes the text agreed at the plenary meeting of the Club of Venice in Gozo (Malta) on 4 June 2010.

Capacity building in government communication

Let me start this contribution to the first edition of the new "Convergences" magazine by thanking all our friends Club members who have enabled to make big progress on this issue during these last five years. In drawing up this article I made good use of extracts of documents and studies from presentations made in different Club meetings and operational conclusions which prove how seriously we have taken this issue aboard the Club agenda. Thanks to all of you. I hope this will help ensure continuity on such important subject.

Nada Serajnik Sraka, Matjaž Kek and Branko Vidric study starts with an excellent UN definition of capacity building: it is about "organising an enabling environment, setting up appropriate policy, legal and administrative frameworks and management structures, implementing processes and procedures, developing human resources, strengthening of managerial systems and equipping individuals with the skills, knowledge and training which will enable them to perform effectively".

Jan Veenman, former communication director in The Netherlands, was the inspirer of the large scale reflection initiated within the Club of Venice since 2008. For Jan, capacity building aims at improving the effectiveness of government communication by all kinds of means and to share know-how and experiences to exchange knowledge, experience and strategic orientations. It is crucial to emphasise this concept insofar it is the key to acquire the ability of enriching the professional skills, planning capacity, determination and self-confidence in a more and more demanding environment. Public communicators are facing increasingly demanding challenges of internal and external nature owing to the legitimous citizens' requirements about clear, coherent and transparent information. There is a growing need to Improve relations between government authorities and the general public as well as to ensure a smooth horizontal communication within governments' authorities. By developing a programme of comprehensive training, communication tools, seminars with peer to peer interaction you can seize the opportunity to tackle the real obstacles and work together to strengthen and consolidate communication environments.

The Club plenary in November 2008 plenary sparked an everlasting process during which the Club members have been carrying out cross-checked analysis of how to respond to the requirements of communication experts within government and what basic knowledge about communication is needed by directors, deputies, policy advisors and media specialists to fulfil their tasks efficiently and effectively. According to Jan, what is crucially needed for is the development, exchange and conservation of knowledge on the field of communication. And to this end, the key is a whole training programme including full immersion and interactive seminars, professional publications, role playing simulations, examination of wide variety of communication tools, etc.

The foundation of capacity building lies in strengthening the relation between policy and communication (factor C), improving the communication discipline and provide facilities for the implementation of knowledge and expertise. For example, by a communication website, a communication knowledge monitor, newsletters, platform publications, rules and guidelines to behave with traditional and new emerging media, exchange meetings, etc. To concretize the capacity building approach, the government authorities in The Hague established the Academy for Government Communication, whose structure and programme were presented in a thematic seminar organized by the Club in Brussels in the premises of the European Parliament in late 2009.

Since then, the Club has made big progress on this matter, availing itself of feedback provided by many of its members. The Venice plenary meetings in 2009 and 2010 enabled to draw up and build a scenario with a view to develop capacity building discussion upon concrete operational tracks.

1 Requirements for a successful public communicator:
- What capacity is needed to run effective public communication operations: management and business, leadership, professional profile, skills, writing skills, journalistic experience, policy experience, private sector experience
- Recruitment and promotion assessment processes
- Social media expertise

2 Requirements for a successful public communication operation:
- Leadership and management, business process,
- Media monitoring, social network monitoring, public surveys, monitoring customer requirements (Ministers, officials)
- Campaign evaluation

3 Legal and institutional framework
- Special laws and professional regulations for public communicators
- Ethical rules
- Codes of conduct, in particular for use of social media

4 Training and professional development
- National training models, evaluation of results achieved
- Assessments of needs, best practices
- Exchange of training materials
- Existing - and creation of new - exchange programmes for public communicators
- Possible cooperation MS - EU Institutions in organizing and funding training schemes (academic courses for public relations, public affairs)

5 Exchange of information
- Share and spread best practices
- Networking between specialists in MS and EU Institutions

6 Concrete follow-up within the Club
- Active break-out groups for discussion in plenaries
- Interactive CoV platform / Forum on the Venicenet
- Creation of a small CoV working group of capacity building specialists
- Organization of capacity building workshops at regular intervals and evaluation of results in plenary
- Production and maintenance of a capability map
- Achieving co-funding for new training programmes
- Exploitation of existing training formats (courses, workshops, seminars, study visits, traineeships at national, trans-national or EU-institutional level) by extending the offer to all governmental communicators.

From 2009 to 2012, in addition to The Netherlands, more countries have made significant efforts in building capacity and continuity in their communication structures and strategies: Italy (building upon a legal framework with special laws and professional regulations for public communicators in force since 2000), Latvia (interaction between public communicators and associations on communication), Estonia (meetings between communications officials and journalists, to discuss how public communication can improve), Sweden (interministerial initiatives from 2006 to 2009 and a six-Nordic country survey on capacity building perspectives), Finland (Central Government Communications guidelines published by the PM Office in spring 2010 containing instructions and recommendations covering planning, implementation and organisational aspects), UK (government guidelines and studies during the last years of the COI's activity, such as a guide to its officials on how to deal with social networks), Slovenia (the study "From Capacity Building to professionalism in Communication" undertaken by the Government Communication Office), Croatia (building the Public Diplomacy service and reinforcing internal communication structures) and Montenegro (internal synergies, professional development, enhancement of technology standards). Many of the above initiatives are referred to in the book "25 Years of Public Communication in Europe" published in November 2011 to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Club.

The EU institutions and advisory committees are also mobilised in this field, with variable rhythms, developing in particular internal training (i.e. a master class for public communication organised by the General Secretariat of the Commission, or internal courses within the European Parliament on how to interact via the social media) or organising intensive exchanges with civil society and young people (EESC) and with decentralised authorities (CoR).

It is worth to quote at this stage the introduction of the abovementioned Slovenian study, which draws a clear picture of the phenomenon:

"While there is probably no government today that does not communicate with the public, the means and methods of public communication differ considerably from one to another. Particularly noticeable are differences in the understanding of communication and related communication activities. Some countries have developed their communication for decades, and now this is not used only to promote political views, but also to inform the public about government activities – policies and actions – the creation of which often involves various representatives of the public. Countries with a well developed public communication system also boast an efficient structure, as well as high standards, which ensure that communication is on a par with other government functions.

But there are also governments that often do not realize that communication is essential part of their job and is fundamental for its functioning. They believe that the knowledge is power and sharing it would diminish their power and influence. These countries do not see the need to raise their own communication capacities because they believe that media outlets are sufficient for spreading the government messages to population."

This is where the Club continues to engage. As Niels Thoegersen mentioned in one of his conclusive remarks after a Club meeting on this issue, we should bear in mind that:

- The Club mission lays upon the consciousness that public communication is a special profession in itself, which needs specialists. And that these specialists are trained on a permanent basis
- No member state or EU institution at present offer a systematic and permanent training to its communication staff
- The key to progress in this field stands in our ability to share winning models and, as far as possible, take advantage of the possibilities to cooperate in capacity building initiatives which have already proven to reach successful results.

In 2011 and 2012 the relay was taken by Mike Granatt and Kate Moffat who gave a boost to the Club's engagement in this field by managing to set up a working group on capacity building and suggested to carry out a survey to identify existing capacities and capabilities, areas of particular strength, the skills and expertise that Member States would like to build and ways and means to share best practice across. Key issues to be covered included recruitment, training and planning. Mike reminded, however, that we are facing with 28 different school of thoughts, different systems and cultures, sets of assumptions, rules, structures and glossaries and therefore concentrated first on creating a common set of definitions and ground rules.

The survey was going to be a tough undertaking. It aimed to assess which behavioural skills, which kind of knowledge and experience are needed by communications professionals and to build an accurate description of the seniority and responsibility structures within Government communications. However, during the latest 18 months many changes have taken place in a number of Member States, sometimes of epocal nature (i.e. the dismantling of the COI structure in the UK) and sometimes due to big reorganisation of the communication structures owing mostly to mass changes as a consequence of political turn over. The above survey is not yet achieved and should be resumed with the support of volunteer Club members, and its results exploited.

Meanwhile at the last plenary meeting in Venice in November 2012 we welcomed a presentation from Erik den Hoedt about the activities of the Dutch Academy of Government Communication. Erik outlined organisation, scope and objectives of the Academy, through which the competent national authorities wish to identify, develop, combine and spread expertise and knowledge to enhance the effectiveness of Government communication. The Academy's training targets the communication staff at ministries as well as staff from the different policy departments through the expertise of specialists/teachers of different profiles (government, universities, private sector). Focus is being put on adapting to the rapidly changing society - with social media, networks and horizontal relationships playing a crucial role ("fast is getting faster").

The Club should continue to develop exchange from good practice and bearing in mind on this and similar challenging models of capacity building. There is a lot to learn from such successful "internally-developed" initiatives in a period of financial constraints and rationalized resources. We should work together more than ever, drawing inspiration from good practices, bearing in mind that by joining initiatives in this field we can build new synergies. ■

Vincenzo Le Voci

The Dutch academy for government communication

Erik den Hoedt,
Director Public Information and Communication Office
Presentation, Club plenary on 15 November 2012

Public Information and Communication Office (DPC)

What we do
- Managing Government information to the public by telephone, mail
- and the Internet (Rijksoverheid.nl, Government.nl)
- Implementing Campaigns (on health, safety, traffic behaviour etc)
- Audio-visual services for government communication
- Purchasing communication services for the (central) government
- Expertise on Communication research
- Facilitating Corporate and Internal communication
- Training and knowledge (The Academy for Government
- Communication)
- Total staff: 150 people

Serving 11 Ministries, focussing on the Communication Directorates (500 people)

Central Dutch Government (100 000 people: policy staff 11 000 people)

The Academy for Government Communication
The Academy for Government Communication identifies, develops, combines, captures and spreads expertise and knowledge to (further) enhance the effectiveness of Government communication.

Activities
- Meetings (small and large scale)
- (Online) Publications
- Peer-consultation
- Communication of (best) practices
- Expert views
- Courses and training programmes

Who do 'we' train?
1 Communication staff at ministries
2 Staff of policy departments (in collaboration with an external partner)
Experts, teachers from:
- Government Information Service Staff
- Ministerial staff
- University/Polytechnic staff
- Staff of private organisations
- Our own staff: 7 advisors

Challenges: 10 years ago
Communication (the process and the people) should be in the heart of the policy process'
Communications is not the sales department
Bring the outside in

How did the academy anticipate?
Linking the communication and policy process.
Factor C

Challenges: 6 years ago
- We (the communication directorates) seemed to lose ground
- To much involved in the policy process?
- Uneasy questions, not het right answers
- What would the ideal Communication directory look like?

What should communication do (very well), 6 years ago
- active connection of the long term and short term objectives and actions
- the multidisciplinary approach
- more systematic application of research, media analysis and monitoring, coupled with focused advice and solutions
- better use of the possibilities that digital media, both to outside world to get its messages as bringing out
- a good cooperation between communication and policy making experts (agreement on priority themes in communication)
- a corporate communication, both for the department and for the Central Government

The ideal director communication

Personals leadership combined with communication expertise
Concept: 'A linking leader': (liaison officer)
- Departemental link: policy - politics
- Linking manager: long term – short term
- Communicative link: inside - outside
- Interdepartemental link: government - department

The ideal Senior Consultant

- Helicopter view
- Managing strategy and process; organizing skills
- Knowledge and understanding policy making
- Manages interdisciplinairy teams (comunication advice, research, press contactcs, editors)
- Is an expert on the prior policy themes
- Supporting political and managerial staff
- Connecting short and long term
- Understanding public administration and its context; politics, media and society
- Daring and dynamic!
- In one word: Authoritative!

Challenges:current

- Rapid changing society
- Networks and horizontal relationships
- Social media (everybody is an 'expert')
- All is true until proven otherwise
- Fast is getting faster
- Economic stagnation
- How to stay in control without control?

How can we keep up?

- Train our communcation staff in new media
- Help our policy staff with new forms of communication
- But it is a real challenge ■

Learning path

Target group	Form	Objective
Communication directors	Masterclasses (session)	Inspiration and knowledge transfer
Hipo's (communication + policy experts): future communication managers	TOP-training: 'linking leadership'	Secure supply of qualified communication directors
Senior communication consultants	Training 'Strategic regie' (8 months)	Strengthen quality of communication advise on (interdepartmental) priority themes
Medior communication consultants	Training ...	Strengthen quality of communication advise
Newly arrived communication professionals	introduction course (2 days)	General introduction into government communication

'Genetic code' of Top training (future directors)

Path	Learning objective	Form
Know your craft: Linking short and long term communication strategies based expertise	Expertise of all modes of communication: (focus on online, research, strategy, interdepartmentaldepartemental corporate communication	Guru-sessions
Know yourself: Linking leadership	Developing personal leadership based on personal growth: visionary, persuasive, multidisciplinary approach	'studio's'/simulations focussed on personal development ('desert experience')
Know your world: Linking inside and outside	Linking the world of politics, policy and society: sparring partner at high level, contextual awareness, knowing other public services	Internship ('desert experience')

Open government in the making

A seminar on Open Government and Open Data was hosted on 4 October 2012 in Brussels in the premises of the Council of the EU.

- The event, jointly organised by the Club of Venice and the Council Working Party on Information, consisted of two interwoven sessions focusing on new digital developments:
- The morning session devoted to Exploring Open Government Best Practices (a governmental and institutional challenge)
- The afternoon session enabled participants to focus on Involving Citizens in Public Policy Developments.

- The seminar was attended by MS government representatives, staff from EU institutions and also representatives from the private sector who interacted in an open exchange of views on concrete strategies and best practices.

- More than half of the speakers' contributions concerned were focusing on concrete Open Government initiatives in the Member States carried out at national and local level (Germany, Latvia, Finland, the Netherlands, Spain and UK). The EP, the Council, the Commission and the Office of Publications provided an update on the projects being developed to promote Open Data. The interventions of the external specialists (it was a public event) were innovative and provocative.

- The "Open Government" concept draws direct inspiration from the principle of granting and increasing user-friendly access to information for an effective and equanimous public oversight. It embraces a wider strategic horizon, since it pushes governments to look into freedom of information, adapting to the global changing in transparency, investing in public sector reforms, establishing comprehensive databases and interactive platforms, thus facilitating the re-use of public sector data by individual citizens and specialised audiences.

- What appears evident is that the "Open Government approach" is one of the most challenging issues for government authorities and institutions. The objective of the supporters of "Open Government" strategies is to grant and increase user-friendly access to information for an effective and equanimous public oversight. Open Government and Open Data address the growing need to share information and the two concepts must be communicated and implemented in the most transparent way.

- The "Open Data" concept is strictly associated with open source, open access, open content and of course it the "right arm" of the "Open Government" big picture. "Open Data" is a potent solution to address the growing need to share information, adapt to modernised terms, exploit the enormous potential from the internet and enable citizens to access information equanimously, each user having equal opportunity to use his energies to invest in the information acquired. Governments, institutions, international organisations, the public and the corporate world need to play a part in the process of moving towards a more open environment.

- "Open Data", if the right technical and conceptual conditions are fulfilled, entails easier access and re-use of public data. Hence it requires the development of a more open and user-friendly framework, where institutions and governments provide data which is not protected by privacy concerns and copyright rules, without breaching any security rule. Open Data" is a potent solution to address the growing need to share information, taking increasingly into account the opportunities offered by modern technologies; that all the key players (governments, institutions, international organisations, the public and the corporate world) need to play a pro-active part in the process of moving towards a more open environment.

- The UK's Government is the forerunner on "Open Data" since it has been adopting a releasing public data to help people understand how government works and how policies are made. Making this data easily available means it will be easier for people to make decisions and suggestions about government policies based on detailed information. As a matter of fact there are in the UK over 8,000 datasets available, from all central government departments and a number of other public sector bodies and local authorities. The UK authorities have carried out campaigns to open up the large amounts of data the Government has for greater public usage.

- In 2010 the UK Government created the Open Government Licence, and public bodies can now opt to publish their Crown Copyright material under this license. Material marked in this way is available under a free, perpetual licence without restrictions beyond attribution.

- Among the key players in the seminar were Nick Jones, Member of the Club of Venice and Head of Digital from the PM Office in Downing Street who acted as key note speaker and Marco Incerti, Head of Communications and Research Fellow, Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) who has collaborated with the Club for the last three years and acted as moderator.

- In its key note Nick Jones presented the best practice in UK Open Government and connections between policy making and citizens' involvement. Nick made direct reference with the UK Government's initial transparency agenda and the need to "bring the operation of government out into the open":
- All can see whether it is delivering good value for money
- Government documents published online

- Make public sector data freely available
- Open data is an ingredient of economic growth

• He also outlined what is being published (data.gov.uk/data/ openspending-report/index)[1]
- All new items of central government spending over £25,000 for goods and services in full
- All new items of local government spending over £500
- All new central government contracts and tender documents over £10,000 – featuring all performance indicators, break clauses and penalty measures
- All new local government contracts and tender documents over £500

• Furthermore, he mentioned some examples of what else is open (as much public sector data as possible):
- Names, grades, job titles and annual pay rates for most civil servants with salaries over £150,000
- Monthly crime statistics published online by the police at a street-by-street level. 47m visits in 10 months
- Hospital's weekly online data on MRSA and C-difficile infection rates

• Finally, he referred to the ongoing initiatives for opening up "more government"
- the creation of a 'right to data' by identifying the most requested datasets: land, company, environment, transport, weather data all potentially popular
- an active Public Sector Transparency Board, responsible for standard setting, driving more opening, right to data, implications...
- effective Open Government Partnership to drive the movement internationally
- the Open Data Institute advancing the agenda academically and with businesses and to the basic ingredients of an effective way to communicate "open gov":
- Understand the user / audience roles
- Take into account the effective value of all players: armchair auditors, geeks, data journalists, entrepreneurs, and the communicator
- Deliver substance - show ability to responed to user expectations and do it efficiently

From the example of Open Government initiatives described by the speakers and the interaction among the participants in the seminar it emerged that citizen engagement on line is taking place all around the world, at local, national, regional and global levels, from small projects to national and transnational events. And the citizens' response is immediate when there is evidence of a true commitment from the government side. This trend has to be encouraged and all the players have to engage as effectively as possible.

The seminar held in October aims to inspire future initiatives in the Open Government direction and the Club of Venice will continue to stimulate exchanges of views on concrete strategies and best practices in this field.

A dedicated web portal www.consilium.europa.eu/euopengov was launched on Monday 17 September and remains accessible without any operational deadline. Promotion of the event was also done via the social media, InfoNet and VeniceNet. Live blogging archive and video best of (2 videos for each half day, viewed 150 times) are available by surfing on the above-mentioned web page. ∎

1 For more details on the UK platform http://data.gov.uk see the following chapter "The UK approach on Open Data"

The UK approach on Open Data

Enhanced access

[...] Strengthening data usability[...]

2.46. The principles, drawn up by the Public Sector Transparency Board and revised as the result of consultation, are as follows:

- Public data policy and practice will be clearly driven by the public and businesses that want and use the data, including what data is released when and in wat form
- Public data will be published in re-usable, machine-readable form
- Public data will be released under the same open licence which enables free re-use, including commercial re-use
- Public data will be available and easy to find through a single, easy-to-use, online access point (www.data.gov.uk)
- Public data will be published using open standards, and following relevant recommendations of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)
- Public data from different departments about the same subject will be published in the same, standard formats and with the same definitions
- Public data underlying the Government's own websites will be published in re-usable form
- Public data will be timely and fine-grained
- Release data quickly, and then work to make sure that it is available in open standard formats, including linked data forms
- Public data will be freely available to use in any lawful way
- Public data will be available without application or registration, and without requiring details of the user
- Public bodies should actively encourage the re-use of their public data
- Public bodies should maintain and publish inventories of their data holdings
- Public bodies should publish relevant metadata about their datasets and this should be available through a single online access point; and they should publish supporting descriptions of the format provenance and meaning of the data

[...]

2.54. Driving up the usability and consistency of data made available by public authorities is only beneficial if the user is able to find the data in the first place. In recent months, we have made important progress with www.data.gov.uk.

Better access to public data

2.55. We put much of our data on www.data.gov.uk - but we know that users have found the site hard to navigate. So we've completely overhauled it: www.data.gov.uk now has beeter search facilities, simple ways to access information, an advanced GIS data search (including map previewing) and better tools for developers, such as API access to the catalogue holdings. We've been testing the changes with users for some time now and feedback has been strongly positive, allowing us to launch the news site with this White Paper. We would welcome more views on how the site can be further improved; there is a facility on the site where users can give feedback.

2.56. The site's new structure will also facilitate the establishment of a government data inventory looking across published data and other departmental holdings, to facilitate future publication and provide an opportunity to allow for prioritisation of those datasets, in either raw or processed form, that are of most value to users.

2.57. As part of the development of a data inventory, we will explore how best the public can request data through the site, complementing the more formal route of Freedom of Information requests. Alongside this, departments will develop a framework that outlines the best methods for releasing and publishing requested data as part of their ongoing strategy to deliver on the presumption to publish.

2.58. We are also working actively to rationalise our data holdings and establish different avenues for government data that has been cleansed by external parties to return to the data owner for consideration. As new infrastructures for handling data are implemented across government, a mechanism to feed data back to its owner will be integrated into data.gov.uk in the coming months. [...]

1 http://data.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Open_data_White_Paper.pdf

Building trust

[...]

3.1. [...] Alongside our commitments to unlock the benefits of Open Data we are currently co-chair of the Open Government Partnership[2] (OGP), a multilateral initiative that aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption and harness new technologies to strengthen governance.

3.2. The member countries of the OGP all recognise that a lack of transparency diminishes public trust in the objectives and motives of government; transparency and trust are intrinsically linked. Over the last two years we have sought to build trust in the data being released, and make that trust a currency of everyday decision making by the public.

3.3. Trust in decision makers requires openness about the factual evidence that underpins the advice they receive. Where the propriety of data can be assured we will go further in opening up data available to the public. [...]

Making smarter use of data

[...]

4.3. Improving and opening up public services requires data and research to be placed at the heart of delivery. This does not involve creating new databases or compromising privacy and confidentiality; it is about using new technologies and techniques to analyse and access data safely and securely.[...]

Breaking down the barriers

[...]

4.24. The "Open Public Services" White Paper[3], published in July 2011, stated that the Government does not believe that central government should micro-manage public service delivery and that we want to support all those dedicated public sector staff who want to make a difference. Following on from the White Paper, the Cabinet Office launched the Tell Us How programme in October 2011. Tell Us How is based on the idea that those people working hard to deliver public services every day are best placed to provide invaluable insights into innovative ways to improve how we can better design and deliver those services. These ideas can lead to more effective services through improving ways of working, productivity and efficiency.

4.25. We believe that many of the cultural and administrative barriers to data sharing are best addressed through engaging with and crowdsourcing the experiences of those who work with data both on the front line and in central government. We will, through a dedicated Tell Us How challenge, invite public servants to tell us how we can remove those barriers and misconceptions which they come across on a day-to-day basis. The Tell Us How "Better Use of Data" challenge will invite ideas on how we can use data more efficiently and effectively across government and will commence later this year.

4.26. It is the Government's intention to identify any necessary legislative measures that will enable the public sector to keep up with the pace of change to the digital economy and opportunities to make better use of public data. [...]

■

2 www.opengovpartnership.org/
3 http://files.openpublicservices.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/OpenPublicServices-WhitePaper.pdf

Relevant twinned conferences and fora

Recent communication conferences and seminars where the Club has played a pro-active role in the organization and/or in the panels

1st SEECOM Conference (Montenegro, 14-16 September 2012)
- General principles and orientations: promote open communication as it leads to open governance; treat public policy as service not product; treat people as assets not target audiences; sustain public's long-term trust in government communication; preserve integrity and impartiality of public institutions; engage citizens in policy making
- Budva Declaration (16.9.2012) (see here below): promote transparency and openness as THE win-to-win strategic approach to communication; increasingly provide easy access to information and attempt to keep government open, accessible and understandable to the public; facilitate access to information on government activities through all available means of communication and especially new technology
- Cooperation with the Club of Venice being enhanced in view of further SEECOM initiatives, especially in the field of capacity building

EESC civil society media seminar in (Cyprus, 11/12 October 2012)
- Freedom of media in the Euro-mediterranean region (media's involvement and influence, governments use of new media in the democratic development, civil society's role in supporting and assisting media freedom) - 6th edition organised in a good partnership approach (EEAService, Cyprus Presidency, EP, Commission) (last seminar in 2011 focused on the Eastern partnership countries)
- Possible collaboration with the Club of Venice as regards cooperation with government communicators from the Arab spring countries

EuroPCom 2012 (Brussels, 17/18 October) and perspectives for 2013
- 3rd edition - "Re-connecting citizens": web communication and social media, perceptions of the EU, Europe going local, Europe 2020 commitments, public participation and active citizenship, dialogue with specific audiences. Need to focus on how policies respond to citizens' needs, to communicate in partnership and to adopt a multi-faced communication approach
- Possible theme for 2013: "the cost of non-Europe"
- Club of Venice and EU institutions continue to participate in the Advisory board responsible for the organisation of the conference programme (work starts in December 2012)

The Budva Declaration

Declaration of founding values of the south eastern european government communications forum (SEECOM)

Affirming our commitment to democratic and European values, regional cooperation, and good neighbourly relations based on the principles of, inter alia, the UN Charter and other applicable international agreements;

Convinced of the importance of promoting networking, dialogue and peer support for professional development of government communicators and advancement of government communication profession in general;

Aware of the need to pursue the highest and most contemporary standards of our profession;

Having regard to the increasingly important role of the public in government policy making;

Recognising the need to foster two-way communication between governments and citizens;

Emphasising the importance of government transparency, free access to information, greater public participation in policy making, and the use of modern technology and communication tools to achieve them;

Acknowledging the duty of government communicators to provide the public with comprehensive, timely and accurate information about government policies and projects;

We the government communication professionals of the countries of South Eastern Europe, by adopting this Declaration, express our private and professional endorsement of and commitment to the following principles as the founding values of the South Eastern European Government Communication Forum:

Transparency and Openness

Government communication should provide easy access to comprehensive, truthful and timely information on government activities and should attempt to keep government open, accessible, and understandable to the publics.

Government communication should promote government openness by facilitating access to information on government activities through all available means of communication and by taking full advantage of the technological progress in so doing.

Inclusiveness and Participation

Government communication should encourage citizen participation in policy making, attract public interest in government work, and enable direct communication between government and citizens.

Government communication should promote open governance and open public administration and institutions.

An important role of government communicators is to provide channels for the public to influence policy making processes.

Government communication should engage citizens actively in the work of their government, and act towards ensuring citizens' satisfaction with their involvement by providing, among other things: feedback on the outcomes of citizens' participation, promotion of results achieved through collaboration, and advocacy for continued cooperation between government and citizens.

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.

Internal communication

In order to be able to perform their duties, government communicators should seek to enhance the level of internal communication between government departments.

Internal communication should serve to enhance timely exchange of information between departments, which should in turn result in more effective communication with the public, and in other ways ensure the above principles of Transparency and Openness and Inclusiveness and Participation.

Professional exchange and cooperation

Considering that good government communication practices are inextricably associated with good governance, government communicators should aim to maintain regular and close interaction with their peers from the region and the world by exchanging best communication practices.

The rising interconnectedness and shared interests should guide communication professionals towards seeking and offering assistance, providing best services, and joining forces in solving issues.

Innovative approach

Government communicators should rely on innovations and technological advancements to promote and enhance communication between people and government.

This Declaration is a legally non-binding agreement between the government communication professionals from the countries of South Eastern Europe, whereby we vow to ensure commitment to the highest professional standards and values of democratic governance, as contained in the principles of this Declaration, and to convene periodically in this forum to discuss the furthering of these principles and of our cooperation.

The founding South Eastern Europe Government Communication Conference leaves us determined to implement the key principles contained in this Declaration with a view to influencing government policies towards greater transparency and openness, better access to information and greater public participation in policy making, which we hope in turn to advance the level of participatory democracy in the region.

By adopting this Declaration, we endorse the above as the founding values of the Forum.

Vuk Vujnović,
Head of PR Bureau a.i., Government of Montenegro

Media freedom in the Euro-Mediterranean region

Peter Lindvald-Nielsen
Head of Communication
The European Economic and Social Committee

The Arab uprising opened a window of opportunity, sending in a fresh wind of hope: hope for freedom of speech, freedom of choice, the right to information and to hold politicians accountable. However, the new winds blowing seem to have lost some of their freshness in the region. The window of opportunity is slowly closing and the new masters seem to be regressing to the bad habits of former regimes.

Faced with these developments, the European Union (EU) has a strategic, political and moral obligation to help and manage the transition by contributing to the development of open and pluralistic societies. This means offering smart support for self-help.

European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) members have actively taken up the challenge. Over two days in October 2012, the EESC gathered about 100 press and media people from Civil Society organisations in Nicosia, Cyprus, to debate media freedom in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The event was chaired by EESC Vice President Anna Maria Darmanin with the support of the EESC Communication Group, and was actively supported by the Cyprus EU Presidency, the European External Action Service (EEAS), the European Commission Representation to Cyprus and the European Parliament, as well as the Committee of the Regions.

This was a full-blown inter-institutional "going local" initiative, in which the EESC also drew on the experience gathered within the Venice Club and a previous workshop in Warsaw encouraging specific steps to engage with the new free media in the Mediterranean region.

The debate clearly showed that the situation of media in the countries affected by the Arab uprising is still quite fragile. The meeting concluded that in order to uphold media freedom, action must be taken in key areas such as media regulation, capacity-building, security and media management.

The EESC has already reported the outcome to the Venice Club annual meeting in Venice in November and intends to draw up the conclusions in a readable format, and to continue the dialogue and engagement with civil society organisations. You can read more on www.eesc.europa.eu .

Freedom of media in the Euro-Mediterranean region

Cyprus, 11-12 October 2012

EUROPCOM
3rd European Conference on Public Communication

Laurent Thieule,
Director, Communication, Press and Events,
Committee of the Regions

The conference is an initiative of the Committee of the Regions and co-organised by the European Parliament, the European Commission, the Council of the EU and the Cyprus EU Presidency. Conceptually steered by the EuroPCom Advisory Board, which comprises representatives from the institutional partners, the 2010 and 2011 conference organisers (Belgian and Polish regional authorities) and several European networks of communication directors (Club of Venice and EACD), communication agencies (EACA) and researchers in the field of public communication, media and journalism (ECREA).

The programme comprises plenary sessions and thematic workshops on four main strands: communicating Europe; public participation and active citizenship; web communication and social media; and communication with specific target groups.

Conclusions
- The last regional Eurobarometer results confirm a segmentation of audiences

- EU communication must:
  > focus on how policies respond to citizens' needs
  > use appropriate channels and tools to communicate with the different target audiences
  > find the right media mix to reach out to different generations
  > bring a clear and single message from all EU institutions about the reason why Europe is needed/wanted

- "Going local" means:
  > communicating in partnership: for global EU initiatives, the institutions need to provide good info package to regional/local partners
  > bringing concrete stories of EU (How does Europe affect and change our daily life?)
  > bringing a multi-faced communication with MEPs and local elected politicians
  > giving an active participatory role to the citizens

Recommendations
The interactive debate which took place at the end of the conference led to a set of recommendations:

- The EuroPCom conference was, and should be, an opportunity to learn and share best practices with communication practitioners, to exchange innovating, inspiring and motivating ideas about (new) tools and targets, and so fulfill a sort of "collective therapy" function. The conference format could be more participatory and interactive, with fewer up-front speakers and more debate, discussion and opportunities for networking.

- The EU needs a decentralised network of ambassadors who can deliver the message. EU communication needed to engage with the numerous (new) influencers in the public debate and fulfil their demands for more transparency. EU communication delivery needed to be more decentralised, use and reward local communication intelligence that is much closer to the target, knows it better, and knows how to reach it and how to address it: "Listen before you talk, take it to the streets, and make it cool." Local communicators should be active as well. Actually putting Europe into practice — being part of a project or a conference, work or live in another country, going on Erasmus exchange, etc. — helps to demonstrate what Europe does.

- In terms of content, EuroPCom participants said a wake-up call to politicians and EU managers was needed. Public communicators urged the need for a coherent and global message about why we want/need the EU. We needed one voice and face for Europe, with a single message from all EU institutions, if possible also supported by national governments, who should avoid the blame-game of the past decades. This message must be value driven, not policy based, built on the fundamental "raison d'être" of the EU. Concrete results for citizens must find a place in this value driven message.

- The 2013 Year of Citizens is an opportunity to use best practices and send a clear and unified message about why citizens wanted Europe. The EU must prove that European (economic) integration had not only been a guarantee for peace, stability and prosperity in the past, but that it was also an answer — albeit imperfect — to today's preoccupations about the economic crisis and unemployment. ◼
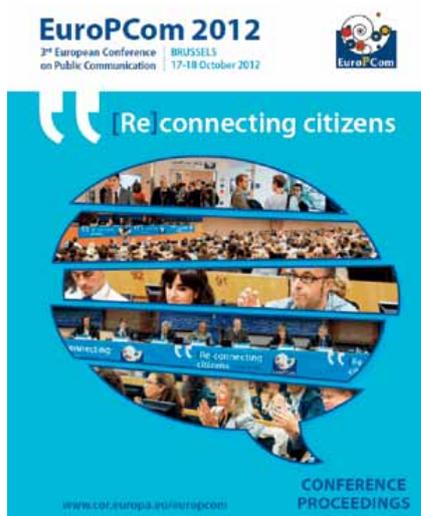
Guide on social media and public communication

This project, launched at the plenary meeting of the Club in November 2011, was inspired by Niels Jørgen Thøgersen (with a group of colleagues in an editorial animation group) as a concrete follow-up to the Club activities in the field of web communication

LIST OF CONTENTS for the GUIDE (electronic)

1 Purpose of this practical and hands-on Guide. Produced in Wiki format and permanently updated by all participants. An editor and a handful of animators to steer and stimulate the process. And with two objectives :
   - Collecting and explaining best practices
   - Setting new standards in the area
   - Providing the best service for the citizens and stimulate an active dialogue between citizens and public authorities

2 Definition of social media (broad definition) : digital many-to-many communication in a closed, semi-open or in particular open forum. Needs contributions from more than one participant

3 Definition of Public Communication / Public Diplomacy

4 Short overview of the state of play of social media (incl. cross scheme on how they relate to each other) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_social_networking_websites

5 Defining an intelligent mix of social media combined with home pages

6 Monitoring of social media. Work with social media has to start by monitoring them
   - Blog monitoring services
   - LIVING EUROPE (www.livingeurope.eu)
   - Google Analytics

7 Facebook in public communication – you can create :
   - A brand site
   - A personal brand site (like Herman van Rumpuy)
   - A purpose/campaign site (like EU – Your Voice)
   - An open group, a closed group or a secret group

8 Twitter in public communication

9 Google+ in public communication (though not yet open to profiles from companies and organisations – will probably happen soon)

10 YouTube in public communication

11 Image sharing in public communication (Flickr, Picasa, etc.) Cases : The White House and 10 Downing Street using Flickr

12 Sound and social media in public communication (podcast, Soundcloud, etc.)

13 Blogs (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blog)

14 Wikis and crowdsourcing sites (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wiki) (http://www.sitepoint.com/6-great-crowdsourcing-sites-for-freelancers/)

15 Syndication and aggregation platforms (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_network_aggregation)

16 Geolocation platforms (such as http://mashable.com/2011/04/07/geolocation-field-service/)

17 Mobile and web applications

18 Viral communications (http://viralcomm.media.mit.edu/index.php)

19 Social media and public campaigns

20 Social media in crisis communication (esp. About using social media in identifying a possible crisis well on beforehand)

21 Social media in service of the citizens (based on what the citizens want and expect)

22 Social media in internal communication with the staff. Case: Yammer

23 Social media and public diplomacy / digital diplomacy

24 Guidelines for officials in their use of social media as officials e.g. the UK Government Guide, the Guidelines from the Swedish govenment, and others)

25 Social media and privacy

26

Timing : First edition ready for the Club of Venice plenary on November 15-16, 2012
Updates to be done permanently and on-line
The GUIDE will never be final. Additional subjects may be covered. It will be a permanent and on-going process.

Guidelines for the contributors to the guide

Date: November 13, 2012

Niels Jørgen Thøgersen
(NJT)

1 List of Contents – dynamic list to be permanently enlarged and updated by all

2 Voluntary contributors select topics from the List of Contents and inform NJT

3 Each contribution should be written in English

4 Each contribution has to be short and very operational / very practical :
- Short description of the topic
- What can it be used for
- If possible, a couple of best practices
- Very relevant links
- How do you use it

5 Contributions are then sent to NJT by e-mail. And I will share them with everybody in our small group for comments- kimbrer@gmail.com

6 After that they will be uploaded to the GUIDE wiki site

7 When we have a certain critical mass of stuff in the wiki we will encourage everybody to start adding and developing directly on the site

8 I and some co-editors (I hope you will be one of them) will on an ongoing basis follow how it goes on the wiki and also ensure a pro-active promotion of the site.

9 It might be an idea to use Google Docs for the editing process (giving all editors direct access to all documents with possibility to edit and add)

10 The GUIDE will be an ongoing operation. It will never be finalised or complete. ■

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	
	28-29 October	Venice	plenary	
1989	16 February	Strasbourg	plenary	Survey "European Parliament and public opinion"
	25-28 May	Barcelona-Seville	plenary	On the occasion of the Olympic Games in Barcelona and Seville World Expo
	30 September - 2 October	Paris	plenary	At the occasion of the European Conference on audiovisual
	20-22 October	Venice	plenary	
1990	18 April	London	plenary	Presentation of the new COI statute
	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
	5-7 November	Venice	plenary	
1994	18 March	Paris	plenary	
	4-5 November	Venice	plenary	
1995	26-27 April	Brussels	plenary	1st meeting with EP communicators
	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 November - 1 December	Venice	plenary	
2002	24 April	Brussels	informal meeting on opinion polls	
	13-14 June	Copenhagen - Malmö	plenary	
	21-23 November	Venice	plenary	
2003	27 February - 2 March	Loutraki (Greece)	plenary	Loutraki declaration containing drafting suggestions to the European Convention
	7-10 September	Venice	plenary	
2004	13-15 April	Bratislava	plenary	
	18-19 November	Venice	plenary	
2005	14 January	Istanbul	plenary	Preparatory meeting and first meeting in a candidate country
	13-15 April	The Hague	plenary	14 April: workshops on Goverment com munication, communicating Europe and crisis management
	3-4 November	Venice	plenary	20th anniversary of the Club of Venice
2006	10 February	Brussels	workshop on callcenters	
	27-28 April	Prague	plenary	
	16-17 November	Venice	plenary	
2007	25-26 April	Vienna - Budapest	plenary	
	15-16 November	Rome	plenary	50th anniversary Rome Treaty
2008	25 February	Brussels	workshop on audiovisual and interactive communication	

Year	Date	Venue	Meeting	Remarks
2008	5-6 June	Ljubljana/Postojna	plenary	
	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 partnerships	
	17 April	Brussels	workshop on interactive Web 2.0 comm. and session on communicating on EP elections	
	27 May	Paris	workshop on public diplomacy	
	28-29 May	Paris	plenary	
	15 October	Brussels	workshop on capacity building	
	19-20 November	Venice	plenary	
	21 November	Poreč (Croatia)	thematic meeting on communicating pre- and post-enlargement	
2010	19 February	Vienna	workshop on management partnerships	
	19 March	London	workshop on digital strategies for public communication	
	29-30 April	Istanbul	thematic meeting on crisis communication	
	2 June	Gozo (Malta)	workshop on public diplomacy	
	3-4 June	Gozo (Malta)	plenary	
	20 October	Brussels	workshop on social media & web 3.0 and on capacity building	
	18-19 November	Venice	plenary	Break-out groups: a) Capacity building b) Audiovisual and interactive communication c) Journalism and new media
2011	10 February	Brussels	workshop on web-communication & social media and communicating enlargement	
	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
	25 May	Warsaw	workshop on public diplomacy	
	26-27 May	Warsaw	plenary	
	7 October	Brussels	joint WPI/CoV seminar on the impact of social media on journalism	
	10-11 November	Venice	plenary	
2012	16 February	Brussels	joint WPI/CoV seminar on The Next Web and its Impact on Government Communication	
	29-30 March	Sofia	workshop on crisis communication	
	23 May	Protaras (Cyprus)	workshop on public diplomacy	
	24-25 May	Protaras (Cyprus)	plenary	
	4 October	Brussels	joint WPI/CoV seminar on "Open Government in the Making"	
	15/16 November	Venice	plenary	Spokespersons' seminar on 14.12.2012

Club programme 2013-2015

Year	Date	Venue	Meeting
2013	1 February	Vienna	4th workshop on management and strategic partnership agreements
	21 March	Brussels	workshop on Web communication + preparation of the plenary meeting
	6-7 June	Tallin (Estonia)	plenary meeting
	October (date tbd)	Brussels	workshop + preparation of the plenary meeting
	14-15 November (date tbc)	Venice	plenary meeting
2014	February (date tbd)	Brussels	workshop on Web communication
	end of March (date tbd)	Bucarest	thematic meeting on Crisis Communication + préparation of the plenary meeting
	May (venue(s) tbc; dates tbd)	Latvia & Lithuania	plenary meeting + Workshop Public Diplomacy
	October (date tbd)	Brussels	workshop + preparation of the plenary meeting
	November (date tbd)	Venice	plenary meeting
2015	February (date tbd)	Brussels	workshop on Web Communication
	May (date tbd)	Vienna	plenary meeting
	October (date tbd)	Brussels	joint workshop + preparation plenary meeting
	November (date tbd)	Venice	plenary meeting