

# convergences

#07  
2015

Public communication in Europe | Communication publique en Europe



**FOCUS ON:**

## **ROME plenary meeting (November 2014)**

- Seeking coherence and new synergies in public communication
  - Governments and civil society
  - Communicating on immigration

## **Governments' communication trends**

- Does professionalism in government communication matter?
  - Social media's impact vs. social media decline
  - Communication in South-East Europe
    - EU Communication in Estonia
- The "Corner House" in Riga - preservation of memory



Club of Venice | Club de Venise



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# Le devoir de bien nommer les choses ...

Par Philippe Caroyez et Vincenzo Le Voci

En novembre dernier, pour cause de Présidence, le centre de gravité du Club s'est déplacé de la Sérénissime à la Ville éternelle.

Notre rencontre de Rome n'a pas manqué à ses promesses par la variété des thèmes abordés et la richesse des interventions, nous en faisons ici écho dans la synthèse des travaux et échanges et en publiant les contributions apportées par celles et ceux qui y ont pris la parole. Comme toujours, le compte-rendu et ces textes ne peuvent pas faire sentir ce qui fait la richesse du Club de Venise : la volonté de partager les expériences et les points de vues sur nos actions et nos politiques de communication publique et nos vues sur les évolutions de celles-ci, dans un esprit de franchise que permet le caractère volontairement informel de nos rencontres.

La revue « Convergences » a, cependant, toute son importance pour garder des « traces » de ces travaux et, mieux encore, en permettre une diffusion plus large, visant à associer les communicateurs publics, mais aussi tous ceux qui touchent à cette activité.

Avec ce 7e numéro, déjà, et une formule qui semble établie grâce à la coopération et au soutien des membres, le temps est peut-être venu de réfléchir à la possibilité d'une plate-forme qui permettrait la diffusion la plus large des résultats publiables des travaux du Club.

Une première initiative a déjà été prise en ce sens, avec l'appui de Mike Granatt - coordinateur du Club - et l'aide de Kate Moffatt. Ce site <https://clubofvenice.wordpress.com> doit être vu comme un prototype et surtout comme constituant une base pour convenir de son « principe » (objectifs, ce qui est publiable) et de son organisation (structure, alimentation, mise à jour).

La réunion plénière de Vienne, en juin prochain, pourrait utilement se saisir de ce projet.

.....

Depuis lors, pour reprendre une formule elliptique, des événements tragiques sont venus obscurcir notre quotidien <sup>1</sup> ... pour ne pas dire assombrir nos vies.

Nous avons « tous » été CHARLIE et espérons que beaucoup le resteront.

La société et les individus citoyens sont ébranlés ; l'action publique est impactée dans toutes ses dimensions, dont ses fondements mêmes (sa légitimité, sa « force », ses valeurs, ses institutions, le socle commun du vivre ensemble, ...) et la communication publique n'y échappe pas.

Un changement venu progressivement, au point de ne pas avoir été relevé, mais qui est désormais significatif dans la straté-

1 Sans corporatisme, notre amie Dominique Mégard - Présidente de l'association Cap'Com (France) a tenu à rendre hommage à Michel Renaud, assassiné dans les locaux de « Charlie Hebdo », indiquant que la communication publique était aussi touchée. Il avait été Directeur de la communication de la ville de Clermont-Ferrand et actif lors de la naissance du réseau Cap'Com. [www.cap-com.org/content/je-suis-charlie-0](http://www.cap-com.org/content/je-suis-charlie-0)

gie des groupes terroristes, est leur investissement dans des actions de propagande, qui savent user et tirer parti des codes de la communication moderne, de son impact et de la force de diffusion et de persuasion des réseaux sociaux.

Sans négliger les effets d'un contexte de difficultés socio-économiques (voire culturelles), mais aussi de tensions et de conflits géopolitiques, certains y décèlent, même, la source principale d'influence sur le comportement de ceux qui en Europe et ailleurs dans le monde cèdent à la radicalisation ou se rapprochent des thèses qui la sous-tendent.

En plus, bien sûr, des mesures premières de sécurité et de prévention et de ce qui résulte de préoccupations plus larges sur l'éducation et le vivre ensemble, les mêmes pointent alors la nécessité de politiques et d'actions de communication publique qui visent à contrer cette influence sur son propre terrain. Le spot télévisuel que les collègues du Service d'information du gouvernement français (SIG) ont fait produire, et que beaucoup ont vu en dehors de la France, en usant du « ils te disent » versus « en réalité », en mettant ainsi en parallèle des images de propagande et des images de la (terrible) réalité - en jouant même sur le contraste des images en couleurs et des images en noir et blanc, illustre cette position et l'assume pleinement. Avec cette initiative qui a été prise en peu de jours, avec courage et volontarisme dans un contexte particulièrement difficile (et qui n'est bien sûr pas la seule initiative de communication prise<sup>2</sup>), il s'agit précisément de donner aux citoyens un décryptage de la propagande et d'en déjouer les mécanismes « pièges ». Certains peuvent y avoir vu une forme voulue de « contre-propagande ». Et là, peut-être, versons-nous dans un phénomène que nous avons pu observer, à savoir (sous l'angle de vue du communicateur public) un certain basculement du débat (ou du discours) sur les politiques prises, envisagées ou à prendre vers un débat sur les « conditions » de ces politiques, en ce compris dans le champs des actions de la communication officielle réalisées ou à mettre en place dans ce cadre.



Comment agir efficacement avec discernement et sans stigmatiser (y compris dans le langage et les images de la communication), comment informer complètement sans voyeurisme et sans donner une forme de tribune à ceux qui la recherchent, comment faire simple sans tomber dans la caricature, comment rendre

2 Voir le site Internet [www.stop-djihadisme.gouv.fr](http://www.stop-djihadisme.gouv.fr)

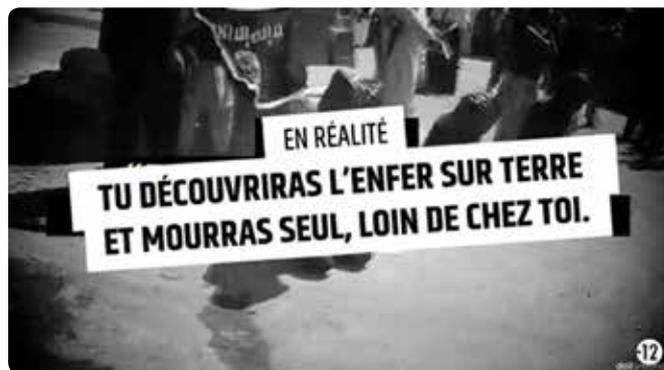
les citoyens attentifs et vigilants sans créer la psychose ou un appel à la délation, comment réguler les sites internet et les réseaux sociaux sans atteindre aux libertés fondamentales, ...

Ce sont toutes questions qu'il est légitime et absolument nécessaire de (se) poser en démocratie et que tous ceux qui y sont confrontés (politiques, journalistes et communicateurs publics, notamment) doivent aborder et régler dans leurs actions.

L'exercice de cette responsabilité professionnelle et déontologique n'est toutefois pas simple quand on sait, comme l'a écrit Albert Camus, que « *Mal nommer un objet, c'est ajouter au malheur de ce monde* »<sup>3</sup>. Il ne faudrait cependant pas que le débat, voire la métacommunication, en ces domaines, où il peut y avoir urgence, ne paralysent l'action ou une compréhension des enjeux de société qui sont en cause.

3 Albert Camus. "Sur une philosophie de l'expression", paru dans "Poésie 44". Œuvres complètes, tome I, La Pléiade, p.908.

Lors de la prochaine réunion plénière du Club, qui se tiendra à Vienne, des 11 et 12 juin prochains, nous aurons l'occasion d'aborder ces thèmes et les actions menées tant par la Commission européenne, notamment sur la résilience, que par les services d'information des Etats-membres.



## The duty to call things by their name...

By Philippe Caroyez and Vincenzo Le Voci

4 In November 2014, for reasons relating to the Presidency, the Club's centre of gravity shifted from 'La Serenissima' to the Eternal City.

The meeting in Rome fully met our expectations in terms of the variety of the themes discussed and the wealth of contributions made. In the following, we present an overview of the proceedings and debates and we publish the contributions of those who took the floor. As usual, the report and these texts do not do justice to the key strength of the Club of Venice, which is the desire to share the experiences and views on our public communication activities and policies and their development over time, in the spirit of frankness that is a hallmark of the deliberately informal nature of our meetings.

At any rate, *Convergences* can be instrumental in preserving a record of these discussions or – even better – in making their contents available to a wider audience, encompassing not only public communicators but also all those who are concerned with this area of activity.

With the publication of issue 7, and building on the practices that appear to have become established thanks to the cooperation and support of the Club's members, perhaps the time has come to consider the possibility of creating a platform that would enable the publishable results of the Club's proceedings to be circulated more widely.

A first step has already been taken in this direction with the support of Mike Granatt – our former Club's coordinator – and the assistance of Kate Moffatt. This website (<https://clubofvenice.wordpress.com>) should be regarded as a prototype and, above all, as a starting point to agree on its basic principles (goals, what is publishable) and its organisation (structure, inputs, updates).

June's plenary meeting in Vienna will provide an occasion to discuss the further development of this project.

.....

Since the Rome meeting, to paraphrase a recent metaphorical remark, 'tragic events' have darkened the social climate<sup>1</sup>, 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.

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 ex-

1 Without a hint of partiality, our friend Dominique Mégard, President of the French Cap'Com association, made a point of paying homage to Michel Renaud, murdered in the offices of Charlie Hebdo. She thus highlighted the fact that public communication was also concerned by the terrorist attack. Renaud served as the Director of Communication of the city of Clermont-Ferrand and was in office at the time when the Cap'Com network was founded. [www.cap-com.org/content/je-suis-charlie-0](http://www.cap-com.org/content/je-suis-charlie-0)

erted 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<sup>2</sup>) – 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 (from the viewpoint of the public communicator): 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

<sup>2</sup> See the website [www.stop-djihadisme.gouv.fr](http://www.stop-djihadisme.gouv.fr) (in French).

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"<sup>3</sup>. It is important, however, that 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.

The next plenary meeting of the Club, scheduled to take place in Vienna on 11-12 June 2015, will provide us with an opportunity to address these themes and discuss the actions carried out by the European Commission (particularly on the issue of resilience) as well as by Member States' information services.

<sup>3</sup> « 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).



THEY TELL YOU,

"JOIN US IN OUR SACRIFICE – YOU WILL BE UPHOLDING A JUST CAUSE".

IN REALITY,  
YOU WILL DISCOVER HELL ON EARTH  
AND WILL DIE ALONE, FAR FROM HOME.



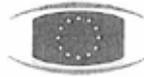
Désigné par les chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement de l'Union européenne, Herman Van Rompuy – alors qu'il était Premier ministre du gouvernement fédéral belge – est devenu le premier Président du Conseil européen permanent le 19 novembre 2009, pour occuper cette fonction dès le 1er janvier 2010. Il a été reconduit à ce poste, le 1er mars 2012 ; il exerça son deuxième mandat du 1er juin 2012 au 30 novembre 2014.

Attentif aux activités du Club de Venise, le Président Van Rompuy avait tenu à y déléguer son porte-parole Dirk De Backer, lors de la réunion plénière à Venise, en novembre 2011, pour célébrer le 25e anniversaire du Club.

Monsieur De Backer y avait lu le message qu'Herman Van Rompuy avait souhaité adresser au Club et à ses membres. Nous reproduisons ici ce texte en hommage à sa présidence.

Nous y joignons la réponse que Stefano Rolando, Président du Club, lui a transmise.

Après le départ du Président Van Rompuy et à la veille du 30e anniversaire du Club, ces deux documents prennent une dimension particulière.



CONSEIL EUROPÉEN  
LE PRÉSIDENT

Bruxelles, le - 9 NOV. 2011

Prof. Dot. Stefano Rolando  
Fondateur et Président Honoraire  
du Club de Venise

Monsieur le Président,

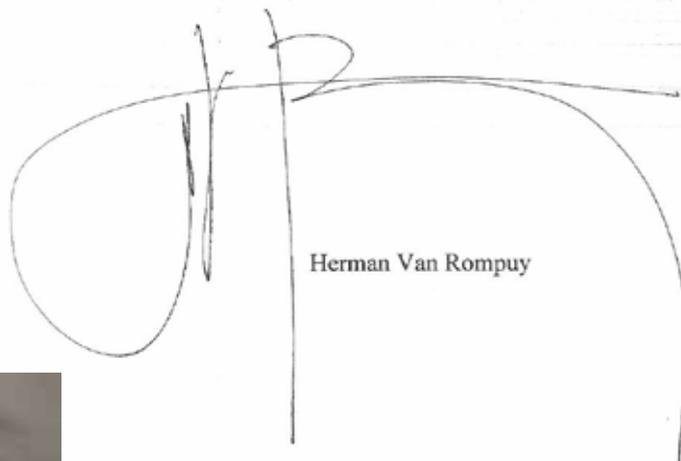
A l'occasion du 25ème anniversaire du Club de Venise, j'ai le plaisir de vous adresser mes félicitations pour le travail accompli dans l'intérêt de l'Europe et des gouvernements des Etats membres de l'Union.

Votre idée de créer un forum permettant aux responsables des services de communication des gouvernements des pays membres des Communautés européennes de se rencontrer de façon informelle a été non seulement juste, elle a été visionnaire. Elle permet depuis 1985 aux communicants institutionnels d'échanger leurs expériences et de discuter des meilleurs moyens pour relever les défis d'un métier en évolution continue et qui est indispensable pour présenter, accompagner et expliquer les politiques gouvernementales et institutionnelles.

Le Club de Venise s'est rapidement ouvert aux communicants des institutions européennes et il a su anticiper les élargissements successifs de l'Union européenne en invitant des représentants des pays candidats à l'adhésion à participer à ses travaux. Au fil des années l'Europe a pris un rôle grandissant dans les discussions de votre Club et une série de propositions concrètes pour améliorer la communication sur l'Union européenne et celle des gouvernements et des institutions vers les citoyens en sont sorties.

Dans une des mes fonctions antérieures, en tant que Ministre belge du Budget, j'ai déjà été associé à vos activités en permettant au Service fédéral belge d'information d'organiser deux réunions annuelles à Bruges en 1997 et 1998 assurant ainsi la continuité de vos rencontres. Dans ma fonction actuelle je note avec grand intérêt les initiatives conjointes avec les différentes institutions européennes que le Club de Venise a développées ces dernières années et qui couvrent un large éventail des thèmes essentiels pour une communication institutionnelle à la hauteur des défis d'aujourd'hui.

Je souhaite, à vous et aux membres du Club de Venise, le plus grand succès dans votre travail en faveur d'une meilleure communication au service des citoyens européens.



Herman Van Rompuy





**CLUB of VENICE**

*Il Presidente onorario*

Al Signor Presidente del Consiglio Europeo  
**Herman Van Rompuy**  
Bruxelles

*Venezia, 12 novembre 2011*

Signor Presidente del Consiglio Europeo, abbiamo accolto, nella Sala della Biblioteca Marciana di Venezia, all'apertura dei lavori della 25° sessione plenaria annuale del nostro sodalizio, le parole che, attraverso il Suo portavoce Signor Dirk De Backer, Ella ha voluto rivolgere a me e ai 75 Colleghi riuniti in occasione appunto dei venticinque anni di lavoro di una rete che, con efficace informalità, riunisce e fa confrontare i responsabili della comunicazione istituzionale dei paesi membri della UE insieme a quelli delle principali istituzioni europee.

La Sua lettera ha dato atto di questo esito, cogliendo proprio il carattere di quella "diplomazia dell'informalità" che rende molti servizi alla causa dell'integrazione europea. E ha rivolto parole lusinghiere a chi si impegna in questo sforzo di coordinamento (tra cui con grande merito anche i Suoi dirigenti e funzionari del Consiglio UE) e a chi ha immaginato 25 anni fa la potenzialità di questa esperienza restando ad essa legato con immutato impegno.

Nella Sua lettera ci sono parole assai generose: *"Una rete informale che si è rivelata giusta e visionaria, per misurare le sfide di un mestiere in evoluzione indispensabile per accompagnare e spiegare le politiche istituzionali"*.

L'applauso dell'assemblea alla lettura del Suo messaggio vuole qui trovare ancora parole di gratitudine per questa alta attenzione.

Pur nell'ineludibile rappresentanza di Paesi e Istituzioni, nelle oltre 60 occasioni di convegni, seminari professionali, sedute plenarie, abbiamo cercato in questi 25 anni di prefigurare la cultura di un network moderno di professionisti pubblici al servizio dell'Europa civile e cooperante e al servizio di tutti i cittadini europei.

L'Europa è nata sulle ceneri delle guerre e di ogni cultura della propaganda.

Questo principio ha ispirato il nostro lavoro, oggi facilitato da moderne tecnologie e da nuovi approcci, ma sempre possibile solo grazie ad un virtuoso rapporto tra autorità politica e management degli apparati istituzionali. Un rapporto aperto alla ricerca, al contributo delle università, al pensiero di culture sociali e politiche ispirate alla democrazia e alla libertà.

Grazie dunque per l'onore della Sua attenzione. Confidando nella possibilità di una Sua presenza in una prossima occasione dei nostri incontri, Le porgo il saluto di tutti i membri del *Club of Venice*.

  
(prof. Stefano Rolando)



## CLUB DE VENISE

### **Le Président honoraire**

**M. Herman Van Rompuy**  
Président du Conseil européen  
Bruxelles

Venise, 12 novembre 2011

Monsieur le Président du Conseil européen,

A l'ouverture des travaux de la 25ème session plénière d'automne de notre association dans la Sala della Biblioteca Marciana, nous avons accueilli les mots que, par les bonnes offices de votre porte-parole M. Dirk De Backer, vous avez voulu adresser à moi et à mes soixante-quinze collègues conviés à Venise.

Nous étions réunis précisément à l'occasion du 25ème anniversaire d'un réseau qui, grâce à un efficace cadre informel, rassemble les responsables de la communication institutionnelle des pays membres de l'UE ainsi que ceux des principales institutions européennes.

Dans votre lettre vous saisissez parfaitement la nature de cette «diplomatie informelle» qui rend de nombreux services à la cause de l'intégration européenne. Vous avez également adressé des louanges à ceux qui sont engagés dans cet effort de coordination (parmi lesquels avec grand mérite des membres du Secrétariat général du Conseil de l'UE) et à moi-même qui, il y a vingt-cinq ans, avais imaginé le potentiel de cette expérience et y demeure fort lié par un engagement inchangé.

Je me réjouis de vos mots généreux, en particulier votre référence au fait que notre réseau informel s'est avéré être juste et visionnaire, pour mesurer les défis d'une profession en évolution essentielle pour accompagner et expliquer les politiques institutionnelles.

Je suis heureux de vous renouveler par cette lettre la gratitude témoignée par les applaudissements des membres du Club à la lecture de votre message et je vous suis reconnaissant pour l'attention remarquable que vous nous avez réservée.

Forts d'une présence de représentants de pays et institutions, lors des plus de soixante réunions (conférences, séminaires professionnels et séances plénières) nous avons essayé, au fil de ces 25 ans, de préfigurer la culture d'un réseau moderne de professionnels dans la fonction publique au service d'une l'Europe civile et coopérative ainsi que de tous les citoyens européens.

L'Europe a émergé des cendres de la guerre et des cultures de propagande. Les principes de cette nouvelle Europe ont inspiré notre travail, aujourd'hui facilité par de modernes technologies et par de nouvelles approches, mais réalisable uniquement grâce à une relation vertueuse entre les autorités politiques et les gestionnaires des structures institutionnelles. Dans le cas d'espèce, il s'agit d'un rapport qui s'ouvre également à la recherche ainsi qu'à la contribution des universités et à la pensée de cultures politiques et sociales inspirées par la démocratie et la liberté.

Merci donc pour l'honneur de votre attention. Dans l'espoir de nous réjouir de votre présence à l'occasion d'une de nos prochaines rencontres, je vous prie de bien vouloir agréer, Monsieur le Président du Conseil européen, les meilleures salutations de tous les membres du Club de Venise.

(signé)

prof. Stefano Rolando

# Club of Venice plenary meeting, Rome, 13-14 November 2014

*Re-launching public communication and seeking a new cooperation framework: who is ready and who is not.*

The semi-annual plenary meeting of the Club of Venice in November 2014 was hosted by the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism. We welcomed 80 participants from 23 countries (EU MS and candidates to the accession), EU Institutions (Parliament, Council, Commission, European Central Bank) and Committees (EESC and CoR) and external organisations such as the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the Mercator Foundation, the Centre for European Policy Studies, the Democratic Society and GovDelivery.



## Public Communication Trends in Europe

The brainstorming session on “Communicating Europe” was introduced by **Federico Garimberti, spokesperson of the Italian Presidency of the Council of the EU**, who recalled the tough responsibilities of the Italian government in a semester marking the start of a new European political cycle. “Communicating Europe”, he said, “is a complicated task”, where all players should feel part of a collective effort to communicate with the public in an honest, concrete and coherent way.

Federico regretted that communication was not always handled in a correct manner and indicated that there could be better ways to use all new and traditional instruments (tv, radio, social media, press, etc.). He showed a few short video clips produced by the Italian national TV (RAI), which focused on EU's concrete achievements (65 different subjects), which started to be broadcast during the pre-European elections information campaign and continue to be disseminated also through the social media, owing to the success of the initiative. He finally indicated that there is a need to change the government approach in communicating EU's values and look beyond 2014's modest results as transition year, hoping that the reorganisation of the European Commission will bring new perspectives for cooperation.

In Federico's view, Governments should play their part and communicate objectively on what is done in Brussels, seeking more appropriate internal capacity building models and engaging in more trans-national initiatives.

Discussion focused on the longstanding gap and uncertainties caused by the lack of an adequate partnership framework for cooperation between Member States and Institutions. In this context, **Kathrin Ruhrman (EP DG COMM)** and **Vincenzo Le Voci (Council GSC)** regretted the discontinuation of the management partnership agreements (MPAs) and the lack of funds for future agreements of this kind, in spite of the positive outcome of the horizontal evaluation carried out by third parties with regard to qualitative and quantitative use of funds. Start from scratch to find a new inclusive formula with partners able to cooperate on equal footing.

The Club focused on three main topics:

- How to re-shape public communication and strategic communications - state of play and perspectives for cooperation on “Communicating Europe” at inter-governmental and inter-institutional level
- Relations between governments and civil society, with focus on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)
- Challenges and possible synergies for governmental and institutional communication on immigration/integration matters



Same worries expressed by **Taavi Toom (Estonia)**, who underlined the need for a call for communication in partnership – with a view to define joint communication priorities. There is a need to brand the EU together, but the political push is crucial. Communicating EU abroad nowadays is indeed important and the Council's suggestion (through its Working Group on Information) to add it to the common communication priorities for next two years is welcome<sup>1</sup>.

**Beate Grzeski (Germany)** regretted the cancellation of MPAs and stressed the need to reflect jointly on a review of the mechanism. Moreover, she indicated that the crisis in the neighbourhood countries and the need to think about how Europe can contribute to solve the crisis (crisis management) can also be seen as an opportunity to organise communication efficiently (crisis communication).

The main trends emerged from discussion : the worrying trends in the European media framework (the vicissitudes suffered by the public television in Greece), hence the need to have a debate on this issue (today's concept of public tv, what it delivers and how independently it works, today's strategies and regulatory framework in the different MS, etc.) in one of the next meetings of the Club; the need to decentralise communication bringing narrative at all levels, but maintaining connections and coherence among local, regional and national objectives; the need to use existing collaborative platforms and exploit EU projects in all MS through the cohesion funds framework, using the regional projects as a convincing factor for the public to communicate of concrete things; the need to brand the EU together, but ensure a political push from all sides (involving national and European authorities); the need to reach all audiences, using TV channels (the mostly exploited by the wide public) and social media (those most popular among the youngsters and the most appropriate for spreading the information in real time).

The contribution from **Peter Fischer (DG REGIO)** enabled to have an insight of programmes and projects implemented in each country (disseminating such information more efficiently could be a convincing factor for the public). Communication should pay due attention to cohesion funds, which concern one third of the EU budget, according also to citizens' expectations emerging from the public opinion's polls.

Reinforcing the existing networking platforms could facilitate Member States' and institutions' research of concrete models for joint planning and coordination. To this end, a survey on the communication staff resources in the different framework could enable to better focus on what are current capacities and what can really be done in Brussels and in the Member States.

**Alessandro Butticié (DG ENTERPRISE/INDUSTRY)** focused on the new Commission's approach announced on the eve of the Club plenary – a political design aiming to provide services, not propaganda. The Commission is expected to “talk with one voice” and do its utmost to avoid citizens' misperceptions of EU. It intends to increasingly think local and use straightforward language.

Alessandro shared feedback on its DG's best practices: e.g. “stop fake” campaign implemented in cooperation with local authorities, to draw citizens' attention to counterfeiting; the COSME campaign 2015, with the EU supporting SMEs to enable them to be more competitive; the efforts made in the field of industrial policy, with new EU funding programmes on which the Commission is engaged in an awareness-raising campaign to explain new opportunities.

**Alessandro Butticié** agreed that the EU Institutions cannot communicate alone (in this case, he referred to the important role of platforms such as the “Enterprise Europe Network” in helping engage local authorities).

**Mirela Rebronja (Montenegro)** shared the elements of the communication strategy adopted by Montenegro's government in March 2014 in view of the country's accession. In a period of general financial and economic struggle and geopolitical instabilities, Montenegro sets an example of positive thinking and good expectations from the EU as emerged from public opinion trends (a survey carried out in July 2014 revealed that 63 % of population supports European integration). Nevertheless, its citizens still appear to have little knowledge about the EU.

The communication strategy not only aims to informing, but also making people understand the integration process. This is the only way that the main message (EU integration will improve people's life) can be clearly perceived and have an impact on the audiences.

<sup>1</sup> “The EU as a global actor” is one of the four topics identified by the Council (Gen. Affairs session of 16 December 2015) as MS' communication priorities for 2015-2016.



Montenegro's approach is both institutional and sectorial and is relying on a clear definition of the roles of the governmental/administrative authorities concerned and on a regular evaluation and monitoring programme. This accurate approach should ensure quality and efficiency control and enable to achieve the objectives of the strategy, which will be based on communicating the forthcoming commitments in the negotiation process (2014-2018 period) and all the EU-supported programmes through all new communication tools, but with emphasis also on the traditional channels.

**Jon Worth** observed that communication is not only a problem at EU level, but also a struggle at national level. It's a matter of commitment and engagement. Moreover, declining trust brings low electoral turn out, regardless of the mainstream political parties' coverage of the different issues.

In Jon's view, providing information is not enough: it's people's knowledge which need to be improved. The EU provides enough information, but not timely, whilst should respond and take position quickly to the press and other on line information sources. The main issue, though, remains the need to think about the term "pro-European". What does it mean? Terminology is what sometimes ignites a defensive approach that is easily exploited by populists.

The on-line sphere is increasingly growing in importance and trans-national campaigns run by citizens on-line could be help communicate more effectively.

Jon's concluded by suggesting to:

- take in hand what you can do. You can also do a lot of things with less budget. Do not use cash as an excuse !
- let individuals communicate (e.g. commissioners instead of the Commission , MEPs instead of the EP).
- strive towards an on-line space, be objective (not necessary to defend the EU all the time) and open-minded.

The interactive debate highlighted the need to push for bridges, capitalising from the informal approach and strengthening the professional standing through exchanges of expertise. The review of the Club "Convergences" will be one of the key tools to monitor new trends, progress made in the national communication strategies and in the professionalization of the communicator's role.

The Club members agreed on the need to develop a survey/analysis of the current communication models (countries' specific trends, institutional communication budget for general and thematic activities, trans-national experiences using existing programmes), with a view to formulating suggestions for the future (possible road map). They also agreed to explore how better adapt communication at local level, hoping that adequate links can be established with the EU institutions in order to act coherently to optimize results. The Club stands ready to study follow-up actions through focus groups which will concentrate on the key policies and on new options for cooperation and coordination among the key players.

## Government and civil society

The intervention of **Verena Ringler (Mercator)** bridged discussion between the introductory brainstorming session and the afternoon debate focused on Government and Civil Society.

**Verena Ringler** tabled today's outstanding strategic questions:

- Since citizens know where the power is, are public communicators doing what they are really supposed to do ?
- Are we experiencing the transition from government communication to strategic communication ? are we shifting from focus on results to focus on methods ?
- Do we need to communicate all government projects at all times, or a selection of priority communication themes ?
- What do we expect from a European citizens ? What kind of narrative do we want to bring them ? Are we in an era that citizens "consume" EU policies ?

**Lars Klüver (Director of the Danish Board of Technology Foundation)** opened the panel on citizens' involvement elaborating on the reasons for public participation, on scope and state of participation practice and on the obstacles to deal with issue. In this context he focused on key elements such as the need to re-establish trust towards science; institutions and politics and to cope with a complex, intensive and challenged society. He observed that no-one has the overview and, at the same time, politics are more and more knowledge demanding. There is also a demand for ownership and distributed action, while citizens are case-oriented.

He also drew attention to the political meaning of public participation, which has many meanings in democracies (opening institutions to their real owners; Informing policy-making; Giving citizens a voice; facilitating transition to collaborative democracy; serving a process of long term development to global democracy; adding dialogue to communication in a "Talk society" taken over by media and elite where citizens' increased involvement should be seen as a positive addendum - not a take-over. In his view, there is an absolute need for introducing new democratic mechanisms at trans-national level.

Furthermore, Lars recalled Denmark's commitment in fostering citizens' engagement and two successful global citizen consultations on Climate (2009) and Biodiversity (2012) and outlined the

wide variety of communication tools (different levels and functions) that could be used to broaden participation. Lars urged to consider that "citizens ARE capable" and act as much as possible at trans-national level, seeking expansion "WWViews"-like approaches, enhancing the multi-site, multi-lingual practice, increasingly compare process and data, e-Participation research and experiments, and seeking combinations of "Face2Face" and "eParticipation". He concluded by stressing the need to dare to invest, to prevent open dialogue to suffers from crisis, seek courage, focus on capacity and competence-building, search for public and private funding, and bring citizens closer to Europe since this is a vital pre-requisite to build trust and work together.

In this context, the communication case-study tabled by **Verena Nowotny (Gaisberg)**, which focused on Transatlantic Trade and Investment Package, enabled to see how this issue has evolved in the global trade scenario and how the arguments (rational and emotional) brought forward by "friends" and "foes" are making of this topic not only a communication challenge but also a real communication test. As a matter of facts, regardless to the possible scenarios on the horizon (failure/rejection? minor expectations?), the communicators should absolutely carry out prior analyses of the potential impact of public participation in such matters and the local "hijacking" of political processes and how to play a role in compensating "bad starts" by contributing to increasing dialogue and transparency.

**Andrea Renda (Centre for European Policies Studies)** shared some comments on the parties' objectives in this field and consequently their negotiating approach, focusing on the topics of elements of major concern (inclusiveness vs. worries of dominance and monopolisation, need for transparent rules and mutual respect in information sharing, and need of neutrality in the communication approach).

**Anthony Zacharzewski (Democratic Society)** underlined that governments and institutions should endeavour to build up more inclusive communication strategies, enlarging space for listening and for taking on board citizens' concern, since this is the only possible approach to reduce and prevent misperceptions and conflictual elements. This requires deep commitment from all parties in raising awareness and consciousness, increasing transparency, enhancing dialogue and joint search of suitable compromises and running productive discussions in all different communication frameworks.





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**Ismail Dia (GovDelivery)** highlighted the need to increasingly enable public sector organisations to connect with external audiences in order to reduce the gaps in participation and foster engagement, in particular by exploiting modern interactive tools, encouraging citizens' involvement in core initiatives affecting their daily lives and not only building but also keeping momentum. Wherever and whenever possible, public authorities should also proactively contribute to educational or promotional activities led by citizens, ideally also in terms of budget investments, in order to tackle together concretely all political or policy hurdles that could hinder progress and participation.

## National best practice

The TTIP case-study was followed by an information session with examples of national best practice (initiatives encompassing concrete citizens' engagement, in particular within civil society organisations):

- Italy's implementation of "Europe for Citizens" (**Rita Sassu**). This EU programme has a total budget of 185.5M€ for the 2014-2020 exercise (2nd multi-annual framework, after the initial 2016-2013 period) and financially supports projects that bring citizens closer to the EU, through projects promoting European citizenship and citizens' involvement. Italy has been on the front line since 2008, with a comprehensive implementation programme supported by the Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism. Several activities are being carried out and planned in this context: a dedicated portal ([www.europacittadini.it](http://www.europacittadini.it)), a phone help-desk and email help-desk ([antennadelcittadino@beniculturali.it](mailto:antennadelcittadino@beniculturali.it)), help to potential beneficiaries, conferences, seminars, workshops, publications and support to town twinning and promote EU's history, common culture and cultural diversity/intercultural dialogue. The two main conceptual strands are "European remembrance" and "Democratic engagement and civic participation".
- the National Convention on the EU (**Igor Blahusiak**), which is a new discussion platform representing a permanent venue for a debate on European issue in the Czech Republic. This project is coordinated by the Office of the Government and interconnects with representatives from both Chambers of the national Parliament and the EU institutions, as well as NGOs, social partners and other relevant stakeholders. The objectives are to initiate a constructive debate on directions and priorities of the CZ Republic within the EU, through an engaging platform which serves as cohesive body for state administration and all sectors of civil society and other partners. Officially launched on the same day of Igor's presentation at the Club plenary in Rome, the National Convention will tackle important issues such as cohesion policy and migration and will hopefully enable, through a strong mechanism of consultation, to develop discussion openly and transparently on all core issues in which the EU is strongly involved to contrast euro scepticism and look forward constructively.
- the key actors' involvement in the implementation of the European Year of Development (2015): activities in Italy and Croatia. **Simone Landini (Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development)** recalled the importance attached to this topic as a priority of the semester of Italian presidency of the Council and highlighted the importance of communicating the EYD 2015 as a good opportunity to explain and promote EU development policy. He underlined that a collective effort is needed to foster citizens' and civil society's direct involvement (critical thinking and active interest and participation) and that Italy clearly sees the information campaign to promote the Year strictly connected with the main objectives of the International EXPO Milan 2015. **Vesna Loncaric (Croatian Spokesperson in Brussels)** indicated that the responsibility for the information campaign in Croatia is conferred to the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs as National Coordinator. Deep connections have been established with contractors to ensure the successful run of this challenging task for the country, with due commitment to explaining citizens how EU budget for development is used. **Vincenzo Le Voci** referred to the launching event in Lat-

via on 9 January and indicated that the Council's Secretariat follows the EYD 2015 activities very closely. He recalled that the great majority of the EU Member States have adopted national work plans to implement the EYD and that an inter-institutional group is meeting on a bi-monthly basis to follow the implementation in progress (planning, organisation of all main communication events, media coverage, joint participation of all the key players, monitoring and future evaluation), with strong input from DG DEVCO which also contributes to the Council's WPI proceedings. The EYD 2015 is indeed a good example of cooperation with MS and EU institutions.

## Communication trends in the field of the Russia/Ukraine crisis

Friday 14 November's works were opened by an information session on the communication trends in the field of the Russia/Ukraine crisis.

**Elina Lange**, from Nato StratCom, presented the complex communication framework in the context of the crisis in Ukraine, outlining the recent developments with regard to the chronology of the events and the communication trends: situation on the ground; trade sanctions against Russia; increased media coverage, but internet influence-oriented trolling and "weaponisation" of social media, imbalance and lack of correct and objective information provision, "agents of influence" (culture, politics, NGOs, religious organisations, etc.) and impact on public opinion - even beyond the two countries concerned and their neighbours.

**Dainoras Ziukas** from LT MFA commented on Elina's presentation, indicating that in Lithuania many were influenced by Russian propaganda during communist times; the Americans were seen as the "bad guys".

Discussions within the Club were concentrated on the need to neutralise propaganda, since this issue should be taken as seriously and urgently as possible. We should think about how to make citizens aware of this and how to resolve digital media literacy. We should also learn citizens how they can recognise propaganda. Education is the key word here. Though it is difficult to conciliate all MS sensibilities, the risk of amplifying this uncertainty on the communicators' role in this context is high and we cannot afford to let disinformation continue...

## Communication on immigration and integration

Discussion was introduced by **Serenella Ravioli (Italian Ministry of Internal Affairs)**. Key words : narrative + governance; need to a) make distinction between information and communication; b) create an objective narrative; c) burden-sharing in the field of communication; c) use social media as a strong and rapid tool to convey messages.

She underlined that different media have different approach to immigration news (e.g. on 04/10/2014, day after Lampedusa tragedy: Manifesto (left paper) spoke of "murder" ; La Padana (right paper) spoke of "criminals" ; "EU traffiquers").



Governmental authorities' primary duty is to provide objective and trustworthy data. It is also important to take due account of geographical areas' differences, which may require a different way to approach the problem. Serenella indicated that the Italian authorities are now receiving immigrants in a "decent way" (ref. to Mare Nostrum operation) and deeply reflecting on the need to develop literacy in this context (e.g. the word "clandestine" has become "irregular"). Moreover, information campaigns should explain in simple language the procedures of how to become integrated.

In Serenella's view, communication should continue to rely on public-private partnerships and should run in parallel with progress in social developments, as part of a comprehensive immigration policy and strategy.

**Ewa Moncure (FRONTEX)** outlined Frontex assistance provided in the context of the previous experience of Mare Nostrum initiative (through the coordinated joint operations Hermes and Aeneas) and the new perspectives for international cooperation with Member States under the 2.9M€-funded new Joint Operation Triton, launched on November 1st 2014 (two weeks before Rome's plenary of the Club of Venice) and stressed the need to engage in objective information provision and transparency, having regard in particular to the increased multi-national framework and coordination.

**Eleonora Gavrielides**, moderator of the session, observed that the communication efforts in this field should take into account the special conditions under which one needs to operate. Multilingualism is an issue which plays an important role, for communication with the wide public but also with the key players involved in the immigration phenomenon: immigrants (to whom a voice should be given from the beginning), potential

immigrants, policy makers/designers; public opinion counts in help communicators see better into this issue and adjust their strategies as appropriate.

**Martin Bugelli** admitted that the situation in Malta is complicated for two main reasons: population density and island pattern. Xenophobic trends are easy to be driven from those who wish to destabilise the political environment and are able to take advantage from ignorance of the phenomenon from some sectors of population. Hence public communicators do not work in a vacuum, but are very often called to operate in a hostile environment. And where there is fear, populist parties will easily take advantage. The ideal approach is to be objective and keep telling the truth, and follow the Italian approach with regard to the adaptation of the communication style and language to the target audiences.

Martin shared Eleonora's view that communicating on migration brings huge challenges, both internal and external. A two-way communication is needed, since listening and understanding how migrants feel can have a positive impact on building a winning strategy. Pooling resources is a crucial pre-condition and not only burden-sharing, but also resource-sharing is important.

**Eleonora Gavrielides** concluded by stressing the need to change the way all the key players think about immigration, have a shift in the strategic thinking and don't forget to use all tools available to penetrate in all angles of the society to explain well what are today's trends and interact constructively in order to handle them successfully.



# From Kissinger to Kelly—A crash guide for government leaders' voyage from Diplomacy to Design Thinking

By Verena Ringler

In two recent issues of *Convergences* and at the Club of Venice plenary session, I discussed the changing paradigm of communication including at government and the EU-level, and I guided readers through the “Unconventional Summit on the Future of Europe”, a pioneering co-creation exercise on the future of the EU.

Today, let us take a step back. Let me respond to a common reaction I get from civil servants and politicians when I speak about contemporary process or event design, multi-stakeholder facilitation teams, or meaningful citizen participation. “All fine, I too hear buzzwords like visioning, co-creation, fishbowl, barcamps, and gallery walks. However, help me catch up. Did I miss a class in graduate school, or, a special edition of *The Economist* here? Whose books shall I read? I always thought I was fine and up-to-date with my Kissinger, Hobsbawm, Morris, and Picketty at home.” My quick answer would be: your library is probably great, it is seminal on substance. Those new buzzwords, approaches, and fields of practice concern a complementing body of thinking and practice, which acknowledges the importance of the “how” (not just the “what”) in modern governance. The disciplines where this new stuff comes from are manifold: some of these buzzwords concern process and event design, others concern conversation or dialogue facilitation all the way to conflict management. Third ones again reflect emerging new work on leadership and change management, technology and the internet, international relations and diplomacy, futures and scenarios, sustainability and commons, participation and inclusion, peace-building and international development.

Here is my crash guide for newcomers to the cross-cutting field of innovation in governance, while I stress that my understanding of the field is that of a practitioner, and nascent and patchy at best.

First, let's share three insights for anyone interested in innovative approaches to modern governance practice:

1. Most proponents of these new approaches don't distinguish between the seemingly royal work on “strategy” on the one hand and the seemingly softer, less important work on “communications” on the other hand anymore. Rather, they see communications, multi-stakeholder and citizen inclusion as well as outreach as an intrinsic work stream that is embedded, ideally, within the strategy team.
2. Just like all other fields and branches, politics and governance need constant reflection and innovation in order to operate adequately in today's world. This includes new human resources work leading to new incentive systems, a new relationship with risk, and a culture of trial and error.

3. public and political decision-makers are agents for change, and change has two ingredients: a change of substance, and change of mindset. Something new has to be realized and it has to be accepted. Both ingredients deserve equal shares of attention, professionalism, time, and funding. Always, with any internal or external project we do.

## Vester and Wack

To explore this long undercurrent shift from the “what” to the “how”, let's dip into modern complexity thinking, which is at the core of how we will overhaul government organization and input legitimacy in the coming decades. Complexity thinking was both inspired and further developed in the last forty years, surrounding the oil shocks, emerging ecological and resource pressures, and the process around the 1972 Club of Rome report, *The Limits to Growth*. In those days, two figures—Frederic Vester (1925 - 2003) and Pierre Wack (1922-1997)—explained why modern times required knowledge not only on results (of actions, of governance etc.) but equally of pathways, processes and consequences surrounding these results.

Vester was a German biochemist, systems researcher, ecologist, an author. His idea: Our biosphere is a complex system; mankind is part of it. Mankind interferes into this fragile, interconnected system. Classic, linear ways of problem solving fail. Hence many of today's large-scale interventions don't yield satisfying results. Only connected thinking can help. At its core is moving our vantage point from inside zones of perception towards their outside. As we look at things from above, we are more inclined to debunk conventional wisdoms, explore seemingly known sets of relations, and challenge our own role and interests in this web of interdependence. Pierre Wack, in turn, was a French oil executive who was the first to develop the use of scenario planning in the private sector, at Royal Dutch Shell's London headquarters in the 1970s. Wack pioneered contemporary scenarios and futures work, which helped Shell to anticipate two oil shocks during that decade. Until today, many of the futures and scenario practitioners and facilitators you meet between Brussels, London or Rome have had previous stints with Shell.

Both Vester's and Wack's oeuvre are built on until today. Swiss Fredmund Malik acquired the rights to work with crucial elements of Vester's oeuvre, and several schools at Oxford University have been building on and further developing Wack's work (check out Rafael Ramirez, Angela Wilkinson, and executive workshop offers like the “Oxford Scenarios”).

## Kelly and Plattner

Complexity and futures thinking take us to another contemporary branch of thinking that is slowly entering government buildings—design thinking. Its roots are less in ecology and scenarios, but rather in the worlds of technology and business. Key figures are the brothers Tom and David Kelly from the U.S. who founded the design thinking company *Ideo* and—thanks to SAP founder Hasso Plattner's funding—Stanford University's *d.school*, which is connected with Potsdam's *Hasso Plattner Institute*. Other, smaller organizations offering design thinking and innovation consultancy are Switzerland's *Go Tomorrow* (formerly called *Brainstore*), Berlin's *Impact Solutions* and *Ignore Gravity*, and London's *What If* innovation company. The Kelly brothers' key idea: Many of us still believe that architects and designers are paid to be creative thinkers, while CEO's or decision-makers are not. That view, however, is hopelessly outdated. In fact, creativity and innovation are among the highly prized qualities in today's leaders. According to the Kelly brothers, creativity is a mindset, a way of thinking, and a proactive approach to new solutions. Carefully devised design thinking exercises or camps tend to yield breakthrough solutions.

- 18 You might ask which governments have pioneering results and best practice to show. It seems to me that governments who stand out in this are Canada with its work on Open Policy Development. In Switzerland, Ambassador Walter Fust, the former long-time head of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, embarked on large and hitherto unseen innovation events in African and Asian countries. Denmark is interesting with the MindLab at the Copenhagen Business School, and both Dutch and British public sector branches and universities promote work on innovation in government, the public sector, and public goods. A lot of further pioneering practice by governments (e.g. Norway's) draws inspiration from new insights and successful case studies in international conflict management, mediation and reframing, mass and group psychology.

Let me close with my personal 2015 book recommendations for curious minds on innovative formats in government. A comprehensive handbook on transformative engagement has yet to be written. Surely, my list includes the work of three authors—Moises Naim, Carne Ross, and Otto Scharmer—who I find elaborate engagingly on the need for a profound change in how we govern.

Cameron, Maxwell A. *Democratization of foreign policy: The Ottawa process as a model*. *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal*: Volume 5, Issue 3, 1998

Kelly, David and Kelly, Tom. *Creative Confidence-Unleashing the creative potential within us all*. Crown Business 2013.

Mettler, Markus. *The Innovation Champs Handbook*. 2013 (order at [brainstore.com](http://brainstore.com))

Naim, Moises. *The End of Power. From Boardrooms To Battlefields And Churches To States, Why Being In Charge Isn't What It Used To Be*, Basic Books 2013

Ross, Carne. *The Leaderless Revolution: How Ordinary People Will Take Power and Change Politics in the Twenty-First Century*. Blue Rider Press 2012.

Scharmer, Otto. *Theory U: Leading from the Future as it Emerges*. San Francisco, CA; Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2008

Vester, Frederic, *The Art of Interconnected Thinking - Ideas and Tools for dealing with complexity*, BoD - Books on Demand 2012

Wack, Pierre. *Scenarios: Uncharted Waters Ahead and Scenarios: Shooting the Rapids*, *Harvard Business Review*. September-October and November-December, respectively, 1985 (available online)



**Verena Ringler** is a Europe Project Manager with Germany's Stiftung Mercator. Previous stints have been as Deputy Head of Press and Public Affairs with the International Civilian Office / EU Special Representative in Kosovo (2006 - 09) and as Associate Editor with *Foreign Policy* magazine in Washington (2002-2006). She is a frequent public speaker on Europe (Club of Venice, TEDx) and is a member of the European Forum Alpbach's advisory board.

In her project, Verena encourages the cross-fertilization between Europe's politics and administration realm and the private sector's innovation and leadership insights. Moves from linear to lateral approaches and from mono-perspective to interdisciplinary conceptualization in the EU profession, she suggests, would enable the whole sector approach the systemic problem sets of our time with systemic response mechanisms. See more at [europeancommons.eu](http://europeancommons.eu)

# Interacting with citizens: the new course

By Lars Klüver

*Director of the Danish Board of Technology*

MSc in Ecology and Environmental Biology, Lars Klüver is director of the Danish Board of Technology (DBT), the parliamentary technology assessment institution of Denmark, and has 25 years of practical and theoretical experience in policy analysis, technology assessment (TA) and foresight.

He has been directing numerous participatory and expert-based TA activities. The DBT has a worldwide reputation as a front-runner with regards to policy analysis involving participation, and the toolbox of the DBT includes a large variety of participatory methods developed or adapted to support knowledge-based decision-making. Lars Klüver has represented the participatory approach to policy-making in EU expert groups as an advisor and in workshops all over the world. He was the initiator of World Wide Views on Global Warming, the first ever global citizen deliberation process.

His work is driven by the notion that diversity, different kinds of knowledge, deep involvement and good dialogue are the needed ingredients to solve the complex challenges facing our societies.



## **The new course: interaction with citizens in an evolving communication society and their involvement in the decision-making process**

**Club of Venice**

Rome, November 13, 2014

*Lars Klüver*

*Director, Fonden Teknologirådet*

*-The Danish Board of Technology Foundation*



## **The presentation**

- ◆ Why Public Participation
- ◆ Application areas for Public Participation
- ◆ State of participation practice
- ◆ Obstacles to deal with





## 2 Global Citizen Consultations Climate 2009 – Biodiversity 2012

- Citizens of the world affected by global policies
- Stakeholders, NGO's, lobbyists, experts all have their channels for influence
- All say they speak for the good of the public
- But who is actually asking the public?



## Climate World Wide Views: 44 meetings in 38 countries

WWViews national and regional partners



Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Denmark, Egypt, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Norway, Netherlands, Norway, Russia, South Africa, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Chinese Taipei, Uganda, United Kingdom, USA, Uruguay, Vietnam

## World Wide Views on Biodiversity: 34 meetings in 25 countries

FONDEN TEKNOLOGI RÅDET

## The presentation

- ◆ Why Public Participation
- ◆ Application areas for Public Participation
- ◆ State of participation practice
- ◆ Obstacles to deal with



FONDEN TEKNOLOGI RÅDET

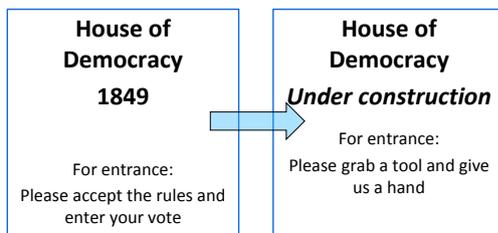
## Why now?

- ◆ Re-establish trust
  - To Science; Institutions; Politics
- ◆ Society complex, intensive, challenged
  - No-one has the overview
- ◆ Politics more knowledge-demanding
  - Many kinds of knowledge needed
- ◆ Wicked problems - Uncertainty
  - Professional + normative judgments
  - Demand ownership and distributed action
- ◆ Citizens are case-oriented

FONDEN TEKNOLOGI RÅDET

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## PP and democracy



Public participation is reflecting democracy and changing it - at the same time

FONDEN TEKNOLOGI RÅDET

## Political meaning

- ◆ PP has many meanings in democracies
  - Opening institutions to their real owners
  - Informing policy-making; Giving citizens a voice
  - Transition to collaborative democracy
  - Long term development to global democracy
- ◆ Adding dialogue to communication
  - "Talk society" taken over by media and elite
- ◆ It is a positive addendum – not a take-over
  - To politics; CSOs, to power games; media

FONDEN TEKNOLOGI RÅDET

## Trans-national participation

- ◆ Policy moves upwards
  - Problems: Climate; Oceans; Terror; Pandemics...
  - Aims: Biodiversity; Resources; Peace...
  - Policies: EU; Global treaties; Trade systems...
- ◆ Publics, advisors, debate stay national
  - Democratic, analytical, communicative gaps
- Need for introducing new democratic mechanisms at trans-national level

FONDEN TEKNOLOGI RÅDET

## The presentation

- ◆ Why Public Participation
- ◆ Application areas for Public Participation
- ◆ State of participation practice
- ◆ Obstacles to deal with



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## Climate adaptation Denmark today



Source: Kort og Matrikelstyrelsen  
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## Climate adaptation Denmark + 10 m ocean level rise



Source: Kort og Matrikelstyrelsen  
FONDEN TEKNOLOGI RÅDET

## Climate adaptation Citizen Summit at Kalundborg



## Tools for different levels

Local	National	Global
World Cafe (Co-creating ideas)	Consensus Conf. (Citizen defined, qualit.)	WWViews Global (Deliberation & voting)
Open space (Self-organising action)	Citizen Jury (Qualit. / quantit.)	Informed ePolls (Streaming & polling)
Citizen hearing (Brainstorm, prioritise, describe options)	Interview meeting (Informed quantit.+qualit.)	eParticipation systems? (Brainstorms; Social innovation..)
Scenario Workshop (Make common future)	Citizen summit (Deliberation + vote)	
	WWViews Nation (Multi-site)	

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## Tools for different functions

Ideas, visions	Policy consultation	Empowerment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>World Cafe</li> <li>Citizen hearing</li> <li>CIVISTI (Research and innovation agenda setting)</li> <li>Scenario workshop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WWViews</li> <li>Consensus Conf.</li> <li>Citizen Jury</li> <li>Interview meeting</li> <li>Citizen summit</li> <li>Informed ePolls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open space Perspective workshop (Exploring myths, and making action)</li> <li>Future Lab (Turning critique into action)</li> </ul>

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## The presentation

- Why Public Participation
- Application areas for Public Participation
- State of participation practice**
- Obstacles to deal with



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## State of the art

- Citizens are capable
- We have the processes ready
  - They "travel well" and are well-tested
- We know about the traps
  - Skills of project managers
  - Fairness in political context

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## Needs for method development

- At trans-national level
  - Need expansion of WWViews-like approaches:
    - Multi-site, multi-lingual
    - Comparable process and data
- eParticipation research and experiments needed
  - Combinations of Face2Face and eParticipation

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## The presentation

- ◆ Why Public Participation
- ◆ Application areas for Public Participation
- ◆ State of participation practice
- ◆ Obstacles to deal with



## Promises are good, so... We have to dare and to invest

- ◆ Open dialogue suffers in crisis
  - Spin and strategies take over
  - Lack of courage (?) in the policy layer
- ◆ No clear support systems for PP – why?
  - Capacity building (mainstreaming)
  - Competence centers (front-runners)
  - Funding (public / private / crowd)
- ◆ Europe needs PP – but doesn't really move

[www.tekno.dk](http://www.tekno.dk)  
[WWViews.org](http://WWViews.org)  
[LK@tekno.dk](mailto:LK@tekno.dk)



## Impacts of Methods 21 "roles" to play

	Raising knowledge	Forming attitudes	Initialising action
Tech/Sci aspects	<b>SCIENTIFIC ASSESSMENT</b> * Technical options assessed and made visible * Comprehensive overview on consequences given	<b>AGENDA SETTING</b> * Setting the agenda in the political debate * Stimulating public debate * Introducing visions or scenarios	<b>REFRAMING OF DEBATE</b> * New action plan or initiative to further scrutinise the problem decided * New orientation in policies established
Societal aspects	<b>SOCIAL MAPPING</b> * Structure of conflicts made transparent	<b>MEDIATION</b> * Self-reflecting among actors * Blockade running * Bridge building	<b>NEW DECISION MAKING PROCESSES</b> * New ways of governance introduced * Initiative to intensify public debate taken
Policy aspects	<b>POLICY ANALYSIS</b> * Policy objectives explored * Existing policies assessed	<b>RE-STRUCTURING THE POLICY DEBATE</b> * Comprehensiveness in policies increased * Policies evaluated through debate * Democratic legitimisation perceived	<b>DECISION TAKEN</b> * Policy alternatives filtered * Innovations implemented * New legislation is passed

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## When, how and why Consensus Conference

### When

Testing issues in a well-informed micro-democracy

### How

12-16 pers mixed panel calls in experts and write an assessment report.

	Raising knowledge	Forming attitudes	Initialising action
Tech/Sci aspects	<b>SCIENTIFIC ASSESSMENT</b> * Technical options assessed and made visible * Comprehensive overview on consequences given	<b>AGENDA SETTING</b> * Setting the agenda in the political debate * Stimulating public debate * Introducing visions or scenarios	<b>REFRAMING OF DEBATE</b> * New action plan or initiative to further scrutinise the problem decided * New orientation in policies established
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## Citizen Summit / WWViews

### When

Policy decisions need input on informed public opinion

### How

100-20.000 persons 1 day, get info, deliberate, vote on questions. Single-/multi-site.

	Raising knowledge	Forming attitudes	Initialising action
Tech/Sci aspects	<b>SCIENTIFIC ASSESSMENT</b> * Technical options assessed and made visible * Comprehensive overview on consequences given	<b>AGENDA SETTING</b> * Setting the agenda in the political debate * Stimulating public debate * Introducing visions or scenarios	<b>REFRAMING OF DEBATE</b> * New action plan or initiative to further scrutinise the problem decided * New orientation in policies established
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## When, how and why Citizen Hearing

### When

Citizen ideas for local/national strategies needed

### How

2-300, brainstorming, specifying & prioritising policy ideas

	Raising knowledge	Forming attitudes	Initialising action
Tech/Sci aspects	<b>SCIENTIFIC ASSESSMENT</b> * Technical options assessed and made visible * Comprehensive overview on consequences given	<b>AGENDA SETTING</b> * Setting the agenda in the political debate * Stimulating public debate * Introducing visions or scenarios	<b>REFRAMING OF DEBATE</b> * New action plan or initiative to further scrutinise the problem decided * New orientation in policies established
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## When, how and why Interview Meeting

### When

Informed ethical judgments needed

### How

Qualitative and semi-quantitative informed 30 person poll and group interviews.

	Raising knowledge	Forming attitudes	Initialising action
Tech/Sci aspects	<b>SCIENTIFIC ASSESSMENT</b> * Technical options assessed and made visible * Comprehensive overview on consequences given	<b>AGENDA SETTING</b> * Setting the agenda in the political debate * Stimulating public debate * Introducing visions or scenarios	<b>REFRAMING OF DEBATE</b> * New action plan or initiative to further scrutinise the problem decided * New orientation in policies established
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## When, how and why Voting Conference

### When

Different actors claim to have the right action plan

### How

Action plans presented by actors. Citizens, politicians and experts vote

	Raising knowledge	Forming attitudes	Initialising action
Tech/Sci aspects	<b>SCIENTIFIC ASSESSMENT</b> * Technical options assessed and made visible * Comprehensive overview on consequences given	<b>AGENDA SETTING</b> * Setting the agenda in the political debate * Stimulating public debate * Introducing visions or scenarios	<b>REFRAMING OF DEBATE</b> * New action plan or initiative to further scrutinise the problem decided * New orientation in policies established
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## When, how and why Future Lab

### When

Actors need to define problems, visions and action opportunities

### How

Actor group criticise, turn that to visions, make action on visions

	Raising knowledge	Forming attitudes	Initialising action
Tech/Sci aspects	<b>SCIENTIFIC ASSESSMENT</b> * Technical options assessed and made visible * Comprehensive overview on consequences given	<b>AGENDA SETTING</b> * Setting the agenda in the political debate * Stimulating public debate * Introducing visions or scenarios	<b>REFRAMING OF DEBATE</b> * New action plan or initiative to further scrutinise the problem decided * New orientation in policies established
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## When, how and why CIVISTI

### When

R&I agenda needs public relevance

### How

Citizens make visions; Turned into research items by experts; Prioritised by citizens

	Raising knowledge	Forming attitudes	Initialising action
Tech/Sci aspects	<b>SCIENTIFIC ASSESSMENT</b> * Technical options assessed and made visible * Comprehensive overview on consequences given	<b>AGENDA SETTING</b> * Setting the agenda in the political debate * Stimulating public debate * Introducing visions or scenarios	<b>REFRAMING OF DEBATE</b> * New action plan or initiative to further scrutinise the problem decided * New orientation in policies established
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# Communication case Study: TTIP

By 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).



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## CLUB OF VENICE Plenary Meeting

Rome, 13 November 2014  
**Verena Nowotny**

## Communication case Study: TTIP

- Short introduction to the TTIP
- Timeline
- The same procedure as last time?
- The communication challenge
- Possible scenarios
- Discussion

## A short introduction to global trade



**WTO:** largest multilateral organization for trade; since 1995; 159 members

**Regional treaties:** NAFTA (USA, Canada, Mexico), ASEAN, CETA (Canada, EU)

**Bilateral treaties:** EU member states have concluded 1,400 bilateral investment treaties

## What is the TTIP about?

- The EU and the U.S. represent 46.7% of global GDP
- American-European trade represents 31.1% of world trade
- 56% of American foreign direct investments are made in EU
- 71% of foreign direct investments made in the U.S. stem from the EU
- Tariffs only amount to 4% on average between EU and U.S. but
- the main issues are **non-tariff barriers**,
- **regulatory differences** as well as
- Investor-to-state **dispute settlement** rules.



## (Emotional) Arguments

### Pro

- U.S. (standards) are still better than China's

### Con

- Free trade is bad
- Globalization is bad
- Big Business is bad
- Standards will be lowered
- Secret negotiations = they have to hide something

## The communication challenge

- Potential benefits difficult to communicate
- Potential dangers easy to communicate (“Chlorine chicken”)
- Opponents much better organized and have more resources
- Deep mistrust of business and politics
- Opposition for many (local) reasons:
  - Shale gas, nuclear power
  - Power of provinces (esp. Germany)
  - GMOs, environment
  - Fight against capitalism/globalization



## To make the best of a bad job?

- Transparency has improved a lot (website, social media)
- Positive efforts to actively inform citizens
- Political backing from new Commission



## Possible scenarios

- TTIP fails (e.g. rejection by EP)
- A „smaller“ TTIP – stripped of controversial issues (e.g. ISDS) – can be enacted

In the meantime, maybe there will be a

- US-China trade agreement?
- EU-China trade agreement?
- And what about WTO?

## Questions for discussion

- Public Participation vs. „Organized“ Participation?
- How to deal with local „hijacking“ of political processes?
- When is the right moment to start Public Participation?
- How can a bad start be compensated?

# 'Europe for Citizens' Programme in Italy

By Rita Sassu

Rita Sassu, from the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism, is the national contact point for the "Europe for Citizens" programme



Ministero  
delle Attività Culturali  
e del Turismo

## Europe for Citizens Programme

Rita Sassu  
ECP – Europe for Citizens Point  
Rome, 13 November 2014

Ministero  
delle Attività Culturali  
e del Turismo

### Europe for Citizens Programme

- The "Europe for Citizens" Programme is established through Council Regulation (EU) No 390/2014 of 14 April 2014
- The Programme financially supports projects that bring citizens closer to the EU and that promote European citizenship and citizens involvement
- The Programme "Europe for citizens" has a total budget of EUR 185 468 000 for the period from 2014 to 2020

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### Programme management/implementation

- The Programme is managed by the European Commission



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e del Turismo

### Programme management/implementation

- The European Commission relies on an Executive Agency, which is the EACEA - Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, established by decision 2005/56/EC of the European Commission of 14 January 2005), responsible for the practical implementation of most of the Actions of the "Europe for Citizens" Programme and the management of the complete life cycle of the projects.
- The EACEA is in charge of the ECP - Europe for Citizens Points, that are national structures whose main task is to spread the knowledge of the "Europe for Citizens" Programme on national territory by disseminating practical information to general public (through conferences, info-day, seminars, workshops, publications, web sites, etc.) and to guide and support those interested in participating in the Programme.

## Programme management/implementation

The Italian Europe for Citizens Point is established in the Ministry of Culture, Rome, since 2008



## ECP Italy's tasks

ECP Italy's tasks include:

- To organize **conferences, seminars, courses, workshops** on the Programme;
- To give citizens **practical information on the Programme and on financing opportunities**;
- To help and to **assist potential beneficiaries**;
- To exchange information, experience with **other ECPs**;
- To **cooperate with EACEA** and with **European Commission** as far as the Programme is concerned;
- To promote the **results of selected projects**;
- To manage ECP Italy's website [www.europacittadini.it](http://www.europacittadini.it) ;
- To manage the **phone help-desk and the email help-desk** ([antennadelcittadino@beniculturali.it](mailto:antennadelcittadino@beniculturali.it))
- To support potential beneficiaries through **one-to-one meetings**
- To realize **publications** related to "Europe for Citizens" Programme main themes (for example: town twinning, intercultural dialogue, volunteering, etc.)

## www.europacittadini.it



## Potential beneficiaries

The Programme is open to all stakeholders promoting active European citizenship. For example:

- **local authorities** such as municipalities
- **Regions**
- **civil society organizations** (volunteering, survivors, cultural, sport associations)
- **cultural and educational institutions**
- **schools**
- **universities**
- and so on

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## Elegible countries



- EU countries: Austria; Belgium; Bulgaria; Cyprus; Croatia; Czech Republic; Denmark; Estonia; Finland; France; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Ireland; Italy; Latvia; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Malta; Netherlands; Poland; Portugal; Romania; Slovak Republic; Slovenia; Spain; Sweden; United Kingdom
- Montenegro
- Serbia
- Potentially participating countries:
- The Programme is potentially open to the following categories of countries provided that they have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Commission.
  - a) acceding countries, candidate countries and potential candidates, in accordance with the general
  - b) the EFTA countries party to the EEA Agreement, in accordance with the provisions of that Agreement.

## General objectives

- Under the overall aim of **bringing the European Union closer to citizens**, the general objectives are:
- to contribute to citizens' **understanding of the Union, its history, its common culture and cultural diversity**;
- to **foster European citizenship** and to **improve conditions for civic and democratic participation at Union level**.



## Intercultural dialogue



The European Commission committed itself to **promoting intercultural dialogue** through the Europe for Citizens Programme, **by bringing European citizens of different nationalities and different languages together** and **by giving them the opportunity to participate in common activities**. Participation in such a project should **raise awareness on the richness of the cultural and linguistic environment in Europe**. It should also promote **mutual understanding and tolerance**.

## Programme Structure

**Strand 1: European remembrance**

**Strand 2: Democratic engagement and civic participation**

**Horizontal Action: Valorisation:** Analysis, dissemination and use of project results.

## Strand 1 – European Remembrance

- The European Union is built on fundamental values such as freedom, democracy and respect for human rights. In order to fully appreciate their meaning, it is necessary to remember the breaches of those principles caused by totalitarian regimes in Europe's modern history.



## Strand 1 – European Remembrance

- The Strand also involves activities concerning other defining moments in recent European history.
- In 2015, the topic of the Second World War and its effects on the creation of the European Union can be addressed as well.



## Strand 2 – Democratic engagement and civic participation

This Strand aims to encourage democratic and civic participation of citizens at Union level.

Measures that can be granted under this strand are:

- 1) **Town Twinning**: This measure aims at supporting projects bringing together a wide range of citizens from twinned towns around topics in line with the objectives of the Programme.

## Strand 2 – Democratic engagement and civic participation

- 2) **Networks of Towns**: Municipalities and associations working together on a common theme in a long-term perspective may develop networks of towns to make their cooperation more sustainable. Networking between municipalities on European issues of common interest appears to be an important means for enabling the exchange of good practices. Twinning is a strong link that binds municipalities; therefore, the potential of the networks created by a series of town twinning links should be used for developing thematic and long-lasting cooperation between towns.

## Strand 2 – Democratic engagement and civic participation

- 2) **Civil Society Projects**: This measure supports projects promoted by transnational partnerships and networks directly involving citizens. Those projects gather citizens from different horizons, in activities directly linked to Union policies, with a view to give them an opportunity to concretely participate in the Union policy-making process in areas related to the objectives of the Programme. The project should consist in stimulating reflection, debates or other activities related to the Programme's topics and propose concrete solutions that can be found through cooperation or coordination at European level.

## Contacts

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# The European Year for Development (EYD) 2015: how joint communication helps enhance inter-institutional cooperation

By Jurgita Rakauskaite

Nowadays, we find ourselves living in the global village, which philosopher M. McLuhan<sup>1</sup> had yet predicted in 1960s. Distances have shrunk and information become available for everybody. Even though, communication strategies are still lacking cooperation and unity. The question is, whether it is possible, on themes which are deemed of "universal" interest, to send *the same* message via different channels? Could close cooperation ensure that *the message* will be understood by *each and everyone*?

The answer is YES. Dedicated to development, the 30th European Year in 2015 brings not only the idea of one united, equal and dignified world, but also an example of inter-institutional cooperation, which unrolls with a high level communication campaign, aims to avoid overlapping and encourages complementarity among all partners.

To begin where everything started, we have to come back to 2012, when all three institutions started discussions on the topic and President Barroso formally suggested the designation of 2015 as a European Year for Development.

The Council of the European Union, together with the European Parliament, adopted the EYD in April 2014<sup>2</sup>. The primary responsibility for raising citizens' awareness of development issues and getting them involved as early as possible rests with Member States, but implementation should at all costs be taken care of jointly with the institutions.

2015 is collectively regarded as a special year to hold the EYD2015 with the imminent deadline for meeting the 2015 Millennium Development Goals and for their replacements to be put in place<sup>3</sup>. This year is therefore the ideal time to look at what has been achieved so far, and most importantly, what still needs to be done in the field.

As the first ever European Year dealing with 'external action' of the EU, this provides an unparalleled opportunity to engage with EU citizens, to showcase our strong commitment to eradicating

poverty worldwide and to inform them how every euro spent to supporting development does make a difference in the lives of so many, in particular in the world's poorest countries.

The EYD2015 is unique not only because of its topic novelty, but also because of its design, which could be taken as a new example for inter-institutional contribution. With an eye of the Council and European Parliament, the organisation, design and framework of the EYD2015 belongs to the Commission and DG DEVCO in particular, which recognises monitoring and evaluation of the EYD2015 as its obligation, as well as a policy goal.

Thus, the inter-institutional collaboration is being established as it follows:

- **DG DEVCO** is responsible for the organisation, design and framework of the EYD2015. Its dedicated staff has put in place a comprehensive implementation plan which is being executed through a wide variety of communication tools.
- **Member States (MS)** have a partner status for organisation of EYD2015 and are crucial for success outside Brussels. MS cannot play but a co-leading role in design and implementation. They are responsible for coordination of citizens, social partners, the private sector, the academic world, civil society organisations and non-state actors as well. As partners, their role is to adapt European approach to national requirements and organise activities at Member State level. The Decision on the designation of the Year contains specific provisions which foresee, though on a voluntary basis, the set up of national work plans in purpose to find some synergies. And Member States' mobilisation to this end has been impressive!
- **EESC** and **CoR** are consultative bodies, which basically are the link between external action and European societies.
- **Civil society** and **Local authorities** are considered both as actors and beneficiaries. Firstly, they engage locally with citizens and are the channel of communication and feedback, but at the same time, they benefit from the EU funded programmes. **Concord**<sup>4</sup> is one of the main promoters of EYD2015.
- **International organisations** can help show global independence and explain why we act jointly.
- **Other stakeholders** can and will be involved as deemed necessary.

1 In the early 1960s, McLuhan wrote that the visual, individualistic print culture would soon be brought to an end by what he called "electronic interdependence": when electronic media replace visual culture with aural/oral culture. In this new age, humankind will move from individualism and fragmentation to a collective identity, with a "tribal base." McLuhan's coinage for this new social organization is the global village.

2 Decision No 472/2014/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 on the European Year for Development (2015).

3 It is also worth recalling the Foreign Affairs Council's conclusions on 14 May 2012 on 'Increasing the Impact of EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change', which, among others, recall "that the Union's development policy and that of the Member States complement and reinforce each other".

4 **Concord** is the European confederation of Relief and Development NGOs, made up of 28 national associations, 18 international networks and 2 associate members that represent over 1,800 NGOs, supported by millions of citizens across Europe. This non-profit organisation is the main interlocutor with the EU institutions on development policy.

Joint visual identity and content will be spread via several social media accounts as well as during initiatives and events or in the Commission representations and offices within the EU. Every institution can link its calendar to the EYD2015 thematic months, that have a specific topic, coinciding with major international days and events, which will provide a common framework to all communication partners. Moreover, the dedicated website, which is rather an on line hub of EYD2015, pushes this project to another level. **This website is based on the principles of co-communication and co-development of content.** It brings all the elements of the decentralised EYD2015 campaign, featuring all participating organisations, a centralised calendar of events at EU level and in the Member States and stories and posts from all stakeholders, showcasing the plurality of perspectives on EU development cooperation in one space.

Moreover, involved communication specialists are supported from the institutions and thus, they are provided with the universal campaign press kit, which helps them feed interested journalists with a wide range of information concerning the European Year. The kit will be updated throughout the campaign with new and up to date press releases, campaign images, interviews, speeches, etc., including country specific information.

our world  
our dignity  
our future

With its motto *"Our world, our dignity, our future"* in the front-line, EYD2015 goes through all institutions. Not to get lost, an inter-service group of the EYD2015' was needed to establish, which involves relevant Commission departments and EEAS to keep them updated and support when required. Thus, number of inter-institutional meetings and technical workshops are being organised to clarify the guidelines and find as many synergies as possible. As a result, joint communication strategy and activities, which supplement each other, are initiated and will be also complemented by an evaluation process being prepared in cooperation with an external consultant.



**Jurgita Rakauskaitė** has worked from October 2014 to January 2015 as a Lithuanian trainee for the Public Relations Unit of the Council of the European Union in Brussels.

Jurgita holds a Bachelor's Degree in Journalism at the Vilnius University and is currently working on her Master Thesis on European Institutions' Social Media Presence at the Middlesex and Mykolas Romeris Universities.

Previously, Jurgita has been working in partnership with a number of audio-visual production companies in Lithuania and successfully developed more than 10 TV projects, gathering meanwhile experience in PR and marketing fields both within NGOs and private companies.

# Decision No 472/2014/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 on the European Year for Development (2015)<sup>1</sup>

## EXTRACT - Articles 3 and 4

### Article 3: Measures

1. The measures taken to achieve the objectives of the European Year shall include the following measures, which may be organised at Union, national, regional or local levels, as set out in the Annex, and in partner countries, in accordance with Article 6(5):
  - (a) communication campaigns to disseminate key messages targeted at the general public and more specific audiences, in particular young people and other key target groups, including through social media;
  - (b) the organisation of conferences, events and initiatives with all relevant stakeholders, to promote active participation and debate, and to raise awareness at all levels;
  - (c) concrete measures in the Member States aimed at promoting the objectives of the European Year, in particular through development education, the exchange of information and sharing of experience and good practices among national, regional or local administrations and other organisations; and
  - (d) undertaking studies and surveys and disseminating their results.
2. The Commission may identify other measures as contributing to the objectives of the European Year and may allow references to the European Year and to the motto to be used in promoting those measures, insofar as they contribute to achieving those objectives.

### Article 4: Coordination with Member States

1. The Commission shall invite the Member States to appoint each a national coordinator to be responsible for organising the involvement of that Member State in the European Year. The Member States shall inform the Commission of any such appointment.
2. The national coordinators shall, in close coordination with the Commission, consult and cooperate with a wide range of relevant stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector, national parliaments, social partners and, where appropriate, the national agencies, the federal State or sub-national government level, including regional and local authorities and, where applicable, associated Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) or contact points for the relevant Union programmes.
3. The Commission shall invite the Member States to transmit to it, by 1 September 2014, their work programme, which shall set out details of the national activities planned for the European Year, in accordance with the objectives of the European Year and the details of the measures set out in the Annex.

# EYD 2015: Implementation in Italy

Extract of a presentation by Simone Landini (Italy) at the plenary meeting in Rome, on 13 November 2014

**#EYD2015 –**  
The Italian Perspective

- ▶ Post-2015 Development Agenda (priority for current Italian Presidency)
- ▶ EXPO 2015 – unique occasion! Development and sustainability at the forefront
- ▶ New law on development cooperation

**Italian Priorities**

**#EYD2015**  
EXPO 2015  
MILANO 2015

30 events in co-operation with Italian and International stakeholders (NGOs, Academia, UN, EU etc)

Strong synergies with EYD actions

**Italian Priorities**

**#EYD2015 – National Work Programme**

1) **Communication campaign at the national level**  
audio-visual material; social advertising on TV and radio; Apps; media, TV news etc.  
To reach the broadest audience

**Italian Priorities**

**#EYD2015 – National Work Programme**

2) **Development Cooperation Week in Italian primary and secondary schools**  
In cooperation with Ministry of Education (MIUR)  
to reach students and their families + teachers

**Italian Priorities**

**#EYD2015 – National Work Programme**

3. **Workshops in Universities**  
In cooperation with CRUI  
NGOs, Regional-local institutions, cooperatives etc.  
To reach Academia, students, private sector

**Italian Priorities**

**#EYD2015 – National Work Programme**

The action will benefit all stakeholders  
How to engage:

- Joint work for identifying contents
- Taking part in EYD activities as speakers
- Contents for EYD website
- Labelling of planned events, to be included in the official EYD calendar

**Italian Priorities**

## Simone Landini

Deputy Head, Evaluation and Communication Unit, DG Development Cooperation in the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. A career diplomat since 2001, Simone Landini has been working at the Evaluation and Communication Unit of the Italian Development Cooperation at the F.A. Ministry since July 2013. The Unit in charge of the coordination of the activities for EYD 2015, including the Italian Development Cooperation activity programme of Milan EXPO 2015. Previously he served at the Ministry's Asia Department (2002-2005), at the Embassy of Italy in Hanoi (2005-2009) as Head of the economic and commercial section and at the Embassy of Italy in Moscow (2009 -2013, political and press sections).



# Statistics and politics

By Anthony Zacharzewski

**Anthony Zacharzewski** is a former Treasury, Cabinet Office, and local government official who set up the Democratic Society in 2006. The Democratic Society works with every level of government to support citizen participation, create a new democratic opportunities and open the policy-making process.



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Back in December, I attended a seminar at the UK Statistics Authority on **Better Statistics, Better Data**. It gave me a slight sense of déjà vu from conversations a decade or more ago – statistics are hard to understand, most people don't understand them (or trust them), and there are significant priming effects in opinion polls.

However, there are some signs of progress, partly driven by the UK's Open Policy Making agenda. A few highlights:

There's clearly now pressure for equal-footing access to data, so the UK Government and Ministers don't get 24 hours to hone their lines (and leak them) before the rest of the country does. One version of this discussed was release to everyone at the same time – the alternative being release to media organisations on the same timetable as Ministers. The former feels far more democratic, not least because I don't think anyone would be able to say who "the media" for statistics is any more.

Will Moy from the brilliant Full Fact called for better referencing of evidence in political statements. That brought a lot of nods in the room, though Chris Giles from the Financial Times pointed out correctly that there is a big difference between "true" and "fair" statistics. It goes without saying that better referencing of *all* evidence used, not just stats, would make policy decisions better and more open. The positive side-effect would be that focus on political philosophy.

Citizen education on statistics hasn't worked (Ben Page from IpsosMORI said Britain is the **5th most ignorant country** about policy-relevant statistics in the world) and no campaign is going to change that – *however* passive statistical awareness and the power of social media is increasing, which enables people to challenge as well as to spread dodgy data. Hence the importance of organisations like **Full Fact**, but also good independent academic institutions, but they are often shy to get involved in what seems like political discussions.

The problem with increasing use of data however, is that it often turns into two pressure groups using data as weapons. The immigration debate, for instance, is the data equivalent of drunks swinging punches at each other in an alley – full of contradictory statistics, most unreliable but all loudly transmitted.

There are few trusted voices to correct or point out discrepancies – Tim Harford talked about politics being in a "low-trust equilibrium" that means political statements are distrusted by default. It is a problem, but analysis sites like Full Fact "kick the ball not the man" said **Will Moy** – and that should be the basis for experts who want to get involved in into a world where data informs highly political decisions and discussions.

That's obviously the world we want to see – where discussions and decisions are informed by all sorts of evidence, understood by participants. It's a test not just for UK Statistics Authority and academic institutions, but for every actor in the open policy making process.

# Open EU

By Anthony Zacharzewski

Open EU is a yearlong project being undertaken by Demsoc with the support of the Commission office in London, testing the demand for participation in EU policymaking and how open policymaking can be done in practice at an EU level. Incorporating voices from the third sector, civil service, political representatives and citizen voice, we are creating a shared action plan on opening up EU institutions – a collaborative statement of the areas in which experiments could take place, the best standards of openness from around the world, and a clear statement of the expectations of citizens.

Through a series of events held throughout the year in London, Edinburgh and Brussels, we will bring together citizens; activists and policymakers to coproduce a shared action plan for EU institutions. This will be a collaborative statement addressing: where the EU should open up its processes and involve citizens and the third sector; examples of the best practice in open policymaking globally; and a statement of expectations from citizens and the third sector on what they expect from the European Institutions moving forward.

The first event will be where citizens and the third sector come together to talk about occasions when they have attempted to have an influence on policy in the past, difficulties they faced and what can be improved, as well as explaining whether or not they feel open policymaking is necessary in specific areas, everywhere or nowhere in the myriad policy areas covered by the EU.

The second event will involve political representatives, policymakers and the democratic sector, asking them to review the demands from citizens and the third sector.

Following on will be two events in Brussels:

- The first of the Open EU Brussels event will be a workshop for and by journalists, activists, technologists and policy people in Brussels working on the ideas, roadblocks and documents from the Edinburgh events. This event will focus on finding potential ways to overcome roadblocks, as well as translating complex needs and requirements of disparate groups into a cohesive approach for increasing public participation in currently exclusive processes and conversations.
- The second of the Open EU Brussels events will be sessions with EU Commission policymakers, where we will present them with the current findings, consult them on the work so far, and receive feedback.

In this project we are both discussing and using the techniques and tools of open policymaking, testing the concept as we research. The entire process will be carried out in the open, with every conversation offline being brought into the online discussion space. We will also be building an online archive of educational content, including videos, blogs, audio recordings/podcasts and linked research – produced and submitted by the public, the democratic sector and the institutions – that can be accessed throughout and after the project.

The last of the Open EU events will be a whole day conference, where we will present the paper. We will also invite speakers who have taken part in the process so far as well as those who have made an overall contribution to conversations around opening up policymaking. This will take place in London in the Autumn.

You can find more information at <http://openeu.org>

# Member States agreed on the Communication priorities for 2015-2016

By Jurgita Rakauskaite

By the end of the year 2014 and the period of Italian Presidency as well, the discussions on the inter-institutional communication priorities, inspired by the priorities of the current semester, the 18-month Trio Programme<sup>1</sup> and the strategic agenda approved by the European Council in June 2014<sup>2</sup> as well as going in line with the political declaration on “Communicating Europe in Partnership”, were not only initiated by the Presidency, but are about to bear the first fruits, as a final agreement at the Working Party on Information (WPI) was reached in this field by the Member States during the WPI meeting on 5 December, 2014<sup>3</sup> and endorsed by the “General Affairs” Council on 16 December 2014.

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## The same value for both local and global issues

At the meeting on 17 October 2014, the WPI had a first presentation and discussion on possible communication priorities for 2015-2016 on the basis of a paper drawn up by the Italian Presidency. At that time, many delegations expressed both general support to adopt the priorities and intention to discuss this matter at the forthcoming WPI meetings.

Thus, on 24 November 2014 the Italian Presidency came back to the delegations with an overall agreement, which is based on comments and positions of delegations and indicates themes for communication priorities as follows:

- a. **EU's support to foster sustainable growth, innovation, competitiveness and employment;**
- b. **Freedom, security and justice (including “immigration/integration”, with due attention to sustainable and coordinated policies);**
- c. **Energy and climate change;**
- d. **EU's role in the world, with focus on contribution to the neighbourhood's stability.**

Communication on this topic would also include the European Year of Development (EYD) 2015, considering its horizontal character and the engagement of all Member States in the implementation of the Year.

## Roots come from the past

These priorities, which have been agreed by Member States at the above-mentioned GAC last December, reflect the main objectives declared by the Presidency at the beginning of its mandate: a job-friendly Europe; moving Europe closer to its citizens in an area of democracy, rights and freedom; the EU's role as a major actor on the international stage; playing a key role in its immediate neighbourhood; and shape a new shared vision of Europe, strongly oriented towards growth, competitiveness and innovation.

Moreover, Strategic Agenda for the Union in the Times of Change, adopted by the European Council just after the elections to the European Parliament in June 2014, is basically redirecting to the same goals, which were presented in the Italian Presidency's proposal. For the next five years EU is going to draw itself as a Union of jobs, growth and competitiveness as well as a Union that empowers and protects all citizens; it will guide itself towards an Energy-Union with a forward looking climate policy and aims to become a Union of freedom, security and justice, which at the same time is a strong global actor. Thus, by adopting the priorities, these political goals become a communication concerns as well.

However, to identify the relevant key issues eligible as inter-institutional communication topics on a yearly or biannual basis, the Working Party on Information has carried out regular surveys to collect Member States' feedback and suggestions. Member States feedback was collected through open questionnaires or, in some cases, through round tables within the WPI framework.

<sup>1</sup> See doc. 10948/1/14.

<sup>2</sup> See Annex to doc. EUCO 79/14.

<sup>3</sup> See doc. 16508/14.

YEAR(S)	THEMES
2013-2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The economic recovery</li> <li>b. The European Year of Citizens (2013)</li> <li>c. The European Elections 2014</li> </ul>
2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Economic recovery, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Economic governance</li> <li>(ii) Europe 2020 - Growth and environmental sustainability</li> <li>(iii) Competitiveness - Developing the internal market and the digital single market</li> </ul> </li> <li>b. Building a citizens' Europe, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Removing obstacles to citizens' rights</li> <li>(ii) The free movement of people</li> <li>(iii) Empowering citizens: consumers' rights and the citizens' initiative</li> <li>(iv) Demographic and immigration challenges</li> </ul> </li> <li>c. Making the most of EU policies, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Maximising the added value of EU policies</li> <li>(ii) The cost of non-Europe</li> <li>(iii) The external dimension of the EU as a global actor</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
2010-2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Driving the economic recovery and mobilising new sources of growth</li> <li>b. Climate action and energy</li> <li>c. Making the Lisbon Treaty work for citizens</li> </ul>
2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The European elections</li> <li>b. Energy and climate change</li> <li>c. The 20th anniversary of the democratic change in Central and Eastern Europe ensuing from the fall of the Iron curtain</li> <li>d. Europe's response to the financial crisis and the economic slow-down</li> </ul>

## Inter-institutional Coherence

Even though the opinion of the Commission and European Parliament is not expressed yet, the synergies between strategies of the institutions, and the Commission in particular, can already be seen on the horizon.

In December 2014 President Juncker presented the Commission Work Programme for 2015, which reflects the institutions' political priorities in line with his speech on his next five years' plan delivered to the European Parliament when he was conferred his mandate. Taking a deeper look at the document, the convergences in the future seems to be found easily.

The Parliament, in its turn, has already indicated that the adoption of communication priorities by the Council will help speed up its internal discussions to join the debate for an interinstitutional adoption process.

The first Council's priority to foster sustainable growth, innovation, competitiveness and employment goes perfectly in line of the first and probably one of the most important Mr. Juncker's priorities to boost jobs, growth and investments by cutting regulation, making smarter use of existing financial resources and making flexible use of public funds. The €300 billion package recently announced aims to boost private and public investments over the next three years.

Second, freedom, security and justice lies under two priorities of the Commission. The first one, dedicated for justice and fundamental rights in particular, which includes such aims as making it easier for citizens and companies in the EU to defend their rights outside their home country; cracking down on organised crime, such as human trafficking, smuggling and cybercrime and tackling corruption, etc. As the Council aims to communicate migration/immigration issues as well, this goes along the Commission's plan to ensure that Europe's borders remain secure and that EU policy encourages the legal migration of individuals with much needed skills and who can help Europe better cope with its demographic challenges.

Third, all the Institutions are going to be focusing on energy and climate change as well. Joint action and joint communication on crucial goals in this field (such as creating a European Energy Union by pooling resources, connecting networks and uniting powers when negotiating with non EU countries; diversifying energy sources to quickly switch to other supply channels as needed; helping EU countries become less dependent on energy imports and making the EU the world number one in renewable energy and leading the fight against global warming) should enable Europe to make the difference.

Last but not least, communicate the EU's role in the world (with focus on contribution to the neighbourhood's stability) should help citizens understand how the EU acts as a global actor, contributing to spread democratic values, facilitating mobility, free trade and economic and monetary union, etc.

These synergies signal positive prospects for the proposed inter-institutional communication priorities to be successful and complementary.

## What's next?

As mentioned above, the communication priorities as referred to in the Joint Declaration "Communicating Europe in Partnership" of 22 October 2008 <sup>1</sup> are designed to be defined jointly with the Commission and the European Parliament. The recently adopted Council's position <sup>2</sup> with regard to the priorities for the years 2015-2016, unanimously agreed by the Member States, should be therefore subsequently discussed with the European Parliament and the Commission with a view to political endorsement by the Inter-institutional Group on Information (IGI), hopefully in the first quarter of 2015 to start practical implementation and have a concrete cooperation on the ground.

In the meantime, WPI might come back to the issue and launch an exchange of views within the delegations on how to facilitate concrete implementation, focusing on budgetary aspects and on different forms of cooperation and partnership. The EP's and the Commission's role in this context is crucial to ensure a concrete impact.

1 see OJ C 13 of 20.1.2009, p. 3

2 "General Affairs" session on 16 December 2014.

# #EUgolocal: New synergies, better strategies, effective communication

By Alessandro Butticié

*"Either we succeed in bringing European citizens closer to Europe, or we fail"* this is how President Juncker addressed the European Parliament on 22 October 2014.

The message is clear: in the next 5 years one of the most difficult challenges for the EU is to fight Euro-scepticism by demonstrating that Brussels and the Institutions are not living on an "ivory tower". And failure is not just failure to connect; it is the failure of the European project. The first step is to begin concrete actions that positively impact the EU citizens' life.

A first example is the € 315 billion Investment Plan launched by the Commission on the 26 November to get Europe growing again and get more people back to work. "If Europe invests more, Europe will be more prosperous and create more jobs – it's as simple as that" – said President Juncker. The investment plan will unlock at least € 315 billion of public and private investments in the real economy over the next three years and will be based on a European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) to be set up in partnership with the European Investment Bank (EIB). The Fund will be built on a guarantee of € 16 billion from the EU budget, combined with € 5 billion committed by the EIB. Part of this fund (€ 5 billion) is dedicated SMEs and mid-cap companies. These enterprises will also be able to benefit from EU funding programmes already in place (Horizon 2020 and COSME).

As communication unit of the Directorate General for internal market, industry, entrepreneurship and SMEs one of our goals is to communicate effectively the benefits of these programmes to our target groups. In line with the mission of our new Commissioner, Ms **Elżbieta Bieńkowska**, our future communication priorities will be based on the following topics: a renewed strategy for the internal market for goods and services; stronger industry (20% of EU GDP by 2020); new sources of jobs and growth by also helping SMEs to grow and innovate; better regulation for industry and enterprises; development of medicines and pharmaceutical products' policies; a stronger cooperation between Member States in defence procurement.

How can we make our communication messages most effective? What is the best approach for reaching our target audience? We call it the "EU go local" approach. This approach is based on the idea that we have to "go local" if we want to speak the language of our target audiences.

We realise that for many European citizens the European Union and, concretely, its institutions are perceived as distant and far

from the "real world". We are working to change this perception by communicating in terms that are relevant to people's lives, adapting our communication to the real needs of the citizens.

With this in mind, we have to create synergies with national and local partners (Member States, enterprises and industry associations, consumer associations etc.) in order to improve the impact of our communication campaigns.

The European Commission can rely on many local/national networks such as the Representations and the Europe Direct network. These offices, located in all the Member States, provide information on the EU to the general public and assist universities and research institutes in promoting the EU and active European citizenship. To talk to SMEs, we also have the **Enterprise European Network (EEN)**.

With close to 600 member organisations in more than 50 countries, EEN experts can help SMEs find international business partners, source new technologies and obtain EU funding or finance. They also advise SMEs on a wide range of issues including intellectual property, going international, or EU law and standards.

I firmly believe that the synergies between these networks and the Member States can be further improved. It is a win-win game. For example, EEN partners can help regional authorities enhance support schemes for SMEs or transfer European good practices to regional/national authorities. In return, national authorities could enhance the visibility of the Networks in the Member States by supporting key communication campaigns at national level.

The various networks play a key role in our "EU go local" strategy. They are closer to the "real world" than we are, they can understand the needs of enterprises and citizens and act as multipliers of our messages. They also help us turn our "institutional and auto-referential" language into a more local one.

Two "best-practice" projects show how our EU go local approach works.

The “EU Stop fakes campaign”, launched on 20 December 2012, by the former Vice-President of the European Commission, Antonio Tajani, informs citizens and end-consumers about the dangers of fake products. The campaign, organised in cooperation with the Directorate General responsible for the internal market, is based on a mix of media tools, including a specific webpage, a series of press events, a video clip in five EU languages, outdoor advertisements and a 16-pages brochure available in 23 different EU languages.



Figure 1 - EU Stop fakes brochure

The brochure explains in an ordinary language why buying fakes can be bad for: the economy, jobs, health, safety, holidaymakers and e-commerce. Thanks to the cooperation of local networks (such as the OLAF Anti-fraud communicators network), the national authorities and national customs organisations we were able to distribute more than 180.000 copies of the brochure in the Member States and to disseminate a video-clip (“The real price of fake products”) that has been seen more than 156.000 times on YouTube.

To boost the impact of this campaign, we organised a series of events promoting the sharing of best practices and inter-institutional cooperation in Member States seriously affected by the problem (such as Italy, Bulgaria and Germany).

The second project I would like to mention is our corporate communication campaign on the benefits generated by the new EU programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs (COSME). COSME will run from 2014 to 2020, with a budget of €2.3billion, to support SMEs in the following areas: access to finance, access to markets, favourable environment to competitiveness, entrepreneurial culture.



Figure 2 - COSME campaign 2015, draft visual

The campaign will be launched in January 2015 in five Member States (Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy and Spain) and will be based on a media mix (radio, news media, online and outdoor advertising, social media) that combines traditional and new media, to reach the widest possible segment of our target group. This corporate campaign mainly targets owners and managers of small and medium-sized businesses. The campaign targets countries where euro-scepticism is increasing, chosen on the basis of data from the SME performance review and from the special Eurobarometer 415 (Europeans 2014) concerning European citizens opinions on the EU.

The campaign will last seven months and will convey the message that EU makes doing business easier and better, highlighting the tangible benefits of the COSME programme.

To ensure the effectiveness of this action, we created a focus group with Enterprise Europe Network experts from seven countries (United Kingdom, Sweden, Italy, France, Cyprus, Greece and Poland) to obtain their impressions about the contractor's proposals for the visual identity, the radio script and the media mix of the campaign.

Their feedbacks enabled us to better identify the needs of the target audience and to brief the contractor accordingly. We changed the initial concept of the campaign from a humorous one (considered inappropriate by the EEN experts) into a more simple but positive one. Moreover, we decided to adapt the elements of the visuals (the main character and the background) for each target country in order to improve identification.

The use of the focus group demonstrates the importance of the application of the "EU go local" approach not only at the operational level (the use of the networks for the dissemination of the information) but also at the strategic level.

While increasing centralisation of communications activities will ensure that the European Institutions communicate unambiguously without contradiction, we must increase our efforts to adapt to the needs of our target groups to ensure that our messages are clear, convincing and credible.



#### **Alessandro Buttice**

Head of the Communication Activities Unit in the DG Internal Market, Industry Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW) of the European Commission.

Previously he worked as Anti-Fraud and Security and Policy Adviser, Head of Unit at the 'Operations & Investigations' directorate (2009-2012), and of the Unit 'Spokesman, Communication & Public Relations', and then as Spokesperson (1999-2009) at the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), where he initiated, created and managed, from 2001 to 2009, the "OLAF Anti-Fraud Communicators' Network" (OAFCN), which includes the heads of communication of the police forces, customs and judicial services from the 27 EU MS. The OAFCN assists journalists in preventing anti-social behavior and crimes against the Union, and also aids the planning of joint initiatives, such as promoting the fight against fraud through European television programs, in order to reduce the gap separating the European Union from its taxpayers.

Alessandro started his career in 1979 in the Italian Guardia di Finanza, where he has now the grade of Brigadier General (Reserve), and where he led investigative units concerned with organised crime, financial, economic and drug-related cases and also worked as Deputy Head of the Press Office and Spokesperson at the National Headquarters.

Winner of the "Communicating the European Union (Public Administration sector)" category of the "International Journalism: Press Officer of the year" award in Italy in 2009, he donated the cash prize to the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) to be used towards providing support to journalists and people in the media who require legal support in the face of violence and intimidation in their work. Co-founder and Vice-President of the European Association of the Press Office and Institutional Communication (EAPO&IC), he is a free-lance journalist, author of three books (one of which on the Communication of Italian law enforcement agencies) and many articles.

Alessandro holds a Master of Science in Economic and Financial Security, a Post Graduate Diploma in Journalism and Mass Communication (Distinction), a Master of Economics and Commerce and a Master in Law, is Knight Officer of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic and holds several other prestigious awards.

# Communicating EU Regional policy – a promising path to reconnect European citizens with the European Union

By J. Peter Fischer

The general mood about the European Union among the citizens of Europe is not a very positive one: the financial and economic crisis in many parts of the European Union has played its part in reducing the enthusiasm for the European integration project. The prescribed economic and political medicines - austerity and structural reforms - have not helped to boost the popularity of the European Union either. Europe is often seen as part of the problem instead of the solution. But Europe clearly plays a very important role in helping overcome the crisis: public investment is down in many countries due to tight public budgets. This is where the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)<sup>1</sup> come in: they provide a significant share of the public investments in many European countries. European co-financed projects contribute more than 80 % of public investment in some countries.

The main EU investment policy is the Cohesion Policy, which will provide some €352 billion for all 28 Member States during the period 2014-2020. The reformed Cohesion Policy concentrates its investments on the main objectives of the 'Europe 2020' strategy, including investments in energy efficiency & renewable energies, research & innovation and SMEs' competitiveness.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, these investments are made in all of Europe's 271 regions in the 28 Member States. This means that these European projects are taking place in the neighbourhood of Europe's citizens and not in distant places of faraway countries. Moreover, the vast majority of the decisions about funding projects are taken at regional or national level – the Commission has a big say only in the field of "major projects" above a budget of €50 million.<sup>3</sup>

At this stage, it is worth taking a pause to consider two aspects: **What do Europeans know and think about such projects?** Furthermore, do Regional Policy projects have the potential to contribute to a more positive attitude about Europe?

The latest available Eurobarometer survey about "Citizens' awareness and perceptions about EU Regional policy"<sup>4</sup> shows

1 Together with the rural development and maritime and fisheries fund, the ESIF comprise some €453 billion.

2 For more on Regional policy, go to: [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/index.cfm/en/](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index.cfm/en/)

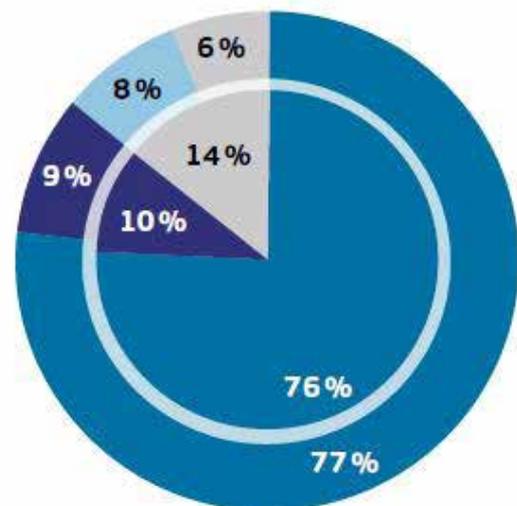
3 The Commission continuously monitors the good management of the programmes. Projects which are not in line with the agreed priorities in the Operational programme will not be reimbursed by the Commission.

4 Flash Eurobarometer 384 of 2013: [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/flash\\_arch\\_390\\_375\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/flash_arch_390_375_en.htm)

that on average 34% of respondents have heard about an EU co-funded project in their region or city: There is, generally speaking, a link between the level of awareness and the amount of regional funding a country receives: top marks go to Poland (80%), Lithuania (67%) and the Czech Republic (67%); on the other end of the scale are the UK (10%) Denmark (13%), Germany and The Netherlands (15% each).

To assess the communication potential of Regional Policy projects, the question of the impact of such projects is raised.

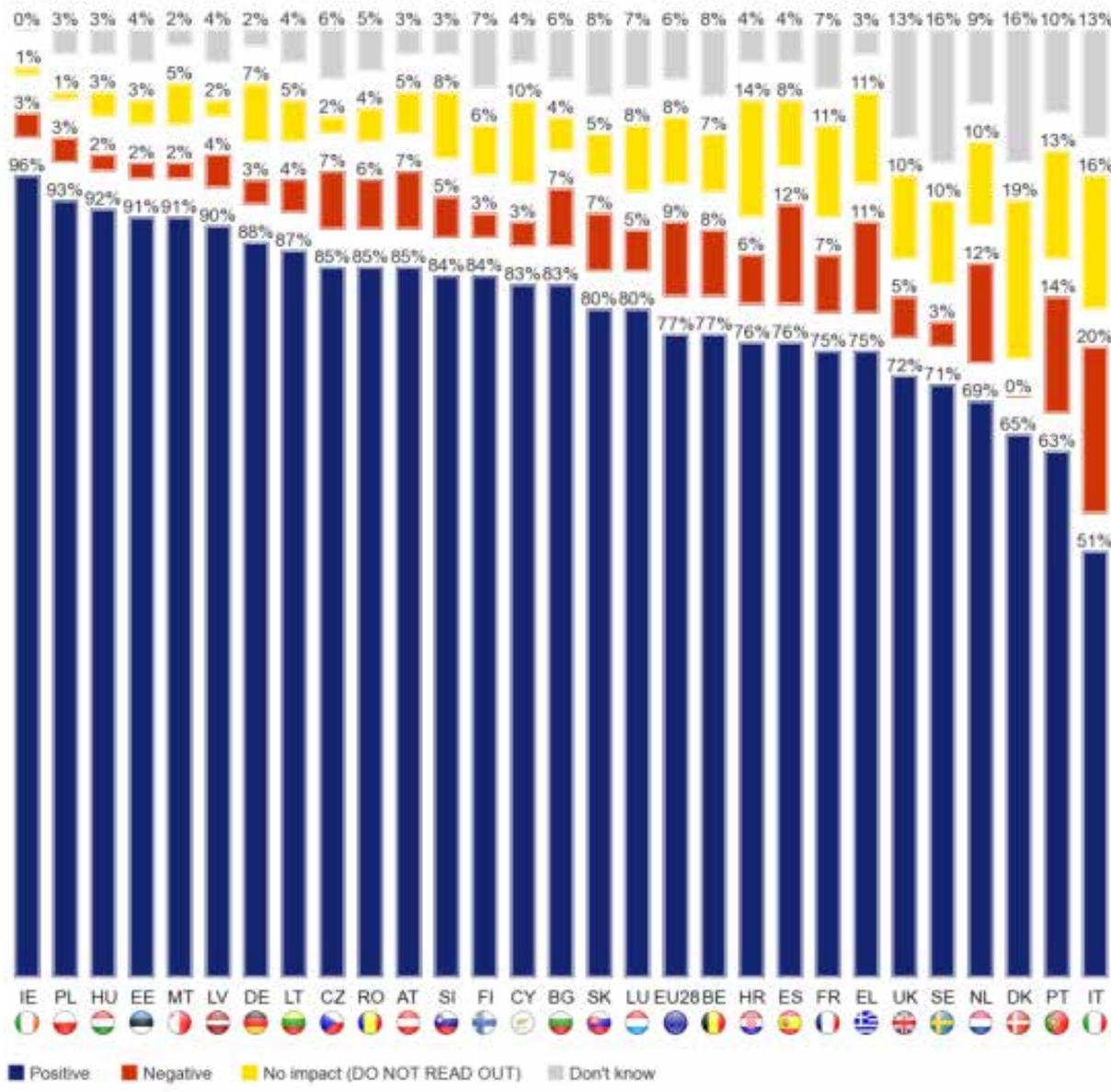
**OVER THREE QUARTERS (77 %) OF RESPONDENTS WHO HEARD ABOUT EU CO-FINANCED PROJECTS SAY THAT THE PROJECTS HAVE HAD A POSITIVE IMPACT, UP SLIGHTLY (+1 %) SINCE JUNE 2010. (EU-28)**



- Positive
- Negative
- No impact
- Don't know

Inner pie: FL298 June 2010  
Outer pie: FL384 Sept. 2013

Q1C. Taking into consideration all the projects you have heard about, would you say that this support has had a positive or negative impact on the development of your city or region?



**Of those respondents that had heard about projects in their city or region, more than ¾ (77%) had a positive opinion about them!** The most positive perceptions were recorded in Ireland (96%), Poland (93%) and Hungary (92%). Even in countries such as Germany or the UK, with a relatively low level of awareness, perceptions were very positive (88% and 72% respectively). These findings indicate that Regional policy projects play an important role when it comes to answering citizens' question: what does the EU do for me? Furthermore, the data demonstrates that efforts to communicate the achievements of EU Regional Policy programmes and projects are well worth it.

The European Commission's Regional policy department is working closely with the INFORM network of Regional Policy communication officers in the regions, whose role it is to publicise the impact of the investments of the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund and to ensure transparency (every single project beneficiary is published in the so-

called List of Operations).<sup>5</sup>

Every Managing Authority of an operational programme (the strategic document agreed between the European Commission and the Member State/region to define the investment priorities until 2020), has to organise at least once a year a "major annual information activity" which promotes the "achievements of the operational programme including project examples".

<sup>5</sup> The Common Provisions Regulation 1303/2013, Art. 115-117; Annex XII contain the Cohesion policy Information and Communication rules.



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Many regional authorities have chosen the period around 9th May, Europe Day, to showcase the most successful and interesting investment projects in their regions. In cooperation with project beneficiaries, projects open their doors to citizens and journalists or come to central locations in city centres for project fairs. Some regions, such as Midi-Pyrénées and other regions in France, have dedicated the entire month of May to celebrating European projects.<sup>6</sup> The Netherlands were pioneers in this field. In 2015, the Dutch authorities will be organising the "Europa Kijkdagen" for the fifth time, to demonstrate that Europe really is only just around the corner, with an ever increasing number of proud project beneficiaries. Regions in Hungary, Poland, Greece, Germany and many other countries have achieved good results with similar activities. However, in most countries, these communication activities do not have the support of central government communication departments.



To have an even bigger impact, European Open project days could be organised on a European scale, for example, during the month of May. Social media could help create a buzz. Coupled with a common branding, these successful European investments might just get the attention they deserve.

To succeed, such a coordinated campaign would benefit from the blessing and support of senior national public communicators across the European Union. Government communicators in the capitals could play an important role in attracting media attention that goes beyond regional newspapers or TV stations. There are surely many national and regional government communicators out there that care about the image of the European Union – why leave all the communication to the EU sceptics?

As this article has demonstrated, European Regional Policy has an enormous potential to convince Europeans about the added value of Europe for them. Public communicators that care about the fate of the European Union could do their share by supporting the publicity efforts of European Structural and Investment Fund communicators. The national information and communication officers for EU Regional Policy working in the capitals could play a coordinating role, together with other members of the INFORM network and the European Commission. Perhaps May 2016 could be the month when European investments are celebrated in all 28 Member States and Europe's citizens really take notice?



<sup>6</sup> <http://www.europe-en-midipyrenees.eu/le-joli-mois/#.VNUNbGOGd8E>

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Peter Fischer has been working for the communication unit of the Regional and urban policy Directorate-General of the European Commission since 2007. He co-ordinates the EU-wide "INFORM" network of some 500 EU Regional policy communication officers in the 274 regions of the 28 EU Member States. Peter is also responsible for the information and publicity rules in this area.

In December 2013, Peter organised the first conference dedicated to communicating the European Structural and Investment Funds, "Telling the Story", at which some 800 EU funds communicators and journalists participated.

During the last 3 summers, he has also successfully managed the "Europe in My Region" photo competition on the European Commission's Facebook page. Peter is a member of the advisory board for EuroPCOM, the European Conference on Public Communication.

Prior to joining the European Commission, Peter had worked as a freelance journalist for a number of regional newspapers in Germany. He holds a degree in Administrative Science/International Relations from the University of Konstanz, Germany.

# New platform for better understanding the EU accession process

By Gordana Jovanović and Mirela Rebronja

By defining the EU accession as one of its strategic goals and foreign policy priorities, the Government of Montenegro has boldly and unambiguously started a process of social reform towards strengthening the rule of law, boosting economic prosperity, and ensuring lasting stability, which are the fundamental European values.

Led by the idea that society as a whole enters the EU and being aware of the necessity to have citizens included in the EU integration process, we have decided to create a wide platform that will serve to the public in a way of helping them understand better and providing timely and accurate information about the EU and accession process as well as the changes that will take place on the road to membership.

Another aspect we have considered as very important to treat was the fact that having information doesn't always mean understanding the messages that those information bring. It's up to the government and EU communicators in general, to find the way to make information clear and adjusted to the different target audiences. In the case of Montenegro, one of the priorities in the approach was also to make citizens understand that changes, arising from the negotiation process, are not something being imposed from abroad, but rather come from our domestic need to improve the quality of life of all citizens.

In that sense, strategic approach was shaped so that citizens will be adequately informed about their future in the EU, about the accession process and membership benefits they will be given access to, but also their rights and obligations. We are all responsible for the change we want to bring and see in our soci-

ety so we should all give a personal contribution to the success of Montenegro to the EU story.

We have adopted a strategic approach to providing comprehensive information on Montenegro's EU accession process to the citizens, and - from lessons learned - we have made a step forward in the sense of further strengthening and intensifying communication with citizens. **Strategy for Informing the Public about Montenegro's EU Accession 2014-2018** was adopted by the Government in March 2014 signifying the strong determination to improve communication at all levels. The whole process came after comprehensive preparations which included relevant NGOs, international partners, communications experts, practitioners. In parallel, the Ministry held consultations both within the Government and with the public by promoting communication approaches prescribed by the new strategic document - **transparency, information, partnership, and dialogue**.

This document offers a framework for communicating Montenegro's EU integration process to domestic and international strategic audiences with the view to ensuring better understanding of the process and strengthening public support to accession. At the same time, the strategy offers guidelines for all partners in the process that will ensure a better, broader and more coordinated communication with citizens, especially when it comes to joint initiatives and projects that will be implemented on the bases of annual action plans.

When drafting the strategy, we took into account our past experiences to identify the best success indicators. In this context, we planned our future activities drawing on both positive and

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**Gordana Jovanović**, Deputy Prime Minister's adviser for communication support to the integration processes, chief of the Unit for PR and Communication Support to Integration Processes at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, Montenegro

Gordana Jovanović has been for years working within the Government of Montenegro. In July 2008, she was appointed as a Spokesperson of the Ministry of Finance, and from December 2010 until December 2012 she served as an adviser for public relations to the Prime Minister.

Previously, from 2001 she has been coordinating a number of projects in the field of tourism and sustainable development supported by USAID and Council of Europe, but she also served as an adviser in projects related to the development of mountain and eco-tourism, as well as an associate for relations with the NGOs and international organizations at the Ministry of Tourism of Montenegro.

She is currently engaged within several Governments working teams regard the communication of the integration processes but also being engaged as a trainer in the field of public relations. She's fluent in English language.



negative lessons learned. In addition, we relied on public opinion surveys and analyses made by national and international NGOs. We also consulted the comparative experience of member-states who recently went through the accession process, as well as the EU Delegation's 2014-2016 communication strategy. The working team spent several months drafting the strategy, which was praised by professionals both at home and abroad, and was also very welcomed by the citizens.

We have focused our activities on helping citizens understand the obligations and responsibilities arising from the accession process better, as well as understand the membership benefits through the three pillars of Montenegro's EU integration: **accession negotiation process, implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, and EU support programmes.**

The key mechanism for implementing communication activities is information provision through multipliers (public opinion shapers), which the previous experience recognised as important. This approach was maintained through a more pro-active and coordinated approach by the Government and line ministries and continued cooperation with civil society in terms of exchanging information. For this reason, in line with the new communication strategy, we established the Operational Structure for implementing the strategy and drafting the annual action plans. It comprises representatives of the Government's Public Relations Bureau, line ministries, the Parliament, the Union of Municipalities, and five NGOs. To ensure continued evaluation and monitoring of the communication activities, a Consultation Body was established, comprising members of the working group that drafted the strategy and inviting the EU Delegation representatives, which will monitor how well the action plans and activities correspond to the objectives of the strategy.

Having in mind the scale and importance of the EU accession process, the new policy approach also focuses on communicating with a broad range of national and international target audiences. A number of target audiences we have defined as long-lasting priorities, so-called strategic target audiences, while others, action plans will discuss in detail. The strategic target audiences are not considered to be of greater importance than those target audiences that will be defined in action plans.

We are communicating at home and internationally. Strategic target audiences in Montenegro are multipliers (shapers of public opinion), youth and sensitive groups. Regarding international communication it is directed towards public opinion shapers and decision-makers but also general public in EU member-states.

We believe the drafting of the new communication strategy came at the right time, and it is an expression of Government's commitment and dedication when it comes to informing the citizens about European integration.

This communication strategy covers the period between 2014 and 2018 and follows closely the Programme of Accession of Montenegro to the EU for the same time-frame. The Strategy is being developed in more detail by annual action plans, drafted in cooperation with partners coming from the state institutions, the EU Delegation to Montenegro and civil society.

At the moment, Montenegro is in the middle of the negotiation process. A lot of work is yet to be done, but, at the same time, we have a lot to be proud of. Communication challenges we are facing are not much different than those in other Eu-

ropean countries. Priority issues coming from the EU, although not directly related to the integration process, are also subject of communication in the candidate countries. Those challenges will continue to follow our European journey, but we will stay devoted to the cooperation and partnership approach convinced in its success.

We stand ready to continue efforts we started with our partners from the civil society, the EU Delegation and international organizations - which is to offer a high quality approach to the process of EU integration and contribute jointly to building the European values and standards, bringing Montenegro to the EU and EU to Montenegro.



**Mirela Rebronja**, Advisor to the Unit for PR and Communication Support to the Integration Processes, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, Montenegro

Mirela Rebronja is currently engaged at the Unit for PR and Communication Support to the Integration Processes at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, Government of Montenegro. Her work is primarily focused on EU integration process, covering different issues and activities regarding the Montenegrin path to the EU and strategic communication. She's a Secretary of the Operational Body for implementing Strategy for informing the public about Montenegro's accession to the European Union 2014-2018, working structure established by the Government of Montenegro.

For years she has been working in the field of communications, first as a journalist writing mainly about European integration process of Montenegro, then in the field of public relations, engaged in the civil society. She served as a spokesperson for Montenegro within the regional initiative dealing with transitional justice issues, but also was engaged as a youth trainer in the field of communications and peace education. She holds Spec. sci degree in political science, from the University of Montenegro.

# Why has 'comms' taken over in every respect except Europe?

By Michael Malherbe

While the distinction between information and communication tends, unfortunately, to dissipate with the development of 'on-line advertising' and 'brand content', what can be said for European news and communication?

Journalists' argument: 'comms' has taken precedence over information.

The recent release of the 'Dictionnaire amoureux du journalisme' was an opportunity for its author, Serge July<sup>1</sup> – former Director of *Libération* – to revisit the how the relationship between news and communication has evolved.

'What strikes me the most in media is that communication has taken over news. It is everywhere. Since the 70s, the whole of society has been doing it. No sector escapes it. All or almost all information has been simplified, and it often comes to us wrapped in communicational packaging. Journalists must remove this outer layer before beginning their work. It is one of the major issues confronted by journalists today.'

On the surface, this is true for Europe. European communication seems to be meddling at every turn of EU affairs - storytelling in the speeches of European politicians, 'sound bites', carefully constructed wording of press releases, former journalists as spokespersons for European institutions, media training for Commissioners and 'narrative policies' in European policies...

The counter-argument of experts in communications: real-time online 'info' is everywhere

1 [http://ecrans.liberation.fr/ecrans/2015/01/30/plus-il-y-a-d-internet-plus-il-faut-verifier-et-plus-il-y-aura-besoin-de-journalistes\\_1192311](http://ecrans.liberation.fr/ecrans/2015/01/30/plus-il-y-a-d-internet-plus-il-faut-verifier-et-plus-il-y-aura-besoin-de-journalistes_1192311)

For the expert in public communications, Philippe Heymann<sup>2</sup>, this is not necessarily the case:

'With the acceleration of info, info in real-time, Digital, growing competition among media, difficulties experienced by the press and redundancies, the deal is changing...and not necessarily for the better! We must realise that journalists have less and less time and capacity to decode the info that they receive, 'to remove this outer layer'.'

In other words, with the increasingly continuous flux of information that has not always been checked and with little consideration for the broader picture, European communication – when it comes from public institutions which are neither partial nor political – can give depth and vision to citizens.

But in fact, where European Communication should 'triumph' over European information, as much for technical and practical reasons as for democratic counterweight, it doesn't, basically because EU communication is unnecessarily technical and boring.

In sum, in every respect 'comms' has taken over information; and what seems at first to be a failure on the part of EU communication in fact represents an opportunity in the face of the failure of the fast news.

2 [http://philippeheyman.typepad.fr/mon\\_weblog/2015/02/serge-july-la-com-la-empport%C3%A9-sur-linformation-.html](http://philippeheyman.typepad.fr/mon_weblog/2015/02/serge-july-la-com-la-empport%C3%A9-sur-linformation-.html)



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Michaël occasionally also lectures for the ENA and Sciences-Po Lille.

Since 2007, he has managed the blog "Décrypter la communication européenne": [lacommeuropeenne.fr](http://lacommeuropeenne.fr)

# Pourquoi la « comm » l'a emporté partout sur l'info, sauf pour l'Europe ? <sup>1</sup>

Par Michael Malherbe

Alors que la distinction entre information et communication tend - malheureusement - à se dissiper en ligne avec le développement du « online advertising » ou du « brand content », qu'en est-il de l'information et de la communication européennes ?

La thèse des journalistes : « la comm » prend le pas sur l'information.

La sortie récente du « Dictionnaire amoureux du journalisme » est l'occasion pour son auteur, Serge July - l'ancien patron de Libération - de revenir sur les tendances de fond entre information et communication.

Ce qui me frappe le plus dans le domaine médiatique, c'est que la communication l'a emporté sur l'information. Elle est partout. A partir des années 70, toute la société s'est mise à faire de la com. Pas un secteur n'y échappe. Toute information ou presque a été prédigérée, et elle nous arrive souvent enveloppée d'une gangue communicationnelle. Tout travail journalistique doit commencer par enlever cette gangue. C'est une des questions majeures de l'information aujourd'hui.

En surface, c'est vrai pour l'Europe. La communication européenne semble de plus en plus s'immiscer partout dans l'UE, du storytelling dans les discours des responsables politiques européens, des « éléments de langage » dans les mots des communiqués de presse, des anciens journalistes comme porte-parole des institutions européennes, du média training pour les Commissaires et des « narrative policies » dans les politiques publiques européennes...

L'anti-thèse des communicants : « l'info » en temps réel et en ligne est partout

Pour l'expert en communication publique, Philippe Heymann, la chose n'est peut-être pas aussi entendue :

« avec l'accélération de l'info, l'info en temps réel, le Digital, la concurrence croissante entre les media, les difficultés de la presse et ses réductions d'effectifs, la donne est en train de changer... et pas forcément en bien ! Car, il faut bien le reconnaître, les journalistes ont de moins en moins le temps et la possibilité de décoder les infos qu'ils reçoivent, « d'enlever cette gangue ». »

Autrement dit, face au flux de l'information de plus en plus continu sans toujours être vérifié et sans le recul nécessaire, la communication européenne - lorsqu'elle provient d'institutions publiques qui ne sont ni partiales ni politiciennes - peut donner profondeur et hauteur aux citoyens.

Mais justement, là où devrait « triompher » la communication européenne sur l'information européenne, tant pour des raisons de moyens techniques et pratiques que de contreponds démocratiques, il n'en est rien, car au fond la communication de l'UE demeure inutilement technique et ennuyeuse.

Au total, partout la « comm » a pris le dessus sur l'information ; et ce qui apparaît d'emblée comme un échec pour la communication de l'UE représente en fait une chance face à la faillite du flux continu de l'info.

<sup>1</sup> courtesy of "Décrypter la communication européenne"  
(<http://www.lacomeuropeenne.fr/>)

# 100 days of Juncker's Commission and you haven't seen a thing, is this normal?

By Michael Malherbe

With the new president of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker in place, as far as communications is concerned, and all else for that matter, we were going to see what we were going to see. So 100 days later, where are we with it?

The new communications strategy under Juncker: Commissioners are 'the face of the public, its advocates and the best spokespeople for the institution's policies'.

With Jean-Claude Juncker, the European Commission's new communications strategy has been announced very clearly, as the Schuman Foundation sums up in its note on the 'return of politics' <sup>1</sup>.

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'At the conference for the release of the Commissioners' portfolio allocation, Jean-Claude Juncker emphasised that he wanted Commissioners (...) to embody the policies of the Commission in the eyes of the public and to bring Europe closer to its citizens. The aim is to rationalise communication and to speak with one single voice. That's one of the factors that will make the Commission seem as though it has reclaimed leadership. Commissioners have to regain control of communication that has become too bureaucratic and ineffective.'

This announcement about the 'politicisation' of the European Commission's communications strategy was reinforced by the 'President's communication to the Commission on the Commission's work methods' published on 11th November last year<sup>2</sup>.

Two principles were founded by Jean-Claude Juncker:

- Communication can only be successful if the Commission speaks with one single voice.
- Communication should be centred on the Commission's political and strategic priorities.

Two conditions for success in the media and public perception were also stated:

- The capacity of the Commissioners to communicate effectively on a large number of issues in all Member States.
- The team's capability to make a positive contribution to the fulfilment of the Commission's key objectives and priorities.

100 days later, has the Commissioners' communication lived up to expectations? Clearly, any definitive and over-generalised judgment would be premature, incomplete, and partial. Nevertheless, several factors combine to give us an overall picture:

- Juncker set off at a sprint and has since lost steam: He seems to have dedicated himself (perhaps almost exclusively) to his investment plan, leaving aside other issues, particularly the #LuxLeaks, which have not been well managed;
- Timmermans, First Vice-President, is in it for the long-haul... but is having to jump obstacles: Essentially, he does the job, and communicates abundantly, but with several hiccups – his setting aside of environmental initiatives (air quality, circular economy and waste) in the European Commission's annual work programme or his lack of initiative in the fight against terrorism. 'To succeed where others have failed', Cécile Ducourtieux states in *Le Monde* <sup>3</sup> that 'Timmermans hopes for a new mindset. That would end the saying 'I legislate therefore I exist'. To take political stands that are bold, executed and explained. At the risk of being under fire from lobbies, MEPs, even Member States...'
- Mogherini, the High-Representative has proudly presented impressive figures on her 100 days in an infographic: 93 bilaterals and 15 visits in the EU or abroad.

In sum, living up to expectations is even harder when we expect so much, according to Nicolas Gros-Verheyde's conclusion in '100 days later, it's not much fun' <sup>4</sup>.

'In the background, a weak propensity to revolutionise politics and to develop fresh new ideas, to reinvigorate debate and well-structured propositions, and to bring the European dynamic to life, means that today, the real enthusiasm felt in Brussels at the arrival of the new team, has quickly withered. The Juncker team should not receive better than a 'barely acceptable' report for its first hundred days. 'A good start, but is now slacking'. And it is not just that 'it can do better' but 'it should do better'...

If the communication of the European Commission about the first 100 days of Juncker Commission has not left its mark, it is because the Commissioners, who have been given the role of 'spokespersons', cannot generally be seen or heard.

1 <http://www.robert-schuman.eu/fr/questions-d-europe/0330-la-commission-juncker-le-retour-du-politique>

2 <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/3/2014/EN/3-2014-9004-EN-F1-1.Pdf>

3 [http://www.lemonde.fr/economie/article/2014/12/16/la-fabrique-des-aberrations-bruxelloises\\_4541392\\_3234.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/economie/article/2014/12/16/la-fabrique-des-aberrations-bruxelloises_4541392_3234.html)

4 [http://www.lemonde.fr/economie/article/2014/12/16/la-fabrique-des-aberrations-bruxelloises\\_4541392\\_3234.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/economie/article/2014/12/16/la-fabrique-des-aberrations-bruxelloises_4541392_3234.html)

# Vous n'avez pas vu passer les 100 jours de la Commission Juncker, est-ce normal ? <sup>1</sup>

Par Michael Malherbe

Avec le nouveau président de la Commission européenne Jean-Claude Juncker, en matière de communication, comme pour le reste d'ailleurs, on allait voir ce qu'on allait voir. Justement, 100 jours après, où en sommes-nous ?

La nouvelle stratégie de communication sous Juncker : les Commissaires sont « les visages publics, les avocats et les meilleurs «porte-parole» des politiques de l'institution »

Avec Jean-Claude Juncker, la nouvelle stratégie de communication de la Commission européenne a été très clairement annoncée, comme le résume la Fondation Schuman dans la note sur le « retour du politique » :

« Lors de la conférence de presse de présentation de la répartition des postes, Jean-Claude Juncker a souligné qu'il souhaitait que les commissaires (...) doivent incarner la politique de la Commission auprès des opinions publiques et rapprocher l'Europe des citoyens. L'objectif est de rationaliser la communication et de parler d'une seule voix. C'est là aussi un des facteurs qui rendront la perception de la Commission plus politique. Les Commissaires ont pour mission de reprendre en main une communication devenue trop institutionnalisée et peu efficace. »

Cet effet d'annonce sur la « politisation » de la communication de la Commission européenne est confirmé par une « communication du président à la Commission relative aux méthodes de travail de la Commission » publiée le 11 novembre dernier.

Deux principes sont posés par Jean-Claude Juncker :

- La communication ne peut réussir que si la Commission parle d'une seule voix.
- La communication doit être orientée vers les priorités politiques et stratégiques de la Commission.

Deux conditions du succès dans les médias et la perception du public sont également formulés :

- La capacité des Commissaires à communiquer de façon convaincante sur un grand nombre de questions dans tous les États membres
- La capacité de l'équipe de contribuer positivement à la réalisation des objectifs clés et des priorités de la Commission.

100 jours après, la communication des Commissaires est-elle à la hauteur ? Évidemment, tout jugement définitif et général serait prématuré, partiel et partial. Néanmoins, plusieurs impressions se conjuguent pour dessiner un tableau d'ensemble :

- Juncker est parti en sprint et depuis perd de la vitesse : Il semble s'être consacré en priorité – en exclusivité ? – à son plan d'investissement, délaissant semble-t-il d'autres dossiers, en particulier les #LuxLeaks, qui n'ont pas été bien gérés ;
- Timmermans, son premier Vice-président est plus dans la course de fond... mais avec des sauts d'obstacles : Pour l'essentiel, il assure le job, et communique abondamment, mais avec quelques hoquets autour de l'abandon d'initiatives environnementales (qualité de l'air, économie circulaire ou déchets) dans le programme de travail annuel de la Commission européenne ou de timidité dans la lutte contre le terrorisme. « Pour réussir là où les autres ont échoué », Cécile Ducourtieux dans *Le Monde* estime que « Timmermans espère un changement de culture. En finir, à la Commission, avec le « je légifère donc j'existe ». Opérer des choix politiques, tranchés, assumés, expliqués. Au risque de s'attirer les foudres des lobbies, des eurodéputés, voire des États... »
- Mogherini, la Haute-représentante aligne les chiffres dans une infographie sur ses 100 jours qui impressionne : déjà 93 bilatéraux au compteur et 15 visites dans l'UE ou à l'étranger.

Au total, le jugement est à la hauteur des espérances, il est d'autant plus sévère que l'on plaçait de fortes attentes, selon la conclusion de Nicolas Gros-Verheyde dans « 100 jours après, c'est pas folichon » :

« En toile de fond, une faible propension à révolutionner la politique et avancer des idées un peu fraîches et nouvelles, pour revigorer le débat, et des propositions précises et charpentées, pour alimenter la dynamique européenne font qu'aujourd'hui, l'enthousiasme réel ressenti à Bruxelles à l'arrivée de la nouvelle équipe, s'est vite étiolé. L'équipe Juncker ne devrait pas recevoir mieux qu'un bulletin « à peine passable » pour ses premiers cent jours. Avec la mention « bon début, mais s'est relâché ». Et ce n'est pas seulement « peut mieux faire » mais « doit mieux faire » qui devrait être indiqué... »

Si la communication de la Commission européenne autour des 100 premiers jours du collège Juncker n'imprime pas, c'est parce que les Commissaires, qui se sont vus confier le rôle de « porte-parole » sont très inégalement visibles et audibles.

<sup>1</sup> courtesy of "Décrire la communication européenne" (<http://www.la-comeuropeenne.fr/>)

# Sachez oser, monsieur Juncker !

Par Pier Virgilio Dastoli

José Manuel Barroso et ses deux Commissions ont laissé peu de traces quant à l'intégration européenne.

Son premier défi en matière de communication a été la consultation populaire sur la Constitution européenne - qu'il avait signée à Rome entre deux chaises : celles de Premier ministre sortant portugais et de Président de la Commission désigné.

Pour Barroso, cette consultation a été un véritable cauchemar : la « *défaite de Leipzig* »<sup>1</sup> du Commissaire Bolkenstein (on se rappelle encore de l'histoire du plombier polonais) a tourné en « *déroute de Waterloo* » avec la campagne menée en France par le Président de la Commission pour convaincre les Français de voter « oui » au Traité constitutionnel.

On connaît bien la fin peu glorieuse qu'a connue ce texte, pourtant bien rédigé par la Convention Giscard, mais qui a pris ensuite la forme illisible du Traité de Lisbonne.

Si on étudie mieux les années Barroso, on constate toutefois que sa « *Bérézina* » a été la nouvelle gouvernance économique suite la grave crise financière qui avait éclaté aux Etats Unis et s'était exportée rapidement en Europe.

Face à la puissance grandissante du Conseil européen, Barroso - tout comme Napoléon en Russie - a été obligé de sacrifier une bonne partie de ses troupes pour sauver la Commission et retourner à Bruxelles avec des pouvoirs formels dans le très complexe système financier européen.

L'ensemble des règles établies par Six Pack, Two Pack, Euro-Plus, Semestre Européen et Fiscal Compact met en effet dans les mains de la Commission les lois financières nationales dans un jeu de négociations bilatérales (Commission-gouvernement national) et multilatérales (Commission-gouvernement national-Eurogroupe-Conseil ECOFIN-Conseil Européen) qui a produit le phénomène dit de la « *déparlementarisation* », où Parlement européen et parlements nationaux ont perdu la fonction fondamentale de la démocratie représentative : « *no taxation without representation* », mais aussi « *no representation without taxation* ».

L'idéal d'un « *fédéralisme solidaire* » a été ainsi remplacé par la réalité d'un « *fédéralisme tutélaire* », caricature grotesque du modèle supranational fondé à l'origine sur le principe de la coopération loyale et de la souveraineté partagée.

En termes de communication et au cours de l'année 2013 qui était consacrée à Richard Wagner, le nouveau système de gouvernance a envoyé aux citoyens européens des messages multiples mais basés essentiellement sur un seul *leitmotiv* : les causes de la crise auraient été liées aux niveaux insupportables de la dette publique et la sortie de la crise n'aurait pu arriver qu'à travers la réduction des dettes en dessous du seuil établi par le Pacte de stabilité.

Les huitièmes élections européennes ont été conditionnées par ces messages et, à des exceptions près, on a laissé croire aux citoyens que leur choix était limité entre un nouvel « *ordo-libéralisme* » mettant en danger le *welfare state* et la fin de l'Union européenne.

La montée en puissance des mouvements euro-hostiles dans un grand nombre de pays membres et le taux élevé d'abstentions ont été le résultat de cette fausse alternative.

Ainsi, l'Union est entrée dans une législature - que Jean-Claude Juncker appelle de la « *dernière chance* » - qui doit faire face à deux dangers : une récession structurelle ou sa disparition.

Nous ne savons pas encore quels seront les résultats concrets de neuf parmi les dix priorités annoncées par le nouveau Président de la Commission : digital agenda, union de l'énergie, marché intérieur, union économique et monétaire, accord commercial avec les Etats-Unis, justice et droits fondamentaux, politique migratoire, action extérieure, changement démocratique.

En termes de communication, ce n'est que la première des priorités annoncées : « *le nouveau départ vers une politique pour l'emploi, la croissance et l'investissement* » qui a gagné la une des médias et du débat européen.

Depuis cette annonce, le débat tourne autour de ces trois mots (emploi, croissance, investissement) mais le succès de l'opération de communication sera jugé sur les effets du mot « *investissement* ».

Ici sera jugé le changement, ici on aura ou on n'aura pas le nouveau départ !

Jacques Delors avait fondé son « *livre blanc* » en 1993 sur les mots « *croissance, compétitivité et emploi* ».

En termes de communication, c'est toutefois son premier « *livre blanc* » de 1985 sur le marché unique qui a eu plus de succès, permettant à l'intégration européenne de redémarrer en s'appuyant sur les objectifs fondateurs des premières Communautés.

<sup>1</sup> Leipzig, Waterloo et Bérézina sont des étapes de l'histoire militaire de Napoléon

José Manuel Barroso a fondé son projet (« *European recovery plan* ») en 2008 sur les mots croissance et emploi, mais son résultat a été nul en termes de communication, emporté beaucoup plus par la crise de confiance entre Etats membres que par la crise financière.

On se souviendra du « plan Juncker » par sa capacité à stimuler les investissements publics et privés.

Compte tenu du très faible montant initial mis à la disposition de la croissance et de l'emploi (16 milliards d'euros réorientés dans les Fonds structurels et 5 milliards d'euros venant du capital de la BEI), l'objectif de 315 milliards d'euros sera atteint si la campagne de communication menée par la Commission avec l'aide du Parlement européen est efficace.

Les investissements privés se multiplieront dans les secteurs des télécommunications, des énergies notamment renouvelables, de la recherche et de l'innovation, si le monde industriel

est convaincu du bien-fondé du nouveau départ annoncé par Jean-Claude Juncker.

Les investissements publics venant des finances nationales dans les transports, la formation, les infrastructures sociales, les grands réseaux et la lutte contre le changement climatique seront à la hauteur des prévisions de la Commission si les Etats membres sont convaincus du bien-fondé de la volonté de la nouvelle Commission de faire valoir les principes de la flexibilité et de la différenciation sur ceux de la rigueur.

Jean-Claude Juncker et ses commissaires ont le temps limité à juin 2015 pour prouver que la dernière chance a été saisie dans la bonne direction. Au-delà de ce délai, la confiance va s'évaporer et l'Union sera de nouveau à la croisée des chemins entre récession et dilution.

Sachez oser et sachez le faire avec urgence M. Juncker !



**Pier Virgilio Dastoli** est président du Mouvement Européen en Italie depuis 2010.

Pendant sa carrière professionnelle, il a été assistant parlementaire de Altiero Spinelli, conseiller spécial de la Commission européenne, membre du Secrétariat général du Parlement européen, Chef du bureau de Représentation de la Commission européenne en Italie, Conseiller du Président de la Conférence des Régions italiennes, membre du steering committee du Spinelli Group au sein du PE.

Pier Virgilio est actuellement membre du Comité directeur de l'Association "Comunicazione Pubblica" et du Board du Civic Forum Européen.

Il est le porte-parole de l'Alliance italienne pour une citoyenneté active européenne.

# The inside view at the new EU macro-regional strategy

By Jurgita Rakauskaite and Vincenzo Le Voci

Before the end of its semester, the Italian Presidency of the Council of the European Union presented a new Adriatic-Ionian macro-regional strategy (EUSAIR) at a high-level conference in Rimini. This is the third EU macro-regional strategy, after the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the EU Strategy for the Danube Region. The new strategy comprises eight countries:

## Importance to all Member States

Endorsed by the General Affairs Council on 29 September 2014 and subsequently by the European Council on 24 October 2014, the European Council, the Adriatic-Ionian macro-regional strategy aims to address common challenges faced by a defined geographical area relating to Member States and third countries located in the same geographical area which thereby benefit from strengthened cooperation contributing to achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion.

The important aspect of the strategy is that it will remain "financially neutral". As a matter of fact, the European Council stressed that it is based on the principles of no new EU funds, no additional formal structures and no new EU legislation, but on optimising use of existing financial resources and existing institutions, together with a better implementation of existing legislation.

Even though EUSAIR involves only four Member States of the EU, the strategy itself is important to all 28 since it has the capacity to contribute to further integration of the internal market, to the stability of the area and to foster cooperation between EU and non-EU countries.

At the same time, cooperation in this framework will have a great impact on candidate countries on their path towards EU accession.

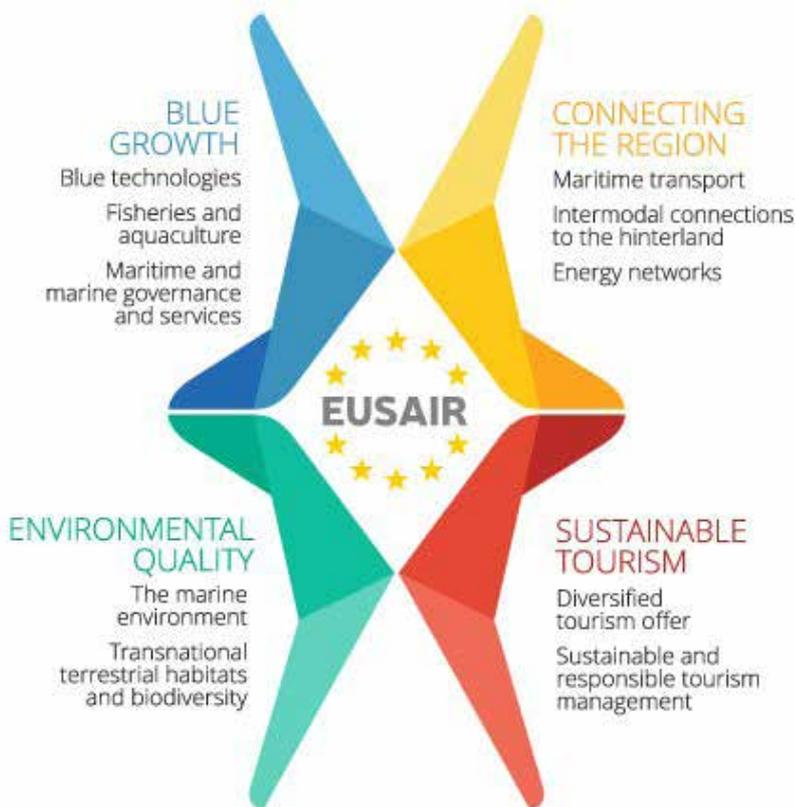


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four EU Member States - Croatia, Greece, Italy and Slovenia, three candidate countries - Albania, Montenegro and Serbia, and one potential candidate country - Bosnia Herzegovina. However, what does this event mean in communication terms and what could we, as communications professionals, expect?



## Pillars



Capacity building    Research and innovation    Small and medium size business  
Climate change mitigation and adaptation    Disaster risk management

## The demand of new communication strategy

For public and private sector communicators the Adriatic-Ionian strategy is a win-win opportunity. As recognised by the General Affairs Council, actions such as those in the area of Blue Growth are expected to bring about promotion of sustainable economic development and jobs and business opportunities. Moreover, tourism as the fastest growing economy sector, must be exploited wider and so, world-wide marketing of the Adriatic-Ionian "brand" of tourism products and services should be

enhanced. Thus, visible impact on the EU communication strategy may be seen as well.

On the whole, capacity building, including communication, research and innovation are cross-cutting elements within EUSAIR to support actions serving to boost high-skilled employment, growth and competitiveness and to promote links between public. That is a clear message for communication professionals as well as the invitation for the Commission to secure adequate visibility at pan-european level, communication and awareness-rising on the Strategy's objectives, progress in its implementation, and evaluation results. The same call is addressed to national governments, asking them to ensure concrete implementation at national, regional and local level.

Defining the implementation of the EUSAIR, a significant role of communication appears beginning with branding (cultural and symbolic process of public communication), following with network building (organization of connections) and ending with transparent evaluation, which basically refers to quality of institutional communication. Public communication players can not only be governments, regions and socio-economic system, but the entire media network as well as other actors representing culture, universities, research and innovation centres.

Thus, as the implementation of the Strategy is about to start, the new shared communication strategy is taking shape and will embrace such products, models and communication events as building a common website, designing the macro-regional brand, activating communication by institutional and social players, implementing communication and media forums and organising appropriate monitoring. Let's work all together to make this happen and contribute to an effective, winning strategy!

# Does Professionalism in Government Communication Matter?

By Nada Serajnik Sraka

"Communication as a skill is for everyone, however communication as a discipline is for professionals!" This meaningful statement which Erik den Hoedt expressed last November in Venice could not better illustrate one of the major problems we communicators may have. Professionalism is much discussed in many occupational fields, also in public sector. State administrations have in the past decades undergone many changes. New social demands call not only for new communication approaches but also for more professionalism in government communication. Do we know how professionalism in communication is perceived in governments? What has been done in this concern?

## Professionalism justifies profession

56 Professionalism may mean different things to different people. The terms 'professional', 'professionalism' are sometimes used very easily, like as not knowing that the concept has a strong theoretical and occupational base. *Professionalism* is understood as an expression of professional expertise, quality of work and a responsible approach to work (ethical behaviour, autonomous and credible functioning, respectful attitude to clients, employers and colleagues). It refers to occupational behaviour and practices of workers who possess a clear sense what their work is about and when it is effective.

Theorists of sociology of professions claim that professionalism is related to professions rather than occupations. The term *occupation* indicates similar kinds of jobs or descriptions of work positions that appear in the employment sphere. Occupations are permanent patterns of behaviour which enable engaged persons the means to survive and determine general social status. Members of a certain occupation are less organized, less educated. Their products or services are judged on the market and so is the position of the occupation.

The term *profession* is reserved for an occupation, which has reached its place and status in the social division of labour. In mature professions (i.e. medicine, law), practitioners master highly demanding knowledge and skills, and are devoted to a long-term systematic and regular education. At work they are autonomous, they act in accordance with the code of professional ethics, which has been developed by their profession; self-regulation and control over services are expected. Members of a profession are constantly demonstrating the importance of their services to others and the public good. They establish their professional organization, professional culture, develop professional language, try to control entry into their profession,

and also determine the mechanisms of professional promotion. Sooner or later they turn to the state with a request for public or legal recognition of their position.

Occupations normally try to achieve the status of a profession by overcoming several stages in the process of professionalisation. In this process, the norms and qualifications for representatives of a profession are established, creation and transfer of knowledge is provided, skills are certified, relations are managed. At a certain stage of development, most occupations try to reach professional identification, but only a few succeed. Professionalisation 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. Professionalisation does not happen by itself, it requires self-awareness and self-organization of an occupation.

When researching professions, the scholars study either different professional attributes that define a profession or try to find out what professions or professionals do in everyday life, how they control their work and their relationship with other actors. In the last decades, due to several organizational and societal changes, driven by the managers, markets or bureaucratic impulses, we are witnessing the emergence of a 'new professionalism' that pushes the traditional professional values (i.e. expert knowledge, professional judgment, independence, mutual support and trust between actors) in the background and exposes the organizational values (standardization procedures and practices in the hierarchy of decision-making, accountability for results, organizational control).

## 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 seem to be among the most influential. The first reforms started in 1980s in 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 known under the name 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, as the promotion and introduction of organizational principles.

The second wave reforms started at the beginning of a new 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.

## The professionalism in government communication

Naturally, when we apply all the findings to the field of government communication, more questions than answers arise. How professionalised has been the domain of government communication? How important are professionalism and professionalisation for our work and its outcomes? What are our professional criteria; are they universal or do we have some specifics of our own? 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?

We may say that government communication developed to the level of an emergent occupational field and professionalism eventually has become an issue. The practices and patterns of behaviour 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, especially in countries with young democracies. Governments which are aware of the role and significance of open and transparent communication with citizens have taken steps to professionalize the communication function. Specially 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.

The data on the status and the extent of professionalisation of government communication function in different states or comparisons among European countries are rare to be found. Some of available ones<sup>1</sup> reveal similarities, but also differences in positions, roles, areas of activities and competences. Public communicators are (mostly) 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 devalue professional principles.

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.

In this concern, the differences between the countries may be greater. In some environments, the communication function has been upgraded to the level of a strategic function, playing essential role in the processes of policy making, while in others it remained on its primary level, much affected by daily politics.

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1 *Government Communication at Central Level*. 2005. Survey among the members of the Club of Venice. Working Document. Den Haag: Club of Venice. Lennard Nordfors, Jacob Lapidus, Johan Brandt. 2011. *Government communication in six European countries*. In 25 Years of Public Communication.

The use of public communication in government is today still predominantly practiced in the roles of media relations and information management to generate publicity, create a satisfactory public image, as well as reduce the adverse media coverage. Citizens and the experts are critical to these practices; they understood 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 become a part of democratic process of interactive policy-making in which government involves citizens, business entities and many societal organizations in policymaking process in order to prepare and implement better laws or policies.

## And implementation?

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 implemen-

tation 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 attentions to government communication. It seems that 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 institutionalised the specialised training for communicators and civil servants and established regular co-operation with academia to develop the specific body of knowledge. 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 the governments communication and providing key benchmarks for the advancement of our profession.

Professionalism is not just a matter of good organization or a promotion of good practices. Karen Sanders <sup>2</sup> claims it should entail also normative standards, if we want that "it matters not only to scientific community but also to policy makers and our fellow citizens".

<sup>2</sup> Sanders, K. 2011. PR and Government Communication. In Strömbäck J. and Kiousis S. (Eds.). 2011. *Political Public Relations. Principles and Applications*. New York, London: Routledge.

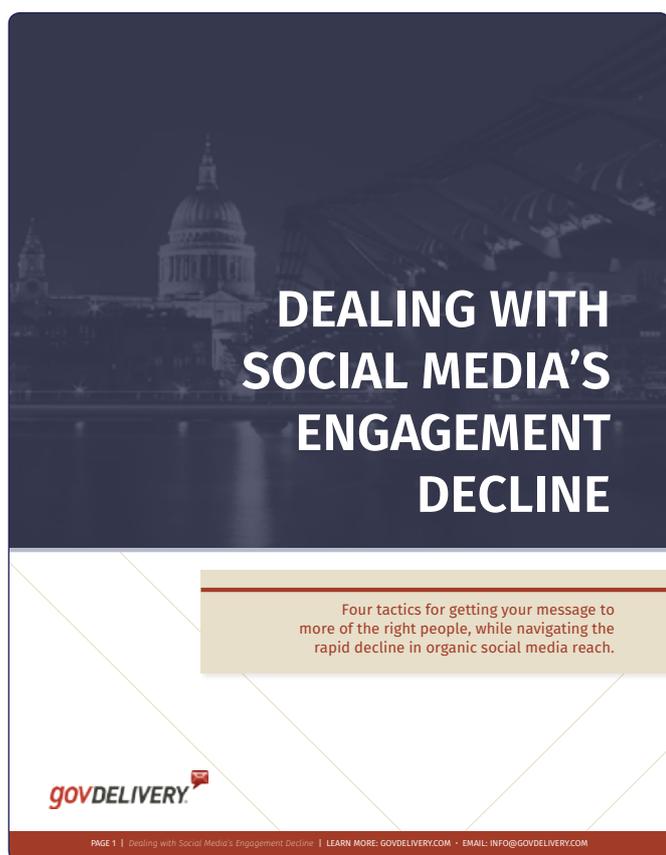
Nada Serajnik Sraka, M.A, ABC, has more than thirty years of experiences in public relations management which she gained in corporate business (Adria Airways), marketing agency (Studio Marketing) and public sector (Communication Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia). She strengthened her professional competences by gaining ABC designation (by the International Association of Business Communicators, USA) and Master in Communication Studies (Faculty of Social Studies, University of Ljubljana). She regularly writes and lectures about various aspects of public relations and communication management. Besides writing many professional and scholarly articles, she edited a manual for PR practitioners "The Fundamentals in Public Relations" (2005), authored a book "Communication Campaigns - A manual for planning, managing and evaluating communication campaigns" (2009) and co-edited the proceedings of Slovenian Public Relations Theory and Practice II (2014). She is Club of Venice Member Emeritus.



# Time to think again about how you use social media?

A short summary and some thoughts on GovDelivery's recent white paper, *Dealing with Social Media's Engagement Decline*.

By Guy Dominy



The purpose of this short abstract is to introduce the reader to the recent white paper produced by GovDelivery, 'Dealing with Social Media's Engagement Decline'<sup>1</sup>. I also consider briefly some of the implications and how I believe the white paper could prove most valuable to the reader. In the spirit of full disclosure I should note that I have previously myself written a White Paper for GovDelivery on best practice in evaluation (2014). This abstract considers the source, the context, the tactics advocated in the white paper before highlighting some of the implications of the paper and ending with a suggestion on how you might make the best use of it.

GovDelivery, the source of this white paper, is a major player in public sector communications. They provide email based communication solutions to over 1,000 public sector organisations

reaching in total more than 70 million individuals mostly in the USA, UK and increasingly in Europe. As such they are champions of the use of email in effectively engaging with citizens. In particular they are strong advocates of the importance of communicating to drive specific desirable behaviours.

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.

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.

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.

It is unsurprising that the paper suggests that you prioritise email for reliable reach. 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.

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 offer 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.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.govdelivery.com/pdfs/BP\\_SocialMediaDecline.pdf](http://www.govdelivery.com/pdfs/BP_SocialMediaDecline.pdf)



**Guy Dominy**

Director and senior consultant at Seeing More Clearly, UK

Freelance marketing/stakeholder and political communication. Project managed, planned and facilitated restructuring of Welsh Government Communication (Summer 2012). Training government communicators in strategy, evaluation, use of behavioural theory and procurement (27 courses over last two years).

An insightful communication specialist – with the experience and skill to devise solutions for complex marketing, stakeholder and political communications problems, the determination to drive through and deliver sophisticated strategies to successful implementation and the personality to get along with almost anybody. A career spanning academia, business, charity and public sectors has included technical/analytical through operational to strategic contributions.

Guy Dominy is also an associate providing training for UK Civil Service in addition to specialist communication training. He has trained and assisted in the delivery of a number of policymaking and management skills training for UK Civil Servants. Including training Analysis and Use of Evidence, facilitating Working Across Boundaries, Personal Impact and Implementing Change for organisations including the Ministry of Defence, Serious Fraud Office, DVLA, Companies House and Crown Prosecution Service.

Previously, Guy Dominy was a strategic consultant at the UK Central Office of Information providing high quality marketing communication advice and strategic counsel across government. Delivered over 60 communication projects on time and within budget including review of all of Department for International Development's promotional activities in the UK and developing the strategy for the successful recruitment campaign for children's social workers.

The 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: listening; explaining; engaging defined as encouraging people to share and comment, responding in forums; convening; and 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!

I would like to finish this brief abstract with one specific call to action. What immediately struck me when reading this paper 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 your engagement strategy. It should get everyone thinking!

## Extract from “Dealing with social media’s engagement decline”

**IF YOU HAVEN'T YET REALIZED THAT FACEBOOK AND TWITTER ARE THE TRUE OWNERS OF YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA AUDIENCE, FACEBOOK HAS SOUNDED THE ALARM BY ENDING ITS FREE RIDE.**

Facebook's EdgeRank algorithm has dropped organic page reach to 6% in the past two years, but predictably, that number will reach zero in no time. Twitter is following suit, implementing its own content filtering algorithm. And your organization is left with a virtual database of social media followers that may be here today and gone tomorrow. Add on the fact that you'll have to pay each time you want to reach those followers who do remain, and driving your organization's resources into social media has all but entirely lost its appeal.

**SOCIAL MEDIA IS NO LONGER AN OPTION FOR CONSISTENTLY, EFFICIENTLY, AND COST-EFFECTIVELY ENGAGING CITIZENS AND CONTROLLING CONVERSATIONS WITH THE COMMUNITY YOUR ORGANIZATION HAS BUILT.**

**THIS GUIDE OFFERS TACTICS TO DEAL WITH THE DECLINE IN SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE AND MORE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION CHANNELS – SPECIFICALLY: EMAIL.**

Your organization can both build and own your database of email subscribers. And you can reach the entirety of those contacts at any time to achieve your organization's objectives through effective, reliable communication with your audience. Also included in this guide is an example of public sector organizations successfully transitioning away from social media outlets to better engage with their communities, reaching more of their audience with their message.

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### THE MORAL OF THE STORY

So what is the moral of the story? The lesson is simple, really:

**KEEP USING SOCIAL MEDIA AS A SECONDARY CHANNEL, BUT NOTHING MORE.**

Relying solely on social media to build an engaged community is risky business. You have to play by their rules, and when they change those rules as Facebook and Twitter continue to do, your traffic and engagement can plummet – and if it doesn't, you're paying for it. Of course it's smart to engage with your audience where they are by taking advantage of social media, but counting on it as a valid and primary connection with your community is simply bad practice.

**THE SUREST WAY TO PROTECT YOUR CONNECTIONS AND ENGAGE YOUR COMMUNITY IS WITH EMAIL.**

An email address sticks with a person in ways that social media simply can't, and it's a form of contact your organization truly owns. If you're interested in improving your organization's digital communications strategy, significantly growing your audience, and engaging your community over an extended period of time – let us know.

GovDelivery continues to serve over 1,000 public sector organizations around the globe, and we can help serve yours too. Call us at (866) 276-5583 or email [info@govdelivery.com](mailto:info@govdelivery.com) today.

# UK social media guidance for civil servants

By Kevin Traverse-Healy

In October 2014, the UK Government's Cabinet Office published new Social Media Guidance (link below) for all its Civil Servants. Its purpose is "to encourage and enable civil servants to use social and other digital media appropriately to enhance our work". It also makes clear the responsibilities of UK civil servants to do so in accordance with their Civil Service Code (link below).

The guidance covers the use of social media networks, such as Twitter and Facebook, and digital activity in general - both in and out of work, e.g. browsing websites, downloading content or posting or publishing anything to the web.

According to UK's Executive Director, Government Communication, Alex Aitken, the guidance reflects five core principles of using social media:

**Common sense** - "social media helps us work openly and connect with the citizens we serve; just remember to apply common sense!"; **Adherence** to the Civil Service Code - "apply the same standards online as are required offline"; **Doubts?** - "if in doubt, don't post it"; **Accuracy** - "check the accuracy and sensitivity of what it is planned before pressing 'submit'"; **Permanent** - "remember once something is posted online it's very difficult to remove it".

The Rt Hon Francis Maude MP, Minister for the Cabinet Office introduced the new guidance: "Digital and social media can help the civil service reach out to the people it serves. Gone forever is a world when an anonymous man in an inaccessible Whitehall office made decisions on behalf of others - new digital technologies help civil servants across the country engage actively with the public. We can promote what we do, draw on new ideas, and represent the government's views in discussion. However with these benefits comes greater responsibility - we are under more scrutiny than ever before. It is right that the public demands the same standards of propriety in the digital space as in the 'real' world."

"It's not rocket science - we must use common sense about everything we publish on digital and social media. Once something has been sent, it's public. Following these guidelines correctly will ensure that your social media activity will enhance your job as a civil servant, while also retaining the highest levels of integrity."

## Kevin Traverse-Healy



Club of Venice Member Emeritus, Kevin Traverse-Healy, works in international communication strategy and evaluation as a consultant specialising in government-to-public communication and delivering public policy through behaviour change. As well as TraverseHealy Consult, Kevin is chairman of Charles Barker Limited (originally founded in 1813 - one of the world's first advertising agencies). Previously, he was a consultant with the UK's Central Office of Information and was an external adviser to European Commission Vice-President Wallström.

Kevin is an expert on EU funded feasibility studies and evaluations and delivers capability building in government communication in many countries. In 2011 he co-authored 'Evaluating the financial impact of public sector marketing communication' and Kevin has been a visiting member of the faculty of communication science at the Università della Svizzera italiana for 18 years.

The UK's Government Communication Service (GCS) has also published 'propriety guidance' on digital channels and social media (link below) to supplement the Social Media Guidance for Civil Servants. "This propriety guidance is particularly relevant to those involved primarily in a proactive communications role, using official departmental accounts, such as press office and campaign accounts administered by ministries", says Alex Aitken.

Part one of the propriety guidance sets out how Civil Servants can safely use social media to engage and communicate effectively. It sets out six principles - that Government should: 1. Communicate with citizens in the places they already are; 2. Use social media to consult and engage; 3. Use social media to be more transparent and accountable; 4. Be part of the conversation with all the benefits that brings; 5. Understand that it cannot do everything alone, or in isolation 6. Expect Civil Servants to adhere to the Civil Service Code (online as well as offline).

Part two of the propriety guidance focuses on helping ministries overcome technical barriers. It was developed by the UK's Home Office and "provides a valuable snapshot of some of the significant challenges". In addition, the GCS says it is important to note that individual ministries will frequently have their own social media policy and guidance which also should be consulted.

Convergences readers may be interested in the UK Government Digital Service's (GDS) 'Playbook' and blog (link below) which "sets out the strong case for using social media in the public sector... highlights how social media is becoming more and more a part of modern life, and how as government we shouldn't miss the opportunities it affords".

#### Links:

Social Media Guidance for Civil Servants (October 2014)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-media-guidance-for-civil-servants/social-media-guidance-for-civil-servants>

GCS propriety guidance digital channels and social media  
<https://gcn.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/GCNSocialMediaPropriety.pdf>

Government Digital Service Playbook:  
<https://gdssocialmedia.blog.gov.uk/playbook>

UK Government Civil Service Code : <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-code>

# The Corner House (KGB compound) in Riga <sup>1</sup>

*Sad stories help learning how to build a better future together*

By Vincenzo Le Voci



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The former KGB prison in Riga (the building officially hosted the headquarters of the National Security Committee) was opened to the public from 1st May to 19 October 2014 and was visited by almost 80 000 people. Located in the centre of the Baltic capital, at the corner of Brīvības street 61, very little was known of this six-storey tower house very little during the “Soviet Latvian” time.

For the first time, the doors of this building were opened in the framework of the celebrations of Riga European Capital of Culture 2014 <sup>2</sup>, and the event has ever since drawn the utmost interest.

The organizers felt that this opening would attract masses of tourists – and this actually happened, but it also turned to increasingly draw special attention by the Riga inhabitants themselves.

<sup>1</sup> Many thanks to Anna Muhka, Foundation Riga 2014, International Communications and Marketing and to Helen Ennok, Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Development Cooperation and Communication, for the great, moving pictures. Acknowledgments also to Anete Rijnece and Aija Abene for the updates on the recent 2015 re-opening.

<sup>2</sup> The web site dedicated to Riga European Capital of Culture 2014 is [www.riga2014.org](http://www.riga2014.org).

Why this? Why, as people pass by and realize they are very near to it, they instinctively tend to change street - so scary was all related to it? History teaches us what lies behind those walls. As a matter of fact, those who unfortunately got into and suffered from it a horrible experience, at best manage to get out only escaping after a long while. But in the worst case they never came out or ended up in Siberia.

I was there in early June 2014, at the end of an international conference hosted by the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (the semi-annual plenary meeting of the Club of Venice, the informal network of communication directors and senior communications specialists from the EU Member States, countries candidate to the accession to the Union and EU institutions and bodies). It was the social-cultural programme foreseen at the end of our meeting...and it turned to be the most striking event of my recent work experience. Something I already spoke about on my return home to my children, as I felt the need to share my feelings by witnessing what I saw, and what I proved.

The building is unique - a large part of it has been preserved as authentic. Only a few billboards and video projectors, which summarise the grim history of the house, have been added. No repairs or renovation work have been made. This building, which is indeed a museum in itself, was originally a living house, completed in 1912. In 1918 part of the building hosted the Ministry of Interiors of the Republic of Latvia. In 1940 it was taken over by the Soviet authorities, then under the German Nazi occupation (1941-1944) it hosted various national authorities (Police department, National guards, Art/Public Affairs department, etc.).

The Soviets took back their control of the building in 1944, establishing therein the KGB Headquarters for almost half a century of obscure history.

With the restoration of Latvia's independence, the national Police moved into the building in the early 1990s, repairing part of the house, but leaving the cellars untouched. As a matter of fact, as the Estonian “Kultuur” mentions <sup>3</sup> there was such a “bad aura” that even the Latvia police authorities were psychologically hampered entering or converting those facilities into “comfortably manageable uses”. So, finally in 2008 the police moved out of the house and left it empty. Since then, the owner of the house - the national real estate company - has been unsuccessfully trying to sell it or rent it. Nobody wants to deal with it.

<sup>3</sup> “Postimes” Section (“The Estonian Times”), 25 June 2014 (<http://kultuur.postimees.ee/2837463/riia-avas-kgb-kongid>), one of my strongest inspiration sources from where I collected some historical references.



The house has a number of spaces that evoke strong emotions: the awful, scary room where prisoners were questioned and tortured; the terrible execution room, with its walls which were once covered with a rubberized cloth and stone floor where blood flowed through a gutter (that drain suddenly reminded me of Hitchcock's "Psycho" shower drain); cellars, where detention under the Soviet power could last average four years in the toughest conditions (according to some prisoners, during the 1940s and early 1950s a cell meant for four people could hold 25-30); and the narrow, cold internal yard from which, during their few-minute walk, detainees could watch once again the sky while shivering and being caught by a feeling of loss and dark frighten.

What prevails most is a state of dismay and astonishment: you ended up in a place where time and reality are suspended. You don't need that huge imagination to "feel" that those stones are talking, echoing the pain and sorrow - it looks like a crowd is being heard among the walls, shouting from a remote corner at the end of the earth, rising to the basement of the house and reaching the courtyard as an avalanche. For those who were caught in, the sun, the clouds, the wind and the freedom had gone and they had sadly left forever all their dreams of a decent life behind that gloomy house.



People ended up jailed there for months, years or...forever. From there, often deported to Siberia or other gloomy and painful remote places of East Russia. Their crimes were mainly activities deemed "anti-Soviet" (newspapers or leaflets distribution, meetings) or simply bold accusations entered by anyone who opted for dropping anonymous denounces in the somber entrance hall of the building - a sort of knee-bench like the ones you can find in a church, with a hole where in that case you could fit deadly messages and confidences, instead of money for the poors/inopes.

No doubt that accompanying relatives, friends, children and the eldest to that building for an excursion through and within those sad walls is quite a special task. The narrow cells are still there, untouched. You can watch the preliminary counter where the personal records were kept. It was there where self-explanatory pictures of the prisoners were posted, with their pale faces - some are still there, pale, and seem somehow well aware of their somber destiny.

The rooms where detainees were interrogated are extremely cold, a smell of mildew and death. All instills drops of sadness and uncomfortableness. It seems so far away, such a remote past - but if you stay silent, and close your eyes, you don't need such a big effort of imagination to start perceiving cries, lamentations and terror from those unfortunate people.

As I mentioned, our visit to the building was organised by the Latvian government also in the framework of the activities promoting Riga as European Capital of Culture for 2014. The aim was to inform everyone - tourists, researchers, media specialists, public authorities, students, teachers - in order to preserve memory and draw lessons from history, but also to stimulate discussion on what should be the future - our future and the one of future generations.

In the national context, the Latvians are also concerned about what should be done of the information obtained through the site. Actually this is not only Latvian, but also European history.

The national authorities are still enquiring on the mystery of the identities of the KGB agents, collaborationists and informants. It is possible that relevant information in this regard may have been destroyed or hidden by the KGB before its way back to Moscow. If new data should emerge, the question would raise how to deal with it after such a large lapse of time.



In May 2014, the Saeima (the Latvian Parliament) opted for undertaking an accurate research, which should be completed in 2018, before any decision can be taken to publish the KGB archive. Meanwhile, there was a common understanding and agreement among Latvian public authorities, and in particular by several cultural institutions, that this house should be the "KGB Museum".

Proud about its recent democratic history, on 21 August 2014 Latvia celebrated the anniversary of the adoption of its Constitutional Law on the Statehood of the Republic. The questions then were raised on what can be done in this new era of freedom to safeguard memories and how to communicate the values of democracy, transparency and civic pride to the future generations.

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**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).

Disclosing information for the sake of transparency and accountability is not enough and gives no guarantee at all to improve us as citizens.

Engagement is necessary, in all fronts. Sharing values also means implementing them together. Against all nationalisms, against violence, in favour of tolerance, mutual respect, joint co-operation, social and cultural prosperity.

Everything can happen, but if we want to create stability from memory, our engagement should be concrete and part of a well conceived process. Vaclav Havel spoke about the characteristics of a dominating whole power structure, which in his view "could not exist at all if there were not a "metaphysical" order binding all its components together, interconnecting them and subordinating them to a uniform method of accountability, supplying the combined operation of all these components with rules of the game". A real machine, in which the communication system was well integrated and made the difference <sup>4</sup>.

Now, we can look behind, discuss with our children, share each and every single detail of such painful moments of our recent European history, and we can draw a very real picture, but today's memory can never reproduce the pathos of those days.

If we don't let youngsters understand that their history can easily be build on cycles and that there is a common thread in the heroic suffering, they will end up thinking that values are a gift outright, taken for granted.

As a matter of fact, since Europeans have luckily lived in the last decades without huge conflicts, they have developed a very mild concept of history - whatever happened long time ago is perceived in an apathetic and faded way.

So, there is a lot of confusion in their minds as regards what the EU is, what peace prevention means in addition to peace-keeping, as well as what the KGB acronym means, and they inevitably ignore that the Soviet Union was a dictatorship and KGB was something similar to Nazi Germany's Gestapo.

<sup>4</sup> Vaclav Havel's "Living in the Truth", in his "The power of the powerless", Selected Speeches, ed. Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the EU, 2009).



In a survey carried out a few years ago among German high school students, someone answered that Hitler was a “protector of the human rights” !!!<sup>5</sup>

Against this as discouraging as well as paradoxical background, against today's challenging reality and the danger that oblivion takes over, our task as public communicators is enormous.

We need to take our responsibility very seriously and honour our role of democratic messengers.

We need to be ready to explain to all audiences what was our past.

Indro Montanelli said that “peoples who ignore their own past will never know anything about their own present” – and, of course, they would be inevitably unable to build their own future. They could only bear it.

This is the core issue: transforming that feeling of “shiver” and all our own experiences and memories drawn from our predecessors in something constructive, to convey the best values to those who will take the relay.

The walls of that Riga's compound are echoing words of heroes who gave their life for truth and media freedom, like Anna Politkovskaia: “I keep crossing this kind of people who come or write to the newspaper admitting that what they thought were histories are not exaggerated at all, but real. Therefore in the past they limited themselves to read them, without reacting. But now something similar happened to them and they understand everything. Now they need help.”<sup>6</sup>

5 References: “La Repubblica” newspaper + “Corriere della Sera” of 29.6.2012 : Klaus Schröder, Professor of the Berlin Freie Universität reported about a poll carried out among 7400 students in major Länder: Bavaria, Baden-Wurtemberg, Nord Renania, Westfalia, Saxe-Anhalt and Thuringia.

6 Anna Politkovskaia's “Noi, gente ignorante” (“We, ignorant people”), in “Proibito Parlare” (“Talking Forbidden”), 2007, Mondadori Editore, Milano, Tiziano Terzani Prize 2007.

Indro Montanelli's warning could not sound more appropriate: “The time of reckoning with your past, of course, will come. But at some point you have to close it up, because in the history this moment has never lasted forever without triggering another reckoning.”<sup>7</sup>

My visit to the Riga' former KGB House has left in my heart such a strong feeling of solidarity and compassion. I feel Latvians like my brothers. I feel they gave their blood, their dreams, their lives for the freedom that we are enjoying today – we should feel proud, as Western Europeans, to have helped them overcome those times of obscurantism, insecurity and anti-democracy. I will fight with all my energies to communicate this feelings, to turn together sad pages, learn the key lessons and contribute to build a better future.

What happened recently? Good news: the Corner House re-opened on 13 February 2015 - the gap was short, the time necessary for the Latvian authorities to decide who should manage this new phasis. The national Ministry of Culture is now responsible for the facility's management, while the operational tasks have been conferred to the Museum of Occupation of Latvia<sup>8</sup>. Preserving the memory of those who suffered in such dark corners of history is definitely an honorable action which enriches the current semester of Latvia's Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

7 Citation from Indro Montanelli, 10 March 1998

8 <http://okupacijasmuzejs.lv/en>. The website also offers a virtual tour of the Corner House (<http://skatskat.lv/virtuala-ture/stura-maja/en/stura-maja.html>). The Occupation Museum is still carrying out researches on organizations that operated in the Corner House.



# SEECOM2014 conference: A communication of deeds is communication indeed

By Stefan Vukotic

Third time's the charm, the popular English saying goes. And indeed the South Eastern European government communicators, gathered in their informal professional forum called SEECOM, took that saying to the letter and brought something more practical at their third plenary conference, SEECOM2014 - "Communication of Deeds."

**SEECOM (South Eastern European Government Communication Forum)** launched in Montenegro in 2012 with the idea of turning a common belief into a shared reality. This common belief is best put in the words of SEECOM's Secretary-General, Vuk Vujnović: "Good public sector communication that fosters meaningful dialogue between public authorities and civil society and enables citizens to participate actively in policies is invaluable for the development and progress of the countries of South East Europe."

Over the first few years of SEECOM's existence this belief began transforming into more tangible actions - first, the adoption of a common framework of professional standards, the **Budva Declaration**, which promotes the top communication standards in South Eastern Europe (such as greater transparency and openness, better access to information, and greater public participation in policy making). Second, the SEECOM forum grew into a regional not-for-profit, making it easier to promote the values from a single centre and to engage governmental, non-governmental, business, and international partners around the common idea that good public sector communication can improve the lives of citizens.

And finally this past year SEECOM started going practical. The SEECOM 2014 plenary conference showcased concrete examples from the United Kingdom, Germany, United States and the region of South East Europe of how effective communications



can lead to meaningful dialogue and productive collaboration on concrete projects between public sector, civil society organizations, and citizens.

In particular, the event made a very practical demonstration on how open communication and dialogue between public institutions, civil society organisations, and citizens can drive efforts to cut red tape and improve business environment in the conference host country Montenegro. It featured a presentation by the UK Government's top communicators about the Red Tape Challenge initiative, an online platform for a broad public dialogue aimed at eliminating complicated administrative procedures and redundant legislation that burden businesses and citizens in the UK.

Building on the lessons from the UK's experience, SEECOM partnered with the Montenegrin NGO Fund for Active Citizenship (fAKT) to offer a 4,000 euro grant for Montenegrin civil society organisations to develop a beta version of the local communications platform aimed at reducing red tape at national and local administration.

The Montenegrin Ministry of Finance and UNDP Montenegro signalled readiness to support the scale-up of this initiative in 2015. Thus, having demonstrated the practical social and economic value of professional exchange among public sector

communicators, SEECOM2014 provided three very concrete benefits (in this case to the host country Montenegro): (1) The UK's experience on how effective communication can inform and improve public policies, by engaging civil society and citizens in policy making; (2) Networking opportunity with prominent European and American communication and policy experts; (3) A small grant to kick-start the transfer of UK's best practice to Montenegro.

In addition to this concrete programme aimed at improving business opportunities in the 2014 host country, SEECOM's General Assembly adopted two key programmes in order to promote its mission and activities in South East Europe.

The first, "Transparency, Accountability and Public Participation," seeks to provide public sector communicators in South East Europe with the knowledge and skills on how to promote government transparency, accountability, and public participation in policy making through effective communication practices.

The objective of the second programme, "Communicating European Integration Affairs," is to improve the knowledge and skills of public sector communicators in South East Europe on how best to inform, educate, and engage citizens in European integration affairs.

**Stefan Vukotić** is a SEECOM member and writes in this capacity. He works as international public relations professional at the Government of Montenegro.

In his daily work, Stefan communicates with international press, runs and edits the English webpage of the Government and the official Twitter channel (@MeGovernment), and participates in Government projects related to transparency and integration. Stefan is also a researcher in international relations.





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The general conclusion of the conference could be summed up by a title of one of the conference panels - CommunicAction - meaning that credible and effective public communication is bound to be an integral and inseparable part of a collaborative policy action aimed at creating new value and benefiting the lives of citizens.

This idea permeates all SEECOM's efforts, as the organisation's **credo** is that effective communication with citizens helps governments create better policies, ones that are more attuned to

people's actual needs, expectations or concerns. And that is the very essence of communication.

SEECOM's next plenary meeting will take place in Sofia, Bulgaria, in September 2015, when more concrete efforts and initiatives from the member countries are planned to take shape.

(I wish to thank Mr Vuk Vujnović on his invaluable input without which this text would not have been possible.)



# SEECOM

## South East Europe Public Sector Communication Association

### Statute (extract)

#### Article 1: Name and Registered Office

SEECOM (hereinafter: the Association) is an international non-for-profit professional association of senior public sector communicators in South Eastern Europe.

Official name of the Association is "SEECOM", standing for "South East Europe Public Sector **C**ommunication Association".

It originates from the South Eastern European Government Communication Forum, an informal international group of senior government communicators, established on 16 September 2012 through the adoption of the Budva Declaration at the First South Eastern European Government Communication Conference in Budva, Montenegro, which was organised by the Public Relations Bureau of the Government of Montenegro, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Media Program South East Europe and the United Nations Development Programme in Montenegro.

The Association was established at the 2nd South Eastern European Government Communication Conference in Budva, Montenegro, on 29 September 2013. The Conference was endorsed by the United States Embassy in Montenegro, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Media Program South East Europe, Regional Cooperation Council, United Nations Development Programme in Montenegro and the United States National Association of Government Communicators (NAGC).

The Association has its registered office in Budva, Montenegro, whereas the General Assembly may decide to change the registered office.

(...)

#### Article 2: Credo and Mission

The credo of the Association is that providing easy access to public information, presenting public policies in a simple and understandable way, allowing for two-way communication between public authorities and their constituents and enabling public participation in policy making will inevitably improve the quality of governance and policy making and promote democratic dialogue with civil society in the best interest of the people.

The mission of the Association is to promote and advance the principles and values enshrined in the Budva Declaration. The Budva Declaration is set out in Annex 1 to this Statute.

The Association shall seek to accomplish its mission through programs and individual projects and activities aimed at advancing:

- a) professional development, exchange, networking and acknowledgement of professional achievements and best practices
- b) citizen engagement through two-way communication and fostering of civil society and citizen participation in public policies
- c) partnership with non-governmental actors, first and foremost media and civil society organizations
- d) good governance through transparency, accountability and free and easy access to information in public sector
- e) internal communication in public sector
- f) professional standards, values and ethics of public sector communication
- g) use of innovation and new technology in public sector communication
- h) other areas that may advance the mission of the association.

(...)

# DECLARATION OF FOUNDING VALUES OF THE SOUTH EASTERN EUROPEAN GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS FORUM ("The Budva Declaration")

**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.

In Budva, Montenegro

16 September 2012

# Communication seen by political parties in South East Europe

By Christian Spahr

Government bodies and parties are the most important institutional political actors in a democracy. They both need to understand professional communication as a strategic goal, as both of them rely on the recognition and support of the citizens.

Some of the challenges are similar: In a democratic society, many citizens want to understand policies and political structures – the “why” and “how” of political decision-making. In the past years, globalization and the Internet have dramatically increased the expectations of transparency on an international level. Citizens are more and more expecting a direct dialogue via web 2.0 and social media. In transitional countries, the need of explanation is even bigger than in Western countries because democratic procedures are not familiar yet to everybody to the same extent, and many political decisions involve genuine questions of strategic direction. Both governments and parties need to prove that they are taking care about the future of their respective countries.

However, the formal requirements and the communication framework for political parties are different from those of the governments. Parties have less legal obligations concerning their communications. For example, they are usually not subject to the national Right to Information laws which are binding for the public sector. But they also have to fight harder for media attention than governments because the latter are more often the direct originators of political decisions.

During workshops of the Media Program South East Europe of Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, spokespersons of parties (most of them affiliated to the European People's Party, EPP) have identified different challenges in the region. The main challenge is obviously the role of the spokesperson within a political party. Not all party leaders give PR personnel a direct access to them

and understand the communications department as a strategic partner and advisor. Brushing away a call from a press spokesperson is not always an exception. Individual party leaders, according to the statements of their communication experts, need to show more openness for advice. Moreover, the communication department needs to play a steering function inside the party. Communicating along one line is more difficult in a political party than in a government, because democratically elected members of parliament are freer in expressing their views than government employees. Therefore, the internal dialogue and PR efforts need to be coordinated, and for this task the press department needs rear cover from the party leader.

In the post-communist countries of the Balkans, the media landscape brings specific challenges for political parties as well. Media often report in a very polarised way – either pro or anti-government. The political debates are often dominated by accusations rather than by the discussion of concepts. “My most important function is to reply to attacks”, said one of the spokespersons. “Communicating our own central arguments is only a secondary concern”. Then, opposition parties have greater difficulties to receive media attention than in Western Europe, because parties involved in the government have much better opportunities to influence media – including direct or indirect pressure, or the (mis)use of state advertising budgets. Agreements on media coverage between PR experts and editors are more frequent, whereas a common understanding of ethical standards has still to be developed.

Definitely, big steps in terms of communications have been made in the past 20 years. Virtually all of the parties affiliated to the EPP in South East Europe have a designated communication division nowadays which is not confined only to issuing press releases. Almost all party leaders have a profile on Facebook,

and one in three party headquarters twitters in the name of its leader. However, many party leaders still reserve appearances in front of TV cameras for themselves – only one in two of them have an explicit press spokesperson who makes statements on their behalf.

This shows that the profession of press spokes-person is still undergoing a development on the side of political parties. Many PR experts emphasise that there is still a great need for further professionalization. The PR profession is not yet generally recognized – until recently there were no strong professional associations, and in many places no basic training exists. Vocational education programmes are therefore important, but the exchange of experience and network building among experts are as well. This encourages the KAS Media Program South East

Europe to continue professional training and networking of party spokespersons in the future; but also the Public Sector communicators organised in the Club of Venice or the newly founded association SEECOM can provide good examples and best practices which can be adapted to the needs of political parties.

## **Christian Spahr**

*Head of Media Program SEE of Konrad Adenauer Foundation*

Christian Spahr is a media and political communications expert at Konrad Adenauer Foundation, a German think tank with 80 offices abroad. With his Sofia-based team, he offers further education for journalists, consults on media policy and promotes professional political communication.

From 2006 to 2012, he was press spokesman at Bitkom, the business association of Germany's internet economy. Christian is initiator and co-editor of studies on digital society. From 2003 to 2006 he was a business editor with Sächsische Zeitung, a high-circulation German regional newspaper. He had previously received journalistic training at Sächsische Zeitung and as a grantee of the KAS School of Journalism.

Christian is a board member of SEECOM (South East Europe Public Sector Communication Association). He has participated as a speaker or presenter at the following conferences: Kommunikationskongress (Berlin), Medientreffpunkt Mitteldeutschland (Leipzig), Frankfurt Days on Media Law, German-Russian Autumn Talks, South East Europe Media Forum, South East Europe Government Communication Conference, Club of Venice plenary meeting.



## POLITICAL COMMUNICATION IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE SEEN BY POLITICAL PARTIES

CHRISTIAN SPAHR, KAS MEDIA PROGRAM CLUB OF VENICE, ROME, 13 NOVEMBER 2014



## WHY SUPPORTING POLITICAL COMMUNICATION?

- KAS networks with spokespersons from political parties and governments
- Democracy, Globalization, Web 2.0: Politicians have to give explanations
- Responsibility in the transformation process
- PR standards need to be developed
- Aim: Professional and value-orientated political communication

## PR OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE

- virtually all of the parties have a **designated communication division** (which is not confined only to issuing press releases)
- Almost all party leaders have a **profile on Facebook**
- One in three party headquarters **twitters** in the name of its leader
- Many party leaders still **reserve appearances in front of TV cameras** for themselves
- Only one in two of them have an explicit **press spokesperson** who makes statements on their behalf



Source: parties affiliated to the European People's Party (EPP)

## CHALLENGES FOR SPOKESPERSONS #1

- **Direct access to the party leader:** Is communication a part of the strategy? Do party leaders value the press office's work? (or are they brushing aside calls from PR staff)
- **Opportunities for consultation** with the party leadership: Are the party leaders open for advice? (or omniscient ...)
- **The role played by spokespersons** and PR advisors inside the party: Do they have a steering function? Do members of parliament accept briefings? (...or neglect the official party line in interviews)



## CHALLENGES FOR SPOKESPERSONS #2

- **Polarisation of the media landscape:** Replying to attacks rather than communicating own arguments
- **Difficult access to media for opposition:** Parties involved in government have much better opportunities to influence the media (pressure, state advertising – partly EU money)
- **Lack of ethical standards for relationships of PR personnel with journalists:** Agreements between PR people and editors – as well as corruption – are more frequent in transitional countries
- **Maintaining personal integrity and protection of one's own private life**



## THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION.

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# The EU and ME(dia) – Where do we go from here?

By Peter Lindvald-Nielsen

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), in partnership with the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), held its 8th civil society media seminar on informed citizenship in Milan from 27 to 28 November 2014. The city of Milan kindly provided the meeting venue, whilst valuable support was also received from the Venice Club, the Italian EU presidency, the Parliament, the Commission and the Committee of the Regions. On the EESC side, the event was managed by Silvia Aumair, Chantal Hocquet and Chloé Lahousse.

With the daily lives of people in Europe's 28 Member States influenced by the decisions that are taken at EU level and agreed by national heads of state and government, it is clear that the EU matters, and not only in Brussels. Yet we Europeans seem to know surprisingly little about each other.

Speakers from different EU countries, journalists, civil society representatives, representatives from the European institutions and politicians held four panel discussions on the theme, "Where do we go from here?"

The issues addressed ranged from discussions on the EU in the news, the EU in neighbouring countries and the EU in a digital society to a review of the European Parliament elections in 2014.

Despite the millions of news stories put out every day, some of which touch either directly or indirectly on the EU, over 60% of Europeans still feel that they are not well informed about the EU and its Member States, according to a recent Eurobarometer survey. As EESC Vice-President Wilms stated in his opening speech: "EU leaders meet once a month in Brussels or elsewhere and know each other pretty well, but what do ordinary Europeans know about each other? What do we know about daily life and the challenges, traditions and hopes in other Member States?"

## What can we draw from this seminar?

### The EU, the Member States and the media: a shared duty to inform the public

- Ensuring that information reaches 500 million people requires efforts on the part of the EU, the media AND the Member States. EU news needs to be communicated with greater authority and reconciled with national attitudes.
- The media world is a quick-fire one; it tends to simplify when necessary background information is missing. Accordingly, the institutions must provide clear, precise background information.
- EU policies need to be made more tangible and policies explained by giving concrete examples. It is also important to "Europeanise" national news, to be concrete and comprehensible when reporting on EU projects and to spell out the (positive) repercussions for the public. A new pan-European TV channel is probably not the answer but more European input in national, regional and local media could be a way forward.
- It is vital to build trust: the media are mediators between politicians/EU institutions and the public. As well as acting as the "public eye" and the citizens' watchdog, they are also information providers. The public needs coverage of the EU to be both critical and constructive. The media, particularly public service broadcasters, should be critical, fair, balanced, objective and independent, but they also need to criticize in a constructive way.

### Independence of the media and journalists is the core of sound information

- The source of financing has a direct effect on the content of information. Drawing on examples from outside the EU, the seminar showed quite plainly what happens when media and journalists are unable to act independently: the floodgates are open for misinformation and propaganda. However, Europe cannot afford to be self-satisfied. The border between report and comment is sometimes quite blurred. The independence of media and journalists must be at the core of the relationship between the EU and its citizens.

### Social media – the "not-to-be-neglected" supplement in communication

- The challenge is that citizens are confronted with many different sources of information, which the EU cannot leave to the markets alone. **The EU must provide input**, whilst asking "what can I give my followers?". The social media can help build trust via transparency and honesty, as well as being an important supplement for political discussion. However, the cornerstone remains face-to-face contact with the public.
- Attention should be drawn to EU legislation by presenting its concrete impact on people's daily lives. **Emotional appeal is important in the social media; avoid boredom!** "Moving hearts is the only way of moving the world". The social media are an important tool for people to express their feelings, engage in dialogue and form their opinions. For a growing number of people, "Facebook" is the prime source for political information.

### The EP-elections: This time it was different

- With regard to the EP elections, the panellists agreed that “this time it was really different”. The televised debate between the “Spitzenkandidaten” for the European Commission was an innovation, broadcast in Member States and also live-streamed across the social media. Nevertheless, it was perceived as a top-down approach, mainly reaching the elites. The lesson that should be drawn from this is that it is vital to listen to the public and to their concerns and challenges.
- It was noted that the decentralised approach had also played a decisive role, allowing messages and dialogues to be linked to the national or local contest.

The discussion will continue. The seminar provided input from organised civil society and has perhaps contributed to a process whereby public broadcasters will use more European content and distribute it to each other.

More information, including a detailed report of the seminar, can be found at <http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.events-and-activities-media-seminar-2014>.



**Peter Lindvald Nielsen** is head of the Communication Department in the European Economic and Social Committee. Peter has a background as Business Economist from Denmark.

Peter started his career in the seventies in the Danish Customs and tax Administration. For the last 26 years he has worked in the European Institutions in areas such as, Indirect taxation, Member of Cabinet of the European Commissioner for Environment, The Commission Representation to Denmark, Development policy and now Communication.



CIVIL SOCIETY MEDIA SEMINAR  
**European Media and informed citizenship**  
 EU and ME(dia) – where do we go from here?

## The EU matters – but how are EU matters received by the EU-citizens?

The aim of this year's civil society media seminar is to analyse the way media are dealing with EU affairs in the Member States and in neighbouring countries. It will have a special focus on accurate and independent reporting on EU affairs, but also a particular emphasis on how public media – social media included - can play a key role in a genuine European debate, allowing Europeans to learn more from each other.

**Time: 27 – 28 November 2014**

**Venue: Palazzo Reale, Sala Conferenze (terzo piano /third floor), Piazza del Duomo 12, Milan**

### Thursday, 27 November 2014

09:45 – 10:45

**Opening session** chaired by EESC Vice-President *Hans-Joachim Wilms*

- *Chiara Bisconti*, Commissioner for Wellbeing, Quality of life, Sport and Recreation: welcoming speech
- *Guillaume Klossa*, Director at EBU, Public Affairs and Communications
- *Stefano Rolando*, Professor at the IULM University in Milan and President of the Club of Venice

11:00 – 12:30

**Panel I:**  
**The EU in the news: generating interest and citizen engagement**

- **What do people say?**
  - \* *Sixtine Bouygues*, Director for Strategy and Corporate Communication, European Commission
- **Giving the news a European perspective**
  - \* *Giacomo Mazzone*, Head of Institutional Relations, EBU
- **Independent reporting on EU affairs**
  - \* *Asunción Gómez Bueno*, Chairperson of EBU News Committee "News strategies and Eurovision News Exchange"
- **Q & A**

Moderator: *Jean-Francois Istasse*, Member of the CoR, Honorary President of the Parliament of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation of Belgium and former Senator

14:00 – 15:30

**Panel II:  
The EU and the media in neighbouring countries**

- **From state media to public broadcaster**
  - \* *Radka Betcheva*, Senior Project Manager, EBU Partnership Programme
- **The EU in an enlargement perspective**
  - \* *Cveto Stantič*, EESC member, member of the Communication Group, co-chair of the EU-Turkey Joint Consultative Committee
- **Are truths in the EU still true outside the EU?**
  - \* *Indrė Vareikytė*, EESC member, member of the Communication Group and chair of the EESC Cultural Subcommittee
- **Q & A**

Moderator: *Marie Zvolská*, EESC member, member of the Communication Group

15:45 – 17:15

**Panel III:  
Connecting citizens, the media and the EU in a digital society**

- **Reliable news on social media and applications**
  - \* *Per Palmqvist*, Social journalism developer, Swedish Radio
- **Can EU social networks burst out of the Brussels' bubble?**
  - \* *Andras Baneth*, Managing Director, European Office, Public Affairs Council
- **Social networks: bringing politicians closer to their citizens?**
  - \* *Erik den Hoedt*, Director at Public Information and Communication Office, Dutch Ministry of General Affairs
- **Q & A**

Moderator: *Beatrice Ouin*, EESC member, member of the Communication Group

**Friday, 28 November 2014**

09:30 – 10:00

**Opening of the second meeting day**

chaired by EESC Vice-President *Hans-Joachim Wilms*

- *Luc van den Brande*, Former President of the Committee of Regions (CoR)
- *Federico Garimberti*, Spokesperson for the Italian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

<p>10:00 – 11:30</p>	<p><b>Panel IV: EP-elections 2014 – This time it was different</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Eurovision-Debate / Media coverage in MS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* <b>Michael Mullane</b>, Head of Eurovision Media Online, EBU</li> <li>* <b>Davide Di Stadio</b>, Europa Art director and project coordinator, RAI</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <b>Civil society engagement in the campaign</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* <b>Brando Benifei</b>, Member of the European Parliament</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <b>Review of the campaign/lessons learned</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* <b>Juana Lahousse</b>, Director General for Communication, European Parliament</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <b>Q &amp; A</b></li> </ul> <p>Moderator: <b>Luca Jahier</b>, EESC member, President of the Various Interests Group</p>
<p>11:45 – 12:45</p>	<p><b>Expo Milano 2015</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>General Introduction of the EU participation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* <b>David Wilkinson</b>, Commissioner-General, Director of Scientific Policy and Stakeholders Relations, JRC</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <b>Communication strategy of the Expo Milano 2015</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Representative from Expo Milano 2015 (tbc)</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <b>Communication strategy of the EU at Expo Milano 2015</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* <b>Tremeur Denigot</b>, responsible for communication EU pavilion</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>12:45 – 13:15</p>	<p><b>Conclusions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Claudio Cappon, Vice-President EBU and former Director General of RAI</li> <li>▪ Hans-Joachim Wilms, Vice-President of EESC</li> </ul>

# EuroPCom 2014 – Imag[in]ing Europe

## European communication experts share their main concerns

By Tom de Smedt

*Is it feasible to develop a common EU brand? How can we make government communications more creative and innovative? Are our political leaders, communication services and citizens ready for real participatory dialogues? These and many other challenges were on the agenda of EuroPCom 2014, the fifth European Conference on Public Communication, organised by the EU Committee of the Regions, in partnership with the European Parliament, the Italian EU Presidency 2014, the Council of the EU, the European Commission, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Club of Venice.*

Over 700 communication experts gathered on 15 and 16 October to discuss the state of EU and government communication in Europe. They listened to keynote speeches from top speakers such as the European Council president Herman Van Rompuy, the French advertising guru Jacques Séguéla and his Austrian innovation colleague Dietmar Dahmen, the Swedish internet evangelist Joakim Jardenberg and the Danish journalist and author Per Nyholm.

But most of all the participants took part in plenty of lively interactive debates and conversation sessions, sharing their personal experiences and views on the future of (EU) communication.

On the state of public communication in general the communication professionals

- agreed on the increasing importance of participatory policy processes and co-creation by the citizens;
- had diverging views on the use and methodology of branding for territories and institutions;
- called for more dialogue with communication partners such as media companies and advertising agencies;
- showed a willingness for more innovation and creativity in government communications.

Many of the debates also covered the state of play and the future challenges of EU communications. Here the practitioners

- called for better coordination of institutions' communication strategies, both among the EU institutions and among the different levels of governance (EU, national, regional, local);
- asked for a less centralised communication strategy and communication budget, making use of the potential and networks at local level;
- asked for an appealing narrative on Europe, based on a story of shared values and tailor-made local evidence.

The future of EU communications remains on the agenda with the ongoing debates about the institutions' strategy at the start of their new legislature and the recently adopted opinion of the Committee of the Regions on reconnecting Europe with its citizens.

On the occasion of the EuroPCom conference three communication projects received European Public Communication Awards. The competition winner was the Finnish project "Faktabaari", which had added depth and balance to the public debate on the European elections. The second prize went to Carinthia's "Servus-Srečno-Ciao" TV programme, with the French government's initiative "Le joli mois de l'Europe" taking the third award.

All presentations, video recordings, pictures and other conference material can be downloaded at <http://www.cor.europa.eu/europcom>.





*More money for local EU communications – More dialogue with the public on Europe at city and region level – Better coordinated branding strategies for EU institutions: These are just some of the recommendations in the Committee of the Regions' opinion on "Reconnecting Europe with its citizens".*

In the wake of the last European elections and at the start of a new EU legislature, the Committee of the Regions adopted an own-initiative opinion on the future communication approach for the EU and its institutions. The opinion "Reconnecting Europe with its citizens: more and better communication at local level" was drafted by Christophe Rouillon, mayor of Coulines and vice-president of the Association of French Mayors. It highlights the need to rethink the EU approach to communication: more interaction with and among citizens, increased involvement of local and regional politicians and public communicators, greater decentralisation of the EU communication budget and initiatives, and better coordination among the communication services of the EU institutions. It also includes some specific proposals for a joint EU communication strategy 2014-2020.

The full text of the opinion can be found on the EuroPCOM and CoR websites.

### Tom de Smedt

Tom De Smedt holds Master's degrees in communication sciences and business communication. From 2000 until 2009 he was the head of the communication service of Ghent University. After this he was appointed as an advisor for the government of Flanders, developing the international communication strategy of the region.

Tom joined the European Committee of the Regions in the beginning of 2011, coordinating EuroPCOM and other European communication projects.

He is also an assistant lecturer in communications at Ghent University.



# I

# SHOW & TELL WHAT EUROPE DOES FOR ITS CITIZENS

#EUROPCOM

EXPLAIN WHAT WE'RE DOING IN THE 24 LANGUAGES OF THE EU

GET THE CITIZENS TO SAY WHAT THEY THINK EVEN IF IT IS NEGATIVE

THERE'S STILL ROOM FOR MANOUVRE!!

A SINGLE NARRATIVE FROM BRUSSELS

LOCAL PARTIES ARE CONTAMINATED BY THE EU

WORK TOGETHER

SHARE THE WORK



WITH POSSIBILITY TO PERSONALISE IT!

GET SPORTS, ARTS PEOPLE AND CELEBS ON BOARD...

LOCAL NEEDS

EUROPEAN AMBITIONS

CAN'T COMPARE EUROPE TO BUSINESS



THERE DOES NOT HAVE TO BE A CONFLICT



YES, THERE ARE FRUSTRATIONS

THE EUROPEAN BOAT IS SINKING!

BUT WE MUST MANAGE AND CHANNEL THESE

IDEAS TO... civex@cor.europa.eu



dum.../2014



# European Union communications as part of government communications

By Villu Känd

Over ten years ago, in January 2004, a seemingly small, but substantially meaningful structural change was made in the Government Office – by integrating the European Union Information Secretariat and the Government Press Office, the Government Communication Unit was born.



Europe day 2013 © photographer\_Mardo\_Mannimagi (It is Europe Day on 9 May. A big family event involving the Member States' embassies is held annually in the Freedom Square in Tallinn to celebrate this day.)

The European Union is engaged in almost all walks of life and Estonia's positions on EU initiatives and drafts are drawn up by the ministries according to their governing areas. Thus, the planning and organising of communications is the responsibility of the ministries.

The EU Information Secretariat of the Government Office had been carrying out significant work in cultivating the awareness of the Estonian people many years before EU accession. It also played a significant role in ensuring that the decision made in the referendum in 2003 would be based on knowledge, not emotions.



5 years in the EU (On 1 May, it will be 10 years since Estonia joined the European Union. Midterm reviews about Estonia's progress as a Member State were also conducted five years ago at a conference held in the National Library, which was organised by the Government Office.)

After the positive vote it was time to think about the role of the EU communicators subsequent to joining the EU. When considering the situation, it was found that once Estonia had become a member of the Union, communications related to the EU were no longer a specific project, rather they formed a part of general government communications. Therefore the Information Secretariat and the Press Office were merged into one. The reason behind the change of name for this new unit was an understanding that the unit's work was not solely focused on press activities (or media relations), but also on bilateral communications with various target groups – citizens, journalists, non-governmental organisations, entrepreneurs, etc.

At first, this step created perplexity in some circles and even raised a question concerning whether Estonia no longer considers the information concerning the European Union to be important. But as time went on, the logic behind this step became more and more clear.

In a situation where Estonia, as a full Member of the European Union, participates in the decision-making process and our EU-policy is designed by our government, it is logical that information concerning these activities belongs within the scope of government communications. Therefore the central role in European Union communications became the job of the government.



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## The aim is to bring the European Union closer to the people

However, EU related communication isn't solely about informing the public about government decisions. Since Estonia was a new member of the Union, efforts had to be made to improve people's level of knowledge about the European Union in general.

Actually, the purpose of these activities was and still is to bring the EU "closer" to people, which means that the European Union should not be talked about in the third person. A joint sense of identity, shared values, and solidarity in times of both joy and concern – these are the irreplaceable elements in the source of strength that will carry on the idea of Europe.

This work began many years before joining the EU, already in 1997, when the European Affairs Committee of the Estonian Parliament and the Committee of Senior Officials put in place the principles of EU communication.

A substantial extension to the government's EU information unit – the Information Secretariat and later the Information Service – were the regional Euro-promoters' networks. The officials of the county governments that had established the networks were disseminating information on the EU at the grassroots level. It was a well-functioning structure, because the strength of the county governments lies in a good understanding of the local authorities, the people and the context, as well as having expe-

rienced personnel and a concentration of competence, central location and certain technical resources.

By today, the regional EU information network has been merged with the network of the European Commission, Europe Direct. On the European scale, 400 info points operate under this designation, with the mission to inform the public about the European Union and about possibilities for the citizens of the Union; and to increase awareness about the founding principles, main policies and support programmes of the Union. In Estonia, there are nine such info points. In addition to the European Commission, they are funded by the Government Office and the County Governments.



EU information materials (Various information materials have always gone hand in hand with the EU outreach activities)

**Villu Känd** graduated from Tartu University as an Estonian philologist in 1986.

He has been working as a journalist for many years collaborating with the Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty since the end of 80's. In 1996 Villu joined the RFE/RL staff in Prague. He was the last Director of the Estonian Broadcast Service when RFE/RL stopped broadcasting to the Baltic countries in 2004.

Villu joined the Government Office (State Chancellery) in 2004 as the Head of EU Information. Currently he manages and coordinates the information related to the European Union and targeted at the general public and the media according to the activities of the Prime Minister and the Government and Estonia's EU policy.



One of the reference points of the information network has been and still is the European Union Information Centre in the National Library of Estonia, which also has a free EU hotline. The role of the physical information centres has decreased significantly, of course, as the information age progresses, because answers to many interesting questions are now found with the help of Google.

But the need to provide a possibility for discussion on various topics related to the EU has remained; it is even more necessary as the policy-makers themselves increasingly encourage holding debates on the future of the European Union. Yet, for such a discussion, knowledge is needed. The representatives of the European Union's institutions in Estonia also provide knowledge about the European Union in general and offer possibilities for discussion.

## Those who know more are more supportive

Communication of Estonia's EU related policy still belongs directly in the government's sphere. Therefore, the planning and organising of communications is the responsibility of the ministries.

In everyday work, this is reflected mostly in informing the public about the work of a minister or an official in the Council of the European Union and in its working parties. Almost every week, the government confirms the positions for the next Council meeting at its session. Understandably, the cabinet also discusses the agenda of the upcoming European Summits.

The communications professionals should note that regarding the Estonian people, there is a strong link between interest and attitude towards the European Union. Those who have more knowledge about the EU are prone to support the EU more strongly; and vice versa.

Does this mean that we can measure the effectiveness of the our activities by the support shown for the European Union? To a certain extent, definitely. But it also very much depends on the economic situation of the country, the popularity ratings of the government authorities and the governing parties; and primarily, on the attitudes of the spokespersons. Fortunately, there have never been any influential anti-EU people in Estonia and even if there have been some sceptical notes from time to time, they usually do not find recognition.

The proof of this is in the level of support of the Estonian people for the European Union, which has been increasing over the years and is currently among the highest in the EU. The same goes for the single currency of Europe, for which support increased even during the crisis of the Eurozone.



Greenwave (In spring, 2007 a tree-planting campaign named Greenwave was inaugurated to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome. The Estonian Parliament and members of the government, the diplomatic corps, and representatives of institutions of the European Union, municipal leaders and representatives of enterprises that had supported the campaign were also invited to the planting event.)

There are other Member States that have not been that successful regarding public opinion. To say that it is due only to communication errors might be an exaggeration. If leading politicians blame the European Union for the economic difficulties of the country, rather than looking in the mirror, then it can't be expected that the people of this country would have great support towards the EU.

It is clear that the communication strategies, messages, target groups, channels, etc. of the Member States differ even on common, Europe-wide issues, and the same goes for the results. If we want to conduct a common European policy, it is beneficial to coordinate the communications on an international level.



The Club of Venice (In June, 2013, the meeting was held in Estonia for the first time. The event was organised by the Government Office.)

## The independent Club of Venice

The so-called Club of Venice is a unique forum that links the Member (and candidate) States of the EU and its institutions. It is where communications professionals from different countries can exchange useful experience. The members of the club meet twice a year – in the autumn in Venice (the Club was established on the initiative of Venice's authorities) and in the spring in some other European capital. There are also thematic workshops in addition to the plenary meetings.

The fact that this is an independent association, where the rules are laid down by the members themselves and where all participants are equal, ensures a free and open discussion at the meetings.

Together with the expansion of the European Union, the club has also increased in size and the topics discussed have changed. When the Club was established in 1986, the European Community comprised only 12 Member States. The Eastern and Central European countries could only dream of joining and only the boldest visionaries thought about a common currency. Far in the unforeseeable future, the first crisis was waiting to happen.

The agendas of the meetings always reflect new challenges and topical issues: the lingering on-going economic crisis; the Euro-scepticism that is rearing its head here and there; and now, the problems related to Ukraine and Russia. Time and again the issues tackled are the new media, new technological possibilities and the quickly changing habits of media consumers.

These are the challenges that all communications professionals have to face, to a greater or lesser extent, both in the Member States of the European Union and in its institutions. The key to handling these challenges lies in cooperation with each other, experience and professionalism.

# CLUB OF VENICE

## Programme 2015-2018

(as of 24 April 2015)



### 2015

Sofia, 26-27 March 2015  
Seminar on Digital Communication Trends  
(in cooperation with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation,  
the Wilfried Maertens Centre and SEECOM)

Vienna, 11-12 June 2015  
Plenary meeting

Brussels (or another MS' capital), autumn 2015 (date to be defined)  
Thematic seminar + preparation plenary meeting

Milano, 22-23 October (dates to be confirmed)  
Plenary meeting

### 2016

Brussels (or other MS' capital), February/March 2016  
Thematic seminar

The Hague, May 2016  
Plenary meeting

Brussels (or other MS' capital), October 2016 (tbc)  
Seminar + preparation of the plenary meeting

Venice, November 2016  
Plenary meeting

### 2017

Brussels (or other MS' capital), early spring 2017  
Thematic seminar

Malta, 18-19 May 2017 (dates to be confirmed)  
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

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