FOCUS ON

**Venice plenary (on line event),
December 2020:**

crisis communication : strengthening resilience

**3rd Euro-Med communicators'
videoconference (ICMDD/COV), November 2020:**

evidence-based public discussion on migration

**1st meeting of the OECD Experts Group
on communication (on line event), September 2020:**

Europeans in search of shared identity

Webinar on cooperation in crisis communication, June 2020

Communicating Europe:

shaping a common identity

The dark side of the internet

Club of Venice | Club de Venise

SUMMARY

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Je vous écris de la zone rouge, niveau 4, phase 2.b … partiellement confiné et en télétravail

Par Philippe Caroyez et Vincenzo Le Voci

« *Je sais de science certaine (…) que chacun la porte en soi, la peste, parce que personne, non, personne au monde n'en est indemne. Et qu'il faut se surveiller sans arrêt pour ne pas être amené, dans une minute de distraction, à respirer dans la figure d'un autre et à lui coller l'infection. Ce qui est naturel, c'est le microbe. Le reste, la santé, l'intégrité, la pureté, si vous voulez, c'est un effet de la volonté et d'une volonté qui ne doit jamais s'arrêter* ».

Albert Camus, « *La peste* ». Gallimard, Paris, 1947.

Comme l'*homme fou* de Nietzsche, en plein jour avec une lanterne, je viendrais inciter chacun à (re)lire « La peste » et t'interpeller « petit homme » – communicateur public de profession – pour te demander (si tu y consens) où se situe ta place et comment tu la trouves dans ce chaos ?

Pour savoir comment tu fais. Ou mieux, comment ferais-tu ? … puisque que tu te dis toujours tiraillé entre le principe de réalité – ce qu'on te permet (par habitude, politiquement, institutionnellement, budgétairement, même techniquement en fonction des outils à ta disposition, …) et ce que tu ferais si-tu-le-pouvais !

Et moi, qu'aurais-je fait ?

Et moi … qu'ai-je fait ?

La séparation entre la communication politique partisane et la communication publique est un acquis. Ce serait, par contre, illusoire et même un non-sens de séparer communication politique gouvernementale et communication publique.

La première marque la cadence et ses tenants autorisent ou pilotent la seconde, d'autant en situation de crise. Quoiqu'il puisse en être concrètement, les deux ne font d'ailleurs qu'un dans la perception de ceux à qui elles s'adressent ou qui la commentent.

A cet égard, beaucoup d'analystes et commentateurs de la communication des autorités publiques s'accordent de nos jours pour diagnostiquer un changement (radical) de paradigme, que Stéphane Fouks (Vice-Président du groupe Havas) dans un livre récent n'hésite pas à qualifier – ni plus ni moins – de « *tournant anthropologique dans l'histoire de la communication* »[1].

Même si ces phénomènes sont déjà à l'œuvre, il est exact que la situation que nous vivons actuellement fait se manifester, avec plus d'acuité, la « mondialisation en direct », sous nos yeux, un monde résolument numérisée, le primat de l'image (sur tout le reste des messages et des communications) et le tout à l'instant, avec comme corolaire le règne de l'émotion.

Ce n'est pas forcément et a priori négatif, nous savons mieux que quiconque que la publicité et la communication publique savent (et doivent parfois) en jouer.

Le problème surgit si on y succombe totalement ou si, comme dans la crise de la covid-19 et la communication particulièrement nécessaire dans ce cadre, il faut particulariser l'état de l'épidémie, du système sanitaire et des mesures prises ou annoncées à un pays, voire à des portions de territoire et/ou à des groupes spécifiques – d'autant si des niveaux différenciés de pouvoir sont concernés ; si les mesures doivent se justifier, et se comprendre et être acceptées, dans une stratégie à plus ou moins long terme, qui par nature ne montre pas ses effets dans l'immédiat ; si il faut assurément faire davantage appel à la raison de tous plutôt qu'à l'émotion, à l'explication plus qu'aux images.

Ce problème peut être vu, sans simplification abusive, comme la cohabitation de deux systèmes de communication devant néanmoins se rejoindre.

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1   Dans son excellent dernier ouvrage « Pandémie médiatique. Com de crise / Crise de com ». Plon, Paris 2020 (182 pages).

Celui de l'émetteur public (fondé sur le bien commun, forcément contraint par l'état des choses, devant composer, prenant des mesures à distance, se laissant guider par la raison et des experts, devant viser le plus long terme, ...) et celui du récepteur (concerné par sa situation personnelle ou catégorielle, vivant l'état des choses comme souvent des défauts de prévoyance ou des mesures incohérentes, peu attentif au compromis, influencé par les commentaires et images en tous sens, vivant les mesures concrètement et les adaptant à sa manière, soucieux de l'immédiat, ...).

Sans verser dans l'idéologie partisane, on pourrait aussi parler de deux systèmes de valeurs qui peuvent diverger (d'autant avec la crise) sur des éléments essentiels comme : le travail, la santé, l'écologie, la consommation, la qualité de la vie, la (re)valorisation sociale de certaines professions, la solidarité, le rôle des corps intermédiaires, la subsidiarité dans l'action sociale et politique, la participation citoyenne et le débat public, ...

Il ne s'agit bien sûr que d'une image pour l'explication ; la réalité est bien plus nuancée et il serait trop tentant et exagéré d'y plaquer, d'un côté la pratique d'une communication publique qui reste figée dans ses vieilles méthodes, ses discours et canaux

(dé)passés, et de l'autre des citoyens (au sens large) qui seraient « déjà plus avancés » avec un pied dans le « monde d'après ». Il ne s'agit pas du « citoyen du XXIe siècle » confronté à une « administration du XXe siècle »... mais nous devons, cependant, être attentifs à ce que ce ne soit pas ou ne devienne pas le cas !

Dans ces pages nous abordons en partie de ces questions ; nous en discuterons plus en profondeur lors de la prochaine plénière du Club.

Gageons qu'il y a beaucoup, encore, à apprendre de nos expériences professionnelles vécues et mises en œuvre lors de cette crise sans précédent.

Les prochaines étapes sont à coup sûr, après l'hiver, la vie qui devrait se « normaliser » et la cohabitation avec le virus SRAS CoV-2... et les actions de communication relatives à la vaccination, par les autorités publiques, sur lesquelles nous reviendrons plus qu'assurément.

From your editor living under a partial lockdown and working from home in the red zone, level 4, phase 2.b...

By Philippe Caroyez and Vincenzo Le Voci

"I know positively, (...), I can say I know the world inside out, as you may see, that each of us has the plague within him; no one, no one on earth is free from it. And I know, too, that we must keep endless watch on ourselves lest in a careless moment we breathe in somebody's face and fasten the infection on him. What's natural is the microbe. All the rest, health, integrity, purity (if you like), is a product of the human will, of a vigilance that must never falter."

Albert Camus, *The Plague*. Translated from the French by Stuart Gilbert. First published by Hamish Hamilton, London in 1948.

Like Nietzsche's *madman* carrying a lantern in broad daylight, I would encourage you all to (re-)read The Plague and ask you (if you agree) in your 'foot soldier' role as a public communicator by trade what your place is and how you find it in this chaos, in order to learn what you are doing – or rather, what you would do.

After all, you always say that you are torn between the principle of reality – what you are allowed to do (out of habit, politically, institutionally, financially, even technically depending on the tools at your disposal, and so on) and what you would do if you could!

And what would *I* have done?

And what *have* I done?

The separation between party-political communication and public communication is a given. However, to separate a government's political communication from public communication would be illusory, or even nonsensical.

The former sets the pace for public communicators to then authorise or steer the latter, especially in a crisis situation. Moreover, whatever the practical specifics, the two are perceived as a single unit by the audience that they are addressing or that is commenting on the communication.

In this connection, today many analysts of public authorities' communication and commentators on this subject are in agreement that a (radical) paradigm shift is upon us – one which in a recent book, Stéphane Fouks (Vice-President of Havas Group) even describes as nothing more and nothing less than an "*anthropological turning point in the history of communication*" (²). Although these phenomena were already at work, the situation we are currently experiencing does indeed show, clearer than ever before, 'real-time globalisation', a highly digitalised world and the primacy of images over other messages and communications playing out before our very eyes – and all this is going on at the same time, with emotion coming to reign supreme.

This is not necessarily per se a negative development, as we know better than anyone that advertising and public communication can (and sometimes must) capitalise on these trends.

The problem arises if we succumb to them completely or if, as in the case of the COVID-19 crisis and the communication that is very necessary in this context, we must tailor our communication on the state of the epidemic, the health system and the measures taken or announced, whether to a country or to specific regions and/or groups – all the more so if differentiated levels of power are involved; if the measures must be justified, and be understood and accepted, as part of a more or less long-term strategy, which by its nature does not show its effects immediately; or if there is definitely a need to appeal more to everyone's reason than to their emotion, and more to explanation than to images.

This problem can be seen, without oversimplifying, as the co-existence of two communication systems which must still come together:

the public 'sender' of the communication (based on the common good, necessarily constrained by circumstances, having to make compromises, taking measures at a distance, being guided by reason and experts, needing to take a longer-term view, etc.) and the 'receiver' (affected by their situation as an individual or group, experiencing the circumstances as often a lack of foresight or an inconsistency of approach, not much concerned with compromise, influenced by comments and images from all directions, experiencing the measures in practice and tailoring them to their circumstances, concerned with the here and now, etc.).

Without falling into partisan ideology, we could also talk about two value systems that may diverge (all the more so as a result of the crisis) regarding key elements, such as work; health; the environment; consumption; quality of life; the social value attached to certain professions (or a reassessment of this); solidarity; the role of intermediary entities; subsidiarity in social and political action; citizen participation and public debate; and so on.

This is of course just a general pastiche provided for explanatory purposes; the reality is in fact much more nuanced, and tempting though it may be, it would be going too far to posit a dichotomy between, on the one hand, public communication which remains ossified in its old methods, its past (and outdated) discourse and channels, and, on the other hand, citizens (in the broad sense) who are supposedly a step ahead, with one foot in 'tomorrow's world'. It is not about 21st-century citizens faced with a 20th-century government apparatus, but we must take care to ensure that this does not become the case!

In this issue of Convergences we partially address these issues, and we will then discuss them in more depth at the Club's next plenary meeting.

It would be safe to say, though, that there is still a lot to learn from the professional experience we have ourselves lived and implemented during this unprecedented crisis.

The next steps, after the winter, will definitely be all about efforts to get life back to 'normal' and co-existing with the SARS CoV-2 virus, and communication drives from the public authorities about vaccination – and this is a subject we will certainly return to.

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2   In his excellent latest work, published in 2020, *Pandémie médiatique. Com de crise / Crise de com* [Media pandemic – Crisis communication/Communication crisis]. Paris: Plon (182 pages).

Club of Venice Plenary Meeting

3-4 December 2020 - on line event (ZOOM platform)

PROVISIONAL Agenda

as of 30.11.2020

Meeting languages: Italian, French and English (interpretation provided)

Thursday, December 4th 2020 (9:00 - 12:30)

9:00 – 9:15	**Opening Session**

Welcome statements - representatives of the hosting Italian authorities and the European Institutions

- **Diana AGOSTI,** Head of Department for the European Policies, Presidency of the Council of Ministers
- **Carlo CORAZZA,** Head of the European Parliament Office in Italy
- **Antonio PARENTI**, Head of the European Commission's Representation in Italy
- **Simone VENTURINI,** Alderman for social cohesion, Municipality of Venice

9:15 - 9:45	**Key addresses**

- **Enzo AMENDOLA,** Minister for European Affairs, Italian Government (tbc)
- **Stefano ROLANDO,** President of the Club of Venice

9:45 – 12:30	**Plenary session**

"COVID-19 as a crucial challenge for strategic communication"

- analysing communication on the impact of pandemic: between credible narratives and uncertainties
- synchronies and incoherencies: governments, institutions and scientific communities
- the role of mass media and social networks
- the role of civil society
- public opinion and citizens' behaviour

Moderator: Erik DEN HOEDT, Director, Public Information and Communication, Netherlands, Ministry of General Affairs - member of the Steering Group of the Club of Venice

Key Note speaker: Prof. Alberto MANTOVANI, Scientific Director, 'Humanitas' Hospital, Milan

Panellists:

- **Prof. John CHRYSOULAKIS,** Secretary-General for Public Diplomacy and the Greeks Abroad, Hellenic Government
- A representative from the Italian Ministry of Health (TBC)
- **Irene PLANK,** Germany, Director of Communications, Federal Foreign Office
- **Miriam van STADEN,** Netherlands, communication specialist, Government Communication Academy, Ministry for General Affairs
- **Louis RIQUET,** France, Director of Communications, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs
- **Daniel HOLTGEN,** Director of Communications, Council of Europe
- **Tina ZOURNATZI,** European Commission Directorate-General for Communication, Head of Strategic Communications
- **Philipp SCHULMEISTER,** European Parliament Directorate-General for Communication, Head of the Public Opinion Monitoring Unit
- **Meletios DIMOPOULOS,** Rector and Professor of Hematology and Oncology, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
- **Christophe ROUILLON,** Member of the European Committee of the Regions, Mayor of Coulaines
- **Pier Virgilio DASTOLI,** President of the European Movement - Italy

14:15 - 17:30 | Plenary session

ROUND TABLE: "Strategic communication challenges: an insight into the other global crises: migration, climate change/environmental risks, socio/economic constraints, geo-political instabilities, terrorism and other hybrid threats"

- communication during the implementation of crisis response mechanisms
- building narratives and capacities and tackling disinformation
- surveys and lessons learning
- monitoring and evaluation
- synergies between communication and the media sector

Moderator: Danila CHIARO, Programme Manager, Regional Coordination Office for the Mediterranean, International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

Key Note speaker: Lutz GÜLLNER, Head of the "Strategic Communications and Information Analysis" Division, European External Action Service (EEAS)

Panellists:

- **Nicola VEROLA,** Central Director for European Integration, Deputy Director-General for Europe, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- **Ave EERMA,** Estonia Government Office, Strategic Communication Adviser, Chair of the IPCR/Crisis Communication Network (CCN) (joint contribution with Elpida CHLIMINTZA, Coordinator of the IPCR CCN, DG RELEX, Civil Protection Unit, Council of the EU)
- **Craig MATASICK,** Policy Analyst, Open and Innovative Government Division, Public Governance Directorate, OECD
- **Katju HOLKERI,** Finland, Chair of the OECD Working Party on Open Government, Head of the Governance Policy Unit, Public Governance, Ministry of Finance
- **Karolina WOZNIAK,** European Parliament, Directorate-General for Communication, Web communication Team Coordinator
- **Marco RICORDA,** Communications Manager, Regional Coordination Office for the Mediterranean, International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)
- **Oliver VUJOVIC,** Secretary-General of the South-East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO)
- **Nikola HOŘEJŠ,** International Affairs Programme Director, Czech Republic, Society and Democracy Research Institute (STEM)
- **Paul BUTCHER and Alberto-Horst NEIDHARDT,** Policy Analysts, European Policy Centre (EPC)
- **Eva GARZÓN HERNÁNDEZ,** Global Displacement Lead, OXFAM Intermón

Friday, December 4th 2020 (9:30-12:45)

9:30 - 12:30

ROUND TABLE:

"The impact of the different crises on public diplomacy, nation branding and reputation management"

- geo-political challenges: what has changed: the demolition of public diplomacy strongholds, the weakening of soft diplomacy and cultural diplomacy: how to work together to recover countries' and institutions' reputation
- 5G and artificial intelligence in the international relations
- re-building cooperation and re-generating mutual trust
- building alliances with the media, civil society and the academic world

Moderator: Vincenzo LE VOCI, Secretary-General of the Club of Venice

Key Note speaker: Robert GOVERS, specialist in public diplomacy and reputation management, author of the book "Imaginative Communities: Admired cities, regions and countries"

Panellists:

- **Alex AIKEN,** United Kingdom, Executive Director, Government Communication Service
- **Imrich BABIC,** Slovakia, Head of the Strategic Communication Unit, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs
- **Amb. Rytis PAULAUSKAS,** Lithuania, Director of the Communication and Public Diplomacy Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- **Michaël NATHAN,** France, Director of the Government Information Service (S.I.G.)
- **Amb. Viktoria LI,** Sweden, Head of the Communication Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- **Igor BLAHUŠIAK,** Czech Republic, Office of the Government of the Czech Republic, Director of the European Affairs Communication Department
- **Stefano ROLANDO,** President of the Club of Venice, Professor of Theoretics and Techniques of Public Communication at the IULM University of Milan
- **Paolo VERRI,** Public Branding specialist, former director of "Matera European Capital of Culture 2019"
- **Christian SPAHR,** Secretary-General of the Assembly of European Regions (AER)
- **Anthony ZACHARZEWSKI,** Founder and Director of The Democratic Society

12:30 – 12:45

Closing Session

- Reflections on the issues emerged during the plenary meeting
- Planning for 2021, with focus on:
  - * London 4th Stratcom seminar (February 2021)
  - * Open Government/Capacity Building joint seminar (March 2021)
  - * Greece seminar (April 2021) (tbc)
  - * Serbia - spring plenary (June 2021)
  - * Work in synergy with international partner organizations
- Publication to celebrate the 35 years of activity of the Club of Venice

Strategy against the COVID-19 pandemic and other crises:
the case study of Greece

By John Chrysoulakis

Introduction

Greece has responded swiftly to the pandemic and has effectively limited infections following a preventive strategy, during the first phase of COVID-19. In the beginning of November, the Greek Government announced new measures against the second wave of the pandemic and a month-long program came into force to try and stop the spread of COVID-19 and to avoid a universal lockdown, which would hurt the economy and society.

According to the "8th Enhanced Surveillance Report", in spite of the recent surge in infections, Greece has to date managed to contain the spread of the corona virus comparably well, also thanks to a timely response in regions facing an increase in the number of new cases. The authorities are strengthening the preparedness of the health-care system and expanding the testing capacity, a set of fiscal and liquidity measures aiding persons and businesses affected by the pandemic has been adopted and is continuously adapted and an ambitious structural reform programme has been implemented to reinvigorate the economic and social recovery. At the same time, Greece has faced other major crises such as the sustained migration pressures and the heightened geopolitical tensions in the region because of Turkey's aggressive policy in the Eastern Mediterranean.

1. Pandemic and Greek Government's strategy

The report of Enhanced Surveillance concludes that in spite of the adverse circumstances caused by the pandemic, Greece has taken the necessary actions to achieve its due specific commitments.

A comprehensive strategy including measures to protect the life of Greek citizens, to support the economy and increase productivity growth, has been implemented by combined actions of National, Regional and Local authorities and organizations.

1.1. Vaccination strategy

The country has already secured significant quantities of vaccines while the Ministry of Health has announced a detailed vaccination plan for the population and preparations are already intensive. First of all, vaccines will be made - as the Prime Minister has stated - free of charge. Regarding the organization of the vaccination, there will be 1,018 vaccination centers throughout Greece that will be able to serve 2,117,440 citizens per month.

If more vaccines come at the same time and additional vaccination centers are needed, this will be dealt with as well. In any case, vaccination will start for the health workers, followed by the vulnerable groups (over 65 years or with underlying diseases) and then the general population.

Health professionals will be vaccinated in Health Centers, Hospitals and Health Structures. Employees and guests in nursing homes will be vaccinated from 65 mobile units within 10 days. Staff and prison inmates will be vaccinated by nearby medical staff. Refugees and migrants will be vaccinated by the medical staff at the 34 Accommodation Centers, in the 6 reception centers as well as in the 8 pre-departure centers.

1.2. Support the Economy

As far as the Economy is concerned, the Greek government responded to this unprecedented health crisis with substantial packages to strengthen the health system, buttress incomes and liquidity, protect the most vulnerable groups of citizens and support sectors most affected by the shock, such as trade, technology and innovation, industrial production and tourism. In parallel and in order to reinvigorate the economic and social recovery an ambitious reform programme focused on boosting growth and investment has been fully implemented.

The measures taken are acknowledged as being in the right direction by our European partners. In particular, the "8th Enhanced Surveillance Report confirms that the Government, despite the crises, continues carrying out the reforms. It also underlines the contribution of the coherent package of measures to support households and businesses, totaling € 24 billion for 2020, in tackling the economic consequences of the coronavirus pandemic and in particular in supporting the people of work, strengthening liquidity in the real economy and stimulating social cohesion.

The Report also points out the successful strengthening of the State Budget, through debt issues with historically low borrowing costs in recent months, whereas "green light" is signaled for the release of the 4th installment of Eurozone Central Bans' profits from Greek bond holdings (SMPs and ANFAs). This is the 3rd installment in a row that is released under the Government of Kyriakos Mitsotakis, within one year, boosting, in total, the State Fund by 2.05 billion Euros.

Concerning the Recovery Fund, Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis stressed that this plan serves two objectives: responds to the ongoing issues of the current situation, prioritizing the protection and stimulation of employment and at the same time it is an opportunity for a radical transformation of the national economy towards an extrovert, innovative development model, which will signal per se how Greece will be in the future.

It is a Recovery Fund that breaks down the taboo regarding joint debt issuance, thus transferring resources to the members who

need it the most. It marks, therefore, a historic moment in the course of the European Union.

1.3. Fiscal targets

It has to be underlined that Greece has successfully returned to the international bond market and rating agencies have improved the country's sovereign rating. The economy has become more open, despite the COVID-19 shock.

Systematic efforts towards economic recovery have been successful, as the budget shifts gradually back to a primary surplus and the public debt ratio is projected to start declining again, backed by low interest rates. The European Central Bank's decision to include Greek government securities in its asset purchase programmes, have contained bond yields below the levels of mid-2019.

1.4. Increasing productivity growth

Increasing productivity growth is the key to raising living standards and offsetting the large negative effect of demographics.

The Greek Government made additional efforts to reduce barriers to competition, especially in professional services and increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the public administration (including the justice system).

The Government continues its efforts:

1. to enhance the rule of law, thus reducing the costs and uncertainties of doing business in Greece, attracting more foreign direct investment, and helping to rebuild trust in public institutions.
2. to reduce red tape, raise accountability and efficiency in the public sector, including through the use of digital technologies, even though during the COVID-19 shutdown period.

The recent establishment of the independent National Transparency Authority is another important step towards the right direction to prevent and prosecute corruption, following international best practices.

2. Pandemic is not the only major crisis for Greece

A long lasting and recently heightened geopolitical tension in the region coincides with the corona virus pandemic. Turkey has been escalating its provocative, aggressive and illegal behavior. From August until now, Turkey has been constantly intensifying its illegal actions in the Eastern Mediterranean, flagrantly violating International Law, including the Law of the Sea and as
As Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nikos Dendias, stated (24.11.2020) Turkey is trying to forcefully create "faits accomplis" to the detriment of EU member states.

In combination with the unsolved on a national and European level migration issue, they constitute a threefold crisis challenge that Greece needs to respond, unlike any other EU Member State.

3. Public Diplomacy and its contribution to a recovery strategic plan

3.1. Greece among the top ten "soft power" countries

It is obvious that Greece's performance throughout the threefold crisis has been taken into account at international level. Greece, for the first time, was evaluated and ranked among the top ten "soft power" countries in the world, according to IFG-Monocle Soft Power Survey 2020.   It is an international survey of the nations whose softer tactics are getting results.
In the framework of the survey, it is noticed that:

3. Despite the pandemic, Greece is still on the road to recovery.
4. Despite reopening borders early, Greece fared well in the first wave of pandemic.
5. The 2019 election of Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis is paying off.
6. The Hellenic Statistical Authority reported this summer that Greece's unemployment rate had dipped in 2020, with industries such as manufacturing reporting growth.
7. Athens is also seeing young Greeks return from abroad to set up ventures at home.
8. Diplomatic disputes with Turkey have escalated over competing claims on gas reserves and maritime rights in the Eastern Mediterranean. But this has only prompted Greece to up its diplomatic game further: Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias has made efforts to meet with his Cypriot and Israeli counterparts and fellow EU member nations.

The metrics which contributed in shaping the ranking of Greece were the number of Embassies abroad (82), the World Heritage Sites (18), the foreign aid spend ($300m – Euro260m), and the Greek islands as tourist destination (super-power superstar).

3.2. Public Diplomacy structure in Greece

All of the above already constitute a powerful narrative that may pave the way for more growth. Our mission, in the next few years, is to signify a turning point for Greece in terms of enhancing extroversion and attracting large investment capital. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be at the forefront of this collaborative effort and Public Diplomacy will play a significant role in reestablishing Greece as a land of creativity, innovation and economic growth.
In Greece, Public Diplomacy is a horizontal policy assisting all forms of diplomacy (political, economic, cultural, educational, tourism). PD' s strategic plan is directed by the General-Secretariat for Public Diplomacy and Greeks Abroad and is conducted by 180 specialized Communication Counselors, graduates of the National School of Public Administration. These officers hold, to a large extent, postgraduate (including doctoral) degrees, are proficient in 3-4 foreign languages and have extensive experience in practicing Public Diplomacy both in Greece and abroad.

The General-Secretariat for Public Diplomacy and Greeks Abroad has a structure of 29 Public Diplomacy Offices worldwide operating at Embassies mainly in European countries, the USA, Russia, China and Australia. The goal is the network to be expanded in other geographical areas, such as Canada, South America, Africa and Asia, where there Greece has a strong interest, both in terms of investment and participation in international organizations, as well as in terms of Greek homogeneity, cradles of Hellenism and

philhellenism that need wider development and cultivation of relationships.

The objectives of Public Diplomacy of Greece is the recovery in all sectors, by bringing up the comparative advantages of our nation, which has been not only the bastion of universal values but also a conduit of cosmopolitanism, openness, resilience and creativity. In other words, it is time to "rediscover Greece". This requires sufficient strategic planning, hard work and believing in our ability to bring Greece among the most progressive and developed nations.

A good example is the milestone of the bicentennial celebration of the Greek War for Independence in 2021. This anniversary is a great opportunity to shed more light onto what our nation has achieved in these two centuries: the very establishment of our state, against all odds, as well as the fact that despite setbacks, wars and hardship, we managed to create a modern European country, which participates in international institutions, respects international Law and Human Rights, has international allies, shares universal values and supports peace and prosperity at all levels.

The Secretary General for Public Diplomacy & Greeks Abroad is the focus person of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to "Greece 2021" Committee on the bicentennial of the declaration of the Greek War of Independence (1821).

It has to be underlined that this is a collective effort, requiring teamwork and a vision shared by all participants, such as Greek Government, Embassies, Consulates and Public Diplomacy Offices, Greeks abroad, Greek Diaspora, Philhellenes and any citizen who wants to be inspired by Greek culture, way of thinking and living. So, this is a big challenge which encourages us to release all our creativity in order to set a successful case study and become a best practice for other countries.

Prof. John Chrysoulakis is a graduate of the School of Civil Engineering of the National Technical University of Athens, was awarded a Master's degree from a US university and a PhD from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. He currently holds the title of Professor Emeritus. He has taught at academic institutions in Greece as well as abroad.

He has worked as manager in the public and private sector, has been in charge of large European joint ventures for the production of new technologies, and has a significant International Administrative and Scientific work.

He was elected Vice-President of the International Association of Schools and Institutes of Administration and appointed as President of the National Centre for Public Administration and Local Government.

He has worked in many European countries and the USA, collaborating and communicating with many organizations and councils of local Greek communities. He has collaborated with many International Organizations and has participated in a large number of Councils, Committees and Conventions both in Greece as well as abroad.

He has a large number of publications and a significant work as an author.

3rd Euro-Mediterranean communicators' wo

COVID-19, desinformation and polarization:
What is next for the migration narrative in the Euro-Mediter

ICMPD/CoV videoconference - 11-12 November 2020

When asking citizens what migration in the Mediterranean looks like to them today, there is a strong likelihood that the images coming to mind are of refugee camps, border fences, boatloads of asylum seekers or episodes of unsuccessful integration initiatives. Most of the migration-related coverage in the region depicts a situation often described as "out of control"[1] and the prospect for serious, balanced and factual debate among governments, policy makers and citizens on this matter has never been harder. The reality is that the governmental authorities of the countries concerned and directly involved in this complex Mediterranean scenario are doing their utmost to ensure that all migration flows in the Euro-Mediterranean region be regular, legal, safe and documented. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this visual narrative with further sanitary, health and security concerns that significantly affect public perceptions and opinions to migration in the region.

Managing this new crisis is crucial, in particular because it constitutes an unprecedented, and for several aspects still totally unknown, challenge for our times. It is a real dramatic test for all public communicators, since it requires an enormous effort from governments, institutions and international organisations to maintaining public trust in explaining positions and behavioural changes while advancing in unchartered waters, and doing so at the same time in a coherent way. This is feasible but it must be supported by an integrated approach: competence, planning capacity, clear roles, responsibilities and resources must be conjugated with clear and objective narratives.

If public perceptions and consequently citizens' behaviours are the result of "narratives" rather than "reality", why should governments, public officials and migration policy makers beware of this? Can such a distorted narrative impair actual policy-making? The answer is clearly "yes" and this is why over the past few years ICMPD and the Club of Venice have tackled the issue of polarized migration narratives by proposing recommendations, organizing high-level events and ultimately running workshops for communicators in the field.

With these premises, the 3rd **Euro-Mediterranean Communicators' Workshop organized by the EUROMED Migration IV project** in collaboration with the Club of Venice will focus on the most current challenges to the implementation of balanced migration narratives, the elements that determine effective communication on migration and the future consequences related to the global COVID-19 pandemic. The objective of this workshop is to provide practical recommendations from prominent experts in the field that will help practitioners be better aware and prepared for such upcoming strenuous tests.

In particular, the workshop will focus on six main subjects:

- The state of play of migration narratives in 2020 in the Euro-Mediterranean region
- Effective communication on migration: a fundamental tenet for multilateral cooperation in the Mediterranean.
- Analysing the elements of the migration narrative to forecast its development
- What policy communication works for migration? Using values to depolarise
- How to Perform Impact Assessments: Key Steps for Assessing Communication Interventions
- Disinformation and its impact on migration narratives

The state of play of migration narratives in 2020 in the Euro-Mediterranean region

When we want to talk about migration narratives in the Euro-Mediterranean context, we must be aware that migration continues to be the major concern in the region and that the debate around this topic is more polarized than ever. As the COVID-19 pandemic redefined the concept of human mobility on both sides of the Mediterranean, governments and institutions have to reach out to the public in new ways and adapt to a changing narrative and a new political discourse around migration. With prominent institutional representatives and experts from the region, this session will take the stock of the current state of migration narratives from the perspective of international organizations and national governments as a crucial aspect of trust-building and accountability with the mainstream public.

Effective communication on migration: a fundamental tenet for multilateral cooperation in the Mediterranean.

As often mentioned in ICMPD reports, the migration narrative in the Euro-Mediterranean region is characterized by a strong polarization: humanitarian perspective versus security, challenge versus opportunity, emotions versus data and facts. Such a confrontational public discourse does not favour a wider understanding of migration and its context. Moreover, it exerts significant influence over the political leadership's ability to enact effective, evidence based and sustainable policies and it challenges multilateral cooperation among governments and international organizations in the region.

How can governments and institutions break this gridlock and move beyond such dichotomy? How can a "whole of migration" narrative improve multilateral cooperation? What are the best practices from the region that can help communication practitioners bring the focus back to the middle instead of feeding the extremes of the debate? This session will provide recommendations on how to promote effective communication

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1 ODI, Chatham House: Understanding public attitudes towards refugees and migrants

on migration within complex multilateral regional institutional settings.

Analysing the elements of the migration narrative to forecast its development

In order to understand the future of the migration narrative, it is fundamental to analyse its elements its recent history and its development. In the last few years, across the Euro-Mediterranean, polarized perceptions related to migration have urged a pressing need to counter harmful and inaccurate narratives about migration and migrants. Yet, evidence-based arguments have often failed to resonate with audiences, while misinformation and stereotypes have spread rapidly with negative implications. Public communicators and media professionals face such challenges every day, in a context where migration is often discussed as a "problem".

Terminology plays an important part in the construction of the public migration discourse. As the larger public often fails to differentiate between terms such as "migrants", "asylum seekers" and "refugees", more reflection is needed on language and on the use of labels. Furthermore, to promote a balanced narrative, those involved in communicating about migration must restore trust by understanding what drives their intended audience, how to identify effective messages and what messengers to enlist to help deliver impactful communications. Governments and key partners, including civil society, the private sector, the media and migrants themselves must work together to spread timely and meaningful messages to balance the public narrative especially in times of high uncertainty , polarization and a public health crisis.

How can governments, international organizations, academia and media professionals cooperate and promote balanced migration public narratives? How can they gain trust of their target audience? What are the key components of effective outreach strategies? This session will look into the different elements shaping the migration narrative today in order to forecast its development and address forthcoming challenges.

"What policy communication works for migration? Using values to depolarise" and How to Perform Impact Assessments: Key Steps for Assessing Communication Interventions

Studies of communication regarding migration have overwhelmingly focused on negative or unrepresentative portrayals of migrants in media, which are argued to often be hyperbolic in order to garner additional readers or viewers, or by political actors who adopt this biased approach to satisfy their own constituencies or use such frames for contingent strategic electoral reasons.

James Dennison, Head of the Observatory of Public Attitudes to Migration (OPAM) – the first observatory to collect and produce comprehensive, international data on public attitudes toward migration – will present his latest studies **"What policy communication works for migration? Using values to depolarise"** and **"How to Perform Impact Assessments: Key Steps for Assessing Communication Interventions"**.

The former provides a summary of key recommendations from existing best-practice guides for migration communication. As explained in the study, aligning one's migration policy communication with the target audience's values is likely to elicit sympathy for the message. Conversely, however, values-based messages that do not align with those of the audience are less likely to elicit sympathy and may elicit antipathy.

The latter brings together disparate terminology, findings and recommendations from the private and public sectors and academia to synthesise a set of five general steps for practitioners when performing impact assessments.

Dr. Dennison's intervention will provide an understanding of what values-based policy communication is and how, using robust data, government officials could communicate objectively and coherently policies that are reflecting universally recognised common values and are concordant with the expectations of their audiences in a way likely to elicit consideration and support.

Disinformation and its impact on migration narratives

The COVID-19 crisis has been accompanied by an acceleration of disinformation that has come to be known as the "infodemic" providing fertile ground around the migration debate for stoking both panic and distrust. Malicious anti-migrant rhetoric has long been a central theme within extremist mobilisation globally and a mainstay of disinformation campaigns. Anti-migrant networks in the Euro-Mediterranean region and beyond exploit the COVID-19 situation to spread disinformation targeting asylum seekers, refugees and other vulnerable populations on and offline. Social media, which has only grown in importance during lockdowns, has been the main amplifier of disinformation.

In this context, Paul Butcher and Alberto Horst-Neidhardt from the European Policy Centre (EPC), will present their work stemming from the *"Roundtable on disinformation about migration in the EU: Promoting alternative narratives"* and showcase an analysis of effective strategies to tackle disinformation, misinformation and targeted propaganda.

AGENDA

DAY 1 - Tuesday 10 November - Institutional roundtables

9:00 – 9:30 | **Institutional welcome and opening remarks**
- **Lukas Gehrke** - Deputy Director General, Director Policy, Research and Strategy, ICMPD
- **Stefano Rolando** - President of the Club of Venice
- **Emma Udwin** - Head of Task Force - Migration Assistance to Neighbouring Countries, Neighbourhood South, European Commission, Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations

9:30 - 9:45 | **Keynote speech** *by H.E. George William Vella, President of Malta*

9:45 – 10:45 | **Institutional roundtable "The State of Play of Migration Narratives in 2020 in the Euro-Mediterranean Region"**

Moderation by **Julien Simon**, Regional Coordinator for the Mediterranean, ICMPD
- **Adalbert Jahnz**, Spokesperson on migration, home affairs and citizenship, European Commission.
- **Fiorenza Barazzoni**, Director Department for the EU policies, office of the Internal Market and Competitiveness, Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Italy.
- **Ahmed Skim**, Director of Migration Affairs, Minister Delegate to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccans Residing Abroad, Government of Morocco
- **Nikoletta Kritikou**, Head of Press Office of the Alternate Minister for Migration & Asylum, Greece
- **Brigadier General Walid AOUN**, Chief of Rafic Hariri International Airport General Security Department

10:45 - 11:00 | **Coffee break**

11:00 - 12:30 | **Institutional roundtable "Effective Communication on Migration: a Fundamental Tenet for Multilateral Cooperation in the Mediterranean"**

Moderation by **Donya Smida**, Regional Portfolio Manager for the Mediterranean, ICMPD
- **Enas El-Fergany**, Director of Refugees, expatriates, and migration affairs department, League of Arab States
- **Imen Drissi**, Director of Affairs of Foreigners in Tunisia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Migration and Tunisians Abroad, Republic of Tunisia
- **Ambassador Amr El Sherbini,** Deputy Assistant Minister for Migration, Refugees and Combating Human Trafficking.
- **Hon. Yana Chiara Ehm**, Vice-President and President of the 3rd Standing Committee dealing with migration of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean
- **Anis Cassar**, Spokesperson, European Asylum Support Office (EASO)

12:30 - 14:30 | **Lunch break**

14:30 - 16:00 | **Roundtable "Analysing the elements of the migration narrative to forecast its development"**

Moderation by **Barbara Serra**, Aljazeera News Presenter.
- **Alexandra Young**, Director, International Migration Policy, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.
- **Nicola Frank,** Head of Institutional and International Relations, European Broadcasting Union (EBU)
- **Sherine El Taraboulsi-McCarthy**, Senior Research Fellow, Overseas Development Institute (ODI)
- **Jacopo Barigazzi**, Senior EU Reporter on migration and foreign policy, Politico Europe
- **Blanca Tapia**, Project Manager - Communicating Rights, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)
- **Khaled Elnimr**, Regional media officer – MENA region, European Investment Bank
- Q&As

DAY 2 - Wednesday 11 November – Technical workshops

9:30 – 9:40 | **Opening statement by Terezija Gras**

Terezija Gras, State Secretary for European and International Affairs, Republic of Croatia.

9:40 - 10:50 | **Workshop session "What policy communication works for migration? Using values to depolarise" and "How to Perform Impact Assessments: Key Steps for Assessing Communication Interventions"**

Moderation by **Marco Ricorda**, Communication Manager EUROMED Migration IV
- **James Dennison,** Head of the Observatory on Public Attitudes to Migration (OPAM) of the European University Institute (EUI)
- Q&As

10:50 – 11:00 | **Coffee break**

11:00 - 12:00 | **Workshop session "Disinformation about migration: Promoting alternative narratives in the Mediterranean and beyond"**

Moderation by **Marco Ricorda**, Communication Manager EUROMED Migration IV
- **Paul Butcher and Alberto Horst-Neidhardt,** Policy Analysts at the European Policy Centre (EPC)
- **Eva Garzon,** Oxfam Migration Thematic Lead and partner in Maldita Migración
- Q&As

12:00 - 13:00 | **Concluding Workshop session: What is next? Reflecting on future migration narratives in the Mediterranean and beyond.**

Moderation by **Marco Ricorda**, Communication Manager EUROMED Migration IV
- **Ana Feder,** Regional Portfolio Manager for the Mediterranean, ICMPD
- **Vincenzo Le Voci,** Secretary General Club of Venice
- **Golda El Khoury,** Director and Representative of UNESCO Cluster office for the Maghreb region
- **Michele Amedeo,** Head of CoTE Migration, European Commission, Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations

The 3rd Euro-Mediterranean Communicators workshop took place on 10-11 November 2020. The event was organised by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) within the framework of the EUROMED Migration IV (EMM4) programme and in coordination with the Club of Venice. EMM4 is an EU-funded initiative implemented by the ICMPD.

The workshop follows on the trajectory and results achieved by the first two communicators' workshops held respectively in 2018 and 2019. This innovative initiative aims to promote and enrich discussions on the role of institutional communication in generating a factual, evidence-driven and balanced narrative on migration in the Euro-Mediterranean region. In this sense, the Club of Venice brings its advanced expertise in promoting public communication as an instrument for more effective policy-making.

The workshop took place in the particular context of the Covid-19 pandemic. Over the past year, the pandemic has rattled public opinion across the region as governments have enacted lockdowns and restrictions measures to combat the virus' spread. Social discontent resulting from limitations on individuals' prerogatives to convene, assemble and travel is challenging governments, which must communicate clearly and convincingly to assuage fears and health-related concerns.

Internationally, the pandemic has brought to light the role of communicators in clarifying the terms of the debate and explain these policies' benefits to the wider community. This notably includes tackling rampant disinformation in order to protect national health and uphold scientific evidence. These challenges echo the adverse context experienced within the public discussion on migration. As highlighted in EMM4's communicators' workshop series, the current narrative in the region is heavily polarised, as the split between deeply entrenched anti-immigration views and proponents of a humanitarian stance seems to widen, jeopardising efforts for consensus-building and pragmatic policy-making.

Based on these few premises, ICMPD and the Club of Venice invited senior communicators and high level policy-makers from the Euro-Mediterranean region to convene and debate on the topic of "Covid 19, disinformation and polarisation: What is next for the migration narrative?". The workshop featured a rich and balanced line-up composed of high-level personalities, representatives of states and civil society organisations and eminent communication experts from the all around the world.

Lukas Gehrke, Deputy-Director of the ICMPD, welcomed participants by stressing ICMPD's commitment to consolidate the comprehensive dialogue framework on migration built under the EUROMED programme. The current transition to the programme's new phase, EUROMED Migration V, provides an opportunity to renew collaboration on the region's most prominent migration challenges, including correcting public misperceptions on this complex and polarising phenomenon. In this sense, his statement previewed two of the meeting's main recommendations: acknowledging the audience's opinions and beliefs as genuine and adopting value-based public communication.

Prof Stefano Rolando, President of the Club of Venice, argued in favour of sound public communication, notably to help EU institutions and member states stand up to emerging challenges. Drawing on the example of migration policy and the ongoing Covid-19 crisis, Prof. Rolando advocated strengthening the EU's

public communication as way to overcome policy dissonance and national fragmentation and re-assert the bloc's common values and priorities.

Emma Udwin, Head of Task Force Migration Assistance to Neighbouring Countries at DG NEAR pointed to the publication of the EU's new "Pact on Migration and Asylum" as an important milestone for European migration policy. In her statement, Ms Udwin stressed that clear and evidence-driven public communication will be instrumental to consolidate the pact's broader acceptance and implementation. She therefore welcomed the efforts of EUROMED Migration IV to restore facts and drive innovative communication solutions on this important yet cleaving topic.

The workshop had the privilege to feature an intervention from **His Excellency George Vella, President of the Republic of Malta.** In his allocution, President Vella addressed the societal dangers of an unbalanced narrative, outlining how stereotypes about migrants directly fuel hate speech and xenophobia among host communities. Malta's position as a frontline state has tested the island nation's welcome culture. However, and as President Vella indicated, the country has been leading the way in fostering inclusion of immigrants and asylum-seekers and preserving social cohesion. To illustrate this point, President Vella referred to the ICMPD-implemented "Migration Media Award" which encouraged fact-based migration reporting through capacity building of newsrooms and promotion of "journalistic excellence" in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

The first roundtable captured the migration narrative's dynamics in Europe and MENA countries. It discussed the actual drivers of polarisation, touching upon crucial issues such as media biases and recurrent terminology pitfalls.

Adalbert Jahnz, spokesperson on migration at the European Commission, stressed the Commission's commitment to lead by example and communicate in an objective and human manner on migration. Despite this, media framings tend to set the tone in the construction of narratives. As a result, stories of tension and conflict are disproportionately reflected in the overall coverage of migration. Jahnz concluded his remarks by advocating for stronger cross-country perspectives on migration.

Fiorenza Barazzoni director at the Presidency of the Italian Council of Ministers argued against the use of the term "crisis" to describe the current situation, underlining the significant drop in migration inflows experienced since 2015. She highlighted the Italian government's own ramped-up efforts to tackle negative perceptions and disinformation on immigration through targeted debunking campaigns.

Mr Ahmed Skim, Director of Migration Affairs at the Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs pointed that the current Covid-19 crisis reinforces the public's stigmatisation and prejudice against migrants, resulting in new challenges for public communicators. At various levels, Morocco is engaging stakeholders to foster a more conducive public communication on migration. Internationally, as co-chair of the Global Forum on Migration and Development's (GFMD) ad hoc working groups on migration narratives and the impact of Covid-19 on migrants, and domestically, via the organisation of public events raising awareness and offering platforms for exchange with migrant communities.

Ms Nikoletta Kritikou, Head of Press Office of the Greek Alternate Minister for Migration & Asylum offered a comprehensive account of Greece's approach to communicating on migration as the country keeps attracting international headlines for the situation in the Aegean reception centres.

Brigadier General Walid Aoun, Chief of Beirut Rafiq Hariri International Airport, informed the audience of measures taken in Lebanon to increase migrants' access to reliable information in the context of Covid. This forms part of a strategy to boost protection in line with human right principles.

A following high-level roundtable focused on leveraging international cooperation to balance the migration narrative. On this account, it featured contributions from various international organisations coping with distorted representations of migrants and migration in general.

Enas El-Fergany, Director of Refugees, expatriates, and migration affairs department at the League of Arab States highlighted her organization's key role in energising international discussion around migration, bridging Arab countries' position with the African Union and the EU. In this sense, it aims to coordinate and upscale Arab countries' response to the pandemic and, in particular, to enhance treatment granted to migrants and refugees in the region.

Imen Drissi, Director of Affairs of Foreigners at the Tunisian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, spoke about Tunisia's deep ties and excellent cooperation with EU MS on managing irregular migration and returns. In the meantime, she encouraged EU policy-makers to better integrate third countries' interests and mark a firmer discursive distinction between migration policy and security considerations.

Ambassador Amr El Sherbini, Deputy Assistant Minister for Migration at the Egyptian MFA, echoed the League of Arab States' position by emphasising the driving role played by regional migration dialogues in contributing to a better-informed narrative. A clear way forward for communicators is to integrate mobility's positive outcomes and trends, such as legal migration, in communication strategies.

The Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly's (PAM) Vice-President, Hon. Yana Chiara Ehm, eloquently illustrated how current misperceptions around the pandemic are harming migrants' rights and access to protection services. She argued in favour of renewed efforts towards amplifying migration's positive aspects and stories while addressing the role of the media in the construction of narratives.

Closing the panel, **Anis Cassar, Spokesperson at the European Asylum Support Office (EASO),** alerted on the "collective failure" arising from the unjustified crisis portrayal of migration since 2015, leading to profound misunderstanding and negative perceptions. Contrary to widely held beliefs, migration is neither a drain on state resources nor a threat for destination countries. Taking asylum management and EASO's action as an example, Mr Cassar reminded the audience that migration policy actually has a positive impact on the use of public resources.

Institutional Roundtable 3

This roundtable dealt with challenges and obstacles in the development of institutional campaigns on migration. The session notably provided an opportunity to reflect on various practices and initiatives, and to formulate concrete suggestions for a more balanced narrative. Importantly, speakers agreed on the crisis's opportunity to better align campaigns in the light of increasing awareness, especially among the "movable middle", of migration's positive outcomes.

Alexandra Young Director of International Migration Policy at Citizenship Canada, talked about efforts undertaken in Canada to foster a more nuanced and holistic understanding of migration. The country's focus on enhancing social cohesion has translated into spearheading efforts internationally, within the GFMD's ad hoc working group on the narrative on migration, but also at home since the government is about to launch an innovative global digital communication campaign promoting migration's positive stories. This initiative will consist in a "social media toolkit" allowing users to customise, share and promote content relating to migrants' contribution in Canada and beyond.

Nicola Franck, from the European Broadcasting Union presented the "New Neighbours" project. Produced in nine different European countries, this series of documentaries focused on host communities' perspectives and their stories of interaction with new immigrants. "New neighbours" has been acclaimed for reflecting the wide diversity of hosting environments and for participating to humanise the migration debate.

Sherine El Taraboulsi-McCarthy, from the Overseas Development Institute, linked the current polarisation on migration to the broader legacy of post colonialism in Europe. In this perspective, attitudes to (im)migration and the resulting public debate are rooted in deeper social positioning relating to racial issues. She urged policy-makers to "interrupt" the toxic treatment of migration by including more Southern-Mediterranean voices in the debate and by forging a whole-of-society consensus against online disinformation.

Jacopo Barigazzi from Politico Europe, concurred on these points, arguing that the constant association of migration and security in political spheres fuels anxiety among the public. Mr Barigazzi sees in the current discussion around essential workers an excellent opportunity to overturn this narrative and elicit public sympathy.

This stance was echoed in the presentation from **Khaled El Nimr, Regional media officer at the European Investment Bank.** Mr El Nimr underscored the Bank's continuous support towards inclusion of migrants in destination countries. To this end, he advocated shedding more light on the economic and social benefits of migrants' integration.

Blanca Tapia, Project Manager at the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) observed that migrants' voices are often omitted from public discourses. She argues that revealing these "missing stories" could help bridge the divide between migrants and host countries. FRA has also been engaging the media, providing dedicated training and expertise for journalists covering migration, in particular concerning legal terminology.

Dr James Dennison, head of the Observatory of Public Attitudes to Migration (OPAM) at the European University Institute, building on

the ongoing partnership between EUROMED Migration and OPAM, presented the findings of the publication "What communication works for migration policy? Using values to depolarise" published recently.

The report is geared towards enhancing the impact of communication campaigns on migration. Noting that values tend to drive people's attitudes vis a vis a specific topic, the author identifies distinct sets of values empirically found within both pro-migration and anti-migration segments of the population. On this basis, communicators are encouraged to first reflect upon the target audience's values, and second, leverage these values in campaigns in order to spark connections and increase chances of eliciting sympathy. Failure to read or integrate individuals' values in the process might result in indifference or outright rejection from the public.

This second working session tackled the issue of online disinformation on migration. Particularly manifest in the context of the Covid-19 crisis, disinformation exploits fears and anxieties to exacerbate polarisation and undermine the potential for consensual and pragmatic policy-making. Disinformation typically involves disseminating distorted information, falsehoods or half-truths with the intention to deceive and/or stir outrage against a particular group, institution or policy.

The session benefited from the experience of **Paul Butcher and Alberto Horst-Neidhardt, Policy Analysts at the European Policy Centre (EPC).** The EPC leads a research project entitled "Disinformation about migration in the EU: Promoting alternative narratives". Based on an analysis of about 1500 disinformation articles, the project reported the following trends: a) not all disinformation is outright wrong, in fact most articles analysed have been classified as "misleading" or "unverifiable" - making it more pernicious a threat b) Disinformation narratives differ according to the national context observed (even within the EU) and c) Disinformation messages respond to the news cycle (ex: health crisis, global compact on migration, etc).

With this information in mind, **Eva Garzon, Migration Lead at Oxfam**, set to share the experience of "Maldita Migracion", a referenced Spanish myth-busting portal. In similarity to the EPC's findings, most disinformation posts flagged on the website either are de-contextualised or lack any evidence to be sustained. Despite Maldita's success in fact-checking volumes of content, Ms Garzon underlined the necessity to devise holistic strategies to effectively combat disinformation: this includes acknowledging people's anxieties (unemployment, health, etc) as genuine and build on them to propose a message of hope and aspiration.

Workshop Conclusions: Formulating key recommendations for migration communicators

The workshop has highlighted critical issues in the development and reception of communication campaigns. Through the exchange of good practices and experience, it contributed to chart a way forward for practitioners in the field of migration communication. The following is an excerpt of recommendations discussed:

- Identifying appropriate messengers: practice shows that audiences are more receptive to messages formulated by

people they know and trust. In this case, community leaders, entrepreneurs, local figures or even celebrities are viable options.
- Clearly defining the target group and identifying its key values: the workshop draw attention on the need to accumulate knowledge on the targeted publics. The "movable middle" rightfully generates a lot of attention. Communicators should invest in understanding this group and its various components and build on value-based communication to mobilise with effect.
- Acknowledging people's fears and anxieties: specialists are adamant about not glossing over people's feelings, especially in times of high polarisation. Perceptions are rooted in real-world concerns about economic decline or globalisation. Communicators need to harness these feelings and not attempt to invalidate or suppress them.
- Formulating messages of aspiration: Positive messaging, rather than mere debunking, is more likely to create a horizon for sceptical groups to pin aspirations and hopes on.
- Adopting a whole-of-society approach: creating a more conducive public conversation on migration, and eradicating disinformation, demands the emergence of a broad, multi-stakeholder coalition. Public communicators need to keep engaging the media, online platforms and various agents with a stake in the debate to instigate a culture of ethical reporting and fact-based discourse.
- Promoting the positive contribution of migration: experts agree that migration is an inevitable phenomenon that carries mostly positive social and economic outcomes and enriches societies. Communicating transparently and aptly on migration's benefits – filling crucial labour gaps in the health sector for example – and avoiding misleading associations with security considerations will make this case clearer for the greater public.

Next steps

The EUROMED Migration Dialogue is about to enter a new phase with the programme's transition to EMM5. Consistently with its key objective to respond to arising challenges, EMM5 will keep promoting cooperation on communication on migration with renewed energy and ambition.

This will include supporting policy-makers across the region to build a better understanding for migration attitudes, to devise and employ strategies and methods to promote a fact-driven narrative and defuse polarisation in uncertain and troubled times. The new phase will notably consolidate EUROMED's partnership with the OPAM, cementing an excellent working relationship that has broken new ground in understanding how people perceive migration and what may affect this perception. A string of publications will be rolled out, in 2021, with a focus on investigating patterns and drivers of attitudes and proposing adequate instruments for policy-makers.

Following the results from the 3rd communicators workshop, EUROMED Migration 5 is committed to pursue a multi-stakeholder approach, engaging across institutions and sectors with the objective to stimulate a broader coalition of interested parties in favour of a balanced narrative. The partnership with the Club of Venice in the framework of the Communicators' workshop will naturally remain a cornerstone of this endeavour.

Finally, the project will reverberate essential learnings from the Euro-Mediterranean region within the GFMD's ad hoc working group on migration narratives. In this role, EUROMED Migration 5 will seek to invigorate a more concerted approach delivering tangible benefits for the migration narrative.

EUROMED Migration Talks

EUROMED Migration Talks is a series of video interviews, organised by EUROMED Migration IV, with prominent experts in the field of migration and communication from the Euro-Mediterranean region and beyond. The series focuses on migration narratives, their development and their future. Interviews are broadcast every Tuesday on the EUROMED Migration Twitter and LinkedIn accounts and available post-show on YouTube. All videos are subtitled in English, French and Arabic. The aim of this product is to feed the debate on:

- How COVID-19 affects migration and migration narratives.
- How practitioners, experts, policy-makers and academics can rebalance the migration narrative in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

Among the areas of interest we can find:

- Disinformation
- Public opinion and attitudes
- Journalism
- Academia
- Media
- Cinema, theatre, literature

What interviews have been carried out so far?

- **Marta Foresti:** A discussion on how the public debate on migration specifically and what can be done to engage the 'anxious middle' group of citizens who want to be reassured that migration is being handled well (but are not inherently pro- or anti-migration).

- **Barbara Serra, Al Jazeera News Presenter** tackled mostly the narratives on migration being discussed in the media and the role of news media in the debate.

- **Jaume Duch, Spokesperson for the European Parliament** explains the political debates over migration especially in the European Parliament, and what the European Parliament and other EU institutions are doing to combat disinformation.

Pedro Silva Pereira, Vice President of the European Parliament discussed human mobility in the Mediterranean and across Europe, the impact of mobility restrictions due to COVID-19, and policy aspects such as EU-Africa cooperation and dialogue. The interview sheds light on the prevailing migration narratives and how these play out in the debate within the European Parliament and other related contexts.

- **Mohamed Kriaa, Professor at the University of Tunis** discussed the impact of COVID-19, for instance the emerging importance of migrant key workers in healthcare and other essential services, as well as the impact on international cooperation and migration management policy.

And much more.

Keynote Speech
at the Online 3rd Euro-Mediterranean Communicators' Workshop

By H.E. George Vella, President of Malta - 10 November 2020

Dear Organisers
Dear Participants,

I am pleased to address you during this 3rd Euro-Mediterranean Communicator's Workshop on Migration.
I thank **ICMPD, Club of Venice and the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations** for this invitation.
I feel I am in my element here as both the Euro-Med region and migration have accompanied me all through my political and Ministerial portfolios and are now also central issues to my Presidency.

Let me use this opportunity to underline my satisfaction at having the ICMPD regional office based here in Malta.
This Office was also inaugurated during my term as Foreign Minister, only six months after the Valletta Summit on Migration.
On the day of the inauguration in May 2016, together with Director General Michael Spindelagger, I had stated that it was an honour for Malta to be chosen for the ICMPD's first Regional Office and I had also expressed my confidence that our joint efforts will bring about results on how to address the migration and refugee crisis.

What I said on that day still holds, and I am very satisfied that the ICMPD has further consolidated its presence in Malta.
In more than one way, this event led me to reflect on how our regional dynamics and the prevailing migration scenario, have evolved over the years.
While several developments have taken place in different directions - the bottom-line scenario is still unchanged.

Our region is still unstable, volatile and prone to conflicts and tensions.
The migration issue with all its political and human consequences – also remains unsolved and uncontrolled.

Aside from the inter-governmental and institutional weaknesses that continue to prevail, one pivotal and problematic aspect of migration is the way we all, in our different capacities, **communicate** about it.
We are still at a stage where the narrative zooms-in on negative and pejorative aspects such as unregulated mass movements, loss of lives, human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants, with migrants sometimes even being perceived as a threat to national security, identity and livelihoods, besides being referred to as 'irregular' and 'illegal'.

We have become more or less familiar – almost complacent - with terms like **'clandestine, invasion, tides'** which promote unnecessary fear and sense of the unknown – they are all negative terms.

This discourse also goes beyond the ethical and moral parameters required when describing human beings, some of whom have fled from war and have left behind terrible scenes of despair.

This indiscriminate use of terminology, sometimes even unintentional, leads to fertile grounds for hate-speech and even xenophobia.

It is also very interesting to observe how media stories tend to start off with scenes of compassion and human tragedy at first, but soon evolve into stories linking hostility and crime, sometimes to terrorism, with migration.

All these factors were underestimated for far too long in my view. I in fact placed the **narrative on migration** front and centre of the migration dossier during Malta's Presidency of the European Union in the first half of 2017.

I had, as Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malta, taken up this matter with then-Commissioner Johannes Hahn in a Panel Discussion in Brussels on a **'Balanced Narrative on Migration in the Mediterranean'.** This was the first event of its kind which addressed the importance of communication between political representatives, institutions and the media as crucial links between policy-makers and public opinion.

In cooperation with the newly-established ICMPD Regional Office in Malta I had also launched a **Migration Media Award** for communicators and journalists.

During the Award Ceremony in Valletta, later on in June 2017, 35 journalists from 16 countries were awarded for their journalistic excellence on migration in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

The selected winners hailing from **Portugal, Croatia, Egypt, Greece, Jordan, Morocco and the UK** had been successful in providing factual, balanced and unbiased reporting on the many facets of migration.

This was a very good opportunity to raise awareness on the need for a well-informed, researched and balanced narrative on migration that should be replicated, potentially also in other regions.

We should not give up on efforts contributing to a thorough review of how information pertaining to migration is gathered, shared and disseminated.

This has a very wide-ranging effect on policy formulation and, very importantly on **public perception.**

It is often the case that communicators, media, government representatives or others, fall into the trap of sensationalism. The dramatic effect usually attracts a larger audience and provokes greater public interest and debate.

Doing this at the expense of factual and balanced reporting, can significantly twist policy responses to the detriment of migrants' rights.

Misnomers are equally dangerous.

Using the term "migration" as a synonym for "irregular migration" ignores the multifaceted nature of human movement and sets the tone for all migrants to be seen as a threat.

Sometimes, referring to a certain category of migrants as "expats" and others as "immigrants", can grossly misguide an audience or listener and potentially sow the seeds for division and discrimination.

You, the communicators, therefore play a key role in educating and informing the public.

As educators, it is important that journalists are knowledgeable in the area they are reporting upon. Migration is a highly technical subject which goes beyond reporting on figures.

It is multifaceted, and migration itself is only the end-result of an accumulation of events and circumstances that, weighing on the individual, lead to decisions being taken.

There are technical, sensitive and even legalistic aspects involved, besides political, environmental, social, cultural and developmental aspects.

Training in the use of terminology and visuals, identification and reliability of sources and better understanding of international humanitarian laws are necessary to turn the page. Equally important are the exchange of media best practices and the insertion of migration issues in **public education and training in media literacy**.

In today's very delicate international context, we need to increasingly question why buzz words like **'identity' and 'threats to security'** are still justified keywords in public, or should I say populist speeches or exchanges on migration.

Firstly, there remains a lack of understanding that a well implemented human rights framework leads to an equal footing for all and is beneficial for society.

Secondly, the simple fact that irregular migration is more visible and data on irregular migration is more readily available. More holistic research and reporting on migration as a whole does exist, but it either takes longer to compile or is not as widely disseminated.

In the case of Malta there is also the issue of its particular situation, as a small Island State for whom irregular migration overlaps with search and rescue and related issues on disembarkation, which can easily feed into negative narratives if not handled well.

Malta was one of the countries affected by migration at a very early point in time, even before migration became a popular topic to be considered newsworthy on an international and global stage.

However, despite the challenges, which are multiplied in view of our small size and large population density, I sincerely wish that the narrative of migration undergoes a positive change in Malta - where journalism and reporting on this topic matures into a more balanced and factual manner, reporting objectively and weighing what we can possibly offer against what we are expected to deliver.

Social media are a different matter altogether. They follow no set journalistic norms or standards and have, even in Malta, been increasingly resorted to as a platform for migration-related hate speech.

I identified the countering of this trend as a pillar of my Presidency, from Day One and spoke about the dangers of hate speech on social media during my Inauguration Speech.
I also made it a point to refer to migrants and refugees present in Malta as an intrinsic part of Maltese society.
I insisted then and continue to insist that the well-being of people in Malta, is the well-being of **all**.

In the present pandemic scenario, I cannot but also address the issue of **misinformation**.

The onset on the COVID 19 has taught us all a lesson on how accuracy and transparent information, can be literally vital.

Regrettably in some instances, the Pandemic compelled us to take measures that, at face-value, could be interpreted as instruments fomenting distrust towards refugees and migrants, making them feel unwelcome and unwanted.

Social media have become alight with comments that it is 'them – the migrants, and the foreign workers' who are posing a health threat to the local population.

Lockdown situations only added to this element of frustration, that was increasingly addressed to migrant communities.

I think this is one other aspect of the Pandemic that policymakers, and communicators, should dedicate additional attention to and hope that this new angle to migration also be covered in your Recommendations.

Before concluding, I wish to once again commend the organisers for taking up this initiative, and for following up on the previous two rounds of this Workshop.

Above all, I urge all of you, moderators, speakers and participants to give your best possible input to these discussions, each one from your own perspective and fields of expertise.

I very much look forward to reading about the outcomes and recommendations that will emerge from your sessions and wish you successful deliberations.

Thank you.

3ème Atelier des communicateurs euro-méditerranéens

Malte, 10 et 11 novembre 2020

Apertura

di Stefano Rolando, Presidente del Club di Venezia

Ringrazio gli organizzatori e saluto dapprima il Signor Presidente della Repubblica di Malta che ci onora della sua presenza e tutti i partecipanti ai lavori, a nome del Club di Venezia, rete dei responsabili della comunicazione sia dei governi dei paesi membri sia di tutte le istituzioni europee.

Da 34 anni esso opera – con laboriosa informalità, con il segretariato presso il Consiglio della UE – per migliorare la qualità professionale e civile della comunicazione istituzionale europea.

Si tratta di una preziosa informalità. Che ha permesso il dialogo sui temi in agenda in materia di informazione, comunicazione e trasformazione digitale a operatori che appartengono a realtà non sempre e non su tutto in accordo. E che riguarda la sfera dei rapporti tra Stati membri e istituzioni europee sovrannazionali che spesso devono fare come Penelope in attesa di Ulisse: tessere la tela e ricominciare a farlo il giorno dopo.

Dico questo perché governare non è solo decidere. È anche capire, ascoltare, verificare, studiare, proporre. E ciò ha sempre più senso oggi quando la materia è difficile, oggetto di interessi e visioni contrastanti.

Perché sappiamo che la ricerca di convergenze resta strategica. E il comun denominatore resta ineludibile.

Come voi bene sapete – insegno da molti anni Comunicazione pubblica nelle università per averlo ben presente – che la comunicazione istituzionale, in un quadro europeo che non è federale, resta in buona parte materia di gelosia nazionale. Dunque tessere quella tela sulle cose che contano vede oggi un favore diffuso. Il sostegno di una vasta rete di istituzioni di ricerca e formazione ci porta qui un ampio contributo di analisi.

Abbiamo avviato fin dalla Conferenza di Tunisi una convinta collaborazione con ICMPD e con Euromed sul tema "comunicazione pubblica e migrazioni" perché esso è stato uno dei nodi ancora cruciali del cammino del gambero del sistema europeo. Un passo avanti, due indietro. Due passi avanti, uno indietro.

Da un lato visioni valoriali, che predicano talvolta una contro l'altra il loro universalismo.

Dall'altro lato una meta-ragione politica, che ha implicato la comunicazione nelle questioni in agenda (drammi, opzioni, rifiuti, soluzioni) non sempre per scegliere ma anche per ricavare vantaggio elettorale.

Un dato che non si può trattare moralisticamente. Ma consente di vedere che mentre l'arma corretta per la battaglia della comunicazione pubblica dovrebbe essere la statistica, l'arma più usata nel dibattito pubblico e mediatico viene ad essere spesso la rappresentazione della percezione.

Accanto al dualismo europeo sulle migrazioni (proprio la comunicazione è stata una parte del dualismo: parlare, non parlare/ discutere, non discutere) anche sull'identità europea sono stati anni di dualismo (identità intesa come identità politica oppure identità intesa colo come mercato). Possiamo inventare l'età del 2.0 poi quella del 3.0 poi quella del 4.0. Ma senza sciogliere quei nodi la comunicazione abbassa la soglia delle sue potenzialità e si fa sempre meno strategica. Ecco però che la grave e globale crisi di pandemia, ancora in atto in modo potente, ha mutato lo scenario della politica e del dialogo internazionale.

Da un lato c'è un sentimento statico e ripiegato, dall'altro si muovono (e l'Europa finalmente ha una qui una voce più chiara) due cose: la volontà dell'analisi profonda del nostro ridimensionamento ma anche la volontà profonda di rigenerare nuovi progetti.

Una rigenerazione che non getterà via né le economie né le culture relazionali che hanno fatto crescere la conoscenza e la pace. Quindi sulla mobilità, sulla relazionalità, sulla cooperazione si comincerà a ragionare con nuovi paradigmi. Molti contributi delle nostre due giornate di discussione saranno su questo cambio di paradigmi. Non è mio compito cimentarmi. Ma è chiaro che la questione migratoria entra in modo importante in questo schema di "cambi di paradigma" ed è chiaro che agenzie di analisi come ICMPD hanno oggi la responsabilità di avanzare proposte e non solo rappresentazione di scenari.

Gli operatori della comunicazione istituzionali europei esprimono dunque grande attesa per proposte meditate che aiutino la comunicazione ad essere nuovamente strategica.

Cioè a operare prima delle decisioni, non solo per confezionarne la distribuzione.

Ouverture

Par Stefano Rolando, Président du Club de Venise

Je remercie les organisateurs et je salue d'abord M. le Président de la République de Malte qui nous honore de sa présence et tous les participants aux travaux, au nom du Club de Venise, un réseau de responsables de la communication tant pour les gouvernements des pays membres que pour toutes les institutions européennes. Depuis 34 ans, le Club de Venise travaille - avec une informalité laborieuse, avec son secrétariat au Conseil de l'UE - pour améliorer la qualité professionnelle et civile de la communication institutionnelle européenne.

Une informalité précieuse. Ce qui a permis un dialogue sur les enjeux à l'ordre du jour en matière d'information, de communication et de transformation numérique pour des opérateurs qui appartiennent à des réalités pas toujours et pas sur tout d'accord. Et cela concerne le domaine des relations entre les États membres et les institutions européennes supranationales qui doivent souvent faire comme Penelope en attendant Ulysse: tisser la toile et recommencer le lendemain.

Je dis cela parce que gouverner, ce n'est pas seulement décider. Et aussi comprendre, écouter, vérifier, étudier, proposer. Et cela a de plus en plus de sens aujourd'hui, lorsque la question est difficile, soumise à des intérêts et des visions contradictoires.

Car nous savons que la recherche de la convergence reste stratégique et que le dénominateur commun reste incontournable. Comme vous le savez bien - j'enseigne la communication publique dans les universités depuis de nombreuses années pour garder cela à l'esprit - que la communication institutionnelle dans un cadre européen, qui n'est pas fédéral, reste largement une question de jalousie nationale. Donc, tisser cette toile sur les choses qui comptent est aujourd'hui largement favorisé. L'appui d'un large réseau d'institutions de recherche et de formation apporte ici un soutien d'analyse important.

Depuis la Conférence de Tunis, nous avons entamé une collaboration étroite avec l'ICMPD et Euromed sur le thème de la «communication publique et de la migration» car elle était encore l'un des nœuds cruciaux du parcours de la crevette dans le système européen. Un pas en avant, deux pas en arrière. Deux pas en avant, un pas en arrière.

D'une part, des visions de valeurs, qui parfois prêchent leur universalisme les unes contre les autres.

D'autre part, une méta-raison politique qui impliquait la communication dans les questions à l'ordre du jour (drames, options, refus, solutions) pas toujours pour choisir mais aussi pour gagner un avantage électoral.

Un fait qui ne peut être traité moralement. Mais cela nous permet de voir que si l'arme correcte pour la bataille de la communication publique doit être la statistique, l'arme la plus utilisée dans le débat public et médiatique est souvent la représentation de la perception.

Parallèlement au dualisme européen sur la migration (précisément la communication faisait partie du dualisme: parler, ne pas parler / discuter, ne pas discuter) également sur l'identité européenne se trouvaient de dualisme (identité comprise comme identité politique ou identité comprise comme marché).

On peut inventer l'âge du 2.0 puis celui du 3.0 puis celui du 4.0. Mais sans dénouer ces nœuds, la communication abaisse le seuil de son potentiel et devient de moins en moins stratégique. Cependant, la crise pandémique grave et mondiale, toujours de manière puissante, a changé le scénario de la politique et du dialogue international.

D'un côté il y a un sentiment statique et renfermé, de l'autre deux choses bougent (et l'Europe a enfin une voix plus claire ici): la volonté d'une analyse en profondeur de notre redimensionnement mais aussi la volonté profonde de régénérer de nouveaux projets. Une régénération qui ne gâchera ni les économies ni les cultures relationnelles qui ont fait croître la connaissance et la paix. Donc sur la mobilité, sur la relationnalité, sur la coopération, nous allons commencer à penser avec de nouveaux paradigmes. De nombreuses contributions de nos deux jours de discussion porteront sur ce changement de paradigme. Ce n'est pas mon travail d'essayer. Mais il est clair que la question de la migration entre de manière importante dans ce schéma de «changements de paradigme» et il est clair que les agences d'analyse comme l'ICMPD ont aujourd'hui la responsabilité de faire des propositions et pas seulement de représenter des scénarios.

Les opérateurs de communication institutionnels européens expriment une grande attente pour des propositions réfléchies qui permettront à la communication de redevenir stratégique.

Autrement dit, opérer avant les décisions, pas seulement pour la distribution de paquets.

1st Meeting of the OECD Experts Group on Pu

Via zoom - 30 September 2020

Overview

On 30 September 2020, the 1st meeting of the OECD Experts group on public communication gathered more than 130 participants from close to 50 countries, including officials in charge of public communication, members of the OECD Working Party on Open Government (WPOG), as well as representatives from the Open Government Partnership, the European Ombudsman and other international partners. The event allowed a discussion on the preliminary findings of the surveys sent to centres of government (CoG) and ministries of health (MH), which will form the basis of **the International Report on Public Communication**. Discussions also focused on the role of this function in addressing disinformation and various challenges linked to covid-19 as well as what the next activities and deliverables of EGPC can be and the synergies that can be created with the WPOG.

Welcome Remarks

Alex Aiken, Executive Director for Government Communication, United Kingdom, and co-host of this event opened the meeting by stressing that the fight against COVID-19 has been one of the toughest challenges in their field. It required more direct interactions through frequent press conferences, a greater focus on digital content to share preventive measures with a wider audience, and a more data-driven approach through public opinion polls and dashboards. He also stressed the need for a stronger approach to incorporating data and insight into their work. **Katju Holkeri, Head of Governance Policy Unit, Public Governance Department at the Finnish Ministry of Finance, and Chair of the OECD Working Party on Open Government**, underlined the importance of the topic for Open Government principles and that this contribution did not yet receive adequate recognition. She highlighted how it can transform transparency from passive disclosing of information to proactive delivery to a broader audience and its potential to strengthen inclusiveness. She also stressed that communication is a pre-requisite for participation and accountability, thus clearly linking to how this group can support the mandate of the WPOG. **Vincenzo Le Voci, Secretary-General of the Club of Venice** emphasized the need for the appropriate competencies and experiences to adapt working methods quickly, especially given the citizens' growing expectations from their government. He also stressed how strongly crisis communication can impact public opinion, as demonstrated by COVID-19. Finally, **Janos Bertok, Acting Director of the OECD's Public Governance Directorate** stated that public communicators are gatekeepers of information that are essential to democracy and inclusive societies, and that they are operating in an increasingly difficult landscape, particularly with mis- and dis-information proliferating. He stressed the need to gather insights and set together an agenda to help communication improve policies, strengthen the uptake of services, and act as a lever for a more open government. The 1st OECD International Report on Public Communication to be published in 2021 will be an important milestone in this regard, that can be used by the group for further work in the field.

Presentation of preliminary findings from the OECD public communication surveys

Ahead of the first session, **Michael Nathan, Head of France's Government Information Service** provided a key-note speech focusing on the mandate of communication: making information more impactful; and recreating structures and content to ensure citizens' trust in government. He also stressed the importance of equipping government officials with the appropriate skills and competencies to understand the needs of informing the public in today's changing landscape.

The OECD team then made a presentation of selected preliminary findings from the public surveys(¹). These included top challenges selected by countries (respectively crisis, strategies and evaluation), interlinkages with COVID-19 and the state of evaluations (which appears to be done infrequently and in a non-institutionalized manner in most countries). The presentation also outlined how communication could be more fully leveraged as a tool for Open Government reform and as a lever of trust. The first commentator to the presentation, **Erik Den Hoedt, Director, Public Information and Communication Office, Netherlands**, underlined that the focus should be on building, rebuilding, and maintaining trust. He also stressed the need to make a greater use of behavioral insights across government. **Sam Ursich, A/g Assistant Secretary, Communication and Change Branch, People, Communication & Parliamentary Division, Corporate Operations Group, Australian Government Department of Health** provided a health perspective and stressed how research and evaluation, in addition to behavioral insights are key in promoting a more evidence-based and strategic communication. She also underlined the importance of having a dedicated spokesperson during the crisis acting as a trusted voice to counter disinformation, and that communicating to diverse audiences remains challenging. **María Caridad Vela Valencia, Secretary General of Communications, Presidency of the Republic of Ecuador** echoed the importance of inclusiveness and the need to to work openly and more directly with citizens and journalists. A discussion followed with all the participants who provided comments and suggestions on the findings shared.

Panel on the role of communication in addressing disinformation linked to COVID-19

The session opened with a presentation by the OECD of the preliminary findings from its survey relating to the institutionalization of counter-disinformation responses within the communication field. The data revealed that a large proportion of responding institutions still lacks adequate structures and frameworks to respond to this challenge. However, some responses highlighted efforts from several governments, a finding also supported by observations in both the OECD working

paper on Governance Responses to Disinformation, and the Covid-19 policy brief Transparency Communication and Trust. Indeed, these publications point to the fact that new approaches and practices are emerging and consolidating around the world.

Participants highlighted the role the recent "infodemic" played in shifting the understanding of disinformation. The pandemic raised the need for governments to pivot from electoral interference to public health and potentially to other new areas that might arise, while making society more resilient against threats to the information ecosystem. This calls for sound and future-proof structures and for holistic approaches to combating disinformation, such as the Digital Citizen Initiative conducted by Canadian Heritage.

Participants' experiences with Covid-19 communication similarly entailed speeding up the response to disinformation in parallel with crisis communication. This involves rapid responses based on established protocols, such as the Rapid Response Unit and the RESIST Toolkit in the UK. Reaching specific groups and marginalised communities at risk from exposure to false and misleading information was highlighted as a challenge to a whole-of-society response to Covid-19. The Italian Government leveraged the profile of a vast group of public figures and influencers to amplify the reach and weight of its public health measures, especially with youth. These efforts required close coordination mechanisms for consistent and evidence-based messaging, while the pace of the "infodemic" has often dictated a delicate balance between timeliness and accuracy or completeness of the information disseminated. Building on the discussions, participants called for more collective learning among peers in communication functions around the world to support responses to this issue. They also underlined the need to consolidate evidence on international best practices.

Tour de table on the future of communication

This session allowed participants to share their views on the role of the group and upcoming activities. They called on developing partnerships and cooperation venues between countries, the OECD, the Club of Venice, the South East Europe Communication Network as well as bilaterally. They expressed interest in establishing related principles, collect good practices and conduct country reviews in this area. Members also called for a continuous platform (such as whatsapp or other) to exchange. Finally, digital communication with a focus on social media was chosen as the priority topic for an upcoming webinar.

Closing Remarks

In his closing remarks, **Gerald Mullally, Deputy Director of Communications at the Cabinet Office and Head of the UK Government Communication Service International (GCSI)**, underlined the salience of challenges in the areas of strategy, crisis and evaluation. He stressed how the present shift from communication perceived as an afterthought to a strategic lever of of government presents an opportunity to push forward the development of global principles inspired by models of good practice around the world. As for Mr. Le Voci, he underlined the need for communicators to work with stakeholders inside and outside government, as they cannot rise up to the challenges by working in a bubble. Major capacity-building investments are also required to cope more efficiently with the increasing evolution of communication techniques and behavioural changes, and to build robust and innovative evaluation methods. Finally, **Alessandro Bellantoni, head of the open government unit, at the OECD's Public Governance Directorate** thanked the governments of the UK and Korea for their support to the International Report, and stressed the relevance of this collaboration between the two communities: the WPOG and the EGPC. He also assured participants of the follow up to be conducted on their proposals.

Overall the meeting ended with a call to establish a more strategic approach to public communication and a global profession of communicators that can better support public policies and services, open government principles and citizens' trust. Participants also underlined the importance of this group and its deliverables, the linkages with the WPOG's mandate, and expressed interest and support for increased collaboration, the collection of good practices, as well as the development of related principles in addition to regional and country specific projects and reviews in this area.

Addressing Covid19-related disinformation

By Rytis Paulauskas

Rytis Paulauskas is the Director of the Department of Communications and Cultural Diplomacy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania. He graduated from Vilnius University Law School, L.L.M and has a Master of Arts Degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, Medford, Massachusetts, USA, cross registration with J. F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University (Fulbright Scholar).

Rytis attended training and Executive Education courses at the Academy of International Law, Hague, and Harvard University, Cambridge. He is also Associate Professor of Practice at the Vilnius University teaching Adaptive Leadership Course. From 1993-1995 served as Deputy Head of Mission to the Council of Europe and in 1995- 1999 R. Paulauskas was a counsellor at the Permanent Mission of Lithuania to the United Nations, New York, USA.

In 2003-2008 he was Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Lithuania to the UN, OSCE, IAEA and other International Organizations in Vienna. From 2008 to 2012 he served as Ambassador and Director of OSCE Chairmanship Department/Head of Lithuania's OSCE Chairmanship Task Force.

From 2012 to 2016 he was Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the UN and other International Organizations in Geneva.

Intervento alla tavola rotonda OCSE/Club di Venezia sul futuro della comunicazione pubblica

di Stefano Rolando, Presidente del Club di Venezia

Prima di fare riflessioni sul tema delle **prospettive future della comunicazione pubblica**[1] (intesa come organizzazione istituzionale, come professione, come disciplina e come cultura civile del nostro tempo) ringrazio – anche a nome di tutta la rete del Club di Venezia – l'OCSE per aver portato in emersione questo tema nell'agenda interna   ed esterna dell'organizzazione nel momento in cui la pandemia porta appunto questo settore del sistema comunicativo e relazionale nella sfera delle questioni strategiche (che non è sempre stato così evidente nel lungo quadro del dopoguerra). In particolare **Alessandro Bellantoni** (capo dell'unità "Governo aperto" dell'OCSE) che è gradito partecipante alle attività del Club di Venezia. Ringrazio il segretario generale del CdV Vincenzo Le Voci per essersi prodigato nella collaborazione all'evento e **Alex Aiken** direttore della comunicazione del governo britannico per continuare a volere a tenere stretta l'interlocuzione europea e internazionale in questa materia.

- Si è parlato di andamento presente e si è parlato di orientamenti alla battaglia pubblica contro la disinformazione e l'infodemia nel quadro della crisi Covid-19. Giusti punti di riferimento per arrivare a parlare della prospettiva futura. I paesi – e in generale le istituzioni anche quelle territoriali - che hanno a cuore il nesso solidale e di credibilità tra istituzioni e cittadini devono **analizzare attentamente l'evoluzione della domanda sociale e dei comportamenti comunicativi pubblici nel quadro della pandemia** per proiettare queste analisi sui cambiamenti e le rigenerazioni necessarie per il medio e lungo termine.
- La società, nella crisi, ha detto: *"Più istituzione, più spiegazione, memo propaganda, meno visibilità effimera per la politica"*. Non è solo per paura che emerge una domanda. E' per dare basi al programma di ripensamento e rilancio del nostro modello di sviluppo; del nostro quadro in cui crescita e uguaglianza faticano a equilibrarsi; del nostro modello di nazionalismi separati (e anche localismi separati) nel trattare i cittadini.
- Può anche essere che più istituzione possa significare meno politica. Il che di per sé apre anche a rischi. Ma nel caso della lezione che viene dalla pandemia vuol dire **istituzione come garanzia che la politica non si proponga con incompetenza** e come fonte in cui la statistica (dato certo) guidi l'informazione rispetto alla sondaggistica (dato percepito). E vuole anche dire - come la riunione OCSE indica - che è il momento di **alzare il livello della mission professionale e operativa della comunicazione pubblica** per cogliere quali strade sostengono il cambiamento e la rigenerazione.
- Al termine di un monitoraggio condotto quotidianamente anche sulla stampa internazionale sul rapporto tra comunicazione e crisi (che ha portato ora alla **realizzazione del rapporto *"Pandemia, laboratorio della comunicazione pubblica"*** che è in uscita) credo di avere raccolto elementi per **riassumere in pochi punti le "strade", ovvero i contenuti che appaiono più rilevanti.**

Sono lieto di anticipare in questa occasione questo messaggio perché penso che **l'OCSE sia l'organizzazione più sensibile** – per il privilegio che accorda alle questioni economiche e sociali – per sviluppare politiche di orientamento delle classi dirigenti.

- *"Più spiegazione" – in generale – vuol dire ora più comunicazione scientifica*. Cioè non bisogna pensare che il grande flusso dei virologi in prima serata tv e in prima pagina sia un tampone alle paure. Da far smettere, il giorno dopo i contagi. Ma bisogna creare reti comunicative istituzionali, sociali e mediatiche – che riguardano ovviamente anche la scuola e le università – per portare a regime il processo di divulgazione che spieghi i principali processi di trasformazione patologica del nostro contesto ma anche le principali cognizioni per modificare i comportamenti e costruire contrasto culturale.
- E' stato spesso penoso durante la pandemia vedere che **il dialogo tra comunità scientifica e comunità economica** è stato più regolato dal lobbismo rispetto al decisore legislativo che rispetto all'equilibrio delle loro rispettive ragioni. Questo equilibrio fa parte di una tessitura quotidiana di iniziative, di rapporti, di comprensione reciproca millimetrale. Sia condotto da istituzioni che da imprese, sia dal pubblico che dal privato, questo campo è per eccellenza un campo di comunicazione pubblica in cui si devono misurare gli operatori, alzando il livello della loro missione attuale di semplice informazione ai cittadini.
- **L'obiettivo della lotta all'analfabetismo funzionale** è il terzo snodo di questo rialzo di livello della mission. In alcuni paesi la soglia è altissima. Con dolore dico che l'Italia è nei punti bassi della classifica. Ma dico di più: l'OCSE tiene conto soprattutto dei dati della scolarizzazione. Bisogna vedere il rapporto reale di parti sociali che sono scolarizzate ma poi non in condizioni di leggere una pagina di giornale, di capire una parola di quello che stiamo dicendo oggi, di capire non tanto una notizia ma il nesso tra le notizie (e qui c'è anche un tema grande come una casa, che riguarda il rapporto dei giovani e giovanissimi con la rete). E' evidente che l'aggressione delle fake news è tanto maggiore quanto più ampia è la platea della loro "ricevibilità".

Mi limito a questi snodi. Ma ricordando che ci sono **due trasversalità connesse** che sono altrettanto importanti:

- La prima riguarda la **riqualificazione della materia nei processi disciplinari (ricerca) e formativi (didattica)**, dove poggi c'è una geografia sregolata, un tendenziale ritardo dell'insegnamento, una prevalenza della formazione tecnica rispetto all'inquadramento teorico (cioè valoriale, giuridico, economico, sociologico e politologico della materia)
- La seconda riguarda il **ridisegno delle professionalità verso modelli più armonizzati nei paesi dell'area delle democrazie liberali e di mercato**. Perché al servizio di modelli di relazione

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1   Pubblicato nelle Note di Rivista italiana di comunicazione pubblica / https://www.facebook.com/notes/rivista-italiana-di-comunicazione-pubblica/intervento-alla-tavola-rotonda-ocseclub-di-venezia-sul-futuro-della-comunicazion/10223198536889029/

pubblico-privato che sono diversi da quelli della comunicazione pubblica delle nazioni a guida autoritaria.

"Serve un maggiore ruolo strategico della comunicazione pubblica nella governance" ha detto Alessandro Bellantoni in apertura. Dobbiamo però **guardare non solo ai nuovi obiettivi** (ho fatto qualche breve proposta), **ma anche ai vecchi problemi non risolti o mal risolti.** Tre principalmente:

- Tre quarti degli operatori del settore in Europa non hanno mai rapporti con i decisori;
- Con l'idea di "semplificare e popolarizzare i messaggi" spesso si è forzata la "giornalistizzazione" e la "politicizzazione" della comunicazione istituzionale. Non siamo alla propaganda. Ma siamo al rischio di avvicinarci alla propaganda e comunque di avvicinarci spesso alla banalizzazione.
- Terzo: non c'è strategia senza rinnovamento della formazione in ordine a cui manca ancora un patto e una valutazione stretta tra università e istituzioni, pur in presenza di molte esperienze incrociate.
- Questa pandemia - **come è stato per le due guerre mondiali nel '900** – offre nuove basi per questa riqualificazione. Le gravi crisi belliche hanno spinto la comunicazione ma la hanno anche distorta.
- La *prima guerra mondiale* ha alzato la soglia della materia; ma la ha spaccata tra democrazie e dittature.
- La *seconda guerra mondiale* ha formalmente sconfitto la cultura della propaganda; ma ha poi ristabilito la propaganda perché essa era al sostegno della guerra fredda.
- E non ci siamo più fermati su questa strada. Questa volta tocca al tema più difficile: **debellare davvero la propaganda**. Se avessi vent'anni non penserei ad altro.

Discussion des résultats préliminaires à l'enquête de l'OCDE sur la communication publique et le futur de la communication AGENDA

Réunion en ligne via Zoom, 30 Septembre 2020

Aperçu

Cet événement a été organisé par **l'Unité Gouvernement Ouvert de l'OCDE** en partenariat avec le Club de Venise (CdV) et le **Service International de la Communication du Gouvernement (GCSI)** du Royaume Uni qui accueille cette réunion. Il vise à rassembler pour la première fois les membres du **groupe d'experts de l'OCDE sur la communication publique (GECP)**.

L'objectif de cette réunion est de présenter les **résultats préliminaires suite aux enquêtes sur la communication publique** diffusées auprès des centres de gouvernement (CdG) et ministères de la Santé (MS) des pays membres et partenaires de l'OCDE, qui seront suivis de discussions relatives aux observations et domaines qui nécessitent de plus amples clarifications et validations.

L'objectif est aussi de profiter de cette occasion pour entamer une réflexion sur la manière d'esquisser un agenda prospectif international en la matière basé sur les données probantes collectées à l'échelle mondiale. Il posera aussi les fondations d'une discussion relative au développement de **principes de politiques publiques internationaux sur la communication publique** visant à contribuer aux principes du gouvernement ouvert de transparence, de redevabilité, d'intégrité du secteur public et de participation des parties prenantes. L'événement facilite aussi le partage de connaissances sur une priorité de communication ayant émergé durant la pandémie de Covid-19, nommément la **lutte contre la désinformation**[1].

Le **GECP** inclut les membres et partenaires de l'OCDE et les membres du CV (soit les autorités nationales des États européens affiliés au CV et en charge de la communication gouvernementale). Le Groupe inclut également diverses parties prenantes partageant des objectifs et des valeurs similaires et interagissant avec l'OCDE ou le CV, telles que des institutions académiques, organisations de la société civile et représentants du secteur privé.

Les participants à la réunion incluent le Secrétariat de l'OCDE, le GCS britannique, le Secrétaire général et les membres du CV, en plus des représentants des CdGs et MSs qui ont répondu aux enquêtes, ainsi que les membres du Groupe de travail de l'OCDE sur le gouvernement ouvert (WPOG), et d'autres participants clés, y compris le Partenariat pour un Gouvernement Ouvert et la Médiatrice de l'Union européenne.

La réunion s'est tenu via la plateforme Zoom en **anglais,** avec **interprétariat en français et espagnol** et sera enregistrée. Un lien d'inscription sera envoyé au préalable avec un formulaire d'inscription à renseigner pour chaque participant. Les données personnelles individuelles collectées via les formulaires ne seront utilisées que pour l'événement et les activités de suivi. La réunion fera l'objet d'une synthèse.

Pour assurer l'interactivité des discussions et optimiser la gestion du temps, il est demandé aux participants qui souhaiteraient intervenir de bien vouloir limiter leurs interventions ou questions à 3 minutes, et d'utiliser la fonction « lever la main » (Raise hand) de Zoom, afin qu'un modérateur leur donne la parole. Nous encourageons également les participants à utiliser la fonction « chat » de Zoom.

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1 Pour plus d'information consultez le document d'orientation « Transparence, communication et confiance : Le rôle de la communication publique pour combattre la vague de désinformation concernant le nouveau coronavirus » et le document de travail de l'OCDE « Les mesures de gouvernance publique face à la désinformation : comment les principes du gouvernement ouvert peuvent éclairer les choix stratégiques »

Agenda provisoire des discussions : (horaires, heure de Paris)

Mercredi 30 Septembre 2020

14:00 – 14:25 | ### Allocutions d'ouverture
- **Alex Aiken**, Directeur exécutif des communications du gouvernement, Royaume Uni, et co-hôte de la réunion
- **Katju Holkeri**, Chef de l'unité Politique de Gouvernance, Département de la Gouvernance publique, Ministère des Finances, Finlande, et Présidente du groupe de travail de l'OCDE sur le gouvernement ouvert
- **Vincenzo Le Voci**, Secrétaire général du Club de Venise
- **Janos Bertok,** Directeur par intérim de la Gouvernance publique, OCDE

14:20 - 15:20 | ### Présentation des résultats préliminaires aux enquêtes de l'OCDE sur la communication publique et discussion

Le Secrétariat présentera les résultats préliminaires issus des réponses fournies par les CdGs et MSs, avant de donner la parole aux participants pour une discussion.
- **Discours liminaire: Michael Nathan**, Directeur, Service d'information du Gouvernement, France
- **Présentation de la Direction de la Gouvernance publique de l'OCDE :**
  * **Alessandro Bellantoni**, Chef de l'unité Gouvernement ouvert
  * **Karine Badr, Emilie Cazenave, Paulina Lopez Ramos** : Analystes des politiques
- **Commentateurs:**
  * **Erik Den Hoedt**, Directeur, Bureau de l'information et de la communication publique, Pays Bas
  * **Sam Ursich**, Secrétaire assistant par intérim, Branche de la Communication et du Changement, Division des publics, de la communication et des affaires parlementaires, Groupe des opérations générales, Ministère de la Santé, Australie
  * **María Caridad Vela Valencia**, Secrétaire générale de la Communication de la Présidence de la République de l'Équateur
- **Tour de table**

15:20 – 15:30 | ### Pause

15:30 - 16:30 | ### Panel sur le rôle de la communication pour faire face à la désinformation concernant la covid-19

La propagation de la covid-19 à travers le monde s'est accompagnée d'une « infodémie » qui nuit aux réponses politiques et amplifie la méfiance et l'inquiétude parmi les citoyens. Autour du globe, les gouvernements ont utilisé la communication publique pour contrer la désinformation et soutenir les politiques publiques. Dans le même temps, l'infrastructure institutionnelle pour contrer la désinformation demeure émergente dans de nombreux pays, alors que le rôle des décideurs publics, communicants publics et des communautés scientifiques et leurs relations ont révélé un manque de clarté, des éléments conflictuels et des interférences. Des problèmes structurels tels qu'un manque de planification communicationnelle et de capacité de mobilisation ont également émergé. Les intervenants lors de cette session partageront leurs expériences quant au degré d'efficacité de leurs stratégies et activités de communication et les leçons tirées à ce jour.
- **Présentation de l'OCDE :**
  * **Carlotta Alfonsi,** analyste des politiques, Direction de la Gouvernance publique de l'OCDE
- **Alex Aiken**, Directeur exécutif des communications du gouvernement, Royaume Uni
- **Alessandra de Marco,** Directrice générale, Bureau pour l'information et la communication institutionnelles et la propriété intellectuelle, Département de l'Information et de la Publication, Présidence du Conseil des Ministres, Italie
- **Rytis Paulauskas**, Directeur, Département de la Communication et de la diplomatie publique, Ministère des Affaires étrangères, Lituanie
- **Owen Ripley**, Directeur Général Diffusion, Propriété intellectuelle et marché des oeuvres créatives, Canada
- **Commentateurs et tour de table**

15:30 - 16:30	**Tour de table sur le futur de la communication**

Cette session vise à permettre aux participants de partager leurs perspectives sur des domaines d'intérêt pour de futures réunion du réseau et l'orientation à suivre dans le développement de standards et principes pour la communication publique.

- **Brève introduction de l'OCDE** et tour de table

15:30 - 16:30	**Remarques conclusives**

- **Gerald Mullally**, Directeur adjoint des Communications du Bureau du Cabinet et Chef du Service de la Communication du Gouvernement à l'International, Royaume Uni
- **Vincenzo Le Voci**, Secrétaire général du Club de Venise
- **Alessandro Bellantoni**, Chef de l'unité Gouvernement ouvert, Direction de la Gouvernance publique, OCDE

À PROPOS DU CLUB DE VENISE

Le Club de Venise (CdV) est le réseau informel des directeurs-généraux / directeurs / chef des services d'information et de communication des États membres de l'UE, du Royaume-Uni et des institutions de l'UE. Il a été fondé en 1986 et s'est depuis ouvert aux chefs de services de communication du gouvernement des pays candidats à l'adhésion, et depuis 2008, au Conseil Européen, CESE, CdR, à la BCE, au SEAE et à la BEI. L'OCDE, le Conseil de l'Europe et l'ICMPD sont des membres associés du CdV. L'objectif du Club est de stimuler l'échange d'information et d'expérience et de renforcer la coopération dans tous les domaines liés à l'information et la communication publiques, le partage et la discussion de bonnes pratique dans une grande variété de champs tels que la communication de crise, le renforcement des capacités et moyens, la formation, l'éthique, le renforcement des capacités de résistance et de lutte contre la désinformation, la diplomatie publique et les développements numériques. La gouvernance du CdV est assurée par un comité de pilotage composé de huit directeur de la communication d'États membres et du Secrétaire général.

À PROPOS DE L'UNITÉ GOUVERNEMENT OUVERT DE L'OCDE

L'unité gouvernement ouvert de l'OCDE soutient les pays dans leurs efforts pour construire un gouvernement plus transparent, redevable et participatif pour restaurer la confiance des citoyens et promouvoir une croissance inclusive. À travers la collecte de données, les activités de renforcement des capacités et la promotion de dialogues régionaux entre pairs, l'OCDE fournit une analyse approfondie des stratégies et initiative en matière de gouvernement ouvert, associée à du conseil en politiques publiques et des recommandations concrètes. Le travail de l'unité est fondé sur la Recommandation du Conseil de l'OCDE sur le Gouvernement Ouvert, premier instrument juridique international sur le sujet, qui définit les grands principes de gouvernance des stratégies et initiatives en matière de gouvernement ouvert et ouvre la voie à l'agenda en ce sens à travers les pays membres et partenaires de l'OCDE.

À PROPOS DU GROUPE D'EXPERTS DE L'OCDE SUR LA COMMUNICATION PUBLIQUE (GECP)

Le GEPC fait partie du groupe de travail de l'OCDE sur le gouvernement ouvert comme évoqué lors de la première réunion du WPOG en octobre 2019, et des occasions suivantes au cours desquelles l'importance de rapprocher les communautés du gouvernement ouvert et de la communication, et de créer des synergies entre leurs agendas a été soulignée. Il émane des discussions avec les membres du WPOG et du Club de Venise. Ses objectifs incluent: (1) partager des connaissances, des données, des bonnes pratiques et des leçons apprises concernant les initiatives de communication publique qui contribuent aux principes du gouvernement ouvert et aident à faire avancer ce programme ; (2) approfondir la base d'informations factuelles et la promotion d'une culture de recherche et de collecte de données sur des sujets de communication publique, ainsi que dans les domaines interdépendants de la communication publique, la désinformation, des approches comportementales, de l'intelligence artificielle et d'autres aspects plus prospectifs ; (3) soutenir la conception et la mise en oeuvre de stratégies et d'initiatives de communication publique qui ont un impact mesurable dans le domaine du gouvernement ouvert grâce à des analyses comparatives et des recommandations concrètes et réalistes ; (4) soutenir l'élaboration de principes de l'OCDE en matière d'usage de la communication publique pour promouvoir un gouvernement ouvert ; (5) encourager les projets de coopération internationale dans le domaine de la communication publique.

Webinar on Crisis Communication
Managing Communication on the COVID-19 Challenges, Analysis and Lessons Learned

By Vincenzo Le Voci - 15 June 2020

The Webinar was hosted by the Croatian Government and co-organized by the Club of Venice and the Croatian Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs. The welcome messages were delivered by Zvonimir Frka-Petešić, Head of Prime Minister's Office (Croatia) and Vincenzo Le Voci, Secretary-General of the Club of Venice.

The meeting was attended by over 100 participants, experts in public communications, medicine, behaviourism, political sciences, sociology and economy, from 24 EU Member States, Montenegro, Serbia and UK, EU institutions (EP, CEU, EC, CoR and EESC), international organizations (OECD and OSCE), academia (EUI Florence, IULM and Milano-Bicocca University), media (EURACTIV Media Network, Deutsche Welle), civil society associations and consultancy firms. There were seventeen contributions from the panels and many interventions by participants via chat.

Contributions focused, on one hand, on the crisis communication in the field of the COVID-19 pandemic, and on the other hand, on the impact of the national and European communication on the social context (having due regard to the different geographical realities and on the need to communicate either at large scale or to targeted audiences on the relaxation of anti-epidemic measures, on the recovery expectations and road mapping, and on the political consequences). Discussion also included an insight on the impact of fake news, on the state of and relations with the media, on the attitudes towards vaccination perspectives, on citizens' emotional response to the crisis caused by the pandemic and on behavioural changes.

First round table

The first round table was inspired by a key-note given by Alex AIKEN, Executive Director of the UK Government Communication Service (UK) who delivered on "*COVID-19: The factors that influence confidence in public communication during the Covid crisis*", describing the three phases of the alert campaign and the UK cross-government strategic communication approach based on a central hub structure coordinating health, economy, the international landscape and the public services framework. Alex highlighted the exceptional crisis management and crisis communication scenario (political, social, economic, leadership, internal and international cooperation and PD implications) and touched upon the state and evolution of public opinion and the outcome of social conversation. He also outlined the key principles inspiring the UK communication strategy: data and insight driven, direct to the public, clear campaign driving behaviour, making science more accessible, performance driven focus with updates/refresh of the messages, credible voices and partners, and agile central hubs with spokes. He finally stressed the need for expert/trusted voices, for transparency (honesty and integrity), for an evidence-data driven approach, for an alignment with the neighbour countries' measures, for common sense and for consistent and durable measures.

The initial discussion focused on **"old key challenges"**:

- Building and maintaining public trust, confidence and acceptance (speakers: Zvonimir FRKA-PETEŠIĆ, Croatia, Head of the Prime Minister's Office, who delivered on the communication during the Covid-19 crisis, on the semester of Croatian Presidency of the Council of the EU and the earthquake emergency) and by Benoît RAMACKER, Belgium, Crisis Communication Strategic Advisor at National CrisiscenterBE (NCCN) who elaborated on the Belgian devices.
- Structures and mechanisms for successful communication (Ave EERMA, Strategic Communication Adviser from the Government Office of Estonia, Head of the IPCR/Crisis Communication Network (CCN)).
- The role of policy makers (governments) and scientific communities (Herman WIERSEMA, Netherlands, Head of Communication, Ministry of Justice and Security; Špela HORJAK, Slovenia, Government Deputy Spokesman for COVID-19, and James DENNISON, Research Fellow, European University Institute, Italy).

First panel

This first panel's contributions highlighted the difficulties to handle the Coronavirus crisis alone and the even more challenging intersection with additional emergencies such as the earthquake that struck Croatia disorienting the population (choosing between staying at home to protect oneself from COVID and the fear of the buildings' collapse). Due attention was given to the need for a transparent and pedagogical, simple-language approach (over 180 call center operators and six 24h/24 social media support in the Belgian framework) avoiding technocratic communication, for enhancing cooperation with the media and capitalise on the prompt activation of the Integrated Political Crisis Response mechanism coordinated by the Presidency of the Council of the EU, whose CCN plays a crucial role in the mapping and daily joint monitoring of the EU-wide evolution of the pandemic and national and EU measures.

All panellists recognised the enormous task for both the political and communication authorities to tackling a multi-faceted crisis that hits all fields and communication disciplines and instruments, all bearing equal priority degrees: share of responsibilities, need for accurate research and analysis, full mutual cooperation in data exchange, trustworthy public information flows, choose of appropriate communication instruments to explain policies and expected citizens' behaviour, reliable key players and the regular involvement of behavioural analysts.

Second round-table

The second round-table was opened by Professor Marijn DE BRUIN, a Dutch Behavioural Scientist from the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment, who spoke about "Integrating Behavioural Science in COVID-19 Prevention Efforts", who described the mobilisation of the CBU (Corona Behavioural Unit) operating within the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) (in the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport). The RIVM has been promoting public health and safeguarding a healthy environment for more than 100 years and has a central role in infectious disease control and national prevention and population screening programmes.

The NL CBU has been contributing to the effectiveness of COVID-19 prevention measures, by making available state-of-the-art behavioural & communication science expertise, and translating that for government policy and communication. It has responded to current questions and anticipate future questions; it has developed scientific studies, literature, research, theoretical basis, COM design, it widely shares results widely with citizens & professionals and provides strong support to prevention planning.

Cooperation with the National Crisis Communication Team (NCTV has helped launching a developed methodology to score complexity and clarity in behavioural recommendations and its communication, and to contribute to discussions including weekly press conferences, and to contribute to government campaigns in a systematic coordinated approach ("*alleen samen krijgen we corona onder controle*") . Much still needs to be done to explore the possibility of the CBU helping shape policies and behavioural guidelines before they are launched, but the CBU already presents outcomes of its research and recommendations to all regional policy makers united against COVID-19 and has helped set up and support a behavioural expert team track & trace app. Need for stronger coordination of the huge amount of knowledge and expertise to be activated rapidly, and for consolidating the structures to manage crises in a more concerted way, also in different fields (other health issues, climate, etc.)

The discussion focused on **"new challenges"**

- Communication on the gradual waiver of lockdown measures: specific challenges for public communicators. Alessandra DE MARCO, Italy, Director of the Public Information and Communication Office, Department for Information and publishing, Presidency of the Council of Ministers provided feedback on the Italian communication campaigns (some of which targeted to the wide public, others to targeted audiences) realized through tv, radio and social network in partnership with the Italian public tv service, main web

industries and private broadcasters and published, choosing a branded content realised by 45 influencers.
- Recovery: communication synergies, EU mobilisation, coordination (two speakers from the EU institutions: Tina ZOURNATZI, Head of the Strategic Communication Unit, European Commission, DG Communication and Christian MANGOLD, Director for Campaigns, European Parliament, DG Communication
- **Behavioural attitudes/changes as a societal symptom** (with an intervention by Professor Riccardo VIALE, Professor of Behavioural Economics, University of Milano-Bicocca)

Contributions and exchanges of views revealed a **balanced approach between the use of traditional and social media as well as between prescriptive and emotional message**. The crucial issues remain the need for timely, coherent and concerted communication and the capacity building requirements in order to efficiently and effectively tackle contingencies as well as mid-term emergencies, and to set up realistic long-term planning.

The interventions from the EP and the Commission representatives respectively focused on the need for channeling trustworthy information (social media outreach capacities, relevance for the "ordinary citizens", use of testimonials and influencers, inclusiveness, countering disinformation) and the joint efforts in the elaboration of a strong Re-OpenEU programme in line with the European Council's political orientations.

Third round table

The third and last round table was focused on the resilience capacities and the ability to set up preventive measures to detect and analyse the anti-disinformation frameworks, and at the same time to build and/or revamp mechanisms in the age of disruption and disinformation. It was opened by a key-note delivered by **Dr Heidi LARSON, Anthropologist and Director of The Vaccine Confidence Project (VCP)** who drew attention to the need for limiting exposure during the lockdown, for a true and objective risk analysis, for challenging this period of uncertainty through a serious diagnosis[1] to avoid the increase in scepticism and populism.

The debate touched upon the following challenging topics:

- Fake news and the conspiracy theories (speaker: Rytis PAULAUSKAS, Lithuania, Director of Communications and Cultural Diplomacy Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
- An insight of reliable sources and effective countering actions (with a contribution by Rosa CAVALLARO, Italy, Senior Officer, Communication Regulatory Authority (AGCOM)

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1 Dr Larson cited R. T. Chen's " Vaccine risks: real, perceived and unknown" (1999) on the need for the modernisation of the vaccine safety infrastructure, as a *condition sine qua non* to counter emotional scepticism and psychological defensive attitudes such as the citizens' reactions to the H1N1 influenza virus vaccination campaign.

- Media and civil society added value to resilience building (with Christophe LECLERCQ, Founder of the EURACTIV Media Network, Associate Professor at the ULB)
- European leaders in the "Situation Room" – Rising beyond the COVID-19 lockdown (with a joint feedback from Verena RINGLER (European Commons) and Nadja EL FERTASI (Thrive with EQ)

The exchange of views in this session can be epitomised by the following key issues:

- as reported by Rytis PAULAUSKAS, a statement pronounced by the Lithuanian PM underlining that **"media literacy and critical thinking is a vaccine for disinformation virus pandemic** - and urgent and timely vaccination is critical";
- the risk that **heavy crisis scenarios** like the COVID-19 pandemic, that have increasingly revolutionarily taken absolute priority in the broadcast plans of all the media, can seriously **affect critical thinking in society, fragmenting the relationship between the state and citizens, damaging mutual trust** between international partners and disrupt infrastructure development related to the existing digital networks as well as the ongoing plans for future developments (5G, AI...);
- **the urgent need for reinforcing ties between public communicators and the media sector, in order to become more and more effective in neutralising disinformation and minimise misinformation** (in the specific case of the Coronavirus threat, to help debunk conspiracy theories). Hence, increasing sustainable cooperative investments in a strategic approach to support civic education programmes and media literacy and counter hybrid threats, while being consistent in spreading good narratives;
- the need for supporting the commendable efforts of the European External Action Service Task Forces in debunking myths and neutralise disinformation..

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Crisis communication with public on the COVID-19 epidemic

Building and maintaining public trust in the anti-epidemic measures undertaken by the authorities and information given by competent bodies were pointed out as important. Transparency, timeliness, accuracy and consistency were stressed as important features of information.

There is no one single "control source" for actual easy-verifiable data about the number of the diseased if anti-epidemic measures were not undertaken) that can be used in communication about the pandemic. However, there are publicly presented figures and estimates, such as the one about health service overload owed to the large number of patients at intensive care, produced in each country but without using uniformed parameters (therefore difficult to compare).

The communication activities strictly related to the pandemic spread were more successful, though, than those dealing with the economic consequences of the lockdown - and this is also due to the different stages of the contagion from country to country.

Nevertheless, all public authorities have endeavoured to inform their citizens on the state of play on a rather regular basis and various communication and information channels have been used (press conferences, traditional media, social networks and other internet platforms).

The real big challenge remained on how to communicate the gradual lifting of restrictive measures, since in some countries the first wave of the pandemic is still hitting the population.

Particular emphasis was placed on co-operation between governments / decision-makers and scientists, primarily epidemiologists. This is important not only for the success of anti-epidemic measures, but also for enabling scientists to take part in the communication about the epidemic without been considered as interfering with the political authorities.

In some circumstances, timeliness in analysing the threats to public health and the national capacities to handle the pandemic was crucial. Taking the appropriate social distancing measures and imposing the necessary restrictions at an early stage of the coronavirus pandemic made the difference. Worth noticing the press and social media campaign carried out in Greece, investing in particular in messages promoting alternative initiatives (such as "We Stay Home and Travel though Literature", aiming to disseminate universality and timelessness of Greek literature, in support of the #we stay home" campaign).

Wider communication and social context

Medical issues superseding the economic ones is a novelty brought forth by the crisis communication on the pandemic.

Consequently, the scientific expertise was perceived as strongly needed in this crisis scenario and gained visibility. At the same time, social solidarity narrowed the field for political factors which thrive on polarization of society.

One of the lessons learnt from the pandemic was the common acknowledgment of the need to be prepared for future crises.

Fake news, disinformation and conspiracy theories appeared in the context of communication on the COVID-19 epidemic, as they do in the other contexts. They are being fought against by means of accurate information placed at various communication channels. In this respect, there was a warning about the financial state of the media, in particular those which issue accurate, verified information. In the absence of a sustained funding effort, such media may be heard less.

It has been noted that the vaccine trust volatility is linked to political volatility and that those voting for populist parties are most distrustful of the vaccination.

As regards the socio-economic impact of the crisis, it was also mentioned that an increase in the usage of new technologies to facilitate smart working raises the question of non-white collar jobs where such work pattern is not possible.

Moreover, the COVID-19 crisis created an increased emotionality characterized by a mix of emotions whereas isolation has been linked to an increase in social pathology (domestic violence, second-hand smoke in children, decrease in regular vaccination and treatments of non-infectious diseases). An opinion has been put forward that **emotional intelligence and stress resistance should be strengthened.**

In the concluding session, the moderators summarised the main inspiring points emerged from the three panels. **Strategic keys: integrated thinking; investments in analysis, research and communication skills; mutual trust and cooperation between communicators and scientific community; cooperation with multipliers; concrete engagement in social media; holistic approach in handling threats and consistent debunking of disinformation; prevention.**

The co-hosts Zvonimir FRKA-PETEŠIĆ, Stefano ROLANDO and Vincenzo LE VOCI (who presented the new issue - No 16 - of the public communication review of the Club of Venice "Convergences"), stressed the need for acting together to meet the challenges ahead for the public communicators, in the incumbent crisis and in all future crisis scenario. This topic will certainly feed the Club of Venice meetings foreseen in the 2nd semester of the year and in particular the autumn plenary in Venice in December 2020.

Vincenzo Le Voci is the Secretary-General of the Club of Venice, the network of the communications directors from the European Union member states and institutions and from countries candidate to the EU membership. He has fulfilled this role since 2011.

He is a longstanding European civil servant, having worked for the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU for 28 years. Since 2001 he is in the Directorate-General of Communication, where he is currently responsible for Transparency and Information Policy matters.
Before joining the EU, he worked 7 years for NATO in administration management and logistics, as a US Air Force - DOD official.

Vincenzo owns a Master degree in foreign languages and literatures and attended courses of modern history, European Integration and management in Belgium and at Maryland and MIT universities. He is giving lectures to universities and contributes articles and essays for communications books and magazines. He is the co-editor of two compendiums and, since 2013, a semi-annual review (Convergences) of the Club of Venice focused on challenges in public communication.

In 2018 he was conferred by the University of Calabria and the Municipality of Ventotene (the home of Altiero Spinelli's Manifesto) the Europa Prize "in recognition of his high commitment to communication and information aimed at encouraging and strengthening public and diplomatic relations between governmental and institutional communicators".

Lithuanian diplomacy in the digital age:
Closing the foreign policy gap

By Dr. Corneliu Bjola and Rytis Paulauskas

With an expanding digital network of influential and engaging social media accounts, actively operating on multiple platforms (Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, LinkedIn, Instagram), in support of carefully crafted strategies of digital communication, the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) has managed, in a rather short period of time, to distinguish itself as one of the most innovative members of a relatively small club of digital diplomatic powerhouses. According to the 2018 Twiplomacy study[1], the Lithuanian MFA ranks sixth among the best digitally connected organisations and shares the platform with globally influential foreign services such as the European External Action Service (EEAS), the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, or the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs. A capacity for strong adaptive leadership, coupled with an organisational culture open to innovation and experimentation and a commitment to delivering ambitious foreign policy goals in a complex geopolitical context are the key ingredients accounting for this performance. That being said, the broader question is how digital diplomacy could contribute more effectively to Lithuania's foreign policy, both in terms of advancing the country's interests and in protecting them when they are challenged.

The main reason that small and medium-sized states like Sweden, the Netherlands, Mexico, Israel, or Australia have enthusiastically embraced digital diplomacy from the early stages has to do with the perception that digital technologies can help them increase their diplomatic influence to levels they might otherwise not be able to reach. It is thus assumed that by being able to directly engage with millions of people, MFAs and their network of embassies could positively shape the views of the global public about the country of origin, and in so doing, they could increase the diplomatic standing of the country in bilateral or multilateral contexts and even 'punch' above their political or economic weight. The Lithuanian MFA makes no exception to this principle. Its expanding 'network of networks of diplomats, journalists, businesspeople, diaspora leaders, academics etc. has proved effective in boosting the country's efforts in public diplomacy, diaspora engagement, and crisis communication. With the arrival of a new generation of digital technologies including artificial intelligence (AI) and mixed reality (MR), the Lithuanian digital diplomacy could expand even further and include consular services, negotiations and new forms of diplomatic representation under its digital umbrella.

Currently Lithuania MFA's digital network has four main Facebook pages, directly aimed at communicating with Lithuanian citizens living in the country and its sizeable diaspora community residing abroad. Three main Twitter accounts (Lithuania MFA; LT MFA StratCom and the Foreign Minister's account) introduce the Lithuania's diplomatic activities and its foreign policy positions to foreign audiences. In the field of economic diplomacy, the MFA uses LinkedIn page to reach out and engage a more sophisticated audience made of professionals, experts, etc. The digital network also includes 50 Facebook, 21 Twitter, and 4 Instagram accounts of Lithuanian embassies and consulates around the world. One hundred Twitter accounts are used as personal accounts by Lithuanian ambassadors and diplomats. The total reach of Lithuania MFA's network from 31st of August 2018 to September 1st 2019 is estimated at 10.5 mil., while the total engagement of the reached users is approximately 590,000. In the year 2018 – 2019, the MFA has launched and managed 7 major campaigns such as the Lithuanian Freedom Fighters, Brexit information for Lithuanian citizens, the Papal visit to Lithuania, Baltic Way 30 and a few others. During this period, the MFA's main pages (Facebook; Twitter; LinkedIn) have gained from 1.5 to 11 thousand new followers.

The strategic aim set by the MFA for its digital activities is to achieve systemic integration of all its accounts so that they can communicate together as one coherent network, a well-designed and effective "Network of Networks". The strength of this approach lies in improving coordination between the MFA and its embassies, amplifying online influence by reaching out a wide range of audiences in real-time, and strengthening the effectiveness of its communication through the use of advanced analytical and content planning programs.

As we are about to enter a second decade of steady evolution and professionalisation of digital diplomacy, one particular lesson stands out for MFAs with respect to how they can excel in their digital approach. More specifically, they need to demonstrate that digital diplomacy holds not only tactical value for communicating MFAs' positions and interests, but also strategic significance as an element of statecraft. This requires a better understanding of how technology impacts relationships between states and a solid commitment to developing the necessary capabilities by which to respond to the opportunities and challenges so generated. In other words, for digital diplomacy to advance into the next stage, it must enhance its strategic value primarily by ensuring that online influence is successfully converted into offline influence of relevance for foreign policy.

The recent media controversy over the role of Lithuania in the second World War (WWII) and the political memory of the Holocaust presents itself an interesting case for briefly exploring how digital diplomacy could provide better strategic support to foreign policy. To mark the eightieth anniversary of the Munich Agreement, the Russian MFA and several of its embassies launched a coordinated digital campaign in Sept-Oct 2018 (see Graph 1 below), promoting the narrative that, against the background of extremism and

1 *Twiplomacy Study 2018*, available at https://twiplomacy.com/blog/twiplomacy-study-2018/

neo-Nazism in Europe, the Baltic states, including Lithuania, deny their past and facilitate neo-appeasement policies by celebrating national heroes who were Nazi collaborators. The campaign targeted audiences primarily in Europe and North America with the rather transparent goal to discredit these countries and generate diplomatic tensions with their allies. The digital campaign followed closely the pattern of Russian disinformation of cultivating political controversies tailored to the local context, exacerbating divides in the West and manufacturing an echo chamber of Kremlin support[2]. It was aided by the fact that traditional media was also covering Holocaust-related stories as part of the commemorations marking the International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Graph 1: *Breakdown of ReTweets by month*

Handle	Date							Grand Total
	2018				2019			
	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	
lv_rusembas	587	407						994
mfa_russia	3,606	1,202						4,808
MID_Kaliningrad		7					13	20
natomission_ru	220	10		116			418	764
PMSimferopol	1,013	515						1,528
PskovMid	206	161	38	105	321	5	63	899
rus_emb_est	199	289						488
RusEmbNo		134	84	131				349
rusembusa	725	1,827						2,552
russian_un	455	169						624
russianembassy_c	6,423	2,007						8,430
Grand Total	13,434	6,728	122	352	321	5	494	21,456

From a strategic perspective, this case shows the importance of closing the gap between digital diplomacy and foreign policy by ensuring that hostile attempts to undermining the country's international position and reputation do not go unanswered. Given that Russia's narrative is spread through Twitter, Lithuania should also disseminate its counter-narrative on Twitter by refuting the argument of the adversary without repeating it unnecessarily. Moreover, as the Russian narrative centres on the allegation that Lithuania is "whitewashing" its past, Lithuania's counter-narrative should be centred on the argument that Lithuania is dedicated to remembering the lessons of the Holocaust and ensuring that these lessons are not forgotten. The digital campaign should also prioritize

2   Corneliu Bjola and James Pamment, "Digital Containment: Revisiting Contain-
    ment Strategy in the Digital Age," *Global Affairs 2*, no. 2 (2016): 132, http://dx.
    doi.org/10.1080/23340460.2016.1182244.

increasing the number of positive reports in newspapers as such development can help break the mutually reinforcing cycle between social and print media. At the same time, it should seek to map the "network of networks" of Russian sources, bots, and influencers involved in the dissemination of negative stories and disinformation about Lithuania and the political memory of the Holocaust. The map could prove useful for identifying potential patterns of dissemination on social media, which could then be modelled to predict and pre-actively react to further disinformation campaigns.

To conclude, the key contribution that Lithuanian digital diplomacy can make to its foreign policy is to help advance the country's interests and to protect them when they are challenged. This can be better accomplished not by directly influencing the views of (friendly or hostile) decision makers, but rather by shaping the environment in which those decisions are made or unmade.

Corneliu Bjola is Associate Professor in Diplomatic Studies at the University of Oxford and Head of the Oxford Digital Diplomacy Research Group.

He also serves as a Faculty Fellow at the Center on Public Diplomacy at the University of Southern California and as a Professorial Lecturer at the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna. His research focuses on the impact of digital technology on the conduct of diplomacy with a focus on strategic communication, digital influence and methods for countering digital propaganda.

His most recent publication is the co-edited volume on Countering Online Propaganda and Violent Extremism: The Dark Side of Digital Diplomacy (2018).

He has authored or edited six books, including forthcoming volume on Countering Online Propaganda and Violent Extremism: The Dark Side of Digital Diplomacy (2018) and Digital Diplomacy: Theory and Practice (2015). His work has been published in the European Journal of International Relations, Review of International Studies, Ethics and International Affairs, International Negotiation, Cambridge Review of International Affairs, Global Policy, Journal of Global Ethics and the Hague Journal.

SEEMF 2020

By Oliver Vujovic (South East Europe Media Organisation – SEEMO / SECEPRO)

Under the title "(Re)Think the Digital Reliability of the media, economic aspects of the pandemic, sustainable digital transitions in South East and Central Europe" the XIV South East Europe Media Forum (SEEMF) took place on 22 October 2020 in a hybrid format combining the online coverage with "live" in-person attendance in different locations / hubs: Belgrade (Serbia), Fažana (Croatia), Podgorica (Montenegro), Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Sofia (Bulgaria), Tirana (Albania) and Trieste (Italy). The limitations brought by the global pandemic did not break the spirit of the annual SEEMF. In total more than 280 participants where present in 7 hubs, and many viewers followed the live online coverage over social media and webpages.

The SEEMF is the leading annual media event for journalists, media CEO, editors-in-chief, media owners and media experts in Central, South and Eastern Europe promoting exchanges and networking. It is organised since 2007 and usually every year in one new country in South, East and Central Europe.

SEEMF is co-hosted by South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), the KAS Media Program South East Europe and the Central European Initiative (CEI) from Trieste, Italy. Additional regular parrters are the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) from Geneva, Switzerland, the South East and Central Europe PR Organisation (SECEPRO) from Vienna, Austria, the International Institute – International Media Center (II-IMC) from Vienna and the International Academy from Belgrade, Serbia.

Regional and international media experts debated topics of relevance for the media in the time of the pandemic, in particular the role of reliable information in preventing the growing influence of fake news and disinformation, the financial struggles affecting media outlets, alternative digital formats and ways for attracting young audiences. The work of journalists is still connected to big challenges during the coronavirus pandemic. Covid 19 strongly impacted the media industry and affected the work of journalists in all countries. Misinformation, disinformation and rumours can spread quickly and widely. Important question in all countries is how can journalists debunk misinformation and still be fast in publishing a news. In some countries journalists have been threatened, especialy over social media or by politicans, or also in some cases arrested for their coverage of the pandemic.

Some governments used Covid19 as basic for controling media and censorship. A big problem during Covid19 pandemic for journalists are indidivudals or groups, sometimes also doctors by profession, with miracle cures and misleading statistics.
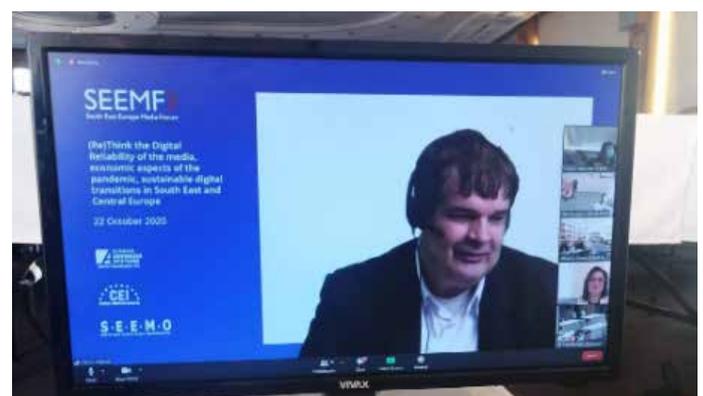
The annual SEEMF was organised in three panels: TRUST ME, I AM A JOURNALIST (reliability in the infodemic, challenges during the pandemic, disinformation), I WILL SURVIVE (financial struggles, restructuring, alternative digital formats and new partnerships) and WE ARE YOUNG (how to attract young audiences, strategies for public service media, targeted content for millennials). A special key not was presented by Noel Curran, EBU Director General.

The SEEMF agenda is online on: https://seemf.org/agenda/

From Trieste, CEI's Senior Executive Officer Barbara Fabro presented the international respected CEI SEEMO Award for Outstanding Merits in Investigative Journalism to the winners: the Italian Cecilia Anesi for the category "Professional Journalists" and the Serbian Natalija Jovanovic for the category "Young Professional Journalists" while Esmeralda Keta from Albania received a special mention. It aims at honouring the work carried out by investigative journalists and their contribution to investigative reporting despite the difficult conditions under which they often have to operate. This year's edition of the CEI SEEMO Award gave priority to works covering issues related to the coronavirus crisis.

Cecilia Anesi, investigative reporter at IrpiMedia, the online media of IRPI (Investigative Reporting Project Italy), is the winner in the "Professional Journalist" category. An accomplished journalist who has made a name of herself as a freelance reporter and as the co-founder of IRPI reporting about international organised crime and drug trafficking. The jury has prized her well-rounded and masterly crafted research conducted with a team of journalists on the topic of international drug trafficking in times of the COVID-19 epidemic. Notably, she stands out for the rigorous and outstanding model of journalism she embodies.

Natalija Jovanović, investigative reporter at BIRN (Balkan Investigative Reporting Network) Serbia, is the frontrunner for the "Young Journalist" award. A tenacious and brave reporter, the jury has valued her story focusing on checking different COVID-19 data from different sources, carrying out her journalistic work through in-depth research. The investigations on the health system have granted the Albanian journalist Esmeralda Keta the jury's special mention. Investigative journalist at Top Story show broadcasted by Top Channel and contributor to BIRN Albania, her model of

journalism focuses on the injustices faced by vulnerable groups and the shortcomings in protecting citizens' rights.

The new hybrid format was organised with respecting all local Covid19 rules. In some countires the event took place localy in several conference rooms, connected to the Covid 19 limit of maximum 30 persons in one conference room. All participants got from the organiser special produced SEEMF face masks.

Oliver Vujović is a Yugoslav, German and Austrian former journalist, co-founder and today Secretary General of the international press freedom group South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO).
In 2000 Vujović founded with a group of 40 editors and media owners the international press freedom group SEEMO, of which he is Secretary General. SEEMO was between 2000 and 2015 affiliate of the International Press Institute.
He later founded also the South East and Central Europe PR Organisation (SECEPRO), of which he also is Advisor.
He is the initiator of the South East Europe Media Forum (annual event), the Istanbul Media Days (annual event), and the Investigative Journalism Days.
Vujović has been editor, co-editor, author or co-author in several books, publications, research articles, research papers and magazines. Some of publications: Guide for Investigative Reporters, Investigative Reporting in SEE etc. Also editor and publisher of SEEMO Media Handbook (annual), of the book Media and Minorities in South East Europe (2006), and publisher of the De Scripto magazine.

EUROPCOM 2020
Bearing with the contingencies

(information drawn from the website of the European Committee of the Regions)

EuroPCom, the European Public Communication Conference, is the largest annual meeting point for experts in the field of public communication and jointly organised by the EU institutions in Brussels.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has clearly highlighted the key role of communication in enabling government action and prompting public response, and has brought about seismic changes in how we need to communicate. The leading organisers (the European Committee of the Regions) had to very quickly adapt to this challenging situation and introduce innovative and creative ways of working and communicating: video conferences, distance meetings, hybrid events and distance learning have become commonplace. Hence, this year EuroPCom is structured as follows:

On 29 June 2020, EuroPCom was for the first time organised virtually and consisted of a series of three webinars – programme and reports on the three sessions here below.

Programme - 29 June

9:00 – 10:00

Stories from regions and cities: staying positive

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed, amongst other things, the urgent need for Europeans at all level to stay connected and to cooperate. Networking, sharing information and spreading good news about what works are key to respond positively to this crisis. Panellists shared positive stories from the ground, highlighting successful communication projects that helped EU citizens to keep connected and positive.
Moderator: María Andrés, Head of the European Parliament Office for Spain
Speakers:

- **Massimo Gaudina,** Head of European Commission Representation in Milan, Italy
- **Andrea Horvat-Kramaric,** Head of Section Communication and Spokesperson - European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)
- **Ana Ferreira,** Head of Cabinet of the Mayor of Braga, Portugal
- **Kati Vähäsarja,** Manager of Civic services unit, Wellbeing promotion department in Kuopio, Finland

10:15 - 11:15

Disinformation during the COVID-19 pandemic

This session tackled the challenges of addressing fake news and disinformation arising in times of COVID-19. Panellists shared some of the best approaches to help you fight disinformation in your own community, whether you represent a public institution, a local/regional authority, a company or an NGO.
Moderator: Janis Sarts, Director of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence Riga, Latvia
Speakers:

- **Delphine Colard,** Head of the European Parliament Spokesperson's unit, Directorate-General for Communication
- **Raimonda Miglinaite,** Information and Communication Officer - European External Action Service (EEAS)

11:30 – 12:30

Communication post COVID-19: what is the 'next normal'?

The COVID-19 crisis is an unprecedented challenge for public communicators as nobody can yet predict how long it will last and how much it will affect the economy and public life. Local and regional governments have to make tough decisions and communicate them in a way that resonates with citizens. This webinar looked at the "next normal" in terms of crisis governance communication, and explored ways to communicate necessary measures in an effective manner. This webinar was part of the CoR Digital Masterclasses.
Moderator: Lene Naesager, Director for Strategy and Corporate Communication, Directorate-General for Communication, European Commission
Speakers:

- **Stijn Pieters,** Co-founder and managing partner of PM ▪ Risk Crisis Change
- **Dr. Hugo Marynissen,** Senior partner at PM ▪ Risk Crisis Change

Session 1 - Stories from regions and cities: staying positive

Moderator of the webinar, Maria Andres, Head of European Parliament Office for Spain, opened the event by welcoming participants. She underlined the importance of keeping communication going in times of a crisis such as the current COVID-19 pandemic. There was an urgent need for Europeans to stay connected, to cooperate, and therefore it became a must for public institutions to spread the message of togetherness and solidarity.

The European Parliament needed to give a fast response, and it has launched a new campaign #EuropeansAgainstCOVID-19 that shared the stories of local heroes in European countries.

Another civic message was #StayAtHome, and later, the Parliament introduced #EUDelivery to communicate about EU response.

At the question of Maria Andres, participants of the webinar shared that the biggest challenge they faced during the crisis in communication was getting through to people, followed by disseminating positive messages. Next on the list were "uncertainty and lack of knowledge on what is going on" and "keeping communities together".

At another question of Maria Andres, 59% of participants of the webinar voted that the age group 18– 40 was most receptive to their communication.

Massimo Gaudina, Head of European Commission Representation in Milan, shared the perspective of the Lombardy region in Italy, which suffered the worst hit by the pandemic with 16 thousand victims.

He gave an overview on how they counteracted false narratives about Europe having abandoned Italy by communicating EU response and positive messages of solidarity and togetherness.

The support of the EU was less visible in the beginning, while help coming from China and Russia received a lot of visibility due to media activities from these countries. This situation created an antiEuropean feeling in Italy. The main objective of the Representation in Milan was not to tell people how to behave, but to counteract the false narratives claiming that Europe has abandoned Italy.

In order to achieve this, they communicated the EU response to the crisis by, among others: sharing the video of President von der Leyen, writing to local papers on EU response, producing a TV programme on solidarity, organising online school lectures for school communities to raise awareness of students on the EU action. They marked the 9th of May with, among others, a virtual concert in Rome and a video of musicians performing the Ode of Joy to show solidarity.

To summarise the challenges they faced in four keywords:

1. Learning – This has been a learning experience, as there was a need to understand a new virus and all its implications in terms of health, economy, society and politics.

2. Empathy – It was more important than ever to feel empathy with citizens, but it was also easier as the crisis affected everyone, we were all in the same situation.
3. Resilience – In order to be able to communicate positively, colleagues had to be positive and keep their positive spirit themselves.
4. Solidarity – It was the main message of their communication.

Andrea Horvat-Kramaric, Head of Section Communication and Spokesperson, European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), explained how they communicated their risk assessment of the COVID-19 pandemic, translating scientific information into easy-to-understand language, and communicating with the public through media.

The ECDC has been monitoring the COVID-19 situation since New Year's Eve 2019, researching, collecting and evaluating data.

Between the 22nd of January until the end of May, the ECDC received more than 900 media requests, they communicated about the pandemic and gave interviews to the BBC, POLITICO, CNN, The Telegraph, The Guardian, as well as American and Chinese media.

They also communicated on their own channels, such as social media or webpages.

Andrea Horvat-Kramaric summarised the main message in the following way:
Effective risk communication is essential in the time of crisis, and it is very important to spread positive messages. Open communication based on facts is necessary to increase public trust. The aim is to build trust and credibility, as public institutions should be perceived as reliable sources.

Ana Ferreira, Head of Cabinet of the Mayor of Braga, Portugal, gave an overview of the measures the Municipality of Braga took to contain the virus and to make sure people receive care and stay connected during the crisis.

The Mayor cancelled all activities and events in public places, and closed all public facilities and nonessential shops, while some schools stayed open to serve food to families in need. Workers of nonessential services of the municipality were sent home on a full salary, all services being available through digital services. Companies were exempt from various city taxes.

A public helpline was created to help senior citizens with their needs and to offer care to people's mental well-being with the support of psychologists. Internet was offered to 800 families until July with the help of telecom companies, and computers have been collected for students in need. Help was provided to the homeless as well, and measures have been taken to prevent the abandonment of pets.

COVID-19 tests were provided to all professionals and senior citizens – so far, 2500 tests have been concluded. A screening centre was opened for testing, where tests have been carried out in a drive through manner.

The keywords to summarise what Ana Ferreira shared were the focus on people, commitment, and safety, with a message to the future of staying positive.

Kati Vahasarja, Manager of Civic services unit, Wellbeing promotion department in Kuopio, Finland, shared the actions taken to ensure the well-being of Kuopio citizens during the crisis. The city had previously introduced a strategy called Happy and Healthy Kuopio 2030 with the goal to become a Capital of good life in 2030. Good progress has been made with this program when the coronavirus crisis started.

With facilities closed, they had to find new ways of keeping people connected and make them stay positive.

All websites and e-services provided were put under one umbrella for easier accessibility of the citizens. Through these, they managed to reach a wider audience.

They introduced new ways for people to take care of their physical and mental well-being, finding ways to encourage physical activity among senior citizens without physical presence. A lot of eservices of museums and libraries were available, these were created for physical exercises as well, by producing a number of videos.

Online lectures were provided by the local community college. Support for lifestyle changes has been provided to citizens as well, as it was recognised that smoking, obesity, and substance abuse seemed to be rising due to the crisis.

More information on the examples of the cities of Braga and Kuopio is **available among the Best practices of the European Committee of the Regions.**

Session 2 - Disinformation during the COVID-19 pandemic

Janis Sarts, Director of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence Riga, Latvia, opened the webinar by introducing the speakers, who shared their experiences on combatting disinformation and misinformation by raising awareness on their risks, detecting and analysing false narratives, and communicating facts and positive messages in order to counteract them.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been accompanied by an 'infodemic' that created an unprecedented situation and challenges for public institutions. The crisis has provided a fertile soil for the spread of false narratives that can be harmful to people's health, as well as a threat to democracies.

At the question of Janis Sarts as part of an audience poll, participants answered that the country from which most of the disinformation originated was Russia in their opinion, followed by the USA and China. To the question of what the most common channels of fake news were, participants of the meeting voted "online".

Delphine Colard, Head of European Parliament Spokesperson's unit, Directorate-General for Communication, shared that the spread of disinformation had a risk to weaken the trust in authorities and science, which can also be a threat to people's health.

In April, there was a large debate on this matter, specific paragraphs were adopted declaring disinformation on COVID-19

as a major health risk. A special committee was created and it was decided that the EU should be ready to fight these false narratives coming from external sources.

There was a large campaign to discredit the EU and the ability of democratic societies to respond to the crisis and deliver solidarity. It advocated that authoritarian states had dealt with the crisis better.

While a quick fix of banning all false narratives might seem attractive, there are various elements to consider when fighting disinformation:

- Disinformation touches very core fundamental values, such as the freedom of speech, therefore one has to be very careful when counteracting it.
- There is a difference between dis- and misinformation, the first being intentionally spread false narratives, while the second can be created innocently.
- Emotions play a very strong part during the pandemic. Most of the disinformation is shared innocently by people who really just want to help their friends and family.

Delphine Colard shared that to tackle the issue, the European Parliament placed emphasis on raising awareness on media literacy and the risks of disinformation and misinformation. They provided a lot of content, press seminars, materials for teachers. They placed a very strong emphasis on the media, supporting fact checkers and investigative journalists.

The second strand was positive communication and spreading the facts, which is key in tackling disinformation. They worked jointly with the Commission and the EEAS to detect narratives, used Rapid Alert System to alert and inform Member States.

Selecting target groups is a challenge as well, as some of the most likely spreaders of disinformation turn a deaf ear to anything that comes from official sources. The European Parliament targeted proEuropean citizens with their communication, encouraging them to talk about it to friends and spread the positive messages via a ground approach. They placed a focus on the very critical younger generation as well, cooperated with influencers on social media and supported journalists.

Raimonda Miglinaite, Information and Communication Officer, European External Action Service (EEAS), shared that while the COVID-19 infodemic tested all its abilities and vulnerabilities, the EU faced this unprecedented situation with certain experience and procedures already in place, allowing it to tackle this challenge successfully.

The COVID-19 infodemic exploits vulnerabilities in healthcare and in our own cognition as well, the pandemic provided a fertile soil for the spread of disinformation. There was a gap of knowledge that was exploited by disinformation actors, among them foreign actors like Russia and China that used this crisis to undermine trust in authorities in order to improve their international image.

Raimonda Miglinaite shared that the EEAS has task forces for different external countries. She shared that the first example of COVID-19-related disinformation came from pro-Kremlin Sputnik in January. It was a conspiracy theory that the virus was created in the US as a biological weapon.

The second large theme of disinformation detected was on the EU failing to respond to the crisis, along with gloomy messages of upcoming collapse of EU, implying that democracies are not able to cope with such a crisis, while autocratic systems are.

The most alarming theme was the health-related disinformation, recommending bogus miracle cures to people or implying that coronavirus is a hoax and governments are using it to increase their power over citizens.

In April, a global activist network of EEAS sampled disinformation on social media and found that it was shared 1.7 million times. However, the EU already had certain experience in tackling disinformation from 2015, when the East StratCom Task Force was created to tackle Russia's ongoing disinformation campaign with a focus on the EU's Eastern neighbourhood.

The Task Force works in three main strands:

1. Communicating EU policies in the Eastern countries,
2. Strengthening media environment,
3. Exposing and analysing pro-Kremlin disinformation, making them publicly available in their database.

This, and the plan against disinformation adopted in 2018 was very useful for the EEAS when the pandemic hit. The Rapid Alert System (RAS) was created to exchange information among the Member States.

To tackle disinformation, the EEAS focused on monitoring disinformation, published four reports, created a dedicated section on their website to COVID-19, among other actions. They also ran awareness raising campaigns, encouraging people to think before they share content online.

Session 3 - Communication post COVID-19: what is the 'next normal'?

Lene Naesager, Director for Strategy and Corporate Communication, Directorate-General for Communication, European Commission, opened the webinar by giving an outline on its topic.

The coronavirus crisis changed the context of political communication, citizens are expecting a lot from communicators and politicians. There is a need to adapt to this and reconsider the communication activities in order to pass on messages in a clear way. Citizens want clarity and guidance, they need to feel trust in the institutions.

During the Digital Masterclass, the speakers from PM, **Stijn Pieters, Co-founder and managing partner and Dr. Hugo Marynissen, Senior partner**, gave an overview on how crisis communicationcould be tackled in the time of this crisis.

The main difference between political communication and crisis communication is that in political communications, we put forward our policies, and communicate them to the public and persuade to adapt them, or we defend or attack policies. In crisis communication, uncertainty is the key.

Based on Barry Turner's Disaster Incubation Theory, the speakers presented a "crisis cycle", which has the following six stages:

1. Plan

2. Incubation Period – The period when we start to drift from the original plan. We are always in a state of incubating a crisis situation. How we deal with this drift will determine how longwe can survive.
3. Precipitating Event – The one thing that flips the whole case from risk to crisis.
4. Onset of the crisis – The phase where we get negative influences towards the recovery.
5. Rescue and salvage
6. Cultural readjustment – When we look back and learn from what had happened before we go into the next crisis.

There is always a short period of time when we can avoid the crisis in stage 3. In the case of the COVID-19 crisis, we had not taken the window of opportunity to do so.

During the masterclass, the following question was asked from the audience:
Which worldview do you adhere to the most?

1. The world is ordered but occasionally things become chaotic.
2. The world is chaotic but we manage to create oases of order.

29% of the audience voted no.1, while 70% voted 2.

The COVID-19 crisis made us realise that we are surrounded by chaos, and we have to deal with this environment. This pandemic indicated that all of a sudden all our plans can be destroyed. Pieters and Marynissen shared that they had been looking at the Chaos Theory to understand this.

The speakers identified three types of problems:

1. Tame problems: these need a rational power, a manager providing the right process.
2. Critical problems: they need a coercive power, a commander providing the answer.
3. Wicked problems: They need emotional power, a leader asking the questions. According to Jeff Conklin, the issue with a wicked problem is that we only understand the very nature of the problem in the moment it is solved. There isn't really an answer on how to deal with it.

During a crisis, communicators and crisis managers try to act and work according to a plan prepared beforehand. However, reality is always different from what the plan is. In the COVID-19 crisis for example, we are trying to contain the pandemic and solve all its consequences as well.

The speakers presented a "Golden Triangle" of governance, operations, communications, and management aligning the three.

Pieters & Marynissen, 2017
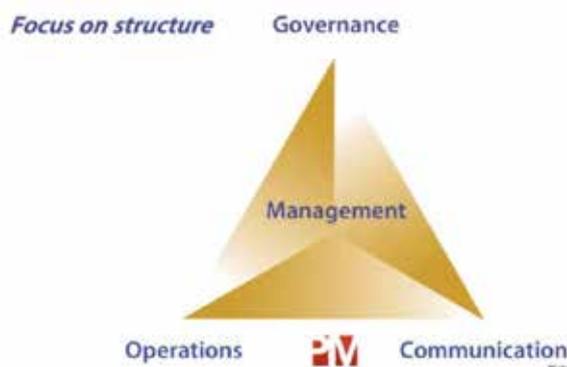
The key is separating the communication part from the governance and operations, this will help building a dependable structure. It is important to have a clear mandate for these domains in an organisation in a preparatory phase for a crisis. The three processes each have a different tempo. Crisis management is the alignment of these three processes in an information flow that helps out each domain. This is what is manageable in a crisis.

What is not manageable, is the many organisations communicating separately, it is a complexity of processes that are beyond our mandate. The idea of communicating with one voice in a crisis is, on a European scale, an illusion.

What needs to be done is perception or sentiment analysis and detecting what people are feeling and doing. It already gives a possible view on how to address uncertainties.

What we can do: looking at the communications from the expert view and having politicians support that expert view.
Marynissen presented the research they did during the pandemic, analyzing the network of the Port of Antwerp. They found that the Port authority took the lead and steered the network, which allowed them to speak with one voice in the end.

How to solve different types of problems:
- Simple problem: to solve this problem, it is enough to react and follow the plan.
- Complicated problem: in this case, we have to anticipate, but it's again a reactive process.
- Compound problem: when there are multiple aspects to a problem. We have to be transdisciplinary, but it's still a reactive process.
- Wicked problem: as in this case we don't have a clear understanding on the nature of the problem, we have to anticipate and get trans-disciplinary, in solving the problem and in its communication as well.

The importance of identifying the needs and wants of the network: we need to know what the network is feeling and saying and how it influences other networks. We have to see the perception outside the organisation in order to match the crisis communication strategy with reality.

On 7 and 8 December 2020, the week after the Club of Venice plenary meeting, EuroPCom 2020 - Time for Communica[c]tion will again be fully online, and will look at the opportunities and challenges in communication around three key themes: Citizens, Green and Digital. It will also address two of the most prominent initiatives of the European agenda for 2020 that will have major implications for European public communication: the Conference on the Future of Europe and the European Green Deal.

During the conference, communication experts from different sectors will help members of the EuroPCom community to reflect on key questions, including: How should these initiatives be adapted to the new situation? How to communicate about them on the ground, so that priorities are not shifting? How do we ensure relevant and effective involvement of citizens? What impact does communication have on action?

Green		Digital
Future of the world?		Future of communication?
	Citizens	
	Future of Europe?	

Programme - Monday 7 December

9:45 – 10:20 | ### The EuroPCom Morning Show

Grab a coffee and kick-start your neurons with this informal introduction to EuroPCom 2020!

10:30 - 12:00 | ### Opening session - Time for Communica[c]tion

A high-level panel of experts in the three conference themes of Citizens, Green and Digital, share their thoughts and ideas on communicating in the current pandemic and on the two flagship initiatives, and answer your questions.

The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly highlighted the need for communication lead to action, as well as the key role of communication in facilitating government action and public response.

In this opening session of EuroPCom 2020 – Time for Communica[c]tion, the panel of expert speakers, drawn from organisations active in each of the three conference themes, will share their thoughts and ideas on communicating in the current pandemic, and the two flagship initiatives.

Moderator: Méabh Mc Mahon, Reporter and news anchor, Euronews
Speakers:

- **Aura Salla,** Head of EU Affairs, Facebook
- **Michael Nathan,** Managing Director, French Government Information Service
- **Tom Brookes,** Executive Director, Strategic Communications, European Climate Foundation

12:15 – 13:15 | ### EuroPCom Talks

Three inspiring speakers, each an expert in one of the conference themes of Citizens, Green and Digital, will share their views on communicating around their area of expertise.

Moderator: Méabh Mc Mahon, Reporter and news anchor, Euronews
Speakers:

- **Kate Wimpress,** Convener, Citizens' Assembly of Scotland
- **Kathryn Sheridan,** CEO & Founder, Sustainability Consult
- **Guillaume Chaslot,** Founder, AlgoTransparency.org

13:15 – 13:20 | ### Tell it like it is!

Light-hearted review of the morning session by De Kiesmannen.
Speakers: De Kiesmannen, Performance artists

13:20 – 14:15 | ## Time for... lunch!

Time to relax and grab some lunch!
And if you have some spare time between checking your emails, pop into the EuroPCom 2020 Market Place! It is open until 18:00 on day 1, and from 09:00 until 17:00 on day 2.

14:15 – 15:45 | ## EuroPCom Market Place

Network with other EuroPCom participants, and visit the stalls of the wide range of exhibitors who are waiting to share their activities and projects with you!
You can chat with other participants and exhibitors, set up video meetings, and attend presentations from exhibitors.
Use the login information sent to you from the b2match platform.

16:00 – 17:30 | ## Workshops

Follow the exchange between the panelists and seize the chance to fire your questions at them.

CITIZENS - The Conference on the Future of Europe: How to reflect the new reality?

Announced at the end of 2019, the Conference on the Future of Europe aims to give all stakeholders, including citizens, a greater say on what the European Union does and how it works for them. The launch of the Conference was delayed due to the COVID-19 outbreak, as all attention was shifted towards dealing with the pandemic. Yet, democracy is stronger than a virus, and revamping European democracy remains a priority of the EU. So the big question now is how to adapt the Conference on the Future of Europe to the current situation? Find out directly from the organisers of the Conference what is envisaged, and share your views and expectations on how to successfully launch and carry out the process!

GREEN - #EUGreenDeal – What's in it for communication?

In 2019, for the first time in a Eurobarometer survey, European citizens said that climate change should be the top priority for the EU institutions. The European Green Deal is the EU's response to tackle climate and environment related challenges and was launched only eleven days after the new European Commission took office. The plan comes with a major communication campaign. What are your expectations? How can we engage the public in ambitions for climate action? Does the COVID-19 outbreak change the game? Ask your questions and give your input!

DIGITAL - Crisis communication: managing the unmanageable

Whether it is a global pandemic or a local emergency, organisations and public authorities seem to face a constant pressure of crisis management. Effective handling of crisis communication among staff and towards the outside world rests in preparedness and anticipation. We may not be able to control the roots or consequences of the crisis, but we can control our response to it. What have we learned in the past months that will help us prepare for those emergencies that are yet to come? Join us in this important sharing and learning exercise!

16:00 – 17:30 | ## Ideas Labs – time to experiment

Deep dive into your selected theme to actively work online with other participants! Get prepared to share your ideas and experiences with the other members of the Lab!

The Ideas Labs will be very collaborative and participatory workshops, best suited for people who are willing to work together in small, facilitated groups to exchange their ideas and views with other participants. Each Ideas Lab will be different in terms of subject matter and what it expects to generate, from new ideas and concepts to concrete plans for future action.

Due to the participatory nature of the labs the number of participants in each Ideas Lab will be limited. Registrations for a particular Lab will be closed when sufficient people have indicated they wish to join it. Everyone who was able to register their interest will be allowed enter the "lobby" of their Ideas Lab shortly before it is due to begin, with access to the actual Lab granted on a first-come first-served basis.
If you do not wish to participate in an Ideas Lab, or the available spaces have all been taken up, we encourage you to visit the EuroPCom Market Place, meet other participants and find out more about the many projects and organisations who will be exhibiting.

CITIZENS - FuturGov engagement game

The FuturGov game uses people's anticipatory assumptions about what the future may look like to generate conversations, negotiations and collaborations. By designing a process through which participants immerse themselves in the future, take on roles that are not theirs, and strategise to achieve their goals, the FuturGov game generates a participatory setting in which a debate can take place. New policies for the future will be discussed and power relations revealed. Prepare your negotiation and debating skills, and put on your strategic thinking cap! This session will use Miro, a visual collaboration platform to facilitate the interactions among the participants instead of a physical board.
Game moderators: Jennifer Rudkin, Eckhard Stoermer, Lucia Vesnic-Alujevic

GREEN - Narratives for climate communication

In this Ideas Lab delegates work with the concept of political framing when it comes to preparing for or answering to criticism. We will look into the main negative frames concerning the EU and the identify the corresponding positive ones.
Using recent case studies from EU climate and environment policy, we will explore ways to communicate controversial topics and see how the choice of frame affects the possibility to have strong message.

DIGITAL - Is the future of participatory democracy digital?

Now more than ever, citizens can participate in decision-making online. New hybrid platforms combine physical and distant consultation elements, and innovative digital forms of participatory democracy now often supplement representative democracy. The COVID-19 pandemic has made people reassess how they regard digital participation, and it seems unlikely that we will go back to how many regarded digital participation in the past. Join this session if you want to learn more about hybrid consultations, and discover the latest trends, tools and platforms enabling citizens to have their say in co-constructing the future of European democracy

17:30 – 18:00 | **The EuroPCom Evening Show**

Wind down with this humorous look back on Day 1 of EuroPCom by De Kiesmannen.
Speakers: De Kiesmannen, Performance artists

Programme - Tuesday 8 December

8:45 – 9:00 | **New day – new beginning**

Recap of Day 1 and intro to Day 2.
View the outputs from the Ideas Labs the day before, and get ready for the second day of EuroPCom 2020 – Time for Communica[c]tion.
Moderator: Méabh Mc Mahon, Reporter and news anchor, Euronews

9:00 - 17:00 | **EuroPCom Market Place**

Visit the diverse range of organisations exhibiting in the Market Place, and meet up with friends old and new. The Market Place will be open on Day 1 from lunchtime until 18:00, and on Day 2 from 09:00 to 17:00.

Our Virtual Marketplace will host multiple exhibitors who are eager to present their projects and exchange ideas with you. Please stroll around the virtual booths, make contact with the different organisations and projects, schedule 1:1 meetings, or follow group demo sessions.

9:00 – 10:30 | **Workshops**

Follow the exchange between the panelists and seize the chance to fire your questions at them.
Second round of workshops on the three different themes, with topic experts who will share their ideas and experience with you. Please choose which workshop you wish to attend when you register.

CITIZENS - For a truly inclusive debate

The aspiration of the Conference on the Future of Europe is to give European citizens a leading and active role in the debate on the future of Europe. This is not new - EU institutions have been trying to connect better with citizens for decades. Could it be different this time? Why and how to involve citizens from the outset of the process? What alternative forms of active participation are out there? Can we learn from past experiences, failures and successes, to make this Conference a truly inclusive process? Come and discuss with panellists what works (and what does not) when it comes to citizens' engagement in decision-making.

GREEN - From climate communication to behavioural change

Informing about climate change and 'green' measures is important. But how do we actually make a difference with our communication? Our panel of experts will discuss how to foster behavioural change and stimulate the intended impact. Join this session to improve the effectiveness of your communication on climate action!

DIGITAL - Upcoming social media trends

Join us to discover what is trending and what to look out for in social media in the coming year. What are the upcoming social media trends, and how can you incorporate them into your communication strategy? We'll have a look at trending platforms like Instagram and TikTok and see how influencers use them, determine how to reach new audiences and also look at social media use from a scientific perspective.
This workshop is part of the Digital Masterclasses, a series of webinars organized by the CoR social media team.

9:00 – 12:15	## Local media meets EuroPCom

Training session focused on local and regional journalists and media representatives.
How to reach and chase your audience online? What are the new storytelling formats? Join the session to get answers to these questions, talk with regional TV journalists and learn about the latest trends through case studies and practical exercises. This is a limited-availability training session, organised in cooperation with CIRCOM Regional, and focused on local and regional journalists and media representatives.
If you wish to attend this session, please select it when you register. Registrations for the training session will be closed when sufficient people have indicated they wish to join it. Everyone who was able to register their interest will be allowed to enter the "lobby" of the session shortly before it is due to begin, with access to the actual training room granted on a first-come first-served basis.
Facilitator: Guillaume Kuster, Networking Manager and Expert Trainer, CIRCOM Regional

10:45 – 12:15	## Ideas Labs – time to experiment

Deep dive into your selected theme to actively work online with other participants! Get prepared to share your ideas and experiences with the other members of the Lab!

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If you do not wish to participate in an Ideas Lab, or the available spaces have all been taken up, we encourage you to visit the EuroPCom Market Place, meet other participants and find out more about the many projects and organisations who will be exhibiting.

CITIZENS - How regions and cities mobilise

Many regions and cities across Europe are well ahead of the Conference on the Future of Europe when it comes to involving citizens in decision-making processes. Their potential to mobilise and engage citizens in public actions was clearly shown in the midst of the COVID-19 outbreak – they were on the front line to take initiatives to fight the pandemic. Regions and cities, as the closest and most trusted levels of government and proven actors of change, are well placed to make the link between the EU and its citizens. Many of them are now mobilising to join actively the debate in the Conference. Come and discover how regions and cities are mobilising for the future of EU democracy, and develop proposals on how to make this process more effective.

GREEN - Learning from the legacy of miscommunicating climate science

Climate change and global warming are unequivocal and many of the observed changes since the 1950s are unprecedented. But the details and findings can be very technical and lead to messages that are too complex or difficult and hence misunderstood. By looking back, can we find out together how we can improve climate communication for our future?

DIGITAL - Countering misinformation narratives

The COVID-19 outbreak led to not only a pandemic, but also an 'infodemic' of disinformation. Learn how to recognise and counter disinformation narratives through concrete case studies. Come and share your experience with identifying and preventing the circulation of fake news on social media and other communication channels.

12:30 – 13:30

Closing session – Ask your questions!

Challenge the EU communication VIPs
Interactive session with the Heads of Communication of the various EU institutions involved in EuroPCom. Are there any remaining questions after two days of EuroPCom? The closing session is the occasion to ask them! Our speakers discuss and close this year's edition of EuroPCom with all the answers you need to go from communication to action!
Speakers:

- **Jaume Duch Guillot**, Director-General for Communication, and Spokesperson, European Parliament
- **Gianluca Brunetti**, Secretary-General, European Economic and Social Committee
- **Pia Ahrenkilde Hansen**, Direcor-General, European Commission, DG Communication
- **Reijo Kemppinen**, Director-General of Communication and Information, General Secretariat of the Council of the EU
- **Petr Blížkovský**, Secretary-General, European Committe of the Regions

15:30 – 16:00

Aftershow - Social media after-party

Sip some virtual cocktails (or mocktails if you need to keep working!) and celebrate the end of the 11th edition of EuroPCom!

Le Forum Cap'Com se transforme

Par Yves Charmont

Le rendez-vous annuel des communicateurs français se tient traditionnellement début décembre. Mais avec le deuxième confinement en cours, il a fallu repenser ce temps fort et imaginer un dispositif itinérant : Cap'Com tour.

Pour retrouver les contenus du Forum 2020, initialement prévu à Rennes en décembre, le réseau national de la communication publique locale organisera Cap'Com tour au premier trimestre 2021. Intervenants, conférenciers, partenaires et tous les communicateurs qui avaient prévu de participer à l'édition 2020 se rencontreront pour des journées d'échange et de formation, avec un programme 100% Forum.

Plus que jamais la profession a besoin de se retrouver pour partager ses expériences, trouver de nouvelles solutions, apprendre, comprendre, échanger. « Tous en transition » (thème du forum reporté) restera la phrase de ralliement de ces rendez-vous dans toute la France, en six dates. Toujours ancrés au territoire, coconstruits avec le réseau, chaque rendez-vous sera

l'occasion de se rapprocher de villes qui n'ont jamais accueilli le Forum.

Cette série d'événements sera complètement compatible avec les mesures de lutte contre la pandémie Codid-19, entièrement construite pour être simple et facile d'accès. La programmation sur une journée et la souplesse d'organisation du Cap'Com tour lui permettra de se tenir dès que les conditions sanitaires le permettront, région par région, période par période.

Cette déclinaison d'un événement de trois jours, rassemblant tous les ans plus de 1 000 participants, en une série de rencontres en région montre l'agilité de cet organisme professionnel. Épaulé par un comité de pilotage regroupant une centaine de professionnels, venant de tous types de collectivités locales, la coopérative Cap'Com s'appuiera sur son maillage territorial et sur la solidarité qui prévaut dans ce réseau. En effet, malgré un mouvement de grève des transports en décembre 2019, le forum de Bordeaux (notre photo) avait tenu toutes ses promesses. En 2021, l'itinéraire en proximité de ce rendez-vous sera sans doute l'occasion de se rapprocher encore plus des enjeux locaux, voire de développer des relations entre zones urbaines et rurales, d'aller au-devant des petites communautés de communes, de changer de regard. Le parcours du Cap'Com tour n'est à ce jour pas encore fixé, mais les étapes seront rapidement rendues publiques sur www.cap-com.org.

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YVES CHARMONT

Impliqué très tôt dans l'animation des territoires, il en intègre progressivement les enjeux stratégiques et communicationnels, auprès des élus et des citoyens. Un parcours qui débute à Radio France en régions, puis par les collectivités locales (26 ans), pour ensuite faire un passage de 4 ans en agence pour animer le débat public sous toutes ses formes (réunion classique, ateliers, interviews) et accompagner les politiques locales et les projets urbains.

En 2018, il devient directeur de Cap'Com, le réseau national des communicateurs publics et territoriaux de France.

Communicating Europe and shaping a common identity

By Pier Virgilio Dastoli

Anyone working in marketing or communications knows very well that no product (goods or services) can be publicised if it does not exist or is not immediately and easily identifiable. Unfortunately, most communications on the EU are publicising products before they actually exist.

For example, when the European Commission says that it has adopted a proposal for a directive it takes at least three years before that directive can be transposed into the national legal system of the Member States and thereby produce any effects on the lives of people and business.

Moreover, the effects of a directive, or more generally a policy decided at the Union level, considered to be beneficial to one particular country, are usually announced by that government and national politicians as their own personal success story.

The exact opposite case arises when the European Union adopts a position that does not tally with the stance being advocated by the government or the national politician concerned, when they tend to make it plain that "it is all Europe's fault" or "Europe has imposed it on us".

In both instances, the result is detrimental to the European Union, which emerges with tarnished prestige, and blameworthy.

This dynamic is aggravated by the protracted time taken by the EU's decision-making and legislative processes, even though it is shorter, on average, than in the individual Member States.

One such example is the permanent abolition of roaming charges promised over nine years ago, and which will come into force in June 2017; this delay is likely to have a negative impact on consumers because of the long-time taken between its announcement and its implementation, and the fact that its potential advantages might be counteracted by a general increase in telephone charges in the meantime.

This same fate applies to the Structural Funds and now the Next Generation EU: the EU announces billions to be spent, which are earmarked by the Union and allocated to the Member States, but even though the information on how the money is spent is available, the benefits are not publicised.

More generally, European citizens' rights are not well known and are often not even being honoured by the national, regional and local authorities themselves. But the EU is always scapegoated for it.

It is very easy to tweet an attack on Europe's convoluted policies, but less easy to explain them in 280 characters.

The European Union is a great target for facile post-truth campaigns. With its complex decision-making system, the provision of information by the EU and on the EU has always been highly complex.

Without going into the whole question of access to sources, it must be emphasised that the press, television and radio have often considered news about the European institutions to be too boring, and not newsworthy enough, until they discover precisely in times of crisis that many of today's opening news stories have to do with the outcomes of European policies.

In the Internet and Twitter age, an anti-EU tweet or headline on the Web can reach a vast audience, whereas only a well-trained and specialised press can provide serious, in-depth and comprehensible information on EU issues, and must constantly check facts to be able to tell the general public what the Union really is, what it can and cannot do, and the part played by the Member States in creating the present inefficiencies in the decision-making process.

Here is a list of seven proposals which will enable the EU institutions and the Member States to communicate more effectively and play a part in raising public awareness of the positive role of the Union in their daily lives and in the formation of a common European identity:

1. To increase the Stopfakenews campaign on the policies, decisions, laws and regulations and the institutions of the EU,.
2. To facilitate the development of a European public opinion through information and media which are responsive to "European" news. One highly symbolic practice could be to organise a joint press conference of the heads of the European institutions and the Member States to publicly announce their conclusions after every European Council and the EU Councils, leaving the individual press conferences of individual Member States until later.
3. To make the positive impact of the European Union on the daily lives of every European citizen visible and comprehensible.
4. More generally, to guarantee visibility to the added-value of every financial contribution from the EU budget on the websites of every national, regional and local government agency tasked with the indirect management of European funds.
5. To clearly indicate how much each citizen spends on the European Union and the return on their contribution.
6. To set up "European houses" (in the capitals and the most important cities) to give the EU a human dimension and bring it closer to the individual citizen.

PIER VIRGILIO DASTOLI is President of the Association of Communicators of Italian Public Administration and President of the Italian Council of the European Movement, member of the Spinelli Group.

Pier Virgilio was assistant of Altiero Spinelli in the Italian Chamber of Deputies and the European Parliament from 1977-1986, founder and spokesman of the Spinelli Committee for the United States of Europe, Secretary General of the International European Movement from 1995-2001, and Director of the European Commission Representation in Italy from 2003-2009.

He is author of numerous articles and essays on Europe.

The Death of a Gerontologist

By Stavros Papagianneas

Dimitris Kampanaros committed suicide last week Wednesday. He was the owner of a nursing home in the northern Athens suburb of Agios Stefanos. A few days before his desperate act, two residents of the home have tested positive for Covid-19 - himself as well.

The gerontologist was very dedicated to his work, had a great sense of duty and, immense respect for his residents. Katerina, an old friend from the Italian School in Athens, told me that she has been in contact with him for her mother and that he was an exceptional person.

When the pandemic broke out in March, he took the initiative to stay inside the building for 65 days together with the residents and his staff.

Although Athens has successfully managed the first corona wave things are now more difficult. Greece entered the second wave of the pandemic in August and the health system is feeling the pressure of the gradual increase in incubated patients. Same situation as in many other European countries.

When EU leaders hold an informal video conference on 29 October to discuss the unfolding pandemic disaster, the possibility of another lockdown will be on the agenda. As efforts to limit the spread with soft methods don't seem to work in overpopulated areas, a new lock down is a radical step that nobody wants. Lockdown is indicative of failure to manage the pandemic.

A slow economic rebound is already losing steam, and the social backlash against the latest restrictions is gathering momentum. There is pressure to come up with something coming close to a coherent EU response. However, lack of unanimity has always been Europe's worst enemy.

The planet is beset by giant problems that defy political and healthcare boundaries. Doctors and healthcare staff are fighting a world war against a pandemic that could have been prevented. The reports were there, the alarming scenarios were there but, the budget, the long-term planning and the co-operation were not there.

Certain members of the dominant political class are more concerned about the number of votes than the wellbeing of the citizens. Look to Boris Johnson or Donald Trump. There is also the type of autocrats like Erdogan or Bolsonaro elected through manipulation of the public opinion, lies or strategic marketing promoting imaginary enemies. For them, domestic problems are always coming from outside but never from the country itself.

Politics is not about staying in power whatever it takes. It is about managing the state for the people and by the people. It is about what you can do for the village, the city, the country, the continent and the whole world. It is not about how to become rich. It is about caring, being empathetic and having compassion. It is about taking difficult decisions, being transparent, communicating well and being pro-active.

There are still many things that we need to do to save humanity and the planet. But what if we require our politicians to take a political version of the Hippocratic Oath? After all, when we elect a government, we are entrusting the health of politics to their hands.

The Oath of Hippocrates is one of the oldest binding documents in history. It is still held sacred by physicians: to treat the ill to the best of one's ability, to preserve a patient's privacy, to teach the secrets of medicine to the next generation. This oath of ethics is one of the most widely known Greek medical texts.

Translating the Hippocratic Oath from medicine to politics is easy. You don't have to change a single word.

For example, with the modern version, a physician vows, among other things, that:

If I do not violate this oath, may I enjoy life and art, respected while I live and remembered with affection thereafter. May I always act so as to preserve the finest traditions of my calling and may I long experience the joy of healing those who seek my help.

All of us, including politicians, have to focus on what we do every day with an eye to the future generations. To ask ourselves if we are acting in "the finest traditions" of our vocations and will know "the joy of healing" those who need our help.

The Dark Side of the Internet

By Stavros Papagianneas

In 2018, a high-ranked diplomat of a non-EU country in Brussels asked me if I was interested in joining the efforts of Steve Bannon to export his fiery populism to Europe. "It is very kind of you, but I believe that Bannon is a dangerous man", I kindly declined.

Steve Bannon has been the Darth Vader of Emperor Trump. The core of the Star Wars saga has always been the struggle between the Bright Side of the Force and the Dark Side. But while in Star Wars the "good guys" are coming out on the top at the end of each story, the reality is different on planet Earth.

Digital communication has permeated almost every aspect of people's lives, across the world, it provides an essential case for examining how the use of new technology affects human well-being, human rights and democracy.

The question of whether new and social media undermine our well-being is an essential societal concern. From encouraging suicide to giving people an unhealthy addiction to staring at smartphones, digital technology has been accused of doing more harm than good.

There is increasing evidence that the Internet and social media can influence suicide-related behaviour. Social media can be more addictive than cigarettes and alcohol. It has a powerful draw for many people that leads to them checking it all the time without even thinking about it.

Another serious concern is the impact of digital technologies on democracy. According to a new JRC report, the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission, the democratic foundations of our societies are under pressure from the influence that social media has on our political opinions and our behaviours.

One of the most critical public concerns is the use of the Internet as a multiplier of disinformation and manipulation of the public opinion in changing people's political behaviour.

Armies of trolls, bots, fake social media accounts, "news" websites and online publications are used to spread propaganda, confusion and fear among innocent people.

Even Tim Berners-Lee, the inventor of the World Wide Web, wrote in his regular birthday letter (2018) that "the web that many connected to years ago is not what new users will find today".

"What was once a rich selection of blogs and websites has been compressed under the powerful weight of a few dominant platforms. This concentration of power creates a new set of gatekeepers, allowing a handful of platforms to control which ideas and opinions are seen and shared," he added.

In 2018, the revelation that 50 million people had their Facebook profiles harvested by data firm Cambridge Analytica so it could target them with political ads, was a huge blow to the social network. Fundamental questions arise about Facebook's approach to data protection and disclosure. Can the social network adequately secure our most personal data? And if that data is misused, is our democracy still safe? Do we need a voters protection legislation as we have in place for consumers?

For example, Brazil's new president makes Trump look like a saint: he praises dictators and wants to destroy the Amazon. Bolsonaro's supporters used fake accounts to flood social media with toxic lies designed to confuse voters and create distrust. Polls show that a large majority of his voters believed these lies, for example that his opponent was a paedophile.

While most countries use their troll armies to police and influence their own citizens, some have already turned against the European Union, the US and Western-type democracies in general. A 2017 Oxford study noted at least 30 nations were utilising them.

Here you have some public opinion manipulators:

1. Russia

Moscow is financing legions of pro-Russia Internet bots and trolls. According to internal documents released by a group of hackers in 2013, Internet Research Agency in St Petersburg employed more than 600 people across Russia. They had an annual budget of $10m, half of which was paid out in cash.

In January 2017, a joint report by the CIA, FBI and NSA confirmed that there had been Russian interference in the 2016 election. Kremlin's objective, according to this document, was to undermine the confidence of Americans in their electoral system and to denigrate Hillary Clinton.

Between January 2015 and August 2017, Facebook linked 80,000 publications to Internet Research Agency through more than 470 different accounts. At the same time, a total of 50,258 Twitter accounts were linked to Russian bots. Those fake accounts were programmed to share false information during the 2016 election period. Approximately 80% of these bots behaved in a way that supported Donald Trump, mostly using the hashtags #donaldtrump, #trump2016, #neverhillary and #trumppence16.

Russia is also trying to discredit the European Union and expose it as a failed project. In its euvsdisinfo database, the European External Action Service (EEAS) outlines different cases of fake stories related to the coronavirus that stemmed from Russian media outlets, such as the "prediction" that the pandemic will cause the collapse of the Schengen area, the paralysis of the EU, etc."

2. China

On 10 June 2020, China and Russia have been once more accused by the European Union of running disinformation campaigns inside the EU. "Foreign actors and certain third countries, in particular Russia and China, have engaged in targeted influence operations and disinformation campaigns around COVID-19 in the EU, its neighbourhood and globally, seeking to undermine democratic debate and exacerbate social polarisation, and improve their own image in the COVID-19 context," a communication of the European Commission states.

The naming of China as a creator of disinformation comes following a public scandal in the EEAS. The EU's foreign affairs department denied media reports that it toned down allegations made against China as part of a report into state-led disinformation campaigns, following pressure from Beijing.

Coordinated and covert attempts by China-linked actors to manipulate information - particularly regarding COVID-19, also have been detected in countries including the USA, Argentina, Serbia, Italy, and Taiwan, with the relevant content often delivered in local languages.

The online army of Chinese trolls are called the "50-Cent Party," because it is believed they get paid $0.50 per comment that they post. This means that they are eager to get into an argument with you. The more you argue, the more money they make. According to one Harvard study, this group of Internet mercenaries is made up of at least two million people.

Pro-Beijing actors are carrying out a whole range of clandestine activities in different countries and languages. The campaigns aim to spread proven falsehoods, sow societal discord and panic, manipulate perceptions of public opinion, or undermine the democratic process.

Evidence revealed last year indicated that some Chinese-language campaigns had begun on platforms like Twitter as early as April 2017, but the latest round of incidents and investigations points to a more definitive shift in Chinese influence operations.

3. Turkey

AKP, Turkey's ruling party, began recruiting a team of 6,000 social media operatives back in 2015. "We aim at developing a positive political language which we are teaching to our volunteers," a party official told the Wall Street Journal a year later. "And when the opposing camp spreads disinformation about the party, we correct them with valid information, always using positive language." However, AK trolls interference is not so friendly and, they spread false stories.

Turkish trolls deploy three aspects of AKPs populism: serving the people, fetish of the will of the people, and demonisation of opponents. Whereas trolls traditionally target and mock institutions, Turkey's political trolls act on behalf of the Islamic establishment. They produce a digital culture of lynching and censorship. Trolls' language also impacts pro-government journalists who act like trolls and attack journalists, academics, and artists critical to the government.
Dissidents are being forced to leave Turkey due to online threats. On some occasions, online abuse has escalated into physical violence. Barbaros Sansal, an LGBT activist and one of Turkey's most famous fashion designers, said he had been beaten up by pro-Erdogan supporters, including one 2012 attack which left him with a broken nose.

I have been in contact with Barbaros Sansal during this year and, he told me that he was forced to leave the country in September because of threats to his life. I was worried when I saw that his Twitter account with more than half a million followers disappeared. I received a message later from someone saying that "he posted a tweet making a joke about the earthquake in Izmir and then shut down his account because of the reactions."

In December 2016, Turkish dissident journalist Abdullah Bozkurt was falsely linked to the assassin of Russian Ambassador Andrei Karlov. The diplomat was killed in an art gallery in Ankara by a Turkish police officer in what is supposed to be the most secure part of Turkey's capital city. A false claim stating that the killer stayed in his apartment was picked up by trolls of the government and disseminated on Twitter. The same journalist describes a Turkish government disinformation campaign with fake stories planted in the media which has been exposed in court in 2020.

In June 2020, Twitter closed 7.340 Turkish accounts for violating its policies. Twitter reported that these accounts were found to be linked to the youth activities of the Justice and Development Party (AKP).

The statement said: "Based on our analysis of the network's technical indicators and account behaviours, the collection of fake and compromised accounts was being used to amplify political narratives favourable to the AKP, and demonstrated strong support for President Erdogan. We're disclosing 7.340 accounts to the archive today." Twitter declared that the research on the identification of these accounts was done in conjunction with the Australian Strategy Policy Institute (ASPI) and the Stanford Internet Observatory (SIO).

Internet is among a few things that humans have built, but don't really understand. It is the largest experiment involving anarchy in history. Hundreds of millions of people are creating and consuming a gigantic amount of content in an online world that is not really bound by the rule of law. A source for potentially scary evil but also tremendous good. We are only just beginning to witness its impact. In a future blog-post, I will analyse the Bright Side of the Internet.

STAVROS PAPAGIANNEAS

Managing Director StP Communications - Author Rebranding Europe

With a background including positions such as Communication Officer at the European Commission and Press Officer and Spokesperson to diplomatic missions in Brussels, Stavros Papagianneas is currently Managing Director of PR consultancy StP Communications.

He is a senior communications strategist with more than 25 years' experience in corporate & public communications, public affairs, PR, digital communication & social media. In 2017, 2018 & 2019, Stavros was named by the pan-European news platform Euractiv as one of the TOP 40 EU INFLUENCERS and is a public speaker.

Stavros has been a member of the Working Party on Information of the Council of the European Union. He is the author of the books : Rebranding Europe ; Powerful Online Communication and many articles in EU media like Euractiv, New Europe, Europe's World, L' Echo, De Tijd, Communication Director, Irish Tech News and Research Europe.

Stavros is a graduate in Communication Sciences from the VUB University of Brussels, and has given lectures in universities across Europe : University of Cantabria, University of Vilnius, University of Brussels (VUB), Institute of European Studies (IES), Thomas More University, Université Paris 1 Pantheon Sorbonne.

Updates from The Democratic Society
Civil society mobilisation : work in progress

1. #DemsocNext10
Letter from the President & Director-General

By Anthony Zacharzewski

Hello,

I hope that the COVID crisis has not been too difficult for you, and that you and yours are safe and well. I am delighted to present you this report on our 14th year of operation, and our plans for year 15. Thank you for your support through this year.

A growing team

Over the course of year 14, the team grew to thirty-three, with **new team members** giving us a permanent presence in Sweden, Poland, Austria, Spain, France and the Netherlands, and growing teams in Brussels, Edinburgh and Berlin. We hope to consolidate this growth next year and grow our projects in those countries and across Europe from those bases. Early in year 15 we will also have a permanent member of staff based in the Western Balkans.

A new logo and website

You may have seen our series of blogposts earlier in the year, celebrating ten years since we undertook our first project (in February 2010). To mark the start of the new decade of work, we have revamped our website and logo – both of which will be going live as you read this letter, in time for our Assemblée Générale this evening. Behind the scenes we're also working on a members' area with discussion and information sharing possibilities. Now that you're on our new site, we hope you enjoy exploring all that's new.

Our new logo adapts our classic fret symbol (a cross in a box, symbolic of networks and voting) into an open box, showing Demsoc bridging the divide between closed decision-making processes and open public space. It also uses new colours that are fresher and work better online than our previous blue/grey. We hope you like it – naturally, we'd love to hear your opinions.

A growing range of projects

One of the benefits of the new website is that it gives us space to show off our projects properly, with better illustrations and clearer text. You can see the full range of our work, but without any favouritism, I wanted to highlight four projects that are showing the way forward for our work in coming years.

In Scotland, we are involved in both the national citizen assemblies, as lead designers for the main Citizens' Assembly which is reaching the end of its deliberations, and as co-lead facilitators and part of the design team for the Climate Citizens' Assembly which will start later in the autumn. Alongside local citizen assemblies in Waltham Forest, Adur and Worthing and through the Innovation in Democracy Programme, we are fully engaged with the "deliberative wave" and developing a strong reputation for innovation and delivery. In Adur and Worthing and elsewhere, though, we are working to go beyond the process and drive culture change, so citizen assemblies are linked into wider democratic reform. Find out more about our Citizens' Assembly work on the website.

In England and Wales, we are taking our democratic thinking beyond the government space into wider organizational theory. Our action research programme Public Square (funded by Luminate) is shaping thinking about the future infrastructure for local democracy. Building on our experiments in Glasgow, Frome and Calderdale, we are now working with a range of places and people to build on that learning and collectively showcase in the soon to be launched Public Square Playbook.

Also in the UK, our Beyond the Rules project, funded by Lankelly Chase, is spending nine months looking at new forms of organization for movements, social action and democracy. Is there a middle path between the unfocused energy of movements, that often dissipates or gets co-opted by those with unrepresentative views; and the heavy structures of legal organisations with reports, financial targets and endless rounds of bidding. We will be reflecting on the project at the half-way point next week and you can find out more about it on the website.

Across Europe, we have been engaged with fifteen different city governments on climate change, working through European funding network EIT Climate KIC. A new network of local connectors has worked with cities and their communities, and a range of other partners, to contribute to building a conversation about climate change that is democratic not technocratic. New initiatives in development through this programme include a governance review in Orléans and a carbon participatory budgeting programme in Vienna. Climate change is a fundamental challenge, and needs to be a driver of democratic change – this is an area where we want to focus and grow our work during 2021.

Our networked European team, grown as a result of our climate work, has been a great asset in spreading our work into European institutions. In recent months this strand of work has grown significantly, seeing us taking a leading role in two participation programmes, one on the future of European research, and the other on how local European offices can support civil society

networks. We expect to be involved, at least in some way, in the forthcoming Conference on the Future of Europe and are working on ways to connect our local, national and European projects to explore how a networked and multilingual democracy can work across Europe.

As we grow, we want to ensure that projects and thinking are closely connected, so for year 15 we want to create a strong centre in the organization for design, research and policy. As part of that, our new Head of Design and Research Paola Pierri, based in our Berlin office, will be working to bring design quality and consistency to our work, and thinking about how the methods we use can replicate and connect. We also want to do more on communications, to ensure that at a time when democracy is in the political moment, we are sharing our ideas and practice, and leading thinking.

In all these projects we are working with a great and growing range of partners, including global networks such as Democracy R&D, consultancies like Dark Matter Labs and Bankers Without Boundaries, and of course a wide range of government institutions at every level. Partnerships with organisations like Involve have lasted many years, and it's gratifying to see them grow and strengthen as time goes on. In a period where our work is growing quickly, partnerships help ensure organisations driven by values

What comes next

I have already mentioned the Deliberative Wave, the term that the OECD use to describe the sudden interest in citizen assemblies and deliberative democracy. It certainly feels like our work is in the spotlight as never before, but this means that we need to be ready for the challenge. New actors will move into the space, higher-profile democratic initiatives will attract bad actors and those trying to game the system. Our capacity to deliver professionally and effectively will need to grow rapidly – and we may find ourselves managing decision processes over millions or billions of euros, rather than a few thousand.

For Demsoc and our sector more generally to successfully mainstream our work and thinking, we will need to work ever more closely with organisations that share our values, ensure that there are the skilled facilitators needed to deliver events, and invest together in open infrastructure, both digital and social, that can make democratic innovation work at the European scale. We know that we have lots of allies in this work – but in every chess game, the other side moves as well. For that reason, need to work on the resilience and reliability of our work, and understand how we can prevent our work from being disrupted.

In year 15, we want to build the capacity and impact of our newly created offices around Europe. I hope that by the end of the year, each will have shown itself financially sustainable, and will be at the centre of a growing network of projects and connections.

We want to do more with digital tools, both internally and externally, ensuring that our members and others can get more involved with our work, and that open and accountable digital technologies are being used to build connected democracy.

We also want to ensure that democracy flourishes outside the world of government. Third sector organisations, companies and social enterprises all take experiences that shape the lives of citizens, and we want to find ways of ensuring that citizens are able to participate in those decisions, just as we want them to be able to participate in traditional politics.

Finally, and most importantly, we want to work more closely with our members, and grow our membership base, to help spread and connect our different European conversations. We know we won't ever be able to have a Demsoc office in every town or village, but we can at least have a connection through people who are supportive of our work and share our values.

To close, I wanted to thank you again for your support through the years. Please keep spreading the word about our work, and I look forward to working with you through **#DemsocNext10**. Don't forget to join in the camaign on Twitter to celebrate this milestone with us!

Yours sincerely,
Anthony Zacharzewski
President and Director-General

Anthony Zacharzewski

Main expertise: Democratic systems and innovation, government policy making, politics. Anthony is the founder and president of The Democratic Society. He has worked in central and local government in strategic roles for 14 years before founding The Democratic Society in 2006.

He has deep practical experience of policy making as an official, and of creating democratic innovations in nine years running the Democratic Society's work dayto day. He has worked with institutions at every level of government, with health and housing providers, with doctors' groups, planners and developers, and international organisations to design, implement, and test new democratic models and systems.

2. Five ways of meaningfully involving citizens in climate action[1]

By Namita Kambli and Edward Andersson

Public participation can play an important part in efforts to achieve climate neutrality. However, in order to achieve the desired effects, engagement needs to be carried out in a way that is meaningful — both for the citizens and the institutions involved. This blog post outlines some of the key considerations for taking citizen participation to the next level in climate action.

Despite renewed attention in recent years, the call for public participation in climate action is not new. From the **1992 Rio Declaration** to the **2015 Paris Agreement** through to the 2020 European Climate Pact as part of the European Green Deal, giving citizens a voice in climate change-related decision-making has long been recognised and championed by intergovernmental organisations and bodies.

In a similar vein, there is **general agreement in academic literature of the benefits of public participation** in environmental decision making. These entail increased community acceptance and support for climate measures, surfacing new insights based on local knowledge and expertise, or inducing social learning. Moreover, it has been determined that effective and meaningful participation is crucial to ensuring that policies are designed in a socially just manner that **respects the rights of communities and builds resilience.**

This is echoed in our own work at **Democratic Society** wherein citizen engagement is a means of empowering citizens to fully participate in and jointly own their climate neutral futures whilst de-risking investment in climate action and de-politicising climate action.

Notwithstanding the need for public participation in climate action, what remains less clear is the ways in which this can happen. There is a **lack of systematic empirical studies** on how public participation is actually designed and practiced and with which objectives in mind. Furthermore, where such studies exist, they find that participation **— in its current form — often hinders rather than facilitates sustainability outcomes**. A year-long study of five municipalities in the southernmost Scania region in Sweden reveals that despite the potential of citizen involvement in climate action, a lack of supportive policies, regulation, and planning tools are a structural barrier to meaningfully engaging citizens in climate change adaptation and planning. Other, more personal, constraints on the part of citizens include a lack of environmental awareness and belief in climate change, place attachment, and perceptions of individual influence and responsibility.

Against this backdrop, and through our work in the **Healthy, Clean Cities Deep Demonstration**, we have identified several ways in which the above shortcomings can be both addressed and overcome. To begin with, deliberative events such as the **UK Climate Assembly** demonstrate the active role that citizens can play in decision making and developing a consensus-based approach to tackling difficult issues, such as climate change. In this instance, Assembly Members recommended that the UK's path to net zero emissions by 2050 must be underpinned by education, choice, fairness and political consensus. This format is seen as one that can help address the dichotomy between experts and citizens and bridge the **generational impasse of representative democracy.**

Deliberation need not be limited to citizen assemblies or juries. **Participatory budgeting** wherein members of a community deliberate on the allocation and distribution of public resources has long been recognised as a means of involving citizens in local governance and decision making. Last year, Lisbon became the first city to introduce a **'green participatory budget'** to support climate change mitigation and adaptation projects, such as cycling lanes, tree planting for street heat reduction, etc., all of which will be chosen by local residents. The impact of this budget is expected to be two-fold: ensure constant annual investments into the city's low-carbon transition and raise awareness amongst citizens of the benefits of climate change mitigation and adaptation in a manner that corresponds to their needs. Green participatory budgeting has also been put forward as means of a **more equal, green post-pandemic recovery** in other places.

Constructive dialogue and participatory processes have an equal role to play in empowering citizens and giving them the agency to effectuate change. This is clearly evident in projects such as **Järva Dialog** where original resistance to an urban regeneration project turned into an inclusive reiterative process of participatory decision making on retrofit. A different picture emerged at the end of the dialogue whereby residents, in particular migrant women, who were previously absent in any local dialogue, felt empowered enough to actively participate in local decision making processes, both inside and outside the project, including voting in local elections.

Citizen science is another means by which citizens can be empowered to recognise that their voice can make a difference. One such project is **HackAIR** wherein an open platform was co-created together with citizens to foster democratic participation in measuring and understanding air quality, ultimately raising collective awareness on the topic through local dialogue and discussions. In doing so, participants, or citizen researchers, not only reported a change in their individual behaviour — based on an improvement in perceived and practical knowledge on air pollution — but also an increased belief in their own voice. This is consistent with the finding that citizen science has more than a 'simple learning' benefit in that it fosters **a sense of empowerment to participate in informed decision- and policy making**, especially for disadvantaged communities.

Recently, attention has also focussed on **harnessing social innovation and local action** in tackling climate change. An example of such place-based collective action is the **Bee Plan** in Genk, Belgium. The showcasing of the documentary **'More Than Honey'** at an open environmental council meeting turned into a brainstorming session amongst 60 residents on how to improve

1   https://www.demsoc.org/blog/five-ways-of-meaningfully-involving-citizens-in-climate-action

conditions for bees in the city. This later resulted in the setting up of a 'Bee Plan' for the city together with a team of 30 bee ambassadors who became active stewards of bee-friendly public spaces in the city, unlocking further civic action.

In addition to specific interventions, overarching approaches, such as Sydney's **community engagement strategy** and Paris' **solidarity-based climate action plan** — are examples of more systematic inclusive climate action in practice. In Sydney, a centralised Community Consultation Group ensures that engagement methods are adapted to the target group so that the voices of those who traditionally do not take part in participatory processes are also represented, and that the city is able to deliver projects and policies that have equitable impacts, especially on low-income and traditionally marginalised groups. This in turn creates broad buy-in for ambitious sustainability targets and policies and reduces polarised debates. Similarly, in Paris, the emphasis is placed on reducing social inequality by engaging and empowering all Parisians in the implementation of climate action through initiatives such as participatory budgeting and Climate Volunteer programmes.

There isn't — nor should there be a one-size-fits-all method for participatory climate action.

The above tools, policies, and approaches indicate the different ways in which structural and personal barriers to meaningfully participate in climate action can be overcome, but it is equally important to choose the right method for the right objective. Just as importantly, it is the **quality of the process**, and not the processes in and of themselves that guarantee better social and environmental outcomes. The plurality of voices and the opportunity to participate equitably is crucial to achieving recognition and redistribution — two important aspects of climate justice. Done well, these processes can help bring about a **more inclusive, less divisive form of politics** and build a public mandate for climate action.

Conclusion

To conclude, engagement and participation remain vital tools in the climate adaptation toolkit — but clearly, many of the old ways of working with narrow dialogues and one off public meetings are not fit for purpose. In Sweden, the Swedish Association of Local Government and Regions, SKR, have talked about the importance of involvement being *viktigt och på riktigt* ('important and for real'). When it comes to climate change engagement is clearly important/viktigt. The challenge is to ensure that it both is for real and is perceived as such by the citizens whom we expect to make drastic changes in response to an unprecedented challenge.

Namita Kambli is an urbanist turned democracy researcher, passionate about creating more just societies. A Doctoral Scholar at the University of Auckland, her PhD thesis focussed on the role of digital technology in 21st century placemaking. Since then, she has worked as a researcher at Citizen City – an initiative of the European Innovation Partnership on Smart Cities and Communities and has several media articles and journal papers to her name. Namita leads research and policy work under the Climate pillar at Democratic Society, and when not thinking about more equitable decision-making structures, spends as much time as possible trying to better understand the fascinating intersection between technology and democracy.

Edward Andersson is DemSoc's Malmö connector since September 2019 and is based in Malmö, Sweden.
Edward has over fifteen years' experience of working with citizen engagement. Edward was a founding staff member of the London based Involve Foundation (www.involve.org.uk), served as Involve's deputy director for five years and was also for many years a board member of E-Democracy.org. He is a Certified Professional Facilitator, certified by the International Association of Facilitators. Edward has worked widely as a trainer, facilitator and process designer in Sweden and internationally. He had worked closely with the Swedish Association of Local Government and Regions.

3. Populism and Civic Engagement (PaCE)

by Sophie Kiesouw, Nadja Nickel, Ola Ziętek

The 'Populism and Civic Engagement (PaCE)' project is a Horizon 2020 project funded by the European Commission, involving Democratic Society and eight other partners across Europe.

Overview

There is a rise of political movements throughout Europe that claim to challenge liberal elites and speak for the 'ordinary person' – movements that can be loosely categorised as 'populist'. Many of these movements have undesirable tendencies.

PaCE seeks to analyse, in detail, the type, growth and consequences of such movements in terms of their particular characteristics and context. From this, it analyses the causes of these movements and their specific challenges to liberal democracy. In particular, it focuses on transitions in these movements as well as how they relate to other kinds of movements and the liberal reaction.

The project's duration is from February 2019 to January 2022.

Approach

The project will employ the agent-based simulation of political processes and attitudes to allow for thorough risk analyses to be made for each kind of response, each kind of movement and the type of transition. It is developing new tools, based on machine-learning algorithms for identifying and tracking populist narratives and to aid online consultation. It will result in specific interventions aimed at: the public, politicians, activists and educators.

Throughout the project, it engages with citizens and policy actors, especially groups under-represented in public affairs, face-face and via new forms of democratic participation appropriate to our digital age to help guide the project and to comment on its outputs.

It will look further into the future, developing new visions concerning how we could respond to populism and it will warn about longer-term trends.

Democratic Society is contributing to core research activities plus leading the dissemination and engagement strand.

We have designed and are facilitating a series of local democracy labs to explore public attitudes and aspirations for democracy across Europe, bringing together different stakeholders and under-represented groups. Democratic Society will organise a European democracy lab towards the conclusion of the programme, in order to review the outputs of the research and make recommendations for future actions. Moreover, we are responsible for sharing outputs throughout the duration of the project through relevant European networks. We have also overseen the development of ethical, legal and social recommendations for designing public engagement campaigns and on the use of digital tools.

Results

Engagement activities with citizens across Europe are a key part of the PaCE project, as it enters into an active exchange with policymakers, civil society, the general public, and other stakeholders about the implications of the research findings, opportunities to introduce them into practice, as well as policymaking. A key aspect of the PaCE project is the direct engagement with citizens themselves, consulting and involving them in the research. The public engagement activities are a way for both the generation of findings itself, which will be introduced into the academic research of the consortium, and distributing the project's research findings to the wider public.

Democratic Society plays an instrumental role in advancing PaCE's aims for network building, citizen engagement, and dissemination activities:

- To include different types of stakeholders, especially under-represented and marginalised communities, in the project's research activities;
- Discuss together with citizens ways and means to strengthen democracy and democratic institutions across Europe;
- To identify, mobilise and engage with a multidisciplinary network of stakeholders across the European political sector, to conduct with them gap and needs analyses which will inform the development of PaCE communications and outreach tools and distribution of findings;
- To present and raise awareness of the PaCE findings and research activities to stakeholders and citizens; and
- To facilitate stakeholders' uptake of research-based interventions that strengthen democratic institutions in Europe within their field of expertise.

Impact and Learning

Democratic Society has brought in its unique know-how in democratic participation and citizen deliberation, strengthening the project's participatory aspects, helping the PaCE project achieve its aims of stepping into a direct dialogue with and disseminating findings to specific target audience members, to inform the research but also policies around populism and civic engagement.

The Democracy Lab is a component of PaCE's engagement plan, which aims to make sure that democratic input and engagement occurs through all junctures of the project. Each Democracy Lab will gauge citizens' attitude towards democracy, how they understand it and what their priorities are with regards to the democratic process. Nevertheless, the labs connect different elements of research within PaCE, and serve as a testing ground for ways to carry out research activities in the field. "These meetings should be planned more often to not only increase the number of participants: everyone should participate in these workshops to be more confident with politics," said one participant. One young woman summarized her impression: "I will bring three words into my mind after this experience: awareness, participation and education."

At the core of the PaCE project is its aims to engage with the public to strengthen democratic institutions across Europe, and societies where people feel they can shape the decisions that affect their lives.

We understand that meaningful engagement with the general public and the target audience groups are essential to resolving the challenges we currently see across European societies.

Meaningful engagement exercises are an opportunity for the target audience to open areas of dissensus, and can generate a discussion about ways to address current challenges. That is why we seek to disseminate the outputs of research activities to policy makers and to engage them in dialogue around implications for the future whilst identifying strategies for strengthening democratic values and practices, and to facilitate stakeholders' uptake of research-based interventions that strengthen democratic institutions in Europe within their field of expertise.

Further Information

For further information about this work, please contact Nadja Nickel via email nadja@demsoc.org and sign up for the newsletter to stay up to date on the PaCE developments.

Sophie Kiesouw is the Local Connector in Amsterdam for the Democratic Society.
Her work focuses on facilitation and involvement of the local networks. For PaCE project she is - with the team - coordinating the 'Local Democracy Labs', which are happening in six European countries. Driven by a strong belief in bottom-up and collaborative approaches, working with local communities is what she loves most.
Previously, she co-founded Starters4Communities, a social enterprise working with cities & community initiatives on training, talent development and a community of changemakers in The Netherlands. She's a hands-on organizer and views the world with an anthropological eye: curious and attentive. Sophie always strives to let people come to new perspectives, by providing her process design and facilitation skills. She has developed several learning experience programs, like Community Lab Beirut, where graduates and activists used placemaking tools for participatory actions in public space in Lebanon. Also, a matchmaking and talent development course for refugees, to include people in Dutch society.
Sophie holds a MA in Sociology of Globalization and Diversity.

Nadja Nickel is the Programme Director Climate of Democratic Society. Her work focuses on ensuring citizen participation in decision-making and building bridges between sectors to find innovative solutions to current challenges, including populism and climate change. Previously, Nadja was the Managing Director of WithoutViolence, a non-profit advocacy agency for the social sector. At WithoutViolence, she applied lessons learned from behavioral science to solutions-focused advocacy on the issue of violence prevention. In past positions at GIZ, she advised former Federal President Köhler in his role on the UN Secretary General's High-level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Nadja holds an MA in Peace and Conflict Studies from Uppsala University, Sweden.

Aleksandra (Ola) Ziętek is the Local connector for Climate-KIC Deep Demonstrations, based in Kraków, Poland. Before joining Demsoc in February 2020, she worked as a volunteer manager and event producer at The Jewish Culture Festival Society. She led an international, cross-generational team of about 60 volunteers, developed a year-round educational programme for volunteers, conducted multiple trainings and produced cultural events of different scale of scope. She also gained experience in a business environment, working for the technology company Miquido, as a chief organiser of an IT conference - Mobiconf. Aleksandra graduated in Culture Studies at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland.

Parler d'Europe aux citoyens/innovations éditoriales/changement d'horizons stratégiques

Par Michael Malherbe (Décrypter la communication européenne)

Comment parler d'Europe directement aux citoyens ?

La Fondation Robert Schuman a organisé un échange entre Fabienne Keller, députée européenne et Isabelle Ory, correspondante à Bruxelles pour réfléchir à « comment mieux impliquer les citoyens dans la communication européenne » et multiplier les manières de raconter, décrypter comment fonctionnent et décident l'Europe[1]...

Respecter le multilinguisme, la langue comme richesse de la vie et non comme outil dévitalisé

Pour Fabienne Keller, députée européenne, le multilinguisme est une vraie difficulté en Europe, car très peu de moyens sont consacrés à la traduction afin de savoir ce qui se passe et s'imprégner des échanges dans les États-membres, comme par exemple sur la règle de droit en Pologne ou en Hongrie.

Pour Isabelle Ory, correspondante à Bruxelles d'Europe 1 et de la Télévision Suisse Romande, ce qui est frappant, c'est que de plus en plus d'interlocuteurs ne parlent qu'anglais, dans l'hémicycle du Parlement européen, dans les échanges au Conseil... Le globish avec des formules toute faite est un appauvrissement attristant qui n'arrive pas à rendre compte de la diversité et de la richesse. L'anglais peut certes être efficace et pratique dans le travail interne mais pas comme langue de communication.

Pour les journalistes, la lecture de sujets techniques et complexes des textes européens en anglais renforce les risques d'incompréhension et participe des difficultés à parler d'Europe, quand les annonces importantes ne se font qu'en anglais.

En revanche, dans les États-membres, la communication européenne est très importante, car elle est adaptée et sur-mesure à la manière de penser et à la langue nationale.

La langue véhicule plus que les mots. La langue est une richesse ; une langue c'est les gens, alors qu'à Bruxelles, c'est un outil un peu dévitalisé.

Distinguer la communication autour des institutions sur les affaires de l'UE de la communication vers les citoyens autour des actualités européennes

Pour Fabienne Keller, dire que l'Europe « c'est compliqué », ça démarre mal ; il ne faut pas trop expliquer les détails institutionnels, mais transmettre l'idée de coalition et de compromis, peu présente en France.

Pour Isabelle Ory, la communication est difficile pour les institutions :

D'abord, il y a un rapport de force entre les institutions elles-mêmes, ce que ne sait pas le citoyen lambda. les médias sont un levier utilisé par les différentes institutions pour peser sur les autres institutions. Par exemple, le Coreper, l'institution permanente des États-membres ne communique jamais mais les représentants permanents sont les maîtres du off avec les journalistes comme avant chaque sommet européen où chaque pays organise un briefing pour partager sa vision.

Du coup, la vie politique entre les institutions dans leurs rapports de pouvoir, c'est quelque chose qui est couvert par les organes de presse spécialisés sur l'Europe à Bruxelles.

Ensuite, la communication vers les citoyens, via les médias grand public, c'est compliqué depuis Bruxelles parce que la connaissance des institutions est limitée et que la culture politique française (majorité/opposition) est différente de celle de l'UE (compromis/coalition).

Enfin, l'agenda est un problème, ce ne sont pas le même rythme, pas les mêmes sujets, il faut insérer l'agenda européen dans l'agenda médiatique national. Parfois, des sujets européens sont trop décalés avec l'actu nationale (récemment la nouvelle PAC) et ne passent pas immédiatement dans l'actualité.

Gérer la subsidiarité entre la communication de l'Union européenne et la communication sur et pour l'Europe

Pour Fabienne Keller, la subsidiarité peut empêcher la pleine communication de l'UE, puisque la communication est difficile parce que chacun lie l'Europe à ce qu'il en connaît, à travers ses perceptions concrètes, or le concret passe très souvent par les États-membres et les régions, qui n'aiment pas trop dire que c'est grâce à l'UE qui n'a pas de visage localement qu'ils agissent.

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1   https://www.lacomeuropéenne.fr/

Pour Isabelle Ory, journaliste, la subsidiarité n'est pas incompatible avec la communication ; si l'on considère que la presse sait traiter des sujets hyper locaux et très globaux, donc c'est possible de le faire pour un niveau supplémentaire européen.

Exploiter la communication positive sur l'Europe, notamment les dessins de presse

Pour Fabienne Keller, députée européenne, plusieurs formes de communication européenne devraient être poursuivies et/ou approfondies :

- La communication participative est une expérience unique plus intéressante pour les citoyens ;
- La communication croisée – interculturelle – en intervenant dans d'autres États-membres est instructive et enrichissante ;
- Les benchmarks européens et l'échange de best practices, c'est une source de communication positive sur des pays proches et différents à la fois.

Face aux tabloïds britanniques qui ont fait mal à la réputation de l'UE, surtout avec des dessins de presse, l'ancienne Sénatrice alsacienne partage « une manière rigolote et sympathique » de communiquer sur l'Europe avec des dessins réalisés par l'artiste Tomi Ungerer :

Ainsi, pour parler d'Europe aux citoyens, des solutions existent afin de rapprocher les Européens en vue de nourrir des échanges et débattre d'Europe avec le grand public.
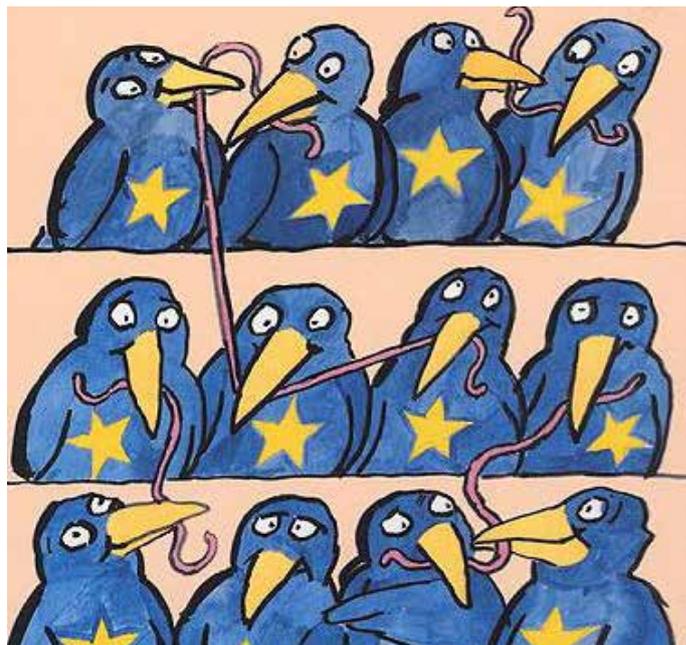
Eurobaromètre
Le temps des solutions de l'UE face à la crise

Alors que la 2e vague de la pandémie frappe durement l'Europe, les résultats de la dernière enquête Eurobaromètre Standard 93 menée au cours de l'été mesurent les dernières évolutions des opinions publiques européennes…

Une perception plus déterminée de l'Union européenne

L'image globalement positive de l'UE (40%, -2) s'est légèrement détériorée au profit d'une image plutôt neutre de l'UE (40%, +3) tandis que la perception négative régresse (19%, -1) et que la répartition géographique de la perception positive de l'Union européenne se situe plutôt à l'est.

SD18b Et du fonctionnement de la démocratie dans l'UE ? (% - UE)
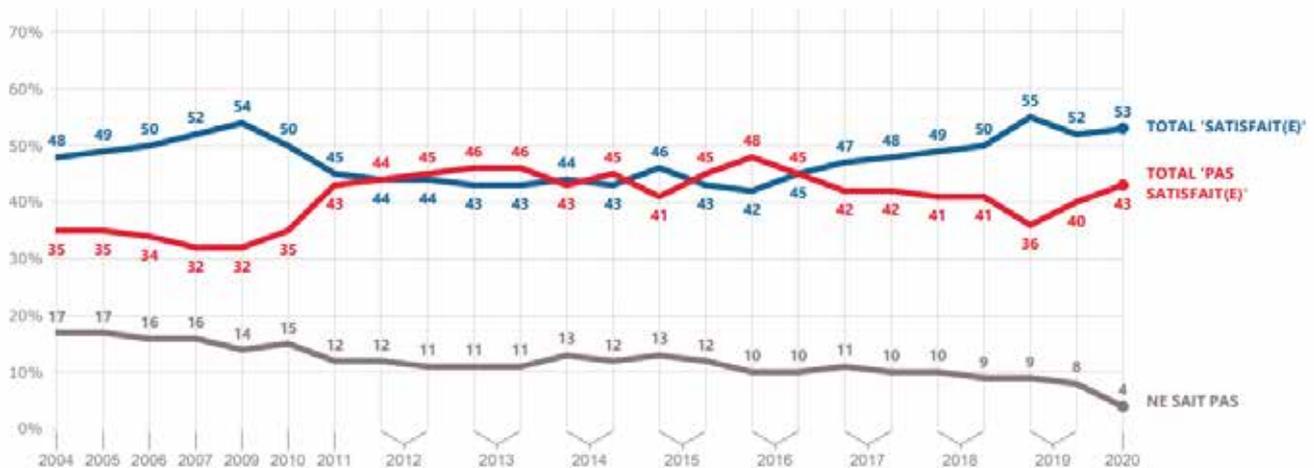
Le fonctionnement de la démocratie dans l'UE (53%) satisfait plus de la moitié des Européens, à son 2e niveau le plus élevé depuis 2009. Néanmoins, la proportion de personnes « pas satisfaites » se dégrade (43%), son plus haut niveau depuis l'automne 2016.
Ainsi, les jugements se cristallisent sans s'antagoniser, les Européens ont une perception plus précise, un jugement plus déterminé sur l'UE.

Des préoccupations revisitées avec le Covid-19

Logiquement, le choc de la pandémie impacte l'ordre des préoccupations :

- 1e préoccupation, la situation économique pèse pour un peu plus d'un tiers ; le résultat le plus élevé depuis le printemps 2014

- 2e, l'état des finances publiques des États membres atteint son plus haut niveau depuis le printemps 2015 ; dorénavant, à égalité avec l'immigration en reculé de la 1e à la 2e position exæquo.
- La santé (22%, nouvelle option de réponse) arrive en 4e position ;
- L'environnement et le changement climatique reculent et arrivent désormais en 5e position ;
- Le chômage occupe la sixième place, et retrouve ainsi le niveau qu'il avait atteint pour la dernière fois à l'automne 2015 ;
- L'influence de l'UE dans le monde et la hausse des prix/ l'inflation/le coût de la vie partagent la 7e position ;
- Terrorisme et insécurité ferment le ban.

QA5 À votre avis, quels sont les deux problèmes les plus importants auxquels doit faire face l'UE actuellement ?
(MAX. 2 RÉPONSES)
(% - UE)

Problème	Valeur
LA SITUATION ÉCONOMIQUE	35 ▲ 16
L'ÉTAT DES FINANCES PUBLIQUES DES ÉTATS MEMBRES	23 ▲ 6
L'IMMIGRATION	23 ▼ 13
LA SANTÉ*	22
L'ENVIRONNEMENT ET LE CHANGEMENT CLIMATIQUE	20 ▼ 8
LE CHÔMAGE	17 ▲ 5
LA HAUSSE DES PRIX / L'INFLATION / LE COÛT DE LA VIE	10 ▼ 2
L'INFLUENCE DE L'UE DANS LE MONDE	10 ▼ 2
LE TERRORISME	7 ▼ 9
L'INSÉCURITÉ	6 ▼ 4
LES RETRAITES, LES PENSIONS	4 ▼ 1
LES IMPÔTS	3 ▼ 1
L'APPROVISIONNEMENT EN ÉNERGIE	3 ▼ 2

Été 2020 / Automne 2019

## Quel pacte vert selon les Européens ?

70 En priorité, les Européens soutiennent les énergies renouvelables et rejettent les plastiques. Plus d'un tiers des Européens estime que la priorité absolue devrait être de soutenir les agriculteurs de l'UE pour qu'ils reçoivent une rémunération équitable et puissent fournir une alimentation sûre et abordable ou de promouvoir « l'économie circulaire ».

De manière minoritaire, les Européens soutiennent l'ambition d'une pollution zéro (27%) ou la neutralité carbone en 2050 (24%) ou une taxe sur les produits importés (20%) ; autant de messages largement mis en avant dans le Green New Deal de la Commission von der Leyen ou discutés à Bruxelles.

Un optimisme pour le futur de l'UE et des attentes nouvelles

Six Européens sur dix sont optimistes quant à l'avenir de l'UE, c'est seulement la deuxième fois en dix ans ; mais surtout la première fois alors que le continent traverse une grave crise sanitaire et économique. Une preuve de confiance que l'UE apparaît plutôt comme une solution qu'un problème face aux nombreux défis.

SD17 Diriez-vous que vous êtes très optimiste, plutôt optimiste, plutôt pessimiste ou très pessimiste concernant l'avenir de l'UE ?
(% - UE)

TOTAL 'OPTIMISTE' : 69, 66, 63, 64, 66, 57, 59, 58, 48, 49, 50, 49, 51, 56, 56, 58, 53, 50, 50, 56, 57, 58, 58, 61, 58, 60

TOTAL 'PESSIMISTE' : 24, 26, 28, 29, 27, 37, 34, 36, 46, 46, 45, 46, 43, 38, 37, 36, 41, 44, 44, 38, 37, 36, 37, 34, 38, 38

NE SAIT PAS : 7, 8, 9, 7, 7, 6, 7, 6, 6, 5, 5, 5, 6, 7, 7, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 5, 5, 4, 2

2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020
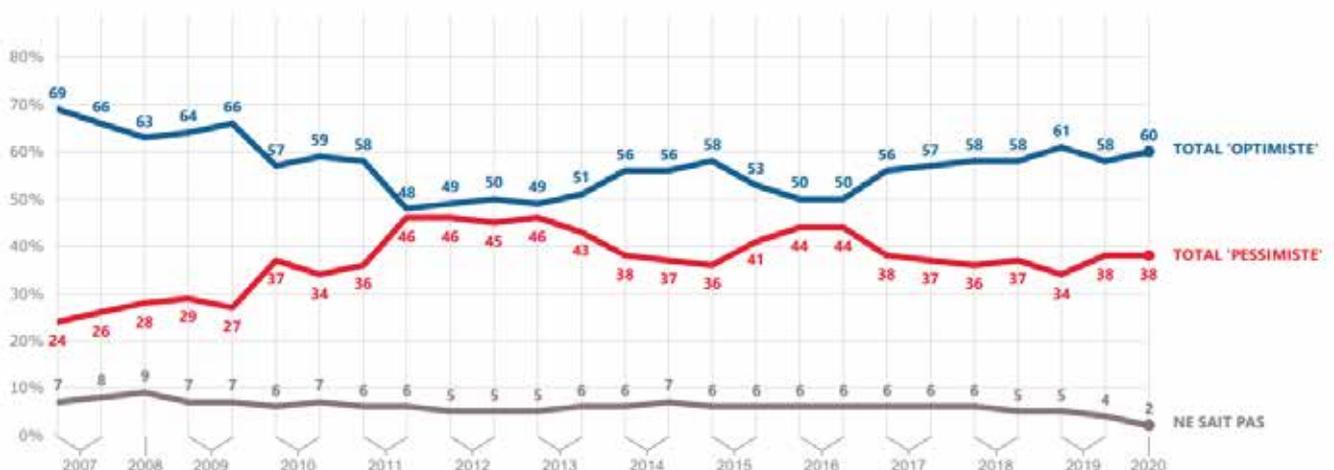
Face au Coronavirus, les Européens mettent en avant majoritairement deux priorités dans la réponse de l'UE à l'épidémie de coronavirus :

- Déployer des moyens financiers pour trouver un traitement ou un vaccin ;
- Mettre en place une stratégie pour faire face à une crise comparable dans le futur.
- En revanche, seuls trois Européens sur dix pensent également qu'élaborer une politique de santé européenne devrait constituer une priorité.

Du côté des fausses solutions rejetées par les Européens, on retrouve :

- Rejet d'un contrôle plus strict des frontières extérieures de l'UE ;
- Rejet de la fin de la libre circulation entre les États membres
- Rejet d'une hausse du budget de l'UE.

Au total, des changements considérables sont intervenus dans la perception des principaux problèmes auxquels l'UE doit faire face. Les institutions européennes auraient intérêt à bien entendre les nouvelles attentes des Européens afin d'y répondre tant que la confiance et le soutien demeurent stables dans cette période de bouleversements.

Information européenne, innovations éditoriales et médiatiques : « comment placer l'Europe à la Une »

Les 3e Journées de la presse européenne interrogent des acteurs qui mènent des initiatives éditoriales et médiatiques pour renouveler le traitement de l'information européenne et inventer de nouvelles manières de raconter l'Europe auprès du public...

Twitch : l'Europe, les jeunes et Internet avec Jean Massiet

Alors qu'Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez incite les jeunes Américains à voter sur Twitch, Jean Massiet, fondateur d'Accropolis, ex-Youtubeur vulgarisateur de la politique, investit la plateforme depuis plusieurs années pour développer un format de conversation interactive, sur la politique, autour par exemple des questions au gouvernement ou de la convention citoyenne sur le climat, en complicité avec un public massivement très jeune.
Partenaire du Bureau du Parlement européen en France, Jean Massiet a pu y aborder les dernières élections européennes ou encore les auditions des Commissaires au Parlement européen, qu'il a estimé très intéressantes.

Sur Twitch, le premier discours sur l'état de l'Union européenne d'Ursula von der Leyen a fait l'objet d'une couverture extensive entre le commentaire en direct du discours (trop déclaratif, pas assez dans l'action), puis l'échange avec des invités et enfin le suivi du débat parlementaire (le plus apprécié par les twitcheurs).

Producteur de l'émission « Sénat Stream » sur la chaîne TNT Public Sénat, Jean Massiet s'investit pour développer un format de talk-show hebdo en plateau avec invités politiques et chroniqueurs en vue des prochaines élections présidentielles françaises.

Podcast : donner la parole à l'Europe avec Antoine Lheureux

Fondateur de l'agence de production de podcasts à Bruxelles Bulle Media, Antoine Lheureux, passionné de radio, s'est imposé ces dernières années comme le premier producteur de podcasts européens rassemblés, si vous souhaitez les découvrir, sur la plateforme Europod.

Après un mémoire sur la vassalisation des médias aux Gafam, Antoine Lheureux a produit son premier podcast sur l'influence de Google en lobbying à Bruxelles en partenariat avec La Libre Bruxelles. Bulle Média ayant un business model stabilisé, des productions propres seront lancées au premier semestre 2021.
Les conseils du spécialiste pour réussir un podcast et prendre par la main l'auditeur sont :

- Une bonne conceptualisation du mode de narration et de bons invités à mettre en musique ;
- Une post-production de qualité pour le montage, le mastering et le mixage du son ;
- Une promotion sur les réseaux sociaux pour fédérer une communauté ;
- Un partenaire média pour donner une légitimité et une audience immédiate.

Pour Antoine Lheureux, les podcasts européens explorent des sujets qui européanisent l'écoute et participent à la constitution d'un espace public européen.

Radio : de la hiérarchie de l'info et des rendez-vous dédiés hebdo sur l'Europe

Stéphane Leneuf, rédacteur en chef adjoint à France Inter et producteur pendant 10 ans de « Question pour l'Europe » et actuellement à l'antenne chaque dimanche matin avec « Café Europe » estime que l'actualité horizontale des pays européens a largement progressé puisque l'Europe est notre cadre de vie et notre actualité au quotidien car les gens ont envie et besoin d'Europe.

Pour l'actualité de l'UE, la hiérarchie de l'actualité nationale impose des choix dans les journaux de la radio en fonction de l'intérêt des sujets et de la ligne éditoriale du média. Résultat : on ne peut pas imposer un sujet européen. Solution : il faut développer des émissions hebdomadaires dédiées à l'Europe pour compenser l'absence de l'actualité européenne dans les journaux.

Contexte : pour expliquer les prises de décision aujourd'hui, il faut être à Bruxelles

Jean-Sébastien Lefebvre, responsable du bureau de Contexte à Bruxelles justifie la couverture des institutions européennes en raison des décisions politiques prises par des élus qui concerne les individus, les entreprises et les organisations partout dans l'UE.

La politique européenne est d'autant plus intéressante que sa dimension multinationale la rend plus multiforme, interculturelle mais aussi avec une instabilité plus importante et parfois des retournements spectaculaires face aux crises.

Pour avoir accès à l'information, il vaut mieux être lobbyiste que journaliste à Bruxelles !

VoxEurop : l'information sociétale à hauteur d'Européen

Catherine André responsable de VoxEurop, un média paneuropéen en 10 langues, veut faire de la bonne vulgarisation, c'est-à-dire donner les clés aux lecteurs pour qu'ils se fassent leur propre opinion.

Hors du suivi quotidien de l'activité des institutions européennes, VoxEurop se concentre sur :
- Le traitement d'enjeux sociétaux qui traversent les frontières comme tous les thèmes globaux et les sujets de politiques globales ;
- La publication des positions de la société civile ;
- Des analyses et interviews de spécialistes au regard paneuropéen ;
- Un dessin de presse hebdo sur l'Europe.

La série consacrée au Dreamers européens, ces enfants d'immigrés sans papier, illustre la puissance de récits concrets et humains qui concernent les Européens et renforcent le lien vivant.

Ouest France : l'Europe au cœur face aux algorithmes

Fabien Cazenave, journaliste à Ouest France, estime que sur tous les sujets européens, il faut aller aux enjeux, ne pas se perdre dans la technicité et aller sur le terrain pour illustrer et rendre concret l'action de l'Europe.

Le sens journalistique devrait davantage guider à faire des choix au profit de l'actualité européenne, compte tenu de son importance pour les Européens, mais le temps des institutions européennes est beaucoup trop long entre les annonces et leurs mises en œuvre.

La puissance des algorithmes et de la recommandation automatisée reposant sur l'exploitation des datas risque de pénaliser les sujets européens et les choix éditoriaux des médias disponibles dans leurs éditions papier et leur site web.

Télévision : l'Europe aux défis du dépaysement, des référendums et des fake news

Face aux préjugés des dirigeants de l'audiovisuel qui rechignent à investir dans l'Europe car ce n'est pas assez dépaysant, les journalistes européens à la TV doivent redoubler d'efforts pour leur prouver que mettre l'Europe à l'écran ne fait pas fuir les téléspectateurs.

Véronique Auger, ex présentatrice des émissions sur l'Europe à France 3, pointe depuis 2/3 ans que les JT de France 3, qui ne couvrent pas l'actualité de l'UE, commencent à couvrir les élections dans les autres États-membres : Allemagne, Italie, Royaume-Uni et même les élections municipales en Hongrie. Il est plus facile de traiter l'Europe dans les JT de France 3 Régional parce que les actions de l'UE y sont visibles par rapport à France 3 National.

Caroline de Camaret, rédactrice en chef à France 24 reconnaît qu'il est difficile même sur sa chaîne de vendre à sa propre rédaction l'Europe en tant que sujet en soi mais se félicite que France 24 anime un réseau de 12 correspondants dans l'UE, notamment davantage à l'Est.

Pour Véronique Auger, le traumatisme du référendum de 2005 explique la situation actuelle : on ne peut plus parler de l'Europe en bien, parce que les téléspectateurs ne l'ont pas apprécié, mais on ne veut pas parler de l'Europe en mal, donc on n'en parle plus. En vue de la présidence française du Conseil de l'UE en 2022, les choses devraient évoluer.

Pour Caroline de Camaret, le choc du référendum a mis l'Europe sous le tapis. L'Europe doit y mettre du sien pour que les MEP et les Commissaires répondent aux invitations des médias, comme ils l'ont davantage fait pendant le confinement. La question de l'accès aux institutions européennes aux journalistes est entre parenthèse tant aux Conseils européens à huis clos qu'au Parlement européen qui n'a plus siégé à Strasbourg depuis le début de la pandémie. Il y a un risque d'entre-soi.

Même au sein de l'UE, l'exercice du métier de journaliste est périlleux. Outre, les héros du journalisme que sont les deux journalistes assassinés en raison de leur enquête sur les mafias en Slovaquie et à Malte, les pressions sont nombreuses : la liberté de la presse est fragilisée, la crise économique fragilise

les pigistes, la concurrence des réseaux sociaux mais aussi le cyber-harcèlement qui peut frapper notamment les femmes-journalistes.

Face aux fake news, le débat s'anime entre Véronique Auger et Caroline de Camaret :

- Véronique Auger estime que les médias se perdent à essayer de contrer les fake news, que c'est même une grave erreur que les médias dit sérieux crédibilisent des fake news en leur donnant un écho. Les médias audiovisuels devraient miser sur l'enquête et l'éducation aux médias pour permettre aux gens de vérifier par eux-mêmes.
- Caroline de Camaret juge que la BBC, qui est restée neutre lors de la campagne du Brexit n'a pas fait le job de vérification au jour le jour et n'a pas tenu informé les citoyens sur la base des faits, ce qui constitue sinon au moins une grave erreur peut-être une faute professionnelle compte tenu des conséquences.

Les fake news à usage électoral, surtout lorsque les institutions européennes ne réagissent pas, doivent être débunkées par les médias audiovisuels.

La comm' de l'UE en procès

Maria Udrescu, journaliste à La Libre Bruxelles pointe plusieurs défaillances dans la communication européenne :

1. La « religion des effets d'annonce » joue trop au sein des institutions européennes, comme l'illustre le fiasco de la conférence sur les 100 jours de la nouvelle Commission européenne qui passe sous silence le Covid en pleine période de confinements des États-membres.
2. Le « maquillage de la comm' en info » montre trop les efforts pour embellir les discours sans parvenir à valoriser les véritables décisions parmi les intentions déclamatoires et les déclarations de principe sans effet sur la machine décisionnelle.
3. La « religion du secret » verrouille l'accès indispensable des journalistes aux brouillons (les draft) des futures législations. En fait, l'information la plus importante n'existe pas officiellement tandis que l'information officielle n'est d'aucune utilité pour les journalistes.

Pour aller plus loin, toutes les vidéos sont disponibles sur Facebook et le Taurillon publie également une vaste enquête qui nous plonge dans les quinze années écoulées, à la recherche de l'Union européenne dans les médias français.

Michaël Malherbe, Deputy Practice Leader Digital chez Burson Cohn & Wolfe (groupe WPP). Depuis plus de 12 ans, il développe une activité de conseil en communication digitale (stratégies en e-campagne, e-influence et e-réputation) dans les secteurs corporate et institutionnel), précédemment en tant que Fondateur-Associé de l'agence Two4com et Directeur du pôle Digital de l'agence Cohn & Wolfe de 2011 à 2015.

Formé à l'Institut d'Études politiques de Strasbourg (2001-2005) et à l'Université Paris I Panthéon Sorbonne dans le master « Communication politique et sociale », il est un spécialiste de la communication de l'Union européenne, intervenant dans les masters « Etudes européennes » de la Sorbonne-Nouvelle, Paris III et « Affaires européennes » de la Sorbonne-Paris IV et précédemment à l'ENA et à Sciences-Po Lille.

Depuis 2007, il anime le blog : « Décrypter la communication européenne » et intervient régulièrement dans la presse et les médias, des débats publics et des colloques.

When it comes to disinformation, focus on the middlemen

By Nikola Hořejš, Programme Director at STEM
With contribution by Matěj Jungwirth and Jitka Uhrová, STEM

Short Summary

In the spring of 2020, the STEM institute, supported by the Prague office of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, carried out an extensive investigation of Czech seeders of disinformation or ordinary people who spread it in a good faith. As we found out seeders' motivations and media literacy levels vary greatly, wherefore one-size-fits-all solutions could be rather counterproductive. For example, some groups of seeders would benefit from basic media literacy initiatives, while others are immune to any official communication or even warnings. With further research, this can significantly help government to design their anti-disinformatino efforts.

Introduction: Why seeders?

The debate and research around disinformation is mostly focused on its content, creators and sources on one hand and its reception among the general public on the other.

However, the lifespan of disinformation relies on a third, much less understood group involved in the process. This study labels members of this group "seeders", borrowing the term from the language of marketing campaigns. Seeders of disinformation are people who share disinformation texts and messages, both online and offline, and as such critically amplify the outreach of disinformation websites. They might play a far more important role in the spread of disinformation than websites and news outlets, since very few Czechs are aware of disinformation websites in the first place. Additionally, US research on the topic suggests that the middlemen, forwarding the information to further individuals or a wider audience, are far more relevant than the original source.

Lifespan of disinformation – schematic route and knowledge gaps about seeders

- **Sources**
  - Well-documented and monitored
  - Disinformation websites
  - „Troll farms"

- **Seeders**
  - Little knowledge about this segment
  - Who are they and what motivates them?

- **Audience**
  - Good knowledge of effects and impacts
  - General population
  - Policymakers
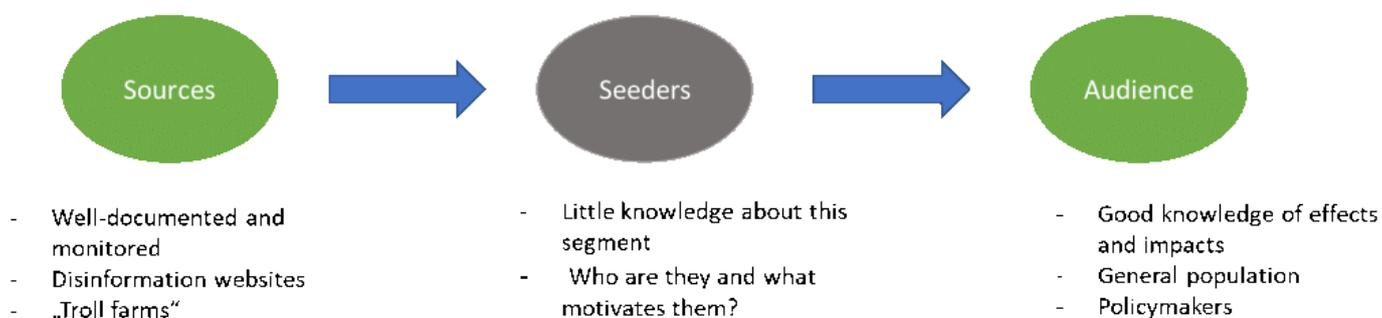
Any policy aiming at countering the spread of disinformation therefore needs to consider the seeder group. However, little is known about their beliefs, behaviour and the ways in which they disseminate disinformation both online and offline.

How many seeders are out there?

While the research largely focussed on a qualitative approach, comprising 13 structured in-depth interviews with disinformation seeders, it also included a quantitative survey element. In both the quantitative and qualitative part of the research, the interviewers made a point of not explicitly asking about „disinformation" or „fake news", as these terms are loaded and could lead to a strong bias during the interview process. Instead, (inevitably imperfect) workarounds were chosen. These include paraphrasing, such as „information intentionally suppressed or altered by major media,

including the public broadcasting," which is the most trusted media outlet in the Czech Republic.

The survey results were fairly alarming:

- Nearly three quarters of the Czech population (72 %) believe that large media and public media intentionally suppress or alter important news; and
- 20 % of Czech citizens reported receiving such content through email or Facebook at least once a month.

Based on the collected information we estimate the group of „seeder" to make up approximately 5 % of the Czech population. These are Czech citizens who distrust most media, seek out information on their own and who share „alternative" news at least once a month.

The subsequent qualitative research focuses exclusively on the seeder group.

Talking to seeders

While the final number of 13 in-depth interviews might seem relatively low, it did involve high efforts to single out potential seeders that would engage with research on their behaviour. In addition, the sample was chosen to ensure diversity and compliance with demographics of the quantitative survey results. Presumably, there could be a segment of Czech seeders who would decline to engage with a research inquiry of any sorts. However, STEM aimed at capturing a wide variety of respondents since they were approached through their acquaintances and even some of the most "paranoid" in the sample expressed their wish to "be heard".

Spontaneous vs. Expert Seeders

The most important finding of the interviews was that the group of Czech disinformation seeders is far less homogenous than previously assumed.

However, the results still show some common patterns and characteristics, that apply to the entire seeder group:

- Lack of trust in any media outlets, including disinformation websites
- Distrust and superficial understanding of the workings of media companies
- Sensationalism and preconceived ideas

Concern and consternation: Seeders also exhibit high levels of concern for the fate of the world or at least the Czech Republic.

Finally, the seeders' motivation to share disinformation can be allocated on a spectrum between the following poles:

- Spontaneous seeders share disinformation rather impulsively, as a way to preserve social relationships. These can include younger and more inexperienced students, who seek a sense of belonging in a peer group, as well as senior citizens, who feel isolated and want to feel useful or interesting to others.

"When something pops up while I am browsing the internet, I check it out." (respondent)

- Expert seeders are driven by the need to earn validation, respect, influence and a sense of exceptionality based on comprehension of "hidden" truths. These seeders share disinformation in a premeditated and systematic way and include both well-travelled men and women who used to have influence, and rather extreme "Inquirers", who spent most of their free time looking for alternative sources and spreading the information.

"I do not have much time for friends because I devote so much time to researching politics and sharing what I discovered." (respondent)

The expert-spontaneous scale was then combined with a test of seeders' inclination to believe conspiracies, as well as their level of media literacy. As a result, this research proposes six different categories of seeders, that differ in major socio-demographic characteristics and in motivation to share disinformation content. These groups are summarized in the chart below.

Six types of seeders in the Czech Republic
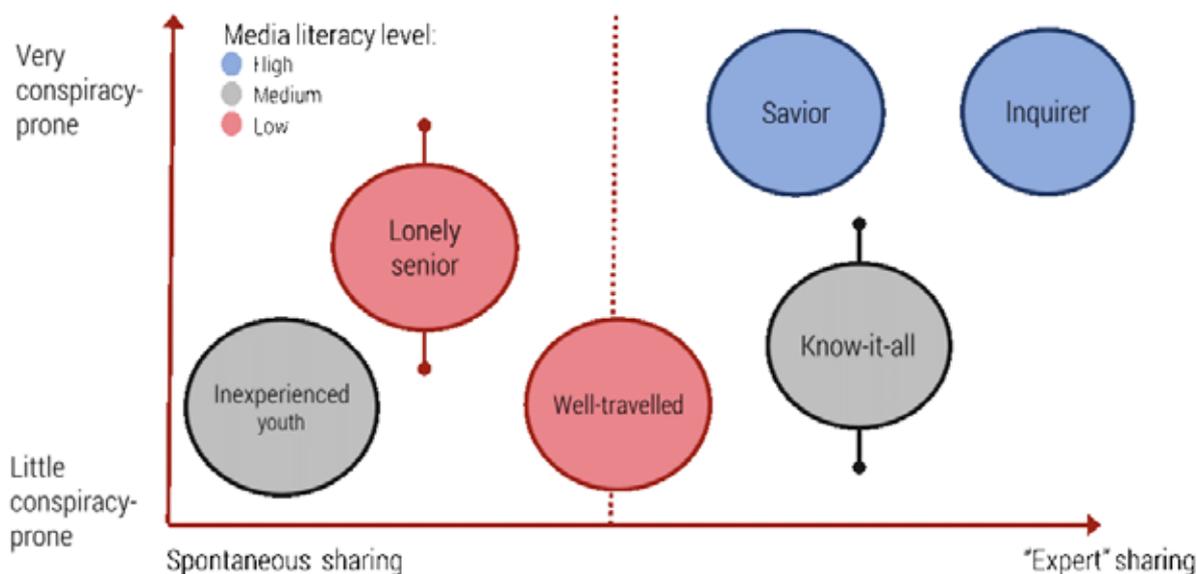
One policy does not fit all

Crucially, these different types of seeders will react differently to policies aiming to stem the circulation of disinformation in the Czech society. Pursuing the increase in citizens' media literacy might be effective for some types of spontaneous seeders, who will benefit from a better understanding of how news content is created. However, expert seeders are much less likely to respond to such initiatives as they already believe themselves to have a superior understanding of the (nefarious) working of large media houses and as they already often compare a variety of news sources.

Another often discussed yet recent measure in the Czech media space is the automated flagging of false content, implemented on large social media platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook. This might work reasonably well for less experienced and younger media consumers, who pay no attention to the source of news they share. However, for expert and conspiracy-prone seeders this measure will only reaffirm their conviction that large corporations (i.e. Facebook) are out to "get them" and to suppress the truth they seek to disseminate.

We believe that expert seeders of disinformation might respond better to the establishment of conservative media platforms that would still follow basic tenets of rigorous journalism. These outlets could lend them the feeling that there is someone out there on their side. They also might trust the fact-checking of these outlets far more than that of an established liberal platform, which would be inevitably biased in the eyes of expert seeders. For the spontaneous seeders the key intervention could be affective trust building with news organisations and the provision of alternatives that can address their underlying social motives.

Thus, as is clear from the examples in this study outline, every policy intervention should be tailored to the specific seeder type and one-size-fits-all approaches should be viewed with utmost suspicion.

A modified version of the article appeared in a Freedom Fights Fake project by the Friedrich Naumann Fundation for Freedom and the work was genreously suported by the foundation's grant.

Nikola Hořejš is a psychologist and a strategic communication consultant.

As a International Affairs Program Director at STEM Institute (Prague) he initiated and leads a coalition of NGOs focused on perception of EU. He has worked with both non-partisan organizations and political parties in order to promote democratic and transparent governance, human rights and international cooperation.

His publications include textbook on crisis communication, stress and trauma, corruption and whistle-blowers, as well as trust i media and disinformation.

Countering the "hate speech" in the media
The Agcom regulation

By Rosa Cavallaro

How to counter the spread of the hate speech in the media? An answer came from Italian Communications Regulatory Authority (Agcom) that on the 15 May 2019 approved a new regulation on this theme, the act n. 157/19/CON¬S. According to the regulation, the hate speech is *"the use of content or expressions likely to spread, propagate or foment hatred and discrimination and instigate violence against a specific set of 'target' people, through stereotypes relating to group characteristics, ethnic, of territorial origin, of religious belief, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, personal and social conditions, through the diffusion and distribution of writings, images or other material, including through the Internet, social networks or other telematic platforms".*

The regulation arised from the need to implement the provisions contained in the Legislative Decree of 31 July 2005, no. 177 (TUSMAR). The respect for human dignity is among the main principles of media services system provided by the law (art.3) and Agcom has the task to ensure an efficient intervention to tackle every kind of discrimination and to guarantee the respect of fundamental rights of the person in the media. This legislative decree, that implemented the European Audiovisual Media services Directive of 2010, in article 32 mentions in fact that "all audiovisual media services must respect human dignity and do not consent any incitement to hatred based on race, sex, religion or nationality". But the powers given to the Authority were limited; in particular the law in force didn't give it any sanctionary function.

On the basis of its experience Agcom therefore decided to draft the regulation 157/19/CONS, that represents an important step to concretely implement the fundamental principles of the quoted Legislative Decree and to identify regulatory and sanctioning tools in accordance with the article 32, aimed at preventing and combating the hate speech and discrimination phenomena, often fueled also by disinformation strategies, in contrast with the fundamental rights of the person, in particular when fed by inaccurate or untrue news.

The Authority has always paid particular attention to ensuring respect for the fundamental rights of the person in the communications sector and to exercising the function of guaranteeing users, counteracting all forms of discrimination. Before the regulation, in fact, Agcom adopted different resolutions and guidelines to regulate the respect of fundamental rights of the person by broadcasters, like the resolution n.46/18/CONS, that was a strong appeal to all radio and television broadcasters to ensure the most rigorous respect of human dignity and to prevent direct or indirect forms of hate speech, based on ethnicity, gender, religion or nationality. This resolution was born as, from the tv and radio monitoring activity, Authority noted the centrality assumed by the theme of migration phenomenon in the programmes and in particular, the ways in which the figure of the migrant was represented in relation to the 'events of Macerata' , which occurred in the period affected by the electoral campaign for the political elections. According to the monitoring data, during the 2018 election campaign, the "events of Macerata" was the third theme among the most treated topics in the prime time current affairs programs of the main national tv channels after the theme of immigration.

With this resolution Authority, while recognizing the editorial freedom of broadcasters, considered *"worrying some particular choices of narration and of images in the treatment of news relating to crimes committed by non-EU immigrants, that could appear to be oriented to highlight a link between immigration, crime and situations of social hardship and to feed forms of racial prejudice or a climate of fear or social alarm";* therefore it called strongly the audiovisual media services to conform to criteria of truth, respecting human dignity and avoiding content that could contribute to the incitement or encouragement to hatred and discrimination.

Considering the pervasiveness of the media and the important contribution that radio and television information plays in order to form a public opinion on the correct representation of foreigners, on social inclusion and on the promotion of diversity, Authority thought it was essential and urgent to adopt the regulation n. 157/19/CONS.

In compliance with the editorial freedom of each broadcaster, the regulation contains provisions aimed at combating the use of hate expressions in audiovisual media services and establishes the principles which audiovisual and radio media service providers must comply with to guarantee the respect for dignity of human rights and the principle of non-discrimination and to contrast the incitement to violence and hatred towards groups of people.

The approval of the regulation was preceded by a public consultation on the scheme of the act. in order to acquire all the most useful information from the interested parties. A fundamental contribution came from the collaboration with the Order of Journalists, which led to the definition of a permanent cooperation procedure on the Authority's initiatives on this theme when professional journalists are involved.

Italian Authority considered also that the topics covered in the tv and radio programs increasingly can become the object of attention, discussion, polarization in social media, which represent significant forms of access to information for some parts of the population, as well as forms of expression and sedimentation of public opinion.

Furthermore, it considered that often fuels disinformation strategies that can support hate speech or in any case a diffusion of discriminatory representations. For this reason, pending the transposition by a national law of the new European directive on audiovisual media services (2018/1808) which extends certain obligations on the subject to online video sharing platforms, the regulation provides that the Authority may promote, through co-regulatory procedures, the adoption also by the platforms of measures aimed at countering the dissemination on Internet, and in particular on social media, of contents in violation of the principles established for the protection of human dignity and at removing hate contents.

A future intervention at the legislative level will be able to strengthen Agcom's possibilities of action. Giving the Authority, in fact, monitoring and supervisory powers and establishing adequate sanctioning provisions could ensure rapid and efficient action also in relation to the digital world.
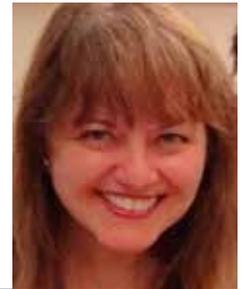
Rosa Cavallaro began to work for Italian Regulatory Authority for communication sector in the 2000.

She is a senior officer of the Audiovisual Content Directorate. She is an expert in monitoring radio and television programs; her job is related to the verification of compliance with the rules on political and social pluralism, on the protection of minors and on the fundamental rights of the person by broadcasters. She participated in the Agcom working group for the drafting of two editions (2014 and 2017) of a "White Paper on the relationship between the media and children".

Currently she is also following the works of the "Technical committee for Ensuring Pluralism and Correct information on Digital Platforms", established by Italian Authority to promote self-regulation of platforms and the exchange of best practices for the use of digital platforms.

She followed for Agcom, as observer, the meetings of "Committee of experts on quality journalism in the digital age (MSI-JOQ)" - Council of Europe, Strasbourg (2018-2019). She also participated as a drafter in the working group of Erga (European Regulators Group for Audiovisual Media Services) "Subgroup SG 1 - Internal and External Plurality".

Actually she is working in the task force of Erga to verify the compliance to the "Code of Practice on disinformation" commitments by digital platforms.

Reduced Inequalities

By Danijel Koletić

The new strategic guidelines of the United Nations known as sustainable development goals clearly describe how the community and the people of this planet should support each other. If a person already has knowledge, he should certainly try and donate part of his knowledge through support to the community in which he works and lives, but we live fast to sometimes wonder if we have time for ourselves.

I don't know why or how, but I like to provide support if it's in my power.

It was in 2005, when I was lecturing at a Brand conference in Zagreb. My lecture was related to branding. Let's not forget that it is known that perception is everything and that branding is needed by everyone because reputation is not bought, but reputation is created. Familiar with the concept of social entrepreneurship, the Association of the Blind Zagreb and its representatives came to the information counter that day because they saw the title of my lecture on branding and look for me. I understood this as a call and so began our five-year journey.

Apriori World agency has been providing pro bono support to the Association of the Blind Zagreb for five years. We defined a communication strategy, communication plan, raised funds, communicated with all target audiences, including sales strategy, and accordingly organized meetings with the media, business community and even the office of President Kolinda Grabar Kitarović, whose office ordered soap with dots as a protocol gift.

This year, IPRA and the international jury decided to award us the Global Contribution Awards for public relations with the aim of achieving one of the goals of the UN sustainable development, more precisely goal number 10: reducing inequality.

In connection with this project, the Association of the Blind Zagreb had to open the company Sfera Visia, since it is a matter of social entrepreneurship. Soaps with dots are now produced as souvenir soaps, where the names of the cities of Zagreb, Dubrovnik and Split are in the preparation of special models for production, and sales have certainly gone in the corporate direction. Soaps with dots were one of the official gifts of the Croatian Football Association in Russia at the World Cup. To get better acquainted with the production of soap, I also visited the production plant outside London of their association of the blind and visually impaired.

The director of production is a person with 70% impaired sight. She started studying chemistry and unfortunately lost her sight in the third year of study. Despite this, she graduated. Her beauty of soul, but also knowledge are poured into the recipes of natural ingredients used to produce these soaps. Barbara Šajinović, M.Sc., is the production manager, Dario Vuljar and Ante Babić work with her. The key person from the Zagreb Association of the Blind is Goran Denis Tomašković, the executive director of the association. The premises of the production plant were provided by the city of Zagreb on favourable rental terms. Our business partners, architects Vedran Pedišić and Eric Velasco Ferrara, also pro bono designed the production line and advised on the implementation.

We upgraded the project and started additional fundraising to secure funds for production. Our invitation to participate in the collected funds was accepted in accordance with the procedures by the employees of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development of the Zagreb office, but the support was also given by the Turkish development agency TIKA. We branded liquid soaps under the name "Touch of Nature". They are real soaps with natural ingredients and we want to sell them to restaurants and institutions and we expect that due to this project, four more blind and partially sighted people will be employed next year.

I take this opportunity to thank everyone who bought soaps with dots. We want to expand this project through a franchise model to support other associations of the blind and partially sighted people because ultimately this is not just a social entrepreneurship project, this is a project that gives dignity and a project that sends a clear message that there are opportunities.

We all need liquid soaps, in all institutions, homes, sports halls, schools. We wash our hands several times a day, so why not then with the soaps "Touch of Nature" of the Association of the Blind Zagreb. I am proud of my team and myself. The project continues, and you think about who you can give a little of your time each week to make society more beautiful and give someone a chance at life.

Danijel Koletić and his business career began 30 years ago. For the first seven years he was involved in event management.

He was the executive producer of the Eurovision winner, composer Rajko Dujmic, director of the Croatian national championship, director of super model of Croatia, WTA CROATIA LADIES OPEN, director of the Split Festival, television producer and organizer of many events.

Danijel has been professionally engaged in communications since 1996. He is the founder and chairman of the organizing committee of the leading specialized PRO PR conference and the FOCUS conference aimed at employees in the communications sector of public administration and public companies.

He is a regular columnist for Diplomacy &bCommerce Croatia - the economies, the author of numerous articles and, since 2019, the chairman of the Southeast European Institute for Integrated Inclusive Communications.

Capacity building and synergies between European programs and funds
"Lombardia Europe 2020"

By Luigi A. Dell'Aquila

"The strengthening of the administrative capacity of Public Institutions - accompanied by appropriate and solid strategies of communication and dissemination of the results related to the implementation of European projects - should be more intensely oriented to the joint and synergistic use of European "Direct Management" Programs and Operational Programs, national and regional, relating to the European Structural and Investment Funds, especially by Local Authorities"

In view of the launch of the new European programming for the period 2021-2027, it seems inevitable to consider and deepen the ever-current issue of strengthening the administrative capacity of all potential beneficiaries of European funding.

In this regard, it is considered useful to examine and illustrate the distinctive characteristics of the Italian project "Lombardia Europe 2020 - Design, Modeling and Start Up of Europe Services of the Vast Area (ESVA) in Region of Lombardia: being competitive in Europe" ("LE2020")[1], certainly a good practice that hopefully could be replicated and implemented in other territorial contexts in Europe.

The "LE2020" Project is fully part of the Regional Strategy for the "Direct Management" Programs of the European Union and the Guidelines for Regional Participation in the 2014-2020 European Territorial Cooperation Programs elaborated and placed in be from the Region of Lombardia (Italy)[2] and has the general objective of relaunching the capacity and role of Local Authorities in seizing European opportunities, improving collaboration with the Regional Administration and promoting dynamic and advanced partnership methods.

This Project - which also provides as a specific objective the start-up of Europe Services of the Vast Area (ESVA) as organizational methods able to favor the associated management of European services in the wide area contexts of the Region of Lombardia in order to attract, use and manage the financial resources made available by the European Union to carry out interventions that respond to the needs and peculiarities of the territories - represents an integrated capacity building process consisting of research, information, design, experimentation and implementation actions aimed at the establishment of so-called ESVAs and start their operations. The purposes of this integrated path are as follows:

1. to raise the level of awareness of public officials on the funding opportunities made available by the European Union (based on the current European programming 2014-2020 and, above all, on the next European programming for the period 2021-2027), promoting synergies and complementarity between public financial resources and with the planning of local policies;
2. to increase and refine the specialist-operational skills of the employees of the Region of Lombardia and of the Local Authorities in the field of European programming, enhancing the knowledge, skills and experience already present (European Union policies and financial instruments and European Project Management techniques);
3. to activate cooperation and collaboration strategies inspired by the subsidiary model of the "Network" (Network of European local services) between public institutions and / or organizations of different levels, of the same level or in a hybrid form, so as to allow the establishment and " implementation of the ESVA in a multilevel governance approach.

Precisely in this latter regard, one of the most innovative aspects of the "LE2020" Project is considered relevant, represented by the launch of a marked "Administrative Cooperation" between the partners of the aforementioned Project as well as all the other local public actors involved - as envisaged. and governed by the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union[3] - in order to activate efficient and effective territorial planning processes aimed at allowing innovative urban development.

Among the activities envisaged by the integrated path set up by the Project in question, on the other hand, "EuroLab" assumes particular importance: Territorial Laboratories on European Policies. These Laboratories, preceded and accompanied by specific and thematic training courses in the field of European project management aimed at setting up real European planning tables, represent the "place" for sharing, at a territorial level, the objectives, strategies and perspectives of the ESVA being set

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1 The "LE2020" Project is implemented in partnership with the Region of Lombardia, the National Association of Italian Municipalities - Lombardia Section and the Province of Brescia (Website: https://www.lombardiaeuropa.eu/)

2 Resolution of the Council of the Region of Lombardia No. X / 6323 of 13/03/2017 (update of the Resolution of the Council of the Region of Lombardia No. X / 1042 of 05/12/2013) which also provides for the development of specific accompanying and support tools to strengthen the planning capacity of the General Directions of the Region of Lombardia and of the other Public Bodies of the regional territory.

3 Title XXIV / Article 197.
   Furthermore, it should be considered that the "LE2020" Project was formulated and implemented in its executive version through the signing of an Agreement between the Project Partners pursuant to Article 15 of Law 241/90 which governs the "Horizontal" Administrative Cooperation between Administrations (as well as regulated by Directive 2014/24 /EU).

up for each of the twelve Provinces of the Region of Lombardia and the instrument necessary to define with reference to the Territorial ESVA: 1) the Territorial Strategy[4] ; 2) the Governance System[5] ; 3) the Organizational and Financial Sustainability Plan[6].

Finally, the expected results of the "LE2020" Project are listed below: 1) the creation of a regional community on Europe (ESVA Club) that allows both to enhance all the economic, relational and socio-cultural opportunities coming from the European Union that to activate processes of exchange and continuous training of the technical-administrative skills of the participating subjects; 2) the signing of Territorial Conventions establishing the ESVA between Public Bodies of different levels as a formal and substantial basis for institutional relations aimed at promoting territorial planning processes in the sector of European policies[7] ; 3) the creation of ESVA guidelines and organizational-managerial regulations as tools for guiding the project processes activated at the territorial level and aimed at presenting quality projects with continuity in Europe; 4) the strengthening of the ability to access European funding (coming in particular from the "Direct Management" European Programs, the European Structural and Investment Funds and the European Territorial Cooperation Programs) during the current European programming and the next European programming for the period 2021-2027, thanks to the organizational-planning methods provided for by the ESVA model.

Therefore, in the light of the above, although briefly and highlighting only some of the profiles and aspects of innovation of the "LE2020" Project, it can certainly represent a good practice in the field of capacity building of Public Administrations that intend to move towards a joint, complementary and synergistic of the different forms and methods of financial support from the European Union.

In conclusion, with a view to launching the next European programming for the period 2021-2027, it is therefore desirable to promote, support and suggest a possible replicability of the Project itself in other regional and local European contexts and, to this end, the undersigned believes particularly useful and profitable to allow and implement, for example, a greater investment in cross-border training opportunities, an increasingly intense sharing of the most relevant international best practices in the field of European Policies and their implementation through the "Direct Management" European Programs and Structural Funds and European Investment and an increase in activities related to the Communication and Dissemination Strategies of the results that will be achieved by the "LE2020" Project, as well as similar European Projects that go in the direction of greater integration of the financial instruments managed by the European Commission.

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4 The Territorial Strategy provides for: a) the identification of European opportunities that best adhere to local needs and vocations; b) the definition of a set of European services to be implemented at local level; c) the establishment of a Network of Local Authorities as referent actors of the territorial SEAV; d) the establishment of effective relationships with local stakeholders active on European issues.

5 The Governance System, instead, provides for: a) the activation of a Territorial Coordination on European Policies; b) the establishment of work commissions capable of involving public entities operating in the area, c) the deployment of a shared staff; d) the promotion of European planning groups able to increase the European skills of the professionals in the local authorities involved and to present projects in Europe.

6 The Sustainability Plan, finally, provides for: a) monitoring and evaluation actions; b) communication strategies and paths (internal and, above all, external); c) a 2021-2027 sustainability plan; d) training and updating of European skills.

7 National Reform Law 56/14 (Delrio Law) which, in initiating an overall reorganization of the institutional structure of the Italian Provinces, indicates the possibility of activating flexible forms of associated management of public services and assigns the care and development to the Provinces themselves strategy of the territory and the management and management of services in associated form based on the specificities of the territory concerned.

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- Regulation (EU) No. 1304/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 relating to the European Social Fund

- European Social Fund 2014-2020 / Regional Operational Program of the Lombardy Region / Axis IV "Institutional and Administrative Capacity" (Action 11.3.3 which provides, among other things, the implementation of interventions to qualify and empower the technical-professional skills of the Public Administration in the field of construction and management of integrated projects through the use of European funds, also with a view to innovative urban development and territorial planning)

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Luigi A. Dell'Aquila, boasts fortnightly scientific, educational and professional experience in the field of economics, policies and programs of the European Union. He has carried out Technical Assistance activities to the Management Authority of the ROP ESF Calabria 2007-2013 and to the Management Authority and the ROP ESF Abruzzo 2014-2020 and, currently, he is the owner of the Consulting and Training Agency "Knowledge Management & Intellectual Capital "and Scientific Director of the European Laboratory on Training, Education and Citizenship: in this capacity he coordinates, as European Project Manager, several European Projects in the implementation phase.

He is also among the Senior External Experts of the European Commission / Directorate General REGIO (Regional and Urban Policy) on Education and Training and Synergies between European Structural and Investment Funds and Synergies between European Structural and Investment Funds and other EU financial instruments.

Recently, he also received the assignment of ESVA Coach - operating for the Province of Bergamo and its Municipalities - as part of the "LE 2020" Project.

Giving a great legacy a wider audience
The Jean Monnet House

by Martí Grau

The very first real estate property the European Parliament ever owned was not in Brussels, Strasburg, or Luxemburg, but in a tiny French hamlet: Houjarray. In 1982, the institution signed the purchase of the thatched house where Jean Monnet, the Father of Europe, had lived from the aftermath of WWII until his death, three years earlier. It was here where Monnet and his collaborators drafted the declaration Robert Schuman made to the world on May 9 seventy years ago, announcing the creation of the European Coal and Steel community, the first step towards European integration.

In 2018, the European Parliament stepped up its involvement with the site by taking over direct management. The goal was to bring Jean Monnet's legacy to life and his deeds closer to all Europeans. The strategy was twofold: first, to increase the number of visitors to the historic house and the broader estate; second, to turn the location into a true powerhouse for public conversation on Europe's past, present, and future.

With that in mind, the permanent exhibition was revamped with new audiovisual and interactive stations, which President Sassoli inaugurated in October 2019 at the closing of the EP Bureau Away Days. The site widened the scope of its activities with training for officials delivered by the Jean Monnet Academy, as well as a tighter programming of academic, research, and network meetings. In January 2020, just ahead of their declaration on the Future of Europe, the presidents of the three European institutions took time for a retreat at the Jean Monnet House, which epitomized the venue's vocation as a meeting place for all.

What does the Jean Monnet House offer to communicators?

Even in the midst of a pandemic, the site's new offerings continue to unfold. In the summer of 2020, visitor figures were up by 15-20 % compared to the same period the previous year. In 2019, 40 groups of officials—over 800 individuals in total—participated in training events, lasting two to three days each. The conference facility hosts a vast array of events. Among those devoted to communication was the general assembly of the Association of European Journalists in December 2019.

Earlier in the year, since the visitors' facilities are managed by the personnel of the Directorate for Visitors in the Directorate-General for Communication, the site team pooled with the University of Versailles-Saint-Quentin to organize a debate on the outcome of the European elections, under the title *Le nouveau Parlement européen : qu'en disent les médias ?*

Starting in mid-2022, the site will have a brand new accommodation facility to host groups of up to 32 people. During weekdays, the Jean Monnet Academy training groups should be by then back in full swing, after the pandemic subsides. The site will also be bustling with activity during long weekends, starting on Fridays, when the plan is to open the door wide to networks and organizations looking for a calm and inspiring place for seminars, discussions, and gatherings.

At the Jean Monnet House, current issues can be dissected under the light of the legacy of one of the greatest Founding Fathers, who inspired an ambitious blueprint that continues to deliver peace and unity to Europeans. Today, when the situation is dire, it is fitting to turn to the teachings of the Founding Fathers: the mot d'ordre is "solidarity", and we realise that the Schuman declaration is unique in placing "solidarity" at its core. The role of communicators is crucial to spread the word, and this same conviction has animated our joint work with other Founding Father houses. On social media and in general through our respective online channels, we have developed a common narrative to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Schuman declaration, with an emphasis on the common effort that animated the beginnings of a united Europe, so necessary again in the present.

Communicators at the Jean Monnet House have the opportunity to follow up on some of the most insightful debates linking Europe's trodden paths and the way forward: in 2019 the site hosted the conference Taking Stock of European Memory Policies, co-organized with the European Commission, the House of European History, and the European Observatory on Memories, and will do so again later this year.

The house's surroundings are part of the magic of the place: spots of unspoiled natural beauty, outstanding monuments carefully tucked in the woods, such as the neighbouring Alvar Aalto's Louis Carré House, and, most importantly, the scenery of Jean Monnet's daily morning walks, that natural "backdrop of his thoughts", as he wrote in his memoirs. He also wrote: « Il est essentiel pour l'esprit de commencer sa journée par de l'espace ». In Houjarray, this is soon apparent, and the site continues to deliver its inspiration to all who experience it.

Martí Grau is Head of Service and Curator at the Jean Monnet House, European Parliament.

He pursued graduate studies at SAIS-Bologna and holds a History PhD by the Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona.

Having started his career in Ancient History and as director of archaeological excavations, he then turned his research focus to the role of History in contemporary political discourse. He has been Visiting Professor at Indiana University, and he has also taught at the Autonomous University of Barcelona and the University of Versailles-Saint-Quentin.

He was member of the House of European History academic team from the inception of the project in 2011 until one year after its inauguration, when he moved to France to take up his current duties. He served as Member of the European Parliament in 2008-2009.

Club of Venice:
Provisional programme 2020-2022

2020
London, 6-7 February 2020 **3rd seminar on Strategic Communication**
Dubrovnik (Croatia), 4-5 June 2020 **Plenary meeting - CANCELLED**
15 June 2020 **WEBINAR on communication challenges in the field of COVID-19 pandemic** *in collaboration with the Croatian government authorities*
30 September 2020 **1st OECD Expert Group on Public Communications (EGPC)** - *ON LINE MEETING* *in cooperation with the OECD and the UK Government Communication Service* Discussion on the preliminary results of the OECD public communication surveysand the future of communication
10 and 11 November 2020 **3rd Euro-Mediterranean Communicators' Workshop** - *ON LINE MEETING* *in cooperation with the ICMPD* COVID-19, disinformation and polarization: What is next for the migration narrative in the Mediterranean?
3-4 December 2020 **PLENARY MEETING - CRISIS COMMUNICATION** - *ON LINE MEETING* Communication on the COVID-19 pandemic and other crisis scenarios countering disinformation, impact of crises on public diplomacy, country branding and reputation management

2021 (35th year of activity of the Club)
London, February 2021 **4th Seminar on Strategic Communication**
Brussels or Lisbon, March 2021 **Seminar on Open Government/Capacity Building/Social Media**
End of April 2021 (dates to be confirmed) **Seminar on communication strategies in the field of COVID-19 pandemic** *in cooperation with the Greek government authorities*
Serbia (tbc), June 2021 **Plenary meeting**
Cyprus or Portugal or Slovenia (tbc), autumn 2021 **Thematic seminar**
Venice, November 2021 **Plenary meeting**
2022
Brussels or Paris, February 2022 **Thematic seminar**
May 2022 (venue to be decided) **Plenary meeting**
Brussels or Prague, September/October 2022 **Thematic seminar**
Venice, November 2022 **Plenary meeting**

Aknowledgments