

# CONVERGENCES

Public communication in Europe | Communication publique en Europe



## FOCUS ON:

**Governmental communication  
academies as catalyzers**

**Relaunching the European  
institutional communication**

**Citizens' engagement and trust**

**Contrasting euroscepticism  
and building bridges**

**The refugee and migration crisis**

**The London Charter**

**Soft power developments**

**Behaviour change**



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# Faire le choix de l'humanisme...

Par Philippe Caroyez et Vincenzo Le Voci

C'est avec beaucoup d'émotion et énormément d'enthousiasme que nous avons célébré le 30e anniversaire du Club à Venise.

En cette période et en ces lieux, les anniversaires, de plus ou moins grande importance, se bousculaient : les 500 ans de la création du premier ghetto juif, les 50 ans de l'aqua alta historique de 1966 et de la crue de l'Arno inondant Florence de boue ... des signes de biens d'autres événements humains et naturels destructeurs et dévastateurs.

Mais aussi, le 60e anniversaire de la signature des traités de Rome ... ouvrant là l'espoir d'une Europe pacifiée et à l'unification progressive, que bien des coups sont venus affaiblir, passant d'une critique des plus radicaux à - désormais - une critique généralisée de tous bords, proche du « stop ou encore » et alors qu'il faudra encore se compter lors des élections européennes de 2019 qui se profilent ...

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Les communicateurs publics ne répondent qu'indirectement à la « demande sociale » soumis qu'ils sont à la *commande politique* et c'est bien ainsi dans un système démocratique, où les autorités élues ou mandatées veillent à ce qu'elles tiennent pour être l'*intérêt général* (qui ne se confond pas avec celui du plus grand nombre) et à ce qu'elles perçoivent et retiennent (ou veulent bien percevoir et retenir) des demandes et signes qui émergent de la société.

Il serait, toutefois, bien pauvre et désincarné le métier de communicateur public si ceux qui en ont l'exercice et la responsabilité n'avaient pas à cœur de s'intéresser à la *demande sociale*, aux manières de la faire émerger et de la rendre intelligible<sup>1</sup>, d'être à son écoute et d'aider à la rencontrer par des propositions et solutions dans son champs de compétences et d'actions professionnelles.

Le communicateur sera à cet égard d'autant plus performant (ou dérangeant, parfois) qu'il remplira sa tâche avec professionnalisme et déontologie et qu'il saura tirer parti des recherches sociologiques et des expériences pratiques de ses pairs et homologues.

C'est *essentiellement* ce qui fonde l'esprit du Club de Venise depuis, maintenant plus de 30 ans :

- l'engagement pour le service (au) public et la recherche de sa constante amélioration ;
- la volonté de comprendre et de savoir les pratiques sociales et les besoins qu'elles portent d'être informés et entendus sur les demandes sociales ;
- le retour réflexif sur nos actions ;
- le partage d'expérience.

Chacun le vit et le fait vivre à sa manière, avec ses moyens, à son niveau, avec plus ou moins de contraintes ou de soutien, ... mais il y a là pour qui le veut (ou le peut - soyons de bon compte) de

quoi nourrir une pleine conscience humaniste pour nos métiers de communicateur public.

Si, pour paraphraser Jean-Paul Sartre, (le bel exercice de) *la communication publique est un humanisme...* des événements récents nous ont fait percevoir qu'il peut être grand, quand de nos collègues sont confrontés à des situations dramatiques ou cruciales.

C'est à quoi nous avons été confrontés, puisqu'il y a quelque chose de l'ordre du *choc* dans ces situations et le « récit » des actions de ces collègues, après les attentats de Paris et de Bruxelles, face aux femmes et hommes qui cherchent péniblement refuge dans les pays européens au prix de leur vie, ...

Nous y avons consacré trois séminaires thématiques, dont il est fait ici largement écho.

Bien sûr d'une autre nature, mais y trouvant prétexte, d'autres chocs nous ont aussi ébranlés : le « Brexit », la montée des populismes et des partis d'extrême droite, pire la libération d'une parole haineuse, le retour en force de la propagande et de la manipulation de l'information principalement via les réseaux sociaux, ... Autant de thèmes que nous avons abordés lors de nos dernières plénières et lors d'un séminaire et qui sont abordés dans ces pages.

La volonté et la raison nous y amènent, en contrepoint, des pistes d'espoir illustrées ici par de belles réalisations entre Athènes et Thessalonique, l'encouragement à la participation démocratique, des débats sur le futur de l'Europe, la recherche de la confiance des citoyens dans les institutions, ... et, pour quelques-uns d'entre nous présents à Sliema, le sourire de Pietro Bartolo, médecin de Lampedusa.



<sup>1</sup> Voir notamment : Robert Castel. La sociologie et la réponse à la demande sociale. Revue Sociologie du travail, n°2, vol. 42, avril-juin 2000, pp. 281-287..

# Choose humanism...

By Philippe Caroyez and Vincenzo Le Voci

We celebrated the 30th anniversary of the Club of Venice with a great deal of emotion and enormous enthusiasm.

Over this period and throughout these locations, anniversaries, of lesser or greater importance, much has happened: 500 years after the creation of the first Jewish ghetto, 50 years since the historic *acqua alta* of 1966 and the Arno flooding Florence with mud ... and signs of other destructive and devastating human and natural events.

But also, the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Rome, generating hope for a peaceful Europe and progressive unification, although weakened by various blows, starting with criticism from more radical wings to – nowadays – general criticism from all sides, heading towards a view of “stop or more”. And even more criticism is likely during the upcoming European elections in 2019.

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Public communicators' response to social demands has been an indirect one, as they are subject to *political instruction*. That is a good thing in a democratic system where the elected or mandated authorities must take care of what they hold to be in the *general interest* (which is not the same as the interest of the most numerous), and answer the demands and signs that emerge in society which they detect and engage with (or would like to detect and engage with).

However, the profession of public communicator would indeed be a weak and disembodied one, if those who carried out the role and are responsible for it did not have the interests of the *social demands* at heart, and in ways to bring them to the surface and make them understandable<sup>1</sup>, by being able to listen and facilitating encounters with them through proposals and solutions within their fields of expertise and professional endeavour.

In this regard, communicators will be all the more efficient (or challenging, sometimes) if they perform their role professionally and ethically, and are able to draw on sociological research and the practical experiences of peers and counterparts.

Based on the spirit of the Club of Venice, it is *essential*, now even more than 30 years ago, to:

- be engaged to public service, or to a service to the public, and strive for this to be constantly improved;
- want to understand and to know about social practices, and the needs that they have to be informed about and heard on social demands;
- reflect on our actions;
- share experience.

<sup>1</sup> See in particular: Robert Castel. La sociologie et la réponse à la demande sociale. *Revue Sociologie du travail*, no. 2, vol. 42, April-June 2000, pp. 281-287..

Everyone experiences it and makes it work in their own way, with their own means, at their level, with more or fewer obstacles or support... but for those that want it (where this is possible – let us not forget), our job as public communicator is inspired by a full humanist conscience.

So, to paraphrase Jean-Paul Sartre, (the proper performance of) *public communication is humanism*. Recent events, where our colleagues have been confronted with dramatic or crucial situations, have made us aware that this is perhaps important.

These words came true for us when there was some kind of *shock* in these situations, coupled with the “narrative” of our colleagues' actions, after the attacks in Paris and Brussels, and when faced with women and men who are desperately looking for refuge in European countries and are paying with their lives...

We dedicated three topical seminars to these events, which are largely reflected here.

Other shocks, admittedly of a different nature but equally meriting a discussion, have upset us: Brexit, the rise of populism and far-right parties, and worse still the freedom to deliver hate speech, the strong resurgence of propaganda and the manipulation of information, primarily via social media... so many topics, which we addressed in the final plenaries and in a seminar, and that we have discussed on these pages.

Conversely, desire and reason take us down avenues of hope, illustrated by the significant achievements between Athens and Thessaloniki, the encouragement for democratic participation, debates on the future of Europe, institutions striving to recover citizens' trust... and, for those of us who were in Sliema, the smile of Pietro Bartolo, a doctor from Lampedusa.





# Outcome of the Club of Venice plenary meeting

*The Hague (Netherlands), 26-27 May 2016*

*By Vincenzo Le Voci*

The Spring Plenary of the Club of Venice in The Hague on 26/27 May 2016 was attended by 66 participants, representing 25 MS (missing: BG, IRL and FIN), two accession countries (Montenegro and Serbia), EU institutions and bodies (EP, Council, Commission and EESC) and included external specialists (Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Democratic Society).

Introductory statements were delivered by Erik den Hoedt (Director, Communication and Public Information, Dutch Ministry of General Affairs), Jozias van Aartsen (Mayor of the city of The Hague) and Stefano Rolando (President of the Club of Venice).

## “Security and Social Peace Under Threat”

This session focused on the recent crisis management issues (the terrorism threat and refugee and migration crisis), and was dedicated to the public communicators' capacity to detect public opinion trends, in particular through monitoring and analysis of the media landscape, and to the increasing role of civil society as a sounding board and a partner in dialogue with audiences.

The key note speaker Tom van Dijk (political scientist and consultant for the Dutch Government Information Service) recalled previous Eurobarometer surveys and drew attention to the substantial growth of populist parties and to the waning influence and prominence of the large mainstream parties.

Tom mentioned the current feeling of “Unsicherheit” (a combination of insecurity and unsafety) among Dutch public opinion and a mass media communication about the EU loaded with the words ‘Grexit’, ‘Brexit’ and ‘Nexit’.

At the same time, he referred to the parallel phenomenon (though less visible in the public and political debates) of a desire for association, connection and togetherness - hence, a frame with “a strong wish for positivity and for leadership, political and otherwise”. Although the number of people in Europe who are very optimistic about the future of the EU is falling slightly, it is still true - he stated - that a majority of Europeans are optimistic and it is time for courageous leaders from the political centre to instill the right values.

Tom van Dijk's key note was followed by a video-message from Christiane Höhn (Senior Adviser to the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator Gilles de Kerchove) who highlighted the communicators' key role in shaping the government's response to terrorism and stressed the need to take due account of the complex evolution of the challenging environment in which communication has been shaped in the last year.

Christiane indicated that, to remain relevant, governments have to address the core issues the citizens care about and talk about them reasonably, refraining from exacerbated terms that could give rise to racism and stereotypes. Moreover, she underlined that, in order to build credible and successful communication strategies, there is a need to draw lessons from the past, exchange and learn from each other and identify clearly what the greatest challenges are.

Discussion was sparked by the panellists: government officials from the Belgium National Crisis Center, the Dutch Coordination Centre for Security and Counter-Terrorism, the French Government Information Service, the Latvian Chancellery's Communication Department, the Directors of Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) Media Programme and the Democratic Society platform.

Issues on the table:

- the need for thorough analysis (“perception vs. reality” and due attention to listening, reading, monitoring, and the interpretation of trends) before establishing a communication strategy;
- the capacity of detecting the population's criticism and expectations from public authorities, emphasising transparency and ethics;
- the ability to interact promptly and regularly through the social networks and analyse social media's evolution;
- cooperation with the media and development of tool kits for media players and all public audiences;
- internal coordination and dialogue with the chain of command;
- interoperability, interchangeability and daily exchanges of feedback;
- the opportunities of information-sharing and close cooperation among competent specialists throughout the existing mechanism of the inter-institutional political crisis response (IPCR);
- research and inclusive training projects and multimedia capacity projects for media specialists to enrich and enhance governmental and institutional staff's skills and expertise;
- the need for timeliness, accurate language, due attention to minorities and due verification of trustworthy sources and messages;
- the need to educate citizens to a collective effort in managing crises of all kind.



#### Follow-up:

- The Club will pursue the exchange of information on the Member States' internal/inter-ministerial coordination and the perspectives for cooperation at inter-governmental level and with international partners;
- The Belgian governmental authorities are keen to organise a new seminar of the Club of Venice on crisis communication to be held towards the end of September in Brussels, in the Residence Palace.
- The EP will be publishing a special EB survey focusing on citizens' concerns (the greatest being the terrorist threat) and their views on how to tackle the hardest challenges.

## The information campaign of the UK's Government with regard to the referendum

This 2nd session focused on the communication activities during the preparation of the UK referendum for the country's permanence in the EU. This update (the Club plenary was taking place three weeks before the electoral deadline, last chance to address the Club members before the *purdah*) was provided by Jessica Pearce, Head of Campaigns in the Prime Minister's Office & Cabinet Office Communications.

Jessica highlighted the four key elements on which the UK Government information approach was based: integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality, and indicated that the communication strategy was started after a thorough preparation (setting objectives, audience insight and learning lessons from the Scottish referendum). It was not intended to be a persuasive, but a public-info driven campaign.

Its main tools:

- a leaflet sent to 27 million homes focusing on facts, meeting citizens' expectations since the UK public audiences are very sceptical and need clear information (the UK Government Communication Service paid due attention to ensuring neutral and objective content and correct factual figures);
- videos;
- a website portal, which was visited by three million people in ten weeks;
- Instagram activity.

Pending the final results of the vote, no post-referendum communication strategy had been planned yet.

#### Follow-up:

- After the summer break, the UK GCS will be available to share the final results of the information campaign with the relevant body of the Council of the EU (Working Party on Information) and with the Club of Venice (plenary in Venice).

## Workshop on "Framing"

This session was chaired by Hans De Bruijn, Professor in Public Administration/Organisation and Management at Delft University (author of "Framing: about the power of language in politics" and "The Rhetorical Frames of a European Populist"), with a pool of four actors (theatre professionals).

Hans de Bruijn showed the ins and outs and do's and don'ts of framing, by: 1) showing some videos on bilateral talks between political leaders and 2) setting the stage for actors to play out all the options available in a public debate when facing opponents, public or critical reporters.

The participants were invited to comment on the characters' behaviour (simulated talks with high profile political and media players) and to give stage directions to the actors on how they should respond and adapt their approach.

Focus was given on communication problems and pitfalls stemming from the migration processes, especially with regard to refugees, with a practical demonstration of how framing was well managed or mismanaged. The audience showed its wide appreciation for this session and participated pro-actively.

## Public Diplomacy

This last session, moderated by Ole Egberg Mikkelsen (Under-Secretary for Consular Services and Public Diplomacy, Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs), was dedicated to the new frontiers of Public Diplomacy, in particular to the adaptation of governments' communication, media and global diplomacy to the media landscape reshaped by the digital revolution.

In his key-note, Jan Melissen's (Clingendael Institute, Professor of Diplomacy at the Universities of Antwerp and Leiden, author of "Diplomacy in the Digital Age") focused on the huge impact of digitalisation on diplomacy and on the need to see clearer on key concepts such as "Soft power", "Twitplomacy" and "Classic Diplomacy".

According to Jan, professionals are obliged to reflect on how to achieve their goals and reshape their organisation according to the rapid technological developments, taking into account some important elements:

- there certainly are driving forces of influence opera
- the different audiences, and in particular the junior generations, can get the information sooner, especially through the use of social networks;
- new initiatives such as the “hackathons” (a successful “Diplohack” event at the end of April 2016 organised in Brussels by the General Secretariat of the Council and the Dutch Presidency was recalled) are very welcome and forward-looking in terms of openness, inclusiveness and expertise sharing;
- there is an increasing need for dialogue, and hence to enhance capacity for that dialogue;
- technology alone cannot drive social changes. There is a strong and urgent need to understand trends in society;
- diplomacy serves a purpose: it is instrumental in achieving success, and digital technology has provided the capacity to penetrate much deeper diplomatically;
- between 9/11 and today, public diplomacy has changed remarkably since the future is more unpredictable;
- policy makers need to be “educated” to the digital world, since the future lies in the appropriate use of the new technologies. Those who are not familiar with the new media landscape will be unable to interact and deliver. Foreign ministries have no choice but to develop digital strategies if they are to survive.

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Jan’s key-note was followed by contributions from Sweden (Government Communication Services), Spain (MFA, Oficina de Información Diplomática), Netherlands (MFA, “Peace and Justice” project management) and Poland (MFA Public and Cultural Diplomacy Department) on the respective public diplomacy activities.

In particular, Sweden recalled:

- The guiding principles of a recent project for a joint hackathon event organised in the UK, after a first successful initiative of this kind in Stockholm in January 2014;
- The “co-creation” approach adopted in the initiative “Midwives for All” presented at the plenary meeting of the Club in Rome in November 2014 and launched in Geneva in February 2015;
- The country’s investment in digitalising the network of its embassies worldwide.

**Follow-up:**

- Pursue of the exchange of best practice through the Venicenet.
- Dedicated session or separate workshop on the occasion of the 2017 spring plenary of the Club foreseen in May 2017 in Malta.

The hosting authorities circulated the new number (9) of the Club’s review “Convergences”.

The Italian delegate announced that the next plenary of the Club will take place in Venice on 10 and 11 November 2016. During this event the Club will celebrate its 30th year of activity and the hosting authorities will anticipate some information on the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Treaties foreseen in Italy in 2017.



# The plenary of the 30 years of the Club of Venice

Venice, 10-11 November 2016

By Vincenzo Le Voci

The **plenary of the 30 years** of the Club took place in Venice (Palazzo Franchetti) and was attended by 70 persons (25 Member States, one candidate country, the European Parliament, the Council of the EU, the European Commission, the European Central Bank, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions, the Council of Europe, Frontex and external partners).

The opening session was introduced by **Fiorenza Barazzoni** (Director at the European Policies Department of the Italian PM Office), followed by welcome statements of **Luisella Pavan-Woolfe** (Director of the Venice Office of Council of Europe), **Beatrice Covassi** (Head of the European Commission representation in Italy) and **Jesús Gomez** (Head of Unit in the European Parliament DG Communication headquarters in Brussels).

**Stefano Rolando**, President and founder of the Club, recalled the reasons and principles inspiring its creation in October 1986 to implement the project of a "Citizen's Europe" launched at the European summit in Milan in 1985. Moreover, he highlighted the core steps of the network's activity throughout thirty years of increasing challenges, covered in more than eighty meetings, with a continuously expanding agenda. Finally, he welcomed the enlarged Club membership and the efficiency of the informal framework which enabled the Club members to foster professional connections. This interaction is not only effective among national government communicators, but also with all the EU institutions and bodies, together with external communication experts, scholars, researchers and civil society representatives who animate plenary meetings and seminars.

The president's speech was followed by a video-address by **Giuliano Amato** (twice President of the Council of Ministers of the Italian Government and Vice President of the European Convention for the writing of the Constitutional Treaty on the "Future of Europe" in 2004). While recognizing the critical phase and "communication" difficulties in instilling the very principle of European identity, Giuliano Amato said he is confident that new generations will renew civil paths and ideals to resume the story of a great and not waivable political project such as that of European integration.

The plenary's debate focused on:

- the "**external challenges**" for public communicators in the light of the UK referendum and to regain citizens' trust in the European project
- the follow-up to the Club seminars organised in 2016 to tackle two major **crisis communication** issues of particular complexity (refugee and migration crisis, counter-terrorism and security), which have been affecting Europe in the last few years
- **Capacity building**, new initiatives, new models and orientations to make public communication in Europe more "professional".

From the plenary session on today's communication challenges, moderated by **Claus Hörr** (Director at the Press and Information Department of the Austrian Federal Chancellery), a common feeling emerged that, as usual, the wounds caused by political failures are generating a widespread anti-institutionalism, which identifies institutions with "bureaucracy and technocracy" monsters.

Some participants sketched self-critical arguments that boosted the debate. "**Discomfort**" was the theme raised by **Juana Lahousse Juárez**, Director-General of Communication at the European Parliament, who indicated that, although that institution was mobilised and pro-active and has come a long way in product innovation in recent years, the results do not correspond to the investments made.

Speaking on behalf of the Committee of the Regions, **Christophe Rouillon**, mayor of Coullaines (France), one of the two political authorities attending the meeting (in addition to the Italian State Secretary Sandro Gozi), underlined that, today more than ever, governments and institutions should listen more to their citizens. He also stressed the need to preserve multilingualism as a crucial tool for true interaction and urged the development of communication at local levels (against growing tendencies to shifting toward centralization at national and European level).

**Anthony Zacharzewski**, director of "Democratic Society", asked not to denigrate the institution of the **referendum**, but rather to regenerate a social idea of accompaniment of all these measures which ought to be considered pure instruments for "the promotion of public debate."

**Fabrizio Bucci**, Deputy Director-General of European Affairs at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, emphasized Europe's "narrative re-qualification", which does not only mean "listing the actions done" but above all to focus on the widespread intelligibility of the measures taken. "The mystified idea being circulated - says Bucci - is that Europe has not done anything for migration. This is completely incorrect, but it is also true that we haven't always been able to communicate Europe's mobilisation and achievements in this domain effectively.

Some participants argued that hasty, belated statements in support of the EU on the eve of a referendum after having criticized the Union for years had no impact at all on the public opinion. Others regretted that the vote in the UK was not on "merits and contents", but simply "pro or against the EU" ("make or break"), and that this kind of referendum has been recently used by governments for purely political purposes to handle difficult questions without taking direct responsibilities for tough decisions.



**Jessica Pearce**, head of campaigns of the Communication Service of the British Prime Minister, recalled that the British government rule in this context (which was also reflected in the BBC's coverage) was to adopt a **"neutral" approach** with respect to the diverging positions expressed during the referendum debate, whilst encouraging citizens to vote in an unprecedented manner. Lessons learned: disaffection and legitimate concerns; need to find a "common language", meet constituencies, ask about their needs, expectations and challenges at local level.

**Ralf Beste**, Director for Strategic Communication at the German Foreign Affairs Ministry, focused on new projects to foster citizens' proactive involvement, proximity and dialogue (*Welche Europa wollen wir?*). He also recalled the historical escalation of the "Communicating Europe" initiative, which had led Members States to join former the Commission's Vice President Wallström's initiative calling for cooperation stemming from the "three D" Plan: democracy, dialogue, debate. The consequent fruitful cooperation period brought forth **management partnership agreements**. In spite of the limited global communication budget (approx 10M€ per year), everybody appreciated the new ground for cooperation and the successful implementation. The ideal scenario would be to rebuild that momentum and recover that spirit of collaboration.

**Juana Lahousse (EP)** regretted the lack of continuity in the partnership process. In her view, in light of recent events, governmental and institutional communicators should carry out a thorough analysis of their role and capacities to help connect citizens and politicians and swiftly adapt to a continuously evolving media environment in which new players (i.e. social media) have emerged.

**Erik Den Hoedt** - Head of the Dutch Government communication, moderated the crisis communication session focused on opportunities, challenges and risks linked to the management of the refugee and migration emergencies and the global terrorist threat.

In her introductory key-note, **Izabella Cooper**, Spokesperson from Frontex Headquarters in Warsaw, delivered recent statistics (147,000 lives saved throughout the year) and stressed the need to raise awareness of the usefulness of professional training and acknowledge the new professional boundaries regarding the principles of **accountability** and their multi-faceted implications. She drew the audience's attention to the **need for full transparency** as the only way to counter negative voices, and for the development of appropriate products (manuals, checklists, videos) and joint initiatives (a coordinated visits' programme, a capacity to detect false reports and counter them quickly).

**Lefteris Kretsos**, Secretary-General for Media and Communication of the Greek Government, recalling the seminar of the Club of Venice held on 9 April 2016 in Lesbos, pointed out that in Greece, in spite of the general impoverishment of the population in recent years, the feeling of **solidarity** has prevailed over fears. The number of arrivals managed in Greece is equivalent to almost 10% of the country's population, though subsequently migrants have in large part been transferred to other areas.

Lefteris highlighted that the migration crisis took unpredictable dimensions and the urgency of rescue caught all public authorities unprepared to face an influx on such a massive scale. Hence, the consciousness of the dramatic scenario, the need to save lives, the potential threats to security and the need for more collaborative and cohesive strategies to finding suitable and sustainable solutions (he also referred to the ongoing implementation of an open media policy).

The representatives of the Italian and German Foreign Ministries (Valerio De Parolis and Ralf Beste) illustrated the communication activities targeting the public audiences in the countries of origin.

**Valerio De Parolis** focused on the "migration compact" proposed by Italy to deal with the increased flow of arrivals, which should entail a synchronised set of measures (resettlement schemes, investment projects, legal migration opportunities, EU-Africa bonds and increased cooperation in security, commitment to coordinated border controls and readmission procedures, increased fight against trafficking, etc.)

**Ralf Beste** welcomed the impressive work of Frontex and outlined the initiatives carried out by the German authorities in this regard: 1) a communication campaign addressing potential refugees and migrants; 2) activities to counter smugglers' disinformation; 3) a set of instruments such as dedicated communication on the press and social media channels of embassies and consulates (Facebook channel), billboards in different public areas, contacts in the different countries of origin and support to legal voices...

**Susin Park** (UNHCR Deputy Regional Representative based in Sarajevo) referred to the growing worries about massive numbers of unaccompanied children and stressed the need to conceive fair asylum procedures that recognize the protection of human rights. She also warned against creating false expectations such as recruiting migrants in language courses and similar projects if they have not yet been granted refugee status. According to Susin, the nodal point is the true sharing of responsibilities in providing resources but also in privileging dialogue, and trying to overcome the widespread continuous mistrust towards migrants and refugees.



The discussion on progress in the **communication activities in the field of anti-terrorism** (aiming at analysing the engagement of public authorities both at internal and international level) was introduced by **Arlin Bagdat** (DG External Communication of the Belgian Government, who hosted the thematic seminar organised by the Club on 30 September 2016 in Brussels). Arlin referred to the issues emerged from that event, in particular the need to coordinate existing platforms (to tackle challenges more effectively and in a more timely fashion) and the need for more partnership with civil society. She also announced a strategic campaign being prepared by the Belgian authorities for 2017.

Important contributions were delivered by **Peter Wilson** (Head of the UK RICU), who shared analytical details on the **monitoring** of the phenomenon (qualitative and quantitative research) and the **increasing synergies** with SME and corporate professionals) and by **Iain Bundred** (Ogilvy Public Affairs) on the communication trends and suggestions for **inspiring models of reputation management** (with a stress on tracking the real impact, protecting and promoting the good values and assets, etc.).

The last plenary session, moderated by **Marco Incerti**, Head of Communication at the Centre for European Policies Studies (CEPS), enabled participants to share feedback on “capacity building” perspectives, including on measures recently adopted to enhance and reinforce professional structures of government and corporate communication in Europe.

In his key-note, **Sean Larkins**, former British government communication specialist and current global international consultant (WPP-Public Affairs), recalled a **comprehensive survey** across Europe launched in October, based on valuable interviews and thorough analysis of data and trends. The **emerging results are quite dramatic**. Discomfort in the general public is now a global issue (growing protests, crisis of interest, growing **lack of true listening and confidence in governments** are ubiquitous according to OECD data). Moreover, faced with technological changes and an increasing potential for growth and opportunities for multiple initiatives, on average public professional structures are organizationally and methodologically in arrears. Sadly, skills, training, agenda's quality, and a sense of strategy, are a “rare commodity” in the current structures. Whilst there truly is a growing consciousness of the cultural transition from “deference” to “reference” – which today is pointing at “proximity” – said Larkins – it is also true that this perception has not yet translated into manuals, explicit job profiles, or operating rules respected by the policies. Hence, the need for common skills, efficient infrastructures, research and strategic-internal-digital communication to tackle the transformational period with the appropriate dynamic approach.

**Sweden and the Netherlands**, two countries drawing particular attention to citizenship rights, outlined cultural and organizational achievements (i.e. within the Dutch Government Communication Academy) and ongoing projects to improve internal and external communication by modern ways of learning and interaction..

Valuable feedback was also provided by **Guy Dominy** (Seeing it More Clearly, UK) and **Christian Spahr** (Director of the Media Programme for South East Europe, Konrad Adenauer Foundation), mainly confirming the abovementioned gap between the complexity of the transformations and operating models currently in place, and also covering the state of play of media freedom in Europe, the change of the information culture and the growing popularity of independent news portals and investigative media platforms.

As pointed out by Dominy – an opinion fully shared by all participants – **training and competence building** are pre-conditions for effective communication, which in its turn is a key instrument for the smooth functioning of societies and institutions (and not only for commercial processes). Spahr highlighted the **crisis of confidence** in place, which should alert politicians and communicators, wake up their consciousness and give the necessary impulse towards **re-organization**.

## Conclusions

The steering panel read and distributed two important documents:

- a letter of **Donald Tusk**, President of the European Council, congratulating the Club for the path followed throughout its thirty years of professional and institutional partnership and dedication. President Tusk praised the **effectiveness of the informal framework** in which the Club has operated and the substance of discussions, which enabled the Club to play “a crucial role of aid to the conduct of the great objectives of the **relationship between Europe and its citizens**”, helping focus on their expectations and contrast “simplistic solutions offered by extreme and populist forces”, and hopes this network will pursue “this valuable contribution”.
- a letter of **John Verrico**, former President of the United States National Association of Government Communicators (NAGC), welcoming the 30 years of achievements of the Club of Venice, highlighting the common primary duty of **servicing public communities** and praising the recently established relations of **partnership and collaboration** in joint communication events (plenaries, seminars and communication schools' agenda).



During the final session, President Stefano Rolando introduced the Italian Secretary of State for European Policies and Affairs Sandro Gozi. In his address to the Club, **Sandro Gozi** underlined that, in order to make a decisive step forward in the **definition of organizational models and skills**, public communicators need to carry out an objective analysis of their **relationship with policy makers**, with a view to overcome potential conflicts (a heritage of the 20th century attitudes) and refrain from dangerous tendencies to a revival of propaganda.

The State Secretary welcomed the letters addressed to the Club from Brussels and Washington and invited participants to reflect on the crucial nature of the communication's role in a historical phase "which definitely closes the era started with the fall of the Berlin wall and makes us perceive a world perhaps less organized and less secure, so far governed by multilateral rules, where we must deeply **re-think** about those real **values that make up the primary European bond**". Mr Gozi finally recalled that the Club plenary in Venice was also intended as one of the preliminary events anticipating a series of initiatives foreseen to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Rome Treaties, that will culminate on 25 March 2017 (ad hoc European summit in the Italian capital) and referred to the symbolic value of a "renewal of the covenant" boosted by a "white paper" announced by President Juncker to mark the anniversary. Research, youth policies, social policies, the growing economy, quality of life and principles of common governance will be at the centre of the debate.

**Vincenzo Le Voci**, Secretary-General of the Club, closed the plenary by summarised the key issues at the centre of the debate:

- as highlighted also by State Secretary Gozi, the need to provide citizens with convincing answers, paying due attention to their real priorities and maintaining a high commitment on common values
- as agreed with participants, the need to pursue discussion on:
  - crisis communication (refugee/migration, anti-terrorism, stratcom and other priority topics, depending on actuality)
  - interministerial coordination and interagency
  - multi-annual planning as pre-condition for shaping and safeguarding communicators' vision

- development of communication capacities and capabilities through adequate planning and training platforms and projects, privileging activities in partnership
- initiatives to re-gain citizens' trust in the EU and in governmental and institutional authorities.

He also informed the audience of the meetings foreseen in 2017. In the first semester of the coming year the Club will organise two events: a thematic seminar in early spring (on a crisis communication topic - venue to be identified) and the spring plenary in Malta (country holding the next six-month presidency of the Council of the EU).

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# Letter from the European Council President Donald Tusk to the Club of Venice President Stefano Rolando



Brussels, 10 -11- 2016

Dear Mr President,

On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Club of Venice, I would like to express my heartfelt congratulations on the excellent work that you and your colleagues, from the Member States and the institutions of the European Union, have accomplished since 1986.

Your idea to bring together senior public communicators to discuss informally and freely the challenges facing European governments and institutions, to exchange experiences, to learn from each other and seek ways of better responding to the expectations of European citizens has thrived for over 30 years now, and it remains crucial for the success of your future deliberations.

Europe is going through particularly difficult times. We must join forces to relaunch the European project. At our recent meeting in Bratislava on 16 September 2016, dedicated to our common European future, the leaders of 27 EU Member States stressed that we need to improve our communication – among Member States, EU institutions, but most importantly with our citizens. We must inject clarity into our decisions, use concise and honest language, and focus on citizens' expectations in order to challenge the simplistic solutions offered by extreme and populist forces.

A huge task lies before us. Public communicators will play a crucial role in helping us to attain our common goals. I am convinced that the Club of Venice will continue to make a most valuable contribution, and that we will be able to rely on your professionalism, your expertise and your dedication to our common European values.

I would like to convey my best wishes to you and all the members of the Club of Venice for your continued work in the interest of better communicating Europe to our citizens.

Yours sincerely,

  
Donald Tusk

Professor Stefano Rolando  
President and Founder of the Club of Venice

# Reply from President Stefano Rolando to the European Council President Donald Tusk



## Club of Venice

**The President**

**Hon. Donald Tusk**  
**President of the European Council**  
**Brussels**

Venice, November 11, 2016

Dear Mr. President,

I would like to express my personal and all participants' gratitude for your letter which was circulated and read today at the concluding session of the meeting of the Club of Venice dedicated to the thirty years of activities of this body.

Your recognition for our work, and the achievement of a new milestone, is a great honour for us.

We are aware of having forged forward on delicate ground, starting in October 1986, when relations between the then Member States' governmental communication and information structures were inadequate and when it was therefore necessary to overcome a situation of "no relationship".

We developed informal ties among the national communication leaders as well as between Member States' and EU Institutions' representatives, expanding our framework up to a hundred specialists, including academics and experts, who follow and participate in our works. This has enabled us to harmonize professional cultures, make available different experiences, and converge towards the most innovative models for the relationship with both political decision makers and citizens.

You confirmed the judgment of "crucial utility" which your predecessor, President Herman Van Rompuy, had so kindly expressed in 2011, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Club. You added a thought of encouragement for the future. I am and we all are deeply grateful for this and we also appreciate the operational support given by the structures of the General Secretariat of the EU Council.

We wish to look forward and hope for a more cohesive and collaborative Europe.

We feel that the matter to which we dedicate ourselves can become strategic in this direction. Every effort is made in the course of our meetings, held in the different Member States and candidate countries, to generate orientations aiming at growing shared cultures in the integration process. We shall continue to denounce all sorts of propaganda as experienced by some European countries in the 20th century, against which Europe has searched and found ripostes built on the culture of democracy and social respect.

We are pleased to enclose herewith the Book "Club of Venice 1986-2016: 30 years of Public Communication Challenges", presented at our meeting, which contains civil and professional thoughts and ideas that nourish our mission.

We thank you and wish you all the best and we confirm to you and to the EU institutions our dedication to the Union's founding principles.

(Stefano Rolando)

# Outcome of the Club of Venice plenary meeting

Sliema (Malta), 19 May 2017

By Vincenzo Le Voci

**The Club of Venice** (informal network of the EU MS' and institutions' communication directors and senior communication specialists) met in **Malta on 18 and 19 May 2017 in its spring plenary focused on the government and institutions' synergies in communication strategies (national and EU's agenda), followed by a seminar on "The refugees' and migration crisis: a crucial test for public communicators"**.

These two meetings aimed respectively to cover two key issues:

- to address the challenges of communication in Europe for the reconstruction of citizens' confidence;
- to tackle the most urgent priorities for communicators and foster their involvement in the different applicable phases of this crisis' management (rescue, assistance, asylum/relocation/resettlement and return).

The **plenary meeting** enabled the Club to investigate new trends calling for a transformation of public communication services by quickly learning lessons from recent events, national initiatives, civil society's experiences and suggested models.

Panellists shared with the audience their perception of today's state of play and their view of the evolution of public opinion trends and perspectives. The aim was to explore how public communicators could respond more efficiently to today's European communication challenges by enhancing synergies among governments and between national authorities and European institutions and bodies. And in doing so, how to convince the respective budgetary authorities to select and invest in the most efficient communication instruments, capitalizing on successful initiatives.

**Thursday morning's session focused on policy challenges, inclusiveness, citizens' trust and expectations.**

In his key-note speech, Erik den Hoedt (Director for Communication and Public Information at the Netherlands' Ministry of General Affairs and Club Steering Group member) pointed out the multi-faceted implications of today's transitional phase. These include economic, cultural, mass migration-related, technological, climatological/environmental, technological, and political features.

Erik observed that, while the acceptance of the representative democracy is still high, society's political imprint is evident on all decisions and, at the same time, there is a wide and growing dissatisfaction with the performers (*We like the play, but don't like the acting*). The difference in level of discontent between people with higher and lower educational levels is increasing. In addition, the slow changes and uncertainties about policies and their coherent implementation give ground to growing populism that can easily mislead disappointed audiences.

Erik delivered statistics on trends in trust in European governments and in particular in the Dutch government.

In his view, since democracies' foundations are dependant on trust, the role of government is crucial in understanding the evolution of trends and building the ideal conditions through a durable relationship with our citizens based on three key elements: integrity, performance and attention. A low level of trust in government (which may occur) is not necessarily fatal as long as there is a high level of confidence in society and a good perspective for the future.

Thus in his conclusions, Erik underlined that the role of **social cohesion** (based on participation, trust and integration, in synergy with civil society) is the key to moving forward.

This session's speakers shared their views on the current trends and on how to enhance cooperation:

- Fiorenza BARAZZONI, Director, General Affairs, Communication and Internal Market Office, Department for European Policies, Italy's PM Office (need to maximise synergetic approach; learn lessons from the citizens' dissatisfaction reflected in the UK referendum results; draw inspiration from Bratislava, Valletta and Rome outcome; engage in a true dialogue with citizens; focus on schools and entrepreneurial world; be transparent, creative and concrete);
- Vanni XUEREB, Head of the Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee (MEUSAC) (extend the consultation processes; deal with policy challenges emphasising inclusiveness; create new synergies and partnership models; make good use of public opinion indicators; facilitate interconnections);
- Jessica PEARCE, Head of Campaigns, UK Government Communications Service, Cabinet Office (lessons learned from the Edelman Trust Barometer; build trust through the right approach; address people properly; be more creative, as suggested in the McNamara report "Creating an architecture of listening in organisations"; listen but also take action, placing the citizens at the heart of the campaigns);
- Sixtine BOUYGUES, Deputy Director-General, European Commission DG COMM (heterogeneous picture, where citizens' views differ from country to country; general distrust for political parties; national elections in France may mark the turning point; persisting worries in view of the new EP elections; general misinformation or lack of information in less educated people; citizens accepting challenges if they can bring solutions; "Decodeur Europe" (set of thematic factsheets explaining why the EU is worth it); need for positive communication; segmentation, focus, adequate formats; training for the press; practice communication as a science; exploit the new reflection launched by the Commission through its White Paper on the Future of Europe and its



complementary reflection papers; do not impose but share agenda (social agenda may not be perceived as a priority by everyone);

- Christophe ROUILLON, Member of the European Committee of the Regions (need to mobilise all democratic sources to contrast rising extremism; need for concrete measures against unemployment and poverty; CoR engaged in several "Citizens' Dialogues" in cooperation with the Commission; launch of the questionnaire "Reflecting on Europe" collecting feedback on the White Paper; emphasis on the going local dimension; engagement in the social networks);
- Paul SCHMIDT, Secretary-General, Austrian Society for European Policy (pessimism and uncertainties should induce the EU to reflect on how better to fulfil its key role; nationalisms can be counterbalanced only by joining forces, increasing cross-border cooperation; need to be emotional, foster citizen's engagement, make good use of opinion polls and manage expectations);
- Igor BLAHUSIAK, Deputy Director of the European Affairs Communication Department of Czech Government Office (the successful experience of the National Convention on Europe, a new discussion platform which represents a permanent venue for a debate on European issues in the Czech Republic. The Convention's recommendations are forwarded to the government and social partners within a project coordinated by the Office the Government. Inspiration drawn from Slovakia's dialogue on these themes with stakeholders, experts and general public. Roundtables, conferences, workshops and regional debates). Igor finally referred to the country's branding initiative "Touristiada", also in connection with the EU's cultural heritage (in view of the European Year 2018)

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From the interaction with the other participants emerged the need for:

- wider involvement of civil society in a real participative framework
- avoiding fragmentation and seeking new forms of partnership in communication
- managing conflicting messages
- increasingly involve young people
- investing more in an open, trustworthy dialogue through the social media
- carrying our deeper analysis (go beyond segmentation, avail of more opinion poll sources)
- striking the right balance between the governmental and institutional political agenda and the need to cover European issues at all levels (EU, cross-border, national, regional and local)
- 

### The afternoon session hosted a discussion on relations with the media, civil society and social networks.

Marco INCERTI, Head of Communications in the Centre for European Policies Studies (CEPS), sparked discussion by addressing the audience in particular on the dangerous influence of disinformation and misinformation and the impact of such incendiary practices on the credibility and legitimacy of the system.

Welcoming the Club of Venice London Charter adoption at the seminar on Strategic Communication held in the UK on 17 March 2017, Marco highlighted, among others, the close connection of this topic with all major crisis management and crisis communication priorities.

In this context, he stressed the importance of the investigative approach, since accurate research and study of new metrics can help identify unreliable sources and take adequate measures. Likewise, an increased collaboration with the web industry is crucial (Google and Facebook in the front line) to remove dangerous information. Marco also praised the increased engagement of some Member States and the EU institutions in the anti-radicalisation field, but referred also to the "investigative populist approach" of other players (Cambridge Analytica, The Observer...). He finally drew attention to data mining, training in web users' psychological approach, the need for a legal framework and the need to invest adequate financial resources to counter-balance disinformation and to spread good narratives.

This session's contributors were:

- Anja FIEDLER, Strategic Communication officer, from the European External Action Service (EEAS), on the EU's communication activities targeting countries outside the EU's borders. Anja referred to the EEAS' Global Strategy and to the need to elaborate common messages and to strengthen cooperation between EU institutions and Member States. Her contribution also covered Stratcom East anti-disinformation campaign and the extension of this good practice to other geographical zones of Europe and in Africa. She also urged participants to create positive stories and draw inspiration from good examples such as the celebration of the 60th anniversary and the Erasmus + cooperation.
- Pier Virgilio DASTOLI, President of the European Movement in Italy. Virgilio warned against the surging concept of "illiberal democracy" and recalled successful examples of cooperation with NGOs who led to the creation of a network in 2014. He observed that one of the potentially strong instruments such as the ECI has technically failed and there is a need to find other ways to connect. To this end, he praised the platform "Europe on Trial" (prosecutors V/attorneys - a good example of a true share of best practice rather than "discourses"), and the impulse that should arrive from increasing interaction with civil society. He regretted that the two EP's reports in



this regard had been totally ignored and warned against the growing fear of the EU's disintegration (the total extreme of the concept "an even closer Union").

- Adam NYMAN, Director of Debating Europe, who reported on the growing engagement of young people in the on-line dialogue and within the school environment. He underlined that there is no "one size fits all" campaign and that the institutions are embracing more and more criticism. In this case, he referred to President Juncker's participation in open debates with French, Polish and German YouTubers and indicated that national policy makers should do the same and promote Europe as well.
- Hanna BROGREN, Communication advisor, former Head of Swedish government and Stockholm city communications. Hanna stressed the need to think digital, acting persistently and consistently, fully acknowledging that the audiences are increasingly believing that credible news are delivered through the social media. She agreed that cross-border initiatives are crucial, also to overcome media and communication polarisation trends, and called upon enhanced synergies which could help attune the communication departments more rapidly and effectively.
- Rasmus KRISTENSEN, Head of Department for Public Diplomacy, Communication and Press in Denmark MFA, who referred to the December 2015 failed referendum on EU matters and focused on partnership, cross-border cooperation, civil society's mobilisation (such connection could help raise levels of respect and trust), digital communication and engagement in social media, debating on structured journalism, open data and facilitated access to information, avoiding replications and investing on complementarity.

The exchange of views also included a close look into ethics and the risk of distorted use of the referendum to mislead audiences by deviating focus on unclear targets.

The feedback shared by the panellists on the concrete ongoing initiatives and past experiences confirmed that, in order to rebuild citizens' trust and help relaunch the EU's credibility, there is a need to shape communication around a number of essential pillars:

- a clear view of the state of public opinion;
- data analysis' and data interpretation capacities;
- the full understanding of media and communication trends, habits, strengths, weaknesses and opportunities in the respective geographical landscapes;
- capacities to face all risks inherent to crisis communication (how to be resilient towards sources of influence, problems with misinformation, exponential velocity of the spread of information);
- the increasing role of strategic communication (exploiting in a more coordinated manner the best instruments for a concrete and successful outreach);

- new modern forms of partnerships among governments, between governments and institutions, and between public communication authorities and civil society.

The 3rd and last session on **Friday 19 morning** focused on capacity/capability building. The key-note speaker Zigurds Zakis, Latvian strategic communication expert, delivered a short summary (review) of key fundamental changes in communication environment and related consequences for any communication organization. He addressed the participants on:

- the increasing role of communication and increasing role of strategy (what does it mean for our organizations) in a world of transversal influences;
- the key competences and how we develop them; the need for deep understanding of people, groups and society, through a genuine emphatic approach;
- the importance of "building learning" organization and what learning (and listening to people and society) means in the context of Strategic Communication;
- setting high professional standards and putting personal professional growth into the centre of organizational culture, as a key for success;
- the importance of planning ("absolutely nothing "lasting" can be achieved in short term).

The panel included:

- Sean LARKINS, Director, Consulting and Capability of WPP Government and Public Sector Practice (moderator of the session), who delivered a presentation with Laure VanHauwaert, WPP Managing Director, European Institutions Dept.

As a follow-up to his contribution to the previous plenary of the Club (Venice, November 2016), Sean kept focusing on the communication implications in the capacity/capability building plans of the public sector. In particular, he underlined that the technological developments are having a huge impact on how people communicate, which requires important changes in social norms and habits, and also a massive political impact worldwide.

This context is leading governments and institutions to invest in professional development (training, online technology and social networks), support engagement (with an undisputable primary role of government communication academies), enhance co-ordination, develop media monitoring capacity, promote internal skills development and change management, but also strengthen co-operation with international organisations and, as appropriate, outsource some activities.

Sean and Laure recalled the salient points of "The Leaders' Report" presented at the World Economic Forum in Davos. This instrument is the first comprehensive global overview of government communication leaders' and practitioners'



working methods and concerns and gives an insight of how they are preparing for the communication challenges ahead. The report stems from a research carried out across 40 countries – from Australia to Austria and Namibia to New Zealand, with over 300 audited senior specialists and practitioners (a mix of qualitative interviews and a quantitative global study) trying to build capacity in (quoted) *“an age of anger, dislike, disbelief and insecurity”*.

Commenting the main findings of the report, Sean and Laure indicated that government communicators are confronted with post-truth, post-democracy, fake news, increasing number of people protesting outside of mainstream political parties, and a rise in populist sentiments. Hence, they face a unique challenge: they have both a moral and legal responsibility to engage with the entire population.

The right approach consists of:

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- prioritising wider community's needs, opinions and expectations;
- reinforcing ties between communication and consultation;
- investing in training;
- embracing new technology, but wisely, in order to prevent it from disrupting citizens' engagement and maintain the human touch (*“If used inappropriately, technology might become a bigger barrier between government and citizen rather than a bridge”*).

Paulijn DE BRUJINE, Public Relations and Communications specialist from the Dutch Ministry of General Affairs, presented the Government Communication Academy and its activities aiming at keeping high motivation standards, expand knowledge and professional skills and competences. Focusing on knowledge, Paulijn stressed the need to build political and organizational sensibility as well as strong analytical capacities and the cooperative approach.

She also referred to a 360 degree survey method carried out (through feedback from colleagues and managers) to identify internal competences.

- Jessica PEARCE, Head of Campaigns in the UK GCS, and Tina ISRAELSSON, Sweden GCO, shared some details on successful skills-based training models focused on internal communication, strategic communication and digital communication.
- Guy DOMINY, (Senior Consultant, *“Seeing More Clearly”*) focused on *“thinking tactics and strategy”* (the communicators' key role to enhance outreach while giving internal advice and contributing to building credibility), investing time, making alliances and understanding the audiences, questioning and listening.

- George PERLOV (George Perlov Consulting) illustrated a campaign carried out by the Arcus Foundation focusing on *“Driving Behaviour Change Through Communications”*. In delivering on the campaign insights, successes and lessons learned he drew the audience's attention to the concrete areas of surveillance, such as risks of inadequate planning, need to well define outcomes and metrics, effectively commission campaigns, awareness of budget constraints, risks of inadequate audience reach, need to understanding the work of partners, analyse previous efforts and prevent/anticipate predictable and uninteresting messaging lessons. Hence, the need for sound planning, systems thinking, rethinking audiences and reframe issues as needed, connecting with stakeholders, going beyond education and messages, and ensuring adequate and strategic funding.
- Dave WORSELL, Managing Director of Granicus, shared some views on a model for digital reach and engagement taking into account that governments are at a crossroads, facing unusual joint challenges (retiring experienced workforces, budget pressures tightening, social media and fake news, rising citizens expectations...). Dave referred to a Deloitte global digital transformation study of over 1,200 government officials, which revealed that truly transforming government through the power of digital technologies is a journey, and a majority of government agencies are in the very early stages of that process. 76% of digital technologies are disrupting the public sector and only 13% are on track to keep pace with the constant transformation. An ideal *“digital engagement maturity model”* consists of setting the desired outcomes, reach and engagement, identify the desired outcomes, investing in technology and maximize investments, look forward to increasing capabilities and capacities, and implement security requirements and holding staff accountable.
- Noah CURTHOYS, Senior Partner of The Democratic Society, invited participants to take due account and respect of all stakeholders, truly engaging with citizens, running serious on-line consultations, showing the impact and engaging in honest local conversations covering what people want to hear and discuss which affects it has on their day-to-day life. In other words, today's world needs a sense of civic participation and contrast as far as possible to eliminate risks of alienation (more participative democracy).



# Outcome of the Club of Venice seminar “Terrorism: Challenges for Crisis Communication”

Brussels, 30 September 2016

By Vincenzo Le Voci

The seminar, co-organised with the Belgian authorities of the PM Chancellery, Directorate for External Communication as a follow-up to the discussions held at the Club plenary in The Hague in May 2016, was attended by 51 colleagues from 20 different countries, the EP, the Council and the Commission and a number of external specialists who joined the event as panellists.

Rather than concentrating (only) on lessons learned and best practices, the meeting enabled to analyse, drawing from long-term endemic challenges and recent tragic events, “**communication during and after a long-lasting crisis**” and on how to **structure, energize and optimize** the existing frameworks in this field.

The seminar was introduced by Christiane Höhn, Senior Advisor to the EU Counter-terrorism Coordinator, who outlined the threat and communication challenges and the strategic framework under which the EU has been operating throughout the last ten years implementing interwoven communication strategies embracing media, radicalism and recruitment, promoting tolerance, non discrimination, fundamental freedom and solidarity.

Christiane also recalled the Council's push for coordinated preventive and detective measures and the two platforms operating in parallel to this end (Radicalization Awareness Network (RAN) and Strategic Communications Network), as well as the EU Internet Forum (ministerial authorities, law enforcement and internet industry, Europol...) which, under the initiative of the Commission, aims to counter terrorist propaganda and develop a code of conduct against hate speech on line.

Christiane also recalled the efficiency and effectiveness of the consultancy services of the Syrian Strategic Communication Advisory Team (SSCAT) (a complementary contribution was also provided by the Team Director) and the joint cooperation in developing convincing narratives able to counter extremist propaganda and challenging extremist ideas. She finally urged the governmental and institutional communication specialists to discuss constructively the following questions:

- How to shape the debate?
- How to help raising the right questions without playing into the hands of extremists and populists?
- How to address Islam without creating divisions between Muslims and non-Muslims or contributing to radicalization?
- How to talk about the issues without encouraging racism and stereotypes?
- How to better share strategies to communicate in this field? What has worked so far in the existing strategies and what hasn't?
- How to identify and support credible voices in communities vulnerable to radicalisation? What are the most remarkable experiences in the ground?
- To which extent returnees are being used for counter-narratives and how?
- How can we create resilience in our societies?
- How do communicators work together in the EU? How to enhance mutual trust, coordination, synergies and information exchange about approaches and campaigns

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The programme of the seminar was divided into three stages:

1. **The analysis of the facts and diagnosis**, with focus on destabilizing factors, confidence crisis, uncertainties and social unrest, and on the notion of “collateral damage” in a crisis situation. The direct experiences shared by Member States as case studied included:

- elements of prompt intervention (broadly illustrated by the Belgian PM Spokesperson, the representative of the French Anti-Terrorism Coordination Unit from the Ministry of Interior and the Spokesperson and Head of Communication of the Brussels Airport);
- coordination and study at all levels: monitoring of emotional and psychological development of radicalisation processes (focus on the information campaign “Family Against Stress and Trauma” (FAST)); international terrorism watchdog activities; far right trends; and domestic extremism (contribution from the Head of the United Kingdom’s Research, Information and Communication Unit (RICU));
- the political communication and the capacity to handle citizens’ emotional reactions and to respond to their quest for information.

2. This exchange of feedback enabled the participants to have an insight of:

- the strong impact on the population of the terrorist acts perpetrated in the two countries and the way the governmental authorities, in some cases in partnership with civil society components, perceived the strong need to re-instill citizens’ feeling of security;
- the risk of «**alienation**» and «**desertion**» of national and foreign public, linked to so-called “**nation bashing**” (affecting France and Belgium, but also other countries), the “**self-bashing**” and “**bashing “the other**” (for example, minority communities and immigrants - ruthless political exploitation of community fears, particularly blaming migrants or minority communities);
- the high risk of “crisis of confidence in the institutions and of the self-esteem”.

3. **Challenges for public communication in managing crisis**

- **Communicating to inform and restore confidence in the internal audiences**
  - services: direct or indirect information provision, interaction and dialogue with citizens (witnessing by communicators directly involved in these issues, in a “long-lasting crisis”)
  - analysis: how a (crisis) communication takes places and evolves; how to maintain attention (while reassuring); how to reassure ; how to react and have an “official voice” heard in a situation where “everybody speaks”
- **Communicating abroad - reputation management**
  - **Assessing / measuring the image of a country abroad**
  - **Evaluating / measuring its degradation and its evolution:** How to deal with the “Alienation” and “desertion” of the foreign public audiences and country’s nationals living outdoors? How to inform and (re)build confidence ?
  - **informing and instilling confidence beyond the country’s borders - improving the country’s image abroad; becoming again attractive:** 1) Citizen initiatives, associated and private; public initiatives (information and branding campaigns, public diplomacy, public relations, influence communication, ...); 2) **Openness with foreign media.** Foreign language broadcasting, social media exploitation, etc.; 3) Leisure and business tourism to reevaluate/revamp cities’ image.

Interesting ad hoc contributions were delivered by two external panellists: “Visit.Brussels” (focus on communication and promotional initiatives to restore climate confidence with regard to the city’s safety and hosting standards) and Ogilvy (focus on tracking real impact of reputation management activities and cooperation with governmental authorities in crisis scenarios i.e. “Mexico Today”).



## Organisational key-elements for public communicators

- identification of the communicators' roles
- nuances in the legislative approach
- **cooperation/coordination** at inter-ministerial and inter-governmental level as well as between governments and institutions
- readiness and promptness
- **media coverage** (internal and external players) **and media monitoring**
- detecting public opinion and expectations
- **sustaining the confidence and co-operation of minority communities** (information from these communities is a vital source of intelligence for the security authorities, their co-operation also being vital to sustain anti-radicalisation programmes).

The extensive share of best practice (United Kingdom Civil Contingency Communications, National Security Center; France Anti-Terrorism and Coordination Unit; Belgium National Crisiscenter) focused on the main priority areas to build upon lessons learned:

- clarity of messages, roles' distribution and timelines;
- coherence and capacity to adopt a balanced approach;
- strong presence in the social networks;
- reinforcement of resilience;
- capacity to anticipate and prevent criticism;
- engaging with the local level;
- plans sharing;
- facilitating, where possible, the creation of local comms intelligence.

Moreover, **prevention** and **awareness-raising** were also discussed, based on some concrete examples of information campaigns (Netherlands) targeting the wide public and aiming to avoid raising panic or uncertainties but to ensure a high level of awareness and reassure about the good cooperation put in place among all relevant authorities in case of threat.

**Relations with the media** and the establishment of a **climate of mutual confidence and transparency**, were also mentioned as a precondition to avoid misperception and misinterpretation of public authorities' communication activities.

Finally participants agreed on the **need for coordination, the capacity of managing expectations and identifying reliable actors and multipliers** (elements highlighted by the Head of Communication of the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS)).

## Reflection elements emerged

- The continuous risks of polarizations of society, the rise of extremism, the sophisticated means of terrorist propaganda, the interdependence between different terrorist groups and the risk of exploitation of the refugee and migration crisis for recruitment purposes continues to cause high security concerns in the population (see the EuroBarometer's trends, which show terrorism as the most worrying issue for citizens).
- The communications challenge is changing fast and this requires investments in dedicated research capabilities and capacity to study the changing nature of extremist communications.
- Governments cannot do this alone but new partnerships are needed between governments, civil society, industries and internet/media companies. Trust is crucial. A "civsoc empowerment programme" advocated by the European Commission could help serve this purpose.
- Following the approach of organisations such as the SSCAT (which is changing its denomination into the more inclusive "European StratComms Network" - ESCN), Member States are warmly encouraged to foster relationship among communication experts to increasingly exchange experiences and build up the capacity to analyse, research and develop counter-narratives.
- Counter-narratives, though, only do part of the job. As a matter of fact, a whole suite of responses is required to challenge extremists' narrative and restore confidence among key audiences.
- The response needs to match the pace and scale of the challenge. This can only happen by building a formal architecture in-house to drive a daily, consistent, coherent delivery of communications including campaigns.
- There is a strong need for continuous impact evaluation, in order to adjust and optimize information and communication campaigns in progress and maintain a continuous proactive approach.

# Outcome of the Club of Venice Seminar “Stratcom-Strategic Communication Challenges in Europe”<sup>1</sup>

London, 17 March 2017

By Vincenzo Le Voci

The London seminar on StratCom was attended by representatives from 23 EU Member States, two accession countries (Montenegro and Serbia) and three additional EU neighbour countries (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia and Ukraine), EU institutions and bodies (EP, Council, Commission, EESC and CoR), the EU Institute for Security Studies in Paris (EUISS) and NATO specialists (Headquarters and Centre of Excellence in Riga) and independent agencies working as partners with Governments and Institutions.

Introductory statements were delivered by Alex Aiken (Head of the UK Government Communications Service) and Linda Jākobsonsone (Director of Communications in the Latvian State Chancellery).

The meeting was moderated by Erik den Hoedt (Director of Communication and Public Information in the Netherlands).

In her key-note, Baiba Braže (Latvian Ambassador to the UK) outlined the main Europe-wide StratCom challenges and the need to seek adequate instruments and synergies to tackle them effectively. To this end, she recommended working as much as possible in partnership and supporting all relevant projects involving multipliers, opinion makers and the academic world. In this context, she highlighted the successful platform “Wire” managed by Dutch students without claiming ownership (working from within but let players act independently).

The seminar (held under “Chatham House” Rule) addressed the major current challenges of strategic communication in Europe. It was structured as follows:

## Two plenary sessions:

Analysis of the state of public opinion, the current sources of influence and media habits

- Walter Osztovics (Kovar & Partners) referred to a recent study (“Arena Analysis” - A New Start for Democracy) carried out by his Austrian PR agency to identify and analyse escalation of critical topics. He focused on the threats to freedom and to liberal societies generated by populism, extremism, “identitarianism” and the crisis of direct and representative democracy. He also pointed out the crisis of mainstream media and the correlation

between new nationalism and the macho culture, the segregation of part of the population and the lack of European themes in the agenda of the mainstream parties.

- The European Commission drew the attention to the need to better understand and interpret the public opinion trends stemming from the Eurobarometer and how to build effective communication from understanding the survey's figures. 75% of Europeans have detected or experienced in person hate speech on the web. Living in a post-truth makes people feel alienated, neglected and generates apathy. These trends can only be contrasted with trust and honesty. Another important element is trust in the media: the last EB revealed that radio is ahead, whilst internet and social media are less credible – and only a small majority agrees that media provide trustworthy information. The Commission representative also informed the audience of an imminent launch of a website (EU INVESTS) with 20 stories of the EU's impact on citizen's real life and underlined that much governance work needs to be done within the institutions.
- The European Values think tank (a non-governmental policy institute based in Prague) indicated that liberal democracies are already under attack and made explicit reference to the Russian misinformation campaigns which aim to undermine public trust towards democratic politicians and institutions and public support for the EU and NATO. Hence, it urged to take the issue seriously by uniting efforts to shed light on misinformation campaigns' substance and vehicles and systematically build resilience of free societies.

1. Governments' and institutions' efforts in developing, in partnership with other key players, effective communication strategies to help handle major crises, misinformation and citizens' mistrust.

- The European External Action Service highlighted the context in which its Task Force is working. In an extremely challenging environment there is a need to communicate EU policies effectively, strengthening media environment and forecasting and responding to misinformation. The EEAS outlined its current efforts in the Eastern Partnership countries and its engagement in identifying the right multipliers, collaborating with trustable partners and opinion makers and supporting students (social media campaign on Erasmus +) and young democratic associations. It also recalled the ongoing cooperation

<sup>1</sup> On the eve of the seminar, Sir Alan Duncan, UK Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, addressed the participants and Alex Aiken, GSC Executive Director and Jessica Pearce, Head of Campaigns, presented the Government Communication Services in Whitehall..



with the EU delegations and with the Commission DG HOME and its tasks of practical advice, providing correct information and objective reporting and highlighted the lack of staff and funds.

- The UK FCO stressed the need to move from a one-way culture to a two-way communication approach, improving insight evaluation and analysis within governmental structures. It also referred to the Edelman barometer <http://www.edelman.com/trust2017/> (global annual study findings) and to the MacNamara report. The FCO underlined that, while moving to the world of BIG DATA, we need to consider Brexit phenomenon as a symptom, not a cause. Meanwhile, there is an ongoing transformation process in the way government uses data to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of every instance of communication with citizens. Organisational concept and an insightful strategic function should be developed.
- The UK Research, Information and Communications Unit (RICU) underlined the need to avail of the StratCom advice to counterterrorism and assure high cybersecurity standards. It stressed the need for thorough research and analysis (understand the audience) prior to information provision. It also highlighted the difficulty to adapt Government models and behaviours to generate clear messages “writing across the sector” in a complex and continuously evolving context. However, UK statistics on public authorities’ engagement are encouraging (voices actively speaking against ISIL on social media grew from 57% to 69%; religious leaders from 52% to 60%; government ministers from 49% to 65%).
- ESCN (European Strategic Communication Network - former SSCAT, Belgian-led and Commission-funded network) recalled the need of a full spectrum campaign, in line with the need to create an architecture which addresses the structure, methods, financial sources, and communication speed enabling extremists to influence audiences. In this contest, it underlined that Daesh has generated a paradigm shift in the quality of communication which is targeting EU audiences. The issue is not about contrasting radical global media platforms, but about delivering messages through local audiences. Moreover, often divisive discussions undermine the community cohesion and this generates a network of hostile and extremist influence. Traditional information tools are becoming redundant. Within a

chaotic info space, the appeal of a single, emotional “driver” can have a tremendous impact. One should ask whether we are doing enough, try to move towards sustainable campaigns, sustainable resilience and partnership. A campaign response should be based on a) preventing violent behaviours; b) experiencing, not arguing; c) sustained resilience.

- NATO (Headquarters’ StratCom) has adopted the UK OASIS <sup>2</sup> communication campaign model. The ideal approach consists of 1) knowledge of the objectives; 2) evidence for concrete planning, 3) conscious decisions-making; 4) defence against turbulences; 5) project stability. The three communication campaigns foreseen in 2017 are: looking across the board and focusing on defence, security and deterrence. NATO stressed the need of closer connections with PA officers from European countries and reassured that the transatlantic ties are more powerful than ever.
- EU ISS indicated that the success of East StratCom must be acknowledged and underlined that more resources are required to strengthen the process. Budget is maybe already available, but split under different headings. Moreover, it warned about the Russian Radio/ TV propaganda deep penetration, with approx. 20% of Europeans “buying” Russian TV information. In its view, the Jihad trends will affect our society for a long time and we need to reunite forces to contrast illegality (of 50,000 poisonous accounts, only 1,000 have been closed). We should strive to build resilience and avoid contradictory narratives.

### Three break-out groups focusing on three different geo-political trends.

The aim was to share fresh feedback on recent developments and orientations, study possible synergies among communicators and identify solutions to help respond to disinformation and declining trust, terrorism and migration challenges.

<sup>2</sup> Objective/Audience Insight/Strategy-idea/Implementation/Scoring-evaluation  
<https://gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/OASIS-Campaigns-Guide-.pdf> ..



## 1. Baltic and Eastern Europe

Issues on the table:

- Examples of “information security doctrine” approaches (false testimonials, alleged contradictory values and biased assessments, cyberspace control, hacking, etc.);
- Feedback from the European Endowment for Democracy (EED) through the NL MFA, the NATO StratCom Centre of Excellence in Riga, the European Commission DG NEAR, the Ukraine Ministry of Information Policy and experiences of the Media Development Foundation and the Independent Media in the Baltic States;

Challenges:

- Need to find appropriate, concrete solutions to counter Russian propaganda. Shape better strategies. More actions, not just studies and talks.
- Bear in mind that communication is not a tool for politicians, but an important element to develop an efficient and effective two-way communication approach.
- Seek closer ties with NGOs and rely on media as allies to contrast misinformation.
- Introduce a system of media trust-rating. Cooperation with Deutsche Welle judged more successful than with EBU.
- Support Ukrainian projects and platforms such as “Stop Fake” <http://www.stopfake.org/en/news/> and contribute to uniting efforts of all organisations working on this scenario.

## 2. Mediterranean, South Europe and Middle East

Issues on the table:

- Anti-Daesh communications cell;
- Capacity building in the Arab countries, with projects already underway;
- Focus on vulnerable audiences, use of credible voices;
- Use of simple but concrete and credible narrative;
- The added value of an international, diverse team;
- The challenging issue of getting projects funded;
- The importance of a “full spectrum” approach;
- The need to act in a post-truth era, where counter-narratives have to shift and follow other alternative narratives;
- Feedback from France MFA: initiatives launched on line (i.e. “Toujours le choix” “Always the choice” in France, video platform in English, French and Arabic, with two characters’ role-play; hotlines promoting balanced information;

- Individual campaigns to address the beginning of radicalism and denounce violence through testimonial victims (viral video clip and TED “Jihad d’Amour” <https://www.facebook.com/Jihad-dAmour/> which is available in Arabic, Turkish, Persian, Spanish, Portuguese, German, Malaysian, Bosnian and French and is being translated into other languages);
- The commemoration of Brussels events one year after (campaign ending with a big demo-event “Turn to Love” in the Baudoin stadium);
- Taking off and blocking content;
- Multi-faceted global campaigns of citizens (Muslim and non-Muslims against Daesh);
- Information on asylum procedures available in 19 languages (Greece);
- Commission’s on line information hub for migrants;
- Secured IPCR web platform and informal communication network;
- SEECOM’s feedback:
  - Western Balkan governments reluctance to exchange data with civil society (this lack of trust leaves ground to influencers in area where NATO is not strongly represented);
  - a recent Gallup survey revealing that, in times of crisis, citizens would rely more to the support of military powers from Turkey and Russia; need to handle this through a strong commitment by the EU and the international community, otherwise the influence in the region will fade;
  - need to convey more positive messages for the region not being left behind.

Challenges:

- Multilingualism; engaging with foreign audiences (in particular with refugees); the impact of incorrect translation and misinterpretation (and amplification throughout the social media);
- Measuring engagement, outreach and impact (qualitative analyses are still complicated and this creates frustration), identify best practice, carry out clearer evaluations;
- Developing cooperation with Arab countries;
- The sophisticated communication machine of Daesh;
- Russia’s huge investments in its systematic and overarching propaganda;
- Community reputation management;
- In the migration crisis management, the need for a more systemic and integrated approach, stressing the need to respect the principle of “shared responsibility”, respecting



human rights and security, and close monitoring the implementation of the EU-Turkey statement of March 2016;

- Tailoring messages to the different target audiences.

### 3. Atlantic questions

Issues on the table:

- US policy direction, NATO and Atlantic geo-political trends: the role and impact of communication;

Challenges:

- Fake news' impact and growing nationalistic trends in the USA and the EU
- Media evolution: print is dying; linear TV is dying; online is increasing and we are consuming more media;
- Need to meet the audiences where they are;
- Future of "true" political leaders vs. populist ones is depending more than ever on daily media trends.

## Concluding remarks

Key elements emerged from discussions within the plenary session and the break-out groups:

- Shared worries, common dangers;
  - In the age of "Big Data", privilege a transparent citizens-centered communication modelling;
  - Contrast fake news and propaganda, but keep in mind that mere communication on democratic values doesn't pay off;
  - Continue to take off and block radical and violent content on line; build capacity to engage as appropriate in multi-wave social media campaigns;
  - Need for multi-level mechanisms and for an architecture based on partnership;
  - Need for inter-agency and inter-governmental cooperation and for synergies with EU institutions ;
  - Continue to invest in awareness-raising and multilingualism;
  - Need to reinforce ties with civil society ;
  - Coherence brings authenticity and credibility.
4. The participants adopted the attached "London Charter", which summarises their common views on the need for reinforced cooperation and highlights their common commitment to StratCom values.

5. At the margin of the seminar, the Steering Group of the Club had a first exchange of views on the preliminary programme of the two events envisaged in spring time in Malta: the next plenary, foreseen on 18 (full day) and 19 (afternoon) May 2017 and the seminar on Communication Challenges in the field of Migration (19 May 2017 afternoon).

The next plenary meeting will focus on:

- How government and institutions are relaunching their communication strategies to rebuild citizens' confidence (policy challenges, inclusiveness, citizen's trust and expectations);
- How public communicators see the relations with and the role of the media, civil society and social networks in this context;
- Capacity/capability building (professional development; supporting engagement; internal skills, media monitoring and the added value of cooperation with international organizations).

The seminar on the refugee and migration crisis will enable, one year after the Lesbos experience, to assess how the communication activities and the collaboration among the key players have evolved. The event will be attended by public authorities from Lampedusa island (who will be sharing their own harrowing direct experiences on the ground) as well as by FRONTEX, EASO, IOM and Commission DG HOME representatives.





**London Charter  
(17 March 2017, Club of Venice StratCom seminar)**

Communication directors and senior communication specialists from the EU Member States, institutions and candidate countries,

convened to the seminar "StratCom-Strategic Communication Challenges for Europe" co-organised by the Club of Venice and the UK Government Communications Service,

hereby share common views on the need for reinforced cooperation to safeguard objective communication values, assure impartiality and promote transparency.

To contrast the current threat to free communication and pluralism, they agree to multiply their efforts and seek synergies to contribute to the management and the solution of crises by:

- enhancing inter-governmental cooperation in strategic communications;
- supporting public communicators and their partners/multipliers/opinion makers in regions with geo-political instability in their work to promote, spread and defend the democratic processes and values;
- ensuring support to the media and the organisations who are engaged in the defence of freedom of speech, pluralism and transparency;
- neutralizing fake news to prevent public audiences' misperception and misinformation in today's post-truth actuality;
- facilitating resilience-building in response to growing nationalism, extremism and populism;
- communicating strategically the benefits that the EU has brought and can bring to the regions concerned, elaborating objective and concrete narratives for both internal and external audiences;
- regaining citizens' trust and confidence in public authorities; engaging in communication activities aimed to improve liaison between politics and citizens and dialogue with all sectors of society;
- reinforcing collaboration among communication practitioners by cross-collaboration in training activities, visits' programmes and on line interconnections;
- using the Club of Venice network as a permanent platform for further reflection to help improve StratCom capacities, in liaison with the formal governmental and institutional agenda, and in close collaboration with the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the European Strategic Communication Network (ESCN).

# Outcome of the Club of Venice seminar on the Refugee and Migration Crisis

Sliema (Malta), 19 May 2017

By Vincenzo Le Voci

The **seminar on migration** (held on Friday 19 May afternoon) aimed to check the state of play one year after a similar event in Lesbos (9 April 2016) and the implementation of the EU-Turkey statement of 16 March 2016.

The participants interacted on the several aspects of this topic, sharing their best practice and suggestions on how to:

- develop more effective governmental and institutional communication strategies on the refugee and migration crisis management;
- analyse improvement made since Lesbos' seminar with regard to the relations among public communicators, political authorities, international organisations and civil society in the field of information provision; and explore ways and means to strengthen global cooperation in the light of the last year migratory waves;
- counteract disinformation and reduce the spread of fake news through balanced and coordinated actions aiming to improve the circulation of trustworthy information sources;
- efficiently detect public opinion trends on the refugee and migration crisis since the Lesbos seminar;
- work together in the research of stronger intergovernmental, interinstitutional and countries-institutions synergies in communicating this topic.

After opening remarks from the hosting Maltese authorities of the PM Office Department of Information and the Italian PM Office Department of European Policies, an exchange of feedback from the authorities most involved in the Mediterranean started to feed discussion through very moving interventions.

The strong commitment in the Mediterranean scenario was testified by doctor Pietro Bartolo, responsible for the Medical Centre in Lampedusa, personally involved in all first-aid phases. Doctor Bartolo was recently awarded by UNICEF the title of World Good Will Ambassador for his invaluable role in this humanitarian crisis. His direct testimony sparked discussion by showing videos and photos of very strong and painful content on the first treatment of migrants who landed in Lampedusa and focusing on the victims (especially women and children) of this mass phenomenon.

The theme was dealt with in a **dual perspective**, short-term / humanitarian - rescue, relocation and resettlement, and long-term prevention, planning and cooperation. The exchange of views focused on sharing responsibilities among the EU's members states (asylum' opportunities, the principle of solidarity), on the external dimension implications (causes, awareness-raising and prevention, relations with the countries of origin and transit), and on the assistance being provided to the migrants (medical, psychological, educational, with focus also on the increased number of unaccompanied minors).

Important contributions were provided by:

- Marie GILLESPIE, Professor of Sociology, Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences at the Open University (organisation responsible for the monitoring of the new migrants portal launched by the Commission);
- George FLORENTIS, Secretary for Migration and Refugee Policy's Communication of the Hellenic Government (focus on the Greek authorities' handling of the crisis before the EU-TR statement and the follow-up activities for migrants settled in the country);
- Ewa MONCURE, FRONTEX Spokesperson, on the increased role of the Agency and the coordination and information-provision challenges;
- Cristina VLADUT, from the Communications and Stakeholders Unit of the European Asylum Support Office (EASO);
- Susanne NIELSEN, from the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU, DG Justice and Home Affairs, who outlined the recent decisions of the Council fostering cooperation in this field;
- Edward DEMICOLI, European Commission DG HOME, on the recent concrete steps taken to implement the EU's communication strategy (the abovementioned migrants portal, ongoing studies to track down the social media's impact, etc.);
- Regina CATRAMBONE, Director of the Migrant Offshore Aid Station (MOAS), who focused on the ceaseless NGOs' involvement in the humanitarian crisis and on the ongoing cooperation with the national and international players;
- Flavio DI GIACOMO, from the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), Spokesperson and Press Officer for the IOM's Coordinating Office for the Mediterranean in Rome.

The crucial issue in the discussions remains how to adopt an **integrated, coherent and efficient communication approach** that could help relaunch cooperation between EU institutions and Member States”.

As highlighted in the 2016 seminar in Lesbos, the seminar in Malta confirmed that this global effort should include:

- the common understanding that the refugee and migration crisis must continue to be considered as a global issue that requires global solutions and cannot be solved on a “national responsibility” basis;
- the common endeavour to manage this crisis by means of proper communication and information mechanisms;
- the need for policy coherence as well as a thorough coordination of the information strategies (at national, cross-border and European level);
- mutual trust, prompt information sharing and utmost degree of information reliability;
- pursuing the research of solutions to improve the outreach of governments’ and institutions’ communicators towards civil society and citizens.

The Club of Venice looks forward to pursuing exchanges of information and research of synergies on this issue.



# Outcome of the Club of Venice seminar/ study trip on the refugee and migration crisis

Athens-Thebes-Livadia-Thessaloniki, 23-24 September 2017

By Vincenzo Le Voci

The thematic seminar of the Club of Venice “**Mobilizing communicators in the field of the refugee and migration crisis**” was held on September 23-24, 2017.

The event was organised in close collaboration with the Hellenic Government General Secretariat for Media and Communication and the Special Secretariat for Crisis Communication of the Ministry for Digital Policy, Telecommunications and Media.

The aim was to check the state of play one year after the Club seminar held in Lesbos on 9 April 2016, taking into account the ongoing implementation of the EU-Turkey statement of 16 March 2016 and as a follow-up to the seminar held in Malta on 19 May 2017.

The event was attended by representatives from 14 Member States, EU institutions (EP, Council, EC, EESC), International Organisation for Migration (UNHCR-IOM), European Asylum Support Office (EASO), International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), Austrian Society for European Politics (OgFE).

## Objectives

- to visit facilities managed in Greece by the national authorities in close collaboration with the European Union, the United Nations, international organisations and NGOs that host migrants during the process of identification, settlement, relocation or return
  - 50 centres are currently disseminated in the country for this purpose, with a hosting capacity of 75.000 people
  - educational programmes have been set up in 33 hosting centres for approx. 3000 children

*This internal relocation programme has enabled the authorities to offer shelter and better living conditions to migrants formerly located in Idomeni as well as in the islands, in Athens and other critical areas of the countries - and to facilitate integration and coexistence with the local population*

- to discuss communication trends and perspectives for cooperation in the improvement of internal and external communication on the management of the refugee and migration crisis.

## The study visit

The programme started with an informal dinner held in Athens in the presence of the Minister of Migration Policy Mr. Ioannis Mouzalas and the Deputy Minister of Citizen Protection Mr. Nikolaos Toskas who addressed the participants after an introductory speech of Lefteris Kretsos, Secretary-General for Media and Communication.

On Saturday 23rd the participants visited the hospitality structures of Thebes.

A representative from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) briefed them on the efforts made to run the local Accommodation Centre (max capacity 700 people, strong UNHCR support, co-operation with three different NGOs) to ensure the best possible living conditions for the families of refugees and unaccompanied minors.

Thebes' Centre has hosted the refugees and migrants resettled from the “unofficial” camp of Ellinikon since June 2017. The participants made an extensive visit of a pavilion hosting school activities and medical facilities. The assistance programme also includes interpretation services and a cash allowance/card assistance plan to build a “self-reliant community”.

In Livadia the Club was welcomed by the Mayor of the city, who presented the stage of implementation of the ESTIA programme (Emergency Support to Integration & Accommodation).

The ESTIA accommodation and services scheme programme, adopted in September 2016, consists of lodging the migrants potentially eligible for refugee status and relocation in fully equipped apartments rented in town with the support of the UNHCR and the funding of the European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid.

This project required a thorough awareness-raising and information-sharing with the local population and strong coordination and prior inspection of all the facilities concerned, as well as remarkable coordination efforts to ensure smooth integration (school activities, health care, psychological support...). As of May 2017 the project has achieved its goal to host 400 beneficiaries in 70 apartments.

The Greek authorities were proud to show Livadia's reality as a successful example of best practice in welcoming and integrating refugees in the society. The participants were also split into small groups, each of them visiting a city apartment where the families reside. This was an emotionally charged interactive stage of the mission.



On Saturday 23rd the participants reached Thessaloniki and were welcomed by the Mayor of the city Mr. Boutaris.

The participants had dinner with approx. 30 members of the migrants/refugees' community and discussed about their travel, background, living conditions and aspirations with them.

During dinner, representatives of the Municipality presented the refugee program "REACT" (Refugee Assistance Collaboration Thessaloniki), developed through a network of local authorities and NGOs in cooperation with the UNHCR and funded by DG ECHO.

REACT manages 888 accommodations for migrants in 160 private apartments, local host families and shelters in Thessaloniki's neighbourhood. Until now, REACT has hosted 1100 asylum seekers under the UNHCR's Accommodation Program initially designed for relocation candidates but subsequently expanded to include vulnerable asylum seekers.

On Sunday 24th the participants visited the refugee and migrant hospitality centre in Diavata (established in a former Greek Army installation area), one of the widest compounds with fully equipped apartments, in-house support and education for children and adults (language programmes in Greek and English) as well as activities encouraging integration in the host community..

The participants noticed that, in all different banners, panels and other information material posted in the visited facilities the European logo was accompanied by the expression "European Union project" (instead of "European Commission"). This helps convey a message of unity among the EU's institutions.

## The round-table discussion

The study visit was followed by a 3,5 hour round-table discussion. The exchange of views (which also included video clips on positive experiences of relocation and integration in Northern Europe) focused on:

- sharing responsibilities among the EU's members states (asylum' opportunities, the principle of solidarity)
- the need for timely decision-making and reinforcement of cooperation in all different stages of the crisis management
- the external dimension implications (causes, awareness-raising and prevention, relations with the countries of origin and transit)
- pursuing the assistance to the migrants (medical, psychological, educational, with ceaseless focus also on the most vulnerable categories such as women, unaccompanied minors and the elderly)
- media and communication literacy



- public opinion monitoring (a must)
- media coverage of the humanitarian efforts
- adequate revamping/use of narrative(s), storytelling, testimonials from diasporas.

Contributions were provided by:

- Tove ERNST, Commission's Spokesperson for Migration
- Erik DEN HOEDT, Director of Communication and Public Information at the Netherlands' Ministry of General Affairs
- Zana TARASE, Lithuanian Spokesperson at the Perm. Rep. to the EU
- Peter DEBELJAK, Slovenian Government Office for Support and Integration of Migrants
- Michael HASPER, Head of Division, Communication and Germany's Image Abroad at the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- the Greek Ministry for Digital Policy, Media and Communication (George FLORENTIS, Secretary-General, Foteini PANTIORA, Secretary-General for Crisis Management Communication and Mariana VARVARIGOU, Press and Communication Counsellor)
- Maria SAVVOPOULOU, Coordination Team Officer at the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) (Coordination and Stakeholders' Unit)
- Christine NIKOLAIDOU, Public Information Officer at the International Organisation for Migration (IOM)
- Michèle SEMAAN, Communications Assistant at the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), Regional Coordination Office for the Mediterranean
- Paul SCHMIDT, Director of the Austrian Society for European Politics (OgFE).

Like in Lesbos and Malta, the Club tackled this topic from two angles:

- acknowledge on the ground the improvements made in the assistance to migrants and the enhanced cooperation among all the key players in all aspects of this crisis' management (focus on the humanitarian elements, but also on the legislative framework, on the economy, on security and social implications);
- the impact of communication on long-term prevention, planning, monitoring, coordination and cooperation.

18 months after the Lesbos' seminar, significant progress was made by the Greek authorities to provide much better living conditions for the migrants while following the evolution of their individual status (i.e. applications for asylum and eligibility for relocation). Significant improvements were also noticed in the



timeliness of the awareness-raising activities addressed to the local population and in the coordinated actions with the EU and the international organisations associated with the different assistance programmes. Both the Greek authorities and the international entities involved are increasingly cooperating in a joint endeavour.

The debate in Livadia and in Thessaloniki enabled participants to appreciate this global effort and share their views on how to continue to tackle the refugee and migration crisis together, considering that such **global issue requires global solutions** and cannot be solved acting alone.

Meanwhile, there is now a common European Policy on Migration and there are no longer uncontrolled arrivals (European Coast Guard and Border Agency work is in progress; identification and registration procedures are being applied; solidarity continues). Joint coordinated efforts in communication to prevent further migration waves are crucial and are proving to be the most effective approach.

To conclude, the participants had the clear perception that today's cooperation between the Hellenic government authorities and the EU institutions in handling the refugee and migration crisis is much more fluent. Consequently the management of this crisis in Greece has entered a new promising course, although the challenges remain.

The improved national and local authorities' informative and communicative approach when addressing their internal audiences keeps bringing much better results. This should inspire all countries.

- enhance relations with **civil society**, not only in the implementation of the assistance programmes but also in the communication plans and ad hoc activities, for a more effective public outreach
- focus on the main findings of reports produced by **reliable information sources**, i.e. the Commission's reports on the delivery of the European Agenda on Migration of 27.9.2017 (including the follow-up recommendations), on relocation and resettlement of 6.9.2017 and on the progress in the Partnership Framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration of 6.9.2017; the Crisis Communication Network of the IPCR (Integrated Political Crisis Response) coordinated by the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU; the EASO's information reports on migration trends from the specific countries; FRONTEX' annual risk analyses, ICMPD' factual reports, etc.

### Next events:

- |                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| 23/24 November 2017:    | autumn plenary meeting - Venice (will include some references to the seminar held in Greece and to the migration communication agenda) |
| February or March 2018: | seminar on digital/open government issues - Luxembourg   |
| May or June 2018:       | spring plenary meeting - Vilnius   |

### Follow-up

- Capitalise on the good examples of **coordination, collaboration and advanced planning**
- pursue cooperation, enhancing **mutual trust and information sharing**. The informal discussion was open and intense - with very good interaction between Member States, Institutions and with the other external specialists. The organisers provided very good information material on the different projects and the written presentations on the projects and the audio-visual testimonials of the EU/UN info campaigns drew a lot of interest.
- **transparency** as the key for further progress in the relations with EU citizens





# Non c'è nessun destino dell'Europa che passi sopra la testa degli europei

By Stefano Rolando

Noi cittadini degli stati membri dell'Unione europea abbiamo elaborato nel lungo corso dei decenni di costruzione di una architettura comune - passata dall'impossibile al possibile, poi dal credibile al realizzato e poi infine dal solido al fragile - uno strano pensiero che appare oggi diffuso nella testa dei 503 milioni di "passaporti", ovvero di membri di diritto di appartenere alla parola "popolo europeo" (439 milioni senza gli inglesi).

Mentre è chiaro a tutti che il destino dei nostri stati nazionali appartiene alla volontà popolare che costituzionalmente è la fonte di ogni ordinamento interno, per quanto riguarda quell'architettura comune, di cui pure eleggiamo i parlamentari, il destino ci appare in larga maggioranza come materia delegata: ai nostri governanti, ai nostri rappresentanti, ai tecnici che presidiano i meccanismi giuridici ed economici che regolano le relazioni (salvo poi mugugnare contro gli "eurocrati" che ci esproprierebbero i sentimenti).

Questo argomento pone la questione ormai più importante di tutte: quale sia cioè la legittimità che ciascun cittadino ritiene di avere in quanto "fonte" del destino comune dell'Europa.

Sia stata una volontà giusta o malintesa, sono i "cittadini" che hanno portato ad optare per la Brexit, aprendo una crisi identitaria di cui ancora non sono chiari tutti i confini.

Sono i "cittadini" che recandosi alle urne catalane (nel legittimo spirito di "autogoverno" ma anche malgrado l'evidenza di una disposizione costituzionale accettata che non prevede l'unilateralità dell'opzione independentista) hanno prodotto la configurazione, ora sospesa, della riduzione del perimetro dell'Europa. La riduzione che potrebbe escludere 32 mila chilometri quadrati di sicuro europeismo, di storia e di benessere economico condiviso dai commerci e dal turismo.

Sono i "cittadini" che eleggendo un presidente giovanissimo in Francia che si è trovato schierato contro due opposti euro-pessimismi o euro-scetticismi (di destra e di sinistra) ha riportato la questione europea nell'agenda di un paese fondatore che rischiava di smarrirla con catastrofiche conseguenze per tutti.

Si potrebbe continuare a lungo. Ma l'attualità ci induce a fare un passo avanti nell'interpretazione di questo tema. E induce in particolare noi, che come comunicatori pubblici abbiamo la sensibilità della rappresentazione di temi che stanno sempre nella tensione (positiva o negativa) tra istituzioni e società. Detta in modo più moderno, noi che dovremmo in verità avere sempre chiaro un doppio vincolo: di lealtà alle istituzioni, di servizio non propagandistico ai cittadini.

Il dossier "L'Europa dei cittadini" costituì il punto n. 2 all'ordine del giorno del vertice di Milano del 1985 che, al punto n. 1, aveva niente meno che la costituzione del "mercato unico".

Ricordo la questione perché il giorno dopo quel vertice io prendevo servizio come direttore generale dell'informazione del governo italiano e mi trovai sul tavolo quel dossier con la scritta di pugno del sottosegretario con delega all'informazione con scritto "dare attuazione".

I trent'anni che ci separano da quella data hanno visto ingrossare, trasformare, tecnologizzare, sociologizzare, statisticizzare, eccetera, quel dossier. Dossier che gli sviluppi interattivi della comunicazione in rete hanno reso, negli ultimi venti anni, materia di strategie praticabili a costi ridotti.

Ma malgrado la quantità di attenzioni, di prodotti, di servizi, di norme che hanno tenuto vivo il tema (da Erasmus al passaporto uniformato, dall'agenda della euro-cittadinanza alle forme di euro-progettazione, ai laboratori di democrazia partecipativa, alle formule di "iniziativa popolare", eccetera) oggi nel saldo di coscienza decisionale e responsabile tra la consapevolezza di formare un destino e il modo con cui quel destino formato viene mediaticamente rappresentato c'è un'oceanica distanza.

Il tema non è più solo quello dell'insufficienza narrativa (auto blu e bandiere, auto blu e bandiere...).

Non è più il caso di addossare ad altro o ad altri un principio che non deve puntare né a colpevolizzare né ad assolvere, ma ad aprire il dibattito pubblico (responsabilità primaria dei comunicatori) sul rapporto tra coscienza individuale e accadimenti.

E' evidente come e quanto il nodo *cittadinanza-identità* sia stato negli ultimi anni abbondantemente rivoluzionato: dagli antichi profili linguistico-culturali (accettarsi) a quelli economico-occupazionali (accreditarsi) a quelli di accesso alle conoscenze (innovarsi) fino a quelli dominati dalla "minaccia migratoria". Di mezzo, nel cambio di secolo, l'affidamento alla moneta unica di un compito "unificante" che, rispetto al ruolo, ha fatto come Penelope: prima ha tessuto poi ha smontato (un po') la trama. Un zig-zag che oggi rende più difficile e più critico il dossier.

Per altro la progettazione politica brussellese ha operato su due punti rimasti in discussione: il presidente della Commissione eletto da tutti e l'ipotesi di una forza comune di difesa.

Sul primo punto pare che prevalga lo stand by, sul secondo va prevalendo l'idea del patto inter-governativo per una *politica di difesa comune* ma non per una *forza di difesa comune* (proprio per l'insufficienza popolare di un'idea di "patria" condivisa).

Ed eccoci allora al pullulare di “piccole proposte”, adattamenti o allargamenti di vecchi provvedimenti.

Resta sempre aperto il tema di forzare l'ordinamento degli studi (scuole primarie e secondarie) riaprendo le porta alla “*educazione civica europea*” (storia, istituzioni, valori, diritti) che rappresenta certamente una leva efficace a medio e lungo termine, supposto che vi sia volontà condivisa negli attuali assetti nazionali a promuovere un simile piano.

Penso che nel dibattito interno ai comunicatori istituzionali la questione potrebbe, anzi dovrebbe, passare all'ordine del giorno.

Come si è detto più volte i comunicatori non sono megafoni, sono professionisti dell'ascolto e anche delle proposte di narrative compatibili fatte a decisori che non hanno sempre il dono della creatività. Un round del *Club of Venice* potrebbe lavorare su questo tema: quali iniziative sono possibili per accentuare la coscienza individuale nei cittadini di essere fonte dell'evoluzione del destino comune?

Un prossimo round, diciamo inizio del 2018.

Prima che sull'argomento si rischi di arrivare troppo tardi.

PS Al momento di chiudere questo numero di “*Convergences*” apprendo che il Parlamento Europeo ha licenziato l'ultimo sondaggio sui cittadini europei (27.881 interviste) che affronta il tema della fiducia in relazione a minacce e incertezze.

Mentre i risultati restano problematici sui giudizi in ordine alle policies (non va oltre al 31%, pur con un piccolo miglioramento, il giudizio di chi dice che “si va nella direzione giusta”), un dato risulta interessante ai fini di quanto scritto in questo articolo: il 47% dei cittadini europei ritiene che “la loro voce conti nella vita della UE” (arriva al 57% il giudizio positivo sull'adesione del proprio paese alla UE). Si tratta del dato migliore dopo le elezioni del 2009.

Ecco, a partire da questo dato si tratta di lavorare non solo per “contare con il diritto di voto”, ma anche per assumere la “responsabilità di destino” al pari di quanto accade per molti rispetto a ciò che essi identificano come “patria”.

## There can be no European destiny decided above the heads of Europeans

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*By Stefano Rolando*

As citizens of the EU's member states we have worked over the course of the past decades building a common architecture. We managed to move from the impossible to the possible, achieving credible objectives, but then reversing the process and finally turning solidity into fragile realities.

This weird feeling of uncertainty is widespread in the head of 503 million “passport holders” (members belonging by law to the “European people” family (439 million without the British citizens).

The destiny of our countries is intrinsically linked to the will of the people,

which by constitutional decision is the source of every domestic order – and elect members of parliament also stem from this shared architecture. Destiny, however, appears to the vast majority of Europeans as a “delegated matter”. We delegate it to our rulers, to our representatives, and to technocrats who govern the legal and economic mechanisms and societal interconnections (though we often blame eurocrats for expropriating our opinions and then deciding behind closed doors).

This matter raises the most important question ever: How legitimately can the average citizen claim to be a source/integral part of Europe's common destiny?

Whether they did it on purpose or naïvely, it was the citizens who opted for the choice of Brexit; thereby sparking an identity crisis of still immeasurable dimensions. It is the “citizens” who, by going to the Catalan urns (in the legitimate spirit of “self-government”, acted beyond their constitutional framework which does not make provisions for a unilaterally declared independence). Their actions have produced a state of limbo and a possible shrinking perimeter of Europe. The price of independence is the risk of removing 12,400 square miles from the safe haven of European territory, history, and economic prosperity.

It is the “citizens” who have elected a young president in France who is arbitrating between two opposite euro-pessimisms or euro-scepticisms (left and right). And President Macron is now bringing the European agenda into the spotlight in a founding country where it was fading away.

We could go on and on with this description. Current circumstances, though, induce us to take a step forward in interpreting this trend. Our perception of duty as public communicators induces us to get involved in issues which generate positive or negative

tensions between institutions and society. We should always be conscious of our double role: to be loyal to the institutions while rendering a non-propagandistic service to citizens.

At the European summit in Milan, "Citizen's Europe" was the second agenda item debated right after the paramount establishment of the "single market". I remember this issue because, the day after that summit, I took over the functions as Director-General for Information by the Italian Government and found that file on my desk, with a short but clear handwritten instruction from our State Secretary responsible for Information: "To implement".

Throughout these last thirty years, the 'Citizen's Europe' file has expanded exponentially and acquired new connotations and many multi-faceted parameters, owing to the technological and social/sociological development. The ultra-rapid development of interactive communication has transformed this file into a crucial matter for cost-effective strategies.

The multiple examples of "aggregating" products, services and legislative tools such as Erasmus' mobility, the euro-citizenship agenda, the euro-design, the laboratories for participatory democracy, and instruments such as the "citizens' initiative" have not succeeded in expanding the sense of inclusiveness and common identity. There is still a huge gulf between the decision-maker's consciousness of creating a destiny and the way that destiny is "communicated".

The theme is no longer just that of insufficient narrative (reworking and re-packaging the same information ...).

It is no longer an option to blame or discharge someone else, but there is a need to open the public debate (our primary responsibility as communicators) on the relationship between individual conscience and occurrences.

Over time, the linked concepts of "citizenship" and "identity" have morphed from the ancient connotations of being purely linguistic and cultural, through a state of being an economic identity, to an innovative and knowledge based identity, and finally becoming a 'them and us' identity, dominated by the perceived common threat of 'migratory waves'.

With the new millennium, the birth of a unique currency had a "unifying" impact but this trend seems to emulate the Penelope-thread process, first weaving and then dismantling the work already done. This zigzag process is increasingly difficult and critical.

Brussels politicians have focussed on 2 outstanding issues : The election of the President of the Commission and, with Brexit underway, a new possibility for a European common defence strategy.

Moreover, we are still at the advanced stage of a "common policy" rather than a "common force", precisely because of the persisting disagreements on the concept of a unique "homeland ". Hence, at this stage we can only put in place some "small proposals" which are mere adaptations or extensions of old measures.

In the light of the above, I believe that forging the educational landscape (primary and secondary schools) remains one of the strongest opportunities to instil a "European civic education" (history, institutions, values, rights). This undoubtedly represents an effective leverage in the medium and long term, as long as

the competent authorities are willing to share the same views and pool their efforts in promoting this approach in their national plans.

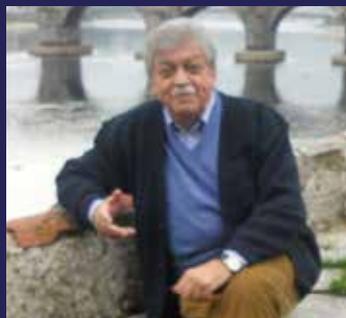
I believe this should be a frontline agenda item for the internal debate among the institutional communicators.

As repeatedly pointed out, communicators are not mindless megaphones, but professionals in listening and tabling proposals for compatible narratives for decision makers, the latter not always having the gift of creativity. The Club of Venice could focus on the following topic: what kind of initiatives could regenerate and reinvigorate the individual citizenship consciousness as a source of evolution of our common destiny? Let's try to launch this in 2018, before it gets too late.

While this edition of Convergences is being finalized I just read that the EP has published its last poll on the European citizens' perception on societal threats and uncertainties (over 27000 interviews).

While the outcome of this survey is quite worrying in terms of policies (only 31% believes that the EU is "going in the right direction"), it is worth noticing that 47% of the European citizens share the opinion that "their voice counts in the EU's development" (and 57% has a positive view on their country's membership). These are the best figures since 2009 European elections.

Let's try to capitalize on this encouraging data to go beyond the simple "right to vote", taking the "responsibility for our destiny" similarly to what happens when we feel patriotic towards our own country.



**Stefano Rolando**

**Professor at IULM University (Milan)**

**President of the Club of Venice**

**President of the Milano Branding Committee**

**Former Director-General of Information at the Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers**

# Three level education: Involving heart, mind and hands in professionalization

By Paulijn de Bruijne

What is professionalization all about? Ask this question to your colleagues, and the first and quick response will be: it is about training of skills and transfer of knowledge. When talking about professionalization we tend to focus on the brains of our professionals, which is of course very important. However, we all know professionals who have read all the books and can talk about it very sensibly, but can not put this knowledge into practice. We all have met professionals who are full of ambition, but lack the knowledge and skills. In this way, professionals will not be effective.

If we want to be really effective in capacity building, we must not forget the hearts and hands of our people. I call this 'three level education'. It is not only enough to gain knowledge, in order to become an effective professional. There are two other essential things: ambition and actual behaviour on the work floor. In order to be effective a professional needs to 1) want it, 2) know how and 3) show it.

At the Academy for Government Communication in the Netherlands, we follow these three levels - heart, mind and hands - in our education programmes. How do we do this?

## Heart: focus the ambition

It all starts with the heart: the ambition to learn. Is a professional really open for change? In an intake process we explore and focus their ambition. We discuss their learning goals? And what is asked of the professional in daily practice? This implies a very important role for the manager. He has to make explicit: what do I expect from this professional? So we arrange meetings with the professional and her manager to discuss the learning goals. Surprisingly, they hardly ever talk about personal development. And once they do it, they enjoy it!

## Mind: gain know how

Every professional has to have up to date knowledge and skills. This permanent education ensures the added value of the communication professional. So gaining know how and acquiring new skills is a very important aspect of professionalization. In the Netherlands we now focus on new topics like behavioural

insights, visual communication, and interactive policy making. We offer trainings in these fields on top of the basic trainings for speech writers, communication consultants, spokes persons, editors, researchers and managers.

## Hands: show it in practice

So once we've set the ambition and the communication professional has gained knowledge, the professional has to transfer this all to the work floor and show new behaviour. A very powerful instrument to monitor the actual behaviour are competences. Competences describe what effective professionals do/show in the context of the working floor in order to be 'cooperative', 'analytical' or 'persuasive'. Competences provide a mutual language to discuss professional development. This helps managers to be clear about their expectations. And it helps me to develop myself.

The Academy for Government Communication has developed 360 degree feedback surveys. In these online surveys communication professionals ask their manager and colleagues to give them feedback. The report based on these surveys is a useful input to monitor their professional development and assess their effectiveness in daily practice. It offers understanding and insights, perspective for professional development and input for discussion with the manager.

Summarizing: a communication professional needs to want it, know how and show it. The Academy for Government Communication provides tools to involve their hearts, minds and hands in their professional development.



drs. Paulijn de Bruijne is head of the Academy for government communication. The Academy (part of the Dutch Ministry of General Affairs) develops and organises professionalization programmes for communication professionals working in the central government of the Netherlands.

# Is Corporatisation of Soft Power Failing Strategic Communicators?

By Paweł Surowiec

From about 1986, the logic of corporate public relations practice, based on the notion of 'relationships building', and later on stakeholder management theory, has been adapted into the studies of public diplomacy and soft power statecraft. Over the last ten years or so, public diplomacy practice has been influenced by the concept of nation branding, which aspired to dominate the practice in strategic communication for diplomacy. Nation branding has been adapted from corporate world to the world of international politics, specifically to the field of public diplomacy.

The above-mentioned process of the adoption of modes of thinking, business solutions and communicative practices, such as nation branding, derived from the corporate sector and directly applied to the governance of soft power capabilities has been described as the process of 'corporatisation'. Whether this is a part of the systemic push for more corporate-styled governance or the process driven by self-advancing interests of consultancy firms offering specialised services does not probably matter to anyone any more.

What matters, however, and I argue, should matter to diplomatic strategic communicators are problematic and constraining aspects of this process. In my research I have explored 'corporatisation' in the context of statecraft of a single state, but strategic communicators working for the European Union Member States might recognise some of the points that I am putting forward, as they face new digital challenges and new threats that corporatisation neither in theory nor in practice have answers for.

## Branding And Democratic Unease

First, for any communicative practice, including strategic articulations of soft power, its context is important: for that reason, bringing a commercial branding practice into the realm of diplomacy has proven to backfire on a number of occasions. Let's take the United Kingdom, for example, where the 1997 New-Labour's '**Cool Britannia**' faded away as soon as it was launched and, later on, it was replaced by the Conservative government's '**GREAT Campaign**', which is, by the way, crushing against the harsh realities of Brexit. Advocates of the corporatisation of soft power, particularly nation branders, assume that, by the virtue of their pragmatism, the market orientation of branding should not be subject to any political influence, and therefore, it has a long term future. This way nation branders attempt to depoliticise their practice.

However, the argument that nation branding is 'apolitical' demonstrates limited understanding of power relations within the democratic societies whereby political elections might lead to personal changes or even changes to narratives in soft

power. Wielding soft power is linked to domestic power and branding as a long-term strategy, driving the governance of its capabilities, as research demonstrates, collapses under the influence of democratically elected governments and changing foreign policies.

## Over-Belief in Markets Rationality

Second, regardless of any foreign policy agendas among actors governing soft power capabilities, nation branders make predominantly economic promises. The entire agenda around this concept and practice is set around attracting investment, attracting tourism, and supporting branded exports. Frequently, this market rationality has entered the governance of soft power: nation branding market research is used for soft power grand strategies making and, in result, developing strategic narratives used in exercising soft power. Interestingly, market rationality, inherent to nation branding, is supported by holistic approach to mapping out perceptions of political entities, for example, '*Nation Brand Index*' or '*Country Brand Index*'.

This holistic approach to analysis of perceptions of political entities, however, is very limiting, and does not allow policy makers and strategic communicators to understand what the issues driving changes to perceptions and reputations of political entities are. The construction of the measure for the way particular polity is seen as a 'whole' does not allow screening for details when it comes to policy making as well as when it actually comes to complexities of ways in which networks of people engage in a digital media landscapes globally, or how networks of people participate in international politics, international business or international tourism.

## Branding Is an 'Authoritarian', Soft Power Needs Flexibility

Third, contemporary strategic communication in diplomacy requires flexibility which goes beyond electoral changes, but flexibility which that accounts for changes driven by the way people use digital media technologies, how multilateral institutions operate, and how multi-layered issues influence foreign policy orientation. The governance of soft power requires flexibility, which, corporate-styled brand management frequently lacks.

In theory, nation branding is closer to authoritarian regimes than to the democratic politics and institutional structures of pluralist institutions. Its commitment to unification and synergy is hardly viable in any liberal democracies where the institutional voices represent diverse interests. Arguably, in context of international politics, the idea of brand is closer to

the practice of propaganda practice in authoritarian regimes where the unification of messages tends to underpin persuasive communication. The imaginative writings on nation branding do not address the specificities of pluralist institutionalism. The generic approach to identity construction among nation branders, inspired by the mind-set of '**command and control**' to governance shows misrecognition of democracy where political actors' engage in 'polyphonic governance'. To that end, nation branding is rigid and attempts to lock political actors into a commitment to a fixed vision for political entities. With this kind of approach, how does one even try to engage in strategic communication with Russia, say, over Ukraine or alleged Russian strategic intervention into elections in Europe or other of cyber-attacks? It appears that the '*command and control*' approach is hardly useful here.

## Managerialism Versus Actor-Specific Strategies

Fourth, nation branding has typically emerged as an external consultancy and it has had ideological effects on the governance of soft power capabilities of many states. This concept was packaged by its advocates using discursive strategies legitimizing the need for its practice as a form of 'corporate managerialism' - a phenomenon corresponding with the previously-mentioned inevitability of market logic. My research found that, for example, in Poland, the market principles of nation branding were legitimized as 'post-ideological' whereby nation brand management serves as the representation of the 'national market' and therefore it was deemed free of ideological intentions; 'post-political' as nation branding should be bipartisan and not serve any political party agenda; 'post-historical' as it was considered that it was time for the Polish nation to move away from its past. Those statements remain in tension with socio-historical context of their practices as well as other existing practices accompanying the governance of soft power: public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, investment marketing or destination marketing.

A direct application of nation branding into strategic communication for diplomacy demonstrates 'asymmetry of rationality' whereby corporate-styled practices clash with political realities and institutional cultures. Nation branders have mobilised enthusiasm among some policy makers on a short term basis, but tend to fade away as it nation branding seems unfit for the job, and it has very little to do with hybridizing media environment in which contemporary strategic communication in Europe came to operate.

## Conclusion

The logic of nation branding does sit comfortably with the logic of the governance of soft power of liberal democracies, and with nuances of foreign policy behaviour, to which nation branding is often 'bolted on'. For example, imagining that perceptions of the polity such as the European Union (EU) can be managed as a 'brand' on a strategic level adds to reputational problems (e.g. more technocracy), rather than solutions sought by policy-makers. It is not to say that the EU or, for the sake of argument, any other political entity cannot benefit from tactical use of branding or branded contents, but to imagine that the polity as complex as the EU can be managed as a 'brand' is unmanageable or contestable, to say the least.



Paweł Surowiec, Ph.D, is a Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Media and Communication, Bournemouth University and Research Fellow at Charles University in Prague. He lectures in Political Economy of Public Relations and leads a module on International Relations and Diplomacy. His scholarly research is driven by questions relating to the re-invention of classical models of propaganda praxis and socio-cultural changes in European politics. His monograph, 'Nation branding, public relations and soft power: corporatizing Poland' has been published by Routledge (2016). He has published academic articles and book chapters on nation branding, soft power, political communication and diplomacy. From October 2016, he has been a treasurer of the European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA) and serves as the association's Executive Board member.

# Open Government, Open Democracy and Work in Partnership

By Anthony Zacharzewski

Governments cannot rely on public support – they must earn it. In an age of individualism, scepticism and growing nativist populism, they need to prove their legitimacy every day. The EU institutions lack the immediacy of local government, which can change things at the end of your street. They lack the deep social and historical roots of national governments. They therefore need to build legitimacy through their actions. In part this means effectiveness – being seen to take action that benefits citizens and communities. Equally important is openness – that the action taken is transparent, that institutions are accountable and people feel able to involve themselves in decisions that affect their lives.

In October Demsoc<sup>1</sup> published a report looking at current open government initiatives within the EU institutions, and reflecting on the experiences of three member states. It made recommendations on how the EU could better celebrate its current open government work, and go further by working with the OGP, and building a new support network for open government in Brussels and beyond.

Open government initiatives we considered included legislation to ensure the right to access documents, the use of online profiles for Members of the European Parliament showing their contributions in parliamentary sessions, codes of conduct for civil servants, MEPs and Commissioners, and legislative transparency and opportunities for citizens and other stakeholders to share their views on these earlier in their development.

We found many good initiatives, but disconnection between different efforts, reducing impact. Instances where work crosses institutional boundaries, such as the Transparency Register, are rare. There is much duplication of effort – for example the multiple sites through which a citizen or individual might view legislative activity with EU institutions, including the Parliament's Legislative Train and Legislative Observatory websites, the Commissions 'Track Law Making' site, and EUR-Lex. These are good initiatives, but would be stronger if they existed within a single and recognisable place to see progress on law-making.

We believe there is a need to move from a model of individual initiatives, where much of the work is carried out in siloes as single projects, to one supported by a clearer strategy, explained

through a clear narrative and driven by leadership at the highest level. This would help ensure actions were better joined up between and within institutions, and encourage innovation by positioning open government as a clear institutional value.

There is also a need for a specific push of work around participation. The institutions all have participative elements to their work. The Commission's work on stakeholder engagement, given a new focus through the better regulation initiative, is a positive development. However, the EU institutions need to embed more and better engagement throughout the policy-making cycle, not just at a "consultation moment", and to go beyond traditional well-informed or well-connected participants into broader audiences within Brussels and beyond. Progress on this work will involve developing organizational cultures of engagement and openness, building networks that create broader routes to citizens, and putting policy structures and processes in place that involve public engagement from an early stage.

We believe that the time is right for the EU to make a strong commitment to practical action on its own approach to open government. This is in line with existing commitments such as the Commission President's priority on the Union of Democratic Change<sup>2</sup>. It supports the ambitions of the 2017 State of the Union speech<sup>3</sup>, First Vice-President Timmermans' recent essay on Trust in Times of Intense Scrutiny<sup>4</sup>, and other recent political initiatives<sup>5</sup>, all of which aim to show citizens that, in the recent words of President Macron, "Brussels is us, always, at every moment"<sup>6</sup>.

At the end of the report we set out five recommendations for going farther, faster with open government work in Brussels and beyond.

## 1. Champion and celebrate existing open government work

EU institution individually or collectively should create a clear declaration of principles on open government that marshal their different commitments and work programmes on open government. They should increase public awareness of this work through a specific programme of celebration, such as internal or public openness awards.

## 2. Create a European open democracy network

A European open democracy network would enable more effective transfer of knowledge and ideas, and a space to

1 The Democratic Society (Demsoc - [www.demsoc.org](http://www.demsoc.org)) works for more and better democracy, where people and institutions have the desire, opportunity and confidence to participate together.

Demsoc works to create opportunities for people to become involved in the decisions that affect their lives and for them to have the skills to do this effectively. It supports governments, parliaments and any organisation that wants to involve citizens in decision making to be transparent, open and welcoming of participation.

2 [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/democratic-change\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/democratic-change_en)

3 [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/state-union-2017\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/state-union-2017_en)

4 <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/trust/trust-times-of-intense-scrutiny>

5 [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/white\\_paper\\_on\\_the\\_future\\_of\\_europe\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/white_paper_on_the_future_of_europe_en.pdf)

6 <http://www.elysee.fr/declarations/article/initiative-pour-l-europe-discours-d-emmanuel-macron-pour-une-europe-souveraine-unie-democratique/>

discuss initiatives and promote better open government. A light and informal network would provide the benefits of connection without the overhead of process.

The network needs to be broad and inclusive, bringing institutional actors and civil society organisations together on an equal footing, and including other stakeholders. The institutions need to make a commitment to engage. Civil society and funding organisations need to make the commitment of resources, time and attention that will create the network and make it a success.

### 3. Work in partnership to create an action plan

The Commission and other interested institutions should work through the European open democracy network to create a two-year open government action plan on the model of the national action plans drawn up under the OGP, founded on the basis of existing good work in the European institutions and elsewhere.

The action plan should be broad and ambitious, reflecting key declarations such as the Paris Declaration of the Open Government Partnership<sup>7</sup> and the recent Guidelines for Civil Participation in Political Decision Making, issued by the Council of Europe<sup>8</sup>.

The action plan should acknowledge and reinforce the essential role of Europe in driving the technological, governmental and social reforms that support open government, and in championing openness, democracy and rule of the law in its region.

### 4. Connect to action beyond Brussels

The European open government network described above should have as one of its goals the linking of innovation and open government work at European, national and local level, through existing channels and by building new ones.

This connection should be broad and open, and allow organisations and individuals to participate to the extent and in the depth that they are able. Through this broader network, EU open government can reach beyond representative bodies and to citizens and organisations directly in their own media and political environments. The existence of these routes to citizens is important for work on transparency and accountability, and essential if participation in EU policies is to be broad enough to make a difference.

### 5. Support and defend open government elsewhere

A partnership between OGP and the EU should be used to advance the EU's reform goals for candidate and neighbourhood countries. For such countries, National

Action Plans can be an important means of seeking speedier reforms and public support for change. The EU supports these actions where they reinforce the EU's strategic goals on democracy, transparency and the rule of law. By working together, the OGP and EU can encourage more ambition and action by providing a prestigious international platform and positive incentives for change.

The EU should work with the OGP to support the creation and execution of open government plans in developing countries, particularly on core areas of EU priorities (e.g., open budgets, open contracts, open extractives). The EU's technical, political and financial support to these countries, including specific peer exchange and expertise around e-Government, should be aligned around open government plans.



Anthony Zacharzewski is trying to make European democracy work. He founded the Democratic Society in 2006, and since 2010 he has led practical democracy projects and research from village councils to the European Commission. Recent and current project partners include the European Commission, the Open Society Foundations, the Scottish Government, the Serbian government, the Council of Europe, and the UK's Health Foundation. He is involved in numerous European networks including the Club of Venice, SEECOM, and the World Forum for Democracy's Democracy Incubator. From 1996 to 2010, he worked for the UK's Treasury, Cabinet Office, and Department of Health, and led the strategy function for the city of Brighton & Hove.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/paris-declaration>

<sup>8</sup> [https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result\\_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016807509dd](https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016807509dd)

# EU Coalition Explorer

## VISUALISING THE INVISIBLE

### Understanding the web of European cooperation

By Christoph Klavehn & Verena Ringler

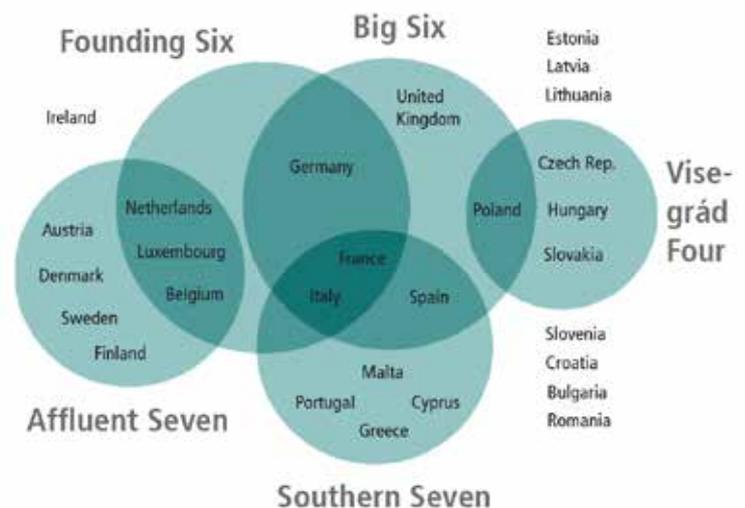
In our partnership with Stiftung Mercator, the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) works to better analyse, conceptualise, and visualise European cohesion and cooperation. What holds Europeans together, what drives them apart – both on governmental as well as societal levels? Thus, in 2016, we launched the EU Cohesion Monitor (see *Convergences Magazine* 09/2016). It is both a study and an open-source data browser that illustrates the ties between the 28 EU member states and their societies. The EU Cohesion Monitor shows the intensity of connections and shared experiences that Europeans enjoy. But the tool also highlights where links are weakest and which countries lie at the periphery of European connectedness.

Shortly after we published the EU Cohesion Monitor, the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union. While the UK had already ranked last in our assessment of individual and structural cohesion indicators, the Brexit vote was nevertheless a stark reminder to rethink European integration and for the need to communicate better how European cooperation works.

### From known unknowns to a web of connections

Most of what the EU does – or fails to do – depends on its member states. In a union increasingly steered from national capitals, Europe's future will be defined by countries and governments with the capacity and willingness to act together. A great extent of this future is being shaped by 27 or 28 different national policy communities. The dynamics within and between these groups are the core of Europe's inner workings. Put differently, anyone aiming to inform the debate on the future of European cooperation needs to understand the thinking of the professionals working in the political machine rooms of the capitals of the EU. Their views and experiences are part of the basis on which European cooperation is being built every day. Who tends to be cooperative, and in which policy field? Who is proactive, who is hedging their bets? This kind of information, however, has so far been a rather restricted body of knowledge. To decision makers outside one's own office or caucus group, let alone the wider public, the opinions of peers and partners across the EU are often a black box or "known unknowns".

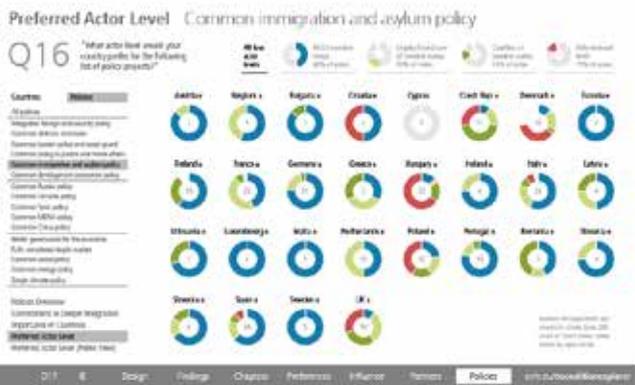
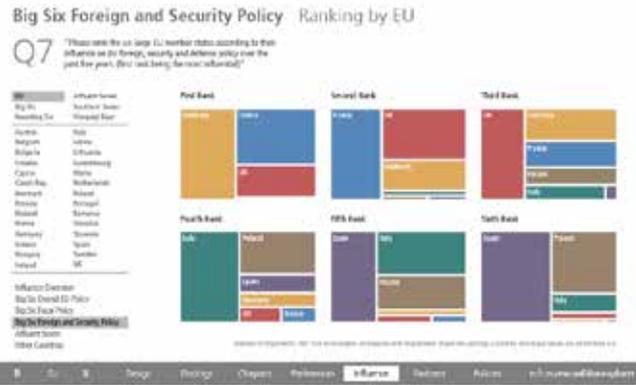
### EU Coalition Explorer Country Groups



#### 1. Groupings of EU member states used in the EU Coalition Explorer

This is where the EU Coalition Explorer comes in – a new body of research published by ECFR in partnership with Stiftung Mercator in 2017. Based on several hundred expert interviews conducted in the 28 member states of the EU, the Coalition Explorer is the first collective and publicly available mapping of the views held by Europe's professional political class on the dynamics that shape their cooperation. Among other things, we asked interviewees about their government's most contacted EU partners, who among the EU28 is most easy to work with, shares many of one's own interests, and is considered an essential ally in different policy areas. From the many individual answers emerges a mosaic of European perceptions and preferences that allows us to discover patterns for future coalition-building in the EU.

The Coalition Explorer is to be seen as complementary to the Cohesion Monitor, and both ECFR studies will be continuously updated, renewed, and refined on an annual or bi-annual basis. Many insights can be drawn from the data with the help of the EU Coalition Explorer. In some cases, the results confirm and illustrate existing assumptions but also allow quantification them by degrees and magnitudes, as for example when assessing the centrality of Germany and France as the two best and most widely connected EU member states. What also becomes visible are the connections of smaller countries, such as the Netherlands and Sweden, that through their regional connections and policy preferences hold the potential to serve as the tying nodes in future



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coalitions among a wider circle of EU member states. This can be augmented by looking at specific policy preferences. For example, expert majorities or pluralities from many EU member states would favour an immigration and asylum policy managed by all countries on the EU level. From this the EU Coalition Explorer allows dissection of those countries most or least supportive of a common policy approach – for example Sweden, Austria, or Germany on the one hand, and Poland, Hungary, Denmark, the UK, and the Czech Republic on the other. However, the Explorer's multiple perspectives and looking at the interconnections of its indicators provides a more differentiated understanding of cooperation within the EU – rather than the simplistic “for” or “against”.<sup>1</sup>

Example of findings from the EU Coalition Explorer

- Germany and France: the two best and most widely connected EU member states
- Centrality of the UK: Brexit likely to increase EU coalition-building dynamics
- Netherlands and Sweden: bridge-builders in a cooperation community with the Big Six/Big Five
- Spain and Austria: coalition-builders punching below their weight in their respective peer groups of the Big Six and smaller but affluent EU member states
- Incomplete Weimar Triangle: sustained through Germany's individual ties with Poland and France
- Pro-European bias of experts and professionals in favour of deepening integration when comparing their views with the opinions of more than 11,000 European citizens

The EU Coalition Explorer is not only a tool for analysts. Rather, decision-makers and the public alike can browse the otherwise invisible web of connections between the EU28 by using the tool themselves. It was built on the principles of transparency and all its underlying data is available to the public. It is the result of several years of preparatory groundwork, involving a workshop with experts and practitioners from eight countries, a European pilot survey conducted online in 2015, a revised follow-up survey including an expert and a public sample, and an intense phase of designing the visualisation and the explorer's interactive features.

2. Sample pages from the interactive EU

## Fostering a European debate

At the time of writing the project team at ECFR have discussed findings of the EU Coalition Explorer in more than 50 briefings, seminars, and presentation events in Brussels, national capitals, and other cities across Europe. By presenting our findings with this tool we can highlight to policymakers where their governments may hold unused potential to interact more closely with hitherto-overlooked partners, and have in some cases triggered a reflection process on the cooperation dynamics that are likely to unfold in an EU of 27 members.

“With the EU Coalition Explorer, ECFR looks beyond objective realities of the EU to subjective ones; to countries' perceptions of each other. From all of that emerges a much more realistic picture from the EU as it is – multiple, intersecting circles and pre-existing variable geometries.” Timothy Garton Ash Historian & ECFR Board Member

1 For details and more findings please see “The invisible web. From interaction to coalition-building in the EU” by Josef Janning and Christel Zunneberg, European Council on Foreign Relations, May 2017. Their policy brief is part of an ongoing series of analysis and additional commentaries available on [www.ecfr.eu/eucoalitionexplorer](http://www.ecfr.eu/eucoalitionexplorer).

In our discussions with senior government officials, diplomats, members of parliament, and university students we use the EU Coalition Explorer, as well as the EU Cohesion Monitor, as tools to break away from binary images of the EU and its member states, and conventional “more or less Europe” debates. At a time of uncertainty about the trajectory of European integration our goal is to change the discourse towards the outcome of policy and future communities of cooperation: what should we do together and what is better done on the national level? Which political initiatives can be put into practice to achieve results for EU citizens? If not all can proceed together, which countries can form political centres from which they can move forward?, And on which issues?

The list of policy challenges covered by these questions is long and seemingly ever growing. To address them, the application of innovative research tools, new data, and inspiring visualisation is crucial. Yet it is only a first step in a shared debate among practitioners and experts from inside and outside government. As the EU evolves, our goal is to foster a dialogue on member states’ capacity for cooperation that will form a central element in a much-needed new strategy for joint action in Europe.



Verena Ringler has been shaping the Europe Cluster at Germany’s Stiftung Mercator since 2013. Previous stints have been as Deputy Head of Press and Public Affairs with the International Civilian Office / EU Special Representative in Kosovo (2006 – 09) and as Associate Editor with Foreign Policy magazine in Washington (2002–2006). Verena is a frequent public speaker on Europe (Club of Venice, TEDx) and is a member of the Councils of the Fondation Jean Monnet and the European Forum Alpbach.

Verena has been devising and is overlooking a large portfolio of projects which aim to strengthen European cohesion and our joint ability to act. Verena specifically encourages trust-building, co-creation, and co-operation across political parties,

sectors and professions, as well as across countries, languages and generations. She aims to harness today’s insights into leadership and foresight practices for tackling challenges in European integration, suggesting that we can only solve the systemic problem sets of our time with systemic response mechanisms. Verena is a graduate of the Johns Hopkins University’s School for Advanced International Studies.



Christoph Klavehn coordinates the Rethink: Europe project at the European Council on Foreign Relations. His professional background is in designing and implementing opportunities for the exchange of ideas in international affairs. His focus has been on bringing together professionals from the public, private, and non-profit sectors in the United States and Europe to strengthen interdisciplinary collaboration and deepen mutual understanding. Before joining ECFR he worked primarily in transatlantic affairs, including at the German Marshall Fund of the United States and Atlantik Brücke in Berlin. Christoph is an alumnus of stiftung neue verantwortung where he was Associate in foresight analysis. He holds degrees in International Relations and Public Policy from the University of Dresden and the London School of Economics.

# The European Problem Set

By European Strategic Communication Network - ESCN



## Introduction

The European Strategic Communications Network (ESCN) is a collaborative Network of 26 Member States, funded by the EU Commission, which shares analysis, good practice and ideas on the use of strategic communications in countering violent extremism (CVE). The aim of the Network is to develop and deepen a common understanding of the terrorist communications challenge.

Having deployed communications at an unprecedented pace and scale to radicalise and recruit foreign terrorist fighters to travel from Europe to Syria and Iraq, it is widely recognized that Daesh has generated a paradigm shift in the quality and impact of terrorist communications worldwide.

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But as military failure draws down on the so-called Caliphate, Daesh's narratives are being reframed and new emerging polarising themes are drawing more on the experiences of Muslims in the West, in particular, encouraging Western supporters to carry out domestic terror attacks at home.

In turn this has generated a response from other jihadi groups and existing violent extreme right wing groups in Europe whose use of communications online and offline are also improving. Combined, this represents an unprecedented increase in the pace, scale and sustainability of terrorist and extremist influence across the world.

The ESCN Network met for the first time in November 2016 in Brussels, to explore this 'Emerging Communications Challenge'. Out of the meeting, the ESCN Network identified a new set of communications challenges that Member States today face both collectively and individually – called 'The European Problem Set'.

The purpose of this paper is to describe this communications 'Problem Set', capturing the views of Network members in both Network meetings and bilateral consultations.

This document is therefore not designed to be comprehensive nor definitive, but attempts to 'understand the problem', which is an important first step in the ESCN's approach to applying the principles of strategic communications to the emerging challenge facing Europe.

It represents a process which we hope will see the Network establish a common view of the problem, explore a set of possible communications responses and inform strategy and thinking towards generating new influencing architectures to drive a new pace, scale and sustainability of response – both in Member States and across Europe.

## Problem Set 1: Daesh

As the so-called Caliphate, the group's physical 'state' in Syria and Iraq collapses, Daesh will now seek to reframe its purpose and adapt its messaging and issue 'calls to action' in order to remain relevant.

While Daesh and its supporters continue to demand its followers make hijrah, the emphasis is now on encouraging supporters in Europe to carry out spontaneous, lone-actor attacks in Europe.

As the so-called Caliphate is moving from a physical 'state' to a motivating 'psychology', the Internet becomes even more important to Daesh to continue to recruit to its cause.

Daesh therefore is redefining success: no longer encouraging thousands to travel to Syria and Iraq to live as citizens in a so-called Caliphate but instead recruiting just a few people in each EU Member State to take action on its behalf and die for the cause. These individuals often display a number of vulnerabilities and emotions which make them susceptible to radicalisation, including a history of criminal behaviour.

To radicalise and recruit in this way, Daesh communications is increasingly localised and atomised. Although not at the same scale as before, Daesh is now delivering divisive and polarising communications in multiple languages and across multiple platforms – primarily through peer-to-peer and encrypted channels.

Although grounded in jihadi ideology and scripture, Daesh communications today is tailored more to specific individuals within communities, focusing on co-opting Muslims' concerns and grievances and provoking a backlash.

An ESCN working group has produced a thematic paper which looked at the Daesh communications challenge in greater detail. The paper has been launched on 17th May 2017.

## Problem Set 2: Al Qaeda and other Jihadi Groups

Local, regional and global jihadi movements are capitalising on conflict and instability around the world to raise their profile and increase their appeal among audiences worldwide, including in Europe.

The collapse of the so-called Caliphate in particular has offered the opportunity for terrorist organisations to emerge and for existing jihadi organisations to reinvent themselves to appeal to European audiences. For example, Al Qaeda (AQ) is becoming increasingly relevant in the context of the Syrian civil

war. A resurgent AQ is transforming and adapting to the new communications paradigm, using a greater range of online platforms to host higher-quality emotional and psychological communications material in multiple languages with which to compete with Daesh for attracting a new cohort of recruits from the West.

While Daesh has been encouraging people to make hijrah to Syria and Iraq, AQ has been burnishing its credentials as the more credible, longer-term vehicle for creating a global 'Caliphate'.

In other respects, Daesh communications is aligning with AQ's. Where Daesh has focused on advocating lone-actor and low-tech attacks since last year, AQ has been advocating the same lone-actor and low-tech attacks in their English language publications since at least 2013.

However, they seem to be targeting different audiences in different ways. Daesh seeks specifically to co-opt the concerns and grievances of vulnerable and younger individuals, and its official and unofficial propaganda output tends to prize action and proximity to conflict more highly than mastery of ideological knowledge.

AQ propaganda on the other hand tends toward the theoretical and theological to a far greater extent and perhaps appeals more to individuals who subscribe and adhere to radical Islamist ideology.

Meanwhile, in Syria and Iraq, AQ (by co-opting or creating local groups) is filling the vacuum left by the loss of territory by Daesh. For example, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham's success in presenting itself (mainly in Arabic) as a credible and popular governing agent in north-west Syria could broaden its credibility to audiences in Europe, especially if it was to borrow from the Daesh communications playbook and begin to aggressively market itself to Europe's Muslims in multiple languages.

### Problem Set 3: The Violent Extreme Right Wing

In response to Daesh, violent extreme right wing groups in Europe are themselves mobilising their own followers, holding up Daesh brutality as evidence of the inherent 'evil of Islam'. This gives credence to their claims that they are defending European communities against 'violent Islam'. These groups are stoking Islamophobia and anti-Muslim sentiment in order to galvanise and broaden their support bases.

They also do this to position themselves as voices in the mainstream discourse, trying to show themselves as connected across Europe and able to mobilise to sow division in European communities.

Violent extreme right wing groups have capitalised on real-world events, such as the 'Migration Crisis' in the summer of 2015 and lone terror attacks in France, Belgium and Germany, to

present Islam as an existential threat to European communities and to present European governments as weak and unable to protect these communities from the threat. To do so they have been using social media to tell audiences in Europe that the influx of Muslims to Europe both poses a serious security threat to Member States and threatens to change fundamentally Europe's demographic profile.

Today, both Daesh and right wing groups (including the violent extreme ones) are telling audiences in Europe that the values, identity and way of life of 'true' Muslims are incompatible with living in the West.

### Problem Set 4: Operating Networks

In order to achieve their aims, Daesh, AQ and other jihadi groups and violent extreme right wing groups build, maintain and exploit powerful online and offline support networks to recruit. They are using these networks to distribute and proliferate locally tailored emotional and influencing communications. Disrupting the power of these networks requires its own communications response.

Offline, these operating networks are central to managing localized communications, which are increasingly being deployed by jihadi and extreme right wing movements. These manifest themselves through powerful but local individuals and small groups which engage on a peer-to-peer basis to radicalise and recruit.

Online, these network of fanboys and supporters often go unchallenged, deploying unofficial Daesh material which has the potential to create powerful individual responses.

For example, Salafi networks peddle the narrative that the values, identity and way of life of Muslims are incompatible in Europe, increasing the vulnerability and susceptibility of individuals and communities to both radicalisation and polarisation.

### Problem Set 5: Divisive Discourse

Where terrorist and extremist communications has, until recently, focused on radicalising individuals, Daesh, AQ and other jihadi groups, the violent extreme right wing and all of their support networks are using communications to foster a divisive discourse to polarise European communities and drive a wedge between Europe's Muslims and mainstream society.

They are all doing this by further isolating Western Muslims in a 'them and us' scenario, by presenting Muslims and Islam as an existential threat and an 'enemy within' Europe. They are also all exploiting Islamophobia and local tensions around immigration to create a greater sense of Muslim victimisation and alienation.

These groups are telling young Muslims that they 'do not belong, cannot succeed, don't fit in and must act in response'. For Daesh, those who do act in response will be idolised as martyrs, offering redemption from all personal problems, giving supporters a kind of immediate hero status.

For all these groups, there is value in generating a divisive discourse between ethnic and religious communities themselves and between communities and the authorities, in some cases prohibiting engagements with government agencies and services.

Divisive discourse ultimately generates increasingly isolated communities which become fertile ground for networks to operate and groups to radicalise and recruit.

## Problem Set 6: Disinformation

The combined communications challenge posed by Daesh, a resurgent Al Qaeda and the violent extreme right wing is now being framed within an information environment in which distributing disinformation on media channels is now a recognizable phenomenon.

Much of the discussion around disinformation has, for example, focused on the recent allegations of Russian influence on the US election.

By creating, propagating and proliferating disinformation, including propaganda and conspiracy theories, state and non-state actors are now blurring the lines between fact and fiction, between reality and myth, creating an atmosphere in which rational argument and debate cannot take place. Traditional assumptions therefore around the use of counter narrative communications are being challenged.

In this chaotic and confusing information environment, simple and binary propositions of terrorist and extremist groups can hold the strongest appeal and where simple low-intensity acts of violence can provide an outlet for individual and community frustration.

Vulnerable individuals, who sit in online echo chambers, where they can get information which affirms their views, are most susceptible to this new communications environment.

## Conclusion

The terrorist and extremist communications challenge across Europe is becoming increasingly complex and interrelated, in which Daesh is setting a new standard for terrorist and extremist organisations in the quality of its communications.

In response, the ESCN sees divisive and polarising communications from other terrorist groups and extreme right wing organisations increasing in pace, scale and sustainability.

As a result, Europe is affected directly, as the communications of Daesh, Al Qaeda and the violent extreme right wing combined serves to recruit and radicalise vulnerable individuals and drive Europe's communities apart at a pace and scale never seen before.



# How to beat EU communication challenges in South East Europe

By Ivana Djuric

At this moment 49 percent of citizens support the membership in the EU in Serbia. The greatest support – 67 percent – was in May 2008, in the month during which the Eurosong contest was held in Belgrade. Since 2002, when we began conducting biannual public opinion surveys on the European orientation of citizens on behalf of the Serbian European Integration Office (at that time it was government institution in charge for coordination of the EU integration activities in the country), this figure was almost as high only once – in December 2009, after visas for travelling to the Schengen area had been abolished for the citizens of Serbia.

Although apparently these two events have nothing in common, both figures actually tell us the same thing: When there is more of Europe around us, we are more Europeans. Whether is a Europe embodied in something that seemingly does not have a wider social significance, such as a music contest, or the result of the than first class policy of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, which was ready to fulfil all required conditions. This led Brussels to open the doors for free travel for its citizens to most countries of the EU. The citizens have, as much as we have observed, recognised this and their respond to such involvement with a sense of belonging, which always implies acceptance of the values of the environment in which one is present.

Since 2000, and especially since the Thessaloniki Summit held 14 year ago, confirmation has been given for a European future based on individual progress of each country in the South-East Europe. The more rapidly a certain SEE country improves its economy and society, simultaneously harmonising its legal system with the EU law, the closer it comes to EU membership. The enlargement policy embodied in European integration has been the impetus for reform in each country and it has brought concrete results. Accession has from the very start become an instrument of democratisation and modernisation of the state, while the progress achieved in this field is measured on the basis of parameters that should be clear and transparent to governments – and more significantly – the citizens of the region.

## Crises - not to rejoice but to deal with

However, since the beginning of the global economic crisis, especially accession day has moved to a more distant future. The scale of the refugee crisis that ensued has focused all attention on how to respond on that issue.

In parallel, Daesh terrorist attacks in Europe and the manner in which the EU is facing this issue have not remained without echo in the region, taking into account the implications the fight against terrorism may have, for example, on free travel of citizens to the Schengen area.

Additionally, the decision of Great Britain to leave the Union in the next two years has almost completely made the enlargement policy, as one of those with the best results in the European Union, a secondary issue. As the counter-argument of then British Prime Minister David Cameron sounded as a verdict – that those five are not going to join the EU any time soon and their admission to the Union once they fulfil all the criteria will be subject to a UK veto and by all the others 27 existing EU countries. From that perspective the statement of European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker from 2014, that 'under my presidency of the commission, ongoing negotiations will continue ... but no further enlargement will take place over the next five years', even seemed encouraging, although it did not look like that at the time.

Therefore, from the point of view of the general public it seems justified to say that the enlargement process has almost stopped. Even Slovak Foreign Minister Miroslav Lajčák, recently spoke about it openly saying that 'we are not doing what we promised to the Western Balkans. That region has not been on the agenda of the EU Council of Ministers for as much as two years...'

Moreover, theories have been appearing in the media more frequently that the European Union in the Western Balkans has an alternative embodied in closer cooperation with Russia, which is, for example, Serbia's key partner in achieving energy stability, or with Turkey, which as a regional power is expanding its political, cultural and economic influence. The TIKA report (Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency) on Turkish development assistance for 2014 states that of a total of approximately 3.6 billion US Dollars (ca. 3.3 billion Euros) in that year, a sum of 133.8 million US Dollars (approx. 122.6 billion Euros) was given to the countries of the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe. Turkey is also a significant investor in this part of Europe – 50 Turkish companies invested about 113 million US Dollar (ca. 104 million Euros) in Serbia. At the same time, much more was invested in three EU countries from the region – two billion US Dollars (ca. 1.8 billion Euros) in Bulgaria, more than six billion US Dollars (ca. 5.5 billion Euros) in Romania, in which 7,000 Turkish companies operate, while they invested about 430 million (approx. 395 million Euros) in Croatia all according to data from the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey.

On the other hand, the EU itself does not putting an effort to influence public opinion in those member states which are almost completely negative towards enlargement. According to the Eurobarometer survey of September 2016, 52 percent of respondents at EU level do not agree with the statement that a new expansion would happen at some point in the future. In Austria, this question was answered in the same way by 71 percent of the population, 68 percent in Germany, 65 in France, while a more positive attitude towards the issue of expansion was recorded in countries that joined the EU latest.

Bearing in mind all those challenges as well as geopolitical context, the results of public opinion surveys in SEE shows clear trends. Even though there is still support for EU integration and it varies from high to balanced, citizens' fears related to the future of the EU are also present in this part of Europe. For example, in Serbia (December 2016) only 19 percent of Serbians said that the EU would overcome the current challenges. In comparison, EU citizens are much more positive – at the same period, the Eurobarometer survey showed that around half of Europeans said they were optimistic about the future of the EU, in as much as 21 EU Member State.

The reason is that the latter have 'more of Europe'.

## Crucial role of the media freedoms

Promotion of the EU can only be successful if good results achieved by European policies are promoted, as well as domestic ones in the context of EU accession being conducted by the political elites in the region. Without a clear commitment of governments in the region, which is reflected in changes for the better life of citizens, and without clear EU support for these changes, there can be no strengthening of the EU's role. It should provide key assistance in the fight against corruption and the rule of law everywhere. Rule of law is a fundamental value on which EU is founded and it should be the main narrative of communication in all countries in the SEE.

The rule of law is not only a key condition for peace, security and prosperity, but it also reinforces the social and economic strength and capacities of the country, and has a powerful transformative effect on society. A well functional judicial system, which is independent, effective, transparent, accountable and accessible helps improve the quality of people's life. Also allows for better economic conditions and prosperity.

## What is the impact and the role of media in SEE on this issue?

They are very important in shaping the public opinion on the EU integration, but more as a communication channel for transmitting messages of the main political and social actors in the respective countries than a channel for contributing to the provision of good quality information to the citizens. The role of journalists is to initiate debates between the state authorities, non-government sector, academia and citizens. They should create the topics and talk about them based on arguments in clear language, and not to follow the technical and political agenda, regardless of whether it comes from Brussels or the governments in the region.

It is also essential to understand that the issue of the media reporting on the EU integration should not be analysed isolated from the way they write or talk about other important social and political topics. For this reason, one of the EU political priorities is to support the strengthening of freedom of the media and the right to access to information and to ensure that governments in SEE remain committed to the introduction of EU standards in this field.

All aforementioned shows that the EU communications in SEE should be a common concern and activity, both for countries in the region and the EU.

However, the basic and the most important precondition for success of communication is the commitment of the EU for further enlargement, i.e. clear and reachable European perspective of the region. When this issue becomes unquestionable for all actors of the process, professional communicators will be than the one responsible for the challenges of the EU communication.



**Ivana Djuric is a communications and training expert with over 19 years of experience in planning and managing government strategic communications and professional development within public administration.**

**Djuric is in charge for communication and training on the EU in the Ministry of European Integration, Government of Serbia.**

**As a civil servant, throughout her career she has conducted numerous trainings to prepare state administrators and the wider public for EU accession.**

**Djuric, a member of the Club of Venice and SEECOM, is the author of several publications on democratic principles and the rule of law and holds a law degree from the University of Belgrade. Fellow at the Draper Hills Summer Fellows Class 2017 at the Center for democracy, development and rule of law, Stanford University, charred by Francis Fukuyama.**

# European public opinion in Austria: ambivalent but not indifferent!

By Paul Schmidt<sup>1</sup>

Austrians' attitude towards the European Union is rather ambivalent. The country is located at the core of Europe, has benefited from all major steps of European integration and has weathered the economic and financial storms comparatively well. At the same time, Euroscepticism has been sticky and even gaining ground - a tendency, which is also reflected in the results of the latest Austrian parliamentary elections of October 15th.

Austrians' assessment of the European Union is characterized by incongruity. The fundamental elements of the EU are highly appreciated, such as its role in preserving peace or improving the standard of living through enhanced cooperation. When asked to select the EU's greatest achievement, 36% of the Austrians choose peace on the continent and 36% removing borders. They approve some of the most important milestones of European integration, including the euro (34% agree), freedom of movement of people (38% agree) as well as EU membership itself: more than 50 opinion surveys conducted by the Austrian Society for European Politics since 1995 corroborate the view that a comfortable two-thirds majority of Austrians favour staying in the EU. And after the Brexit-vote in the UK and the US-elections this number has increased considerably. Still, the EU is considered remote and undemocratic, a risk for national sovereignty and a haven for costly bureaucrats and extensive regulation (44%, 23% and 55% agree with these statements respectively). Many doubt that the country or they themselves are benefiting from EU membership. The pains and gains are perceived to be unevenly distributed within society.

The origins of Eurosceptical elements date back to 1994, when 66.6 per cent of Austrians voted in favour of joining the EU. The successful government campaign to enter raised expectations which could not be easily met, and in the absence of continued publicity and official support for the EU, disillusionment and indifference followed. Perceived price increases with the introduction of the euro as well as the bilateral measures imposed by 14 EU member states following the Freedom Party's participation in government in 2000 also left a lasting impact.

The EU's eastern enlargement in 2004, where eight new countries joined, of which four were Austria's neighbours, nourished doubts about the economic benefits of EU integration and its distribution within society. It also raised concerns about fair competition, particularly regarding the low-wage sector. In addition, Austria's status as a net contributor to the EU budget regularly polarizes the public debate. Today, political parties are at loggerheads with each other at the expense of an EU considered aloof and interfering with too many domestic issues.

Despite Austria's open economy, rated among the world's most internationalized countries, globalization and liberalization are regarded with suspicion. People are proud of their social and welfare system as well as their high environmental and social standards, which are seen to be under pressure by a deepening drive toward integration and digitalization. Many appear to glorify a seemingly better past.

Politics and business have not been very successful to counter these trends. In fact, quite to the contrary, some have preferred not to contest one-dimensional EU criticism. EU discourse in Austria is marked by its defensive character and approaches to European issues are marginalized by headline-driven politics and a particular focus on security and migration issues. It is still considered risky to take a pro-European stance and the majority of politicians tend to refrain from highlighting their own involvement and responsibility in European decision-making. It may sound familiar, but in Austria it is the sceptical voices that "successfully set the agenda, with the support of a powerful yellow press and their active social media channels."

The public debate on new European free trade agreements restarted the Brussels blame-game. The lack of political involvement at an early stage in debates about TTIP boosted public unease, exacerbating a very emotional debate and polarising viewpoints. Last-minute initiatives to influence the European position were neither promising nor convincing, with Brussels getting the blame.

The Union's handling of the financial crisis as well as the recent influx of refugees further weakened trust in the EU and politics in general - 24% of Austrians associate the EU with 'economic crisis'. The heavy burden on Austria - which hosts more refugees per capita than Germany - transformed calls for rapid European action into national activism and harsh border rhetoric, which denounced the EU as incapable. When asked to select the EU's greatest failure, the refugee crisis came first at 52%.

<sup>1</sup> This comment is an updated version of an op-ed published on 20 June 2017 within the Chatham House project „Contested Legitimacy“. Based on a major survey across 10 EU countries, a new Chatham House report shows a lack of consensus among the elite over the future of EU integration - and a pronounced divide within the public on issues of identity. In addition to the research paper, which examines the European sample as a whole, experts from think tanks across the EU were asked to analyse the public data from national perspectives. See more at: <https://www.chathamhouse.org/publication/future-europe-comparing-public-and-elite-attitudes#sthash.WsMX00v5.dpuf>

Finally, the Union's much-maligned regulatory frenzy is also readily misused for quick political wins. Catchy examples range from the size and shape of cucumbers to the ban of certain light bulbs. The respective myths have deep roots in the public mind and are willingly repeated by opinion-makers. Discussions rarely reflect the fact that regulation can make sense and is in reality often initiated by member states themselves.

Recently, the Austrian presidential election in December 2016 was a good case in point how Eurosceptic views can actually be countered. In these elections, the Brexit and Trump vote were successfully transformed into a pro-European electoral agenda. The message was clear: national identity does not exclude emotional ties with Europe but can be complementary (67% of respondents said they were proud to be Austrian and European).

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On the other hand, the Austrian parliamentary elections in October 2017 were dominated by a political discourse on security and migration issues in combination with a strong, yet indistinct and rather abstract wish for change. Although Austria had managed the challenges of the economic and financial turbulences comparatively well, the coalition government of the Social Democratic Party and the conservative People's Party, in charge for a decade, was regarded as a symbol of stalemate and quarrel. To counter people's discontent, the governing parties - to varying degrees - adopted ever more restrictive positions on migration and integration. Plans for reforming the EU and an optimistic attitude towards EU-integration - as proposed by Jean-Claude Juncker and Emmanuel Macron - were still too vague and too new to decisively influence the political arena.

Nationalistic forces are still very much at play in many EU capitals promoting their particular interests while showing rather little European responsibility.

The European legal framework is undermined by unilateral approaches. In these circumstances, it should come as no surprise that the EU-27 has difficulties meeting citizens' expectations. But at the end of the day the Union is just a legal and political framework to align different European interests.

It is up to member states to seize this opportunity and look for allies rather than unilateral ventures to achieve their common goals. In this context the ambitious roadmap of Juncker and Macron to create a stronger and more effective European Union is an important glimmer of optimism. The new Austrian government needs to proactively contribute to a better and safer Union. If Austria assumes its European responsibilities, public opinion will follow.



Paul Schmidt is Secretary General of the Austrian Society for European Politics.



# An everlasting challenge

By Erik den Hoedt

The Club of Venice initiated a long-term reflection on how to recover citizens' confidence in the EU in Venice, in November 2016, two months after the adoption under the Slovak presidency of the Council of the EU of the Bratislava Declaration.

In its paragraph n° 4, the Declaration states that *"We need to improve the communication with each other – among Member States, with EU institutions, but most importantly with our citizens. We should inject more clarity into our decisions. Use clear and honest language. Focus on citizens' expectations, with strong courage to challenge simplistic solutions of extreme or populist political forces."*

The European summit in Bratislava was convened at a critical time, with Europe and its Member States facing with major crisis (challenges for the economic recovery, migration, geo-political tensions in the EU neighbourhood, terrorist threats,...) and on the eve of the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Rome Treaties. There was the clear perception that it was necessary to give a boost to the cooperation process and to increase communication synergies among institutional and governmental players.

At the spring plenary of the Club held in Malta in May 2017 I was asked to deliver a key-note speech focusing on the multi-faceted implications of our role as public communicators in this process.

As usual, I preferred to be frank and do not pretend that today scenario is fantastic or "encouraging", so I underlined that there is still a wide and growing dissatisfaction with the "performers". What is also alarming in our societies is the difference in level of discontent between people with higher and lower educational levels. This is the ideal scenario for populist forces, that can easily profit from citizens' disappointment and mislead disoriented audiences.

In my presentation I provided statistics on these European trends and in particular with regard to the Dutch government. I stressed that democracies' foundations are strongly depending on trust and that governments and institutions must never stop investing our energies in a durable relationship with our citizens, seeking as much as possible civil society's cooperation. Integrity, performance and attention are the key ingredients to make this happen and the process cannot lead to positive results without paying the necessary attention to social cohesion.

I look forward to the follow-up debate on this topic at our next plenary meeting in Venice on 23/24 November 2017.

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Erik den Hoedt (1959)

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

Ministerie van Algemene Zaken




## Lost in transition

Why government (communication) should build on social cohesion

Erik den Hoedt  
Director of the Public Information and Communication Office of the Netherlands

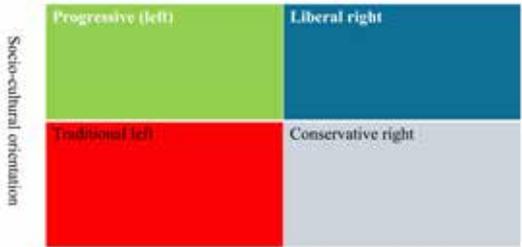
Many transitions with enormous impact

- Economical (global shift)
- Cultural
- People (Immigration and refugees)
- Technological
- Climatological/environmental
- Political

Can we (citizens and government) keep up?

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How it used to be: political imprint of a well-understood society



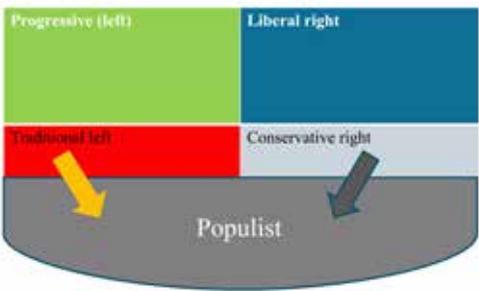
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Characteristics

- Authorative, representative bodies
- Acceptance of hierarchy
- Distinctive countervailing powers
- Slow change

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The call for populism



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Characteristics

- Erosion of representative bodies
- Waning countervailing powers
- From verticalism to horizontalism
- Fast change

- The acceptance of the (representative) democracy is still high, but there is a wide and growing dissatisfaction with the performers (We like the play, but don't like the acting)
- The gap of discomfort between people with higher and lower education is widening

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So, what does this imply?

- The role of government
- The relationship with our citizens

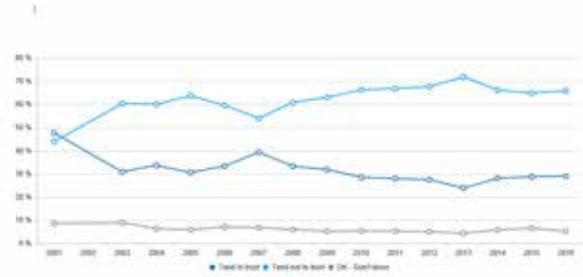
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## Democracies are built on trust



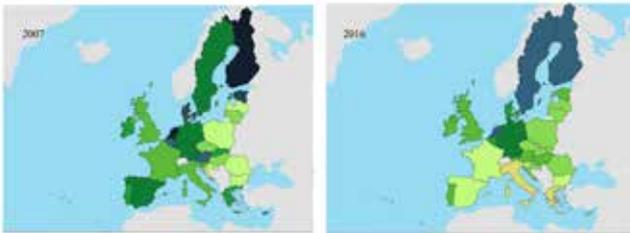
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## Trust in national government – EU average



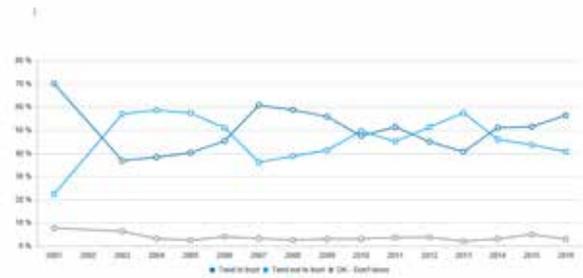
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## Trust in national government: 2007 vs 2016



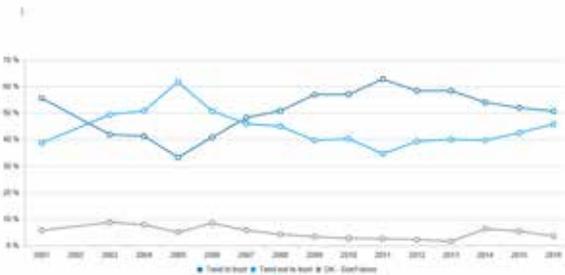
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## 'High' trust in national government - Netherlands



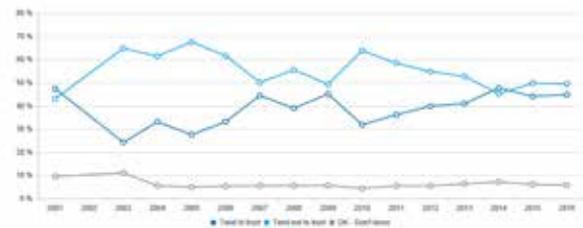
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## 'High' trust in national government - Sweden



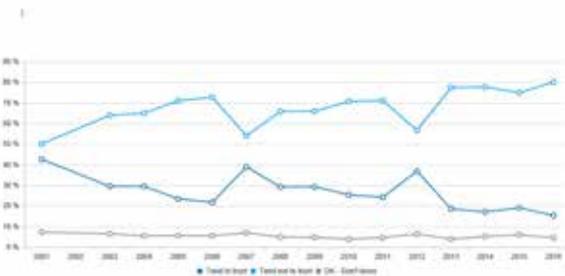
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## 'High' trust in national government - Germany



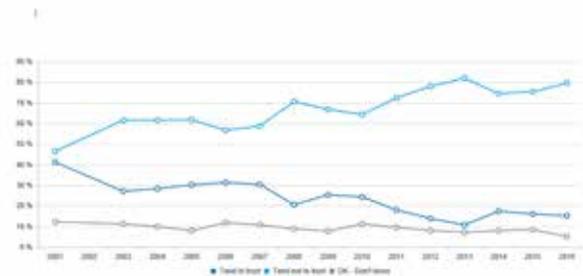
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## Low trust in national government - France

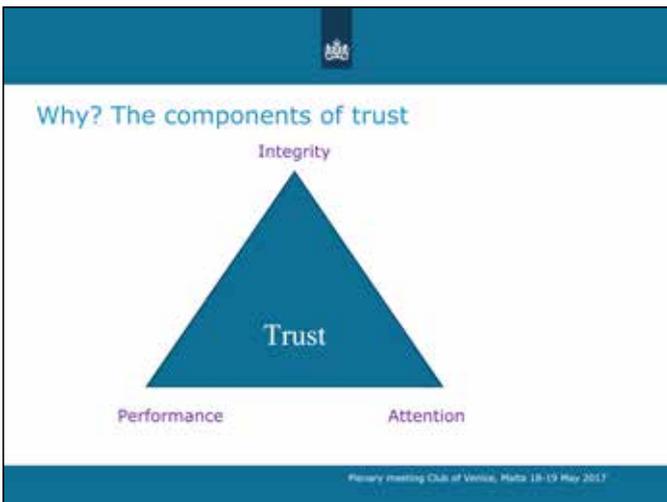
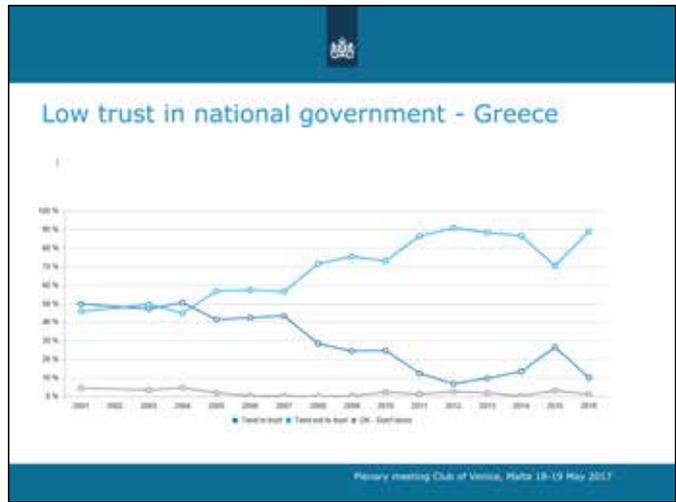
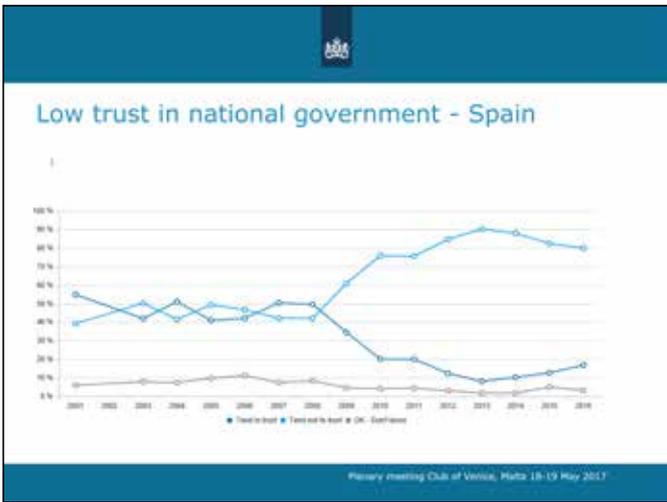


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## Low trust in national government - Italy



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If trust in government is crucial to sustain a strong democracy, we have a problem.

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But....

Low trust in government is not necessarily fatal

... as long as there is high trust in society

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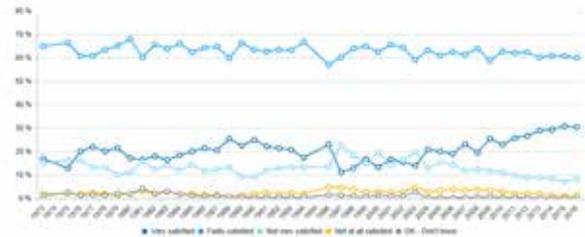
### Life satisfaction – Sweden



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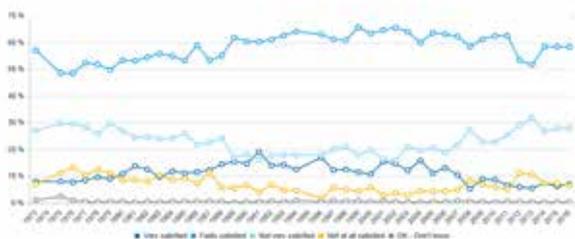
### Life satisfaction - Germany



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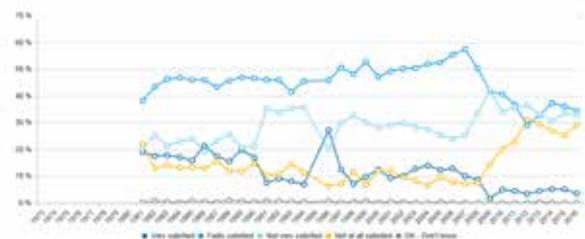
### Life satisfaction - Italy



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### Life satisfaction - Greece



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Even in countries with a high level of satisfaction with personal life and living conditions like NL and the scandinavian countries there is a strong and growing discomfort with society as we know it and society as we fear it will be in the near future.

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“Social cohesion is the key...!”



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### Social cohesion

Framework of social cohesion: participation, trust and integration

Integration	
Participation	Trust
Social (social contacts)	Social (in others)
Civic (in organisations)	Institutional
Political	Political

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### Do we have something in common?

SPSE - To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? People in YOUR COUNTRY have a lot of things in common. (% - TOTAL 'AGREE')

	EU27	EU28	EU29	EU30	EU31	EU32	EU33	EU34	EU35	EU36	EU37	EU38	EU39	EU40
<b>EU27</b>	75	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76
<b>EU28</b>	75	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76
<b>EU29</b>	75	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76
<b>EU30</b>	75	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76
<b>EU31</b>	75	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76
<b>EU32</b>	75	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76
<b>EU33</b>	75	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76
<b>EU34</b>	75	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76
<b>EU35</b>	75	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76
<b>EU36</b>	75	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76
<b>EU37</b>	75	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76
<b>EU38</b>	75	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76
<b>EU39</b>	75	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76
<b>EU40</b>	75	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76

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Two key-elements to understand our citizens and society

- Level of self-reliance
- Perspective on the future

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### Self-reliance and perspective

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### Low self-reliance, pessimistic about future

Living in rural areas  
Older  
Low education  
Low income  
Unemployed

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### Understanding what's going on in the world

Q24.8 To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?  
How confident are you about going on to today's world?  
(% - TOTAL SAMPLE)

	EU	UK	US	FR	IT	DE	ES	IN	BR	JP	RU	CA	MX	AR	CH	IN	SA	AE	QA	OM	EG	TR	PK	BD	TH	PH	MY	SG	HK	MO	US	CA	MX	AR	CH	IN	SA	AE	QA	OM	EG	TR	PK	BD	TH	PH	MY	SG	HK	MO																												
TOTAL	68	71	69	67	65	63	61	60	59	58	57	56	55	54	53	52	51	50	49	48	47	46	45	44	43	42	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6	-7	-8	-9	-10
EU	68	71	69	67	65	63	61	60	59	58	57	56	55	54	53	52	51	50	49	48	47	46	45	44	43	42	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6	-7	-8	-9	-10
UK	68	71	69	67	65	63	61	60	59	58	57	56	55	54	53	52	51	50	49	48	47	46	45	44	43	42	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6	-7	-8	-9	-10
US	68	71	69	67	65	63	61	60	59	58	57	56	55	54	53	52	51	50	49	48	47	46	45	44	43	42	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6	-7	-8	-9	-10
FR	68	71	69	67	65	63	61	60	59	58	57	56	55	54	53	52	51	50	49	48	47	46	45	44	43	42	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6	-7	-8	-9	-10
IT	68	71	69	67	65	63	61	60	59	58	57	56	55	54	53	52	51	50	49	48	47	46	45	44	43	42	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6	-7	-8	-9	-10
DE	68	71	69	67	65	63	61	60	59	58	57	56	55	54	53	52	51	50	49	48	47	46	45	44	43	42	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6	-7	-8	-9	-10
ES	68	71	69	67	65	63	61	60	59	58	57	56	55	54	53	52	51	50	49	48	47	46	45	44	43	42	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6	-7	-8	-9	-10
IN	68	71	69	67	65	63	61	60	59	58	57	56	55	54	53	52	51	50	49	48	47	46	45	44	43	42	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6	-7	-8	-9	-10
BR	68	71	69	67	65	63	61	60	59	58	57	56	55	54	53	52	51	50	49	48	47	46	45	44	43	42	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6	-7	-8	-9	-10
JP	68	71	69	67	65	63	61	60	59	58	57	56	55	54	53	52	51	50	49	48	47	46	45	44	43	42	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6	-7	-8	-9	-10
RU	68	71	69	67	65	63	61	60	59	58	57	56	55	54	53	52	51	50	49	48	47	46	45	44	43	42	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6	-7	-8	-9	-10
CA	68	71	69	67	65	63	61	60	59	58	57	56	55	54	53	52	51	50	49	48	47	46	45	44	43	42	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6	-7	-8	-9	-10
MX	68	71	69	67	65	63	61	60	59	58	57	56	55	54	53	52	51	50	49	48	47	46	45	44	43	42	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6	-7	-8	-9	-10
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CH	68	71	69	67	65	63	61	60	59	58	57	56	55	54	53	52	51	50	49	48	47	46	45	44	43	42	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4	-5	-6	-7	-8	-9	-10
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Government challenges

Perspective on the future + - connect - act from the perspective of the citizen - keep it simple - .... -		

Self-reliance

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Government challenges

Perspective on the future + - empower - .... -		

Self-reliance

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Government challenges

Perspective on the future + - - -		- dare to be normative

Self-reliance

Primary meeting Club of Venice, Malta 18-19 May 2017

Government challenges

Perspective on the future + - - -		
		- show you understand - revitalize - support private initiatives (co-finance) - deregulate - ....

Self-reliance

Primary meeting Club of Venice, Malta 18-19 May 2017

Conclusions

- Social cohesion is crucial
- (re-)establishing trust in government and the EU should not be a means in itself
- Try to understand
- Connect

Primary meeting Club of Venice, Malta 18-19 May 2017

# The Leaders' Report : legacy and perspectives

By Sean Larkins & Laure van Hauwaert

## Improving capability and skills in government communications: introducing *The Leaders' Report*

**Sean Larkins, Director of Consulting & Capability and Laure Van Hauwaert, Managing director EU Institutions, WPP Government & Public Sector Practice**

Alongside legislation, regulation and taxation, communication is one of the four key levers of public policy delivery. Yet the full potential for effective and efficient communication to help governments deliver their priorities is poorly understood by politicians and policymakers alike.

Too often, government communication focuses on short term, reactive and tactical actions: it is rarely seen as a strategic enabler. Government communication focuses primarily on disseminating information rather than on changing long-term behaviour change. In an age of declining trust in government, and an increasing fracturing of media channels, broadcast, one-way communication, mediated by an increasingly hostile and underfunded media, is no longer sufficient.

WPP's Government & Public Sector Practice is based in eight cities around the world. We believe that public policy cannot be delivered successfully without effective communication. So, we help policymakers and government communicators deliver the policy objectives through the better use of data, insight and

creativity. Our focus is always the citizen and the organisation, not the organisation and the media.

Our experience is global and local, and balances theory with proven practice in areas such as behaviour change; digital government; engagement and participation; and public service recruitment.

We have been fortunate to support the Club of Venice to consider capability and skills building within and across European governments, so that communication is used to its full potential and contributes to rebuilding trust between governments and those they govern.

In early 2017, we launched *The Leaders' Report* at the World Economic Forum in Davos.

*The Leaders' Report* is the first comprehensive global overview of how government communication leaders and practitioners are working now, what their concerns are, and what they are doing to prepare for the communication challenges they see ahead of them.

The fact that this is the first ever global study into government communication shows how under-researched this area of is.

The research was carried out across 40 countries – from Australia to Austria and Namibia to The Netherlands. We audited

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Sean Larkins is Director of Consulting & Capability at the WPP Government & Public Sector Practice. He leads the Practice's consulting and capability offer, helping governments and public organisations around the world improve their communications functions and strategies. Based

in London, he works worldwide and over the last 12 months has led projects in Europe, the Middle East and Australasia.

A frequent speaker on communications capability in government, Sean leads WPP's executive education faculty at the Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford and at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore. He is the author of *The Leaders' Report: the future of government communication*, the first global study into trends in public communication.

Before joining WPP, Sean was Deputy Director of UK Government Communications and has also worked in the private and not-for-profit sectors. A firm believer in the power of education, he is a Trustee of the Further Education Trust for Leadership.

Laure Van Hauwaert is Managing Director, EU Institutions, WPP Government & Public Sector Practice. She heads the



EU Institutions team and brings WPP's best thinking, talent and experience to the EU public sector, by building on solid academic and social research to inform the development of effective strategies for citizen engagement, policy communications, and behaviour change.

She leads agency teams in the development of effective solutions to the major challenge of communicating the European project to over 500 million citizens in 28 different countries and 24 languages. Laure regularly organises inspiration sessions and discussions about best practice in communications for clients and colleagues.

Prior to this role, she was Institutional Communications Director at Ogilvy Brussels, where she led several campaigns for the European Commission's DG Environment and the last European election campaign for the European Parliament.

existing and best practice, and we held a global conversation with eight advisory board members, all of whom are senior practitioners in politics, government or marketing and communication. This was supplemented with a mix of qualitative interviews and a quantitative global study with more than 300 government communicators.

A summary of key findings is included here. The full report can be accessed at <https://www.wpp.com/govtpractice/insights/leaders-report/>.

# The Leaders' Report

**THE LEADERS' REPORT**  
The future of government communication

**Sean Larkins**  
Global Director, Consulting & Capability  
Club of Venice, May 2017

**Laure VanHeuwaert**  
Managing Director, European Institutions

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**ABOUT US**

- USA
- UK
- EU Institutions
- Middle East & North Africa
- India
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Singapore
- Australia & New Zealand

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**THE LEADERS' REPORT**

- First global review
- 40 countries
- 5 multilaterals

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**TODAY**

- The state we're in
- Global challenges
- Towards best practice government communication
- A word on Europe
- Future challenges
- Discussion

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**AN AGE OF ANGER/DISLIKE/DISBELIEF/INSECURITY**

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**POST TRUTH | POST DEMOCRACY | POST POST DEMOCRACY**

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### FIVE GLOBAL CHALLENGES

<b>TRUST</b>	The long road to reconnecting
<b>AUDENCES</b>	Turn down the megaphone. Dial up the data
<b>CONVERSATION</b>	Shifting from communication to consultation
<b>CAPABILITY</b>	Moving beyond ability
<b>INFLUENCE</b>	Like respect, you don't just get it: you earn it

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### FIVE GLOBAL CHALLENGES

**“** The expectations [of what we need to do] changed overnight but the skillsets in the communications departments didn't. We've still got the same people so there is a capacity issue that's going to need to be dealt with.  
Communication leader, North America  
**CAPABILITY**

**“** There is a heightened individualisation. We can no longer send a uniform message to the entire public. It's not possible. It doesn't work anymore.  
Communication leader, Western Europe  
**AUDIENCE**

**“** Evaluation? It's very difficult. We don't do enough of it.  
Communication leader, Australasia  
**INFLUENCE**

**“** The ability to 'push out' information is necessary, albeit doubly insufficient. The willingness and ability to speak with citizens must be coupled with a willingness and ability to listen to them.  
Communication leader, Multilateral Organisation  
**CONVERSATION**

**“** All over the world, the authority of government is being eroded. There is a sense that citizens are beginning to doubt whether government actually can make a difference in their lives.  
Communication leader, Africa  
**TRUST**

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### ATTRIBUTES

		H	L
<b>STRATEGY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Having a clearly defined role of and structure for communication</li> <li>Understanding the wider socio-economic and cultural environment</li> </ul>	88	33
<b>PEOPLE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating collaborative team environments</li> <li>Sustaining investment in talent, skills and professional development</li> </ul>	83	68
<b>PROCESS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintaining consistency of messages across govt and across channels</li> <li>Working across government on communication priorities</li> </ul>	79	44
<b>STRUCTURE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintaining sufficient access to senior stakeholders</li> <li>Driving a focus on the citizen throughout the organisation</li> </ul>	74	50
<b>TOOLS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accessing a wide range of data sources to inform decisions</li> <li>Embracing technology to become more citizen focused</li> </ul>	70	34

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### TYOLOGIES

	MARGINALISED MEGAPHONE
<b>TRUST</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Citizens feel sense of distrust and detachment</li> </ul>
<b>AUDIENCE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speaking to general public</li> <li>No audience segmentation</li> </ul>
<b>CONVERSATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One-way communication</li> <li>Broadcast, not engagement</li> </ul>
<b>CAPABILITY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hire generalists; only traditional media skills</li> <li>Risk averse, bureaucratic</li> </ul>
<b>INFLUENCE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cut off from rest of government</li> <li>Considered service, not strategy</li> </ul>

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### TYOLOGIES

	MIND NOT MATTER
<b>TRUST</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Citizens feel sense of distrust that reduces ability of governments to impact change</li> </ul>
<b>AUDIENCE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attempts at segmentation</li> <li>Lack of appropriate data and channels</li> </ul>
<b>CONVERSATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand need for engagement</li> <li>Inappropriate use of medium</li> </ul>
<b>CAPABILITY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teams have improved ability and skills</li> <li>Not empowered to act</li> </ul>
<b>INFLUENCE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of access to decision makers</li> </ul>

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### TYOLOGIES

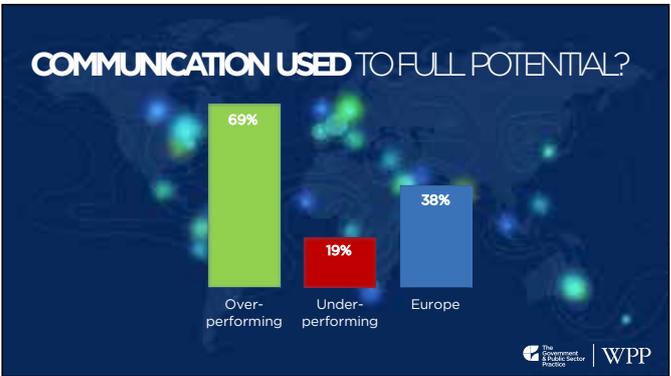
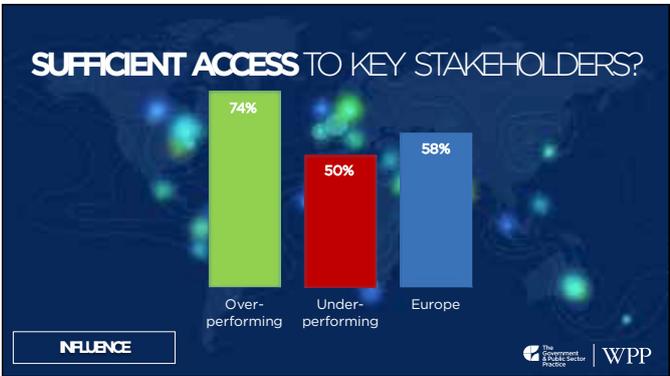
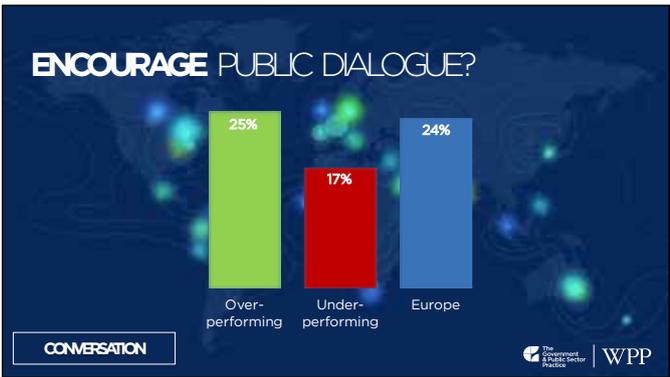
	CROSSING THE LAST FRONTIER
<b>TRUST</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Citizens feel lingering sense of distrust but are re-engaging with govt</li> <li>This provides government with more data and opportunities for dialogue</li> </ul>
<b>AUDIENCE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data used to personalise</li> <li>Audience segmentation is sophisticated</li> </ul>
<b>CONVERSATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two-way dialogue achieved</li> <li>Able to respond to citizen engagement</li> </ul>
<b>CAPABILITY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dynamic skill sets and fluid team structures</li> <li>Empowered for change</li> </ul>
<b>INFLUENCE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insufficient resourcing continues</li> <li>Lack of necessary KPIs to show communication impact</li> </ul>

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### TYOLOGIES

	FIT FOR THE FUTURE
<b>TRUST</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trust is being rebuilt and engagement is high</li> <li>Cycle of positive re-enforcement: citizen interaction with government increases trust further</li> </ul>
<b>AUDIENCE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Able to balance hyper personalisation with retained sense of civic community through sophisticated messaging frameworks</li> <li>Public trust, government with data; data bank increases to grow and inform segmentation</li> </ul>
<b>CONVERSATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement with the public is continuous</li> <li>Two-way dialogue is second nature</li> </ul>
<b>CAPABILITY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professionalised, collaborative teams with a co-ordinating centre</li> <li>Innovative and digitally-skilled teams</li> </ul>
<b>INFLUENCE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Powerful senior leadership; clearly-defined role and profession</li> <li>Communication integrated into central budgets and seen as an investment, not an expense</li> <li>Evidence of impact on policy objectives</li> </ul>

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# Building bridges with citizen

By Vanni Xuereb

The General Election in Malta, although confirming the Labour Party led by Prime Minister Joseph Muscat in government, brought with it some changes in terms of the composition of the Cabinet. Following his decision to retire from Parliament, Louis Grech has been replaced by Helena Dalli as Minister for European Affairs. Minister Dalli is assisted by a State Secretary who is the newly elected MP Aaron Farrugia and who has directly responsibility for EU funds and social dialogue, while she retained her responsibility for Equal Rights and Social Dialogue. As a result, MEUSAC now falls within the remit of the Ministry for European Affairs. This represents an opportunity to strengthen the role of the organisation in the general set up of how EU affairs and EU funds are handled in Malta.

Another important change is represented by the establishment of MEUSAC as an agency in terms of the Public Administration Act. Ever since its reactivation in 2008, I have been pushing for greater clarity in terms of the juridical status of MEUSAC. The Public Administration Act provides for the establishment of agencies by subsidiary legislation. On May 30, the Prime Minister signed the Order that finally provides MEUSAC with its own separate and distinct legal personality.

Moreover, the Order also assigns functions and duties to MEUSAC. The functions are the following:

- to stimulate and lead a national debate on European ideals, values, objectives and long term strategies;
- to discuss the impact proposed EU measures could have on Malta, its institutions, its specific sectors and ordinary citizens through a structured consultation process and other initiatives;
- to establish and maintain dialogue between those participating in the EU decision-making processes;
- to provide support on EU programmes and funding; and
- to disseminate EU-related information, seeking to ensure in particular that the public is well and adequately informed on Malta's positions within the EU and its institutions as well as the rights Maltese citizens have as EU citizens.

In terms of duties, MEUSAC is tasked:

- to steer a structured consultation process on EU policy and legislation with stakeholders;
- to provide EU-related information to stakeholders and to the public with particular emphasis on Malta's position within the EU and its institutions as well as the rights Maltese citizens have as EU citizens; and
- to provide information and assistance on EU funding programmes, in particular by advising and assisting local councils and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to draw up and submit competitive project applications.

Hence, not only is MEUSAC now firmly established as an agency, but, equally important is the fact that its functions are now set out by regulation, therefore, providing it with a better possibility to assert its role in the local and European context.

This is being linked with a re-launch that was announced by the Minister for Finance in his speech for the 2017 budget. The re-launch is tied to an enhanced role for MEUSAC in the Europeanisation of the country. For my colleagues and I, besides providing us with a fresher look, this is also an opportunity to review our operations over the past years and seek to fine tune in terms of the ever-changing scenario particularly on the European plane.

I consider this as fundamental to those of us dealing in EU affairs. As we have witnessed over the past year and a half in particular, it is not easy to predict developments particularly those dependent on choices by the electorate. However, we need to stop merely reacting to events and actively start exerting greater influence in moulding public opinion. This is a substantial challenge for us dealing with EU communication because although we are not, in fact, the decision makers, we often have to try to spread a positive message whilst being faced by decisions taken that are not always easily understood by citizens.

Just to give one example, when Prime Minister Joseph Muscat went to deliver his report to the European Parliament on the Maltese Presidency of the Council of the EU, we witnessed the unfortunate situation of Commission President Juncker



President Juncker complained that the EP is ridiculous after most MEPs did not turn up for a debate to review the Maltese Presidency of the Council



Prime Minister Joseph Muscat and European Affairs Minister Helena at the European Parliament on 4 July 2017



Muscat, Juncker and Vella at a public dialogue in Valletta on 29 March



Prime Minister Muscat and State Secretary Aaron Farrugia met the social partners represented on MEUSAC on 19 June and pledged to keep them updated on the Brexit negotiations

admonishing MEPs for not turning up, claiming, moreover, that their absence was tantamount to a lack of respect towards the smaller Member States. How do we, in Malta, explain to our citizens that our Prime Minister addressed an almost empty chamber? What repercussions will this have on Maltese citizens' perception of the European Parliament? This makes our task to convince citizens about the need to vote in the 2019 European elections much more difficult since the scene of President Juncker calling the Parliament 'ridiculous' will not fade easily from peoples' heads.

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We see our role at MEUSAC as one of building bridges between the EU and citizens by engaging with stakeholders in the decision-making process on EU policy and legislation, involving the public in discussions on European themes as well as by promoting greater take up of EU funds particularly by local government and NGOs. Through MEUSAC for instance, the social partners and civil society were, over the past four years, regularly updated about the preparations, the priorities and programme of the Maltese presidency of the Council. With the start of the official negotiations on the withdrawal of the UK from the EU, the Prime Minister has committed the government to keeping the social partners informed through MEUSAC on the ongoing negotiations.

Another very significant moment during the past months was the Public Dialogue on the future of Europe with Prime Minister Muscat and President Juncker in which Commissioner Karmenu Vella also participated. Held on March 29 and organised by the European Commission Representation in Malta and MEUSAC, this event provided civil society and the public with the opportunity to engage with Muscat and Juncker on various topical issues. Now that the elections in Malta have taken place, we are looking forward to greater focus on the debate on the future of Europe. Indeed, the future must not be decided upon just by politicians making last minute deals based on compromises meant to appease different national interests. On the Contrary, it needs to be a bottom-up process that gives citizens a greater sense of ownership in tomorrow's Europe and pride in considering themselves European.

I am, therefore, grateful that the Club of Venice provides us with the opportunity to have frank and serious discussions that not only enrich us but also allow us to focus better on our tasks. The plenary meeting held in Malta last May was another of these excellent opportunities. It could also provide us with

greater space to focus more on EU communication as it had done when the management partnership agreements between the Commission and Member States were in place. Apart from congratulating Paul Azzopardi and our colleagues and hosts, the DOI in Malta as well as Vincenzo Le Voci and his team, I wish to stress the importance of such a network and the enormous benefit that agencies such as MEUSAC stand to gain from it.



Dr. Vanni Xuereb is the Head of MEUSAC

A graduate in Laws from the University of Malta and in Advanced European Legal Studies from the College d'Europe in Bruges, Belgium, Vanni Xuereb Heads MEUSAC, a government agency entrusted with consultation on EU Policy and Legislation, EU information and assistance on EU funding .

His career has centred on EU affairs. He served at the Permanent Delegation of Malta to the EC and as Legal Consultant on EU Law to the Malta External Trade Corporation. He also practiced as a lawyer, specialising in financial services and EU Law. Between 1999 and 2007 Dr. Xuereb was advisor on European Affairs to the Maltese Catholic Bishops' Conference.

He is a member of the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) and of the Experts' Forum of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), a visiting lecturer in the Institute for European Studies of the University of Malta and a regular contributor to the Times of Malta.

In 2015, Dr Xuereb was created Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Mérite of the French Republic in recognition of his role in bringing Malta closer to the EU.

# Help engaging citizens for Europe

By Niels Jørgen Thøgersen

Europe is still in deep trouble despite the recent national elections, which gave less support to nationalistic parties than feared, and the initiatives to reform the EU institutional architecture by the President of the Commission, Mr. Jean-Claude Juncker, and the French President, Mr. Emmanuel Macron. Not necessarily because EU's institutions do not function, but because a significant part of the populations in the member states still feel that their voice is not heard and their concerns taken into account by European and national politicians. This is why more voters than before in the Netherlands, France and Germany in this year's national elections have voted for political parties that question European collaboration and criticize the European Union's democratic deficit and distance from the citizens. A significant number of these voters have not cast their vote for the past elections but finally have become part of an international surge of angry and perturbed voters who flock to highly EU-skeptical political parties frequently employing nationalistic and anti-immigrant rhetoric. From a democratic perspective it is positive that more people ultimately have engaged in politics, but one of the victims is the European Union institutions that have become one of the major targets for criticism.

The perceived distance between European citizens and European institutions and politicians is on average significantly higher than that between citizens and national governments. This perceived distance is found among those who sympathize with hard core nationalistic, anti-immigrant and EU-critical political parties, but it is also found with much larger groups of potential voters. In a recent Eurobarometer survey (Standard Barometer no. 87, May 2017) only 42 % of the citizens trust in the European Union institutions whereas 47 % tend to distrust them. 52 % find that their voice does not count in the EU. Previous Eurobarometer surveys including a special Eurobarometer commissioned by the European Parliament in April 2017 show that the citizens' satisfaction with democracy and the degree to which citizens feel their voice is heard is approximately 10 % higher at national level averagely than at European level. This suggests that today citizens want to have a say and be heard also between the elections. It should be noted, however, that though the perceived distance between citizens and decision makers is slightly less at national level almost half of all the citizens perceive a distance.

Until citizens feel that their voice is heard and that they live in a well-functioning European Union democracy they are not likely to agree that the EU is indispensable and working for them... It is another cause for concern that the elderly, the rural inhabitants and unfortunately also the young tend to feel that their voice is not heard, whether they are positive or negative about the European Union.

This sentiment constitutes a gigantic challenge for the European and national parliaments, for the European Commission and not least for the advisors and managers responsible for communication.

You as professionals know well that this challenge cannot possibly be met by more one-way information or by inviting citizens to pose questions to politicians and to the European Commission in Citizens' Dialogues fora. A real change in election participation, changes in attitudes and increased active support for Europe and EU is not likely to happen until citizens engage in contributing to shape the future policies in a dialogue with the national parliaments, the European Commission and European Parliament.

There have been numerous successful initiatives at local and national levels, where deliberative communication processes have made it possible for the citizens to voice their concerns, and allowed their input to influence the political process. These initiatives cover open fora for local citizens debating local budget spending, large-scale political festivals with intense discussions among national politicians and citizens, as well as consultations with carefully pre-selected groups of citizens that represent the local socio economic and demographic diversity.

It is obvious that an EU-level deliberative democracy must use a number of platforms to involve Europeans as active participants in the democratic process – also in between the elections to the European Parliament.

It is of course impossible to copy the discussion and decision process of citizens and politicians in the village square or to implement direct and deliberative democracy across Europe. However, with each extra democratic dimension we add to the existing procedures people's trust in democratic governments and parliaments as well as their active involvement will increase. Europe's Peoples' Forum, the Danish Board of Technology and numerous organisations in each member state share the ambition to give each of the EU's 500 million citizens the opportunity to voice their visions and opinions in a deliberative democratic process. This input will subsequently be debated by citizens from all member states and, formulated into coherent policy proposals and presented to politicians and civil servants from the EU as well as member states.

The first phase in our approach covers national online debates to develop the framework for solutions to those problematic issues that the citizens prioritise. The second phase covers one-day consultations with local organisations, and political candidates presenting their visions and with representative citizen groups at national level that culminate by bringing out agreed visions and recommendations for the political solutions. The participants in each meeting in each country elect the national representatives to a forum uniting the representatives from all member states to discuss all political solutions.

The third phase is the large-scale event where the citizens' representatives will meet to prioritise the visions and recommendations. Experts will validate this input and assist in transforming them into policy proposals which will then be presented to national and European level politicians and civil servants as input to their decisions on future European

legislation. All citizens will be encouraged first online to determine key challenges and later to vote on the draft policy proposals.

This is the time for deliberative democracy. French president, Mr. Emmanuel Macron, and President for the European Commission, Mr. Jean-Claude Juncker, have both stressed the need for democratic conventions and citizen engagement in order to contribute their vision for the future of the European Union. The Vice Presidents of the European Parliament tasked with relations to citizens are also considering the implementation of a deliberative democratic approach. Europe's People's Forum strongly supports democratic conventions in all member states about the future development of the EU, and we are convinced that it is essential to develop models to allow very broad parts of the populations to voice their visions and particularly to involve the youth and the un-engaged citizens in a democratic dialogue on how political problems may be solved. This is the only way to ensure long term popular support and constructive engagement for the European Union and meet the perceived democratic deficit - not only as proposed by the above presidents in 2018 but as a long term democratic instruments for the European Union.

The democratic conventions and their extended engagement of citizens makes public communication processes central to the democratic development but also challenges you as communicators. As Club of Venice colleagues, I encourage you to collaborate with governments and institutions to ensure that the foreseen democratic conventions will implement procedures to involve all citizens in discussions about visions for a future Europe and solutions to prioritised concerns. Of course, citizens will disagree about different aspects and some might disagree with the political decisions made by the European Commission and the European Parliament. Nevertheless, they will certainly become less critical of the democratic strength of the European Union because their voice has been heard and seriously considered among other citizens and by the decision makers in the European Union.

As the President for the Europe's Peoples' Forum I strongly encourage you as communicators to convince your governments, parliaments and institutions that your work should prioritise encouraging citizens to engage actively in the political decision processes at national or European level.

We would be delighted if you as a member of the Club of Venice would promote this approach which aims to motivate the European Commission and the Parliament to diminish the perceived distance between citizens and decision makers and ultimately remove citizens' distrust in the European Union.

We would also be grateful if you would contribute to our work as a supporter, advisor or by providing us with institutional support or resources.

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**Niels Jørgen Thøgersen**

Born 22.1.1945 in Denmark. Political scientist. Head of the EU Office in Denmark 1973-88. Director of Communications in the EU Commission 1988-2005. Member of the Club of Venice since 1988 (Honorary Vice-President since 2005). Specialising in on-line interactive communication, especially about Europe.

E-mail: [niels4europe@gmail.com](mailto:niels4europe@gmail.com) Skype: kimbrer

# The Role of Government Communicators in Times of Change

By Christopher T. O'Neil and John S. Verrico

Heraclitus said, "There is nothing permanent except change," a phrase that has morphed to the now more commonly heard, "The only constant is change." The sentiment, however expressed, is the same: regardless of where you work in government—at the local, county, state, tribal or federal level—change happens. Change could be the result of planned transition through elections, or driven by suddenly shifting political landscapes. But no matter what the cause, one can be sure that change is a constant. While government provides continuity for citizens, the inner workings of government are driven by this ever-occurring change.

The cyclical change in government stemming from elections invariably creates a period of uncertainty called "transition." This is the time it takes for the outgoing administration to depart and the new administration to find its footing. When examined more closely, one realizes that transition in government is really just a study in change management, in communicating change, and in managing up.

This transition period is an opportunity to collaborate with people who view existing processes and policies with a fresh set of eyes and with new perspective.

Transition is also an opportunity to help new team members onboard with your agency, to help them understand the culture, understand the organization, see the formal and informal networks that get work done, and to embrace your agency's history and heritage.

Perhaps most importantly, for career government communicators, transition represents an opportunity to demonstrate how good communication is essential to good government.

Clearly, transition isn't always smooth or painless. Change is hard. Uncertainty is uncomfortable. Change in government can be amicable, but more often than not, it can be brutal, vicious, and even downright hostile.

Transition can be challenging when differences in priorities, ideologies and philosophies on the release of information collide. Often, new management for communication offices have backgrounds vastly different than the career government communicators they are about to lead. Many political appointees come from the campaign trail or from the private sector.

While communication skills are generally transferrable from one sector to the next, the philosophy, doctrine, and best practices are not necessarily so. Communication efforts in the private sector are focused on adding to the bottom line of a company. Communication efforts in a political campaign are conducted to get a candidate elected. These marketing and image management skills, while certainly useful at times, do

not address the predominant needs of day-to-day government communication. They serve the organization or the candidate.

Government communication efforts, however, serve the public interest, support the democratic process and promote transparency and accountability in government. Unless a conscious effort is made to help incoming appointees transition to the doctrine and practice of government communication, it is likely they will continue to manage and communicate as they had in their past positions, trying to control information and manage branding.

When the political appointees who manage government communication offices fail to transition from political campaign practices to government communication practices, the result is a release-of-information philosophy based upon political gain and risk instead of the public's need and right to know. If the release of information presents an unacceptable level of political risk, the information may never be released or could be withheld so long that it is no longer timely or relevant. If the release of information is viewed as helpful to achieving a political objective, it generally gets announced at the highest level of the issuing agency or by the administration - which, of course requires lengthy reviews and approvals before anything is actually released. This politically based philosophy for the release of information diametrically opposes the axiom of "Maximum Disclosure, Minimum Delay." That opposition creates a number of significant problems for career government communicators and their customers.

The conflict is a problem for the media, who cannot get their stories because information is highly controlled or obfuscated, or, they rely upon non-attributed sources such as, "a senior agency official who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak on the matter." It's a problem for the public who cannot receive timely and accurate information about important issues, policies and actions in their government. The results of the conflict become a problem for the organization because public trust and confidence are eroded, damaging the agency's reputation. The conflict is a significant problem for the professional communicator who knows the best and proper means of the release of information, but cannot do so when an administration is intolerant of departures from its politically driven policy for the release of information.

In the absence of top-cover from senior leadership and managers, it is not uncommon to see career government communicators be forced to abandon their role as facilitators of media access to information, and become the unhelpful roadblock or censor of information - often to the detriment of their professional reputation and their agency's reputation. Failure to successfully resolve this conflict can compel career

communicators to make a moral decision, based upon their own personal and professional ethics, whether or not to stay in that position and continue advocating for the best practices of the profession or to become the "anonymous government official" source. Others may opt to ride it out and hope for a better change.

In contrast, a fire-from-the-hip approach to communication, while a 180-degree shift from the previously mentioned politically based philosophy that puts a chokehold on public information, is hardly a helpful change for the public or for career government communicators. Having government leaders or political appointees who do not consult with professional communicators, nor take their advice, before releasing information or making public statements, completely changes the communication landscape and brings about a new set of problems.

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The uncoordinated release of information is a problem for the media, who becomes inundated with unvalidated information, making accurate reporting difficult. It's a problem for the public who cannot separate accurate and useful information from political rhetoric. It's a problem for organizations because this practice also negatively impacts public trust. And the uncoordinated release of information is a problem for the professional communicator who has to spend their time playing catch-up on what was said, and trying to validate, justify or correct information (if allowed to do so).

The change represented by transition may be extreme, unnoticable, or something between. Regardless of the nature of the transition one constant remains -- government communicators at all levels must be allowed to practice their profession, to serve the public interest by being the timely, credible and trusted source of factual information about government.

New leaders and their appointees in any administration need to understand and embrace the principle that good government requires good communication, and that good communication is guided by ethics, like taking swift and effective action to prevent the public release of false or misleading information, or not knowingly providing false or misleading information to the public and, above all else, never lying to the media.

So how are career government communicators to prevent the implementation of these extremes? Clearly, new administrations hold the power and positions to impose their will, career communicators can only push back so hard for so long before encountering career jeopardy. The key lies within the communicator's role as advisor, and, having a steadfast dedication to the best principles and practices of the profession.

Career government communication practitioners have the education, the training, the experience and the judgement necessary to help introduce new staff to the government communication mission and our profession's practices, ethics and policies.

During transition, government communicators need to pay particular attention to their trusted advisor role. Career government communicators provide counsel about effective communication practices to leadership.

In that role of trusted advisor, government communicators have the responsibility to be the ethics-based, grounded, constant amid the change and conflict. To meet that responsibility, they must have the courage to advocate for the profession and its practices. They must have the courage to speak truth to power, and practice disciplined initiative.

As advisors, they need to advocate for the practice of government communication and the axiom of "Maximum Disclosure, Minimum Delay," bounded by the tenets of security, accuracy, policy and propriety. And to be successful advisors, career communicators must also have a fundamental and genuine desire to inform, educate and persuade leadership.

Transition is not a time for the meek, nor is it a time for Quixotic quests.

After laying a solid foundation for effective government communication, practitioners need to then review communication plans, strategies, crisis communication plans and standard operating procedures with the incoming team and provide them with the context and reasoning behind their development and execution - recognizing that some changes to those plans are inevitable, and, can be potentially helpful.

Similarly, the career government communicator should be able to explain the organization with context, demonstrating the separation of functions within a communication office, but also demonstrating the unity of effort and the mechanisms that provide that unity. Here too, career communicators need to recognize that changes in roles, responsibilities and procedures are likely. This can be a great opportunity when existing organizational structures and procedures are less than optimal. It's also worth having an open and honest discussion about staffing and workloads. Transition isn't a time to try to build an empire, rather, it's a time to manage expectations.

While providing this sage counsel, career communicators need to also be receptive to input from new leadership, and need to learn what the new leadership considers to be critical information requirements, and, understand how new leadership evaluates the effectiveness of communication efforts. Flexibility

in evaluating the efficacy and value of communication efforts is critical – showing flexibility and agility in what your office measures demonstrates a willingness to align efforts, collaborate and support new priorities and initiatives.

The savvy practitioner also assesses the changes to the political landscape – not to be political, but to be politically savvy. Successful communication strategies require an awareness, assessment and understanding of the political landscape. This awareness and understanding helps government communication practitioners from pushing projects that are destined for disapproval because they may be contrary to the new administration's agenda, and, helps them develop effective strategies for communicating about new initiatives.

Management of transition in government can have long-term effects on how government communication is practiced. Transparency and accountability in government, and the public trust, hang in the balance and rely heavily on how the government communicates.

The career government communicator is the key to developing a foundation for appointees and career communicators that helps navigate between communication efforts that are based only upon achieving political objectives and communication efforts that are based upon the public interest.



Christopher T. O'Neil is President-Elect of the National Association of Government Communicators and a retired U.S. Coast Guard Commander with more than 29 years of public affairs experience gained through full-time and collateral-duty public affairs positions in both government and military public affairs offices, including tours as the U.S. Coast Guard's Chief of Media Relations and Chief of Strategic Communication. O'Neil holds three degrees; a Master's in Public Relations from Boston University; a Bachelor's in Communication from Charter Oak State College; and an Associate's in Criminal Justice from University of Phoenix. O'Neil previously served two terms as the NAGC's Communication Director. and was a member of the Public Relations Society of America's National Capital Chapter, Public and Government Affairs Committee.

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John S. Verrico is the Immediate-Past President of the National Association of Government Communicators in the United States and has more than 35 years of experience as a public affairs professional in federal and state government agencies, working extensively in media, community and employee relations. A retired U.S. Navy Reserve Master Chief Journalist, former freelance journalist and a communications and marketing consultant for small businesses, John is also a professional trainer on communications and leadership. John holds a Master of Science degree in Organizational Leadership from Norwich University and a Bachelor of Science in communications from the University of the State of New York. Prior to being elected as NAGC's former president, John previously served as the association's Director of Professional Development and the Director of Communications. He also served on the leadership boards for the Federal Communicators Network and the U.S. Navy Public Affairs Alumni Association, and in various leadership positions with Toastmasters International. John is an honorary member of the South Eastern European Public Sector Communicators forum (SECOM).

## 2017 communications school schedule St Louis (Missouri, USA), 13-15 June 2017 Programme (extract)

### Tuesday, June 13

#### Advanced Training Workshops

##### Communication Planning: Defining Success and Setting Goals

Christopher O'Neil<sup>1</sup>, Chief of Media Relations, National Transportation Safety Board, and President-Elect, NAGC

Communication planning has never been more important to effective communication than it is in today's information environment. Multiple communication channels, noise created by competing narratives and the dwindling attention span of your audience require purposeful communication planning to integrate, coordinate and synchronize your communication efforts.

This interactive advance workshop is a must for any government communicator working on multiple platforms, engaging multiple and diverse audiences or working to align communication efforts to a specific goal. Learn how to define communication goals, separate strategy from tactics and use research and evaluation to enhance message development.

##### Accreditation in Public Relations (APR) Bootcamp

###### APR Mini-Jump Start

- What to expect during the APR / APR+M process
- Ethics and law
- Communication models and theories
- Research, planning implementation and evaluation
- Crisis communication management
- Media relations

##### How to Contain Crises in Today's Viral World

Interactive, hands-on workshop designed to help become aware of potential crises, create an effective communication crisis strategy, measure your response effectiveness, and prepare yourself and your agency or organization to maximize your overall communication goals.

##### How to Develop Persuasive Messages with Science of Storytelling

Emerging neuroscience and social psychology research tells us that the best way to transmit highly effective and "sticky" messages is through storytelling. Using the science of storytelling, government communicators can craft messages that resonate with audiences. Tools and are needed to heighten

messages for public briefings, press releases, and memos without resorting to bureaucratic clichés.

##### Plain and Simple: Plain Language Concepts and Techniques for Government Communicators

What plain language is and is not, what the concepts and principles of this method of writing require, and how to apply those techniques in our own writing.

### Wednesday, June 14

#### Welcoming Remarks by NAGC President Kathryn Stokes

Opening Keynote: Reimagining the Arch: Working with Multiple Agencies to Communicate a Monumental Transformation,

by Ryan McClure<sup>1</sup>, Communications Director, City Arch River Foundation - View Bio

#### Breakout Sessions

- "Fail-Proof" Media Coverage
- Case Study: The Gatlinburg Fires
- Seven Ways to Explain Complex Ideas to the General Public

#### General Session : The Internet is Magic (And Other Crazy Things We Believe About It)

B.J. Mendelson<sup>1</sup>, Writer, Editor, and Mall Santa - View Bio

#### Breakout Sessions

- Social Media Stories: How to Communicate Government Information in the Land of Emojis  
Jessica Milcetic<sup>1</sup>, Director of Social Media, USA.gov
- Accreditation in Public Relations (APR)  
Laura Kirkpatrick<sup>1</sup>, NAGC APR liaison and Director of the Monmouth County (N.J.) Department of Public Information & Tourism  
Ann Knabe<sup>1</sup>, APR+Military Communications and Dean of Students, Associate Professor, and Reserve Component Chair at National Defense University
- Using Social Media and Other Communication Tools to Pass a Public Safety Sales Tax  
Sharon Watson<sup>1</sup>, Director of Public Affairs, Johnson County, Kan
- Using Protocol to Brand Your Agency  
Cheryl Chambers<sup>1</sup>, Civility and Business Coach and former NAGC Competitions Director  
Kathleen "Kathy" Zona<sup>1</sup>, Protocol Officer, National Aeronautics and Space Administration

<sup>1</sup> <https://nagc.com/program/>

- Plain and Simple: Plain Language Concepts and Techniques for Government Communicators  
Wendy Wagner-Smith<sup>1</sup>, Training Coordinator, Plain Language Action and Information Network and NAGC Marketing Director
- Communication, for a Change: Helping Your Leaders Talk About Change  
Blythe Campbell<sup>1</sup>, Senior Communications Director, NANA Development Corporation

**Blue Pencil & Gold Screen Awards Presentation and Reception and Communicator of the Year**



Chris Poynter is the Director of Communications for the Office of the Mayor of Louisville, Ky. In his nomination letter, Mayor Greg Fischer detailed the leadership and ingenuity Chris used to help the city and the world celebrate the life of the late Muhammad Ali. Over seven days in June 2016, Chris rallied his team to honor Ali, Louisville's beloved native son. Although they had extremely short notice, Chris and his team organized a flag lowering ceremony outside Metro Hall shortly after the boxing superstar's death.

**Thursday, June 15**

**Annual Business Meeting and General Session, with morning Keynote : Uprising: A City Divided**

Mark Basnight<sup>1</sup>, Senior Public Affairs Training Specialist, Argonne National Laboratory, Public Affairs Academy

In the wake of an officer involved shooting, the city of Charlotte (N.C.) was thrust into the national spotlight after the unexpected and unanticipated uprising of civil unrest. The dramatic events of Sept. 20 - 24 left one dead, several injured, hundreds of thousands of dollars in property damage, and a city divided until the release of information exposing the facts and truth of the police investigation were reluctantly released. Mark's key note focuses on the lessons learned from this extraordinary situation that might be critical to other government communicators in the future.

**Breakout Sessions**

- Monitor, Analyze, Engage: Your New Blueprint for Benchmarking Data in the Public Sector  
Ben Kessler<sup>1</sup>, Director of Government Solutions, Meltwater  
How to use metrics for your public relations strategy, break down reporting, and share examples of best practices in federal, state, and local government. You'll leave this session understanding how to:
  1. Give your agency a public voice with social media
  2. Justify program decisions by measuring growth and quality of media
  3. Identify new media opportunities through current trends outside of typical journalism beats
- What's Your Story? Best Practices for Engaging with Media in Good Times and Bad
- Implementing Culturally and Linguistically Relevant Communication to Diverse  
Communicating with diverse audiences as a huge challenge

for government communicators. How to ensure culturally and linguistically appropriate communications to diverse audiences. Learn how the National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health (National CLAS Standards) can be embedded in the communications strategies. The importance of delivering information in a culturally and linguistically appropriate way; how an agency tailors information and outreach activities for various audiences.

**General Session: Reaching Your Next Summit: Seven Vertical Lessons and One Essential Question for Leading with Impact**

**Breakout Sessions**

- Communicators Communicating: Break Down Silos to Work More Effectively
- Community Branding that Works
- What Now? Connecting with the Media and the Community Post-Ferguson
- Balancing Your Personal and Professional Brands Online
- The Role of Government Communicators and Transition in Government

Christopher O'Neil<sup>1</sup>, National Transportation Safety Board  
John Verrico<sup>1</sup>, Department of Homeland Security

This panel discussion examines the role of career, professional government communicators during transitions in government leadership. If you work in an agency experiencing a major transition in leadership, you won't want to miss hearing the perspectives of senior communicators who have experience with transition teams. These career government communicators understand the need to champion transparency, accountability, and excellence in government communication with incoming administrations and their appointees.

**General Session: The Media Today.... and For At Least the Next Two Weeks!**

Dennis Kendall<sup>1</sup>, Director of Broadcast News, QNI, St. Louis  
Chris Regnier<sup>1</sup>, Reporter, Fox 2 Now, St. Louis

Kent Boyd<sup>1</sup>, Public Information Officer, Springfield/Branson Airport, and former journalist

Panel discussion focused on how government communicators can help the media....and how the media can help government communicators.



# Driving Behavior Change Through Communications: Campaign Insights, Successes and Lessons Learned

By George Perlov

Change is inevitable, but that doesn't make it easy, especially when we talk about behavior change. As government communicators, there are many instances where we would like to see or need to see some sort of behavior change among our citizens – be it regarding their health, the local environment, or even how they pay their taxes.

A recent report I wrote for the Arcus Foundation on behavior change communications provides insights on the topic, examples of good practice, as well as the challenges groups creating and commissioning campaigns often face when doing this work. While initially developed for the Arcus Foundation, its grantees, and other NGOs working in the conservation and social justice sectors they support, the learnings from the report have universal relevance to all marketers and communicators who are looking to change behaviors of targeted audiences. This article presents highlights from and expands on a presentation I made at the May, 2017 meeting of the Club of Venice in Malta.

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## The problem

The research I conducted among experts in advertising and social marketing, practitioners and others identified many challenges behavior change campaigners face. These include:

- **Inadequate planning** -- not conducting a situational analysis of the environment or fully engaging all stakeholders.
- **Outcomes and metrics not clearly defined** -- defining the desired behavior change and how it can be measured.
- **Funders' inability to effectively commission campaigns** – a lack of clarity from the commissioning organization as to desired outcomes, approaches, and utilization of funds.
- **Budget constraints** -- lack of budget for adequate planning or for sustaining campaigns.
- **Inadequate audience reach** -- lack of resources for media placement of messaging.
- **Not understanding the work of or collaborating with partners** – limited research and learning from what others have done in the past or joining forces with like-minded groups for greater impact.
- **Predictable and uninteresting messaging** -- the tendency for social issue campaigners to preach from a soapbox and not think about engaging (and entertaining) their audiences.



Photo Credit: Mick Garratt; Digital illustration courtesy of Benjamin Bobkoff

The image below, symbolizing an actual road sign a Program Officer at the Arcus Foundation had seen in the area surrounding a great apes preserve in Africa, is perhaps a dynamic representation of what can happen when campaigners succumb to the issues mentioned above.

The good news is that efforts like this don't have to be the norm, and the full report provides theory, best practice and recommendations to help communications officials create more effective campaigns.

## Using behavior change theory in campaign planning

Government campaigners and the agencies they use to create their communications efforts often forget that there is a world of existing behavior change and behavioral economics (i.e., nudging) theory that can help inform campaign planning. While theory alone cannot create a campaign, it is an excellent building block and starting point.

One important theory that is often overlooked but is critical to any effort's success is the Diffusion of Innovation Theory, first proposed by Dr. Everett Rogers at the University of New Mexico (U.S.). Often associated with how quickly consumers pick up new technologies, social marketing author and expert Nancy Lee believes that the model can be utilized to behaviorally segment target audiences for social marketing campaigns.

Those on the far left side of the curve in the diagram above, whom Nancy calls the "Tell Me" group, might only need a very simple and direct educational message (like "Don't Cut Trees") in order to take action. The majority, however, the "moveable middle" to many, are those she calls the "Help Me" group. These are the people for whom we will need to use research and



planning to understand barriers and opportunities in order to build a successful social marketing campaign that will engage them towards changing behavior. Lastly, the group on the far right are those Nancy calls the "Make Me" group. These are citizens who will not change their behaviors unless forced to by legislation or fines. Government campaigners can be notoriously guilty by producing "Tell Me" campaigns and assuming that they will reach an entire population. More information about other behavior change and behavioral economic theories are further developed in the report.

## Examples of effective government-sponsored behavior change communications

The report contains a variety of case studies from campaigns around the world. One government-sponsored campaign that has impressed me is the **Adoption from Foster Care** effort from the US Department of Health and Human Services and their partner agency AdoptUS Kids. Created by the Advertising Council (full disclosure, my former employer), the goal of the campaign is to increase the number of parents willing to adopt a child from the foster care system. These are typically older children, many of whom have lived in numerous homes with various guardians. As far as behavior change is concerned, the "ask" of this effort is probably one of the hardest a government agency can ask of its citizens.

The campaign reframed the conversation about adoption from being all about "the poor child" to one that acknowledges and supports the fears and anxieties of prospective adoptive parents. In addition, it utilized an innovative formative research methodology that brought together current adoptive parents with prospective adoptive parents. These sessions helped the ad agency create its effective messaging platform. How can we take the focus away from "the poor environment" and identify compelling insights that will stimulate our target audiences to take action?

## Recommendations

Based on the research conducted with practitioners and experts, as well as the campaigns analyzed for this report, the following are key recommendations for government communicators who are creating new campaigns:

- **Planning, Planning, Planning!**: Ensure that sufficient planning and research are conducted in the formative stages of a campaign to deeply understand issues and audiences, set realistic goals and objectives, and to develop meaningful and effective programs and messages.

- **Systems Thinking**: Have a rich understanding of the complexity of the issue being addressed and recognize that system change at the individual, government and business level may be needed for lasting change.
- **Rethink audiences/Reframe issues**: Many of the successful campaigns highlighted worked because they took a disruptive look at who their audiences are or reframed a message so that it influenced audiences in a new way.
- **Let the stakeholders build it**: Campaigns that rely on extensive stakeholder input tend to be more authentic and believable, and they empower stakeholders to sustain such efforts.
- **Go beyond education and messages**: Resist the trap to just tell audiences what to do. Typically, only a small portion of a campaign's audience needs simple education. Most need nudges and other support to change.
- **Ensure adequate and strategic funding**: Campaigns need funding for success. One model worth considering suggests a three-part solution: a strategic planning phase, a concept prototyping and pilot testing phase, and then a full-blown implementation to be sustained and monitored over time.

The full report can be accessed at <http://www.arcusfoundation.org/publications/report-provides-insight-effecting-lasting-change/>



George Perlov is a marketing and communications consultant who helps clients improve their impact in addressing a host of social, environmental and health-related issues through strategic planning, research and evaluation. In addition to his consulting practice, he was recently an adjunct professor of marketing for the new MBA in Sustainability at Bard College (New York City).

He was previously Executive Vice President for Research and Innovation at the Advertising Council, the largest producer of public service communications campaigns in the US. In this position, he was responsible for advising the planning and research process for the Council's campaigns, monitoring and measuring of donated media, evaluating campaign effectiveness, as well as proprietary research the Council conducted on public service directors and social issues. He also led several international projects and special strategic initiatives.

He is a graduate of Oberlin College (Ohio, USA) and has a Masters of Public Administration degree from Columbia University.

# Content Marketing: Key to the Success and Survival of Public Sector Programmes

By Dave Worsell

In the digital marketplace, content marketing has become a powerful tool for attracting and keeping new audiences, as well as for adding value to a company and its wares for the benefit of its users/customers. Done well, content marketing has the ability to inform, inspire, educate and convert audience members to action through meaningful pieces of information. In the private sector, the goal of moving people along this decision path or “marketing funnel” is ultimately to increase sales. For years content marketing tactics including useful website content, blogs, video, email bulletins, social media activity and online guides and resources have been integral to businesses’ strategies for improving their bottom-line.

## Using content marketing to improve the outcome of public sector initiatives

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More recently, the public sector including organisations at all levels of government have begun to **leverage these tactics** to engage more citizens in their programmes and improve the outcome of their missions. That could be using storytelling-tactics (visual, transmedia, two-way, collaborative) to demystify difficult subject matters, for example ‘fostering’, whereby foster carer testimonials and ‘a day in the life stories’ serve to increase **foster carer recruitment** and place more vulnerable children in safe homes. For other public sector teams, content marketing has become central to attracting inward investment and for meeting commercial objectives such as to **increase the use of paid-for services** (leisure, events, consultancy, bespoke waste collection, education etc) to bring in more income and reduce budget gaps, particularly in local government in the UK.

## Content marketing: essential to building credibility and trust

But how easy is it to draw an audience to your content and programmes? In addition to the ‘information-overload’ citizens experience every day in the digital space, governments and public sector teams must also contend with the proliferation of **fake news and a global crisis of public trust**.

Being able to engage citizens, businesses and other target audiences, and earn their trust, is more important than ever, not least to counter false truths. Furthermore, for public sector communications teams tasked with helping their organisation manage reputation, boost credibility, improve customer satisfaction and increase participation in critical initiatives; content marketing is an essential component of any campaign. It is an opportunity to build an engaged audience around a service/programme, and to make those services more “sticky” and indispensable to your service-users’ lives.

“Good content brings stories to the consumer, with information they can use, discuss, share and comment. Stories are social at their core, and we are constantly looking for those stories that bring answers to the questions of our everyday lives.” - Danny Davriendt

Those who think more strategically about their storytelling and the content they connect around a service or programme will be more in tune with what citizens care about. Knowing what information is needed and at what moment is critical to affecting citizens’ [emotional] attachment to your initiatives and triggering higher levels of engagement. Since good and timely communication helps build trust, in turn, that means more endorsements, more social proof and peer influence, more eyes on your communications, higher programme participation, more citizen feedback to help you optimise your services, and better returns on your marketing investment.

## Equipping citizens with the knowledge and skills they need to make better decisions

Content marketing is your best chance of equipping citizens with the knowledge and resources they need to make better decisions and take positive action leading to better programme outcomes. For example, this could be the provision of resources that **educate citizens** so that in the event of an emergency, they know what action to take to limit damages and risk to life. Or, a proactive approach to providing citizens with content that serves to help them recycle only the right items which could be the difference between an effective waste and recycling service and one that is a drain on public money falling far short of citizens' and governments' expectations. Many local government teams in the UK are already leveraging the power of bitesize digital communications to improve waste and recycling services (email and SMS alerts, infographics, online incentives etc). For example, Kirklees Council sends targeted email alerts to remind people to put their bins out, educate people on local policies to reduce contamination rates in problematic areas and **increase recycling rates**.

## Making sure your content is used by the right people

**Content marketing strategy + audience acquisition strategy = Increased programme success**

Whatever your corporate missions and civic programmes, you must have a solid understanding of who your target audience is, where they're currently spending time, and how you'll reach them. Go to them, don't wait for them to come to you. To do that you need to be proactive in letting them know the value of your communications to their lives and make it easy for them to engage with your content. Developing supporting content for your initiatives alone is pointless without an audience to actually use it. You must couple your programmes' content strategy with an **audience acquisition strategy**, to maximise the reach and desired outcomes of each programme.

### 1. Build an authentic audience

At Granicus, we specialise in helping **over 3,000 government organisations** in the UK, Europe and US to build huge audiences around their content and services. We're helping all levels of government engage citizens in targeted ways, leading people quickly through the 'awareness' and 'interest' phases to 'participation' in critical public programmes. More most definitely is more. We help convert passive

citizens to active contributors who are better able to self-serve and make decisions that help to reduce the strain on public services later down the line. For example one UK council **reduced customer contact costs and demand on its call centre** during council tax billing week by deploying an informative email campaign to preempt customer questions and enable them to self-serve online. Call it channel-shift, but without having already built an engaged audience through its trusted email subscription service, the helpful content would have gone unused.

Citizens who 'raise their hand' and opt in to your messages are more likely to remain engaged with you and other public services over the long term. **In the 2017/18 Granicus Benchmark Report**, we call these people your "authentic reach": those who subscribe to your email bulletins about service changes, people who opt in to receive text messages about local consultations, or who come to your website for more information about an event. **Capturing this interest** is vital, because active audience members are more likely to be receptive to your messages over time, giving you a better chance of effecting positive behavioural change.

Government is uniquely positioned to collaborate on both audience growth and outreach and therefore tapping into the **GovDelivery Network** is a great way to increase your authentic reach. The network currently consists of over 150 million citizens who've opted in to receive updates from the public sector. It is growing all the time; for example, **100,000 more Londoners a month** subscribe to an average of seven digital updates on offer through the GovDelivery Network. The network gives public sector organisations a unique way to cross-promote their content and services and engage audiences they otherwise may not have been able to reach. These organisations can see an increase of 500 per cent or more in their subscriber growth due to joining the collaborative GovDelivery Network.

### 2. Engage and keep your audience

Once you've built an authentic audience, the next step is to keep your audience's attention, prove your worth and usefulness to their lives, and prepare them to take action. Move them from passive recipients to active listeners and ultimately 'doers' through a series of targeted drip-campaigns. Nurture them. Be timely, deliberate and creative. Make sure you are there at key moments they need help or guiding to keep them on the path to deep understanding and action.

Ensure your content is relevant and increasingly targeted. A great example of an **organisation doing this well** is Wrexham County Borough Council who use advanced segmentation of their audience combined with marketing automation to

deliver personalised bin collection reminder emails. This approach increases customer satisfaction, reduces call centre traffic, and improves the efficiency of the collection services. Via targeted topic-based digital communications (43 options), Wrexham connects with a total of 34,000 subscribers, achieving a strong average engagement rate of 62%. The council has saved £24,000 per year just by moving away from a printed magazine to email updates tailored to subscribers' personal preferences. By using more sophisticated methods of audience segmentation and targeting, organisations are guaranteed to see stronger engagement from citizens.

### 3. Convert your audience to action and impact outcomes

In the public sector we measure conversion and success in terms of programme outcomes or lives changed. In other words, when a citizen has completed a driving licence application, volunteered to sit on a committee, or enrolled in online learning. We've successfully "converted" them into an active citizen whose behaviour supports a desired outcome. It's then time to nurture them, maintain their attention, and learn from their feedback and behaviours to optimise your comms cycle.

For some organisations, for example Bournemouth Tourism, content marketing and audience acquisition (at the right scale) must help achieve financial objectives. As outlined in the new whitepaper, "**Income Targets: Comms Entrepreneurs, Income Warriors, and Three Paths Forward**", building a digital subscriber base and promoting touristic offerings across a suite of email bulletins and other digital channels are key to Bournemouth's income generation strategy. The revenue from increased citizen engagement in their chargeable services is already helping to bridge a £120k funding gap.

Whatever your objectives, your content marketing strategy should serve to move people along the marketing funnel from awareness to action. Relevant content, available on the right channel, for the right people, at the right moment, will make your organisation more visible, boost your credibility, and ultimately increase the number of people participating in your programmes.

For more content marketing tips check out Granicus' Content Marketing Guide for the Public Sector.

@GranicusUK

uk.granicus.com

info@granicus.com



David Worsell, Managing Director, Granicus Europe.

Twitter @dworsell

David manages Granicus Europe and is supporting over 150 European public bodies connect, engage and inform over 11 million European citizens each and every day. With over 165 million users worldwide and 1,800 government clients, Granicus offers the largest and most effective public sector digital communication platform designed specifically to help government reach more people and encourage those people to action.

David has a technical background combined with considerable communication expertise gained through working with public sector organisations for almost 20 years. David is an expert in the application of digital engagement technologies and understands the obstacles that must overcome to engage the public effectively.

# Strengthening the influence of the communication function: Skills and Structure

By Guy Dominy

## Strengthening the influence of the communication function

*"It is not enough to be right, to be effective you must be listened to..."*

Yes, but how? This short piece attempts to answer this question. It is based on my current research for a Master's Degree in Public Policy and Administration at the London School of Economics. My focus here, though, is the practical rather than the academic. I also draw on my experience, both as a communication specialist within the UK government, and from training civil servants from a number of countries. It is, deliberately, perhaps a little provocative.

To set the scene, communication professionals in government are almost always advisors. Our role, typically, is to advise policymakers, whether politicians or civil servants, on how best to exploit communication as a multiplier to make policy more effective. Let us take as our starting point that we know the best way to use communication to enhance the effectiveness of policy. The focus here then becomes how do we ensure that our specialist expertise is heard and valued. How do we make sure we have the influence we need to do our job properly? The answer I believe is to ensure we have both the right skills and structures that support us to use these skills effectively.

## The importance of skills in giving advice

Advising is, arguably, a much more challenging skill than simply telling someone what to do. Advising someone senior to yourself is that much more challenging. They are however skills that can be taught – but do we? Outside communication the importance of advising as a skill is recognised and specific training provided – certainly in the UK. After-all, in democratic countries, the accepted role of the civil service is to advise the elected leaders of the government.

In the UK, we have a 'fast stream', new Civil Servants, competitively recruited in anticipation that they will rapidly progress up the hierarchy of the Civil Service. They are specifically trained in advising, briefing and drafting with a focus on giving difficult advice to very senior individuals including Ministers. This training is provided by individuals who have actually done this themselves. Of the communication specialists I interviewed only one, actually the most junior, had ever had any training in

'influencing'. Interestingly she reported that she used the model she had been taught "all the time".

The fundamentally challenging nature of giving specialist advice is aggravated in the area of communication by a misunderstanding of what communication can and cannot do on the part of many policymakers. Everyone I interviewed for my research felt this was an issue.

*"I think that's fairly common, a sort of over-expectation of what comms can do. In some cases, purely because they haven't thought too deeply about what the problem is, to start off with."*

There was a consistent view that asking questions was a vital skill as an advisor.

*"You can usually get to the true objective of any campaign by just saying, why? Why do you want to raise awareness? What's your purpose in raising awareness? Simply raising awareness will not achieve anything in and of itself."*

My observation is that we devote considerable attention to developing audience insight about those our campaigns are aimed at and the development of models and techniques to influence their behaviour. We all recognise the importance of a scientific approach in this area. However, when it comes to that other critical audience – those we advise – we seem to rely on 'natural' ability to influence. Indeed, one of the individuals I interviewed held strongly to the view – myth I would argue – of the 'natural influencer'. This unhelpful and as it encourages leaving junior communication specialists to 'sink or swim' by themselves. It is also unnecessary. There are plenty of tools and models that can be used to enhance our ability to give advice effectively. For example, 'social styles' type models help identify types of individual so you can adapt your approach in one-to-one interaction. Similarly, there are models that help you understand the type of intervention you are making: supportive or confronting for example, and help ensure that it is 'healthy' and helpful rather than 'perverse' and damaging.

Of course, skills and structures are intertwined, one aspect of the 'fast stream' training referred to above is that the fast streamers are trained together in groups from different departments. This is deliberate and is done in anticipation that when they reach the top of their departments they will already have developed strong relationships with their peers in other departments based on shared experiences. Indeed, the trainers typically explicitly emphasise the importance of networking.

## The importance of structure

Another consistent complaint among those I interviewed was getting involved late in the process. This is something that reflects how communication is seen. WPP in their Leaders Report on the Future of Government Communication<sup>1</sup> published earlier this year found the same issue. They concluded that "government communication is overlooked and underused as a strategic tool for policy delivery". Getting the structure of the communication function can help with this. 'Embedding' is where you assign a communication specialist as a permanent member of a policy team. This can help bridge the gap between policymaking and communication. In particular, it can help make sure that professional communication advice is incorporated much earlier in the policymaking process. One senior communicator embedded in a department I interviewed brought this vividly to life:

"It's an absolute machine Guy, and comms has to fit into it. I think to be successful requires us to be part of that machine. Not be removed... They sit next to you, having coffee with them. Having lunch with them. So, you're involved in their process."

Of course, embedded communication specialists can also help policymakers develop a better understanding of what communication can and cannot achieve. However, embedding risks distributing your communication specialists reducing your ability to justify more senior posts. Most governments are still hierarchical in nature and seniority matters. WPP found 39% of leaders say they do not report into sufficiently senior levels within government. As a result, they are unable to drive a strategic communication agenda within the highest echelons of government.

Embedding communication specialist also leaves them vulnerable to the inevitable pressures of advising your immediate boss.

My own research found, like WPP's more extensive survey, that communication specialists believe that policymakers lack understanding of what communication can and cannot actually achieve. However, I also found that communication specialists felt policymakers and, especially politicians have a very clear understanding of what communication can do for them as individuals. And that is it offers them a way to be seen to be doing something. Compared with many policy interventions a communication campaign can be launched relatively quickly and cheaply. It is also immediately visible. I was given numerous examples of the attempted use of a communication campaign to be seen to doing something. Of course, this is harder for the embedded specialist to push back against and many of the specialists I spoke to reported being at a distance, in a central resource, helped them push back against this type of misuse of communication activity. Alongside the security that the separation provided they felt they were able to bring a broader perspective:

"again, it came from experience of working on government campaigns, and frankly being bitten, and knowing in the future you have to be careful ... again, it's a view from the outside, a dispassionate view, as to how it's going to look and what might happen, and just knowing that the media, particularly press, are frequently stuck for something to write about and government comms is a very easy target."

It was also apparent that the increased seniority of the specialists enabled by a central resource facilitated this ability to 'push back'.

So what is the answer: embedded communication specialists or central resource? As you might expect the answer, I suggest is getting the balance right. Embedded communication specialists appear to be absolutely necessary to educate policymakers about what communication can and cannot do and to ensure communication is considered at the earliest stages of policy development.

<sup>1</sup> For the WPP Leaders Report see <https://www.wpp.com/govtpractice/insights/leaders-report/>

Being close at hand and consistently giving good advice makes it easier to earn the status of 'trusted advisor' which of course strengthens the reputation of the communication function more generally. However, these embedded specialists have to be supported to not only give the best 'technical' advice but also to push back against the inappropriate use of communication activity where necessary. The UK Government Communication Service (GCS) in their Modern Communication Operating Model (MCOM)<sup>2</sup> identifies a number of capabilities that should be concentrated centrally specifically: Audience Insight, Strategy, Evaluation, and 'Futures' (i.e. horizon scanning about the impact of new technologies on communication such as artificial intelligence). It is also important, where communication specialists are embedded to ensure that there is a career path for them rather than them being 'trapped' in a particular policy team with no prospect of promotion.

## A call to action

Both skills and structure matter. A flexible structure with embedded communication specialists supported by specific centralised functions capable of supporting embedded staff all within a career framework that supports progression is one fundamental foundation to moving communication from an "overlooked and underused as a strategic tool for policy delivery" to a fundamental part of the policy process. Being close to the action enables the communication specialist to more easily earn the status of 'trusted advisor' but they will need to know that there is someone with both distance and seniority to help 'speak truth to power' if necessary. The second fundamental foundation that I believe we need to put in place is staffing this structure with communication specialists whose training as 'advisors' is given equal weight as their training in the communication specific skills of insight, strategy, and evaluation. We must recognise that it is not enough to be right, we need to be listened to as well and lastly, we must recognise, and act on, the fact that we can all learn how to give advice more effectively.



**Guy Dominy**

Director and senior consultant at Seeing More Clearly, UK

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

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

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

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

<sup>2</sup> For the GCS Modern Communications Operating Model see <https://gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/mcom/>

# The unbearable lightness of leadership<sup>1</sup>

By Eugenio Ambrosi

**The International Organization for Migration (IOM), the UN Migration Agency, was established in 1951. IOM is the leading inter-governmental organization in the field of migration and works closely with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners. With 166 member states, a further 8 states holding observer status and offices in over 100 countries, IOM is dedicated to promoting humane and orderly migration for the benefit of all. It does so by providing services and advice to governments and migrants. IOM works to help ensure the orderly and humane management of migration, to promote international cooperation on migration issues, to assist in the search for practical solutions to migration problems and to provide humanitarian assistance to migrants in need, including refugees and internally displaced people.**

**IOM's Regional Office in Brussels acts as the organization's regional liaison and coordination office to the European Union (EU) and NATO, and provides policy, programme and resource management support to the IOM offices in the EEA plus Switzerland. The regional office supports IOM offices worldwide on EU-related policy, programmes, legislation and cooperation. The Brussels office is also responsible for liaison and partnership with Governments in the region, and routinely provides technical support for the development of national migration frameworks and to strengthen migration governance and management systems. All EU Member States (plus Norway and Switzerland) are also Member States of IOM.**

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Failing to address the root causes of migration will mean reducing Mediterranean crossing is only ever a stop-gap solution (Photo: consilium.europa.eu)

Recent election results in Europe, and elsewhere in the world, have given further impetus to a worrying trend that has been taking shape in the last several years. Xenophobic, populist politicians are successfully exploiting public fears and misconceptions about migration to gain electoral strength, which in turn has persuaded mainstream leadership to enact increasingly hard-line migration policy and restrictive measures, primarily to stem flows and reassure constituents. Yet are these policies going to be effective in the long run? Eugenio Ambrosi, IOM Regional Director for the EU, Norway and Switzerland, argues in this opinion piece that effective leadership on migration cannot afford to cower before extremist political movements, but must take a principled stand and forge a new narrative. This oped was originally published in EUobserver on 18 October 2017.

Contrary to prevailing mainstream political narrative, the recent migration flows across the Mediterranean to Europe are not the problem. But they have exposed the real problems we face.

The most significant of these is the crisis of leadership that has set states against each other, and citizens against newcomers, in a race to the populist bottom.

Migration policy "breakthroughs" are heralded by reduced numbers of people making it to Europe and rewarded inversely by higher poll numbers and more votes. These indicators tell us nothing about how migration is really being handled, but a lot about the current state of migration governance.

The numbers game is playing out as mainstream policies continue to move towards the populist right, where xenophobia is the ruling principle, in what has been described as a tactical move to 'neutralise' extremist parties and recover their voting base. Instead, pandering to anti-migrant sentiment legitimises and strengthens them.

Extremist forces have therefore become the policy setters and opinion-leaders. Ironically, they are the ones, in their fashion, demonstrating the most convincing leadership, and adherence to their values. It looks as if we have lost our faith in visionary leadership, and the attractive power of optimism, integrity and commitment to the fundamental values that constitute our moral compass.

## Dark side of history

Migration has been for far too long an issue around which politicians can win or lose elections. And unfortunately, success in gaining votes is all too often contingent upon the fear whipped up among constituents toward migrants or migration. And yet, the dark side of our recent history should remind us of the deadly downward spiral that fear-mongering entails.

People in Europe have legitimate concerns about the arrival of immigrants and we recognise how this can create uncertainty and scepticism. However, we also see that certain politicians

1 <https://euobserver.com/opinion/139507> - 18 October 2017

and political groups deliberately distort the picture to generate unreasonable fears and panic for short term gains.

We are facing systemic, structural challenges that can only be met with longer-term, strategic solutions. However, some politicians find it expedient to draw attention away from the systemic problems, leaving migrants exposed to bear the brunt of public fears and frustrations and scapegoated for failed social policies.

Reducing flows in itself has a real positive effect on the root causes of irregular migration only when no harm is done to the people we should be protecting and assisting and if not detrimental to the communities hosting people in transit or back in home countries.

Containment tactics such as reinforced borders and over-reliance on forced returns only serve to 'kick the can down the road' and exacerbate the root causes whenever they are not balanced by more legal routes, community-based stability, reintegration and development initiatives.

We are also witnessing the downplay of recent key international commitments on migration and rights such as contained in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the New York Declaration to be realised in the Global Compact on Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration next year. It is striking, and worrying, that these international commitments are not fully reflected in our political actions when addressing migratory flows. This does not bode well for the future.

The drafting of the Global Compact on Migration represents a historic opportunity for the international community to put an end to ad-hoc, fragmented and emergency-based response. The EU and member states have the expertise, experience and responsibility to take a leading role in shaping the Global Compact and building a system for human mobility where people can move safely, legally and voluntarily in full respect of their human rights.

Leaders need to step up and offer a new narrative that puts the fundamental rights, needs and vulnerabilities of everyone on the move at the center of migration policy instead of the overarching focus on reducing the number of arrivals. The measure of successful policy should not be only a decrease in arrival numbers but an increase in the well-being, protection and integration of migrants, which we know from experience benefits communities and the larger society.

## Next election vs next generation?

James Freeman Clarke, the 19th century American theologian and author once said, "A politician thinks of the next election. A statesman, of the next generation."

Young and working-age migrants also represent a future generation. We need to tirelessly remind our public of migration's overwhelmingly positive contributions to the economic and social dynamism of home and host societies. Political leadership at all levels from global to local is essential.

There is no ready-made model for the governance of social diversity and none that may be universally applicable, but we must reaffirm a common base of core, universal values, that form the bedrock of our ambition to create policies for harmonious societies.

If we fail to do this, the deeply ingrained problems that lead to forced displacement and irregular migration will simply continue to fester and grow and risk creating a generation of trapped people who can become easier prey to criminal and extremist groups.

Is this our legacy?



Eugenio Ambrosi is the Director of IOM's Regional Office for the EU, Norway and Switzerland. Prior to this, he was the Senior Regional Adviser for Europe and Central Asia in the Office of the Director General at IOM's Headquarters in Geneva. Mr. Ambrosi came to

IOM in 1991 where he has since held senior positions including Director for the Regional Office in Buenos Aires and Director of the Dakar Regional Office. He has extensive experience and knowledge of European issues and IOM policies, programmes and operations, in addition to several years of executive experience with IOM's Regional Bureau for Africa and the Middle East. Mr. Ambrosi is a Master in Law and holds a Post Graduate degree in International Law and Multilateral Diplomacy.

# Smart Migration? How Mobile Phones and Social Networks are Transforming Refugee Experiences

By Marie Gillespie

*Providing reliable and timely information and news to refugees should be regarded as a humanitarian matter of life or death, not feared as facilitating migration to Europe, and it should be integral to “smart migration” in terms of policy and practice.*

This article is based on research that investigated the parallel tracks of the physical and digital journeys of Syrian refugees, and the role played by smartphones in shaping migration movements and the experiences of refugees. The research was carried out by The Open University and France Médias Monde from September 2015 to April 2016. It documented the media and information resources used by refugees via smartphones from the point of departure, during their journeys across different borders and states, and upon arrival in Europe - if they manage to reach their desired destination. The ensuing report 'Mapping Refugee Media Journeys: Smartphones and Social Media Networks' was published in May 2016<sup>1</sup>.

The research identified a huge gap in the provision of relevant, reliable and timely information for refugees. The research team used the research to submit evidence to the European Commission about the news and information resources required to enable refugees to make better-informed decisions. We also appealed to European Member States to fulfil their obligations under the UN Refugee Convention 1951. As signatories to the Convention, they are obliged to provide information about national legislation relating to refugees and to cooperate with the United Nations High Commission on Refugees in its timely and ordered dissemination. There is an urgent need for a common European policy and approach to tackling this deficit in news and information.

This article gives an overview of the key findings of our research on smartphone uses among refugees. It points to some lessons learned based on an assessment of state-of-the-art digital resources for and by refugees. A set of 8 principles are distilled from our research that can be used by any group aiming to provide refugees with digital support via smartphones. Hopefully these may inform future developments in the field. Further reflections arising from our findings are offered on what “smart migration” might mean as a concept and what it might entail for policy and practice – for refugees, humanitarian workers, governments, policymakers, civil society groups and NGOs.

1 For the full report see [http://www.open.ac.uk/ccig/sites/www.open.ac.uk/ccig/files/Mapping%20Refugee%20Media%20Journeys%2016%20May%20FIN%20MG\\_0.pdf](http://www.open.ac.uk/ccig/sites/www.open.ac.uk/ccig/files/Mapping%20Refugee%20Media%20Journeys%2016%20May%20FIN%20MG_0.pdf)

## One Year On

One year on from the height of Europe's refugee crisis and the situation seems less critical this summer. The EU-Turkey deal has reduced flows of refugees coming out of Turkey to a trickle compared to last August when, for example, on the island of Lesbos alone, two thousand refugees landed daily. Even so, refugees continue to make dangerous journeys to Europe via Libya. Then and now, Greece and Germany have borne the brunt of the responsibility for providing protection for refugees. Most other European nations have turned their backs: they have tightened, closed and militarized borders, and continue to squabble over the low numbers of refugees that they are willing to shelter. European governments and policy-makers have mostly failed in their responsibility under the 1951 Refugee Convention to provide protection and security for refugees. A vital but neglected aspect of this is information security: the provision of timely, relevant, well-structured and clear information and news in appropriate languages to assist refugees to access services and humanitarian assistance.

One distinctive feature of the recent human exodus is the widespread use of smartphones by all those who can afford them. But even the poorest of refugees generally have access to a 2G mobile phone. European politicians, policy-makers and publics have all been taken by surprise by the power of the mobile phone and social media to transform the decision-making, journeys and experiences of refugees. In August 2015, for example, the news media were awash with reports that trumpeted the positive value of the smartphone as a “refugee essential”. But as we discovered in our Open University research on this issue, after the 13 November Paris attacks refugees and terrorists became conflated in the public imagination, and the smartphone became ‘a terrorist essential’ – seen as a threat, just like the refugees. News media questioned whether “refugees wielding smartphones” like weapons could be genuine<sup>2</sup>.

There are nevertheless promising opportunities for developing a new kind of “smart”, digital management of migration and refugee flows, and these did not go unnoticed by government officials and humanitarian aid agencies. Indeed, in the last year hundreds of apps have been developed by tech companies large and small, with very honourable intentions to assist refugees in transit and when stuck in camps. . However, as our

2 For further details on the media coverage of these issues, see Chapter One of the Open University Research Report 'Mapping Refugee Media Journeys: Smartphones and Social Media Networks' by Marie Gillespie, Lawrence Ampofo, Margaret Cheesman, Becky Faith, Evgenia Iliadou, Ali Issa, Souad Osseiran, Dimitris Skleparis. Published May 2016.

research discovered, few such apps are widely used by refugees themselves. One key message of our research is that quick tech fixes don't work. Digital resources have to be very carefully designed and planned if they are to be reliable, sustainable, and win refugees' trust.

Never before has it been easier for governments, aid organizations and news media to communicate with and inform refugees. Yet, the provision of vital information for refugees is still hardly a priority for policy-makers and media, and aid organizations have failed to meet the challenge. What has motivated the political failure to provide timely, relevant, clear and well-structured information in the right language? It is part of a wider policy paralysis, due to a fear not only among policy-makers but also among news organizations, that they might be seen to be promoting, encouraging and facilitating refugee movements. The refugee issue is a political football kicked around by populist politicians, feared by governments worried about losing popular support. It is a divisive issue because it has been left to fester. The slow, sclerotic and chaotic approach among European governments to processing refugees and moving them along the asylum application chain is part of the same picture. The resultant situation of information precarity remains damaging and dangerous for refugees, hinders the efforts of the humanitarian community, and prevents effective communication between key actors, slowing up procedures and processes and creating frustration and even a sense of hopelessness. Our research suggests that with more assertive political will to tackle the so called "refugee crisis" and more effective policy-making on a European level, "smart migration" policy and practice could provide part of the solution, alleviating a great deal of human suffering and seeing the situation for what it is - namely a policy crisis. The following definition provides a starting point for thinking about what "smart migration" might involve:

*"Smart migration" refers to the effective deployment of digital tools and resources to complement face-to face, on the ground conversations and non- digital communication (posters, leaflets and hand-drawn maps) in order to create an agile information ecosystem that can facilitate humane and orderly migration policies and procedures.*

*"Smart migration" would enable the rapid circulation of vital information and news by and for, as well as about refugees and migrants. It would improve flows of information and communication between refugees and migrants, governments and authorities, news and humanitarian organisations. And, it would facilitate the digital empowerment and literacy of*

*refugees and support organisations. It would promote the development of a viable digital infrastructure to manage flows of people and information about associated administrative and legal procedures and how to gain access to services.*

*"Smart migration" eschews quick tech fixes and technological determinism. It exploits the social, cultural, economic and political potential of the digital while encouraging vigilance about the increased powers of surveillance, erosion of privacy and the inequalities that inhere in contemporary digital cultures and networks. It is at one and the same time an emerging fact and an aspiration towards a more effective digital management of migration that, with the right kind of political will, is achievable.*

The concept of smart migration as policy and practice is work-in-progress but its origins and rationale emerge from what our research revealed about refugees' digital journeys during the course of 2015-16 set in the wider historical and political context of information and communication technologies for development (ICT4D), refugee and humanitarian communication.

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## The Digital Journey: Opportunities and Threats

Our research underscored the fact that for refugees on the move, the digital infrastructure is as important as the physical infrastructure of roads, railways and sea crossings. Mobile apps, websites, social media, navigation and translation services, camera and audio recording facilities, alongside phone facilities, all combine to make up a digital infrastructure that has become integral to any journey to Europe.

The smartphone is an essential tool for refugees because it provides access to news and information that they depend on for their survival, for example, routes, modes and cost of transport, the opening and closing of borders, and weather conditions for sea crossings. One Syrian refugee echoed what many others told us: "We have three basic needs - a smartphone, water and food - in that order". Another refugee told us how, when his wife was taken ill at the Macedonian border, he was able to tell the border police that she needed urgent and very specialist attention thanks to a translation app on his phone. Another told us that if he had not had a mobile phone he would not have been able to call the coastguards to inform them that their boat was capsizing. He said 50 lives were saved as a result of that call. We have hundreds of stories about how smartphones saved lives on the journey to Europe.



Syrian Refugee Family on the Serbian Border  
Source: France Medias Monde

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Access to web and digital resources via the phone plays a crucial role in planning the different legs of the journey. It can offer a small level of control at a time when refugees feel their lives are at risk. One group of Syrian refugees, for example, told us that when they were passing through Serbia trying to reach the Hungarian border by car, the GPS device helped them to avoid being cheated by dishonest smugglers. They were able to check that they were on the right road and were able to stop the smuggler when they realised he was leading them astray.

Despite being a fundamental necessity, phones are also a threat. The digital traces they leave behind make refugees vulnerable to surveillance by state and non-state actors who now use sophisticated tools for tracking the movement of groups using GPS apps. They also use social media monitoring techniques to access refugee social networks and carry out intensive surveillance of individuals and groups. Camera phones often contain images of the very violence, abuse and/or torture that led refugees to leave their homes and flee in the first place. Such 'digital witnessing' can provide evidence that can contribute to a successful asylum claim. But if those same images of violations of human rights get into the wrong hands, (whether 'Islamic State', Taliban or Pro-regime actors) then refugees may face further dangers and even death. For this reason, many refugees have several sim cards and are extremely careful where they keep such images.

Fears about surveillance, security and privacy are particularly intense when refugees travel illegally using smugglers. In the last year, as Europe's borders have tightened or closed and become more militarised, legal options to cross borders and seek asylum have become more limited. This explains the resort to fake passports for those desperate to escape the uncertainty and snail-like pace of recent relocation and resettlement programmes and the indeterminacy of long waits in refugee camps with deteriorating conditions. What is clear is that the twin processes of criminalization of refugees and the militarisation of borders, has led to the containment and detainment of thousands of refugees in camps - approximately 57,000 in the Greek islands and mainland alone. This has engendered very inhumane treatment of refugees, a loss of dignity, and a deep distrust of European governments to provide them with the information and resources they need or to offer them protection. This is the opposite of 'smart migration'.

Fears of being monitored, detained, abused, refused and deported force refugees to go underground digitally, to use avatars, fake identities and closed Facebook groups where they are exposed to rumours and misinformation, and criminal networks and gangs ready to exploit them. Smugglers advertise on Arabic Facebook groups such as *التهرب إلى الاتحاد الأوروبي* or 'Smuggling into Europe'. This leads to further risks and dangers. A growing concern is the fate of refugees, particularly unaccompanied minors who disappear (6,000 were reported missing last year), girls and women being trafficked and forced into the sex or slave trades, and organs being sold - all facilitated by underground digital networks<sup>3</sup>.

In order to circumvent surveillance Whatsapp and Facebook Messenger are used. They were the most popular apps used by the Syrian refugees that we interviewed because they are encrypted, so messages can't be monitored. It is used to circulate vital information such as the map below 'The Road to Germany' sent via Whatsapp by refugees that we interviewed in Paris. Place names are shown in Arabic, English and Greek and the means of transport and the cost of each leg of the journey is displayed. You can even see the currency you need to use at each stage of the journey.

<sup>3</sup> See <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/12/almost-6000-refugee-children-missing-last-year-germany> accessed 31.08.16 and <https://new-int.org/features/2014/05/01/organ-trafficking-keynote/> accessed 31.08.16



Three of the principles above are essential in providing resources for refugees:

- **Design with the User.** Include all user groups in planning, development, implementation, and assessment.
- **Design for scale.** Be replicable and customizable in other countries and contexts.
- **Build for sustainability.** Plan for sustainability from the start, including planning for long-term financial health, e.g. assessing total cost of ownership.

## Bottom-up innovation approach: important determinants

Further pointers can be drawn from the UN Innovation Unit which collaborates with UNHCR Divisions, refugees, academics, and the private sector to address complex refugee challenges. Their annual report, like the DFID guidelines, places strong emphasis on user involvement at all stages of a project and the importance of establishing a very clear set of aims according to which success or failure can be assessed<sup>12</sup>. Progress indicators should include the extent to which:

- the refugee community/groups are involved from conception to completion and help drive the design process and delivery of the project
- the solution addresses a specific challenge that has been clearly defined
- a demand is created to adapt the resource for use in different contexts and locations.
- a holistic approach involving a broad coalition of actors is developed that goes beyond quick tech fixes
- monitoring and evaluation is carried out at all stages of the project and involves different actors/ beneficiaries and multiple perspectives.

It is also vital to understand what people affected by conflict can contribute to a 'bottom-up' innovation approach. A recent report on Humanitarian Innovation suggests that

*Although 'humanitarian innovation' has been increasingly embraced by the humanitarian world, this kind of 'bottom-up' innovation by crisis-affected communities is often neglected in favour of a sector-wide focus on improving the effectiveness of organisational response to crisis. This oversight disregards the capabilities and adaptive resourcefulness that people and communities affected by conflict and disaster often demonstrate.*<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> See report available at <http://innovation.unhcr.org/report2014/> accessed 03.02.16

<sup>13</sup> To access the report visit <http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/refugee-innovation-humanitarian-innovation-that-starts-with-communities> accessed 03.02.16

This is a very important observation and an essential feature of the kind of "smart migration" that I am advocating here. The creation of new apps and digital tools should always begin by consulting potential users in order to find innovative ways of involving and empowering refugees and migrants to articulate and formulate responses to information and communication problems, and to devise solutions to the challenges that they face.

Organisations need to make sure that their aims in taking on a digital project for refugees are consistent with the overall strategic goals of the organization itself. It is surprising how often the goals of organisations and developers are at odds, as recent work by Aspiration Tech points out<sup>14</sup>. So organisations need to ask the following kinds of questions: Has the intended audience affirmed a need for the proposed digital resource? Have the barriers to accessing and engaging with the resource been addressed? Has a plan to overcome barriers been put in place? How will the project build credibility and gain buy-in from key stakeholders? How will the project work openly and transparently in order to be accountable to both sponsors and project stakeholders? As well as such questions, for every project, the prospect of what precisely will constitute success and/or failure must be considered right from the start<sup>15</sup>.

## Secure design of 'smart' technologies for refugees

As with the DFID guidelines mentioned above, the advice from Aspiration Tech is that new projects created 'from scratch' come with higher risks and hidden costs. They suggest that where possible new digital ventures should seek to improve existing software or web-based tools, and to build on existing, proven components is a best practice. However, if starting from scratch and building a new design, a thorough field scan is absolutely essential. Furthermore, any security issues and risks associated with the project need to be taken into account from the outset. Migrant and refugee projects always involve security risks and threats as outlined above.

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, the work of Aspiration Tech at <http://taitech.theideabureau.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/AspirationWebinarReviewingTechProposals031615-1.pdf> ; <http://taitech.theideabureau.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/AspirationWebinarReviewingTechProposals031615-1.pdf> and <http://tech.transparency-initiative.org/notes-from-webinar-checklists-for-reviewing-technology-funding-proposals/>. All accessed 03.02.16

<sup>15</sup> The Open University, for example, have devised a conceptual and methodological tool, The Cultural Value Model, which can be flexibly adapted and used by organisations to assess the relative success and failure of digital projects and resources in international and multilingual contexts. It builds on the principles outlined in this paper. For examples, see project website and scroll down to the end of the page to access research reports <http://www.open.ac.uk/researchprojects/diasporas/cvp>

They also involve sensitive topics or subjects that could pose risks to staff, users, activists and others, so these need to be factored in. If data is being collected that could potentially put a user at risk, the user should be told in clear language before their information is collected to acquire “informed consent”.

Security issues are explored in greater depth in a guide for secure application development for NGOs by Eleanor Saitta – a hacker, designer, artist and writer who set up Dymaxion, an innovative tech start-up company.

Building tools that support better security outcomes for high-risk groups requires a deep understanding of what those groups are trying to accomplish. Too often, development teams build tools to support what they think people should be doing and not what the people actually need to do. The details of user community/team cultures need to be understood deeply and carried throughout the entire development process<sup>16</sup>

Developers need rigorously to examine and assess the risks and threats faced by high risk and vulnerable users and act accordingly. Building software that helps people accomplish their goals when they have adversaries means building software that has specific security properties. Security design should, whenever possible, be done as part of a participatory design process. Understanding what design properties are useful in a given situation is often not easy for designers who may not understand the political and cultural context of their users. The security design process requires a working understanding of what kinds of adversaries people are facing, what resources those adversaries have at their disposal, how those adversaries are likely to use their resources, and how the situation is likely to change over time. It also means understanding the resources people have at their disposal and the strategies they already use to avoid their adversaries. Much of this information may be confidential and sometimes extremely sensitive. Proper discretion in the security design process is critical.

## Right to privacy

Protecting the privacy of users is another crucial aspect to consider when creating digital resources for refugees and migrants. Oxfam, for example, has created a policy which is intended to respect the privacy of its beneficiaries' data which any providers of digital and other information resources for refugees would do well to take into account<sup>17</sup>.

Oxfam and its agents will: (i) ensure a participant's right to privacy in the treatment of his/her data and has a responsibility to protect the identity of those providing data, unless otherwise outlined and agreed to in the informed consent; (ii) not collect non-essential data that could put participants at risk without justification and a clear process for managing and mitigating that risk; (iii) take all reasonable measures to ensure that the process of data collection and the totality of the data lifecycle have no negative physical, psychological, or political consequences for the participants; (iv) store all high-risk data securely.

Techfugees, the non-profit tech community response initiative, also provides useful guidelines that highlight the importance of security and privacy<sup>18</sup>: (i) Remember that there may be significant risk to life, and therefore anonymity/privacy for refugees may be critical; (ii) As well as helping refugees directly, you should see if you can help NGOs; (iii) Don't build anything unless you have ongoing contact with a real user you can test it with; (iv) If you are building something for refugees, how are they going to find out it exists?

## Eight best practice principles

On the basis of such a comprehensive study of relevant guidelines and principles, our research concluded with a distillation of the most important to consider. Hence, it seems that digital resources for refugees and migrants should be:

- **User-centred:** user involvement from design to implementation is vital
- **Secure and Private:** crucial
- **Strategic:** aligning organisational strategy with tech output is a must as is ensuring that the resource produced has a clear strategic goal
- **Pragmatic:** Consider reusing/repurposing of existing resources rather than creating from scratch
- **Novel:** Ensure effective field scanning to ensure that the project does not replicate an existing resource and has a Unique Selling Point (USP)
- **Trustworthy:** resources must be trustworthy
- **Accessible:** must be easily accessible – cost, technology, language and literacy
- **Sustainable:** long term planning and resourcing is vital to ensure that an initiative is not launched and then abandoned.

<sup>16</sup> The paper is available at <https://dymaxion.org/essays/ngodevsecpart1.html> accessed 03.02.16

<sup>17</sup> See <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/oxfam-responsible-program-data-policy-5759500> accessed 03.02.15

<sup>18</sup> See <https://techfugees.com/> accessed 03.02.16

## Concluding recommendations

Despite the initiatives outlined above, the field is fragmented, and many are not well resourced or sustainable. And if an app is not kept up to date it can provide misleading information which can be as dangerous as no information. Quick Tech fixes don't work. Our research called for the European Commission to play a role in facilitating better provision of information and news from trusted sources for refugees via mobile apps and other digital resources. It called for a new EU "smart migration" strategy that would start by tackling the lack of relevant, reliable and timely news and information for refugees. Our call to action involved the following recommendations.

- First, each EU Member State, given the huge differences in policy and implementation between them, needs to collate, curate and communicate the necessary information for refugees with regard to safe passage, relocation and resettlement – including about relevant laws, housing, social services, medical treatment, education, culture, the labour market, and the acquisition of skill-sets.
- Second, the European Commission should monitor the quality, accuracy and credibility of the information and news provided for refugees and facilitate their digital empowerment.
- Third, The European Commission should facilitate new partnerships between member states and institutions, international news services, tech companies, network providers, NGOs, and academics and involve refugees actively to help crowd source knowledge and know-how and create an appropriate digital infrastructure to enable the right kind of information eco-system to underpin humane smart migration practice and policy.

Above all, any resource must be user-led and trusted, but sadly trust is in short supply. The good news is that the European Commission have just agreed to fund such an initiative (at present, details are not available) and we will report back in due course on its progress and development. Let's hope it might take on board what a fully comprehensive "smart migration" policy and practice might entail.

## Acknowledgments

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Your feedback and comments on the research and this article would be very welcome and for further information contact [marie.gillespie@open.ac.uk](mailto:marie.gillespie@open.ac.uk)

Marie Gillespie is Professor of Sociology at The Open University and Co-Director of the Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change

Margaret Cheesman was Research Assistant on the Mapping Refugee Media Journeys project. She is an Associate Researcher at the Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change at the Open University. She is currently pursuing the Masters Programme in Digital Anthropology at the University College London.



Marie Gillespie is Professor of Sociology at the Open University. Her teaching and research interests revolve around media and migration, trans-national and diasporic cultures, religion and social change. Books include: *Social Media, Religion and Spirituality; Diasporas and Diplomacy: Cosmopolitan Contact Zones at the BBC World Service and Drama for Development: Cultural Translation and Social Change*. Her recent research includes projects on forced and irregular displacement and digital connectivity, artistic and cultural diplomacy especially in conflict zones.

# Without migration, the world as we know it would not exist

An interview with Julien Simon - ICMPD, by the EUROMED Migration IV communications team

## Interview

*Julien Simon is the head of the Regional Coordination Office for the Mediterranean of the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD). The office opened in May 2016, and is hosted by the Republic of Malta. It is currently home to several Mediterranean initiatives, including EUROMED Migration IV (EMM4) and Mediterranean City-to-City Migration (MC2CM).*

### 1. Mr Simon, the ICMPD opened its coordination office for the Mediterranean in May 2016 in Malta – what is your approach and which initiatives are you implementing in the region?

First of all, thank you for the opportunity to address your readers and provide some insights into ICMPD in the Mediterranean. We are an intergovernmental migration expert organization, which specializes in supporting governments in developing better, evidence-based and forward-looking migration policies. These policies encompass various aspects of migration such as immigration, transit migration, emigration, protection, the role of diasporas and others. As you know, migration is at the heart of the Mediterranean political agenda. The region is at the centre of public attention and sees a significant investment in terms of migration cooperation. ICMPD is here to support this cooperation.

ICMPD is a dialogue facilitator in nature, which bridges Europe with its Southern Neighbourhood and contributes to defining common ground for cooperation on migration. Since its foundation 25 years ago with the Budapest Process, ICMPD has supported a number of political and technical intergovernmental dialogues on migration. In addition to the Budapest Process, ICMPD supports the Valletta Process, the Khartoum Process, the Rabat Process, the Prague Process, the EUROMED Migration Programme and the MTM Dialogue. Just to give you an idea of what we do in concrete terms I would like to briefly highlight one of our most innovative initiatives in the region: the "MC2CM" project which looks at Mediterranean City-to-City-Migration. In an increasingly urbanised world where an estimated two thirds of the population will live in cities by 2050, and with one out of five migrants already living in the 20 largest cities, most migration movements are urban-bound. Yet, these final destinations – the cities were not involved as key stakeholders in shaping migration policies until recently. For years, ICMPD has been advocating for national governments to dialogue and consult cities on migration policies and migration cooperation frameworks. We believe that cities on both sides of the Mediterranean can learn a lot from each other. By bringing together local authorities, MC2CM facilitates peer-to-peer learning among cities. Furthermore, we support greater cooperation and the development of consolidated migration policies by connecting cities with central governments. We strongly believe in such an approach.

We also tackle a number of pressing challenges faced by the region and work closely with Libya for instance to support the development of migration governance in the country and integrate the emergency or crisis focused actions currently undertaken in a long-term institutional capacity development.

### What is the ICMPD?

The International Centre for Migration Policy Development is a key player in the migration field. The organization has 15 member states and carries out activities throughout the world, including Sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia.

The Vienna-based organisation has a mission in Brussels and duty stations in other 18 countries. Founded in 1993, ICMPD serves as a support mechanism for informal consultations and provides expertise in multilateral cooperation on migration issues. The principles of partnership and balancing of interests are the foundation of the organisation. The ICMPD has also established the Vienna Migration Conference as its annual flagship event promoting collaboration on critical issues in the field of migration.

For more info, go to <https://www.icmpd.org/home/>



### 2. You recently published a study on the media on both sides of the Mediterranean and their role in reporting on migration. What was the origin of such a study? And what are its main findings?

This is indeed an innovative publication – mainly because it is not an academic study, but a 17-countries study by journalists for journalists and policy-makers, who analysed migration reporting in 2015/16. It was implemented under EUROMED Migration IV, which commissioned the Ethical Journalism Network to conduct the study.

### EUROMED Migration IV – a migration policy dialogue for both sides of the Mediterranean

EUROMED Migration IV (EMM4, 2016-2019) is a program funded by the European Union (EU), led by the Directorate-General for Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) of the EU Commission. The ICMPD implements this migration flagship program whose overall objective is to support EU Member States and its Southern Partner Countries in establishing a comprehensive, constructive and operational dialogue and co-operation framework. Its particular focus is on reinforcing instruments and capacities to develop and implement evidence-based and coherent migration and international protection policies and activities. The EMM4 actively engages with a broad variety of stakeholders including government authorities, international organizations and civil society representatives, academia, and the media.

For more info, go to <https://www.icmpd.org/our-work/migration-dialogues/euromed-migration-iv/>



EUROMED  
MIGRATION  
هجرة

The background of the study is this: ICMPD, the European Commission and the Italian Presidency of the Council of the EU organised a EUROMED Migration Conference in 2014 on “*Changing the narrative – Fostering a positive approach to migration in the Mediterranean*”. At this event, visibility and communication were highlighted as topics requiring more effort, notably towards a broader audience in general - and civil society and the media in particular. It was agreed that a communication strategy encompassing ways and means to disseminate information more efficiently should be developed and implemented. The study on migration media reporting was a first step in this direction, and with the next steps we are currently undertaking, we aim to pave the way towards such actions. Another related action is the ongoing development of the “Migration Media Hub” which will be a web portal bringing together migration-related content for journalists and media managers. We are planning to launch it in English, French and Arabic in Spring 2018.

At the origins of our efforts is the recognition that the media plays a strong role in informing its respective populations on migration, as well as its challenges and opportunities. We wanted to know: how was the media doing that, what were the shortcomings, and how to better engage the media in enabling them to contribute to people's understanding of the complexity of migration?

Most of the work was done in 2016 and we launched the study in May this year. The title of our Press Release was “Media under-equipped to cover migration” since this was one of its main findings. Although the study did highlight the abundance of high quality journalism on migration, there is also the general issue of journalists on both sides of the Mediterranean being poorly informed on the complex nature of migration as a phenomenon; newsrooms are vulnerable to pressure and manipulation by voices of hate, whether from political elites or social networks. Thus, the study provides a series of recommendations, calls for training, better funding of media actions and other activities to foster more balanced and fact-based journalism on immigration, emigration, integration, asylum and other migration-related challenges.

One of the other most interesting findings was the fact that only 2 out of 17 authors – all of whom are journalists – mentioned and analysed reporting on the emigration of the country's nationals, as opposed to the other 15 authors focusing solely on immigration rather than addressing the phenomenon holistically. This is of great concern to us as we see a strong tendency - by the media and policy-makers - to reduce a complex phenomenon to only one element, namely immigration, or even further to irregular immigration. Such a perception is very limited and can strongly influence our governments' ability to develop sound migration policies.

## Media Under-equipped to Cover Migration



Media in many countries on both sides of the Mediterranean are under-resourced and unable to provide the time, money and appropriate level of expertise needed to tell the migration story in context. This is the main finding of the study “How does the media on both sides of the Mediterranean report on migration?” which was published in May 2017 by the EMM4.

The program had commissioned the Ethical Journalism Network (EJN) in November 2016 to conduct this study for which journalists from 17 countries examined the quality of migration media coverage in 2015/16 from a national perspective. The study covers nine EU countries: Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Malta, Spain, Sweden and eight countries in the south of the Mediterranean: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia.

It finds that journalists are often poorly informed about the complex nature of migration as a phenomenon; newsrooms are also vulnerable to pressure and manipulation by voices of hate. The study also highlights inspirational examples of journalism at its best -resourceful, painstaking, and marked by careful, sensitive and humanitarian reporting. Moreover, it provides a series of detailed recommendations and calls for training, better funding of media action and other activities to support and foster more balanced and fact-based journalism on immigration, emigration, integration, asylum and other migration-related challenges.

To access the study, go to [https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/2017/Media\\_Migration\\_17\\_country\\_chapters.pdf](https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/2017/Media_Migration_17_country_chapters.pdf)

### 3. Let us talk more about this – the so-called “narrative on migration”. What is it and why is your organization investing more resources into better understanding it?

Migration is not a new phenomenon. In fact, it is one of the oldest forms of human development and interactions. Without migration the world as we know it would not exist. Unfortunately, we are nowadays witnessing an increasingly dangerous trend of focusing on the negative narrative of migration, which is already influencing major political trends in Europe. Just look at the main arguments of the pros behind the Brexit or the rise of the anti-immigration far-right across Europe. We do believe that sensible migration policies must take into account the negative public perceptions and address people's fears. But forthcoming measures need to show that migration can be managed rather than endured to ensure successful migration policies. The narrative on migration has a very important role to play here.

In 2006, the Bureau of European Policy Advisors (BEPA) issued a report entitled “Migration and public perception”. One of their main findings – and this is over ten years ago – was that no migration policy, and I quote, “*will be effective unless issues relating to public perception of migration are explicitly addressed. Justified concerns have to be tackled and misperceptions have to be cleared up, without presenting an overly optimistic view of the migration challenge.*” I recall this quote because it is so important for policy-makers and all those who influence public attitudes towards migration, including the media and many other drivers.

Our view is that the narrative on migration needs to be balanced. As it is predominantly negative at the moment, our objective is to “re-balance” this narrative on migration, and that is a big challenge. Legitimate concerns of host and transit societies must be addressed, but at the same time we must demonstrate what numerous studies have already proven: that migration also brings a lot of opportunities, such as engaging diasporas, the influence of successful migrants on societies, culturally diverse cities and an overall net contributor to development. In the current context, feelings rather than reason steer our orientations on such sensitive matters. An increasingly “toxic” migration narrative impacts and literally impedes governments’ ability to develop and propose reasonable medium- and long-term policy options.

#### i.Map Migration Media Hub



The i.Map is an initiative by the ICMED, implemented under EMM4. Capitalising on more than 10 years of experience, the upcoming i.Map will strengthen migration governance through various digital Hubs. The Migration Media Hub will be one of 4 hubs aimed at empowering media, through coherent migration information and data sets. It will provide high-end migration reporting and present a balanced and fact-based narrative on migration. The Migration Media Hub will:

- Aggregate **news** in French, English and Arabic, drawing on a wide variety of reputable sources;
- Highlight **innovative and high-quality media initiatives related to migration** in the EUROMED region;
- Promote and showcase the Migration Media Award;
- Provide **reporting guidelines, and codes of conduct for journalists** reporting on migration;

#### 4. It is an interesting perspective to bring people’s perceptions and attitudes towards migration and migration policy-making together – are you conducting any related activities?

As mentioned before, people’s attitudes towards migration are already among the key influencers towards recent major political decisions in Europe. As migration experts, we are very concerned that migration is not perceived as a neutral phenomenon. In fact, the tendency of reducing this phenomenon in people and policy makers’ minds to immigration solely and more specifically on irregular migration is very risky.

We think that one of the main drivers for people’s attitudes is the media, which is the reason why we commissioned EJM to conduct our 17-country study. Working with specialised partners, we keep on learning and uncovering the complexity of the interactions at play. In this regard, the media are only one of many drivers. Furthermore, we have learned that people’s attitudes towards migration cannot be disentangled from people’s general values. These attitudes are part of a set of values and principles encompassed within individuals. Also, education, socialisation and many other aspects play an important role in shaping these attitudes. In order to continue our efforts and build solid foundations for our actions, we are planning to collaborate with the recently launched Observatory of Public Attitudes to Migration (OPAM) on a study entitled “*What people think about migration – and what might make them change their attitude*”. The study will look into migration-related opinion polls on both sides of the Mediterranean: how were they

conducted? What are the main findings? Are there differences between Europe and its Southern partner countries? These are just some of the questions, which the study to be published in summer 2018 will address.

#### 5. As you know, the Club of Venice gathers spokespersons and communication strategists from various EU Member States. What role can and should we, as government communicators, play when it comes to migration-related issues?

I believe that communication strategists need to realize and recognise that the recent and current European approach to migration is predominantly a “crisis communication” approach, namely considering, describing, treating and reacting to migration as a “crisis”. It is therefore very important to shed the light on the fact that this migration “crisis” is not a crisis of numbers, but rather a crisis of management.

The reality is that Europe is perfectly capable of accepting a large number of migrants numerically speaking; however, what is being demonstrated is that Europe is lacking a solid mechanism and a united front in dealing with these numbers thus showcasing that it is unable to handle an influx of immigrants - ergo dubbing it as a “crisis”.

Here comes the very pivotal role of communicators in balancing the narrative on migration. By explaining the phenomenon holistically and focusing on migration as a theme that goes beyond immigration, communicators can influence both policy-makers and the public in shifting the narrative to a less negative and more forward-looking, balanced one. Communication efforts are needed to preserve migration as the phenomenon that it is, and communicators have the opportunity to lead the rebalancing of the narrative on migration.

The language and wording we choose is one of the most important elements here - we see for instance an increase in governments referring to their diasporas as expatriate communities, or even “expats” to further anchor the familiarity of the term applicable to “us”. Europeans benefit from an incredible level of mobility both within and outside the EU. Let us recognise and face it: we are very privileged. So, rather than considering our fellow citizens abroad as emigrants - which according to the UN definition of a migrant is what they are in most cases - we distance ourselves from this phenomenon by using different terminology. As far as I know, the only country in Europe which still refers to its citizens abroad as emigrants and its communities of citizens abroad as diaspora is Ireland. But Europe is also a beacon of collective achievements and as such, remains an example influencing others and a reference point to emulate. Many countries in the Mediterranean no longer refer to their own citizens abroad as migrants but expatriates. National communities residing abroad are further pushing the use of “migrants” to refer to a phenomenon which describes “the others”, the foreign, even limited to “irregular immigrants”, and endured by the concerned country of transit or destination. What will happen when, due to its overall pejorative perception, governments refuse to use the term “migrant” for their nationals abroad in favour of using “expatriates”? Will migration and its related terminologies become obsolete?

## Rewarding top quality journalism on migration: the Migration Media Award

A media award recognizes high quality journalism in a certain area to highlight the topic and contribute to the critical role which media play in society – and that is exactly why the EMM4 teamed up in November 2016 with the Open Media Hub (OMH), also funded by DG NEAR, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), and the Maltese Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Together, they created and established the first-ever Migration Media Award, launched under the Maltese EU presidency in January 2017. Its first edition rewarded 35 outstanding pieces of journalistic work dealing with migration in the Euro-Mediterranean region in all its aspects. Over 100 already published journalistic pieces had been evaluated according to journalistic criteria, alongside with an evaluation of a proposal for a second production. The award consists of winning an EU-funded contract to produce a journalistic piece covering other aspects of migration or the issue initially dealt with.

Set in the beautiful Upper Barrakka Gardens of Valletta, Malta, the first award ceremony of the Migration Media Award on 14 June 2017 was a success with over 150 people in attendance including ambassadors, high government officials and high-level media personalities. The twelve 1st prize winners in four categories in three languages were awarded with a certificate and a trophy. The release of the 35 awardees' funded second productions has already started and can be accessed at [www.migration-media-award.eu](http://www.migration-media-award.eu). A call for entries to the award scheme's second edition is scheduled to start in January 2018, while the award ceremony will take place during June 2018.

To know more about the MMA, go to <http://www.migration-media-award.eu/en/>



## 6. You will soon attend the 2017 plenary meeting of the Club of Venice. Which messages are you planning to convey to our colleagues?

I am very grateful for the invitation and pleased to be attending this meeting in Venice. I highly appreciate the work the Club of Venice is doing and would like to sincerely extend a cooperative hand to tackle together one of the biggest public policy challenges we are facing in the first half of this century.

Within the framework of ICMPD's outreach policies, and more specifically through EMM4's work plan, we are continuously looking to work with the right partners – and we believe that the Club of Venice is one of them as migration experts and communication strategists need to work hand-in-hand and better together, in Europe and beyond. Given the current narrative on migration in the Mediterranean and the urging need to put more efforts and invest in communication strategies and planning, I hope to learn more about what individual EU governments are already doing or considering in terms of "communicating migration". I will also emphasize that we wish to collaborate with you as we believe that migration-savvy journalists and communication strategists can contribute a lot to re-balancing the migration narrative. This will ultimately support better migration policy-making, which is of strategic importance in Europe today.

I look forward to meeting and discussing with other participants and members of the Club of Venice.

Thank you for the interview!

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**Julien Simon is Regional Coordinator for the Mediterranean at the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)**

**He has been working with ICMPD since 2001 holding different positions namely Senior Programme Manager and Head of the Secretariat of the Mediterranean Transit Migration Dialogue at ICMPD Headquarters in Vienna and Team Leader of the EUROMED Migration III at ICMPD Brussels Mission.**

**In 2016, he moved to Malta where he assumed the position of Regional Coordinator and Head of the ICMPD Regional Coordination Office for the Mediterranean. In this role, he oversees regional programmes such as EUROMED Migration IV, Mediterranean City-to-City Migration, the Euro-Mediterranean Migration Media Award, and staff in various offices in the region e.g. Amman, Beirut and Tunis.**

**Mr. Simon holds significant migration experience over the course of his career particularly migration cooperation between Africa, Europe and the Middle East. He has managed a portfolio of large initiatives of multilateral, multi-thematic and complex nature and developed a wide range of expertise covering areas such as: migration dialogue facilitation; migration governance and inter-institutional cooperation and coordination. He conceptualised the development of the migration governance process and migration governance tool; information sharing mechanisms and migration knowledge management, and notably created the Interactive Map on Migration (i.Map) platform; in addition to tackling specific themes such as irregular and mixed migration, migration and development, urban governance of migration, and communication on migration and notably developed the Euro-Mediterranean Migration Media Award.**

# Being driven by dignity and ethics: Doctor Bartolo's example

By Vincenzo Le Voci

In our editorial, we stressed the need to fulfil our tasks as public communicators driven by our sense of responsibility towards our community. This pre-condition to perform our job efficiently must prevail in all circumstances. Communication is meaningful only if we are driven by ethics, focusing on and responding to *social demand*, striving to make it emerge and make it intelligible<sup>1</sup>.

In this new number of *Convergences* we mentioned our moving experience with the seminar/study visit to migrants' and refugees' centres in Greece on 23/24 September 2017.

What we've seen in Greece is indeed a matter of pride for the governmental authorities and their local administrators. This event enabled us to appreciate the progress made in handling this complex crisis in the year after the Club seminar in Lesbos in April 2016. We noticed how far one can go by improving and structuring both internal and external communication and by acting in close cooperation with the EU, the UNHCR and other volunteer organisations to handle such a complex crisis.

Athens, Thebes, Livadia, Thessaloniki and many other locations are setting examples on how to contribute together to facilitating integration and coexistence with the local population, sharing responsibilities and communicating beforehand with the internal audiences on how these topics are handled. Citizens' understanding, their involvement and pro-active participation in the democratic process, and their trust in authorities can only come from this collective effort and from full interaction.

But before Greece, we attended another seminar in Malta on 18/19 May in presence of Pietro Bartolo, a doctor from Lampedusa. Since the very preliminary steps of the preparation of the event, I was determined to invite him in order to hear one of the most genuine voices from the migration front line.

Pietro accepted to join us immediately and delivered a memorable contribution which left us speechless, showing



some deeply moving pictures from his professional experience during the rescues and first aid operations. I saw some of the participants in tears, others shocked by the images he was showing us. Myself as a moderator I had to take a long breath before resuming the debate.

Pietro Bartolo said that he is "the saddest world record holder of the identification of dead bodies" drowned in the deep blue Mediterranean sea.

The island of Lampedusa has been in the heart of the crisis since the very beginning.



This beautiful, peaceful little piece of land of 22 square kilometres with its white sandy beaches has been experiencing one of the most epochal crises of our modern times. Two years ago the barycentre of the migration waves seemed to have moved to the Balkan countries, but when the March 2016 joint EU-Turkey statement started to be implemented it deviated again towards the Centre-Mediterranean area.

The migratory process then started again from North Africa, mainly towards the Italian coasts - and Lampedusa has again come under the spotlight. Lampedusa is not only an island: it's the heart, the priceless spontaneous hospitality, the open arms of its people, and the humanity of doctor Bartolo.

Pietro Bartolo recently took part in the film-documentary "Fuocoammare" directed by Gianfranco Rosi, who won the Golden Bear Prize in Berlin in February 2016 and also earned a nomination at the 2017 Oscars.

He was also awarded the 2015 "Vieira de Mello" Prize in Poland for distinguishing himself among "those who worked hard for the pacific coexistence and cooperation between societies, religions and culture". He also won the 2016 "Franco-German Prize for Human Rights" in Berlin from the Foreign Ministers Steinmeier and Ayrault, as well as the 2016 International Prize "Padre Pino Puglisi" in Palermo.

<sup>1</sup> see Robert Castel. *La sociologie et la réponse à la demande sociale*. *Revue Sociologie du travail*, n°2, vol. 42, avril-juin 2000, pp. 281-287.

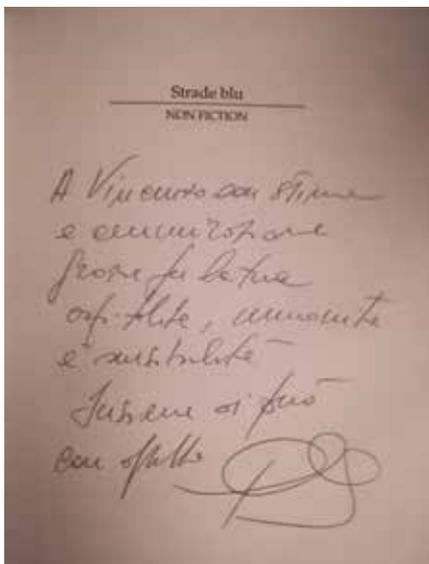
In September 2016 Pietro published with Lidia Tilotta and in collaboration with his son Giacomo Bartolo the Book “*Lacrime di sale*” (“Tears of Salt”), which he defined as “my daily story as doctor of Lampedusa between sorrow and hope”.

This book, published by Mondadori, has been translated into several languages. I brought a copy of it with me to Malta and Pietro wrote me a dedication therein, which I wish to share with the readers of *Convergences*, as I will keep it forever as one of most precious souvenirs of my professional career.

A few days after the Club of Venice seminar in Malta, Pietro Bartolo was appointed “Goodwill Ambassador” by the Italian UNICEF Committee.

His heart and his conduct are the most effective vehicles of communication and epitomize the sharing of good values and professionalism.

Grazie, Pietro.



Secretary-General of the Club of Venice; Administrator Press/Communications, Council of the EU

Studied at University of Cagliari (Master degree in foreign languages and literature) and attended modern history, European Integration and management courses in Belgium and at US Universities. 1985-1991 Housing Manager at the US Air Force. Since 1992 EU Council official. He has worked on Transparency and Information Policy issues since 2001 and contributed articles for communications books and magazines. Since 2011 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. Currently he works for the “Public Relations” Unit of the Council of the EU, coordinating the communication agenda of the Council Working Party on Information. He consolidated his experience within the Council by working in the Linguistic Division, Research and Technological Development, Education and Culture and Staff Training Departments.

# Echoes from the Club seminar/ study visit in Greece, 23/24 September

**Seminar**

HELLENIC REPUBLIC  
Ministry of Digital Policy, Communications and Media

“Mobilising communicators in the field of the Refugee and Migration Crisis”  
Held in Athens-Thebes-Livadia-Thessaloniki,  
23-24 September 2017

Club of Venice **Education**

Educational programs in 107 schools & 33 hosting centers



Club of Venice **Crisis Management Communication**

- “Open media” policy
- Main target groups:
  - European & International public
  - Greek public
  - Refugee & Migrants
- Establishment of Secretariat for the Crisis Management Communication



Club of Venice **Communication with International public**

- Informative websites
- Social media accounts
- Fact sheets
- Press trips
- Conferences & International fora
- Information to accredited representatives of international media
- Interviews, press conferences
- Exhibitions, events
- Communication of Greek positions through Embassies and Foreign Press Offices

MEDITERRANEAN EU COUNTRIES' SUMMIT  
ATHENS 2016

Club of Venice **Communication with Greek public**

- Informative websites
- Social media accounts
- Fact sheets
- Campaigns
- Conferences
- Information to accredited representatives of Greek media
- Interviews, press conferences
- Exhibitions, events



Club of Venice **Communication with Refugees / Migrants**

Asylum Service Application

Christos Michalakis Maps & Navigation

PEGI 3

This app is compatible with your device.

Installed

- Information in English and Arabic through news bulletins on:TV, Radio, Internet, Printed brochures
- Wireless Internet in all hosting structures
- Mobile applications
- Information campaigns
- Interpreters and translators in hosting structures

“ESTIA - Emergency Support to Integration & Accommodation”






September 2017

**Accommodation and Services Scheme**

“Since the beginning of November 2016, the Municipality of Livadia in collaboration with the Public Benefit Organization of the Municipality of Livadia (K.E.D.H.L.) has been implementing the Project «ESTIA – Emergency Support to Integration & Accommodation» in rented apartments with the support of the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the funding of the European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid”.

**BENEFITS OF THE PROGRAMME**

- **Financial Assistance for the local society**
  - €1.5 million were spent on the rental of 70 apartments, food and clothes, medicine, the provision of goods and services etc. in the local market.
  - 26 young unemployed people with specific qualifications were hired to meet the requirements of the Programme.
- **Cultivation of ethical values such as solidarity and humanism.**
- **Interaction of two different cultures through their peaceful coexistence.**



# REACT

(REfugee Assistance Collaboration Thessaloniki)

Thessaloniki, 23/09/2017

Eleni Deligianni, Project Coordinator  
e.deligianni@thessaloniki.gr



## What is REACT?

- A UNHCR – Municipal Accommodation Project
- Project Targets
  - 888 Accom. Places in Apartments/ Centers/ Host families
  - Support & Protection services
  - Extend local communities
  - Provide optimum access to education
- Implementer:
  - Municipality of Thessaloniki via Network of local authorities & NGOs, in partnership w/UNHCR & funding by the EU
- Project Duration:
  - May 2016 – December 2017 (885.472,15 €)
  - Jan – Dec 2017 → 2.619.836,14 €



## Population of Concern (PoC)

1. Persons w/ specific needs (PWSN) w/family who entered GR after 1/1/2016 & are (pre-) registered Asylum Seekers in GR
2. Dublin cases (reunification)
3. **Relocation candidates**
4. Asylum seekers & Recognized Refugees/beneficiaries of subsidiary protection

### Country of origin:

- Syria (64%)
- Afghanistan (16%)
- Iraq (11 %)
- Algeria, DRC (Congo), Iran, Kuwait, Lebanon, Pakistan, Palestine, Stateless (9%)
- Legal Status**
- Asylum Seekers (48%)
- Dublin Cases (38%)
- Relocation Candidates (3%)
- Refugees (12%)

Age Group	Male		Female		Total	
	In numbers	in %	In numbers	in %	In numbers	in %
0 - 5	71	8%	62	7%	133	15%
6 - 17	160	18%	124	14%	284	32%
18 - 59	249	28%	204	23%	453	51%
60+	9	1%	9	1%	18	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>489</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>888</b>	<b>100%</b>



## Actions...

- Set-up Independent Committees for the Appropriateness of Accommodation
  - Amended selection criteria accord. to real estate market
  - Innovation & Entrepreneurial spirit
    - Introduced new fast-track pre-approval application → mitigated financial risk
    - Introduced New 'Suitable under Conditions' status → opened up pool of candidate Apts'
- Negotiated w/ UNHCR → revised work plan, increased publicity funds
- Internal PM team → Coordination & Communication w/ multiple internal Stakeholders (Municipal/ partner level) → increased "ownership"
  - Promoted calls for tender via personal/ community networks
  - Assisted candidates w/new e-procurement system
- SWOT analysis/ strategy → Communication campaign → Targeted communication messages/ promotional materials
  - Info meetings w/ locals & real estate agents
  - Local media → promotional social ads aired on national TV
- Monitoring Tools & SOPs
- Swift response to all neighborhood complaints → Tactical Response Teams
- Emergency Plans
- Interpreters available 24/7



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## Reception Toolkit



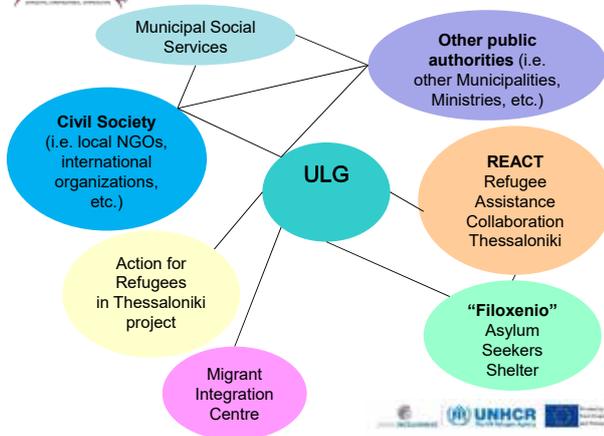
RECEPTION TOOLKIT



## Asylum Seekers Shelter "Filoxenio"



## ULG Network



# Fighting ISIL through TV drama: The case of Black Crows<sup>1</sup>

By Donatella Della Ratta, 19 Jun 2017

## Analysis: A Ramadan soap opera that attempts to deter people from ISIL gets mired in stereotypes instead.

MBC has collected a long history of these morally edifying TV series aimed at fighting media propaganda from 'extremist' groups [Reuters]

"What's the shape of Paradise? Is it as beautiful as they say?" a child asks a black-robed, long-bearded and smiling soldier relaxing under a tree.

"How do we go to Paradise?" echoes another, sitting in a circle with a group of young boys in a countryside in the middle of nowhere.

"By car? By boat?" the children suggest. The soldier smiles and patiently repeats, several times: "No ... no."

"I know," a triumphant boy finally shouts. "They're gonna take us there by plane, as Paradise is up in the sky, isn't it like that?"

"No," the soldier reiterates, this time showing them the answer, which has materialised right in his hands.

"This is how you will enter Paradise," he concludes, closing his eyes and presenting them with a suicide belt, as if to emphasise the inner lyricism of "martyrdom".

This is not the latest ISIL<sup>2</sup> release, although it resembles a thousand propaganda videos featuring child soldiers that the group has uploaded on the internet in recent years.

This is a TV series, or "musalsal" in Arabic - the main course of the Ramadan<sup>3</sup> media diet consumed daily by million of Muslims after sunset, when the fast<sup>4</sup> is broken and hundreds of free-to-air TV channels provide them brand new primetime entertainment.

Yet "Gharabeeb Soud" (Black Crows) - whose final episode was surprisingly broadcast on MBC a week before the end of the holy month that traditionally also puts an end to the series - is far from the usual family entertainment joyfully consumed with and after the iftar meal. A sign in the opening credits of the TV series openly states it is "not suitable for children".

Yet why would MBC, one of the top family-oriented Arab networks, fight the Ramadan TV viewership war with such a gloomy product, which seems to go against the channel's own audience base? Why inflict on Arab viewers visions of women beaten and raped, of children sexually abused and prepared to

"die for jihad", or of men slaughtering other men in the most unimaginable and inhuman ways?

Does the Arab world not already have its daily dose of violence and death?

"We believe that this is an epidemic, this is a disease that we have to muster the courage to address and fight," Ali Jaber, Director of Television at the MBC Group, told the New York Times with regards to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, known as ISIS), the series' protagonist.

Jaber, is well-known to Arab viewers as a celebrity judge on the show, Arabs Got Talent, and was named Media and Industry Leader by the crown prince of Dubai, Sheikh al-Maktoum.

Last March, he was invited to a top-level meeting in Washington hosted by US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson. The meeting, which featured high-ranking diplomats, politicians, "terrorism" experts, and media<sup>5</sup> professionals such as himself, was part of the "global coalition working to defeat ISIL".

In his opening remarks to the meeting, Tillerson underlined that "our Muslim partners, particularly Saudi Arabia<sup>6</sup> and Egypt<sup>7</sup>, have important roles to play in combating the message of ISIL." He then stressed the importance of media counter-propaganda to fight "terror" groups, and called upon Jaber to "speak in great details on how to achieve victory in this arena".

We see now on the screen the result of this alliance between pan-Arab capital - MBC is a Saudi-funded network - and US foreign policy.

Trying to learn the lesson from the embarrassing failure of a previous (and unilateral) anti-ISIL campaign - "Think Again Turn Away" - the US State Department then decided, under the blessings of the Annenberg Foundation Trust at Sunnylands, to team up with Arab media makers in order to build a less unilateral media effort.

To celebrate the partnership, the city of Dubai, where MBC is based, was symbolically chosen as a venue for the talks. Jaber proudly declared that "for the first time, we sensed that the heart of Hollywood was opening up to the Arab world; for the first time, Arabs and the US have an enemy in common in ISIL."

Yet there is nothing new or unprecedented in the way in which Gharabeeb Soud portrays armed groups, pointing the finger at how their interpretation of religion is misleading.

1 Re-publication <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/06/fighting-isil-tv-drama-case-black-crows-170611101134470.htm>

2 <http://www.aljazeera.com/topics/organisations/isis-isil.html>

3 <http://www.aljazeera.com/topics/spotlight/ramadan.html>

4 <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/05/muslims-ramadan-explained-170522153522413.html>

5 <http://www.aljazeera.com/topics/categories/media.html>

6 <http://www.aljazeera.com/topics/country/saudi-arabia.html>

7 <http://www.aljazeera.com/topics/country/egypt.html>

MBC has collected a long history of these morally edifying TV series aimed at fighting media propaganda from "extremist" groups.

*For the first time,  
we sensed that the heart of Hollywood was opening up  
to the Arab world; for the first time, Arabs and the US  
have an enemy in common in ISIL*

*Ali Jaber, MBC Group*

In Ramadan 2005, "Hur al Ayn" (The Maidens of Paradise), directed by Najdat Anzour, a Syrian filmmaker specialised in "anti-terrorism" TV fiction, premiered on the channel amid controversies generated not only by the show's taboo topic, but also because of the arrogantly pedagogical tone that the series adopted vis-a-vis Islam<sup>8</sup>.

The pan-Arab channel has sponsored several "anti-terrorism" shows over the years, spanning from Anzour's Ramadan musalsal to the satirical show "Irhab Academy" (Terrorist Academy) to factual programs like "Sina'at al mawt" (Death Industry) - the latter on Al Arabiya, which is part of the MBC Group.

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All these shows - including Gharabeeb Soud - have been crafted under the advice of Abdullah Bjiad al-Otibi, a prominent Saudi writer who was once close to "extremist" groups' political thinking, but has later repented and started engaging in the mission of showing the right path to Islam.

Gharabeeb Soud is the latest addition to this anti-extremist media collection MBC began promoting a long time ago. Yet, after the March meetings, this one seems to enjoy the blessings of US diplomacy and the endorsement of a long list of Western publications that have already praised the show, probably having just watched the English-subtitled trailer.

Adding "Jihad al-Nikah" (sexual jihad) as a central topic in the storyline, and presenting several women-centred stories (including Yazidi slaves), make for extra appealing features of a TV series that seems to be mostly crafted for Western press and diplomacy.

Gharabeeb Soud does not reflect on or analyse the causes that lead people (from around the world, not only Arabs) to join ISIL. It generically accuses the latter of misunderstanding Islam and naively refuses to acknowledge that ISIL has succeeded in crafting an ideology that is tempting to many, one that anthropologist Scott Atran calls a "world-altering revolution".

Instead, Gharabeeb Soud features women willing to join ISIL because they have been cheated on by their husbands, or whose children have been accidentally killed by cold and famine in UNHCR<sup>9</sup> refugee camps.

But what about those who embrace ISIL for financial reasons, or the European youths looking for a vision of the future that promises something other than just austerity and sacrifice, even if through the use of violence and "self-martyrdom"?

These issues, that for political Islam experts such as Olivier Roy and Alain Bertho, are at the core of ISIL's recruiting machine, remain largely uncovered by Gharabeeb Soud, which looks like yet another failure of the US-led anti-terrorism PR campaign, this time seemingly legitimised by having included Arab capital and media professionals in the creation process.

However, ignoring ISIL's ideological machine will not result in its elimination. And from the perspective of a communication strategy, engaging would-be supporters in a peer-to-peer process that results in co-authoring media propaganda seems much more cutting edge than building edifying fictions.

*The views expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect Al Jazeera's editorial policy.*

SOURCE: Al Jazeera



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Donatella Della Ratta is a writer, researcher, and curator specialized in media, arts and culture in the Arab world. From 2007 until 2011 she lived in Damascus and carried out extensive media ethnography of Syrian TV series that became the

topic of her PhD research (University of Copenhagen, 2013). She is a former Post-Doctoral Fellow at University of Copenhagen and at the Annenberg School for Communication, Pennsylvania University and an Affiliate of the Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University. Donatella has authored several books on Arab and Syrian media, and she is a contributor to Italian and international media outlets, such as Al Jazeera English, Hyperallergic, Internazionale, il Manifesto. Donatella has a professional experience as a journalist, TV author and producer, and has managed the Arabic speaking community of the international NGO Creative Commons for five years (2008-2013). She has curated several art exhibitions and film programs on Syria and the Arab world, and is co-founder and board member of the web aggregator on creative resistance SyriaUntold ([www.syriauntold.com](http://www.syriauntold.com)).

She tweets avidly at @donatelladr.

8 <http://www.aljazeera.com/topics/subjects/islam.html>



# Modern media operations

## - A guide -<sup>1</sup>

By Alex Aiken

*This new guide is about recognising and capturing, for the first time, the best practice that exists across GCS, to ensure our media teams remain the best anywhere in the world at what they do, while also continuing to work effectively with colleagues in communications disciplines such as strategy, campaigns and digital. This guide and the commitments Heads of News have made in it, will help ensure our media teams keep up with the ever-changing media landscape evolving around us.*

*To continue to enjoy their rightful and traditional place at the heart of government and public sector communications, media relations professionals throughout GCS must be alert to the future as well as the present, and be confident and influential in managing relationships and expectations with ministers and senior colleagues.*

*"...I endorse this guide as a key resource from which to build capability, share best practice and reach towards even higher standards."*

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## Core functional requirements – the 5 aspects

Listed below are the 5 core functional aspects for which, across a media relations team, practitioners are required to operate with confidence and appropriate expertise.

Directors/Heads of Communication, in consultation with the Head of News, should seek to ensure that their media relations teams have the requisite capability in these aspects in order to deliver effective day-to-day operations. They should also plan and enable the necessary professional development action to ensure that capability is optimised across the team, and that the team is equipped to cope resiliently when individuals leave and new colleagues join.

For each of the 5 aspects, the following tables itemise the key specific requirements for optimal and best practice.

- **Proactive media handling** Making announcements | Nations and regions | Consumer media | BAME | International
- **Reactive media handling** Media monitoring | Call handling/ rebuttal | Crisis communications
- **Relationship management** Policy shaping and corporate | Integration with other comms | Ministerial and special adviser engagement | Winning and retaining journalists' trust
- **Digital/content creation** Digital | Content creation
- **Insight and evaluation** Insight | Evaluation

### 1. Proactive media handling

- Making announcements
  1. Place stories in a strategic way to achieve coverage, aligned to departmental business objectives and ministerial priorities
  2. Ensure work aligns and integrates with strategic communications priorities and narratives and, where possible, campaigns work
  3. Media announcements should support long-term government messages as included in the latest Government Communications Plan
  4. Use tools like OASIS (Objectives, Audience Insight, Strategy/ idea, Implementation, Scoring/evaluation) to plan and properly target proactive work
  5. Produce high-quality handling plans that include press notices, potential risks, core scripts/briefing and Q&A
  6. Consider the use of comment pieces, op eds, blogs and shareable social media content
  7. Engage early with broadcast planning desks and correspondents to discuss how your announcement can work on TV
  8. Work with broadcasters to identify filming opportunities, locations and backdrops which are authentic and illustrate your announcement
  9. Speak regularly to key correspondents and build knowledge on their areas of expertise and interest

<sup>1</sup> Extract from a publication of the UK Government Communication Service (<https://gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/guidance/modern-media-operation-guide/>)

10. Make sure agreed press notices and media products are adopted as core narratives to inform the work of other communications teams where appropriate
  11. Work with stakeholders through communications or policy colleagues to build third party advocacy and support (in print, online, on broadcast) for announcements
  12. Consider the use of trailing and embargoes to maximise impact and coverage and/or to de-conflict with other expected news
- Nations and regions
    1. Find regional and devolved nations angles for UK-wide announcements
    2. Adapt stories to the area, recognising the different political situations and what powers are devolved. Ensure people know that a release is from the UK government
    3. Set up media rounds for ministerial visits that include broadcast and key print for area visited
    4. Adapt stories for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, acknowledging the difference between national and regional media – know when to use terms like region, country and nation
    5. Understand the BBC's General News Service (GNS) regional service and use where it applies
    6. Be aware that broadcast media is increasingly tailored to specific regional and national audiences, including new and bespoke news programmes for Scotland and other areas of the UK
  - Consumer media
    1. Use non-news media, including broadcast, to showcase and explain government policies – e.g. documentary filmmakers, TV magazine programmes
    2. Work closely with campaigns specialists to support priorities through consumer and specialist and trade channels
    3. Plan long-term consumer campaigns that will stand up against the rigours of an ever-changing news agenda and central government priorities
  - Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME)
    1. Identify ways to reach black, Asian and minority ethnic audiences for national policy announcements
    2. Provide explanation of all aspects of policy – lines to take and briefing for contentious and difficult issues
    3. Maintain a database of key titles for communities across the UK and feed into centrally-held lists of publications
    4. Regular discussions with BAME media contacts and titles to build an understanding of how best to reach specific audiences through the correct channels
  - International
    1. Understand the international role of the UK government, specifically in security, prosperity and development and how this relates to domestic policies (e.g. exports, jobs)
    2. Assess, advise and include in-country media when ministers travel overseas
    3. Maintain an up-to-date database of key international media contacts
    4. Arrange ministerial and senior official briefings for international media
    5. Engage London-based international media and build relationships with key correspondents – invite media to briefings and send them press notices
    6. Use social media channels to target BAME audiences with tailored messages
    7. Engage with the FCO and other international departments for advice on international announcements



## 2. Reactive media handling

- Media monitoring

1. Provide 24/7 real time monitoring of relevant coverage - news as a priority, but specialist channels as resources allow
2. Evaluate news coverage to understand and pre-empt the direction of stories - evaluation should be turned into insight and learning over time and shared across teams
3. Identify and flag important individual coverage including comment from stakeholders and parliamentarians
4. Develop a real-time monitoring system that is focused and concise, ensuring that ministers, special advisers, senior officials and departments hear about relevant 'breaking news' swiftly - ideally from the in-house communications team first
5. Add professional expertise to coverage summaries by forecasting upcoming stories
6. Monitor parliamentary business (Prime Minister's Questions, Urgent Questions, Oral Questions, select committees and hearings)

- Call handling/rebuttal

1. Anticipate possible criticism and risk and prepare responses beforehand
2. Deal with journalists confidently and helpfully - judge how stories will be presented and their prominence (Is it a front page story or a page lead? Is it a bulletin item or leading the news?)
3. Engage with journalists verbally to shape and contextualise stories and prevent and/or correct inaccurate coverage
4. Work at pace with policy teams to get relevant information to draft effective responses in the context of wider departmental and government priorities
5. Use digital and other channels for rebuttal (media blog, social media etc.)
6. Give ministers and special advisers the confidence that the department is rebutting negative media through regular updates, including out of hours

- Crisis communications

1. Establish the facts as quickly as possible and identify contact points for key areas (policy/operational lead, ministerial liaison, communications lead etc.)
2. Initiate immediate and close media monitoring, including social media and digital online
3. Produce initial 'holding statements' and key Q&As to clarify facts
4. Engage and share responses with No.10 and other departments as appropriate
5. Consider the rebuttal of inaccurate commentary and proactively issuing agreed statements
6. Produce handling and contingency plans for potential crises, covering likely scenarios, responses, possible triggers for media bids, stakeholder engagement and cross- government conference calls when appropriate
7. Prepare content when possible and appropriate before crises in line with risk and likelihood
8. Work with other communications colleagues to address potential longer-term and reputation-recovery campaigns

## 3. Relationship management

- Policy shaping and corporate

1. Build productive working relationships with policy and service delivery teams to understand their priorities, structures and policies
2. Get involved in policy and service development from an early stage - not just in the few days before an announcement - to ensure communications objectives align to policy objectives
3. Build the authority to engage with internal and external stakeholders on how the media might react to a policy announcement or proposal - and how to best communicate policy
4. Use knowledge of ministerial priorities to aid policy development
5. Observe the principles laid down for best practice in co-operation between No.10 and departments; share responses with No.10 promptly before Lobby; make sure regular and routine meetings with No.10 colleagues take place
6. Act as an advocate for the department in dealings with ministers, explaining the overall communication goals and advising on a course of action.

- Integration with other communications
  1. Work in partnership with communications colleagues from all disciplines to ensure consistent, creative, strategic external communications across channels and audiences
  2. Media activity should support long term campaigns not just short term emerging issues
- Ministerial and special adviser engagement
  1. Build strong relationships with private office to build trust and ensure access to decision makers
  2. Maintain productive relationships with ministers through regular engagement and informed advice
  3. Identify ministerial priorities and use them to shape media output and policy development
  4. Build productive working relationships with special advisers, including acting as advocates for the department
  5. Provide media training and coaching to ministers and senior officials to improve the presentation of policy
  6. Understand ministerial requirements and provide regular media briefings to ministers and special advisers
  7. Accompany ministers to media interviews and regional visits
- Winning and retaining journalists' trust
  1. Adhere at all times to the Civil Service Code
  2. Build professional relationships with journalists based on honesty, authority and credibility
  3. Identify the most influential journalists on particular topics and maintain ongoing relationships
  4. Stay up to date on media trends and understand the approach and style of different journalists

#### 4. Digital/content creation

- Digital
  1. Be digital by default, using the advice provided by the GCS and Government Digital Service to use online tools to reach specific audiences, engage with people and assess the impact of your work
  2. Embed digital channels in all media handling
  3. Build your knowledge of the differences between channels and create content according to what works for the platform and its audience
  4. Use online communication tools to maximise all campaign, event and media work
  5. Work with internal or external digital communications specialists to consider digital from the outset of campaign planning
  6. Use digital and social media channels for both proactive announcements and reactive media handling
  7. Have a set process for digital use in crisis communications that is practised and understood
  8. Use digital evaluation to inform and improve digital activity
  9. Use digital channels for rebuttal and immediate reaction
  10. Use audience-led research to inform digital planning
  11. Define successful practice and use this as a benchmark for quality
  12. Use insights gained from the GCS Digital Maturity Model survey to fill skills gaps and boost capability, competence and confidence where it is needed
  13. Manage or advise on social media accounts for ministers and senior staff
  14. Identify and work with key influencers on social media
  15. Collaborate across other government departments to amplify digital messaging
  16. Share lessons learned and best practice with colleagues across GCS|
- Content creation
  1. Build a culture of experimentation and continuous improvement to ensure content remains engaging and fresh
  2. Encourage access to all communicators so they can produce or effectively commission products such as video and images for social media e.g. infographics
  3. Produce high quality content in-house for use by media outlets, or commission DESIGN102 or external agencies to deliver this content



4. Repurpose content for different digital channels and audiences to ensure it is as effective as possible, based on detailed research
5. Have the capability in place to ensure content can be produced quickly during a fast-moving news event
6. Plan and produce (or commission) relevant, engaging and shareable content appropriate to channels and government messaging
7. Provide practical services including filming, editing and producing new content, or brief DESIGN102 or external agencies to deliver this work
8. Provide staff with content production software and hardware where appropriate and cost effective
9. Follow GCS guidance on accessibility
10. Monitor emerging trends to research and utilise emerging channels
11. Build strong relationships with digital and picture desks in news organisations
12. Understand data protection, consent, copyright and intellectual property law around featuring case studies and use of third party content

▪ Evaluation

1. Identify clear and SMART communications objectives around outputs, outtakes and outcomes, including deciding 'success' measurements and how data will be collected
2. Use a dashboard (or similar tool) to monitor and record activity as it is delivered in line with the GCS Evaluation Framework
3. Identify 'lessons learnt' from each media project and sharing learning with the rest of the team
4. Produce an evaluation pack which highlights reach/coverage, assesses content (positive, negative, neutral) and identifies message penetration
5. Find innovative ways to evaluate rebuttal, briefing and story shaping
6. Track sentiment over longer periods to identify shifts in the tone of coverage and provide early warning of emerging issues and trends
7. Identify media outlets which don't carry ministerial lines or run stories without checking properly and work with them to improve relationships
8. Integrate different media - print, digital, broadcast - into evaluation to provide a comprehensive picture

**5. Insight and evaluation**

▪ Insight

1. Use insight to identify and secure different audiences
2. Use audience measurement tools such as National Readership Survey (NRS), the Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC), the Broadcasters' Audience Research Board (BARB) and comScore across print, broadcast and digital and at national and regional levels
3. Consider how audience characteristics such as age, gender, social class and education level inform media consumption habits to better target your work



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

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

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

He lives in Pimlico, London with his family.

# Les enjeux de la communication européenne

By Michaël Malherbe

## Communication des Etats-membres sur l'Europe : que reste-t-il de la Déclaration de Bratislava ?<sup>1</sup>

En septembre 2016, les chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement se sont prononcés, dans la Déclaration de Bratislava<sup>2</sup> pour une communication plus claire dans son langage, plus honnête quant aux décisions et plus courageuse face aux populistes/extrémistes. Un an après, le Working Party on Information<sup>3</sup> en septembre dernier fait le point sur les meilleures pratiques, les leçons et les voies à suivre...

### La présidence semestrielle du Conseil de l'UE : la meilleure occasion de sensibilisation des citoyens à la valeur ajoutée de l'UE

Adoptée au cours de sa présidence semestrielle, la délégation slovaque estime que la Déclaration de Bratislava a délivré un message fort d'une Europe unie, capable d'améliorations et globalement engagée. La très bonne couverture de l'événement et la variété des outils de communication ont évité les risques de désinformation. La Slovaquie a adopté un premier plan national de communication stratégique sur l'Europe dont les principaux objectifs sont d'améliorer la sensibilisation des citoyens via notamment des campagnes dans les médias sociaux et l'engagement du personnel de la Représentation permanente dans l'initiative de l'UE « Back to School ».

Le semestre de la présidence maltaise en 2017 a redynamisé le soutien déjà important de l'UE aux citoyens maltais. La délégation maltaise insiste sur les résultats obtenus en reliant l'agenda de l'UE avec les citoyens à travers une campagne intensive sur les médias sociaux, basée sur un langage simple, transparent et informel. Des efforts sont également déployés à plus long terme pour maintenir l'élan et renforcer la coopération avec les institutions de l'UE. Malte s'est engagée à communiquer sur l'Europe et à renforcer ses liens avec la société civile.

La présidence estonienne actuellement en cours s'est référée à son approche axée sur le citoyen et a également souligné la nécessité de communiquer dans un langage clair. Au cours de son semestre, l'Estonie va renforcer l'utilisation de vidéos et d'infographies destinées à toucher le grand public.

**Les partenariats entre les institutions européennes et nationales : la meilleure coopération pour remettre en question les solutions simplistes et définir un nouvel esprit à travers une communication positive et proactive**

La délégation française a souligné que la Déclaration de Bratislava exhortait à renouveler l'esprit de partenariat entre les États membres et les institutions. En conséquence, les campagnes de communication pertinentes doivent être parfaitement coordonnées (en France, la coopération interministérielle a été renforcée à cette fin) et menées conjointement et de manière cohérente. Le professionnalisme, l'inclusivité et l'écoute des besoins des citoyens sont cruciaux. La communication devrait être renforcée et centrée sur l'avenir de l'UE, sur des priorités concrètes, en promouvant une Europe moins bureaucratique et davantage axée sur les citoyens.

La délégation italienne a exhorté à trouver les synergies nécessaires pour établir des priorités de communication répondant aux attentes des citoyens. La déclaration de Bratislava, le livre blanc de la Commission et la déclaration de Rome ont montré la voie. L'Italie prépare une stratégie de communication sur deux ans basée sur des connaissances actives et des débats ouverts ciblant les étudiants. Une campagne de communication sur le patrimoine européen positif est également en cours. En outre, l'Italie a souligné l'importance de communiquer sur la dimension sociale de l'UE et de promouvoir une connaissance active de l'UE dans les écoles et à travers les médias sociaux.

La délégation finlandaise a indiqué que la Finlande revoyait régulièrement sa stratégie de communication de l'UE et a souligné que le succès de l'UE dépend fondamentalement de la participation active des citoyens.

Les délégations danoise et néerlandaise soulignent l'utilité de la Déclaration de Bratislava et soulignent la nécessité de mesurer clairement ce qui a été fait, de fixer des objectifs très concrets et de montrer aux citoyens que l'UE peut les atteindre. Les Pays-Bas ont souligné la nécessité de rester concentrés sur l'obtention de résultats concrets.

La délégation tchèque met en œuvre une stratégie de communication pluriannuelle basée sur des priorités annuelles, en coopération avec leurs propres autorités régionales ainsi qu'avec les centres Europe Direct et les ONG. La Convention nationale continue d'être un instrument fort pour débattre largement de la politique tchèque en matière d'UE.

En somme, il serait nécessaire de renforcer les synergies et les partenariats et de rétablir le mécanisme fructueux de priorités communes de communication qui était en place avec la Déclaration de 2008 « Communiquer l'Europe en partenariat ».

**Au total, force est de constater que toutes les parties prenantes reconnaissent que des efforts supplémentaires sont nécessaires pour atteindre la finalité première de la Déclaration de Bratislava à savoir mieux communiquer dans un langage qui clarifie et exploite davantage les potentiels de sensibilisation du grand public...**

1 <http://www.lacomeuropeenne.fr/>

2 <http://www.lacomeuropeenne.fr/2016/09/20/declaration-de-bratislava-les-chefs-d-etat-et-de-gouvernement-veulent-mieux-communiquer/>

3 <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-12843-2017-INIT/en/pdf>

## Le jeu des 7 erreurs de la communication de l'Union européenne<sup>4</sup>

Dans une étude rafraîchissante, "We Need to Talk about the EU – European Political Advertising in the Post-Truth Era"<sup>5</sup>, Konrad Niklewicz fait la liste des faiblesses de la communication européenne. Un rappel de salut public.

### 1. La perte de la légitimité liée aux « résultats »

Pendant longtemps, le processus d'intégration a été justifié par les résultats obtenus, faciles à identifier, en commençant par le marché unique et la libre circulation des personnes.

Malheureusement, cette légitimité « de sortie » s'est évanouie. Plus la perception est que le niveau de vie diminue, plus il est difficile d'expliquer les avantages de l'intégration européenne.

Conclusion, l'UE n'est apparemment plus en mesure de persuader les citoyens qu'elle apporte de la valeur ajoutée.

### 2. Le manque de la légitimité liée à la « gouvernance »

La communication de l'UE a également été incapable de défendre une autre source de la légitimité de l'Union, celle liée à la gouvernance de l'UE.

Dès le début, la communauté européenne a été considérée comme un projet d'élites. Plus les institutions et les lois européennes étaient nombreuses, plus l'élitisme perçu était un problème.

Plus des sommets européens fermés à Bruxelles ont pris des décisions unilatérales sur l'avenir des Européens, plus le sentiment que l'UE élitiste les oblige à des situations inacceptables, sans demander leur avis ou leur consentement a été partagé par de nombreux Européens.

Problème, la communication de l'UE n'a pas abordé correctement ce sujet, voire pas du tout.

### 3. Faible visibilité

Malgré les efforts déployés, les institutions de l'UE, malgré plus de transparence, ne sont pas parvenues à générer une couverture médiatique importante, même pendant les campagnes électorales européennes.

Les institutions de l'UE affirment qu'elles se concentrent sur les journalistes des médias « traditionnels ». Mais elles n'ont apparemment pas répondu aux besoins des médias :

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.martenscentre.eu/sites/default/files/publication-files/european-political-advertising-post-truth-era\\_0.pdf](https://www.martenscentre.eu/sites/default/files/publication-files/european-political-advertising-post-truth-era_0.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.martenscentre.eu/sites/default/files/publication-files/european-political-advertising-post-truth-era\\_0.pdf](https://www.martenscentre.eu/sites/default/files/publication-files/european-political-advertising-post-truth-era_0.pdf)

D'une part, les institutions se sont trop concentrées sur les correspondants de l'UE basés à Bruxelles et ont fait trop peu d'efforts pour se connecter avec les journalistes nationaux et régionaux.

D'autre part, le contenu lui-même n'est ni attrayant ni intéressant. Dans la plupart des cas, l'UE parle de manière impartiale, neutre et transparente. Du coup, la communication de l'UE est ennuyeuse et inefficace. La prise de décision dans l'UE repose sur un compromis qui, par nature, exige le langage diplomatique et le lissage des conflits, pourtant générateur d'histoires intéressantes.

La Commission a supposé que la transparence serait la meilleure façon de lutter contre la méfiance. Mais éthiquement louable, cela s'est révélé insuffisant. Les institutions européennes ont cru qu'elles n'avaient pas besoin d'insister pour expliquer ce qu'elles font, se défendre. Mais, les faits ne parlent pas d'eux-mêmes.

### 4. Cibler une opinion publique européenne inexistante

Le quatrième problème de la communication de l'UE a été la présomption qu'il existe un espace public européen. Les institutions européennes communiquent comme si les problèmes étaient perçus de la même manière dans les 28 États membres. Mais ce n'est pas le cas.

Malgré plus de 60 ans d'intégration européenne, les discussions sociales sur les problèmes liés à l'UE se déroulent fermement dans les limites des frontières nationales. La plupart des communications politiques sont spécifiques au pays : le public lit et vit la politique de l'UE d'un point de vue national. Il n'y a pas de débat européen sur les sujets liés à l'UE.

Au mieux, il existe une « parallélisation » : des problèmes identiques ou similaires sont discutés en même temps, mais dans des contextes nationaux, sans référence ni liens vers les débats dans d'autres pays. Un espace public européen n'existe pas (encore) en raison des divers contextes culturels, linguistiques et historiques des différents États membres.

Mais malgré ces réalités, les institutions européennes continuent de faire appel à la notion d'opinion publique européenne dans les documents officiels.

### 5. Des valeurs oubliées

Il manque quelque chose d'important : des valeurs européennes universellement acceptées. Certains symboles sont mentionnés dans les traités : le drapeau étoilé bleu, l'hymne de l'UE, la standardisation des passeports et des permis de conduire, et des cartes européennes d'assurance santé.

Mais, ce n'est pas suffisant pour faire vivre de manière tangible un patriotisme européen. L'UE n'a pas été en mesure de créer

un sentiment d'appartenance, une identité propre à être partagée par les citoyens des Etats membres. Surtout en période de difficultés économiques, la question de l'identité – le sentiment de faire partie d'un groupe plus important – prend de l'importance, car elle renforce le sentiment de sécurité.

L'UE n'est évidemment pas en mesure d'offrir une identité ethnique, mais elle aurait pu essayer de se concentrer sur une solidarité matérielle. Le sentiment d'appartenance aurait pu être construit autour de bénéfices concrets. Ce type d'attachement fondé sur les avantages aurait dû être développé avant la crise, en période de prospérité économique. Une autre occasion a été manquée.

## 6. Cacophonie et fragmentation

La persistance de la fragmentation est une autre faiblesse dans les activités de communication de l'UE qui ne sont pas pleinement efficaces par rapport aux ressources dépensées.

Le problème de base est que les activités de communication sont dispersées. Les efforts de communication des différentes institutions de l'UE ne sont pas alignés. Même dans une seule institution, il existe souvent trop d'activités incohérentes.

La fragmentation non seulement rend la voix de l'UE moins audible, mais elle déclenche également des réactions négatives car elle laisse croire que l'UE n'est pas capable de parler de manière cohérente.

Chacune des trois principales institutions décisionnelles de l'UE a son propre service de communication et, dans une large mesure, une stratégie de communication distincte. Il n'y a pas assez de coordination, bien que de nombreuses tentatives aient été faites pour l'établir, notamment via le Groupe interinstitutionnel sur l'information.

## 7. Un cœur de cible négligé

La septième faiblesse dans les activités de communication de l'UE est la capacité limitée à identifier et à atteindre un cœur de cible auprès duquel construire et maintenir des relations.

La relation avec les citoyens a été la moins développée. Les mesures visant à élargir la portée – par exemple, des plateformes en ligne personnalisées telles que Debate Europe, Your Voice in Europe et Citizens Agora – n'ont pas réussi en termes de pénétration publique.

Le fait de ne pas reconnaître les besoins du public de base a abouti à un style de communication impersonnel et éloigné, trop bureaucratique, formel, technique, à long terme, orienté sur l'intérieur, abstrait et (parfois) complaisant.

Vu de loin, il semble que les dirigeants pro-européens à l'échelle européenne et nationale n'aient pas compris la vraie nature

des personnes qu'ils essayent d'adresser. La communication européenne a été construite sur la photo idéaliste de citoyens bien éduqués qui parlent différentes langues européennes, sont ouverts aux différences culturelles et capables de placer leurs identités nationales dans un contexte plus large. Mais, la plupart des Européens ne parlent qu'une seule langue. Et beaucoup d'entre eux n'appartiennent pas aux élites culturelles, universitaires et commerciales, ou aux diplômés Erasmus.

**Au total, les erreurs de la communication européenne sont nombreuses et s'auto-entretiennent les unes les autres : la légitimité d'un côté et le public de l'autre sont les deux grands absents pour le moment.**

## Futur de l'Europe : y a-t-il un soutien de l'opinion aux projets de refondation? <sup>6</sup>

Dans l'indifférence quasi générale, la Commission européenne multiplie les publications pour contribuer à la refondation de l'Union européenne. Cette réflexion en cours fait-elle l'objet d'un soutien de l'opinion publique européenne aux regards des résultats de l'Eurobaromètre sur « l'avenir de l'Europe » ?

### Les jalons pour une refondation de l'Union européenne

L'effervescence au sein de la Commission européenne passe inaperçue et pourtant, si l'on prend le temps de regarder les initiatives, on n'assiste à une multiplication des documents de réflexion et de projection posant les jalons d'une véritable refondation de l'Union européenne :

- Livre blanc sur l'avenir de l'Europe – 1er mars 2017<sup>7</sup>
- Document de réflexion sur la dimension sociale de l'Europe – 26 avril 2017<sup>8</sup>
- Document de réflexion sur la maîtrise de la mondialisation – 10 mai 2017<sup>9</sup>
- Approfondissement de l'Union économique et monétaire – 31 mai 2017<sup>10</sup>
- Avenir de la défense européenne – 7 juin 2017,<sup>11</sup>
- Avenir des finances de l'Union européenne – fin juin 2017...

6 <http://www.lacomeuropeenne.fr/2017/06/13/futur-de-l-europe-y-a-t-il-un-soutien-de-l-opinion-aux-projets-de-refondation/>

7 [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/livre\\_blanc\\_sur\\_lavenir\\_de\\_leurope\\_fr.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/livre_blanc_sur_lavenir_de_leurope_fr.pdf)

8 [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/reflection-pa-per-social-dimension-europe\\_fr.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/reflection-pa-per-social-dimension-europe_fr.pdf)

9 [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/reflection-pa-per-globalisation\\_fr.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/reflection-pa-per-globalisation_fr.pdf)

10 [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/reflection-pa-per-emu\\_fr.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/reflection-pa-per-emu_fr.pdf)

11 [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/reflection-pa-per-defence\\_fr.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/reflection-pa-per-defence_fr.pdf)

L'Union européenne se met en ordre de bataille pour une refondation de ses missions et de son avenir : Europe sociale, mondialisation, défense, finances.

Pourtant, c'est bien le Brexit qui apparaît à l'avant-scène des médias, et qui risque de consommer beaucoup de capital symbolique et politique pour négocier, sans oublier les questions de valeurs ainsi que la place et le rôle des citoyens au sein de l'Union qui font turbuler la machine médiatique à coup de pression populiste et europhobe.

### Les opinions des Européens sur le futur de l'Europe

Ces initiatives bénéficient-elle de l'assentiment, au moins de principe des citoyens pour acquérir une place croissante et mieux acceptée dans la vie quotidienne de ses peuples ?

L'Eurobaromètre sur le Futur de l'Europe fournit quelques éléments de réponses<sup>12</sup> :

- Une majorité d'Européens convient que le projet européen offre des perspectives d'avenir à la jeunesse européenne, même si les personnes interrogées pensent que la vie de la jeune génération sera plus difficile que la leur ;
- L'accent pour relever les principaux défis mondiaux devrait être mis sur l'égalité sociale et la solidarité, devant la protection de l'environnement ainsi que le progrès et l'innovation ;
- Une majorité des personnes interrogées estime que l'élément le plus utile pour le futur de l'Europe serait des niveaux de vie comparables, loin devant des standards d'éducation comparables et des frontières extérieures de l'UE bien définies.

L'opinion publique européenne semble mûre pour une refondation du projet de construction européenne. Quelques soient les domaines, une large majorité estime que davantage de décisions devraient être prises au niveau européen.



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Par rapport à 2012, le soutien en matière de lutte contre le terrorisme et de promotion de la démocratie et de la paix ou la garantie de l'approvisionnement énergétique sont en baisse, quoique toujours majoritaire. A l'inverse, la gestion des questions liées à la santé et à la sécurité sociale, aux migrations et à la protection de l'environnement progressent.

**Au total, tant la floraison des initiatives de l'UE pour définir son avenir que le soutien majoritaire des Européens dessine un nouveau contexte européen favorable à la rénovation. Reste plus à la communication de relayer auprès des médias et à l'influence de recueillir le soutien des responsables politiques nationaux**



<sup>12</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/ResultDoc/download/DocumentKy/77405>

## Comment réduire l'incommunication entre les Européens ?<sup>13</sup>

En guise de conclusion de la Revue Hermès consacrée aux incommunications européennes, Dominique Wolton dresse une liste des chantiers pour aider à penser l'incommunication en Europe...

### Réduire l'ignorance : populariser l'histoire de l'Europe

L'incommunication et la méfiance résultent d'abord de l'ignorance. Le 1er chantier est d'apprendre à se connaître, à se respecter, à désarmer les incompréhensions mutuelles afin de respecter les altérités, de découvrir la diversité, d'assumer les différences et de s'approprier notre histoire et notre destin.

Le corollaire est d'enseigner la vie politique européenne dans toutes les écoles, de valoriser la diversité linguistique, d'intéresser les Européens à leur histoire et d'ainsi favoriser une fierté pour la construction européenne.

### Apprivoiser la diversité : retrouver la confiance entre Européens

Ce sont le silence et la langue de bois qui sont les principaux adversaires de l'Europe, pas les conflits. La connaissance de nos différences et de nos contradictions est la première condition d'une compréhension et d'un dialogue.

Le premier chantier porte sur le respect de la diversité en faisant prévaloir les éléments communs de la culture européenne (la croyance en la science et la rationalité, les droits de l'homme et la démocratie) dans un esprit d'ouverture aux industries culturelles, créatives et de la connaissance.

### Relancer les utopies et les grands projets

Le plus grand investissement dans l'avenir, c'est d'apprendre ensemble. Dominique Wolton invite à investir massivement dans des lieux d'échanges et de rencontres, afin de multiplier les expériences de rencontres entre Européens et que chacun puisse « perdre son temps » à discuter et faire des projets communs – essentiels.

Les différences européennes nourrissent les utopies européennes... à condition d'en parler. Discuter régulièrement des accords et des désaccords, c'est déjà construire l'union. Faire enfin confiance aux peuples, dont l'UE est encore trop souvent indifférente, c'est le « principal antidote à l'euro-pessimisme actuel ». Prendre les citoyens – les plus éduqués, formés et cultivés dans le monde – enfin au sérieux.

### Redéfinir l'Europe comme avant-garde

C'est sur l'incommunication que paradoxalement l'Europe s'est construite dans un consensus permissif mais aujourd'hui l'UE butte justement contre cette incommunication qui relire autant qu'elle sépare les Européens. L'Europe ne se fera que si l'on est capable de parler de tout, progressivement.

Relever le défi de la gestion pacifique de la diversité et de la cohabitation, c'est le cœur du projet européen et dit autrement, c'est apprendre à gérer l'incommunication.

Faire de l'Europe l'avant-garde de la réglementation politique de la globalisation en mettant la politique au premier plan devant l'économie et la finance, c'est l'autre moteur de la construction européenne, qui la replace comme une force, une ambition et une originalité capable de déployer ces utopies et de nouvelles solidarités.

**Avec un tel programme pour la communication de l'Europe, il ne devrait pas être trop difficile de tordre le cou aux discours pessimistes sur la « fatigue » ou la « décadence »...**



Michaël Malherbe is a Digital Strategist at Cohn & Wolfe, an international Public Relations agency and a regular lecturer in the following master's courses: "European Studies" at the Sorbonne-Paris III and "European Affairs" of the Sorbonne-Paris IV. He occasionally also lectures for the ENA and Sciences-Po Lille. Since 2007, he has managed the blog "Décrypter la communication européenne": [www.lacomeuropeenne.fr](http://www.lacomeuropeenne.fr)

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.lacomeuropeenne.fr/2017/10/16/comment-reduire-l-incommunication-entre-les-europeens/>

# SEECOM (South East Europe Public Sector Communication Association) 2017 Annual Conference

By Manuela Zlateva

## Politicians and PR experts promote Western Balkans' path to the EU

**Ministers and communications experts from south east europe met with eu colleagues at the seecom conference in Berlin**

*The strengthening of the political dialogue between Brussels, Berlin and the Balkans was the main focus of this year's SEECOM conference on 13th October 2017. For the first time the biggest conference for government spokespersons from South East Europe has been hosted in Berlin. The event was organised by the KAS Media Program South East Europe and the SEECOM association, and backed by the Directorate General for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policies of the European Commission (DG NEAR).*

110 Over 140 participants from more than 15 nations attended the conference, among them politicians, PR experts, diplomats, NGO representatives and interested citizens. They came to inform themselves about the progress of EU enlargement in the Western Balkans as well as to enter into dialogue with the high-profile speakers.

The conference was opened by SEECOM Secretary General Vuk Vujnović and the Deputy General Secretary of Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Dr. Gerhard Wahlers. Vujnović underlined that an open citizen dialogue and an inclusion of citizens into the processes of reforms are vital for the further development of democratic societies in South East Europe. Moreover, he emphasised the role of Germany and France as examples for the idea of a unified Europe as well as for the future of the Western Balkans in the European Union.

During his opening speech Dr. Gerhard Wahlers said that an EU enlargement would be, above all, a huge communication challenge: "With regard to this, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung is especially proud to be co-host and co-founder of SEECOM."

Keynote speaker David McAllister, Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the European Parliament and Vice-President of the European People's Party (EPP), complimented the speech of Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission, in which Juncker supported the accession of the Western Balkan States into the European Union by the year 2025. McAllister also mentioned Russian efforts to influence media, politics and civil society in some of the Western Balkan countries. He underlined that, in comparison with Russia, the EU has to communicate its achievements more clearly.

After their speeches David McAllister and Dr. Gerhard Wahlers answered many questions from the audience, among others on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The key message of both speakers was: "All six Balkan states need our attention."

### Focus on Berlin Process and the fight against Euroscepticism

Government members from Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia discussed the future of the Berlin Process, a German initiative concerning the EU enlargement. The debate was moderated by Adelheid Wölfl, South East Europe correspondent of the Austrian daily "Der Standard". Speakers were Boris Grigić, Assistant Minister in the Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jadranka Joksimović, Serbian Minister for European Integration, Aleksandar Andrija Pejović, Montenegrin Minister for European Affairs, as well as Maciej Popowski, Deputy General Secretary of the Directorate General for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policies of the European Commission.

Topics of this discussion included better citizen dialogue about European themes on a national level and media strategies with clear and simple statements about the EU enlargement. Jadranka Joksimović commented that for better communication with the EU, given structures like the newly established Ministry for European Integration in Serbia should be used. Boris Grigić described the experiences of Croatia with the EU accession process. He gave examples on positive narratives that his country used during the negotiations. Aleksandar Pejović underlined the media relations as a crucial part of communicating EU themes. With regard to communications on a national level, EU representative Popowski said that it is necessary to strengthen the sense of belonging of citizens towards the EU.

### Presentation of newly published KAS book on political communication

After the end of the first panel, the KAS Media Program South East Europe presented a newly published book: "Reconnecting with citizens – from values to big data: Communication of governments, the EU and political parties in times of populism and filter bubbles". In an interview with the German media adviser and journalist Christoph Lanz, the authors Christian Spahr, Head of the KAS Media Program South East Europe, Erik den Hoedt, Director at the Public Information and Communication Office of the Dutch Ministry of General Affairs, and Ivana Đurić, Head of Communications of the Serbian Ministry for European Integration, discussed trends of political communication. Christian Spahr emphasised that the book's intentions were to support the daily work of press spokespersons in South East European countries and to help them to strengthen their professional profiles.

## How can Europe resist fake news and propaganda?

The second expert panel, moderated by Erik den Hoedt, was dedicated to disinformation. Georg Streiter, Deputy Spokesman of the German Government, underlined that dealing with fake news is a learning process for all European governments. Therefore, he continued, there is no clear and simple strategy to oppose them. Iulian Chifu, President of the Romanian Centre for Conflict Prevention and Early Warning in Bucharest, added that there is no immunity against fake news. In his opinion, the quality of the media decreased and they are often not working in the best interest of the citizens, but rather constantly fighting for the highest click rates.

Alina Frolova, Adviser for Strategic Communications at the Ministry for Information Policy in Ukraine, made the remark that journalists had a high responsibility not to share lies and false information. Saulius Guzevičius, Military Liaison Officer at the NATO StratCom Team in Brussels, said that nowadays the problem was not to find information, but to identify whether it is reliable or not. Nebojša Regoje, Spokesperson at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, also mentioned the increasing tendency to accuse true information as fake.

The following discussion on campaigning trends was moderated by Christoph Lanz again. Panellists were: Ivana Đurić, Claus Giering, Head of Communications at the EU Commission's Directorate General for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policies, Vlad Kulminski, Executive Director of the Institute for Strategic Initiatives in Chisinau, John Verrico, Immediate-Past President of the Association of Government Communication (NAGC) in the USA as well as Anthony Zacharzewski, Director of the NGO "Democratic Society" (Demsoc) in Brussels. The speakers mainly debated about different types of social media campaigns as well as the usage of big data.

Afterwards, Vincenzo Le Voci, from the European communication network "Club of Venice", gave a speech about the cooperation between PR representatives in the public sector. "It is on the basis of partnership and interaction that we can create long-lasting and reliable communication outcomes", he said. After Le Voci's speech, Vuk Vujnović and Christian Spahr announced that SEECOM will continue to advance its work through cooperation with EU representatives and other partners.

## SEECOM General Assembly Meeting

Subsequent to the conference was the annual SEECOM General Assembly. Ognian Zlatev, Head of the European Commission Representation in Bulgaria, has been confirmed again as SEECOM Chairman. Furthermore, the board members Christian Spahr, Ivana Đurić and Nebojša Regoje were unanimously re-

elected. Dinka Živalj, Press Officer of the EU Representative Office in Kosovo, was newly elected into the board of SEECOM. New projects were planned during a panel with the closest partners of SEECOM. The next SEECOM conference in 2018 will prospectively be held in Sarajevo.

All SEECOM members agreed on their continued engagement to strive for more transparency, civil dialogue and a unified European future.

Collaboration: Darija Fabijanić

## Politiker und PR-Experten setzen sich für Westbalkan in der EU ein

**Auf der seecom-konferenz in Berlin kommen minister und fachleute für politische kommunikation aus südosteuropa mit eu-kollegen zusammen**

*Wie die gegenseitige Wahrnehmung zwischen Brüssel, Berlin und dem Balkan gestärkt werden kann, stand im Fokus der SEECOM-Konferenz am 13. Oktober 2017. Die größte Konferenz für Regierungssprecher aus Südosteuropa wurde zum sechsten Mal organisiert und fand erstmals in Berlin statt. Veranstalter waren das Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS)-Medienprogramm Südosteuropa, der von der KAS mitgegründete Kommunikationsverband SEECOM und die Generaldirektion Nachbarschaftspolitik und Erweiterung der Europäischen Kommission (DG NEAR).*

An der Konferenz nahmen rund 140 Politiker, PR-Experten, Diplomaten und NGO-Vertreter sowie interessierte Bürger aus mehr als 15 Staaten teil. Sie kamen, um sich über den EU-Erweiterungsprozess der Balkanstaaten zu informieren und in Dialog mit den hochrangigen Referenten zu treten.

Die SEECOM-Konferenz wurde von SEECOM-Generalsekretär Vuk Vujnović und dem Stellvertretenden Generalsekretär der Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Dr. Gerhard Wahlers, eröffnet. Vujnović unterstrich, dass der offene Bürgerdialog und die Einbeziehung der Menschen in Reformen Voraussetzung für die Weiterentwicklung der demokratischen Gesellschaften in Südosteuropa sei. Zudem betonte er die Rolle von Deutschland und Frankreich als Garanten der Idee eines vereinten Europas und die europäische Zukunftsperspektive der Länder des Westbalkans.

Dr. Gerhard Wahlers sagte in seiner Eröffnungsrede, dass die EU-Erweiterung vor allem eine Kommunikations-herausforderung sei: „In dieser Hinsicht ist die Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung stolz darauf, Mitveranstalter und -gründer von SEECOM zu sein.“

Keynote-Sprecher David McAllister, Vorsitzender des Ausschusses für auswärtige Angelegenheiten im Europaparlament und Vizepräsident der Europäischen Volkspartei (EVP), begrüßte die Rede des Präsidenten der Europäischen Kommission Jean-Claude Juncker, in der dieser einen Beitritt der Westbalkanstaaten bis 2025 befürwortet. Zudem thematisierte McAllister die Bestrebungen Russlands, die Medien, Teile der Politik sowie die Zivilgesellschaft in einzelnen Ländern des Westbalkans zu beeinflussen. Im Vergleich mit Russland müsse die EU ihre Erfolge besser kommunizieren.

Nach ihren Reden beantworteten David McAllister und Dr. Gerhard Wahlers zahlreiche Fragen des Publikums, etwa zur Situation in Bosnien-Herzegowina. Die Schlüsselbotschaft der beiden Redner war: „Alle sechs Westbalkanstaaten brauchen unsere Aufmerksamkeit.“

### **Im Fokus: Berlin-Prozess und Kampf gegen Euroskeptizismus**

Regierungsmitglieder mehrerer Balkanstaaten, darunter Serbien und Montenegro, debattierten über die Zukunft des Berlin-Prozesses, einer deutschen Initiative zur EU-Erweiterung. Das Gespräch wurde moderiert von Adelheid Wölfel, Südosteuropa-Korrespondentin der österreichischen Zeitung „Der Standard“. Referenten waren Boris Grigić, Beigeordneter Minister im kroatischen Ministerium für auswärtige Angelegenheiten, Jadranka Joksimović, serbische Ministerin für europäische Integration, Aleksandar Andrija Pejović, montenegrinischer Minister für Europäische Angelegenheiten, und Maciej Popowski, Stellvertretender Generaldirektor der Generaldirektion Nachbarschaftspolitik und Erweiterung der Europäischen Kommission.

Themen der Diskussion waren ein besserer Bürgerdialog zu europäischen Themen auf nationaler Ebene, strategische Medienarbeit und die Formulierung von klaren und einfachen Botschaften über die EU-Erweiterung. Jadranka Joksimović äußerte die These, dass zu einer besseren Kommunikation mit der EU bestimmte Strukturen wie das neugeschaffene Ministerium für EU-Integration in Serbien genutzt werden müssen. Boris Grigić sprach über die Erfahrung von Kroatien und gab Beispiele für positive Narrative seines Landes im EU-Beitrittsprozess. Aleksandar Pejović betonte die Arbeit mit den Medien als wichtigen Teil der Kommunikation über die EU. Mit Blick auf die nationale Kommunikation mit den Bürgern sagte EU-Vertreter Popowski, dass es wichtig sei, das Zugehörigkeitsgefühl zur EU zu stärken.

### **Vorstellung eines neuen KAS-Buchs zur politischen Kommunikation**

Nach dem ersten Panel wurde ein neues Fachbuch des KAS-Medienprogramms Südosteuropa vorgestellt – zum Thema „Reconnecting with citizens – from values to big data: Communication of governments, the EU and political parties in times of populism and filter bubbles“. In Form eines Interviews mit den Autoren Christian Spahr, Leiter des KAS-Medienprogramms Südosteuropa, Erik den Hoedt, Kommunikationschef der niederländischen Regierung und Ivana Đurić, Kommunikationschefin des EU-Integrationsministeriums der serbischen Regierung, wurden neue Trends in der politischen Kommunikation diskutiert. Das Gespräch wurde von dem deutschen Medienberater und Journalisten Christoph Lanz moderiert. Christian Spahr sagte, dass dieses Buch auch dazu diene, die tägliche Arbeit von Pressesprechern in der Politik Südosteuropas und die Weiterentwicklung ihrer beruflichen Profile zu stärken.

### **Wie kann Europa Fake News und Propaganda standhalten?**

Das zweite Panel der Konferenz widmete sich dem Thema Fake News. Die Diskussion wurde von Erik den Hoedt moderiert. Georg Streiter, stellvertretender Sprecher der deutschen Bundesregierung, unterstrich, dass der Umgang mit Desinformation und gefälschten Nachrichten ein Lernprozess für alle europäischen Länder sei und es dagegen keine klare und einzige Strategie gebe. Iulian Chifu, Präsident des rumänischen Zentrums für Konfliktprävention und Frühwarnung in Bukarest, fügte hinzu, dass es keine Immunität gegen Fake News gebe. Es sei ein Problem, dass die Kompetenz der Medien sinke und sie häufig nicht im Dienst der Bürger agierten, sondern sich in einem ständigen Kampf um mehr Klicks befänden.

Alina Frolova, Beraterin für strategische Kommunikation beim Ministerium für Informationspolitik der Ukraine, ergänzte, dass Journalisten hohe Verantwortung trügen, wenn sie Lügen und falsche Informationen verbreiteten. Saulius Guzevičius, Verbindungsoffizier im NATO-Stratcom-Team in Brüssel, sagte, dass heutzutage nicht das Finden von Informationen problematisch sei, sondern die Identifikation wichtiger und glaubwürdiger Nachrichten. Nebojša Regoje, Leiter für Kommunikation im Außenministerium von Bosnien-Herzegowina, wies auch auf die zunehmende Tendenz hin, wahre Informationen als Fake News darzustellen.

Die anschließende Diskussion wurde von Christoph Lanz moderiert. Ivana Đurić, Claus Giering, Kommunikationsleiter bei der EK-Generaldirektion für Nachbarschaftspolitik und Erweiterungsverhandlungen, Vlad Kulminski, Direktor des Instituts für strategische Initiativen in Chişinău, John Verrico, Präsident des US-amerikanischen Verbands für Regierungssprecher (NAGC) sowie Anthony Zacharzewski, Direktor der NGO „Demokratische Gesellschaft“ (Demsoc) mit Sitz in Brüssel nahmen an der Diskussion teil. Diskutiert wurden vor allem Social-Media-Kampagnen. Alle Experten waren sich einig, dass Medienkompetenz unter allen Altersgruppen gefördert werden muss.

Im Anschluss hielt Vincenzo Le Voci vom EU-Kommunikationsnetzwerk Club of Venice eine Rede über Kooperation von PR-Verantwortlichen im öffentlichen Sektor. „Nur durch Partnerschaften und Interaktion können wir nachhaltige und zuverlässige Kommunikationsergebnisse erreichen“, sagte er. Nach seiner Rede betonten Vuk Vujnović und Christian Spahr, dass SEECOM durch Kooperationen mit EU-Kollegen und -partnern seine Aktivitäten weiter vorantreiben wird.

#### **SEECOM-Mitgliederversammlung**

Im Anschluss der Veranstaltung fand die jährliche SEECOM-Mitgliederversammlung statt. Ognian Zlatev, Leiter der Vertretung der EU-Kommission in Bulgarien, wurde in seinem Amt als SEECOM-Vorsitzender bestätigt. Überdies wurden die Vorstandsmitglieder Christian Spahr, Ivana Đurić und Nebojša Regoje einstimmig wiedergewählt. Dinka Živalj, Pressesprecherin des EU-Vertretungsbüros im Kosovo, wurde als neues Mitglied in den SEECOM-Vorstand berufen. In einem Panel mit den engsten Partnern von SEECOM wurden weitere Projekte geplant. Die nächste SEECOM-Konferenz soll 2018 voraussichtlich in Sarajevo stattfinden.

Die SEECOM-Mitglieder waren sich einig, dass sie sich weiter für mehr Transparenz, Bürgerdialog und für eine gemeinsame europäische Zukunft engagieren werden.

Mitarbeit: Darija Fabijanić



**Manuela Zlateva,**

**Online Communications Manager of the Media Program South East Europe of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung**

Manuela has studied Communication Management (M.A.) at the University of Leipzig (Germany). In 2012 she has received the PR Junior Award of the German Public Relations Society (DPRG). Since 2013 Manuela is working as an Online Communications Manager at the Media Program South East Europe of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS). She is one of editors of the KAS books "Requirements for modern journalism education. The perspective of students in South East Europe" and "Reconnecting with citizens - from values to big data: Communication of governments, the EU and political parties in times of populism and filter bubbles". Manuela has attended various conferences of the South East Europe Public Sector Communication Association (SEECOM) and events on political communication management such as the first regional KAS Sommer School of Political Communication in Chişinău (Moldova).

# L'avenir de la communication territoriale - Cap'Com s'approche de son 30<sup>ème</sup> anniversaire

By Dominique Mégard

Le 29<sup>ème</sup> Forum Cap'Com se tiendra au Havre les 5, 6 et 7 décembre 2017. Un millier de participants sont attendus à ce rendez-vous annuel de la communication publique et territoriale. Ils viennent, comme chaque année, échanger des expériences, discuter nouveautés et problématiques communes, réfléchir à leur métier, leur fonction autour de valeurs et d'une éthique partagée. Avec un programme inscrit dans l'actualité.

Le programme est le fruit d'une réflexion collective. Elle est menée tout au long de l'année par le Comité de pilotage de Cap'Com, instance pluridisciplinaire d'une centaine de membres, majoritairement responsables de communication dans des collectivités, institutions et organismes publics mais aussi universitaires, consultants et agences, représentants des associations d'élus... Le comité de pilotage, tête de pont d'un réseau de 25 000 personnes, se réunit toutes les 6 semaines.

« Nouvelle vague » est le thème de l'année : « la nouvelle vague, c'est un esprit de liberté qui laisse à chacun le soin d'expérimenter, de s'approprier, de diffuser de nouveaux langages. Et de rendre acteurs ceux-là mêmes à qui on s'adresse ». Une thématique inspirée par la ville d'accueil, La Havre, port majeur de la façade Atlantique : « une ville fondée à la Renaissance, réinventée au moment de la Reconstruction. Une ville qui s'attache à porter le regard au-delà de ce que l'œil voit. Une ville qui célèbre ses 500 ans en contemplant l'avenir... » souligne l'éditorial de présentation.

**Premier axe : la jeunesse.** Au cœur du programme, une focale particulière sur la jeunesse, thème inscrit dans l'actualité politique et institutionnelle, en France tout au moins. « Le 29<sup>ème</sup> Forum de la communication publique et territoriale s'inscrit dans une actualité politique, sociale et technologique marquée par la jeunesse, souligne l'éditorial. Revendiquée partout, incarnée par les nouveaux élus de la République - version politique des héros ordinaires, jeunes et contemporains de la Nouvelle vague -, trop souvent délaissée, la jeunesse fait exploser les codes et les symboles avec insolence, avec panache. Au vieux monde d'en saisir le sens pour mieux agir avec elle : l'appel à la jeunesse n'est pas une course contre le temps... » Pour travailler sur ce thème, problématique récurrente des communicants publics, perpétuellement soucieux de toucher un public qui leur échappe souvent plusieurs entrées : « La jeunesse, l'entendre et agir avec elle » conférence d'ouverture d'Anne Muxel, directrice d'un centre de recherche du CNRS (Centre national de la recherche scientifique) et spécialiste de la jeunesse. Une réflexion approfondie à l'adresse des communicants publics : « La jeunesse semble traversée par un sentiment de révolte envers la politique, les institutions et les médias. Est-ce là le reflet des craintes, des dysfonctionnements et des blocages sur lesquels

buttent la socialisation et l'intégration des jeunes générations ? Vie personnelle, rapport à l'école et à l'emploi, valeurs en matière de politique et de citoyenneté, visions de l'avenir de la société, c'est à nous de mieux comprendre les jeunes et de mettre la communication publique en dialogue avec eux ». Une adresse partageable sans doute dans l'espace européen, en mal de comprendre les jeunes publics et leur rapport aux institutions... Plusieurs ateliers sont organisés ensuite pour aider à mettre en musique et en pratique les propos réflexifs et permettre de mieux relier jeunesse et institutions.

**Second axe : la recomposition.** Recomposition politique en premier lieu : « 2017, année zéro d'un nouveau monde politique ? » avec le regard de Pascal Perrineau, politologue, sur les bouleversements du paysage politique français dans une année électorale surprenante. Recomposition territoriale ensuite avec les changements d'organisations territoriales provoqués par la loi Notre (nouvelle organisation territoriale de la République) d'août 2015 et celles qui ont suivi en 2016 : passage de 22 à 13 régions, métropoles, communes nouvelles (regroupement de communes), fusions de communautés de communes en milieu rural... Des transformations qui accompagnent ou provoquent selon les points de vue une rupture entre monde rural et monde urbain. La question : « Monde rural et métropoles : faut-il une même parole publique ? » Avec quelques questions cruciales à la clef : « Comment penser une communication adaptée lorsque l'institution - métropole, grande intercommunalité, département - couvre des territoires aux attentes si différentes ? Le discours public peut-il dès lors être le même partout ? Les changements d'échelle géographique qui viennent bouleverser les équilibres entre centres urbains et ruralité modifient-ils les stratégies de communication ? La communication publique doit-elle essayer et peut-elle compenser cette fracture ? C'est une affaire de stratégie, d'outils et de moyens. Mais aussi une question de reconnaissance et de légitimité. » Des questions d'une actualité et d'une pertinence valables dans la France d'aujourd'hui en pleine mutation mais, nous semble-t-il, valables à l'échelle de l'Europe et pour chacune de ses composantes... Recomposition organisationnelle enfin. Avec toutes les conséquences managériales que transformations et mutations impliquent dans la conduite du changement et l'accompagnement des hommes.

**Des questions récurrentes.** À côté de ces axes, « fil rouge » de nombreux ateliers et rencontres informelles, des rencontres toujours autour du numérique, impact, techniques, moyens... passés au crible de l'expertise pour le secteur public et les préoccupations de liens aux citoyens. Sur le numérique une question sera traitée en particulier : « Civic tech : faut-il croire en la participation numérique ? » dans un débat qui essaiera de répondre sans illusion, à des interrogations largement partagées



par les communicants publics : « Aurait-on trouvé le moyen, grâce aux réseaux sociaux, aux applis dédiées, à l'internet mobile, de ré-intéresser les habitants à la vie locale, de les faire participer à la délibération, au débat public. La citoyenneté serait-elle définitivement numérique à défaut de passer par les urnes ou les réunions publiques ? Comment faire fonctionner la démocratie numérique ? Quels outils peuvent permettre aux citoyens de dialoguer avec leurs élus, de co-construire les politiques publiques ? Comment ne pas privilégier une population active et connectée au détriment d'une nécessaire expression de tous les habitants, de tous les territoires ? »

Autre récurrence comme une répétition perpétuelle partagée par les communicants publics de nombre de pays européens : « Comment mobiliser les électeurs ? » Pour la traiter, Céline Braconnier, chercheuse avec laquelle le réseau Cap'Com travaille depuis plusieurs années (cf Convergences N° 9 p.83-84) sur la question des inscriptions sur les listes électorales. Pour tenter de voir comment redonner espoir et confiance dans la parole publique.

**Préparer l'avenir.** Chaque Forum se vit intensément comme une étape essentielle de l'évolution de la communication publique. Le prochain en décembre 2018 sera important. Trentième de la lignée, il constituera une étape particulière, l'un de ces moments privilégiés où mémoire et histoire permette de regarder l'avenir avec confiance. Des chercheurs (cf encadré) vont permettre de comprendre les évolutions depuis trente ans. Mais surtout l'année 2018 sera au rendez-vous de quelques questions qui traversent le temps et, partant, la communication publique, parole de gouvernance :

- La sécurité : comment participer à sécuriser les citoyens ? Face aux changements climatiques et à ses résultats en catastrophes et autres tempêtes ; au terrorisme, son imprévisibilité et ses conséquences ; face aux mouvements migratoires et à l'arrivée de réfugiés en Europe... comment dire, faire comprendre ? Comment réduire angoisses et sentiment d'insécurité ? Les questions autour de la sécurité questionnent langages et pratiques. Complexes, fortes elles méritent un intense travail commun.
- L'information, un concept qui revient en force : il avait laissé place à la communication. Mais la qualité et la crédibilité de l'information, des informations devient une question prégnante à l'heure des *fakes news*. Que faut-il faire ? L'émetteur public bénéficie-t-il d'une crédibilité particulière ? Doit-il certifier l'information (avec le risque de la politisation de l'information) ou renforcer l'éducation aux médias ?
- La participation et le rapport aux citoyens, encore et toujours. Liée à la crédibilité du politique, aux transformations numériques, il interroge jusqu'à l'organisation et la nature même de la communication publique : certains services abandonnent le terme de communication au profit de relation aux citoyens. Abordée au Havre sous l'angle d'une analyse du

phénomène « civic tech » elle jouera en 2018 les prolongations. Avec éventuellement une analyse des implications et des convergences aux différents niveaux de gouvernance européen, national, local

- La question des territoires : concept politique lié aux questions d'identité, d'attractivité, de rapport au terroir, à la mondialisation. Comment gère-t-on sous une marque commune des identités complexes ? Comment tenir compte et affirmer des spécificités sans dislocation des solidarités territoriales et maintien d'une identité commune ? Le détachement et l'indifférence à la chose publique est aussi une conséquence de la dilution de la citoyenneté dans la mondialisation économique. Les habitants attendent de la proximité, de l'authenticité et du service, ce qui conditionne leur rapport au politique. Ils demandent, en même temps, à adhérer à un destin commun, une vision qui les entraîne et les dépasse. Comment répondre à cette apparente contradiction ?

Dans ce monde mouvant, changeant, il s'agit d'être optimiste et de croire encore au rôle de la communication publique comme un levier de cohésion sociale, sociétale et politique. C'est à cela en tout cas, qu'invitera les trentième anniversaire de Cap'Com. Auquel le Club de Venise est appelé, en invité d'honneur, à apporter son expertise et sa réflexion.

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**Un travail de recherche universitaire... ou quand l'histoire éclaire l'avenir.**

**L'histoire de la communication publique territoriale demeure à ce jour un sujet relativement méconnu. Or l'approche historique permet d'apporter un éclairage original sur les mutations territoriales post-décentralisation et sur la constitution, en France, d'un pouvoir local après les lois de décentralisation de 1982.**

**En prévision du 30e anniversaire du réseau Cap'Com, dont la création en 1988 marque la naissance du métier, plusieurs centres de recherche se sont réunis pour conduire un séminaire de recherche historique sur la communication territoriale. Un travail qui permettra de mieux comprendre les évolutions et préparer l'avenir...**

Il nous a semblé intéressant de transmettre au Club de Venise, que nous aurons l'honneur d'accueillir au 30ème Forum Cap'Com en 2018, le profil de cette recherche qui rejoint des travaux engagés par lui au fil des ans sur la fonction de communicant public comme réflexion permanente engagée sur la façon de conduire la communication publique d'État.

« La problématique de la communication publique territoriale demeure à ce jour un sujet relativement méconnu, explique Frédéric Theulé, l'un des chercheurs pilote de ce travail dans la note de cadrage publiée en amont du séminaire. Si des analyses



existent sur les médias<sup>1</sup>, la communication politique<sup>2</sup>, les discours des élus locaux<sup>3</sup>, la communication publique d'Etat<sup>4</sup>, l'action publique locale<sup>5</sup> ou encore de la fonction publique territoriale<sup>6</sup>, peu d'ouvrages traitent encore de la communication publique d'un point de vue territorial<sup>7</sup>, alors même que ce sujet intéresse tout autant l'histoire de la communication que celle des pouvoirs locaux. L'approche historique par l'objet de la communication territoriale permet en outre d'apporter un éclairage original sur les mutations territoriales post-décentralisation et l'ébauche de constitution d'un réel pouvoir local en France, après les lois de 1982-1986 ». Au-delà, le séminaire va aussi s'attacher à l'analyse de la naissance et de l'affirmation « d'un « métier » qui, depuis la fin des années 1980, s'est structuré en un groupe professionnel de quelque 25000 acteurs. Quasiment inexistante il y a quarante ans, la fonction de « communicant public » s'est progressivement organisée dans un contexte marqué par le développement de la décentralisation, l'essor de la fonction publique territoriale, l'évolution des médias d'information, mais aussi la montée en puissance du marketing et de la publicité. La constitution d'un groupe de professionnels communément appelés « communicants publics territoriaux » doit également beaucoup à l'impulsion d'acteurs institutionnels ainsi qu'à la mise en place progressive, à partir du début des années 1990, de nombreuses formations qu'elles soient initiales (universitaires) ou continues... Aujourd'hui, la communication publique territoriale revendique une spécificité qui revêt la forme d'un ensemble de valeurs, au premier rang desquelles l'on retrouve la citoyenneté et l'intérêt général. Le réseau Cap'Com, qui créa en 1988 le tout premier forum de la communication publique et qui célébrera en décembre 2018 ses 30 années d'existence, en est l'un des principaux dépositaires ».

La Chaire Territoires et Mutations de l'Action Publique de Sciences-Po Rennes<sup>8</sup>, le Centre de Recherches en Sciences de l'Information et de la Communication de l'Université Rennes 2<sup>9</sup>, le Centre de Recherches sur l'Action Politique en Europe de l'Université de Rennes<sup>10</sup> et Cap'Com vont ainsi travailler ensemble lors de 6 séminaires programmés d'octobre 2017 à mai 2018.

La séance inaugurale de cette recherche en octobre 2017 a permis de définir les grandes lignes historiques, juridiques et communicationnelles de 30 ans de communication territoriale avec une approche qui croise l'histoire des médias et de l'action publique.

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**Dominique Mégard est aujourd'hui présidente du Comité de pilotage de Cap'Com, réseau des professionnels de la communication publique et territoriale. Elle anime avec le réseau, une réflexion permanente sur l'actualité et la diversité de la communication publique.**

Depuis l'origine, en 1988, elle accompagne la vie et les débats du Forum annuel. Elle a assuré, comme déléguée générale, la responsabilité de la manifestation ainsi que la création de nombreux services et actions pour et sur la communication publique dans les territoires, avant de devenir présidente du réseau qui en est issu. Bernard Deljarrie lui a succédé en 2012 au poste de délégué général, assurant la gestion, l'action et l'avenir de Cap'Com.

Journaliste diplômée du CFJ Paris, elle a exercé en PHR et pour de nombreux périodiques spécialisés en économie, urbanisme, vie territoriale et vie publique. Elle a été elle-même directrice de la communication dans une collectivité pendant huit ans. Elle a été chargée de cours plus de dix ans à l'université de Paris I Sorbonne, à l'université Lille 2 et à l'UCO d'Angers et intervient, en tant qu'expert, à la demande.

Auteur de nombreux articles et d'un ouvrage paru au printemps 2012, chez Dunod « La communication publique et territoriale », elle est également co-auteur avec Bernard Deljarrie de l'ouvrage La communication des collectivités locales LGDJ, 2008.

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 2 Notamment : Aldrin Philipp, Hubé Nicolas, Ollivier-Yaniv Caroline et Utard Jean-Michel (dir.), Les mondes de la communication publique, PUR, 2014 ; GERTSLE Jacques, La communication politique, Armand Colin, 2004.  
 3 Notamment : LE BART Christian, La rhétorique du maire-entrepreneur, critique de la communication municipale, Pédone, 1992 ; LE BART Christian, Les mots de... la vie politique locale, PU Mirail, 2014.  
 4 Notamment : ZEMOR Pierre, La communication publique, Puf, coll. Que sais-je ?, 2008.  
 5 ASQUIER Romain, La gouvernance territoriale. Pratiques, discours et théories, Paris, LGDJ, 2013 (2e éd.) ; CADIOU Stéphane (dir.), Gouverner sous pression ? La participation des groupes d'intérêt aux affaires territoriales, LGDJ, Lextenso Editions, 2016.  
 6 Voir notamment sur le sujet : BILAND Emilie, La fonction publique territoriale, La Découverte, 2012 ; COLMOU Yves, « Les collectivités locales : un autre modèle », revue Pouvoirs, 2006/2, n° 117, Le Seuil, pp. 27-37.  
 7 Signalons toutefois : DAUVIN Pascal, La communication des collectivités locales. L'ambivalence politique, L'Harmattan, 2015 ; DELJARRIE Bernard et MEGARD Dominique, La communication des collectivités locales, LGDG-Dexia, 2009.

8 <http://www.sciencespo-rennes.fr/fr/qui-sommes-nous.html>.

9 <https://www.univ-rennes2.fr/prefics/centre-recherches-sciences-information-communication>.

10 <http://www.arennes.eu>.

# 8th EuroPCom Conference: “[Re]shaping European dialogues”

On 9th and 10th November, the Committee of the Regions organised its 8th annual Public Relations Conference, ' (Re) shaping European Dialogues' in Brussels. This conference is a traditional and important annual meeting point for public communication managers and senior experts of local, regional, national and European authorities.

It was an opportunity for colleagues to share views on how to engage citizens in the European project and in public affairs more generally, examining the unique area of crossover between

communication and engagement, and mapping the latest trends in (digital) communication.

Through workshops, keynote lectures, and ideas labs, such ideas as political campaigning, behavioural insights, the new media landscape, participatory engagement, and institutional communication on Europe.

Most of the conference sessions was web streamed live via the conference site. Videos on Demand of these sessions are also being made available.

Convergences wishes to share with its readers an extract of the programme showing the broad range of the communication topics covered, and focussing on the workshop 'review of EU institutional communication'.

A detailed outcome of the event will be published in Convergences N° 11.



## 9 November 2017

10:30-12:30	Opening session					Room Hemicycle, Paul-Henri Spaak building, EP	[1]			
12:45-14:15	Networking lunch					Atrium 5 and 6				
14:30-16:00	Political campaigning - how and where is the battle won? Room JDE62	Employee advocacy – engaging your staff as ambassadors Room JDE51	The Age of Big Data: data mining and communication Room JDE52	How to produce videos with a smartphone Room JDE53	Interactive Cities: the use of social media and digital tools Atrium 5	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]
	Raising emotional engagement with Europe: a love story of grassroots initiatives Room JDE53	Know your target: behavioural insights and audience perspectives Room JDE52	Where is social media headed? The biggest trends to watch out for. Room JDE62	Engaging citizens in a debate on Europe: local dialogues "Reflecting on Europe" Room JDE51	Catalogue of good practice for communicating with young people Atrium 5	[7]	[8]	[9]	[10]	[11]
16:30-18:00										
18:00-19:30	Networking reception					Atrium 5 and 6				

## 10 November 2017

09:15-10:45	Tackling populism and Euroscepticism at local level Room JDE51	Who earns the trust of citizens and why: key findings of global studies Room JDE52	Media literacy in the post-truth era – surviving in the world of fake news and misinformation Room JDE62	Ten pitfalls to avoid when moderating debates Room JDE53	From audience to partner: exploring innovative engagement approaches to boosting policy effectiveness Atrium 5	[12]	[13]	[14]	[15]	[16]
	Communicating Europe - the role and impact of public service broadcasters Room JDE51	Drivers of engagement: participatory – communicative projects and concepts Room JDE52	Review of EU institutional communication Room JDE62	The rise of MADCOMs Room JDE53	Storytelling: a tool for reaching other filter bubbles? Atrium 5	[17]	[18]	[19]	[20]	[21]
11:15-12:45										
13:15-14:00	Closing session					Room JDE62, listening rooms JDE52, JDE51, JDE53	[22]			
14:00-15:00	Networking lunch					Atrium 5 and 6				

### Session formats:



workshops



key note lectures



ideas labs

## [19] Review of EU institutional communication

10 November, 11:15-12:45, JDE62  
*Interpretation from/into English and French*  
*Web stream provided in English*  
*Listening room JDE70*

Over the past few years, EU institutions have invested a considerable amount of effort in improving communicating Europe. A new approach to corporate communication was launched by the Commission in 2017, communicating directly to citizens along three narratives: EU delivers, EU empowers and EU protects. The Parliament developed a new all-encompassing consistent communication strategy. Significant attention and resources have been directed at social media activity by all EU institutions, while working together on further cooperation and streamlining of communication activities. This panel will discuss the efforts made so far and invite the audience for a constructive scrutiny.

Speakers:

- **Stephen Clark**, Director for Relations with Citizens, European Parliament, DG Communication
- **Mikel Landabaso Alvarez**, Director of Strategy and Corporate Communication, European Commission, DG Communication
- **Paul Reiderman**, Director of Media and Communication, Council of the European Union
- **Ian Barber**, Director of Communication, European Committee of the Regions
- **Andrea Bonanni**, European Editor of La Repubblica, Italy

Moderator: **Tomas Miglierina**, EU correspondent, Radiotelevisione Svizzera, Switzerland



**Stephen Clark** has been the head of web communications at the European Parliament since 2007, leading the team bringing daily news of Parliament's activities to the general public. He has been deeply involved in the introduction and development of social media in the communications mix and the ongoing renewal of Parliament's wider digital strategy. Since September 2012, he has been in charge of the Directorate for Relations with Citizens.



**Mikel Landabaso Alvarez** has been Director of Strategy and Corporate Communication in the European Commission's DG Communication since May 2016. Mr Landabaso was Head of Cabinet for the Regional Policy Commissioner, Corina Cretu. Prior to that, he was head of unit at the Competence Centre on Smart and Sustainable Growth in the Directorate-General for Regional Policy. Before that, he worked as assistant to the Director-General of DG REGIO and in both policy design and policy implementation. He was also head of the research department and assistant to the Director-General of the Basque Regional Development Agency (SPRI S.A.) from 1986 to 1990. @Landabaso1



**Paul Reiderman** is the director for media and communications at the Council of the EU. He worked previously for four years as an adviser in the private office of Javier Solana, the High Representative/Secretary General of the Council of the European Union. Prior to that, he was spokesman on external relations in the Council's press office. Before joining the Council he was a political consultant and lobbyist in London and Brussels. He graduated from Oxford University with a Master's degree in Philosophy, Politics and Economics.



**Ian Barber** has worked for the EU Institutions for almost 25 years, including 15 years of experience in communication. He has worked in corporate communication, opinion polling and as head of development Communication in Brussels, in addition to roles in the European Commission Representations in Member States. He was appointed Director for Communication at the Committee of the Regions in summer 2016. There the aim is to ensure communication is member-centric, measured and innovative in its approach.





## Club of Venice (CoV) Plenary Meeting 23-24 November 2017, Venice (Italy) Provisional agenda

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 22ND 2017

Optional social programme

19:30 INFORMAL EVENING

Venue: Council of Europe - Venice Office, St. Marco 180C, Venezia

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 23RD 2017

8:30 - 9:00 GUESTS' ARRIVAL, REGISTRATION

Meeting Venue: Fondazione La Biennale, Ca' Giustinian, Sala delle Colonne, San Marco 1364/A, Venezia

9:00 - 09:20 OPENING SESSION

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

9:20 - 9:35 THE CLUB OF VENICE AND TODAY'S COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES

Stefano ROLANDO, President of the Club of Venice

09:35 - 10:00 INTERVENTION BY SANDRO GOZI, STATE SECRETARY FOR EUROPEAN AFFAIRS OF THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT

10:15 - 13:00 PLENARY SESSION

"European communication challenges: Rebuilding citizens' confidence in the EU"

- the role of Member States and institutions

- overcoming barriers and divides: opportunities for work in partnership

- government and institutional communication and civil society

Moderator: Claus HÖRR, Director, Press and Media Service, Bundeskanzleramt, Austria - member of the Steering Group of the Club of Venice

Key Note speaker: Jaume DUCH GUILLLOT, Director-General, DG Communication, European Parliament

Panellists: Tiina URM, Head of Communication for the Tallinn Digital summit, Estonian Presidency of the Council of the EU - Andreas KINDL, Director, Strategic Communication, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Germany, member of the Steering Group of the Club of Venice - Diana AGOSTI, Italy's Prime Minister's Office, Head of the Department of European Policies, member of the Steering Group of the Club of Venice - Tina ZOURNATZI, European Commission DG Communication, Head of the Strategic Communication Unit, Directorate for Strategy and Corporate Communications - Dominique-Francois BARETH, Head of Conferences, Internal Services and Protocol Unit, Communication Department, European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) - Michel MAGNIER, Director, Culture and Creativity, Directorate-General Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (EAC), European Commission - Silvio GONZATO, Director, Interinstitutional relations, strategic communications, legal affairs, inspection, internal audit and Mediation, European External Action Service (EEAS) - Eva MONCURE, Frontex Spokesperson - Julien SIMON, International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), Regional Coordinator for the Mediterranean - Dr. Pawel SUROWIEC, University of Bournemouth, Faculty of Media and Communication - Christoph KLAWEHN, Project Coordinator, European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR)

14:15 - 17:30 PLENARY SESSION

"The impact of the new media and communication landscape on the public communicator's profession and on ethics"

- follow-up to the London Charter: where do we stand

- threats and opportunities

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

Key Note speaker: Anthony ZACHARZEWSKI, Director of The Democratic Society

Panellists: Fredrik NORDIN, Desk Officer, Communication Divisions at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden - Arlin BAGDAT, Director-General, External Communication, PM Chancellery, Belgium - member of the Steering Group of the Club of Venice - Alex AIKEN, Executive Director of Communications, Cabinet Office, UK - Paul AZZOPARDI, Director, Department for Information, Office of the Prime Minister, Malta - one representative from Spain Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Tiina URM, Estonia, Head of Communication for the Tallinn Digital summit (legacy of the Digital Summit of 29 September 2017 and the e-Government Ministerial Conference in Tallinn on 6 October 2017) - Claus Hörr, Director, Press and Media Service, Bundeskanzleramt, Austria, member of the Steering Group of the Club of Venice - Lefteris KRETSOS, Secretary-General for Media and Communication, Ministry for Digital Policy, Telecommunications and Media, Greece - Marco INCERTI, Director of the Communications Service, European University Institute, Florence - Giuseppe ZAFFUTO, Spokesperson, Council of Europe - Verena NOWOTNY, Communication specialist, Gaisberg Consulting - Christian SPAHR, Director of the Media Programme South East Europe, Konrad Adenauer Foundation



FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 24TH 2017

9:00 - 09:30 TOWARDS 2019: CITIZEN OUTREACH ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

Contributions from: Vito BORRELLI, Deputy Head of the European Commission Representation in Italy - Tanja RUDOLF, European Parliament, Advisor to the Director-General of DG Communication - Christophe ROUILLON, Member of the Committee of the Regions, Rapporteur on Communication, Mayor of Coullaines (France)

09:30 - 12:30 PLENARY SESSION/ROUND TABLE

Capacity/Capability Building and Behavioural Developments

- The Nudge concept: where do we stand (competence, organisational skills, empowerment and effectiveness)
- shaping professionalism: the ongoing transformation of public services
  - lessons' learning from public opinion trends
  - on line technology and training

Moderator: Laure Van Hauwaert, Managing Director, European Institutions, WPP Government and Public Sector Practice, UK

Key Note speaker: Professor Riccardo VIALE, Professor of behavioral sciences and decision making, Università of Milano

Bicocca and Secretary-General of the Herbert Simon Society

Panellists: Pinky BADHAN, Head of Campaigns, Prime Minister's Office, Government Communications Service (GCS), UK - Markus KANERVA, Senior Specialist, Government Policy Analysis Unit ("Experimental Finland" Team), Finland (Nudge-related experience)

- David WATSON, Head of Marketing, Public Health England - Tina Israelsson, Communication and Management Support, Government Offices Communications Division, Sweden - Robert WESTER, Head of sector government, Berenschot Advisors, Netherlands (tbc) - George PERLOV, Communication specialist, Edelman, PR Account Director

12:30 - 13:00 CLOSING SESSION

- Reflections on the issues emerged during the plenary meeting
  - Planning for 2018-2019, with focus on:
    - Luxembourg seminar (8-9 March 2018)
    - Vilnius spring plenary (May or June 2018)
- Partnership activities with SEEMO, SEECOM, KAS, ESCN and CAP'COM

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

# Calendar of events



2017
London, 17 March 2017 Thematic seminar on StratCom
Malta, 18-19 May 2017 Plenary meeting (Thurs 18.5 full-day and Friday 19.5 morning) Seminar on the Migration and Refugee Crisis (Friday 19.5 afternoon)
Athens/Thessaloniki, 23-24 September 2017 Seminar/study visit on the refugee and migration crisis
Venice, 23-24 November 2017 Plenary meeting
2018
Luxembourg, 8-9 March 2018 Thematic seminar
Vilnius, June 2018 Plenary meeting
autumn 2018 (venue to be defined) Thematic seminar
Venice, November 2018 Plenary meeting
2019
Brussels (or other MS' capital), early spring 2019 Thematic seminar
Bucharest (tbc), June 2019 Plenary meeting
autumn 2019 (venue to be defined) Thematic seminar
Venice, November 2019 Plenary meeting



# L'avenir de l'Europe est dans les mains de la « génération Z »

By Piervirgilio Dastoli

Les sociologues ont étudié attentivement les comportements des jeunes qui appartiennent à la « génération du millénaire », nés au début des années '80 et ayant expérimenté le passage au nouveau siècle, la fin de la division du monde entre l'impérialisme soviétique et l'hégémonie américaine, les effets de la globalisation mais aussi les incertitudes et la précarité dans le marché du travail.

L'attention est portée maintenant sur la nouvelle génération qui a été nommée « post-millénaire » ou « Z » à laquelle appartiennent les jeunes nés au début du troisième millénaire et dont un grand nombre (environ neuf millions) sera appelé à voter pour la première fois aux élections européennes en mai ou juin 2019.

Selon un sondage effectué en Italie par Demos-Coop, cette génération exprime le plus haut niveau de confiance dans le projet européen (47% sur une moyenne de 34%) mais aussi dans la globalisation (51% sur une moyenne de 30%) et exige sa propre autonomie et indépendance (75% sur 69%) tout en considérant importante la relation avec la famille.

En se fondant sur ces données qui confirment une tendance consolidée dans l'Eurobaromètre, le Mouvement Européen en Italie a lancé un projet consacré à la génération « Z » qui offre aux jeunes dans les écoles supérieures ou dans les universités l'autonomie et l'indépendance pour juger l'Union européenne (« Procès à l'Europe »), ses politiques et ses institutions en mettant en discussion la réalisation ou la non-réalisation de ses objectifs afin d'indiquer la voie à suivre pour faire changer de cap au bateau européen.

Ainsi les jeunes se partagent la responsabilité de jouer la fonction de « Procureur », d'avocats de la défense et de « jury populaire » en faisant appel à des témoins venant des institutions européennes et nationales ainsi que de la société civile et des stakeholders.

Pendant un an de « procès à l'Europe » mille-cinq jeunes ont participé au projet lancé par le Mouvement européen en Italie, de Trento à Gioiosa Jonica en passant par Modena, Rome et Salerno. Seuls la Cour de Justice et le Parlement européen ont été acquittés par les jeunes puisque ils ont été considérés comme « non coupables » tandis qu'on a reconnu à la Commission des facteurs atténuants et on a condamné normalement le Conseil et le Conseil européen en les considérant responsables de la faiblesse ou de l'absence de réponses européennes courageuses.

Le « procès à l'Europe » est devenu européen dans le cadre du programme « Europe for citizens » qui permettra à des student-leaders de préparer leurs collègues en Pologne, Hongrie, Pays Bas, Slovaquie et Belgique pendant de sessions de débats et de fausses-vraies séances judiciaires (mock-trial) qui vont de dérouler entre novembre 2017 et février 2019, trois mois avant les élections européennes.

Ceux qui sont intéressés au « procès à l'Europe » peuvent découvrir vidéo, photo, actes d'accusation et de défense, jugements sur le site [www.movimentoeuropeo.it](http://www.movimentoeuropeo.it) ou le projet « Message to Europeans 3.0 » sur le site [www.euca.eu](http://www.euca.eu)

Les risques de violations de l'Etat de droit dans un nombre croissant de pays européens et la difficulté presque insurmontable d'appliquer l'art. 7 TUE ont poussé les jeunes à demander de mettre en œuvre une initiative citoyenne européenne (ICE) afin de donner une substance concrète et juridique aux articles des traités qui règlent la non-discrimination (art. 2, 3, 10 TUE et 18, 36, 37, 40, 45, 65, 95, 107, 114, 157, 199, 200, 214, 326 TFUE), aux articles concernant la coopération judiciaire civile (art. 81 TFUE) et pénale (art. 82 TFUE) et aux compétences de l'Agence des droits fondamentaux de l'Union européenne.

Cette initiative vise à renforcer la procédure lancée sous présidence italienne en 2014 et a créé les bases politiques nécessaires en vue de la proposition sur le respect de l'Etat de droit que Jean-Claude Juncker a annoncé le 13 septembre dans son discours sur l'état de l'Union.

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Pier Virgilio Dastoli, assistant parlementaire de Altiero Spinelli (1977-1986) et chef de la Représentation de la Commission européenne en Italie (2003-2009), est président du Mouvement européen en Italie et professeur de droit international dans l'Université pour les étrangers "Dante Alighieri" à Reggio Calabria. Il est journaliste et membre du board de "Associazione dei Comunicatori Pubblici e Istituzionali"

# La Comunicación Institucional, y las llamadas Redes Sociales.

## Un proceso revolucionario.

By Aurelio Sahagún Pool

Ocurre siempre que quienes viven un momento de cambio revolucionario no son plenamente conscientes de la realidad en la que respiran. Y obviamente eso se aplica a las generaciones presentes.

No ignoramos que estamos viviendo un tiempo de inmensas transformaciones. Algunos tenemos la sensación de haber vivido dos milenios de historia en apenas sesenta años de consciencia vital.

A modo de ejemplo sólo puedo aportar experiencias personales. En mil novecientos cincuenta yo tenía diez años, en la España de la Dictadura. Mi abuelo, un mediano terrateniente manchego vivía en una casa exactamente construida como lo habían sido las villas romanas: un atrio que daba a un patio central en torno al cual se abrían dos plantas de vivienda, y más al fondo, una almazara para moler la aceituna y obtener el aceite de oliva, y, enfrente una bodega para hacer vino de las uvas de los viñedos. La almazara tenía un molino de piedra que movían mulas, y la bodega tenía grandes tinajas de barro cocido. Más atrás aún se llegaba a un corral donde, además de las cuadras para las mulas, un par de caballos y dos o tres burros, había un gran espacio por el que pululaban las gallinas, y con frecuencia, unos perros que servían cada uno a su función: perros de pastor y mastines para las ovejas y las cabras que solían estar en majadas, en el monte, perros de caza para la afición cinegética de mi abuelo, dos pares de galgos para ir a caballo a por la liebre, y algún otro sin raza ni definición, que vivía de hacerse querer por las mujeres de la casa. A mi abuela le ayudaban las mujeres de los gañanes y mi abuelo recibía en el atrio todas las mañanas a aparceros que le contaban como iban las tierras a su cargo. Un patricio rural romano vivía exactamente igual dos mil años antes y probablemente en el mismo lugar.

Por otra parte, eran tiempos de caciques y de servidumbres muy establecidas. La Guerra civil había retrotraído el campo manchego a situaciones casi medievales. En mil novecientos sesenta yo estudiaba en la Universidad Complutense una carrera de Derecho en la que las ideas que se nos enseñaban procedían directamente de la Contrarreforma. Aristóteles, Aquino, Suárez, Vázquez de Menchaca, eran los padres de la Filosofía del Derecho, La Constitutio Carolina Criminalis de Carlos V el fundamento del Derecho Penal, Ulpiano y Justiniano los creadores del Derecho civil, Vitoria el fundador del Derecho internacional. Nada que no hubiesen podido estudiar y aprender estudiantes de Salamanca en el Siglo XVII. En 1970 yo era ya funcionario público y en los diez años previos me había zambullido en la vida del siglo XX. Lecturas prohibidas, reuniones clandestinas, protestas universitarias, carreras delante de una Policía tan cruel como torpe, viajes a Francia, a gran Bretaña, oposiciones por recomendación de los viejos profesores

que propugnaban el "entrismo" (es decir la penetración de la Administración pública franquista por jóvenes con ideologías democráticas) ... y por fin destino en Escandinavia, que para mí en aquellos años era un viaje al futuro.

Es una experiencia difícilmente comparable a la que tuvo mi generación durante los mismos años en el resto de Europa, mucho más dramática, con una guerra que destrozó su infancia y una postguerra llena de dificultades y de trabajosas y dolorosa recuperación. La Guerra Civil Española acabó un año antes de mi nacimiento, como antecedente o prólogo de la que sería después la más mortífera de las guerras en la historia de Europa, la Segunda Guerra Mundial.

Durante esos años se habían desarrollado en el mundo la radio (esencial en los anteriores años 20 y 30 para la eclosión de fascismos y nazismo, y la consolidación del comunismo soviético), los diarios de gran tirada (con la tradición de más de cincuenta años de predominio en las sociedades burguesas) y por fin la televisión (en España el año 1956).

En los años setenta, pues, convertido en un funcionario especializado en Comunicación Institucional, mi campo de trabajo estaba claramente establecido y muy intensamente estudiado (Witgenstein, Lazarsfeld, Lasswell, Mc Luhan, Schramm y muchos otros, una legión de tratadistas nos describía el campo y su clima, su cultivo, sus siembras y sus cosechas).

Los años ochenta significó la cumbre del predominio de los Medios conocidos como instrumentos esenciales de la sociedad contemporánea. Durante ese decenio, y quizá durante cinco años más del siguiente, los responsables y profesionales de la Comunicación Institucional en países occidentales nos encontramos con un trabajo duro, si, pero razonablemente apoyado por la naturaleza del territorio a cubrir, claramente establecido, por medio de estadísticas y encuestas cada vez más perfeccionadas, y por la claridad con que en nuestras sociedades se distinguía entre el sector público y el privado.

En aquellos años, que un Bobby pudiera pedirle a un inglés que acreditara su identidad en la calle, era impensable. El ámbito de lo estrictamente privado estaba claramente protegido y socialmente defendido. En aquellos años, los ciudadanos en Europa, instintivamente, distinguían entre lo público y lo privado, y la "privacy" era un ámbito inviolable. En ese campo de acción los responsables de la comunicación institucional nos movíamos en territorio conocido. El poder político era una especie de "paterfamilias" aceptado y respetado, las reglas democráticas eran generalmente asumidas como naturalmente estables, y la "voz" del Poder político era, socialmente, reconocida como la decantación de la voluntad general. Eso no significaba la aceptación acrítica de las posiciones del Gobierno.

Pero se reconocía que las discrepancias aparecerían en la voz de las instituciones políticas de la minoría, o de los movimientos sociales emergentes, o en las consideraciones más o menos razonadas de los comentaristas y editorialistas de los Medios.

En Estados Unidos, donde el papel de los Medios de Comunicación fue siempre fundamental para la vitalidad democrática, campañas mediáticas llegaron a conseguir la caída del presidente Nixon y a animar movilizaciones que acabaron por poner freno y al fin sacar a los soldados norteamericanos de Vietnam, acabando con una guerra que había durado para los Estados Unidos más de dieciséis años y había provocado la muerte de más de 58.000 estadounidenses y al menos 1,1 millón de vietnamitas.

De algún modo durante los ochenta y los noventa, el régimen democrático de los países europeos, de los occidentales, era reconocido por sus ciudadanos como estable, razonable, y asumido. La caída del muro de Berlín marcaba la culminación del éxito de las Democracias Representativas de Occidente

Durante esos veinte años, el ámbito de la comunicación en las sociedades democráticas tuvo un desarrollo intenso y previsible. Las fuentes de la información eran las agencias de noticias, cuyos tentáculos se extendían mundialmente, los corresponsales de los grandes medios escritos o audiovisuales, que también producían información más o menos instantánea desde los cuatro puntos cardinales. Esas corrientes de información eran refinadas y completadas con explicaciones y valoraciones hechas en las mesas de redacción de los periódicos o en las de las radios y televisiones, y la extensión de los lectores o de las audiencias iba creciendo a medida que a nivel mundial crecía el acceso a las ondas de la televisión y de la radio o la distribución de los grandes periódicos.

En ese campo, permanentemente creciente, la información institucional se iba limpiando de las prácticas que habían establecido los totalitarismos durante los años veinte treinta y cuarenta, y se iba ajustando a las necesidades de los ciudadanos de las democracias, para hacerlos cada vez más dueños del conocimiento que les hacía gradualmente más capaces de orientar con una opinión pública más consolidada y mejor apoyada sobre la realidad, la política de sus gobiernos.

Vinieron luego los años del final de la guerra fría y de la consolidación de las sociedades del bienestar en Europa, que iba convirtiéndose en una entidad política supranacional, incorporando con firmeza los países europeos que salían de la dictadura, como Grecia, Portugal, o España, y algo más tarde a los que se liberaban de la servidumbre de una Unión Soviética en proceso de desmoronamiento.

En esas circunstancias la comunicación institucional ganaba eco y credibilidad, y en algunos países se iba ensayando un canal de intercomunicación entre la ciudadanía y las instituciones del Estado, que consolidaba las garantías democráticas del sistema, y atendía de modo personalizado las necesidades de información de cada individuo. Así surgió y se desarrolló la Postbus 51 que aún es operativa, y que sirvió pronto de modelo para desarrollos parecidos en otros países como en La República Federal alemana, Francia o España. Este servicio al ciudadano está extendido hoy a prácticamente todos los países de la Unión Europea y a las instituciones centrales de la misma Unión.

Una de las medidas más difíciles de implementar en todos los países fue la de separar la información institucional de su componente puramente político. Se distinguía así entre la información fría, es decir la que se refería a hechos o a acontecimientos desde la perspectiva del Estado, que se obtenía y se difundía por instrumentos de la Administración Pública, con la garantía para los ciudadanos de que no había en tal información elementos o sesgos de propaganda política por parte del Partido o Partidos que configurasen el Gobierno, y la información caliente, la que Los Miembros del Gobierno, o los Partidos Políticos producían como parte de su actividad y muestra de su tarea. Para ello contaban con su propio jefe de Prensa, que generaba y manejaba ese tipo de información, en la que la voluntad del Gobierno podía introducir los elementos más o menos prudentes de propaganda política que juzgasen conveniente. Esta división de fuentes y de naturalezas de la comunicación institucional nunca se produjo con una distinción radical entre una y otra, aunque la tendencia de la maduración de los sistemas democráticos a la vista del desarrollo y creciente importancia de los medios de comunicación, sobre todo los audiovisuales, ayudaba obviamente a que tal distinción se fuese haciendo cada vez más clara.

Mientras tanto se iban produciendo dos transformaciones de enorme calado: por un lado, las nuevas tecnologías iban transformando la economía de producción en una economía financiera, y la comunicación iba incorporando también innovaciones tecnológicas que permitían la aparición de redes de difusión de la información y de las opiniones al margen de los medios de comunicación conocidos hasta el momento.

A partir de los últimos años de los noventa y los primeros del nuevo siglo el panorama antes descrito, relativamente bien organizado, y en el que la comunicación institucional tenía muy pocas dificultades para difundirse e incidir en el conocimiento de la "res publica" por los ciudadanos, empezó a sufrir un cambio revolucionario. A los medios escritos y audiovisuales vinieron a añadirse los instrumentos de comunicación social que iba

creando la galaxia tecnológica. Desde 1997 en que aparece AOL Instant Messenger, hasta hoy, con cientos de redes que conectan cientos de millones de personas en todo el mundo, el territorio de la Comunicación ha sufrido una transformación de naturaleza y profundidad aún muy difícil de calibrar.

Sí se puede decir que Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Youtube, Pinterest, y muchos otros, han creado una complejidad de redes imposible de contener. Crecen todas ellas en un espacio anómico donde la capacidad de los Estados se tropieza con la práctica imposibilidad de controlarlas. Por otro lado, en las sociedades democráticas occidentales, los derechos de sus ciudadanos a acceder a esas redes son inviolables. Se une a ello la versatilidad de los teléfonos móviles capaces de hacer fotografías y vídeos además de la comunicación por audio y mensajes, que significan millones y millones de fuentes de bits de información sin que exista la menor capacidad de localizar ni de comprobar la veracidad de lo que envían. El mundo se encuentra ya, pues, bajo una nube de redes con millones de flujos comunicacionales que hacen prácticamente imposible su selección su constatación o su importancia. Es una jungla densa, un ruido creciente en el que la Comunicación institucional se pierde, se ignora, o se trivializa. Los Estados se encuentran por ahora inermes ante este fenómeno y las razones que hacen de una información o una imagen dada un fenómeno global suelen ser totalmente imprevisibles. En este mundo se producen de pronto imágenes o mensajes que se difunden por millones de vías y se convierten de repente en "virales" es decir, que son recibidos y reenviados por millones de personas hasta conseguir que la conciencia global sea consciente e influenciable por ellos.

Por otro lado, estas redes permiten la comunicación masiva en tiempo real, lo que permite movilizaciones ciudadanas totalmente imprevisibles, alimentadas por flujos de comunicación que nutren sentimientos irracionales... Los comportamientos sociales están siendo modificados de un modo muy profundo y buena prueba de los efectos que ese tipo de comunicación y hasta de indoctrinación, han llegado a producir, como un primer efecto, la falta de capacidad de respuesta de las Instituciones Públicas, su desprestigio y su sustitución por tendencias populares que cuando se acaban plasmando producen resultados totalmente imprevisibles. El referéndum del Brexit, la elección de Trump o la pretendida declaración de independencia de Cataluña no son más que el principio de un proceso que puede llevar a la civilización occidental por derroteros totalmente irracionales.

Estábamos muy acostumbrados a interpretar la realidad social y política desde parámetros de racionalidad. Las nuevas redes de comunicación se apoyan en los sentimientos ocasionales, se alimentan de ellos y los promueven. Ni las estructuras políticas existentes ni las dinámicas institucionales pueden dar respuestas eficaces, desde sus plataformas de prestigio

(prácticamente inexistente), racionalidad (de hecho, poco destacable por lo común) y autoridad (en clara reducción hasta que no llega el momento del uso de la fuerza).

En este momento histórico, cuando los cambios económicos y sociales son tan profundos que ha desaparecido de las sociedades desarrolladas la clase del proletariado, cuando las clases medias se dividen entre los pocos que se enriquecen y los muchos que ven reducidos sus ingresos a niveles escasos de subsistencia, es precisamente cuando las instituciones públicas necesitan más que nunca intervenir en los procesos de información de los ciudadanos, mantener un nivel intenso de comunicación, difundir medidas paliativas y aún correctivas, que puedan modificar el sentido de este proceso. Pero es precisamente en estos tiempos en los que el ámbito de la comunicación se encuentra saturado de flujos, en buena medida espontáneos y en menor grado promovido por intereses más o menos oscuros, cuando la Comunicación institucional no encuentra el modo de adaptarse e incorporarse a ellos con la presencia y el peso necesarios.

Se puede caer en la tentación de manejar también los sentimientos, lo que nos pone ante el riesgo de caer en prácticas de intoxicación o de propaganda. Algunos países ya se han percatado de ello y en aquellos donde el poder tiende a formas autoritarias, el proceso se está viendo crecer. El Estado promueve fuentes difusas para canalizar mensajes que beneficien sus intereses, y eso no solo lo pueden hacer dentro de sus propios países sino fuera de ellos.

Empieza así el ámbito de las redes sociales globales a ser un instrumento de la política intervencionista de ciertos gobiernos. No necesito aquí recordar los rumores de intervención informática de un país extranjero en las elecciones americanas, en el mismo Brexit, en el crecimiento de los movimientos de ultraderecha en Europa y últimamente en los sucesos de Cataluña, donde se han visto banderas de los independentistas corsos, bretones, vascos, y lombardos. Las redes sociales pueden así utilizarse como un arma de rara eficacia para introducir divisiones y la consecuente debilidad de potenciales adversarios.

Ha cambiado el lenguaje, han cambiado los medios, ha cambiado el espacio comunicacional en el que viven los ciudadanos. Las instituciones públicas padecen una inercia que las hace obsoletas, sin que hayan tenido el tiempo que ellas necesitan para adaptarse a esos cambios. La anomía en la que se mueve la comunicación se extiende a los demás ámbitos de la sociedad. La economía, los flujos económicos hace decenios que se mueven en espacios anómicos, libres de controles y de tributaciones. Ahora, las nuevas generaciones también crecen en la desorientación de un espacio sin normas válidas. Las desigualdades que siempre hubo en la geografía humana global se hacen no sólo mucho más evidentes, provocan flujos

migratorios difícilmente manejables. Tengo, personalmente, la convicción de que vivimos tiempos de transformaciones tan profundas como las que marcaron el paso del Paleolítico al Neolítico en menos de cincuenta años, cuando aquellas se extendieron durante miles de años.

Ante este panorama tan hondamente revolucionario, la Comunicación institucional aparece como un factor insignificante. Y sin embargo los Poderes Públicos, las instituciones Políticas no tienen otro instrumento más eficaz para pautar su transformación, antes de que sean derribadas por procesos revolucionarios de una profundidad y una violencia quizá suicidas para la especie. En la relación imprescindible entre Poder legítimo y Ciudadanía sólo la Comunicación tiene capacidad de establecer ámbitos favorables a transformaciones ordenadas y asumidas. Ella solo puede orientar la Opinión pública, establecer límites razonables a la tendencia generalizada a usar los instrumentos democráticos como herramientas de expresión de sentimientos autodestructivos. Una comunicación eficaz y razonada podría haber evitado brexits, elecciones de personas totalmente inadecuadas, declaraciones de independencia huera o suicidas, quizá guerras, sin duda riesgos de enfrentamientos sociales de envergadura todavía desconocida.

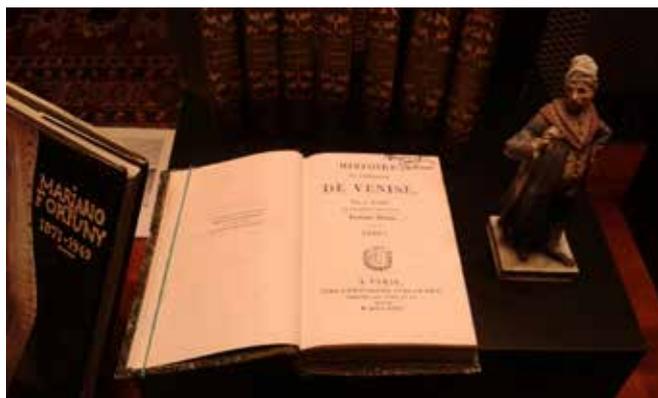
Sin embargo, esos Poderes Públicos, en su inmensa mayoría, mantienen la acción comunicacional en un nivel ancilar. Hay políticas económicas, políticas de Defensa, políticas ambientales, políticas más o menos sociales, políticas educativas, tentativas de políticas de control autoritario, etc. Pero hasta ahora no hay políticas comunicacionales que no sean simplemente reactivas.

El problema esencial reside en que es muy difícil conseguir que un elefante explique geometría. Los aparatos políticos y administrativos que configuran el poder político son por naturaleza, lentos y pesados y, con rapidez, sólo cuando se ven amenazados están preparados para aplicar la violencia, como los elefantes.

Pero eso es precisamente lo que los profesionales de la Comunicación institucional deben intentar evitar. Es más que nunca preciso ahondar en la naturaleza de los cambios, en la transformación del lenguaje y de los medios para usarlo, en la imprescindible necesidad de establecer políticas comunicacionales de largo alcance, prioritarias y dotadas de los extraordinarios medios que hasta ahora no han tenido. Sólo con **políticas comunicacionales de largo alcance**, capaces de canalizar el sentido de los cambios se podrá evitar o quizá simplemente paliar el deterioro de los Poderes públicos democráticos que conocemos y a los que debemos **nuestra vida, nuestra libertad y nuestro desarrollo**.

Hay hechos que contienen una ominosa analogía con el pasado. Las profundas transformaciones sociales económicas y comunicacionales que alteran el ámbito europeo han producido en España el rebrote de nacionalismos excluyentes, que con dificultad están siendo contenidos por una estructura constitucional que ya muestra su fragilidad junto a su misma fuerza. El resto de Europa hará bien en aprender en cabeza ajena y ser capaz de desarrollar sistemas educativos, de comunicación y de información que no faciliten la aparición de estos diablos familiares.

Dejo a quienes me lean, dentro de la muy selecta y especializada cohorte de profesionales que compone el Club de Venecia, la reflexión ulterior y los efectos prácticos que pueda ella tener. Desde la distancia, que no la altura, de mis muchos años, yo les deseo a todos los mayores aciertos en una tarea que es ya vital para nuestro mundo.



# The Institutional Communication and the so-called Social Networks.

## A revolutionary process.

By Aurelio Sahagún Pool

It always happens that those who live a moment of revolutionary change are not fully aware of the reality in which they are evolving. And obviously that applies to the present generations.

We cannot ignore that we are living a time of immense transformations. Some of us have the feeling of having lived two millennia of history in just sixty years of vital consciousness.

As an example, I can only offer my personal experience. In 1950 I was ten years old, in dictatorship run Spain. My grandfather, a medium-sized landowner from La Mancha, lived in a house which was an exact replica of Roman villas: an atrium that opened onto a central courtyard around which two floors of housing opened, and further down, an oil mill to grind olives and get the olive oil, and in front, a winery to make wine from the grapes of the vineyards. The mill had a stone mill-wheel that was worked by mules, and the cellar had large jars of baked clay. Further back, there was still a corral where, in addition to the stables for the mules, a pair of horses and two or three donkeys, there was a large space where the chickens swarmed, and often, different types of dogs that served specific functions: shepherd dogs and mastiffs for the sheep and goats that used to be in sheepfolds in the bush, hunting dogs for my grandfather's hunting hobby, two pairs of greyhounds to go hunting hare on horseback, and some others without a defined race, who simply lived to be loved by the women of the house. My grandmother was helped by the women of the farmhands and my grandfather received sharecroppers in the atrium every morning, who told him how the lands under his charge were going. A Roman rural patrician would have lived exactly the same way two thousand years before and probably in the same place. However, they were times of *caciques*<sup>1</sup> and well-established servitudes.

The Civil War had brought the Manchego countryside back to a quasi-medieval level. In 1960 I studied at the Complutense University for a law degree. The ideas we were taught came directly from the Counter-Reformation. Aristotle, Aquino, Suárez, Vázquez de Menchaca, were the fathers of the Philosophy of Law, *La Constitutio Carolina Criminalis* of Carlos V the foundation of Criminal Law, Ulpiano and Justinian the creators of civil law, Vitoria the founder of international law. Nothing that students of Salamanca could not study and learn in the seventeenth century. In 1970 I was already a civil servant and in my previous ten years I had dived into the life of the 20th century. Forbidden readings, clandestine meetings, university protests, running from the cruel and clumsy police, trips to France, to Great Britain, oppositions on the recommendation of the old professors who advocated the use of "entryism" (i.e. the penetration of the Francoist public administration by young people with democratic ideologies) ... and final destination in Scandinavia, which for me in those years was a trip to the future.

It is an experience hardly comparable to that which my generation had during the same years in the rest of Europe; much more dramatic, with a war that destroyed their childhood and a post-war full of difficulties, of pain and painful recovery. The Spanish Civil War ended a year before my birth, as a forerunner or prologue to what would later be the deadliest of wars in the history of Europe, the Second World War.

During those years world communication had developed through radio, (essential in the 1920's and 1930's for the emergence of fascism and Nazism, and the consolidation of Soviet communism), widely distributed newspapers (with the tradition of more than fifty years of predominance in bourgeois societies) and finally television (in Spain in 1956).

In the seventies, then, I became an official specialized in Institutional Communication. My field of work was clearly established and very intensely studied (Witgenstein, Lazarsfeld, Lasswell, Mc Luhan, Schramm and many others, a legion of writers described the field and its climate, its cultivation, its seeds and its crops).

The 1980's brought the peak of the predominance of the media that would come to be known as essential instrument of contemporary society. During that decade, and maybe for the following five years, as leaders and professionals of the institutional communication in Western countries, we found ourselves with hard work to do, yes! Nevertheless, we were reasonably supported by the nature of the territory to be covered; clearly established, by means of statistics and surveys that had been increasingly perfected, and for the clarity with which in our societies a distinction was made between the public and private sectors. In those years, a Bobby couldn't ask an Englishman to prove his identity on the street, it was unthinkable. The sphere of the strictly private was clearly protected and socially defended.

In those years, citizens in Europe, instinctively, distinguished between public and private, and "privacy" was an inviolable area. In this field of action those responsible for institutional communication moved in familiar territory. Political power was a kind of accepted and respected *paterfamilias*, democratic rules were generally assumed to be naturally stable, and the "voice" of political power was, socially, recognized as the decanting of the general will. That did not mean the uncritical acceptance of the Government's positions. But it was recognized that the discrepancies would appear in the voice of the political institutions of the minority, of the emerging social movements, or in the more or less reasoned considerations of media commentators and editorialists.

In the United States, where the role of the media was always fundamental for democratic vitality, media campaigns managed to achieve the fall of President Nixon and to encourage

1 (in Spain and Latin America) a political boss on a local level.

demonstrations that ended up putting a stop and finally getting the US soldiers out of Vietnam, ending a war that for the United States had lasted more than sixteen years and had caused the deaths of more than 58,000 Americans and at least 1.1 million Vietnamese.

Somehow during the eighties and nineties, the democratic regime of European and Western countries, was recognized by its citizens as stable, reasonable, and assumed. The fall of the Berlin Wall marked the culmination of the success of the western representative democracies.

During those twenty years, the field of communication in democratic societies had an intense and predictable development. The sources of the information were the news agencies, whose tentacles extended worldwide, and the correspondents of the great written or audio visual media, which also produced more or less instantaneous information from the four cardinal points. These information streams were refined and completed with explanations and assessments made in the editorial boards of newspapers, radios and televisions. In parallel, readerships or audiences were growing as news about the world grew in popularity in line with access to television and radio and the wider distribution of the main newspapers.

In this permanently growing field, institutional information was being cleared of the totalitarian practices established during the 1920s and 1940s; adjusting to democratic citizens needs by increasing their knowledge ownership and gradually making them more capable of orienting themselves, along with an increasingly consolidated public opinion, better focused on reality (hence, on the politics of their governments).

Then came the years of the end of the Cold War and the consolidation of welfare societies in Europe, which was becoming a supranational political entity; firmly incorporating the European countries emerging from dictatorship, such as Greece, Portugal, or Spain, and somewhat later, those who were liberated from the servitude of a collapsing Soviet Union.

In these circumstances, the institutional communication gained resonance and credibility, and in some countries an intercommunication channel was being tested between the citizens and the State institutions, which consolidated the democratic guarantees of the system, and personalized attention to the information needs of each individual. This is how the still operational Postbus 51 was created, that soon served as a model for similar developments in other countries such as the Federal Republic of Germany, France or Spain. This service to the citizen is extended today to practically all countries of the European Union and to the central institutions of that same Union.

One of the most difficult measures to implement in all countries was to separate institutional information from its purely political component. Information was classed as 'hot' or 'cold'. 'Cold information', referred to events or achievements from the perspective of the State, which was obtained and disseminated through instruments of the Public Administration, with the guarantee for citizens that in such information there were neither elements or biases of political propaganda from the Party or Parties that configure the Government. 'Hot' information, however, was produced by Members of the Government, or the Political Parties as part of their activity nor propagandistic deeds' shows.

For 'Hot' information they had their own press chief, who generated and managed this type of information, in which the will of the Government could instil the more or less prudent elements of political propaganda that they deemed convenient. This division of sources and natures of institutional communication never occurred with a radical distinction between one and the other, although the maturation of democratic systems in view of the development and growing importance of the media, especially the audio-visual, obviously helped to make such a distinction more and more clear.

In the meantime, two enormous transformations were taking place: on the one hand, new technologies were transforming the economy of production into a financial economy, and communication was also incorporating technological innovations that allowed the emergence of cutting-edge networks to disseminate information and the opinions beyond the traditional means of communication known until the moment.

From the last years of the 1990's and the first years of the new century this relatively well organized panorama, in which the institutional communication network had very few difficulties to spread and influence the knowledge of the "*res publica*" by the citizens, began to undergo a revolutionary change. The instruments of social communication created by the technological galaxy were added to the written and audio-visual media. Since 1997, when AOL Instant Messenger appears, until today, with hundreds of networks that connect hundreds of millions of people around the world, the territory of Communication has undergone a transformation of a nature and depth that is still very difficult to calibrate.

Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Pinterest, and many others seem to have created a complexity of networks impossible to contain. They all grow in an anomic space where the capacity of the States stumble over the practical impossibility of controlling them. On the other hand, in Western democratic societies, the rights of their citizens to access these networks are inviolable. This is coupled with the versatility of mobile phones capable of taking photographs and videos as well as audio and message

communication, which mean millions and millions of sources of information bits, without the least ability to locate or verify the veracity of what they disseminate. The world is already, then, under a cloud of networks with millions of communicational flows that make it practically impossible to select and verify them or appreciate their importance. It is a dense jungle, a growing noise in which institutional communication is lost, ignored, or trivialized. States are currently defenceless against this phenomenon and the reasons that make a given information or image a global phenomenon are usually totally unpredictable. In this world suddenly images or messages are produced that spread through millions of connections and suddenly become "viral" that is, they are received and sent on by millions of people until the global consciousness is aware and influenced by them.

On the other hand, these networks nurture mass communication in real time, which allows completely unpredictable citizen mobilizations, fed by communication flows that nurture irrational feelings. Social behaviours are being very deeply modified. There is clear evidence of the impact that that type of communication and even indoctrination have been producing. The first effect is a lack of responsive capacity in Public Institutions, hence their loss of prestige and their replacement by a blend of popular tendencies that produce, in their turn, totally unpredictable results. The referendum on Brexit, the election of Trump or the attempted declaration of independence of Catalonia are no more than the beginning of a process that could let western civilization drift in completely irrational directions.

We were very used to interpreting social and political reality using rational parameters. The new communication networks rely on disparate feelings, their polarisation and promotion. Neither the existing political structures nor the institutional responses can give effective answers, from their platforms of prestige (practically non-existent) rationality (in fact, hardly emerging from the common) and authority (clearly fading until recurring to the use of force).

In this historical moment, economic and social changes are so profound that the proletariat class has disappeared from developed societies, and the middle classes are divided between the enriched few and the many that see their income reduced to low levels of subsistence. It is precisely now that public institutions need more than ever to intervene in the information processes of citizens, by maintaining an intense level of communication, disseminating mitigating and even corrective measures that can thereby change the meaning of this process. Unfortunately, it is also precisely in these times, with the field of communication saturated with largely spontaneous flows, and to a lesser degree promoted by more or less obscure interests; when the Institutional Communication cannot find a way to adapt and join citizens with the necessary presence and weight.

You can fall into the temptation to also handle feelings, which puts us at risk of falling into practices of intoxication or propaganda. Some countries have already experienced this - and in those where power tends to manifest as authoritarian forms, this trend is growing. The State promotes diffuse sources to spread messages that benefit their interests, and that can be done within and beyond their own territory.

Thus the scope of global social networks widens and starts to be an instrument of the interventionist policy of certain governments. I do not need to remind you of the rumours of web interference by a foreign country in the American elections, and in Brexit, in the growth of the right-wing movements in Europe and lately in the events of Catalonia, where flags of Corsican, Breton, Basque and Lombard independentists have been noticed. Social networks can thus be used as an unusually efficient weapon to introduce divisions and consequently weaken potential adversaries.

Language has changed, the media have changed, the communication space in which citizens live has changed. Public institutions suffer from an inertia that makes them obsolete, without having the time to adapt to these changes. The anomy in which communication moves, extends to other areas of society. The economy, the economic flows have moved for decades in anomic spaces, free of controls and taxation. Now, the new generations also grow in the disorientation of a space without valid norms. The inequalities that have always existed in the global human geography are not only much more evident, but they are also causing migratory flows that are difficult to manage. I personally have the conviction that we are going through times of transformations as profound as those that marked the passage from the Palaeolithic to the Neolithic in less than fifty years, when those changes lasted thousands of years.

Against this deeply revolutionary panorama, institutional communication appears as an insignificant factor. And yet the Public Powers, the political institutions have no other more effective instrument to guide their transformation, before they are overthrown by revolutionary processes of a depth and violence perhaps suicidal for the species. In the essential relationship between Legitimate Power and Citizenship, only communication has the capacity to establish areas favourable to orderly and manageable transformations. Only communication can help forge public opinion, and establish reasonable limits on the generalized tendency to use democratic instruments as tools of expression of self-destructive feelings. An effective and reasoned communication could have avoided Brexit, elections of totally inadequate people, declarations of indeterminate or potentially highly damaging independence, perhaps wars, and undoubtedly risks of social clashes of still unknown magnitude.

However, the immense majority of those Public Powers, maintain their communicational action at an ancillary level. There are economic policies, defence policies, environmental policies, more or less social policies, educational policies, attempts at policies of authoritarian control, etc. But until now there are no communication policies that are not simply reactive.

The essential problem is that it is very difficult to get an elephant to explain geometry. The political and administrative apparatuses that shape political power are by nature slow and heavy, and only when they are threatened are they prepared to apply brisk violence, like elephants.

That is precisely what the Institutional Communication professionals should try to avoid. It is more than ever necessary to delve into the nature of changes, into the transformation of language and the means to use it, the essential need to establish long-range communication policies, prioritized and endowed with the extraordinary means that until now have been missing. Only through **far-reaching communication policies** capable of channelling the meaning of change will it be possible to avoid, or perhaps simply alleviate the deterioration of the democratic public powers that we know, and to which we owe **our life, our freedom and our development**.

There are facts that contain an ominous analogy with the past. The profound social, economic and communication transformations that alter the European sphere have produced in Spain the re-emergence of secluding and alienating nationalisms, which are hardly being contained by a constitutional structure that already shows its fragility within its own rigidity. The rest of Europe would do rather better by learning from others and being able to develop educational, communication and information systems that do not facilitate the appearance of these home devils.

I shall leave it to those who read my words, within the very select and specialized cohort of professionals that make up the Club of Venice, to further reflect and draw all possible practical conclusions on this process. From my many years experience and humble advice, I wish all the greatest success in a task that today is so vital to our world.



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



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