

CONVERGENCES

#17
2021

Public communication in Europe | Communication publique en Europe



FOCUS ON

Belgrade plenary (on line), June 2021

- COVID-19 vaccination: *communication challenges*
- Conference on the Future of Europe: *outreach strategies*
- Governments/institutions and the media: *seeking or sinking?*

Brussels workshop (on line), March 2021

Communication and Open Governance: *info sharing, work in partnership, promoting literacy and evaluation*

London 4th Stratcom Seminar (on line), February 2021

- Reinforcing measures countering disinformation
- Promoting the five "D" model

Venice plenary (on line), December 2020

Crisis communication: *developing synergies and synchronies, building narratives and capacities, and crisis impact on public diplomacy and reputation*



Club of Venice | Club de Venise



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Le « fou », le « magicien » et l'autre... face à l'avenir

Par Philippe Caroyez et Vincenzo Le Voci

"...la vérité est que le monde d'aujourd'hui n'est ni celui du bonheur ni celui du malheur. Il est un champ clos entre l'exigence du bonheur qui est dans le cœur de tous les hommes et une fatalité historique où la crise de l'homme est arrivée à son maximum. Il faut donc que nous ayons d'une part une juste idée de cette crise et d'autre part un sentiment précis du bonheur que chaque homme peut désirer. Il faut donc que nous ayons de la lucidité."

Albert Camus¹

Lors du récent *early may bank holiday*, beaucoup de nos amis britanniques (et d'autres) auront suivi avec passion les dernières *frames* du Championnat du monde de snooker, opposant Mark Selby et Shaun Murphy (tous deux anglais). Il y a dans ce billard comme une leçon de philosophie professionnelle : toujours anticiper et accorder, finalement, le plus d'importance au coup suivant que va permettre le coup encore à jouer et, ainsi, avec l'action ouvrir et permettre (ou pas) un futur. En ces temps de pandémie non endiguée, beaucoup inclinent à vouloir faire le point sur « le monde d'hier » et à envisager les possibles contours du « monde de demain » ... à penser, voire à concevoir, le coup d'après. Pour parfaire l'analogie, non sans ironie, ceux qui s'affrontaient en final à Sheffield sont surnommés, respectivement « *the Jester* (of Leicester) » et « *the Magician* ». Comme communicateurs publics, nous pourrions parfaitement nous y retrouver. Parfois, vu comme « le fou du Roi » - dans un rôle ambigu de soumission et de liberté relative ; souvent, tenus comme le magicien, qui peut agir plus vite que les procédures administratives auxquelles il est tenu ou qui peut faire toujours plus avec moins, d'autant en situation de crise. Même s'il s'agit au pire de caricatures ou au mieux de possibles figures idéales-types, pour épouser la méthodologie conçue par Max Weber, chacun de nous y trouvera sûrement une part de sa réalité professionnelle, même si nous aspirons ou visons à être une autre figure, fruit de la professionnalisation et du professionnalisme de nos métiers et services.

Après les mesures de distanciation sociale et de confinement, qui ne sont pas encore derrière nous et qu'il faudra analyser « à distance », les réactions face aux actions publiques de vaccination et à la communication des autorités en la matière nous offrent un champ de réflexion sans pareil. Rares sont en effet les situations où l'action des autorités publiques est à ce point scrutée, commentée de toutes parts, d'une certaine manière « débattue », contestée par les uns, soutenues par d'autres, traduite quotidiennement en objectifs (inhabituellement rendus aussi publics), indicateurs et statistiques de réalisation, soumises

à sondages d'opinion et enquêtes (plus ou moins scientifiques) et au suivi d'experts et des médias, ...

Il faut espérer que nos autorités ou nos institutions parlementaires sauront s'en saisir et que nos services publics et de communication feront de même et aurons la latitude nécessaire (voire la mission et les moyens) pour s'y consacrer activement.

Ce qui peut paraître singulier dans la situation actuelle, c'est que ceux qui pointent (de manière analytique ou politique, d'ailleurs) les raisons avancées pour expliquer (justifier, parfois) l'attitude de ceux qui sont réticents, refusent la vaccination ou ne « répondent » pas aux invitations des autorités, pointent en fait des raisons qui sont connues de longue date et qui relèvent de situations socio-économiques et culturelles qui n'ont rien de spécifique à la question de la vaccination. Souvent soulevées, mais combien de fois traitées ou même prises en compte, elles ne passent ici que sous la loupe de manière criante ; outre les positions purement idéologiques d'individus ou groupes qui échappent à ces caractérisations, citons : l'accès (au sein le plus plein du terme) à l'information et aux systèmes éducatif et de protection sociale et de santé, l'accès à l'informatique et à son système d'information et d'échanges, avec la fracture numérique qui en découle, la capacité à comprendre les problématiques sociétales et une certaine incapacité à s'y projeter comme acteur, à se savoir concerné, et une plus grande perméabilité aux analyses simplistes ou une plus grande sensibilité aux informations contradictoires qui désorientent, ... et, bien sûr, la méfiance envers les institutions (au sens large) quand il ne s'agit pas du rejet de celles-ci.

Encore une fois, ce sont tous des phénomènes auxquels nos services sont, en théorie, attentifs dans le cadre de l'élaboration des politiques, principes et techniques de conception et de diffusion de l'information publique ... et qui devront être évalués, mais pas exclusivement dans le cadre de la pandémie, précisément du fait de leur nature qui est bien plus structurelle que conjoncturelle ou ponctuelle.

Face à cela, qui apparaît dans la crise avec une particulière acuité, il faut redire que la communication (publique) ne saurait être réduite - comme encore trop souvent - à la seule diffusion d'informations, quand elle ne se limite pas à la seule mise à disposition d'informations, parfois uniquement sous forme électronique.

Bien sûr, nos services ne sont pas restés inactifs en ces domaines: selon les pays et l'évolution de la crise, les supports d'information

1 Sommes-nous des pessimistes? Albert Camus, intervention au Brooklyn College de New York, 1946. Publié dans *Conférences et discours, 1936-1958*. Gallimard, Folio, 2006.

ont été multipliés, au-delà des moyens d'actons traditionnels, la communication est descendue sur les terrains, l'intercession d'individus et associations « relais » a été sollicitée dans les groupes et communautés demandant un renforcement de la communication, on a eu recours à des informations et supports ciblés, au multilinguisme, à la simplification de la communication avec des pictogramme et des infographies, ... Des services ont eu recours à la consultation citoyenne et aux débats citoyens pour faire remonter les remarques critiques et attentes des publics ; d'autres ont fondé une part de leurs actions sur ce qu'apprennent les techniques behaviouristes pour induire ou modifier des comportements, certains ce sont même dotés d'une cellule usant de ces compétences.

La question est cependant de savoir si c'est bien systématique, comme le résultat d'une politique réfléchie, délibérée et constante voulue, mise en place et soutenue par l'autorité publique, et quels sont les efforts qui sont consentis pour la réflexion, la recherche et le développement et leur application en ces domaines. En la matière, quelles sont les ambitions de changement et de rupture ; au-delà des pétitions de principes, des analyses et des constats, quels sont les chemins de développement nouveaux que nous traçons avec nos autorités ou qu'elles proposent ? D'autant face à nos sociétés, dont même le National Intelligence

Council américain, dans son traditionnel rapport prospectif remis au début du mandat présidentiel, annonce des tensions grandissantes entre les demandes des citoyens et la capacité des gouvernements à les satisfaire, sur fond de crises disruptives et d'incertitudes (politiques, économiques, environnementales, climatiques, technologiques et migratoires), ainsi que des tensions sociales découlant d'un pessimisme ambiant face à l'évolution de la situation générale, de l'émergence nouvelle et agissante d'identités et de communautés qui en partie s'opposent, de volatilité, d'insécurité et d'atteinte à la vie privée, de la prédominance d'un système d'information en silos (dans lesquels chacun voit ses certitudes être confirmées et confortées), avec des citoyens et groupes de plus en plus performant en matière de communication face aux gouvernements, qui peinent à pouvoir y répondre².

A cet égard, nous avons assurément encore beaucoup à échanger, au sein du Club de Venise, sur nos connaissances et pratiques, y compris avec le monde académique et les professionnels qui étudient ces problématiques ou y sont également confrontés.

"... The truth is that today's world is neither a world of happiness nor a world of misfortune. It is a closed field between the demand for happiness which is in the hearts of all men and a historical fatality where the crisis of Man has reached its maximum.

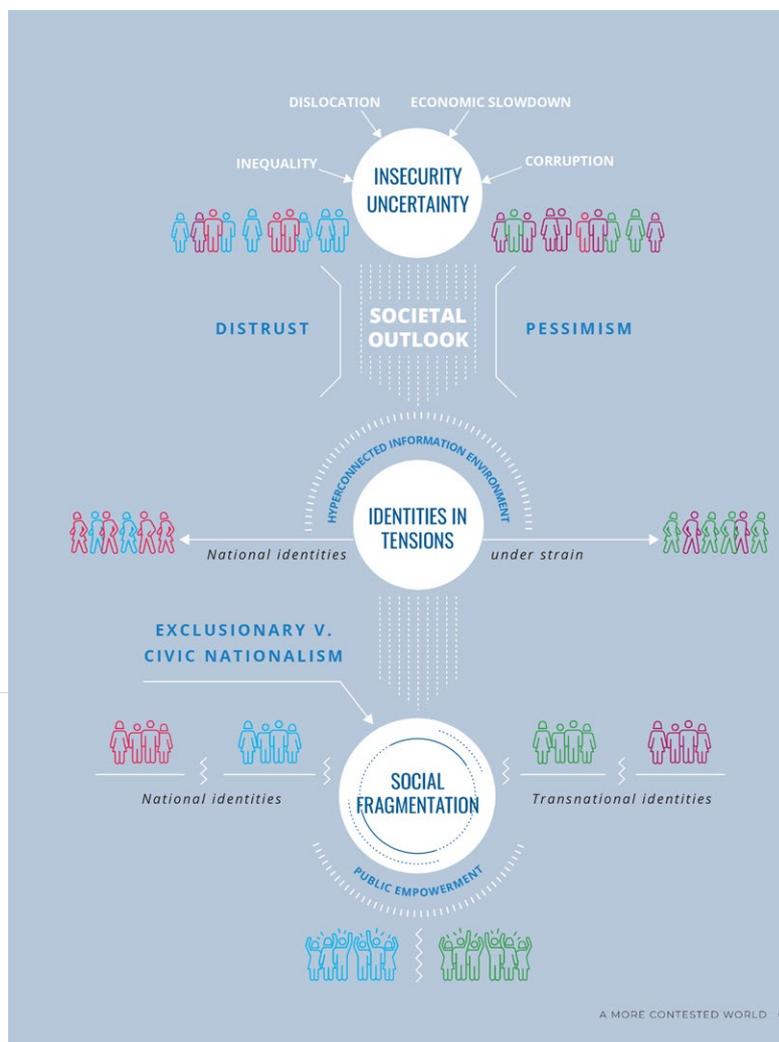
2 National Intelligence Council. Global trends, 2040. Mars 2021, 144 pages. Version digitale : www.dni.gov/nic/global

EMERGING DYNAMICS

SOCIETAL: DISILLUSIONED, INFORMED, AND DIVIDED

Key Takeaways

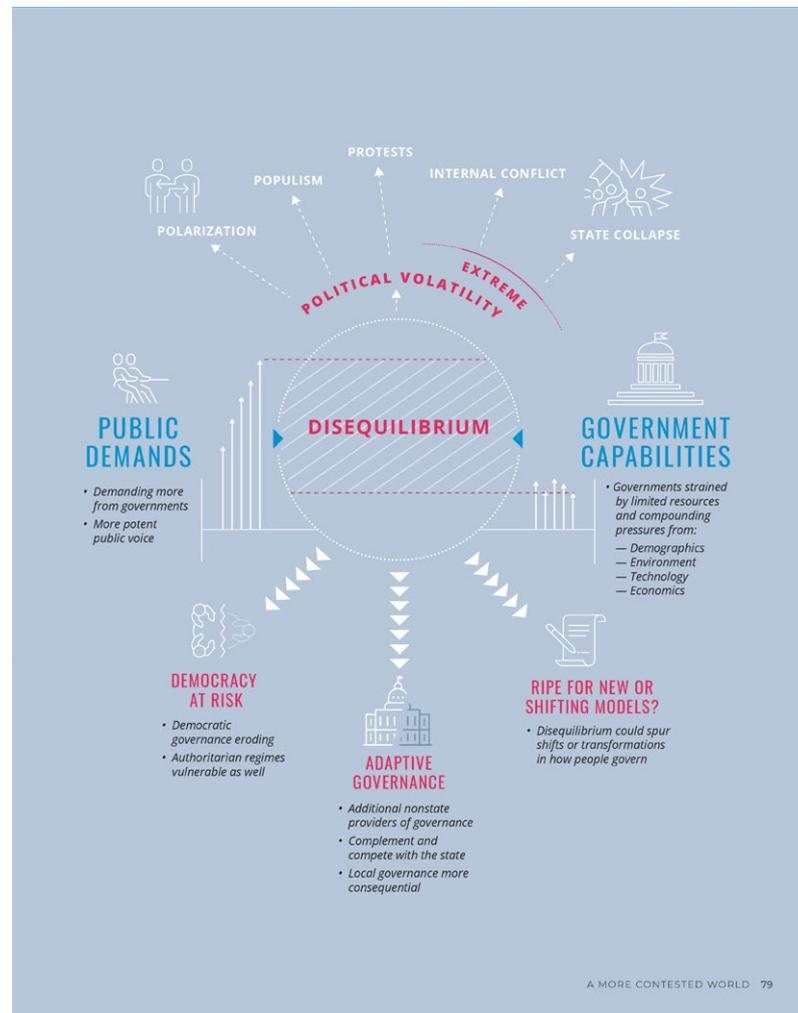
- Slowing economic growth and gains in human development, coupled with rapid societal changes, have left large segments of the global population feeling insecure, uncertain about the future, and distrustful of institutions and governments they view as corrupt or ineffective.
- Many people are gravitating toward familiar and like-minded groups for community and security, including ethnic, religious, and cultural identities as well as groupings around interests and causes. These groups are more prominent and in conflict, creating a cacophony of competing visions, goals, and beliefs.
- The combination of newly prominent transnational identities, the resurgence of established allegiances, and a siloed information environment is creating and exposing fault lines within states, undermining civic nationalism, and increasing volatility.
- Populations in every region are becoming better equipped with the tools, capacity, and incentive to agitate for social and political change and to demand resources, services, and recognition from their governments.



STATE: TENSIONS, TURBULENCE, AND TRANSFORMATION

Key Takeaways

- Governments in all regions will face mounting pressures from economic constraints and a mix of demographic, environmental, and other challenges. Meanwhile, populations will demand more, and they are empowered to push for their conflicting goals and priorities.
- The relationships between societies and their governments are likely to face persistent tensions because of a growing mismatch between what publics expect and what governments deliver. This widening gap portends more political volatility, risks for democracy, and expanding roles for alternative sources of governance.
- Growing public discontent, if accompanied by a catalyzing crisis and inspired leadership, could spur significant shifts or transformations in how people govern.



The jester, the magician and the other – all facing the future

By Philippe Caroyez and Vincenzo Le Voci

Accordingly, we must have both a proper understanding of what that crisis is, and an exact feeling of the happiness every man can desire. Therefore, we must be clear in our thinking."

Albert Camus³

Over the recent early May bank holiday, many of our British friends (and others, too) avidly watched the final frames of the World Snooker Championship between two Englishmen, Mark Selby and Shaun Murphy. This sport can be likened to a lesson in professional philosophy: always think ahead and, ultimately, prioritise the next shot that will enable the shot after that to be played and, by doing that, as the action progresses, open up the table and create (or not, as the case may be) some future prospects. In these times of an unchecked pandemic, many are inclined to take stock of *yesterday's world* and to consider what *tomorrow's world* might

look like – in other words, to think about, or even to conceive of, a shot that has not yet been taken.

And to complete the analogy, not without some irony, the two men who faced off at the final in Sheffield are respectively known as *the Jester* (from Leicester) and *the Magician*. As public communicators, it all makes perfect sense to us. We're sometimes viewed as the court jester, playing an ambiguous role involving both submissiveness and relative freedom; other times, we're considered *a magician*, able to act faster than the administrative procedures we are constrained by or to always

3 *Sommes-nous des pessimistes?* (Are we pessimists?) Albert Camus, speech at Brooklyn College, New York, 1946. Published in *Conférences et discours, 1936-1958* (Lectures and Speeches, 1936-1958). Gallimard, Folio, 2006.

do more with less, especially in a crisis situation. Even if these are, at worst, caricatures or, at best, *ideal types* (if we adopt Max Weber's methodology), each of us will surely find something of our work situation in them, even if we aspire or aim to be another figure – and this is the result of the professionalisation and professionalism of our jobs and public services.

After the social distancing and lockdown measures, which are not yet over and which will have to be analysed in hindsight, the response to public vaccination campaigns and to the authorities' communication about those campaigns offer us unparalleled scope for reflection and discussion. Rare indeed are situations where action taken by the public authorities is so scrutinised, so commented on from all sides, so *hotly debated*, so opposed by some and supported by others, then translated routinely into objectives (which are made so unusually public), performance indicators and statistics, made the subject of (more or less scientific) opinion polls and surveys and of coverage by experts and the media, and so on.

Hopefully, our authorities and parliamentary institutions will seize upon this, along with our public services and communication teams, and will have the leeway they need – and even be tasked with and given the resources to actively devote themselves to it. What might seem odd in the current situation is that those who point out (analytically or politically, for that matter) the reasons put forward to explain (or justify, sometimes) the attitude of those who are hesitant, who refuse to take the vaccination or who ignore invitations from the authorities, are in fact pointing out reasons which have been known about for a long time, reasons having to do with socioeconomic and cultural factors and nothing specifically to do with the issue of vaccination per se. While these reasons are often brought up – but how many times have they been addressed or even taken into account? – here they are only subject to the most blatant scrutiny. Apart from the purely ideological positions of certain individuals or groups that elude these characterisations, we should mention the following: access (in the fullest sense of the term) to information and to the education, welfare and healthcare systems; access to IT and to systems for sharing information, along with the ensuing digital divide; the ability to understand societal issues and an inability to see oneself as a player on the societal stage, to see oneself as involved; and greater permeability to overly simplistic analyses or greater sensitivity to contradictory and therefore disorientating information. And, of course, mistrust or downright rejection of the institutions (in the broad sense).

Once again, in theory, our public services pay attention to all these phenomena when developing policies, principles and techniques for producing and disseminating public information. Indeed, these phenomena should be evaluated, albeit not exclusively within the context of the pandemic, precisely because by their very nature, they are more structural than cyclical or selective.

Given this situation, which is especially acute during the crisis, it must be reiterated that (public) communication cannot be reduced – as is still too often the case – to nothing more than the dissemination of information, much less the mere provision of information, sometimes in electronic form only.

Of course, the public services have not remained inactive in these areas. Depending on the country and on how the crisis was developing, there has been a proliferation of information media, growing beyond the traditional tools. Communication has taken to the field. The intercession of *influencers* – individuals or associations – was sought in groups and communities where enhanced communication was needed. We deployed targeted information and media, multilingual messages, simplified communication featuring pictograms and computer graphics, and more. Some public services leveraged citizen consultation processes and debates to report criticism and the expectations of target groups. Others based part of their campaigns on the techniques used by behavioural psychology to induce or change behaviours. Still others even set up a unit to deploy those skills.

However, one wonders whether this is this being done systematically, as the result of a well thought-out, deliberate and consistent policy that is pursued, implemented and supported by the public authorities, and, if so, what efforts are being made in terms of discussing, researching and developing the application of this approach in these domains. What are the ambitions in terms of change and breakthrough? Beyond begging the question, beyond analyses and observations, what new development paths are being traced out with or proposed by our authorities? This is increasingly important. Even the US National Intelligence Council, in its *Global Trends 2040* report published at the start of the presidential term of office, reports growing tensions between citizens' demands and what governments are capable of delivering, all against a backdrop of disruptive crises and (political, economic, environmental, climatic, technological and migratory) uncertainty, and social tensions arising from a pervasive pessimism in view of the general trend, the new and prominent emergence of identities and communities that are partly in conflict, volatility, insecurity and invasion of privacy, the predominance of siloed information (i.e. echo chambers in which everyone sees their certainties confirmed and consolidated), with populations and groups increasingly better equipped to communicate compared with governments that are struggling to respond⁴.

Here, within the Club of Venice, we certainly still have a lot to share when it comes to our knowledge and praxis, including with academia and professionals who study or have to address these issues.

4 National Intelligence Council. *Global Trends 2040*. March 2021, 144 pages. Digital version: www.dni.gov/nic/global



Club of Venice Plenary Meeting

10-11 June 2021 - On line meeting

Introductory concepts

The COVID-19 pandemic has been hitting the whole world for almost 18 months. Citizens have been coping with this emergency, adapting their life style, their working habits and their behaviour to the restrictive measures put in place to counter this crisis as quickly and as effectively as possible. Nobody has been exempted by this nightmare that has had a devastating impact on public health and on the economy.

What can we do as communicators to help overcome this situation, reinforce resilience and work together in the right direction towards full recovery?

Having due regard to today's key communication priorities, the three half-day sessions of the upcoming plenary co-organised by the Club and the Serbian authorities will focus on the following challenging themes:

- Crisis communication: lessons learned from the pandemic

- Communicating Europe: challenges and opportunities, including a debate on the recently launched Conference on the Future of Europe and on communicating work in progress with regard to EU's enlargement negotiations
- a round table on synergies between public communicators and the media sector
- Yes. This new plenary meeting provides not only a good opportunity to discuss the role of public communication in the reconstruction after the pandemic, but also to analyse how we can concretely contribute to building a better future for Europe, drawing inspiration from the principles of inclusiveness, dialogue, integration and partnership.

8



Comunicazione pubblica.

La pandemia induce a un'idea strategica che manca¹

di Stefano Rolando, Professore di Teoria e tecniche della Comunicazione pubblica all'Università IULM di Milano, Presidente del Club di Venezia

In questo scorcio finale d'anno ci sono state, in più di un'occasione, discussioni – nel sistema italiano ed europeo della comunicazione pubblica (CP) – dedicate al rapporto tra comunicazione e pandemia². Ne ho dato conto sia sul blog stefanorolando.it, sia con vari appunti nelle pagine FB di *Rivista italiana di comunicazione pubblica*, che qui riassumo in una nota di insieme.

In questi eventi, a cui ho preso parte, ho cercato di sostenere l'argomento dell'importanza di approfittare della crisi per accelerare (non solo con gli occhi rivolti all'Italia) la riorganizzazione strategica della professione e della disciplina, rimaste spesso intrappolate da modelli organizzativi e funzionali non adeguati alla portata delle dinamiche di crisi e di emergenza. E nemmeno alla portata degli sviluppi specialistici di questo ambito comunicativo, tra cui quello legato alla crisi sanitaria e sociale sta dimostrando di essere un fattore di opportunità molto rilevante. In particolare ho verificato che **in Italia non si ha diffusa contezza dell'insieme dei temi che hanno modificato – nelle pratiche professionali, istituzionali, sociali – il perimetro stesso di questa materia.** Materia che la vicenda pandemica ha rimesso in agenda nel mondo, per usare un'espressione che apparteneva al pionierismo italiano in questo campo, come “strategica”, ovvero come parte dei processi di decisione, non come parte (che a volte le funzioni comunicative si limitano ad avere) delle attività “confezionatorie”.

Naturalmente è giusto premettere che quanto sarà qui elencato non è materia a regime in tutti i paesi europei. Anche nel dibattito europeo ci sono problemi di “armonizzazione”, di asimmetria organizzativa, di migliorato ma non così avanzato equilibrio tra dinamica dei paesi membri e dinamica delle istituzioni dell'Unione europea. Suona paradossale ma potrebbe essere vero che – per rilevanza storica che incide sull'adeguamento delle funzioni – siano proprio i britannici ad essere più avanti in

quella visione integrata, che qui si sta per indicare, nel rammarico che la bandiera del Regno Unito sia oggi ammainata nel sistema europeo (anche se negli ambiti di cooperazione informale, come il Club di Venezia, la presenza britannica resta inalterata).

Questo “quadro allargato” si è dunque espresso nelle occasioni recenti.

- Un'occasione è stata quella della 34° conferenza plenaria del *Club di Venezia* svoltasi il 3 e 4 dicembre con più di cento partecipanti (rete dei responsabili della comunicazione governativa dei paesi membri e di tutte le istituzioni UE allargata a responsabili di agenzie europee, di istituti di ricerca e di alcuni atenei radicati nella materia), che mantiene dal 1986 il suo carattere informale di *armonizzazione professionale e civile* degli operatori. La plenaria del dicembre 2020 ha posto al centro interrogativi di efficacia in ordine alla situazione di contrasto all'espansione prolungata dell'azione letale e paralizzante di Covid-19³.
- Un'altra occasione è stata favorita dal seminario promosso il 30 settembre dalle strutture di comunicazione dell'OCSE in collaborazione con il *Club di Venezia*⁴, nel quadro degli sviluppi della *OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government* (OCSE, 2017) ma soprattutto in attuazione del documento “*Comprendere la sfida della disinformazione nella risposta alla pandemia globale*”⁵.
- Una terza occasione è stata favorita dall'iniziativa della Associazione italiana della comunicazione pubblica e istituzionale il 18 dicembre di ragionare – nell'ambito di *Eurovisioni forum* ospitato dagli studi della Rai a Roma – sugli sviluppi professionali e istituzionali del settore, svolgendo, in collaborazione con il Movimento Europeo, un seminario in occasione del trentennale dell'Associazione stessa. Questo incontro è stato preceduto l'11 giugno da un web-seminar

1 Contributo alla rivista “Democrazia Futura” n. 1 / 2021

2 Il monitoraggio svolto nel corso del 2020 dall'**Osservatorio sulla comunicazione pubblica, il public branding e la trasformazione digitale** dell'Università IULM ha trovato sintesi nel saggio: Stefano Rolando, *Pandemia. Laboratorio di comunicazione pubblica*, Editoriale scientifica, Napoli, 2020 - <https://www.lindro.it/covid-19-e-comunicazione-il-molto-da-riordinare-nella-partita-in-corso/>

3 Il mio sintetico intervento di apertura della sessione (“La pandemia obbliga ad aprire una quarta fase della comunicazione istituzionale europea”) al seguente link: <http://stefanorolando.it/?p=3968>

4 Il contributo portato alla conferenza OCSE nelle “Note” di Rivista italiana di comunicazione pubblica: <https://www.facebook.com/notes/rivista-italiana-di-comunicazione-pubblica/intervento-alla-tavola-rotonda-ocseclub-di-veneziasul-futuro-della-comunicazione/10223198536889029/>

5 <http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/transparency-communication-and-trust-bef7ad6e/>

nazionale promosso dall'Associazione specificatamente dedicato al rapporto tra pandemia e comunicazione pubblica⁶.

La "questione italiana" fra task force occasionali e invasioni di campo dei comunicatori e delle lobby

La "questione italiana" è oggi rappresentata dal fatto che, se i vincoli di modello determinati da una normativa che fissa obiettivi, scopi e legittimazione professionale (la legge 150 del 2000)⁷ hanno avuto il merito di legittimare appunto il radicamento ponendo l'obbligatorietà degli uffici per la relazioni con il pubblico e di uffici per la relazione con i media, essi (insieme a cause politico-istituzionale generali) hanno, nel tempo, anche tenuto a marce basse le necessità di evoluzione.

Modesta è stata, per esempio, la capacità di presidiare tutte le forme di evoluzione favorite dalla trasformazione digitale. Che è un ambito in cui si registrano recenti reattività. Ma quasi senza visione e senza volontà di adeguamento si sono viste crescere (ma soprattutto altrove) le **aree di specializzazione** che in paesi senza vincoli normativi stretti hanno potuto affermare prima sperimentazioni e poi concrete forme di "*capacity building*" (altro tema su cui l'Europa ha molto discusso con scarso apporto italiano).

Ciò con flessibilità e adeguamento alle dinamiche mutate dell'agenda politico-istituzionale europea e internazionale. Andando ormai ben al di là dei perimetri che la normativa (che pur non nega altre evoluzioni) ha fissato con criteri univoci, quelli di comprendere le funzioni comunicative all'interno della funzione relazionale di sportello (URP), che in alcuni ambiti è stata logicamente tralasciata in altri ha tenuto frenati gli sviluppi... Sempre ricordando che i principi generali di quella legge restano tuttora una cornice a maglie abbastanza larghe da consentire ragionevoli sviluppi in alcuni campi anche con provvedimenti aggiornati di carattere attuativo⁸. Così che **oggi per la CP europea appaiono "strategiche" funzioni che in Italia sono più atrofizzate, meno sperimentate, spesso affidate a task force occasionali, con continue invasioni di campo sia della comunicazione politica sia del ruolo dei soggetti di pressione.**

Una cornice di preoccupazione civile per inquadrare la materia

Per non dare adito all'idea che la tensione sui cambiamenti necessari abbia solo carattere tecnico e contesto tecnologico, è bene dire vi è una chiara cornice di preoccupazione civile in cui vanno collocate le informazioni e le valutazioni che fanno anche qui seguito. Essa riguarda un chiaro consolidamento di legittimità della funzione che con linguaggio novecentesco si riconosce nella "propaganda" che è tornata prima ad insinuarsi e oggi ad esprimersi con evidente nel quadro della comunicazione istituzionale anche per via nell'inevitabile nesso (fatto di convergenze e di conflittualità) con la comunicazione politica e la comunicazione sociale.

Abbiamo pensato tempo fa che fosse lecito confinare la cultura della *propaganda* nella prima metà del Novecento e di riconoscere la cultura della *partecipazione* nella seconda metà del secolo. Ora, nei venticinque anni di attuazione dell'era internet, dobbiamo cogliere il profondo intreccio e quindi la commistione tornata ad essere strutturale di queste due culture in quasi tutti i paesi che si reggono su "costituzioni democratiche". La popolarizzazione e la visibilità (categorie ambigue, perché fisiologiche per la democrazia ma anche snaturanti nell'orientare in forma "viscerale" le funzioni comunicative) hanno assunto aspetti e logiche di trattamento che le tipologie stesse della trasformazione digitale - pur aprendo naturalmente funzioni grandiose di accesso alla conoscenza - hanno facilitato la diffusione l'accettazione delle regole e dei metodi della propaganda con il correlato della manipolazione e dell'alterazione dell'informazione⁹. Così da rendere il *rapporto tra vero e falso oggi* molto compromesso e a porre la soglia deontologica del lavoro degli operatori di comunicazione pubblica in un evidente bisogno di reale ripensamento.

La "legittimazione" di questo declino investe purtroppo tutto il sistema politico ed ha avuto apporti sia dall'esperienza delle istituzioni centrali che territoriali, sia da alleanze di centrodestra che di centrosinistra.

E si va insinuando anche nella visione del cambiamento (in sé naturalmente con fattori di ineludibile necessità) che il processo digitale assorba abbia più facoltà di assorbire che di enfatizzare il conflitto¹⁰.

6 Chi scrive è stato invitato a tenere la relazione introduttiva accessibile al link: <http://stefanorolando.it/?p=3563>

7 ForumPA (2020), *Legge 150 del 2000: cosa prevede la prima (e a tutt'oggi unica) legge quadro sulla comunicazione pubblica*, <https://www.forumpa.it/open-government/comunicazione-pubblica/legge-150-del-2000-cosa-prevede-la-prima-ea-tuttoggi-unica-legge-quadro-sulla-comunicazione-pubblica/> (accesso 16 giugno 2020).

8 L'articolo 1 della L. 150/2000, in particolare al comma 5, vengono individuate le seguenti finalità per le attività di comunicazione e informazione delle amministrazioni: favorire la conoscenza delle leggi al fine di facilitarne l'applicazione; favorire l'accesso ai servizi pubblici promuovendone la conoscenza; favorire processi interni di semplificazione delle procedure; favorire la conoscenza dell'avvio e del percorso dei procedimenti amministrativi; favorire processi interni di modernizzazione degli apparati; sensibilizzare su temi di interesse pubblico e sociale; illustrare le attività e il funzionamento delle istituzioni; promuovere l'immagine delle amministrazioni e dell'Italia in Europa e nel mondo, dando visibilità a eventi di importanza locale, regionale, nazionale ed internazionale.

9 Una certa nuova problematizzazione della materia è nata in questo ultimo ventennio anche grazie ai contributi nati attorno alle riflessioni che hanno avuto in autori come Manuel Castells (da *L'età dell'informazione a Comunicazione e potere*) animatori riconosciuti.

10 La crisi di governo ha ripreso qualche spunto critico - che già era emerso nel corso del governo "gialloverde" (con l'istituzionalizzazione del "team" al servizio dell'allora vicepresidente Matteo Salvini) - e che per il carattere bipartisan della deriva probabilmente non sortirà facilmente una controtendenza. Ne ha scritto Filippo Teoldi sul quotidiano *Domani* il 28 gennaio 2021, per raccontare "un caso unico in Europa": "Conte ha usato la pandemia per diventare un influencer".

Aspetti di sviluppo della materia che in Europa vengono ora considerati “strategici”

Ecco una veloce idea di questi **ambiti da considerare materia di discussione nel quadro europeo**.

1. Strategico oggi per la CP è avere ruolo nei **processi di public diplomacy** a cui l'Europa (soprattutto i paesi nordici) connette la mission di **combattere infodemie, disinformazione e fake news**. Tema di crescente importanza e di coinvolgimento di nuovi operatori ad alta competenza digitale. Con elaborazioni aggiornate in ambiti multilaterali (come quelli citati in sede OCSE) tesi a promuovere “una risposta efficace alla pandemia richiede uno sforzo coordinato multi-stakeholder per affrontare la disinformazione che la circonda, con una chiara leadership pubblica”.
2. Strategico oggi per la CP è chiarire il **confine tra comunicazione istituzionale e comunicazione politica** in cui ridisegnare una mission permanente in materia di **sostegno ai ruoli istituzionali di contrasto alla crisi sanitaria** e di affiancamento al ruolo della comunicazione scientifica e sanitaria (campo in cui è entrato in questo campo specifico anche l'OCSE) riassumendo su questi punti le funzioni da svolgere: fornire ai cittadini informazioni accurate e veritiere; “smontare” in anticipo o smentire informazioni false o ingannevoli; educare i cittadini all'utilizzo e alla condivisione responsabile dei contenuti; sviluppare una maggiore e migliore comprensione dei comportamenti della popolazione, comprese le paure, le preoccupazioni e le aspettative; coinvolgere i cittadini in una risposta collettiva all'infodemia.
3. Strategico oggi per la CP è considerare un **adeguato presidio alla comunicazione di crisi e di emergenza** in tutti gli ambiti tematici che coinvolgono istituzioni nazionali e territoriali, in numerosi campi in relazione stretta con soggetti imprenditoriali e sociali. E soprattutto con nuclei radicati nelle specificità territoriali e tematiche e non delegate al solo corpo nazionale della Protezione civile, che pur ha sulla materia una sua decisiva mission istituzionale.
4. Strategico oggi per la CP è **agire con padronanza culturale e scientifica nel quadro delle opportunità della trasformazione digitale** sia in connessione con il trattamento dei dati, sia in connessione con il trattamento relazionale con le utenze servite, per il miglioramento dei processi di ascolto, per la produzione di servizi di relazione diretta con i cittadini, per la generale fruizione sociale allargata della memoria delle conoscenze di pubblica utilità, per la messa a regime delle condizioni di trasparenza che caratterizzano il concetto di “open government”.
5. Strategico oggi per la CP è agire con piena e prioritaria connessione con le istituzioni – internazionali, europee, nazionali e territoriali – che hanno competenza nel **trattamento della statistica**, attraverso una stabile compenetrazione delle risorse professionali all'approccio del trasferimento delle conoscenze tese a equilibrare sempre e comunque la verità dei “processi reali” rispetto alla soggettività dei dati connessi ai fenomeni percettivi.
6. Strategico oggi per la CP è aprire un **fronte di vero e proprio accompagnamento sociale** (da condividere con molti operatori del privato-sociale organizzato e dell'intermediazione associativa e territoriale) – dunque in uno schema che agisca anche su una rilanciata sussidiarietà – per affrontare disuguaglianze, ritardi, crisi di sviluppo e di pari opportunità, disabilità e nuovi diritti, in generale fenomeni sociali e occupazionali aggravati dalla crisi pandemica.
7. Strategico oggi per la CP è svolgere cooperazione con la comunicazione di impresa sostanzialmente sul fronte della **crescente centralità dei problemi ambientali, climatici e dell'economia circolare**.
8. Strategico oggi per la CP è ritrovare un **tavolo di cooperazione tecnico-comunicativa tra paesi membri e istituzioni della UE**, superando gli ostacoli sempre esistiti delle gelosie nazionali in materia comunicativa ma anche le soluzioni di esclusiva “giornalistizzazione” e quindi della intermediazione del sistema professionale dei media per la circolazione della conoscenza in materia di sviluppo dell'Europa, approfondendo le piste relazionali e operative dirette che raccordano le istituzioni alla complessità sociale e territoriale delle utenze.
9. Strategico oggi per la CP è **accreditare e legittimare le reti di cooperazione professionale e istituzionale, ancorché informali**, che si sono consolidate in materia di comunicazione pubblica nel quadro europeo che agiscono **su quasi tutti i temi qui oggetto di sintesi**, a cominciare dal *Club di Venezia* che opera in autonomia ma con segretariato permanente presso il Consiglio UE e con la partecipazione di responsabili sia della comunicazione dei paesi membri che delle istituzioni UE. E nel quadro euro-mediterraneo soprattutto in **materia migratoria** attraverso la cooperazione stabile tra ICMPD (agenzia europea sulle politiche migratorie con sede a Vienna), *Euromed-Migration* e *Club of Venice* (rete operatori europei di comunicatori istituzionali).
10. Strategico oggi per la CP è dare sviluppo ad un **moderno approccio al Public Branding** teso a liberare dai vincoli di una visione legata a campi applicativi importanti ma del tutto consequenziali (come la *visual identity* o il *marketing territoriale*) l'azione delle istituzioni e delle amministrazioni nazionali, regionali, territoriali in rapporto alle *politiche di brand*, intese come presidio all'evoluzione identitaria e narrativa (largamente oggetto di libera interpretazione del sistema artistico e mediatico) e dell'impatto con l'immagine interna ed esterna, in uno schema applicativo che comprende processi di coesione, processi di promozione, processi di attrattività¹¹.
11. Strategico oggi per la CP è **specializzare il sistema della cultura e dello spettacolo** nel quadro di processi comunicativi tesi a creare un ampliamento sostanziale delle condizioni di fruizione, una connessione importante con i sistemi educativi e una relazione sinergica con le economie della creatività e del turismo.
12. Strategico oggi per la CP è **agire in forma raccordata tra i livelli istituzionali dell'ordinamento** affinché, sulle questioni di maggiore rilevanza per i cittadini e per le imprese, la chiarezza dei dati di pubblica utilità (*open data*) e i contributi di chiarimento e accompagnamento delle normative vigenti sia sottratto ad una conflittualità inter-istituzionale che ha i suoi evidenti spazi di libertà nei processi di interpretazione ma che

¹¹ La materia è oggetto di un ampio aggiornamento di approccio disciplinare che prevede la pubblicazione tra marzo e aprile 2021: Stefano Rolando, *Public Branding – Per un nuovo modo di narrare i territori e la loro identità* (EGEA). Una sessione sugli sviluppi di questi approcci è stata dedicata nel quadro dell'ultima conferenza plenaria del Club di Venezia, con interventi, tra gli altri, di **Alex Aiken**, **Vincenzo Le Voci**, **Robert Govers** e **Paolo Verri**, con le conclusioni di **Stefano Rolando**, riprese in <https://stefanorolando.it/?p=3976>

deve veder favorita la massima unità nel presidio ai caratteri nodali di servizio pubblico.

13. Strategico oggi per la CP è anche - nel quadro indicato al punto precedente - sostenere una valorizzazione politico-istituzionale circa il **ruolo del sistema delle istituzioni territoriali (regioni, dipartimenti e città)** nella relazione diretta con i cittadini sui temi dell'evoluzione identitaria, sociale ed economica dell'Europa, superando l'attuale limite della funzione "consulenziale" del Comitato europeo Regioni e città.

14. Strategico oggi per la CP è **ricercare le forme di sinergia possibile con i soggetti espressione della migliore caratterizzazione professionale nel campo dell'informazione e del trattamento della conoscenza, a cominciare dal servizio pubblico radiotelevisivo**, nel rispetto di tutte le autonomie funzionali e professionali, ma per creare condizioni di sussidiarietà, di delega, di mutuo apprendimento attorno alle cause in cui le istituzioni stesse vorranno e potranno indicare scopi e obiettivi essendo in questione ragioni primarie di interesse collettivo.

15. Strategico oggi per la CP è **mantenere in autonomia e vitalità** un principio che era contenuto nel primissimo articolato (1994) della legge poi adottata nel 2000, ovvero il principio di attribuire a **funzioni permanenti di valutazione** la necessità di attività autonoma, competente e correlata non solo a obiettivi di correttezza di spesa ma anche di rendimento sociale. Funzioni sparite poi dalla normativa e neppure reintrodotte quando, per esempio, in merito alle pratiche di trasparenza e accesso, almeno in forma di Commissione stabile presso la Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, qualcosa in Italia si è fatto (oggi con evoluzione verso l'organizzazione di uffici diffusi con competenza aggiornata¹²). Vi sono infatti paesi (come il Regno Unito) in cui bilancio e organici della comunicazione istituzionale sono regolati dall'impatto delle relazioni ufficiali di valutazione.

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Valutare e colmare il ritardo italiano nell'immaginare, con visione complessiva, le necessità di trasformazione

Alla luce di questo sintetico *quadro tematico* (che potrebbe vedere ciascun punto ampliato in forma di dossier e potrebbe essere prolungato anche attorno ad altri ambiti di contenuto dettagliato) - che è materia ricorrente di organizzazione di confronti e approfondimenti nella convegnistica professionale europea - si evidenzia in vari contesti fra cui quello italiano una condizione di **ritardo di presidio, coordinamento, affinamento dei profili di competenza che si riscontra in Italia**. Pur con eccezioni che si esprimono su alcune delle tematiche indicate con ambiti di trattamento talvolta anche evoluto, ma per lo più senza una visione di insieme che costituisca al tempo stesso anche un riferimento organico per l'aggiornamento degli indirizzi di ricerca e di razionalizzazione formativa a cui la rete di competenze

universitarie potrebbe dedicare sforzi per una più moderna ed efficace relazionalità.

Va segnalato che comunque **il dibattito tra gli operatori oggi è aperto** così come la crisi sanitaria e sociale in atto ha sollecitato ragioni di revisione del rapporto tra modelli organizzativi e rendimenti.

Quando si dice "dibattito tra gli operatori" ci si riferisce principalmente ad iniziative che l'Amministrazione della Funzione Pubblica ha agevolato (promuovendo una discussione e un documento che con il coordinamento di **Sergio Talamo** è stato portato a compimento¹³), sia attraverso iniziative che, nel corso degli ultimi due anni, hanno visto attivarsi la radicata Associazione italiana della CP, la nuova realtà associativa di P.A. Social (che ha avuto riconoscimenti europei sull'innovatività della rete che ha creato), la Ferpi che sta maturando anche trasformazioni per esprimere meglio il ruolo degli operatori pubblici) e ForumPA che costituisce lo spazio di confronto e dibattito pubblico più frequentato dagli operatori di settore. Dunque esistono tracciati interessanti che si muovono per intercettare cambiamenti necessari e il loro quadro di priorità, attorno a cui non vi è allo stato una rappresentazione condivisa. Apprezzabile è il documento - accessibile in rete¹⁴ - che il gruppo di lavoro coordinato da Sergio Talamo ha redatto nel giugno del 2020 sul tema "*Riforma della Comunicazione Pubblica e Social Media Policy nazionale*". In particolare il "rapporteur" ha colto qui un punto di accelerazione nei processi spontanei di adeguamento in corso sia nelle amministrazioni centrali che territoriali come ambito di una più adeguata ri-progettazione: "*L'uso professionale dei social e delle nuove tecnologie ha allargato enormemente il confine della comunicazione pubblica: non più un'erogazione unilaterale verso un destinatario passivo, non più un'informazione istituzionale mediata esclusivamente dalla stampa, ma un rapporto diretto, interattivo e in tempo reale, un flusso che raggiunge direttamente il cittadino nei luoghi virtuali in cui effettivamente opera e interagisce con il mondo esterno. Quindi la comunicazione degli anni Venti del Terzo millennio ha assunto una dimensione molto più ampia e centrale nelle politiche pubbliche*".

Nel documento consegnato alla ministra **Fabiana Dadone**, la **questione della "trasparenza"** ha una centralità motivata dal bisogno di creare "*accesso civico generalizzato*" con funzioni di presidio della "*rilevazione permanente dei bisogni informativi del cittadino*".

I precedenti del Rapporto CNEL del 1995 e il monitoraggio della Funzione Pubblica del 2005

Lo stesso citato documento, nel tracciare un bilancio di attuazione e di proposta, ricorda l'unico atto di verifica (coordinato da chi scrive per iniziativa della Fondazione di ricerca IULM per conto del Ministero della Funzione Pubblica), compiuto su tutto l'universo dei soggetti pubblici in ordine all'attuazione della legge 150 che, tra il 2004 e il 2005, segnalò un processo ancora lento e per metà del

12 <http://www.quotidianoentilocali.ilsole24ore.com/art/sviluppo-e-innovazione/2016-11-11/riforma-pa-uffici-relazioni-la-trasparenza-garanti-accesso-civico-senza-limiti-152706.php?uud=ABP1TfaB8c&pid=nlqelpa>

13 <http://www.funzionepubblica.gov.it/articolo/dipartimento/15-06-2020/riforma-della-comunicazione-pubblica-proposte-operative-10-punti>

14 <http://www.funzionepubblica.gov.it/sites/funzionepubblica.gov.it/files/documenti/Notizie%20Ministro/Riforma%20della%20Comunicazione%20Pubblica%20e%20Social%20Media%20Policy%20nazionale%2016%2006%202020%20ore%2015.30.pdf>

sistema ai minimi organizzativi se non ancora privo di attuazione significativa¹⁵.

Chi scrive ricorda bene anche l'altro più antico precedente. In particolare il **quinquennio tra il 1990 e il 1995** in cui in Italia si era già sperimentata per i cinque anni pregressi una forma di riorganizzazione efficace del "prodotto comunicativo di pubblica utilità", a cominciare dai vertici stessi dell'Esecutivo nazionale, toccando poi sperimentazioni di molte parti dell'ordinamento centrale e decentrato. Era possibile arrivare rapidamente a forme di servizio mutuando molte delle tecniche e molti degli approcci che fino a metà degli anni Ottanta appartenevano prevalentemente alla cultura della comunicazione di impresa. **Tuttavia si comprendeva che le finalità, il trattamento stesso, l'accompagnamento relazionale dell'agire pubblico chiedevano di configurare un ambito professionale smarcato dagli interessi commerciali e quindi delimitato da regole per l'agire pratico oltre che per gli obblighi deontologici.**

La legge 241 del 1990 aveva già portato a risultato un obiettivo strategico che era stato la "stella polare" dell'iniziativa di quel quinquennio sperimentale: abbattere la cultura del "silenzio/segreto" nelle pubbliche amministrazioni e sostituire quell'assioma con la regola della trasparenza e dell'accesso.

Poi nel corso del tempo vari provvedimenti avevano aperto nuovi varchi (tra cui la creazione nel 1993 nell'obbligo di costruire servizi di relazione informativa con il cittadino, denominati URP). Dopo un tratto così lungo di sperimentazione spesso brillante ma non sempre adeguatamente coordinata si ponevano problemi di sistema, cioè regole generali e visione sia del carattere di coordinamento, sia degli aspetti collaterali della formazione, sia degli aspetti focali del controllo legati ad una moderna idea di "valutazione" dei rendimenti (anche socio-culturali).

A dare una lettura "processuale" della materia si incaricò il Rapporto che l'allora presidenza del CNEL affidò alla Associazione professionale del settore, sorta da alcuni anni (che chi qui scrive presiedeva) per compendiare in una descrizione di quella curva di rendimento e di apprendimento ciò che avrebbe costituito un fattore di riordino generale e di adeguamento alle dinamiche anche europee.

A quelle dinamiche aveva fatto riferimento – non casualmente – la stessa ispirazione iniziale del processo di sperimentazione, ricordando che nel 1985 al vertice europeo di Milano non fu solo discusso e approvato il famoso dossier sulle nuove regole per il mercato interno ma anche un importante dossier (coordinato al tempo dal deputato europeo **Pietro Adonnino**) che aveva per oggetto *misure di avvicinamento tra istituzioni europee e cittadini europei* (tra le misure, sia detto per fornire solo un esempio, l'istituzione di Erasmus).

Ebbene il Rapporto che il CNEL patrocinò mise in rilievo cinque aspetti poi alla base del percorso che – pur con tortuosità – portò cinque anni dopo al varo della prima normativa di ordine generale che un paese europeo tentava sulla materia. I cinque principali punti erano:

1. La **legittimazione della funzione pubblica di comunicare al cittadino** (pur in assenza di un chiaro vincolo costituzionale in ordine al diritto all'informazione) trasformando il principio in un obbligo di adeguamento organizzativo (che mise comunque anni ad entrare a regime).
2. Il concetto sociale di una funzione tesa a **ridurre il carattere oscuro delle leggi e il carattere mal accessibile dei servizi.**
3. **L'uguaglianza dei cittadini nel trattamento informativo da parte delle fonti istituzionali** (vero spunto interpretativo circa l'imparzialità stabilita della Costituzione della Pubblica Amministrazione), con attenzione evidente al raccordo tra dinamiche centrali e dinamiche decentrate.
4. Il diritto a **presidiare il miglioramento reputazionale delle istituzioni** (in generale e nelle specificità) con il chiaro vincolo di offrire conoscenza accertata e senza superare i limiti narrativi rispetto a ciò che nella storia d'Italia era stato ben conosciuto con il nome di "propaganda".
5. La capacità di **cogliere le opportunità dell'evoluzione tecnologica in atto** (era il 1994-1995) con compenetrazione di tutto ciò che al tempo andava sotto la voce "società dell'informazione".

Naturalmente a questi aspetti si legavano molteplici trasversalità che riguardano i percorsi formativi, i modelli organizzativi, la relazione tra le competenze comunicative e quelle dell'informazione, l'adeguamento dei bilanci delle pubbliche amministrazioni soprattutto per la normata attuazione delle attività di pubblicità e marketing. **Giuseppe De Rita**, allora presidente del CNEL, accompagnò quel Rapporto con una prefazione che sottolineava la legittimazione istituzionale (nella vivacità al tempo del CNEL di accompagnare l'evoluzione socio-economica del Paese) per consolidare un processo riorganizzativo di funzioni non basate sul criterio del "megafono" ma su quello della interazione interpretativa tra Stato e cittadini.

Poco tempo dopo, avviandosi le pubblicazioni di *Rivista italiana di comunicazione pubblica* (di cui De Rita era presidente del comitato scientifico), lo stesso De Rita rafforzava la specificità della funzione di "spiegazione pubblica" rimasta negli anni come un obiettivo primario non sempre ben perseguito¹⁶:

"La complessità delle società moderne e la speciale crescente complessa ambiguità non possono essere lasciate al loro semplice e semplificato dispiegarsi; avremmo come effetto un galleggiamento continuato, senza direzione di marcia e senza alcuna frontiera di obiettivi e di innovazioni da perseguire. Il dispiegarsi spiega il passato non crea basi per il futuro, il futuro si costruisce secondo derive profonde di evoluzione che vanno capite e interpretate. Vale per la società nel suo complesso, vale anche per l'oggetto della nostra attenzione, cioè la comunicazione pubblica. Senza quel po' di sforzo di interpretazione che abbiamo fatto, in pochi, negli ultimi anni (e che questa rivista tende ad approfondire e ad allargare) saremmo ancora ad una comunicazione pubblica di pura pubblicità o di semplice divulgazione di norme".

¹⁵ https://www1.interno.gov.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/sezioni/sala_stamp/notizie/comunicazione/notizia_20167.html_18907_91.html

¹⁶ Giuseppe De Rita, prefazione a Stefano Rolando (a cura di), *La comunicazione pubblica in Italia. Realtà e prospettive in un settore strategico*, Rapporto per il CNEL, Milano, Editrice Bibliografica, 1995; Giuseppe De Rita, "Nuova cittadinanza, nuovi diritti", *Rivista italiana di comunicazione pubblica* n.1/1999, Milano, Franco Angeli editore. Vedilo poi anche in Stefano Rolando (a cura di), *La comunicazione di pubblica utilità*, vol. I, Milano, Franco Angeli 2004.

Public communication.

The pandemic leads to a strategic idea that is missing¹

By Stefano Rolando, Professor of Theoretics and Techniques of Public Communication at the IULM University of Milan, President of the Club of Venice

In this final part of the year 2020 there have been, on more than one occasion, discussions - in the Italian and European public communication framework - dedicated to the relationship between communication and pandemic². I reported this on the blog stefanorolando.it and in various notes on the Facebook pages of the "Italian Public Communication Magazine", which I summarize here in this note.

In these events, in which I took part, I tried to support the argument of the importance of taking advantage of the crisis to accelerate (not only with eyes turned to Italy) the strategic reorganization of the profession and discipline, often trapped by organizational and functional models that are not adequate to the reach of the dynamics of crisis and emergency. It is not even within the reach of the specialized developments of this communicative field, including that linked to the health and social crisis. In particular, I verified that **in Italy there is no widespread awareness of the set of issues that have changed - in professional, institutional, social practices - the very perimeter of this matter**. A matter that the pandemic episode has put back on the agenda in the world, to use an expression that belonged to Italian pioneering in this field, as "strategic", that is, as part of the decision-making processes, not as part they limit to having) "packaging" activities.

Of course, it is fair to say that what will be listed here is not fully operational in all European countries. Even in the European debate there are problems of "harmonization", of organizational asymmetry, of an improved but not so advanced balance between the dynamics of the member countries and the dynamics of the institutions of the European Union. It sounds paradoxical but it could be true that - for historical relevance that affects the adaptation of functions - it is the British who are the most advanced in that integrated vision, which we are about to indicate here, regretting that the flag of the United Kingdom is now lowered. in the European system (even if in informal cooperation areas, such as the Venice Club, the British presence remains unchanged).

This "broader picture" has therefore expressed itself on recent occasions.

- A favourable circumstance occurred at the 34th plenary conference held on 3 and 4 December 2020 with more than 100 participants by the Club of Venice (a network of government communication managers from member states and all EU institutions extended to heads of European agencies, of research institutes and with ties with the academic world), which since 1986 has maintained its informal nature of a professional and harmonized huge team of operators. The debate in the December 2020 plenary raised questions about the effectiveness of the measures aiming to counter the prolonged expansion of the lethal and paralyzing action of Covid-19³.
- Another occasion was favored by the seminar promoted on September 30 by the communication structures of the OECD in collaboration with the Club of Venice⁴, in the framework of the developments of the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government (OECD, 2017) but above all in implementation of the document "Understanding the challenge of disinformation in the response to the global pandemic"⁵
- A third occasion was the initiative of the Italian Association of Public Communication and institutional on December 18th, promoted to reflect - in the context of the *Eurovisioni* forum hosted by the Rai studios in Rome - on the professional and institutional developments in the sector, carrying out, in collaboration with the European Movement, a seminar on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Association itself. This meeting was preceded on 11 June by a national web-seminar promoted by the Association, focused on the relationship between pandemic and public communication.⁶

1 First published in "Future Democracy" n. 1/2021 "Why the European debate on public communication can help the Italian situation to emerge from stagnation and propaganda"

2 The monitoring carried out in 2020 by the **Observatory on public communication, public branding and digital transformation** of the IULM University was summarized in the essay: Stefano Rolando, *Pandemia. Public communication laboratory, Scientific editorial, Naples, 2020* (<https://www.iindro.it/covid-19-e-comunicazione-il-mol-to-da-riordinare-nella-partita-in-corso/>)

3 My brief speech at the opening of the session ("The pandemic forces us to open a fourth phase of institutional communication European Union ") at the following link: <http://stefanorolando.it/?p=3968>

4 The contribution made to the OECD conference in the "Notes" of the Italian Public Communication Magazine: <https://www.facebook.com/notes/rivista-italiana-di-comunicazione-pubblica/intervento-alla-tavola-rotonda-ocseclub-di-venezia-sulfuturo-communication/10223198536889029/>

5 <http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/transparency-communication-and-trust-bef7ad6e/>

6 I was invited to make my introductory report accessible on the web (<http://stefanorolando.it/?p=3563>)

The “Italian question” between occasional task forces and field invasions by communicators and lobbies

The “Italian question” is today represented by the fact that, if the model constraints determined by legislation that sets objectives, purposes and professional legitimacy (Law 150 of 2000)⁷ had the merit of legitimizing precisely the rooting by making it mandatory the establishment of offices for the relations with the public and offices for relations with the media, they (together with general political-institutional causes) have slowed down the evolution processes.

For example, the ability to oversee the digital transformation process was modest. Only recently we noticed some reactivity in this regard, though some **areas of specialisation** have been subject to some “growth” (but almost without a vision and without a real inclination to changes) in countries without legal constraints, carrying out experiments and concrete forms of “capacity building” (theme on which Europe has discussed a lot with little Italian contribution). This happened with flexibility and adaptation to the changed dynamics of the European political-institutional and international agenda.

Well beyond the perimeters that the legislation (which does not preclude other developments) has set with univocal criteria - those of understanding the communicative functions within the relational function of a “counter” (URP), which in some areas has been logically achieved and in others has held back developments ... Always recalling that the general principles of that law still remain a fairly large mesh frame allowing reasonable developments in some fields, also with updated implementing measures⁸. So that **today for the European public communication we have “strategic” functions that in Italy are more atrophied, less experimented, often entrusted to occasional task forces, with continuous invasions of both political communication and the role of lobbyists.**

A frame of civil concern to frame the matter

In order not to give rise to the idea that the tension on the necessary changes has only a technical nature and a technological context, it is good to say that there is a clear framework of civil concern in which the information and the related assessments. It concerns a clear consolidation of the legitimacy of the function that with

a twentieth-century language is recognized as “propaganda”, insinuated itself and today manifestly evident in the institutional communication, also due to the inevitable link (made up of convergences and conflicts) with political communication and social communication.

We thought long ago that it was legitimate to confine the culture of propaganda to the first half of the twentieth century and to recognize the culture of *participation* in the second half of the century. Now, in the twenty-five years of implementation of the internet era, we must grasp the profound intertwining and therefore the once again structural mix of these two cultures in almost all countries that are based on “democratic constitutions”. Popularization and visibility (ambiguous categories, because they are physiological for democracy but also distorting communication functions in a “visceral” form) have taken on aspects and logics of treatment that the very typologies of digital transformation - while naturally opening up grandiose functions of access to knowledge - have facilitated the diffusion and acceptance of the rules and methods of propaganda with the correlated manipulation and alteration of information⁹. Hence, the relationship between true and false today is very compromised and there is a clear need for a true rethinking of the ethical threshold of the work of public communication operators.

Unfortunately, the “legitimacy” of this decline affects the entire political system and was nourished by central and territorial institutions and center-right and center-left alliances, and the idea that the digital process has more power to absorb than to emphasize the conflict (in itself of course with factors of unavoidable necessity) is also increasingly insinuating in the vision of change¹⁰.

The strategic development of the subject in Europe

Here is a quick idea of these **areas to be considered a matter of discussion in the European framework.**

1. Today for public communication it is considered strategic to play a role in the **public diplomacy processes** to which Europe (especially the Nordic countries) connects the mission of **countering infodemics, disinformation and fake news**, a theme of growing importance which involves new operators with high digital competence and is being deepened in multilateral framework (such as within the OECD) aimed at promoting “*an effective response to the pandemic*” that “*requires a coordinated multi-stakeholder effort to address the disinformation that surrounds it, with clear public leadership*”.

7 ForumPA (2020), Law 150 of 2000: the first (and still the only) framework law on public communication

<https://www.forumpa.it/open-government/comunicazione-pubblica/legge-150-del-2000-what-foresees-the-first-and-allgi-unica-leggequadro-on-public-communication/> (access on 16 June 2020).

8 Article 1 of Law 150/2000, in particular in paragraph 5, identifies the following purposes for the communication and information activities of administrations: promote knowledge of the laws in order to facilitate their application; facilitate access to public services by promoting knowledge; to favor internal processes of simplification of procedures; promote knowledge of the initiation and course of administrative procedures; favor processes equipment modernization interiors; raise awareness on issues of public and social interest; illustrate the activities and functioning of the institutions; promote the image of administrations and of Italy in Europe and around the world, giving visibility to events of local, regional, national and international.

9 A certain new problematization of the subject has arisen in the last twenty years also thanks to the contributions to reflections egregiously animated by authors such as Manuel Castells (from “*The Information Age to Communication and Power*”).

10 The government crisis has resumed some critical points - which had already emerged during the “yellow-green” government (with the institutionalization of the “team” at the service of the then vice-president Matteo Salvini) - and which, due to the bipartisan character of the drift, probably it will not easily break the trend. Filippo Teoldi wrote about it in the newspaper Domani on January 28, 2021, to tell “*A unique case in Europe*”: “*Conte used the pandemic to become an influencer*”.

2. Today for public communication it is considered strategic to clarify **the boundary between institutional communication and political communication** in which to redesign a permanent mission in terms of **support for institutional roles in contrasting the health crisis and collaborating with the scientific and health communication actors** (a specific field in which the OECD is engaged). Hence summarizing hereinto the functions to perform: providing citizens with accurate and truthful information; "dismantling" in advance or debunk false or misleading information; educate citizens in the responsible use and sharing of content; develop a greater and better understanding of people's behavior, fears, worries and expectations; involving citizens in a collective response to the infodemic.
3. Today for public communication it is considered strategic to guarantee an **adequate safeguard of crisis and emergency communication** in all thematic areas that involve national and territorial institutions, in numerous fields in close relationship with entrepreneurial and social players, and above all with entities rooted in local and thematic specificities and not only limited to the national Civil Protection body (which nevertheless fulfils a crucial institutional mission in this context).
4. Today for public communication it is considered strategic **to act with cultural and scientific mastery of the digital transformation opportunities** both in connection with the data processing and with the relations with the users, for the improvement of listening processes, for the production of services in direct relations with citizens, for the general broader social enjoyment of the knowledge memory of public utility, for the implementation of the conditions of transparency that characterize the concept of "open government".
- 16 5. Today for public communication it is considered strategic to act with full and priority connection with the institutions - at international, European, national and local level - that have competence in **the treatment of statistics**, through a stable interpenetration of professional resources able to facilitate the knowledge transfer, with the view to striking the balance between "real processes" and the subjectivity of the data stemming from perceptual phenomena.
6. Today for public communication it is considered strategic to open a **front of real social accompaniment** (to be shared with many operators of the organized private-social sector and those of the associative and local intermediation) - hence, in a scheme that facilitates the relaunch of subsidiarity - to address inequalities, delays, sectoral crises in the fields of development and equal opportunities, disabilities and new rights; in general, social and employment-related phenomena aggravated by the pandemic crisis.
7. Today for public communication it is considered strategic to carry out cooperation with business communication substantially on the front of **the growing centrality of environmental, climate and circular economy problems**.
8. Today for public communication it is considered strategic to find a **technical-communicative cooperation table between EU member states and institutions**, overcoming the obstacles that have always existed - national jealousies in communication matters, but also those solutions adopted for exclusively "media-flavoured" purposes and therefore of the intermediation of the professional media system for the circulation of knowledge on the development of Europe, deepening the direct relational and operational paths that link institutions to the stakeholders' social and territorial complexity.
9. Today for public communication it is considered strategic **to accredit and legitimize the professional and institutional cooperation networks, albeit informal**, which have acquired legitimacy in the field of public communication in the European framework and act **on almost all the issues summarized here**, starting with the *Club of Venice*, which operates autonomously but with a permanent secretariat at the EU Council and with the participation of those responsible for both the communication of the EU member states countries and the EU institutions. And in the Euro-Mediterranean framework, especially **in the field of migration**, through the consolidated cooperation between the ICMPD (Vienna-based European Agency on migration policies), *Euromed-Migration* and the *Club of Venice* (network of European institutional communicators/operators).
10. Today for public communication it is considered strategic **to develop a modern approach to Public Branding** aimed at freeing the action of institutions and national, regional and local administrations from the constraints of a vision linked to important but completely consequential application fields (such as visual identity or territorial marketing) *in relation to branding policies*, intended as a defence of the identity and narrative evolution (broad free interpretation of the artistic and media system) and of the impact on the internal and external image, applying cohesion processes , promotion processes and attractiveness processes¹¹.
11. Today for public communication it is considered strategic **to endow the cultural and entertainment system** within communication processes, maximising benefits for the stakeholders and synchronizing action in synergies with the educational systems and with the creativity and tourism economies.
12. Today for public communication it is considered strategic **to act in a coordinated form between the institutional levels of the legal system** so that, on the issues of greatest importance for citizens and businesses, the clarity of public utility data (*open data*) and the contributions clarifying and accompanying the regulations in force is exempted from an inter-institutional conflict that has its obvious spaces of freedom in the interpretation processes, but facilitating the maximum unity in defending the crucial parameters of public service.
13. Today for public communication it is considered strategic to - as indicated in point 12) - to support a political-institutional enhancement of **the role of the local institutions (regions, departments and cities)** in direct relationship with citizens with regard to Europe's identity-related, social and economic aspects, overcoming the current narrow limit represented by the "consulting" character of European Committee for Regions.
14. Today for public communication it is considered strategic **to seek possible synergies with the most professional players in the field of information and knowledge processes, starting with the public radio and television service**, in compliance with all functional and professional autonomies, but to create the necessary conditions of subsidiarity, delegation and

11 This issue is undergoing an update of extensive disciplinary approach that will lead to a publication foreseen between March and April 2021: *Stefano Rolando, Public Branding - For a new way of narrating territories and their identity (EGEA)*. A session of the last plenary conference of the Club of Venice was dedicated to the developments of these approaches, with interventions, among others, by Alex Aiken, Vincenzo Le Voci, Robert Govers and Paolo Verri, with my concluding remarks (<https://stefanorolando.it/?p=3976>).

mutual learning to plead the causes deemed most urgent by the institutions as primary reasons of collective interest.

15. Today for public communication it is considered strategic **to maintain in autonomy and vitality** a principle that was contained in the very first articulated (1994) of the law then adopted in 2000, namely the principle of attributing the need for autonomous, competent and related activities to **permanent evaluation functions**. Not only to the objectives of spending fairness but also of social performance. Functions then disappeared from the legislation and not even reintroduced when, for example, with regard to transparency and access practices, at least in the form of a stable Commission at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, something has been done in Italy (today with evolution towards the organization of offices disseminated with updated competence¹²). In fact, there are countries such as the United Kingdom in which the communication budget and human resources are depending on the impact of official evaluation reports.

Evaluate and fill the Italian delay in imagining, with an overall vision, the need for transformation

In the light of this synthetic thematic framework (we could develop each of the above points as a separate file and could also elaborate on other related topics) - which is a recurring subject in all European conferences of professionals organizational framework of comparisons and in-depth studies in European professionals' conferences, we noticed that several national frameworks the same **delays in coordination, safeguard and updates of competency profiles as in Italy**. There are some exceptions, but they lack the necessary global, structured vision that could be followed as an example to guarantee professional updates that are expressed on some of the issues indicated with areas of treatment sometimes even evolved, but mostly without an overall vision that could be taken into account as a key reference to update of research and training modules for possible academic follow-up interlinks. It is worth notice that **the debate among operators** is open, and the current health and social crisis has prompted the review of the interconnections between organizational models and performance.

By "*debate among the operators*" we mainly refer to initiatives facilitated by the Public Administration (by promoting a discussion and drawing up a document coordinated by Sergio Talamo¹³) and the well-established Italian Association of Public Administration communicators, the P.A. Social association (which received European awards for its innovative character of its network), the Ferpi which is also undergoing a transformation process to better fulfil the role of public operators) and ForumPA which is the space for discussion and public debate mostly exploited by the sector's professionals. So there are interesting paths to intercept

necessary changes and their priority framework, around which there is currently no coordination. The abovementioned document - accessible online¹⁴ - produced in June 2020 on the theme "*Reform of Public Communication and National Social Media Policy*" is a valuable tool. In particular, the "rapporteur" has seen here an acceleration point in the spontaneous processes of adaptation in progress both in central and local administrations as a scope for a more adequate re-planning: "The professional use of social networks and new technologies has broadened the boundaries of public communication: no longer a unilateral delivery to a passive recipient, no longer an institutional information exclusively mediated by the press, but a direct, interactive and real-time relationship, a flow that reaches the citizen directly in virtual places in which he/she actually operates and interacts with the outside world. So the communication of these first two decades of the third millennium has taken a much broader and more central dimension in public policies".

In the document delivered to **Minister Fabiana Dadone**, the issue of "**transparency**" has a centrality motivated by the need to create "generalized civic access" with functions of overseeing the "permanent detection of the information needs of the citizen".

The precedents of the CNEL Report of 1995 and the monitoring of the Public Service of 2005

The aforementioned document contains an assessment of both the implementation and the proposal and recalls the only act of verification (that I coordinated on the initiative of the IULM Research Foundation on behalf of the Ministry of Public Function) carried out on the entire universe of public entities with regard to implement Law 150 which, between 2004 and 2005, revealed a still slow process and half of the system at the minimum organizational levels, if not yet lacking in significant implementation¹⁵.

I also well remember the other more ancient precedent. In particular, **the five-year period between 1990 and 1995** in which Italy had already been experimented a form of effective reorganization of the "*communication product of public utility*", starting with the top management of the national government and then experimenting many segments of the central and decentralized system. It was possible to adapt services borrowing techniques and approaches belonged until the mid-1980s to the culture of corporate communication. **However, it was understood that the purposes, the processing itself, the relational accompaniment of public action required the configuration of a professional sphere unmarked by commercial interests and therefore delimited by rules for practical action as well as for ethical obligations.**

Law 241 of 1990 had already achieved a strategic objective that had been the "guiding star" of the initiative of that experimental

12 <http://www.quotidianoentilocali.ilssole24ore.com/art/sviluppo-e-innovazione/2016-11-11/riforma-pa-uffici-relazioni-la-trasparenza-garanti-accesso-civico-senza-limiti-152706.php?uaid=ABP1TfaB&cmpid=nlqelpa>

13 <http://www.funzionepubblica.gov.it/articolo/dipartimento/15-06-2020/riforma-della-comunicazione-pubblica-proposte-operative-10-punti>

14 <http://www.funzionepubblica.gov.it/sites/funzionepubblica.gov.it/files/documenti/Notizie%20Ministro/Riforma%20della%20Comunicazione%20Pubblica%20e%20Social%20Media%20Policy%20nazionale%2016%2006%202020%20ore%2015.30.pdf>

15 https://www1.interno.gov.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/sezioni/sala_stamp/notizie/comunicazione/notizia_20167.html_1890791.html

Giuseppe De Rita, prefazione a Stefano Rolando (a cura di), *La comunicazione pubblica in Italia. Realtà e prospettive in un settore strategico*, Rapporto per il CNEL, Milano, Editrice Bibliografica, 1995; Giuseppe De Rita, "Nuova cittadinanza, nuovi diritti", *Rivista italiana di comunicazione pubblica* n.1/1999, Milano, Franco Angeli editore. Vedilo poi anche in Stefano Rolando (a cura di), *La comunicazione di pubblica utilità*, vol. I, Milano, Franco Angeli 2004).

five-year period: breaking down the culture of "silence / secrecy" in public administrations and replacing that axiom with the rule of transparency and access.

Then, over the time, various measures had opened new breaches (including the creation in 1993 of the obligation to build informational reporting services to the benefit of citizens, called URP). After such a long stretch of often brilliant but not always adequately coordinated experimentation, system problems arose, that is, general rules and vision of both the coordination character and the collateral aspects of training, as well as the focal control aspects linked to a modern idea of "evaluation" of returns (including socio-cultural ones).

To give a "procedural" reading of the matter, the Report entrusted by the presidency of the CNEL to the professional association of the sector, established some years ago (I chaired it) described that curve of benefits and learning what would have constituted a factor of general reorganization and adaptation to European dynamics as well.

The same initial inspiration of the experimentation process had referred to those dynamics - not by chance - recalling that in 1985 the European summit in Milan not only discussed and approved the famous dossier on the new rules for the internal market, but also approved an important dossier (coordinated at the time by the MEP **Pietro Adonnino**) which had as its object measures of rapprochement between European institutions and European citizens (among the measures, to give just one example, the establishment of Erasmus).

18 Well, the Report sponsored by the CNEL highlighted five aspects at the basis of the path that - albeit with tortuosity - led five years later to the launch of the first general legislation that a European country was ever attempting on the subject. The five main points were:

1. **The legitimacy of the public function to communicate to the citizen** (even in the absence of a clear constitutional constraint regarding the right to information) by transforming the principle into an obligation to adapt the organizational framework (which in any case took years to become fully operational).
2. The social concept of a function aimed at reducing **the obscure character of the laws and the poor accessibility of the services**.
3. **Citizens' equality to be observed by institutional services when processing information** (true interpretative approach on the impartiality of the Public Administration as established by the Constitution), with clear attention to the connection between central and decentralized dynamics.
4. The right to **oversee the reputational improvement of institutions** (in general and in specifics) with the clear obligation to offer verified knowledge and without exceeding the narrative limits with respect to what in the history of Italy had been well known under the name of "propaganda".
5. The ability to **seize the opportunities of the ongoing technological evolution** (in 1994-1995) by inter-penetrating everything falling under the heading "information society".

Of course, these aspects were linked to multiple transversal aspects concerning training paths, organizational models, the relationship between communication and information skills, the adjustment of public administration budgets, especially to implement advertising and marketing activities. **Giuseppe De Rita**, then president of the CNEL, accompanied that Report with a preface highlighting the institutional legitimacy (at the time, the CNEL was catalysing the socio-economic evolution of the country), in order to consolidate a reorganization process of functions not based on the "megaphone" criterion but on that of the interpretative interaction between the State and citizens.

Shortly after, when the *Italian Review of Public Communication* (of which De Rita chaired the scientific committee) started to be published, De Rita himself strengthened the specificity of the "public explanatory function" which had remained over the years as a primary objective not always well pursued¹⁶:

"The complexity of modern societies and the special growing complex ambiguity cannot be left to their simple and simplifying unfolding; we would have as an effect a continuous floating, without direction of travel and without any frontier of objectives and innovations to be pursued. The unfolding explains the past but does not create foundations for the future; the future is built according to deep drifts of evolution that must be understood and interpreted. It applies to society as a whole, it also applies to the object of our attention, that is, public communication. Without that bit of effort of interpretation that the few of us have made in recent years (and that this magazine tends to deepen and expand) we would still be in a public communication of pure advertising or simple dissemination of rules".



STEFANO ROLANDO, Professor of Public and Political Communication at the IULM University of Milan, President of the Club of Venice and Vice President of Eurovisioni.

16 Giuseppe De Rita, prefazione a Stefano Rolando (a cura di), *La comunicazione pubblica in Italia. Realtà e prospettive in un settore strategico*, Rapporto per il CNEL, Milano, Editrice Bibliografica, 1995; Giuseppe De Rita, "Nuova cittadinanza, nuovi diritti", *Rivista italiana di comunicazione pubblica* n.1/1999, Milano, Franco Angeli editore. Vedilo poi anche in Stefano Rolando (a cura di), *La comunicazione di pubblica utilità*, vol. I, Milano, Franco Angeli 2004.



AGENDA

DAY 1 - Thursday 10 June 2021 (9:00 - 17:45)

9:00 - 9:45

Opening Session

Welcome statements :

- **H.E. Mr Aleksandar VUČIĆ** - President of the Republic of Serbia
- **Vincenzo LE VOCI** - Secretary-General of the Club of Venice
(presentation of the public communication review *Convergences N°17* and call to contribute to the publication to celebrate the 35 years of activity of the Club)
- **representatives of the European Institutions**

9:45 - 10:00

Address

by **Stefano ROLANDO** - President of the Club of Venice
(objectives of the meeting)

10:00 - 12:30

Plenary session - Round Table

Crisis communication: lessons learned from the pandemic

- Public communication facing complexities, distrust and incoherencies
- Public communicators and the scientific communities: synergies and incongruences
- Proposals for strengthening strategies and synergies

Moderator:

- **Vincenzo LE VOCI** - Secretary-General of the Club of Venice

Key Note speaker:

- **Claire PIMM** - Director of the National Resilience Communications Hub, United Kingdom

Panellists:

- **John CHRYSOULAKIS** - Greece, Secretary-General for Public Diplomacy and Greeks Abroad, member of the Steering Group of the Club of Venice (on the impact of the pandemic on the public diplomacy strategies and country reputation) (TBC)
- **Arlin BAGDAT** - Belgium, Director-General, External Communication, -Federal Chancellery, member of the Steering Group of the Club of Venice
- **Eugene FARRELLY** - Ireland, Assistant Principal, Government Information Service
- **Irene Maria PLANK** - Germany, Director of Strategic Communication, Federal Foreign Office, member of the Steering Group of the Club of Venice
- **Ave EERMA** - Estonia Government Office, Strategic Communication Adviser, Head of the IPCR Crisis Communication Network (CCN) and/or **Elpida CHLIMINTZA**, IPCR CCN Coordinator, General Secretariat of the Council of the EU, External Relations Directorate-General
- **Alessandro BELLANTONI** - Deputy Head of the Open and Innovative Government Division, Head of the Open Government Unit, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
- **Daniel HÖLTGEN** - Director of Communications, Council of Europe
- **Viktoras DAUKSAS** - Head of DebunkEU.org

14:15 - 17:30

Plenary session

Communicating the Future of Europe: challenges and opportunities

- The Conference on the Future of Europe: objectives, mechanisms, participative framework and cooperative platforms
- Communicating EU enlargement : keeping the momentum - work in progress

Moderator:

- **Kristina PLAVSAK-KRAJNC** - Founder, Media Forum, Center for Public Communication, Ljubljana

Key Note speaker:

- **Pia AHRENKILDE-HANSEN** - Director-General, DG Communication, European Commission

Panellists - CoFE

- **Regina BASTOS** - National coordinator of the Conference on the Future of Europe, Member of the team of the Secretary of State for European Affairs, Portugal
- **Peter MOLLEMA** - Netherlands, Director of Communications, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- **Annette SEVERY** - Germany, former of head of the German Presidency of the Communication Task Force, Federal Foreign Office
- **Igor BLAHUŠIAK** - Czech Republic, Director, European Affairs Communication Department, Office of the Government
- **Natasa DRAGOJLOVIĆ** - Serbia, President of the National Convention on the European Union
- **a European Parliament representative**
- **Anthony ZACHARZEWSKI** - President, The Democratic Society
- **Wolfgang PETZOLD** - Deputy Director, Communication Division, European Committee of the Regions
- **Christian SPAHR** - Secretary-General of the Assembly of European Regions
- **Verena RINGLER** - Director, European Commons

Panellists - ENLARGEMENT

- **Paul BUTCHER** - Policy Analyst, European Policy Center
- **Aleksandar SIMURDIĆ** - Serbia, Director of the European Affairs Fund of AP Vojvodina
- **Peter GRK** - National Coordinator for Western Balkans, Secretary-General of Bled Strategic Forum, Slovenia
- **Dushko ARSOVSKI** - Spokesperson, Government of the Republic of North Macedonia
- **Vuk VUJNOVIC** - Secretary-General of the South East Europe Public Sector Communication Association (SEECOM)

17:30 – 17:45

Summing-up the main issues emerged from the first day of plenary

DAY 2 - Friday 11 June 2020 (9:30 - 12:45)

9:30 – 12:30

Plenary session

Synergies between public communicators and the media sector

- Implementation of the Venice Action Plan of 4th December 2019: public communication and the media sector
- Initiatives to safeguard the information ecosystem and support media pluralism and diversity
- Challenging conflicting scenarios for democracy, rule of law and ethics

Moderator:

- **Marco RICORDA** - Communication Manager, Regional Coordination Office for the Mediterranean, International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

Key Note speaker:

- **Christophe LECLERCQ** - Founder and Director, EURACTIV

Round Table:

- **Address by Alex AIKEN, Executive Director of Government Communication, United Kingdom**
- **Jésus CARMONA** - Director for Media, DG Communication, European Parliament
- **Melissa JULIAN** - Communications and Policy Outreach Coordinator, International Organisation for Migration (IOM), EU Office, Brussels
- **Klaus DAHMANN** - Programme Director Western Balkans, Asia and Europe, Media Development, Deutsche Welle
- **Pier Virgilio DASTOLI** - President of the European Movement - Italy
- **Martin MYCIELSKI** - Vice-President and Public Affairs Director, Open Dialogue Foundation, Brussels
- **Marco INCERTI** - Director of Communication, European University Institute, Florence

12:30 – 12:45

Closing session

1. Intervention by Ana BRNABIĆ, Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia

2. Club of Venice Steering Group:

- Reflections on the issues emerged during the plenary meeting
- Planning for 2021 and 2022, with focus on:
 - * Thematic seminar (venue to be defined, September/October 2021)
 - * 4th EURO-Mediterranean Migration Communicators workshop, in collaboration with the ICMPD (November 2021 - date/s tbc)
 - * plenary meeting of the 35th Anniversary (Venice, 2-3 December 2021)
 - * 5th Stratcom seminar (London, February 2022)
 - * Seminar on communicating citizenship and environmental transition (Grenoble, February 2022)

Six recommendations to promote balanced migration narratives

By Marco Ricorda

The issue of migration has over the past years taken centre stage in European, North African and Middle Eastern media. Conflicts in Syria and Libya coupled with political and economic instability in several countries in the Mediterranean, Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East have resulted in large scale movement of migrants and refugees throughout the Euro-Mediterranean region.

We have all seen the stark images depicted in the media of migrants and asylum seekers packed aboard vessels of questionable seaworthiness, risking life and limb to make the treacherous journey across the sea in search of a safe haven and a better future. As well, we have witnessed a range of different approaches to covering migration. Numerous ICMPD reports have drawn to the fact that the migration narrative in the region is characterized by a strong polarization. Such a divided and confrontational public discourse is often devoid of a wider understanding of migration.

In the age of disinformation, it is even harder to achieve a balanced public discussion that is functional rather than antagonistic to effective governance, that reconciles evidence with the need for emotional resonance, and that achieves a greater understanding of migration. An important step needed is for governments, institutions, news sources, civil society and big digital platforms to work together to promote authoritative sources. Otherwise misleading narratives take root and develop a life of their own. That was true before the COVID-19 pandemic and so-called "infodemic". It is even truer, now as certain categories of migrants, such as irregular migrants in the Mediterranean, are particularly affected by COVID-19-related disinformation and misinformation since they are already subject to overly simplistic media framing.

I believe that fair and balanced views of migration in the media are essential stepping stones towards developing a more nuanced understanding of migration among the general public as well as contributing to drafting and implementing migration policies that work.

So what would be the practical recommendations to foster a balanced migration narrative? Among the many let me focus on six.

Reinforcing positive examples and approaches

To promote existing best practice examples and to encourage use of available information and data. In particular, efforts could be made to examine whether national initiatives, such as the Charter of Rome in Italy and the Greek Charter of Idomeni, can be applied in other countries throughout the region; Promote exchange of media best practices from countries where the migration crisis

is most acute, such as Lebanon and Jordan and other Southern Mediterranean countries; Encourage journalists, media support groups and media organisations to develop regional and sub-regional initiatives to improve migration reporting;

Training

To develop comprehensive training programmes for media and journalists to encourage ethical reporting with a focus on:

- Use of correct terminology
- Understanding international law and legal rights of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers
- Avoiding hate-speech and political bias in reporting of migration concerns
- Providing balanced coverage from the standpoints of receiving host communities
- Developing diversity in sources of information.

Media Action

To develop support programmes for media organisations and to strengthen their capacity to report on migration issues. In particular, by:

- The appointment of specialist migration correspondents in all newsrooms
- Promoting national media partnerships for coverage of migration
- Providing special information resources for displaced people from war-zones to help them keep in touch with their home communities
- Most importantly, encouraging newsrooms to move beyond coverage of the migration "crisis" and move into coverage of issues of integration that will assist normalisation of migrants in the public sphere.

Supporting policy makers

To encourage policymakers, community and civil society leaders to play a more active role in creating space dialogue about migration. In particular,

- Policymakers should examine how they can fund and support better journalism without compromising the editorial independence of the media;
- All officials and agencies providing information to the media should check facts and verify information thereby assisting the media to prepare balanced reports.

Building Dialogues: Understanding Migration and a Culture of Civil Discourse

To promote the sharing of information and experience between countries and regional dialogue frameworks by:

- Organising national workshops with journalists on the challenges of covering migration, to share experiences and identify possible joint programmes;
- Organising regional media “summits” to exchange information on the challenges facing journalists and media in different countries;
- Promoting a common approach to:
- Combat hate-speech, stereotyping and misinformation in public discourse
- Understanding migration as a process with historical roots in all communities.
- Valuing independent and inclusive media coverage to creating peace and stability.

Research the role of values in policy communication

Throughout the twentieth century, psychologists made numerous attempts to classify human values. While the importance of values as predictors of human attitudes dates back to the 1960s, the use of values in communication is highly debated, but it remains a very poorly defined and understudied field.

- Values come from numerous psychological and societal factors, from family upbringing to education, from religious attachment to the history of a person’s territory. One of the biggest mistakes that a recent ICMPD report highlights, is to delegitimize a community’s value (or a value shared by a specific target audience) as not acceptable or illegitimate.
- After defining values and demonstrating their relationship with attitudes to immigration, we can deduce that messaging with a value-basis that is concordant with that of its audience is likely to elicit sympathy, whereas that which is discordant with the values of its audience is more likely to elicit antipathy. Given the value-balanced orientations of those with moderate attitudes to immigration, persuasive migration messaging should attempt to mobilise values of its opposition;
- Specifically to the case of migration, and following on from the review on the relationship between values and attitudes to immigration, when migration messaging is framed in values of self-transcendence (universalism and benevolence) or openness to change (self-direction, stimulation, hedonism)

it is more likely to be supported by those already favouring immigration.

- When migration messaging is framed in values of conservation (security, tradition or conformity) or self-enhancement (power and to a lesser extent achievement) it is more likely to be supported by those already opposing immigration. To be most effective, messaging should use the opposite values of those already associated with its argument.
- This is a highly debated but poorly known field of sociology and communication that can definitely represent a turning point in reversing a communication trend where polarization and sensationalism are somehow monopolizing the migration debate in a way that does not benefit neither migrants nor hosting communities and make the work of migration policy makers harder than ever.

These are six recommendations on promoting balanced migration narratives in the Euro-Mediterranean region and beyond.



Marco Ricorda is a political and institutional communication expert with strong expertise in social media and digital campaigning.

He is a political communication blogger, a public speaker and a twice nominated #EUinfluencer. He is the Communication Officer for the Mediterranean at ICMPD and formerly a Member of Cabinet for President of the European Parliament Antonio Tajani, Head of Social Media for the ALDE group and Guy Verhofstadt, digital communication strategist for the European Commission and the economic think tank Bruegel.

“It Takes A Community” to recover from COVID-19

By Melissa Julian

In the COVID-19 pandemic, we see the extent to which our daily lives depend on essential services provided by frontline workers, a large percentage of whom are migrants. This is the medical professionals and care workers (who also cared for some Presidents and Prime Ministers, most notably Boris Johnson of the UK), scientists (like Dr. Ugur Sahin and his wife, Dr. Ozlem Turec, both born to immigrant parents from Turkey who moved to Germany and founders of BioNTech, that developed the world's first effective coronavirus vaccine), innovators, entrepreneurs, farmers, food production personnel, transport operators, shop assistants and delivery drivers, all of whom have kept our societies functioning in this unparalleled crisis.

We also see a stronger focus in the media on the vital role migrants and migration are playing in the global economic recovery post COVID-19 in both host and origin countries. Yet, in the context of increasingly polarised discussions on migration, anti-migrant sentiment pushed by some political groups has risen and is predicted to worsen and shape discussions for the next decade as the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 are felt through a likely recession and deterioration of social cohesion.

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To respond to the challenges and opportunities presented by the pandemic, the global movement, 'It Takes a Community' (<https://www.ittakesacomunity.org/>) was launched in December 2020 to support constructive action and dialogue on the many ways migration can support the recovery, drive collaboration and improve future prospects for communities.

The movement, led by the Government of Canada, Ecuador and the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) Mayors Mechanism and coordinated by IOM, promotes balanced, evidence-based narratives that resonate with those in the “movable middle”, people who do not have strong ideological preferences, but are relatively open to learn more from facts, research and real stories and to new and different perspectives on migration, depending on how this could affect their lives.

This global initiative is forward-looking, built on social sharing to exchange stories about the positive impact that migration can have on communities and society and support initiatives to create welcoming, resilient, and prosperous communities. The campaign provides digital assets and guidance in multiple languages for people to share their stories among influential and key networks at the country and regional level, exploring migration through a business, youth, local government, and civil society lens.

Substantial evidence indicates¹ that showing real positive stories and sharing innovative narratives around social cohesion and common issues and interests of all community members, including migrants, is more effective than reacting to extreme political opinions and parties in debates on toxic narratives. There is abundant evidence² that the most effective way to communicate with governments and the public in the current political context is not through the delivery of facts alone, but using the insights of motivated reasoning and behavioural science where information takes into account target audience's existing views, values and concerns relating to culture, socio-economic and security issues in ways that resonate with them. This is done through emotive, human stories which provide common ground.

Going further than a traditional campaign, 'It Takes a Community' has the potential for long-term impact and provides an opportunity to host and support different stakeholders engaged in promoting more balanced narratives around migration through their work, personal engagements and local networks. The movement is deliberately unbranded, which enables ownership and tailored messaging from a wide range of interested stakeholders and the public.

'It Takes a Community' has already mobilised action among diaspora communities and has gained significant traction among the European business community in the areas of international skills mobility, fair recruitment and decent work, the role of entrepreneurship, and financial and digital inclusion.

Join and support the conversation online and offline and become an 'It Takes a Community' leader.

<https://www.ittakesacomunity.org/>

1 [Fear and lying in the EU: Fighting disinformation on migration with alternative narratives](#), European Policy Centre and [The divided continent: Understanding Europe's social landscape in 2020 and beyond](#), European Policy Centre and the most recent studies from the European Policy Centre, EPIM, and ODI's [Public attitudes towards immigration and immigrants: what people think, why, and how to influence them](#).

2 [The Divided Continent: Understanding Europe's social landscape in 2020 and beyond](#), European Policy Centre.



**IT TAKES A
COMMUNITY**

**IT TAKES A
COMMUNITY
TO HEAL**

**IT TAKES A
COMMUNITY
TO CREATE**



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Melissa Julian is the Communications and Policy Outreach Coordinator at the European Union Office of the International Organization for Migration. She has been successfully researching, communicating and advocating in Brussels on the European Union's relations with African, Caribbean, and Pacific countries for over 30 years. Melissa has worked within the European institutions, European non-governmental development networks, lobbying organisations, think tanks and international organisations. She has a detailed knowledge of the decision-making processes around EU external relations policies impacting developing countries and the internal and external actors involved, as well as a demonstrable holistic understanding of the context within which external policies are taking place. She has an excellent track record in formulating communications strategies, communicating research, and getting research into policy and practice.

Communication and Open Governance in a Time of Crisis

A Workshop of the Club of Venice, led by the Open Government Partnership

March 18, 2021 - On line meeting

In partnership with the Democratic Society, Herbert Simon Society, Open Government Partnership, and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development .

Key take-aways, resources shared, and upcoming opportunities for learning and innovation

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As European governments and institutions work to address the complex crises posed by climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a crucial common challenge) to create and improve the citizen trust and societal resilience necessary to not only overcome crises, but also to pave way for more coordination and cooperation among all actors.

Open government approaches to communication - including truthful, factual, clear and responsible public communication, as well as dialogue, listening, civic participation, and building common ground - can help harness civic spirit toward common solutions to the shared challenges. But what does this mean in practice, and how can open approaches to communication be strengthened to foster trust and resilience?

This one-day workshop convened senior government communications professionals from across Europe, with experts from civil society and academia, to share, learn, and develop new understanding and skills in civic participation, transparency, and accountability through communication toward stronger government policies and services in a time of crisis. Through the workshop, participants gained a better understanding of how open government approaches to communication can help improve citizen trust in governments during crises, but also how to build those approaches into everyday practice.

The following document takes stock of the best practices shared and lessons learned throughout the workshop, lists the multitude of relevant resources shared, and outlines upcoming opportunities for future learning, innovation, and cooperation around communication and open governance in Europe.

Key take-aways and resources shared

Part 1: Political discussion - Crisis and open communication

A framing conversation among public officials, researchers, and practitioners on the role of communication in a time of crisis, and how open approaches to communication can make the difference in improving citizen trust and civil society support for government crisis response and recovery toward more open, resilient societies. This opening session featured remarks by Prof. Dr. Andrea Römmele, dean of Executive Education and professor of Communication in Politics and Civil Society at the Hertie School; Katju Holkeri, head of the Governance and Leadership Policy Unit in the Ministry of Finance for the Government of Finland and chair of the OECD Working Party on Open Government; Doreen Grove, head of Open Government for the Government of Scotland; María Pía Junquera Temprano, director general of Citizen Participation for the Government of City of Madrid, Spain; and Irene Plank, director for Strategic Communication at the Federal Foreign Office for the Government of Germany. Anthony Zacharzewski, executive director of The Democratic Society, chaired the discussion.

Key take-aways

- Adopt methods and tools for "Communication" with a capital "C," meaning permanent liaising with citizens. Not just sharing, but also knowing more about citizens, building permanent trust.
- A holistic, strategic communication approach is key to facilitate translation of planning principles and open government strategies into clear and concrete implementing steps and, when appropriate, into feasible and opportune reforms;
- Adopt open government principles of participation, transparency, and accountability through communication to help make government as a whole contribute to overall trust in society;
- Don't expect public trust, earn and maintain it through honest, ethical, and inclusive public communication;
- Citizens should be enabled to express their expectations and concerns through accessible, reliable, and secure channels; governments and institutions should listen and address them in a timely fashion.

Part 2: Workshopping solutions

This series of two short workshop-style sessions focused on problem solving - how does open government enable better pandemic response and recovery?

Time of Crisis

Finance Network for Europe

2.1 Tackling mis- and disinformation

In this session, participants discussed good practice principles for public communication responses to misinformation and disinformation, and the crucial role of open government in tackling the problems. The session featured remarks by Kristina Plavsak-Krajnc, Cultural Diplomacy Department of the Government of Slovenia; Paul Butcher, policy analyst at the European Policy Centre; Jesse Evers, strategic officer at DROG (a Dutch innovation and counter-disinformation platform); Craig Matasick, policy analyst at the OECD; Jussi Toivanen, chief communications specialist for the Government of Finland; and Friso Roscam Abbing, advisor on communication for the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency.

Key take-aways

- More inclusive communication is key for policy implementation. Reaching and involving all groups in society is key to success against COVID-19; sharing precise data and behavioral insights can help make communication more effective;
- Mis- and disinformation are problems that can't be fixed through technical solutions alone. Government approaches to tackling these problems must be adopted holistically, involving: communications strategies, plans and coordination mechanisms; identifying and debunking disinformation; regulatory and legal measures; and civic and media initiatives, such as media literacy education, research, stakeholder engagement, and media market reforms;
- Public education is crucial. Citizens need to develop a better understanding of what misinformation and disinformation in order to navigate information and media ecosystems on and offline for reliable information;
- Public and political responses to mis- and disinformation need to be rooted in human rights.

Resources shared

- OECD's [forthcoming International Report on Public Communication](#) will showcase good practice principles on role of public communication to respond to misinformation challenges.
- DROG developed [Harmony Square](#), a serious game utilizing humor to improve resilience of citizens against disinformation, coordinated inauthentic behavior (CIB), emotional appeal.
- The EU Learning Corner launched a new [toolkit for teachers on how to spot and fight disinformation](#) and run lessons to pupils.
- The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) developed a knowledge hub, [It Takes A Community](#), to mobilise, amplify, and facilitate country and regional engagement initiatives to foster positive relations between migrants and business, youth, local government, diaspora, and civil society sectors.

2.2 Making government more accessible

This session explored modes of collaboration and participation to build civil society and citizens into pandemic response and recovery. It featured remarks by Helen Turek, regional lead for Europe at the Open Government Partnership; Doreen Grove, head of Open Government for the Government of Scotland; Kelly McBride, Director of Scotland, open governance, and deliberative democracy at The Democratic Society; Igor Blahušiak, director of European Affairs in the Communication Department of the Section for European Affairs for the Czech Government; and Vladimír Bartovic, director of the EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy.

Key take-aways

- Governments are not alone! Partnership strengthens policies, strengthens decisions, builds trust, and keeps governments on their toes;
- Treat the outputs of partnership and collaboration carefully and seriously;
- Build frameworks and permanent structures for open communication, which can help to weather crises. One-time interventions are not enough; focus needs to be on long-term enabling environment;
- Take what we have learned through the pandemic, how we have innovated in terms of collaboration and participation (not just talking about Zoom), and take this forward for future activities;

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Part 3: Zooming in on new perspectives

- Culture of error and prudential decision-making

A lecture by world-renowned psychologist Gerd Gigerenzer, president of the Herbert Simon Society and director of the Harding Center for Risk Literacy at the University of Potsdam, Faculty of Health Sciences Brandenburg. Prof. Dr. Gigerenzer then engaged in a Q&A discussion with participants.

Key take-aways

- What blocks prudent decision-making? Misinformation and disinformation, as well as framing, or content presented in a way that generates unwarranted fear or hope, intentionally or not.
- To help societies become more resilient to these factors, governments can use regulation (restricting people's choices), but should minimize nudging (steering people's choices) and boost risk literacy by promoting risk education for journalists, politicians, and the general public.
- Trust in government requires risk-literate citizens.

- Communicate evidence in a transparent, understandable way. Use fact boxes and frequency trees, for example, which can be promoted by medical associations;
- Create positive error culture (talk about errors and eliminate their causes) and reduce negative error cultures (keep silent about errors or else blame people; invite defensive decision-making).

Resources shared

- Read more in Prof. Dr. Gerd Gigerenzer's book *Risk Savvy* (available on [Amazon.de](https://www.amazon.de)), about how to make better decisions with our money, health, and personal lives.

Part 4: Zooming out on partnerships for open governance

A roundtable discussion on the state of play, lessons learned, and future orientations to partnerships in open governance. This session showcased examples of European cross-border and cross-sectoral cooperation and explored how to make the most of partnerships toward stronger democracy and governance practice, with remarks by Marco Ricorda, communications officer at the International Centre for Migration Policy Development, Stephanie Bluma, chief communications and campaigns officer for the Open Government Partnership, Christian Spahr, secretary-general of the Assembly of European Regions; Daniel Höltgen, director of communications for the Council of Europe; and Pier Virgilio Dastoli, president of European Movement - Italy and coordinator of the Expert Committee of Public Communicators on the Future of Europe.

Key take-aways

- Governments and institutions should have the power to advance transparency, accountability, participation, and to make investments to enable open governance policies;
- In applying open governance principles across borders and sectors through partnerships, listening is harder than expressing positions, but is key to effective communication in crisis management;
- Partnership is key to crisis response. Key factors include: roles and responsibilities - who's doing what and when?; audiences - not everyone is affected equally; it's a marathon, not a sprint - how do you build back better for the long-run.
- Need for change in the way governments and institutions collaborate with citizens via regions. Shift in way regions are managed and developed in terms of public services; services need to be designed in a way that responds to needs of citizens - but also enable citizens to contribute repeatedly; citizen participation should be more open and bottom-up; policies and strategies should ensure that policies are understandable and data is accessible - should be open by default.
- The Conference on the Future of Europe is an opportunity for needed participation of citizens in deciding Europe's future. It is also an opportunity for more common campaigns around pandemic response and recovery, for example.
- The design of pandemic response and recovery systems, such as the EU's proposed vaccination passport system, should first and foremost safeguard privacy and other human rights and protect vulnerable groups - not only for the EU but also for EU partners.

Resources shared

- Open Government Partnership launched its [Open Response | Open Recovery | Open Renewal](#) campaign - the pandemic has

shown just how easily things can break down. But it also offers the opportunity to build them back up, better and stronger.

- Assembly of Regions is part of the EU-funded [SCIROCCO Exchange project](#) that assesses capacity of regions in opening up their health systems for citizen participation.

Upcoming opportunities for learning and innovation

17-21 May | Open Gov Week, led by the Open Government Partnership

1-2 June | Human rights communicators network meeting on disinformation, organised by <https://fra.europa.eu/en>. For information contact dennis.van-der-veur@fra.europa.eu.

10-11 June | Club of Venice plenary meeting. For information contact vincenzo.levoci@skynet.be.

21-25 June | inaugural Democracy and Governance Practice Retreat, an annual training series for European civil servants, led by the Open Governance Network for Europe. For information contact maria@ognfe.org.



About the Organizing partners

ABOUT THE CLUB OF VENICE

The Club of Venice (CV) is the informal network of the Directors-General / Directors / Heads of the information and communication services of the EU Member States, the UK and the EU Institutions. It was founded in 1986 under the auspices of the acting Italian Presidency of the Council of the EU. Since 2003, membership has been extended to the Heads of government communication offices of the EU accession candidate countries; and since 2008, to the European Council, EESC, CoR, ECB, EEAS and EIB. The OECD, Council of Europe and ICMPD are associated members of the CV.

The purpose of the Club is to stimulate exchange of information and experience and reinforce cooperation in all fields of public information and communication, sharing and discussing best practice in a wide variety of challenging fields such as crisis communication, capacity/capability building, training, ethics, resilience building and countering disinformation, public diplomacy and digital developments. CV governance is assured by a Steering Group composed by eight MS communication directors and the CV Secretary-General.

ABOUT THE OPEN GOVERNANCE NETWORK FOR EUROPE

The Open Governance Network for Europe is a joint initiative of The Democratic Society - a networked organisation working across Europe to connect citizens with the decisions that shape their lives - and the Open Government Partnership - a multilateral initiative that works with governments and civil society globally to advance reforms to make governments more inclusive, responsive and accountable - that aims to connect and drive debate, learning, and innovation in open governance to improve democratic participation, transparency, and accountability in the European Union.

The network aims to help improve the state of European democracy, not only by generating a European community of knowledge of open governance principles, how they're best applied in practice, and why they make for better democracy in Europe, but also by helping connect and drive actors and innovators to turn open government principles into practice.

ABOUT THE ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an international organisation that works to build better policies for better lives. Our goal is to shape policies that foster prosperity, equality, opportunity and well-being for all. We draw on 60 years of experience and insights to better prepare the world of tomorrow.

Together with governments, policy makers and citizens, we work on establishing evidence-based international standards and finding solutions to a range of social, economic and environmental challenges. From improving economic performance and creating jobs to fostering strong education and fighting international tax evasion, we provide a unique forum and knowledge hub for data and analysis, exchange of experiences, best-practice sharing, and advice on public policies and international standard-setting.

ABOUT THE HERBERT SIMON SOCIETY

The Herbert Simon Society (HSS) is a non-profit international Network Research Institute that brings together cognitive scientists, economists, social scientists, computer scientists and philosophers aiming to renew and apply the fundamental concepts of economic rationality and social action. Starting from the seminal work of Herbert Simon in economics, psychology, artificial intelligence, organizational theory, management and philosophy of science the HSS wishes to tackle the current debate about new cognitive models of economic rationality and social action, the alternative architectures of mind, the mind-brain relations, the simulation of creativity, the uncertainty and complexity of economic and social environment.



MEMO FOR ACTION

Club of Venice

The workshop on “Communication and Open Governance in a Time of Crisis” co-organized by the Club of Venice, Open Governance for Europe, The Democratic Society, the Open Government Partnership, the Herbert Simon Society and the OECD on 18 March 2021 convened senior government communications professionals from across Europe, with experts from international organisations and bodies, civil society and academia, to share, learn, and develop new understanding and skills in civic participation, transparency and accountability through communication toward stronger government policies and services in a time of crisis.

As European governments and institutions work to address the complex crises posed by climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a crucial common challenge to create and improve the citizens' confidence in public authorities and the collective societal resilience necessary to not only overcome crises, but also to pave the way for more coordination and cooperation among all actors.

The following memo takes stock of lessons learned during the workshop and outlines a set of common principles, objectives, opportunities, and challenges for future learning, innovation, and cooperation around communication and open governance in Europe.

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Crisis response, recovery, resilience and communication

- Build on lessons from the pandemic, setting up comprehensive, structured plans and adequate strategies to communicate resilient actions timely and collectively. Set up permanent structures for open communication, which can help manage crises more efficiently and effectively (one time interventions are not enough; focus needs to be on long-term enabling environment);
- Apply the open government principles of participation, transparency, and accountability when shaping communication methodologies. Public trust must be earned and maintained through coherent, effective, sustainable and equitable policies and fueled by honest, ethical, and inclusive public communication;
- Integrate strategic communication in all crisis management plans as a pre-requisite for a professional service rendered to society. Adopt communication methods and instruments to ensure permanent liaising with citizens, facilitating interaction in resilience building and recovery and a collaborative dialogue with a view to sustainable contingency measures and, when appropriate, reforms; multiply efforts to optimize outreach;
- Set up and update reliable and realistic road maps/action plans accessible to all audiences, using a clear and trustworthy language;
- Adopt coordinated approaches to tackle mis- and disinformation holistically. Cooperation among governments, institutions and international specialists in the exchange of key information is crucial to detect and deter these threats

timely and radically, since they cannot be countered through contingent technical solutions alone;

- Capacity building and, in particular, investing on public education is crucial. Public authorities and citizens need to:
 - * increasingly develop a better understanding of misinformation and disinformation, in order to navigate, monitor and analyse information and media ecosystems on and offline and identify and disseminate reliable information;
 - * engage in promoting communication and media literacy;
 - * develop capacities for a pro-active and constructive dialogue through the social media and contribute to the development of collaborative web networks (co-creation).

New perspectives and routes for cooperation and partnerships

- Reduce defensive decision-making and create positive error cultures, adopting the appropriate behavioural approaches;
- Monitor and analyse citizens' behavioral trends. Be ready to recognize shortfalls and to adapt management culture as needed; train governmental and institutional officials and their management in this field, through the involvement of psychologists and other specialists from the scientific - cognitive - behavioral studies communities;
- Invest in improving capacities to analyse citizens' opinions and attitudes; enhance and diversify polling instruments;
- Involve and engage professionals, academics and civil society representatives in multi-annual training planning, capitalizing on their expertise in the field. Inclusiveness in this context will enable communicators to adapt their approach to the national, regional and local environment as rapidly and efficiently as needed;
- For governments, institutions and international organisations: invest more in long-term, systematic synergetic efforts and activities for awareness raising and education purposes;
- Maximize synergies and complementarity between the actions of the Club of Venice and international partners engaged in open governance and committed to the principles of sound management, transparency, accountability and partnership work;
- Explore the possibilities to strengthen work in partnership, drawing inspiration from win-win experiences such as the multi-annual agreements created in the framework of the inter-institutional Declaration “Communicating Europe in Partnership” of 22.10.2008;
- Seize the opportunity of the upcoming Conference on the Future of Europe to highlight and promote the need for a strong open government culture and the blend between representative and participative democracy.

Concept note

As European officials work to address the multiple crises posed by climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a crucial opportunity to create the citizen trust and societal resilience necessary to not only overcome crises but also build back better.

Open government approaches to communication - including factual, clear public communication, as well as dialogue, listening, and building common ground - can help harness civic spirit toward common solutions to the shared challenges. But what does this mean in practice, and how can open approaches to communication be harnessed to build this trust and resilience?

This one-day workshop will convene senior government communications professionals from across Europe, with experts from civil society and academia, to share, learn, and develop new understanding and skills in civic participation, transparency, and accountability through communication toward stronger government policies and services in a time of crisis.

Drawing from a broad spectrum of experience and expertise on democracy and governance - from the Democratic Society's wealth of participatory methods to the Open Government Partnership's action planning around [open response and recovery](#); the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) ongoing surveys on open government and understanding public communication; and the Herbert Simon Society's work on behavioural approaches to governance - the workshop sessions will explore open government approaches to communication and unpack how they can be used across relevant, priority sectors such as pandemic recovery and climate action. The workshop will be held in English and under Chatham House Rule.

Through the workshop, participants will gain a better understanding of how open government approaches to communication can help improve citizen trust in governments during crises, but also how to build those approaches into everyday practice. Participants will gain this knowledge together with their peers across the European institutions and member states, as well as with leading thinkers and actors in civil society. After, the organisers will produce a memorandum including a best practice brief as well as key findings and orientations that will lay ground for future learning and innovation guidelines and for multilateral cooperation.



AGENDA

9:00 – 10:00
CTE

Part 1: Political discussion - Crisis and open communication

A framing conversation among public officials, researchers, and practitioners on the role of communication in a time of crisis, and how open approaches to communication can make the difference in improving citizen trust and civil society support for government crisis response and recovery toward more open, resilient societies.

Welcome and introduction

- **Vincenzo Le Voci** - Secretary-General, Club of Venice
- **Ioannis Chrysoulakis** - Secretary-General, Public Diplomacy and Greeks Abroad, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Greece; Steering Group, Club of Venice
- **Anthony Zacharzewski** - Executive Director, Democratic Society

Speakers

- **Prof. Dr. Andrea Römmele** - Dean of Executive Education and Professor of Communication in Politics and Civil Society, Hertie School
- **Katju Holkeri** - Head of Governance and Leadership Policy Unit, Ministry of Finance, Government of Finland; Chair, OECD Working Party on Open Government
- **Doreen Grove** - Head of Open Government, Government of Scotland
- **María Pía Junquera Temprano** - Director General for Citizen Participation, Government of City of Madrid, Spain
- **Irene Plank** - Director for Strategic Communication at Federal Foreign Office, Government of Germany; Steering Group, Club of Venice

Chair

- **Anthony Zacharzewski**

Break

Part 2: Workshopping solutions - how does open government enable better pandemic response and recovery?

This series of four short workshop-style sessions will start with an open and frank discussion to table and address shared problems – what doesn't work? Then, participants will join two back-to-back problem-solving sessions focusing on practical approaches to tackling misinformation and making governments more accessible amid crises. Finally, Vincenzo Le Voci will lead a short concluding session to wrap up the lessons and recommendations shared throughout.

2.1 What doesn't work?

A session to frame two specific problems of misinformation and disinformation and one-sided communication and how open government approaches are crucial to the solutions. Led by Vincenzo Le Voci, with contributions from government officials and civil society representatives.

Speakers

- **Kristina Plavsak-Krajnc** - Cultural Diplomacy Department, Government of Slovenia
- **Paul Butcher** - Policy Analyst, European Policy Centre
- **Ahmed Skim**, Director of Migration Affairs, Minister Delegate to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccans Residing Abroad, Government of Morocco
- **Jesse Evers** - Strategic Officer, DROG (a Dutch innovation and counter-disinformation platform)

Chair

- **Vincenzo Le Voci**

2.2 Tackling mis- and disinformation

A session to showcase and discuss good practice principles for public communication responses to misinformation, based on the OECD's forthcoming International Report on Public Communication. Led by Craig Matasick, policy analyst, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, with contributions from government officials and civil society representatives.

10:00 – 10:15

10:15 – 12:45

10:15 – 10:55

10:55 – 11:45

Speakers

- **Jussi Toivanen** - Chief Communications Specialist, Government of Finland
- **Friso Roscam Abbing** - Advisor on Communication, European Union Fundamental Rights Agency

Chair

- **Craig Matasick** - policy analyst, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

11:45 - 11:55

Break

11:55 - 12:45

2.3 Making government more accessible

A session to explore modes of collaboration and participation to build civil society and citizens into pandemic response and recovery. Led by Helen Turek, regional lead, Europe, Open Government Partnership, and contributions from government officials and civil society representatives.

Speakers

- **Doreen Grove** - Head of Open Government, Government of Scotland
- **Kelly McBride** - Director of Scotland; Director for Open Governance and Deliberative Democracy, The Democratic Society
- **Igor Blahušiak** - Director European Affairs, Communication Department, Section for European Affairs, Czech Government
- **Vladimír Bartovic** - Director, EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy

Chair

- **Helen Turek** - Regional lead, Europe, Open Government Partnership

12:45 - 13:00

2.4 Morning conclusions

A moment to wrap-up the lessons, recommendations, and future priorities laid out during the morning's sessions. Led by Vincenzo Le Voci.

13:00 - 14:00

Lunch Break

14:00 - 15:15

Part 3: Zooming in on new perspectives - Culture of error and prudential decision-making

A lecture by world-renowned psychologist Gerd Gigerenzer, President of the Herbert Simon Society and Director of the Harding Center for Risk Literacy at the University of Potsdam, Faculty of Health Sciences Brandenburg, followed by a Q&A discussion among participants.

15:15 - 15:30

Break

15:30 - 16:30

Part 4: Zooming out on partnerships for open governance

A roundtable discussion on the state of play, lessons learned, and future orientations to partnerships in open governance. Showcasing examples of European cross-border and cross-sectoral cooperation, this session will explore how to make the most of partnerships toward stronger democracy and governance practice.

Speakers

- **Marco Ricorda** - Communications Officer, International Centre for Migration Policy Development
- **Stephanie Bluma** - Chief Communications and Campaigns Officer, Open Government Partnership
- **Christian Spahr** - Secretary-General of the Assembly of European Regions
- **Daniel Höltgen** - Director of Communications, Council of Europe
- **Pier Virgilio Dastoli** - President, European Movement - Italy; Coordinator, Expert Committee of Public Communicators on the Future of Europe

Chair

- **Vincenzo Le Voci**

16:30 - 16:45

Part 5: Drawing conclusions and mapping out next steps

Led by Vincenzo Le Voci and Anthony Zacharzewski

CONTRIBUTIONS

(Extracts)

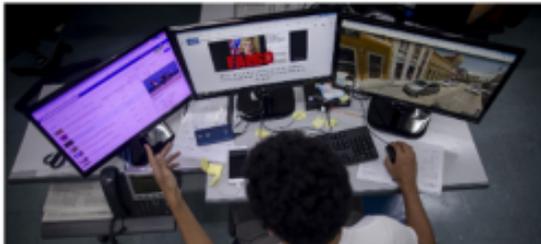
1) EPC - Paul Butcher



DISCUSSION PAPER
EUROPEAN POLITICS AND INSTITUTIONS PROGRAMME
30 JANUARY 2019

Disinformation and democracy: The home front in the information war

Paul Butcher



<https://www.epc.eu/en/Publications/Disinformation-and-democracy-The-home-front-in-the-information-war~21c294>

FEPS
FUNDACION PABLO IGLESIAS
FRIEDRICH EBERT STIFTUNG
EPC
ISSUE PAPER
EUROPEAN MIGRATION AND DIVERSITY PROGRAMME
EUROPEAN POLITICS AND INSTITUTIONS PROGRAMME
26 NOVEMBER 2020

Fear and lying in the EU: Fighting disinformation on migration with alternative narratives

Paul Butcher
Alberto-Horst Neidhardt



<https://www.epc.eu/en/publications/Fear-and-lying-in-the-EU-Fighting-disinformation-on-migration-with-al~39a1e8>

DEGREES OF DISINFORMATION (%)

from an EPC study on disinformation about migration-related themes

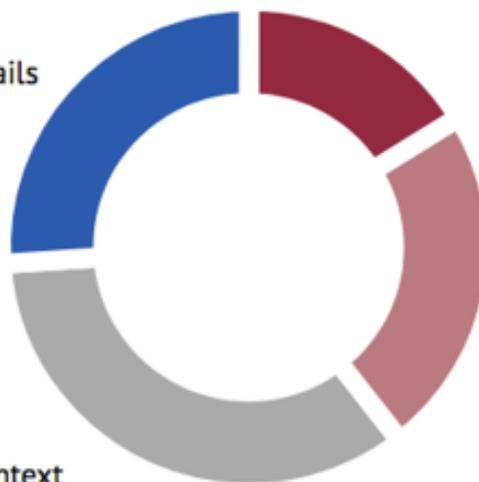


Unverifiable (26%)
e.g. not enough details to fact check

Outright false (16%)
e.g. demonstrably inaccurate

Misleading (34%)
e.g. accurate figures presented out of context

Distorted (23%)
e.g. manipulated figures



2) HSS - Gerd Gigerenzer

What Blocks Prudent Decision Making?

Misinformation

False content shared without malicious intent.

Disinformation

False content shared with intent to mislead.

Framing

Correct content presented in a way that generates unwarranted fear or hope, intentionally or not.

*We await the end of the COVID-19 pandemic with dread,
when the search for whom to blame will begin.*

A governmental official

Error Cultures

Positive Error Culture

Talk about errors and eliminate their causes.

Negative Error Culture

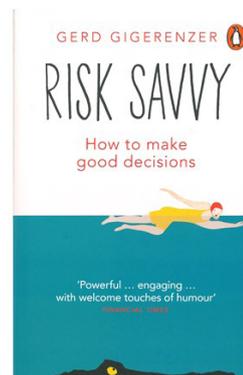
Keep silent about errors or else blame people.
Invites defensive decision making.

Gigerenzer, G. *Risk Savvy*. Penguin

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Error Culture and Prudent Decision Making

- Boost risk literacy of journalists, politicians, and the general public.
- Use fact boxes and frequency trees to communicate evidence in a transparent way.
- Reduce defensive decision-making and create positive error cultures.





Club of Venice

4th Stratcom Seminar - Conclusions

25 February 2021 - On line meeting

Introduction

The UK Government and the Club of Venice have a long-standing association. It is built around the shared understanding of the importance of strategic communication and the vital role that national governments and their institutions can play in delivering that communication in a timely, efficient and effective way.

With the communications landscape evolving at such a rapid pace it is always a useful exercise to take time to reflect on the challenges and opportunities this evolution brings and to share the best practice available.

The Club of Venice, working closely in collaboration with the governmental and institutional communicators from all over Europe and from international partnered organizations, the academic world and industry experts is a key catalyst in convening these opportunities to learn and grow together.

The Event

36 The fourth annual Club of Venice seminar on strategic communications took place on Thursday 25 February 2021. Due to coronavirus restrictions the event was held online and was hosted by Vincenzo Le Voci, Secretary-General of the Club of Venice and Alex Aiken, Executive Director of Communications, UK Government.

The seminar was titled Key challenges and future communication strategies: crisis management, effectiveness and trust with the aims of the event being to:

- discuss the long-term impact of strategic challenges on our work;
- analyse communication trends and efforts in the light of recent social and geo-political developments, particularly in relation to the coronavirus pandemic
- explore ways and means to reinforce cooperation and work in partnership on capacity and resilience building

The seminar involved over 100 professional communicators from across Europe and the United States. Speakers and attendees came from a mixture of national administrations, multinational institutions, media outlets and third party stakeholders. The online nature of the event resulted in a good and varied attendance throughout the day, as well as providing a useful platform to consider many different experiences and approaches.

Main Conclusions

The breakout sessions raised some interesting challenges for the future of strategic communications and the speakers also gave examples of where these challenges are being understood and overcome currently.

Understanding the importance of strategic communication

- Strategic communication in government needs to be routinely considered early in the political and policy process. Alongside policy considerations there needs to be a clear understanding of the strategic communication implications of any policy decision, in order to have a meaningful impact on the end result.
- It is important to note that the world is not static: strategic communication therefore needs to be adequately resourced if it is to meet the increasing challenges.
- Investing in training and in strategic communication and media literacy is crucial
- Using examples of communication successes and failures is a crucial way to emphasise the importance of it to internal audiences and helps to underline the need for it to be an active consideration and resourced accordingly.

Countering disinformation

- We need to counter disinformation through a multi-faceted approach working with government and industry at national and international level to develop common ground for risk management procedures. A reactive, defensive mode is simply not enough.
- We need a strong working relationship with the social media platforms so we can identify and react to disinformation in real time. The UK government has the Rapid Response Unit (RRU) that is dedicated to carrying out this work.
- Education is key to successfully countering disinformation. An example is the UK government resource called RESIST (Recognise disinformation, Early warning, Situational Insight, Impact analysis, Strategic communication, Track outcomes). It is an online toolkit that helps support the dissemination of reliable, truthful information that underpins democracy whilst enabling communications professionals to identify and stop the spread of disinformation.
- NATO are successfully monitoring bots to track trends that can alert them to disinformation.

Tackling a lack of trust in government

- Building greater public trust means appreciating there will always be some level of distrust of government communication due to the lack of trust in authority more generally.
- We should consider how we can use education systems and school curriculums in order to build trust and understanding in politics from an early age.
- Important to ensure that we are listening - instead of just 'pushing out' messages, we need to make space to listen and interact with the public. Use digital channels to hold two-way conversations with the public.
- Ensuring there is common ground with civil society and NGOs means that we are more likely to have their support.

Trusted messengers

- Stronger crisis management means recognising the importance of trusted messengers and online influencers to get across key messages to specific audience groups.
- Independent media have an important role to play in getting out factual content through multiple channels. For example, in Latvia, media has been suffering so the government allocated more money to the Media Support Fund, which is independently distributed. The UK government has also developed a Press Partnership which works with over 600 national and regional publications to deliver factual information in multiple languages.

Increased insight

- More investment in research and insight both to understand public mood and psychological wellbeing as well as being able to improve the tone of messaging to different audiences. Factual but empathetic is key.
- More interactions online result in more data being available. For example, the Austrian government have found their online community has more than doubled due to the pandemic and this has allowed them to better communicate with a wider audience at times when they know they are more engaged.
- Insight gathering by directly inviting the public to ask questions to government websites and share concerns is widely used and encouraged as a way of understanding the mood of the nation and particular issues of concern.

The ever-increasing importance of digital

- Future-proofing communications requires being able to react fast to events and to set the narrative early. It is important to adopt a 'digital first' mindset and communicate with your audiences where they interact in the online space. We must work harder to understand our audience and collaborate with social media platforms to understand what the concerns are and where the debate is going.

The importance of evaluation and impact

- Better evaluation and impact is vital if we are to keep pace with technological and societal changes.
- Being able to evaluate communications in near real-time allows us to adjust messaging and tone in a timely way.
- We should also remember we need to be better at measuring the impacts of owned and earned communications.

Countering the 'dark side of the internet' together

- The internet has many unintended consequences. We need to collaborate with one another if we are to tackle these successfully.
- There are examples we can use of governments coming together for a better future, such as with Space Laws and various treaties. We have a responsibility to come together and create an international charter / declaration on the use of the internet.

The session summaries

The seminar commenced with an opening plenary session.

Alex Aiken offered a definition of Strategic Communication as "Influencing audiences by marshalling all available resources to meet clear objectives to create, strengthen or maintain conditions for the success of the organisation, through the coordinated use of messages and products in a single themed and evaluated plan with milestones over time."

Alex highlighted the Singapore '3C' Model for building trust in government. He explained trust comes when you have the following core elements:

- **Competence** – people's view of a government's ability to deliver
- **Character** – integrity and values, is the government working in the public interest and not just the government's interest?
- **Connectedness** – Building a relationship with citizens, engaging at all levels and co-creating.

Contributions in this opening session included:

- **Craig Matasick**, OECD, Policy Analyst, Public Governance Directorate (GOV)
- **Ambassador Baiba Braze**, NATO, Assistant Secretary-General, Public Diplomacy
- **Erik den Hoedt**, Club of Venice Steering Group Member, former Director of Communication and Public Information, Ministry of General Affairs, Netherlands
- **Fiorenza Barazzoni**, Director-General, PM Office Department for European Policies, Italy
- **Agnès Von der Mühl**, France, Director, Communication and Press, Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs

Following a short break, the meeting divided into five topic based breakout sessions. The sessions took place at the same time with attendees having chosen the session at the event sign up stage.

Session 1 - The use and/or misuse of strategic communications

This session concentrated on defining what 'Strategic Communications' is and its role within policy and wider government decision making. It also looked at the challenges that governments face and how strategic communications can help tackle those challenges.

Key outtakes from the session included:

- The need to ensure strategic communications is considered early enough, in tandem with policy considerations, in order to have meaningful impact on the end result.
- The need to counter disinformation through a multi-faceted approach working with government and industry at a national

level to develop common ground for risk management procedures.

- Trust - we need to be realistic that there will always be some level of distrust of government communication due to the lack of trust in authority. We could consider introducing philosophy of politics and its mission into school curriculum, building trust and understanding in politics from an early age.
- We need to listen - instead of just 'pushing out' messages, we need to make space to listen and interact with the public to ensure that we have the proper context of values in policy making. Ensuring there is common ground with civil society and NGOs means that we are more likely to have their support.
- Dark side of the internet - how do we manage the impact of unintended consequences of the internet? There are examples we can use of governments coming together for a better future, such as with Space Laws and treaties. We have a responsibility to come together and create an international charter / declaration on the use of the internet.

Contributions in this session came from:

- **Jakub Kalenský**, Senior Fellow, Atlantic Council expert on countering disinformation, Digital Forensic Lab (DFRLab), Washington D.C.
- **Lutz Güllner**, Head of the Strategic Communications and Information Analysis Division, European External Action Service (EEAS)
- **Danila Chiaro**, Project Manager, Regional Coordination Department for the Mediterranean, International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)
- **Stavros Papagiannenas**, StP Communications, author of the book "Saving your Reputation in the Digital Age" (for an insight on "The dark side of the internet")

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Session 2 - Crisis management and public trust: European lessons of the Covid Pandemic

This session looked at the impact of the ongoing pandemic communication campaigns organised by governments and institutions, including the monitoring and impact of digital strategies and the cooperation with civil society and social media companies.

Themes of interest from the session included:

- The importance of trusted messengers (for example medical professionals, faith leaders) and online influencers to get across key messages to specific audience groups.
- A strong response to disinformation is important, working with social media companies to monitor, alert and take down disinformation content quickly.
- The importance of using research and insight both to understand public mood and psychological wellbeing as well as being able to improve the tone of messaging to different audiences.
- Data can be a really powerful tool in evaluating how your communications is working, we should embrace it and reflect what it is telling us in our campaigns.
- Keep information clear and concise, stick to facts but also show empathy.
- Importance of wellbeing, we must look after ourselves if we are going to successfully look after others.

Contributions in this session came from:

- **Claire Pimm**, Director of National Resilience Communications, Cabinet Office, UK
- **Erik den Hoedt**, Club of Venice Steering Group Member, former Director of Communication and Public Information, Ministry of General Affairs, Netherlands
- **Lisa Hollenbach**, Head of the "Strategic Media and Communication" Unit, Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, Germany
- **Inga Rosinska**, Director, Information Services and Outreach, DG Communication, General Secretariat of the Council of the EU
- **Ave Eerma**, Estonia Government Office, Strategic Communication Adviser, Head of the IPCR Crisis Communication Network (CCN)
- **Jānis Sārts**, Director of the NATO Strategic Communication Center of Excellence (focus on social media practices monitoring)
- **Kelly McBride**, Director, Scotland+Open Government and Deliberative Democracy, DEMSOC
- **Professor Riccardo Viale**, Milano Bicocca University, Head of Italy Behavioral Insights Team
- **Natasha Kizzie**, Google, Industry Manager, Government

Session 3 - Future-proofing communications: The 5D challenge of 2021 and beyond

This session concentrated on the 5D communications model: Direct, Digital, Diverse, Data-driven and counter-disinformation, with particular focus on resilience building and countering hybrid threats.

Key takeaways from this group included:

- Being able to react fast to events and to set the narrative early is important. To do this requires the right communications structures to be in place.
- Adopt a 'digital first' mindset, communicate with your audiences where they interact in the online space. The UK government have found that livestreaming press conferences across multiple channels helps to reach a larger audience.
- Trust is key, use many different messengers/influencers to get across messages in the tone of voice that audiences respect/react positively to. Many countries have used celebrities and medical influencers for example.
- Understanding your audience is vital, work with social media platforms to understand what the concerns are/where the debate is going.

Contributions in this session came from:

- **Lene Naesager**, Director for 'Strategy & Corporate Communication', European Commission
- **Peter Heneghan**, Deputy Director, Digital Communications (UK government)
- **Amra Ducic**, Head of the Digital Communication Department, Austria Federal Chancellery
- **Viktors Makarovs**, Special Envoy on Information Security Issues, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Latvia
- **Jerzy Pomianowski**, Executive Director, European Endowment for Democracy
- **Pier Virgilio Dastoli**, President of the European Movement-Italy, Steering Group member of the Italian Association of public and institutional communicators (COMPAA)

Session 4 - Nation branding and public diplomacy: Building a trusted national brand

This session drew inspiration from a discussion held at a plenary meeting of the Club in December 2020 and aimed to share feedback on government diplomacy and branding mobilisation and on the importance of strategic planning to reinvigorate public diplomacy through key international events.

Key points from this session included:

- The pandemic has put a spotlight on nation branding and public diplomacy in a way not seen in recent history.
- The Lithuanian government highlighted that nation branding involves many actors, not just communicators and it therefore needs a whole government approach. Sometimes this extends to a regional approach such as the 'Baltic bubble' idea which increased tourism between the Baltic states during the pandemic.
- Sweden has a Council for the Promotion of Sweden which works with many interested parties in Sweden to help understand and promote the country better.
- The pandemic may have changed the method of communications delivery (virtual) but it is important that you still maintain the values and authenticity in your communications. The UK government's GREAT campaign had carried on this year but in different ways for example virtual trips to iconic British venues (Highclere Castle - Downton Abbey).
- Important to regularly carry out perception audits of your country to understand others views of you and your people. Lithuania and UK have examples of this in practice.

Contributions in this session came from:

- **Victoria Li**, Head of the Communication Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sweden
- **Egle Kudzmanienė**, Government's Branding Unit, MFA, Lithuania
- **Caroline Holtum**, Director of Communications for COP-26, Cabinet Office, UK
- **Robert Winder**, author of the book "Soft Power"
- **Maddie Burns**, Deputy Director, Cabinet Office, on the UK "GREAT" campaign, UK
- **Kristina Plavšak Krajnc**, Senior Advisor, Ministry of Culture, Government of Slovenia, former Head of the Slovenian Government Communication Office

Session 5 - Evaluation and communications impact

Session 5 looked at today's monitoring and evaluation methods, mechanisms and instruments put in place to measure efficiency and effectiveness of the strategic communication plans, and to table suggestions for improving current practices.

Contributors drew the following lessons:

- Ensure evaluation is part of campaign planning from the outset and takes place from the start of the campaign.
- Use the latest technology available to evaluate impact.
- If possible try to benchmark with previous campaigns when you are developing measurements for future campaigns.
- Collaborating with social media companies on evaluation is key, as they have lots of technology to help carry out evaluations successfully.

- Use the insight from the evaluation to change direction and approach throughout the life of the campaign and to set up adequate follow-up monitoring mechanisms.

Contributions in this session came from:

- **Paul Knight**, CEO, OmniGOV @ Manning Gottlieb OMD
- **Elpida Chlimintza**, Coordinator of the IPCR Crisis Communication Network (CCN), Seconded National Expert, General Secretariat of the Council of the EU, DG RELEX, Civil Protection Unit
- **Susannah Temko**, Facebook, Government, Politics & Advocacy Partner Manager for UK & Ireland
- **Chris Riley**, NATO Headquarters, Head of Strategic Communications
- **Carlotta Alfonsi**, OECD, Policy Analyst on Open Government policies
- **Vincenzo Le Voci**, Secretary-General of the Club of Venice

Overall conclusions

At a time when strategic communications delivered by governments has never been more important, this seminar demonstrated the vibrancy of communication ideas and practice across Europe.

The attendance of such a great number of varied and experienced communications professionals reinforced the continuing importance of the role that the Club of Venice plays in the sharing of knowledge and promotion of best practice in communications in Europe.

The seminar showed there is a clear need to develop a holistic view of how to approach communication in the 2020s. Whilst traditional communications and PR is still current there is a need to understand and increase the components of the five 'D' model:

- **Direct** – communicating with your audiences in their own online environments
- **Digital** – the ever increasing expansion of digital requires a 'digital first' approach
- **Diverse** – understanding and communicating successfully across broad spectrums of society and channels
- **Data-driven** – harnessing data to increase effectiveness of communications
- **Disinformation** – Collaborating with partner countries and industry to effectively counter disinformation

We look forward to future events where we can continue the discussions on how we use our professional skills and creativity to operate successfully in the European communications space.

CONTRIBUTIONS

(Extracts)

OECD - Craig Matasick



Public Communication for a more Open Government



From the OECD Recommendation on Open Government to the 1st International report on public communication (2021)



39 Centres of Government
24 Ministries of Health

Public Communication can be an asset for better policymaking and for greater **transparency, integrity, accountability** and **participation**.



40



Key challenges and opportunities for the future of public communication

The OECD **EXPERT GROUP ON PUBLIC COMMUNICATION** helps identify priorities for improving public communication function

1st meeting Sept 2020

10 Feb 2021: Convened as part of the Tackling Misinformation event with the UK Gov; 300+ participants from 45+ countries

1. Improving **evaluation** of public communication function to develop evidence-driven initiatives.
2. Building a stronger whole-of-government **crisis response**.
3. Making communication **more inclusive** and developing a **whole-of-society** response.
4. **Future-proofing** approaches against mis- and dis-information to adapt to diverse challenges.

AGENDA

8:30 – 8:45
GMT

Welcome statements and presentation of the structure and objectives of the seminar

A framing conversation among public officials, researchers, and practitioners on the role of communication in a time of crisis, and how open approaches to communication can make the difference in improving citizen trust and civil society support for government crisis response and recovery toward more open, resilient societies.

Welcome and introduction

- **Vincenzo Le Voci** - Secretary-General, Club of Venice
- **Ioannis Chrysoulakis** - Secretary-General, Public Diplomacy and Greeks Abroad, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Greece; Steering Group, Club of Venice
- **Anthony Zacharzewski** - Executive Director, Democratic Society

8:45 - 10:30

INTRODUCTORY PLENARY SESSION

Moderators

- **Vincenzo Le Voci** - Secretary-General of the Club of Venice
- **Alex Aiken** - Executive Director of Communications, UK

'Trust in government; Trust in institutions'

Setting out the landscape and challenges communicators are facing in 2021 and going forward OECD will be setting the scene with most recent polling and present the communications standard against which there are 5 communications strands, which will be the areas addressed in each of the sessions to follow. Communicators need to excel in these areas in order to be successful. These are:

- Strategic Comms
- Crisis management and public trust
- Future-proofing communications: The 5D challenge
- Nation branding
- Evaluation and communication impact

Round table (including Q&A) with:

- **Craig Matasick** - OECD, Policy Analyst, Public Governance Directorate (GOV)
- **Ambassador Baiba Braze** - NATO, Assistant Secretary-General, Public Diplomacy
- **Erik den Hoedt** - Club of Venice Steering Group Member, former Director of Communication and Public Information, Ministry of General Affairs, Netherlands
- **Fiorenza Barazzoni** - Director-General, PM Office Department for European Policies, Italy

10:35 – 10:45

Presentation of the thematic break-out sessions

11:00 - 12:30

THEMATIC SESSIONS

Session 1 - The use and/or misuse of strategic communications

This session should define what 'Strategic Communications' is and should ask 3 questions for the panel to address. The main focus of this session will be on examples of inter-governmental strategic communications cooperation.

Speakers

- **Jakub Kalenský** - Atlantic Council expert on countering disinformation
- **Lutz Güllner** - Head of the Strategic Communications and Information Analysis Division, European External Action Service (EEAS)
- **Daniela Chiaro** - Project Manager, Regional Coordination Department for the Mediterranean, International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)
- **Stavros Papagiannias** - StP Communications, author of the book "Saving your Reputation in the Digital Age" (for an insight on "The dark side of the internet")
- **Club of Venice' expert** - (governmental communications official)

Session 2 - Crisis management and public trust: European lessons on the Covid Pandemic

This session will elaborate on the impact of the ongoing communication campaigns organised by governments and institutions in the field of the pandemic, including the monitoring and the impact of digital strategies and the cooperation with civil society and web industries.

Speakers

- **Claire Pimm** - Director of National Resilience Communications, Cabinet Office, UK
- **Erik den Hoedt** - Club of Venice Steering Group Member, former Director of Communication and Public Information, Ministry of General Affairs, Netherlands
- **Lisa Hollenbach** - Head of the "Strategic Media and Communication" Unit, Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, Germany
- **Inga Rosinska** - Director, Information Services and Outreach, DG Communication, General Secretariat of the Council of the EU
- **Ave Eerma** - Estonia Government Office, Strategic Communication Adviser, Head of the IPCR Crisis Communication Network (CCN)
- **Jānis Sārts** - Director of the NATO Strategic Communication Center of Excellence (focus on social media practices monitoring)
- **Kelly McBride** - Director, Scotland+Open Government and Deliberative Democracy, DEMSOC
- **Professor Riccardo Viale** - Milano Bicocca University, Head of Italy Behavioral Insights Team
- **Natasha Kizzie** - Google, Industry Manager, Government

Session 3 - Future-proofing communications: The 5D challenge of 2021 and beyond

Session 3 will centre on the 5D communications model: Direct, Digital, Diverse, Data-driven and counter-disinformation, with particular focus on resilience building and countering hybrid threats.

Speakers

- **Lene Naesager** - Director for 'Strategy & Corporate Communication', European Commission
- **Peter Heneghan** - Deputy Director, Digital Communications (UK Gov)
- **Amra Ducic** - Head of the Digital Communication Department, Austria Federal Chancellery
- **Viktors Makarovs** - Special Envoy on Information Security Issues, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Latvia
- **Jerzy Pomianowski** - Executive Director, European Endowment for Democracy
- **Pier Virgilio Dastoli** - President of the European Movement-Italy, Steering Group member of the Italian Association of public and institutional communicators (COMPA)

Session 4 - Nation branding and public diplomacy: Building a trusted national brand

This session draws inspiration from discussion held at the last plenary meeting of the Club in December 2020 and aims to share feedback on government authorities' PD and branding mobilisation and on the importance of strategic planning to reinvigorate PD through key international events.

Speakers

- **Victoria Li** - Head of the Communication Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sweden
- **Egle Kudzmanienė** - Government's Branding Unit, MFA, Lithuania
- **Caroline Holtum** - UK, Director of Communications for COP26, Cabinet Office
- **Robert Winder** - author of the book "Soft Power"
- **Maddie Burns** - UK, Cabinet Office, on the UK "GREAT" campaign
- **Kristina Plavšak Krajnc** - Senior Advisor, Ministry of Culture, Government of Slovenia, former Head of the Slovenian Government Communication Office

Session 5 - Evaluation and communications impact

Session 5 aims at exploring today's monitoring and evaluation methods, mechanisms and instruments put in place to measure efficiency and effectiveness of the strategic communication plans, and to table suggestions for improving the current practices.

Speakers

- **Paul Knight** - (OmniGov representative)
- **Elpida Chlimintza** - Coordinator of the IPCR Crisis Communication Network (CCN), Seconded National Expert, General Secretariat of the Council of the EU, DG RELEX, Civil Protection Unit
- **Susannah Temko** - Facebook Government, Politics & Advocacy Partner Manager for UK & Ireland
- **Chris Riley** - NATO Headquarters, Head of Strategic Communications
- **Carlotta Alfonsi** - OECD, Policy Analyst on Open Government policies
- **Club of Venice' expert** - (governmental communications official)

PLENARY SESSION

13:45 - 16:15

13:45 - 14:15

- Address by Michael Hanley, Founder and CEO, The Content Engine (formerly Head of Digital Communications World Economic Forum): **"Strategic communications operations: Building a newsroom culture"**
- Q&A

14:15 - 15:15

THEMATIC GROUPS DEBRIEFING

- session moderated by **Vincenzo Le Voci**, Secretary-General of the Club of Venice

15:15 - 16:00

PLENARY SESSION

- moderated by **Marco Incerti**, Director of Communications, European University Institute (EUI), Florence
- Address by **Guest speaker** - US President Biden's communication campaign representative (TBC)
- Q&A

16:00 - 16:15

CONCLUSIONS

- Main issues emerged and possible follow-up
- Closing remarks

Speakers

- **Alex Aiken**
- **Vincenzo Le Voci**





Club of Venice

Plenary meeting - Outcome

3-4 December 2020 - On line meeting

Owing to the logistic constraints caused by the pandemic, the 2020 autumn plenary of the Club of Venice was held in videoconference, organised by the authorities of the Department of European Policies of the Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

The three sessions of this meeting were followed by 160 registered participants, with an average attendance of 100 specialists from 23 EU Member States, three accession countries, EU institutions and bodies, as well as from extra-European countries (Australia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Lebanon, Morocco, Philippines and United Arab Emirates) and external communication specialists and academics.

The plenary focused on crisis communication.

Three main topics were addressed in this plenary:

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

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

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

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

3. ROUND TABLE: "The impact of the different crises on public diplomacy, nation branding and reputation management"

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

- * future of the media scenario (ecosystem) in Europe.

The participants were welcomed by **Diana Agosti**, Head of Department for the European Policies at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, who encouraged all the participants to multiply their efforts and safeguard continuity in their support to the Club agenda in spite of the logistic constraints caused by the Covid-19 lockdown. Her introductory speech was followed by the welcome statements of the representatives of the European Parliament and the European Commission in Italy and a by representative of Venice Municipality.

Highlighting the challenging period for governments and institutions and the crucial role for public communicators in assuring the necessary links between political authorities and citizens to help cope with the pandemic constraints, **Diana Agosti** introduced then Italian **Minister for European Affairs Enzo Amendola**.

Enzo Amendola underlined that the pandemic had not only changed citizens' behavioural habits, but also our way to work and communicate and that it is crucial to analyse and understand this turning point caused by such crisis. He also stressed the need for Europe to capitalize on this global challenge to reinforce its integration process, its strategic autonomy and its own capacities, which is the first, strongest and clearest message to be conveyed. In this context, all government and institutional players should commit to reinforce global alliances to optimize their communication plans, improving efficiency, accuracy and evidence-based narratives in order to meet citizen's expectations. The Italian Minister praised the European Union for its mass mobilisation in support of the economic and social tissue of the Member States society and in the adoption of innovative and integrated instruments such as "Next Generation EU" to facilitate recovery. Moreover, quoting a recent speech by the European Commissioner Vera Jourová¹, he underlined that, as emerged by the recent European polls, 77% of the European citizens agree to liaise the EU financial support to the countries who recognise the rule of law and the democratic principle. He finally underlined that crisis communication remains a crucial component of all other crisis management scenarios (migration, conflicts prevention and resolution, security, trade and cultural issues) and invited to proactively involve the young generation in the communication campaigns, thus facilitating the evolution of a mutual cooperation welcoming a spirit of participative democracy.

Stefano Rolando, President of the Club of Venice, outlining the objectives of the plenary meeting, regretted that, in the recent

1 "If I had to choose one thing that democracies have and we in an authoritarian regime didn't, I would say this is 'trust'. (...) We trust so much, we decided to dismantle the internal borders. We trust that the ruling of a court in one country is fair and just for every other Member. This is my biggest motivation to act. To restore and uphold this trust. Because Europe without the trust is not a Union".

"Democracy without trust is not complete" (speech of Vice-President Jourová at the webinar "How can Europe protect the rule of law in times of crisis?" organized by the Centre for European Reform on 20 November 2020)

years, communication has become more “technical” and at the same time less institutional and less synergetic. Hence, he called for the necessary revision of communication paradigms and for redesigning the ideal conditions that could facilitate resilience, sustainability and full recovery from crises balance in a synergetic framework built upon expertise, “competence and esprit de corps”.

Session 1

The first session focusing on the **communication strategies during the pandemic crisis** was moderated by **Erik Den Hoedt**, Director of Public Information and Communication at the Ministry of General Affairs in the Netherlands, member of the Steering Group of the Club of Venice.

In his introductory note, **Professor Alberto Mantovani**, Scientific Director at the Humanitas Clinical and Research Hospital and Emeritus Professor at the Humanitas University in Milan, described the spectrum of the propagation of the Covid-19 virus and the symptoms of the insurgence of the disease, summarising the outcome of meta-analyses and wide research in this field also with regard to possible host genetics implications and immunity mechanisms and dynamics.

The panel included governmental specialists (Professor John Chrisoulakis, Secretary-General for Public Diplomacy and the Greeks Abroad, Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs; - Irene Plank, Director of Communications from the German Federal Foreign Office; Miriam van Staden, Dutch communication specialist from the Government Communication Academy of the Ministry for General Affairs), representatives from European institutions and bodies (Tina Zournatzi, Head of Strategic Communications from the European Commission DG COMM; Philipp Schulmeister, Head of the Public Opinion Monitoring Unit at the European Parliament DG COMM; Daniel Holtgen, Director of Communications of the Council of Europe; Christophe Rouillon, Member of the European Committee of the Regions) and external communication specialists (Pier Virgilio Dastoli, President of the European Movement in Italy and Meletios Dimopoulos, Rector and Professor of Hematology and Oncology at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens).

Contributions to this session focused on the public authorities' mobilisation to communicate the governmental decisions (laws, implementing provisions, ad hoc measures, advice on the behaviours to be adopted at large scale by citizens and communities) and to minimize misinterpretations, uncertainties and perceptions of conflicting messages. Focus was given to “advisory-type” instruments (such as the Dutch central government information on line (www.rijksoverheid.nl) and

www.government.nl) and all other sources such as call centres, infographics and other visuals, thematic campaigns, cooperation with media to channel and amplify new provisions promptly, cooperation with police authorities and with representatives from regional and local authorities, and with other stakeholders/multipliers. Due attention was also being paid to empathy, transparency and clarity, verifying beforehand the accuracy of terminology used in the key messages and to the approach adopted when communicating through the social media.

This panel also analysed the state of play with regard to trust in EU and local governments as emerged in the last Eurobarometer (data collected in September 2020) and the inconsistency noticed in communications, also amplified by the difference in the waves of contagion from country to country that made it extremely difficult to disseminate comprehensive and uniform messages for all European citizens. Over-abundance, misinformation and disinformation were also undermining governmental and institutional capacities to be recognized as trustworthy information sources and reliable authorities for behavioural guidance. The European institutions specialists emphasised the role of the European emergency response mechanisms and the envisaged measures to support resilience and recovery (humanitarian air-bridges, Re-open EU, SURE, vaccine strategy, dispelling mis/disinformation on the different aspects of the pandemic including a reinforced social media detection and monitoring, and the Recovery Plan for Europe, Next Generation EU, the European Green Deal and digital health comms at large).

Session 2

The second round table of the plenary meeting focused on how to tackle **strategic communication challenges in all global crises**. After a general introduction by the moderator, **Danila Chiaro**, Programme Manager at the Regional Coordination Office for the Mediterranean (branch of the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)) stressing the need for reinforcing communicating skills and coordinated efforts in time of both contingencies and prevention planning, the key-note speaker **Lutz Güllner** Head of the “Strategic Communications and Information Analysis” Division at the European External Action Service (EEAS) presented the key elements of the freshly adopted European Democracy Action Plan, an instrument designed to empower citizens and build more resilient democracies across the EU by promoting free and fair elections, strengthening media freedom and countering disinformation, and stressing the need to be vigilant against all disinformation threats and the risks for common values to be undermined by distorted realities easily amplified in particular throughout the digital media².

² The EDAP, adopted by the European Commission on 2 December 2020 on the eve of the Club of Venice plenary (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0790&from=EN>), aims to strengthen media freedom and pluralism by helping journalists operate in a safer environment where they can do their work without fear and intimidation. In this regard, the European Commission committed to proposing a recommendation on safety of journalists by presenting an in-

Session 3

The third session, moderated by **Vincenzo Le Voci**, Secretary-General of the Club of Venice, was dedicated to **the impact of the different crises on public diplomacy, nation branding and reputation management**.

The key-note speaker **Robert Govers**, specialist in public diplomacy and reputation management, author of the book "Imaginative Communities: Admired cities, regions and countries", had already proactively contributed to a seminar on this same topic organised by the Club of Venice in cooperation with the Belgian governmental authorities. Robert focused on the role played by global crises of a particular intrinsic strength and dangerousness in raising consciousness of the need to join forces and adopt comprehensive, coordinated but also **imaginative** solutions. He emphasised the role of political leaders in catalysing the attention of their audiences (i.e. in the U.S.A.) and their enormous influence on the political orientation of their country and on domestic and international public opinion and referred to nation branding indexes such as IPSOS NBI 2020 and to successful public diplomacy initiatives such as the Estonian government initiatives (e-Estonia, e-Residency, data exchanges among Embassies). Moreover, he underlined that countries' reputation often also lies on the "external impact", hence the need for alliances with the media, civil society, business and the academic world; and the need to invest on the development of a clear sense of "real purpose and identity" as key ingredients for success. Robert concluded recognizing the "dire need for rebuilding public diplomacy strongholds" that have been heavily hit by crises such as the pandemic.

The panel included heads of governmental communication (Alex Aiken, Executive Director of the UK Government Communication Service; Imrich Babic, Head of the Strategic Communication Unit, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs in Slovakia; Ambassador Rytis Paulauskas, Director of the Communication and Public Diplomacy Department at the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Michaël Nathan, Director of the French Government Information Service (S.I.G.); Igor Blahušiak, Director of the European Affairs Communication Department at the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic) and communication experts from European organisations, branding specialists and academics (Stefano Rolando, President of the Club of Venice, Professor of Theoretics and Techniques of Public Communication at the IULM University of Milan; Paolo Verri, Public Branding specialist, former director of "Matera European Capital of Culture 2019"; Christian Spahr, Secretary-General of the Assembly of European Regions (AER) and Anthony Zacharzewski, Founder and Director of The Democratic Society).

Alex Aiken's contribution served as a second key-note, sharing the specific experience of the United Kingdom that builds upon a consolidated tradition in country branding strategies (re. the GREAT Britain campaign). Alex focused on the three key areas providing an useful perspective on which to build, and on the starting point: TRUST in the public authorities, which is the engine providing the "licence to operate", enabling alliances and helping improve deliveries. He underlined that Covid-19 has highlighted the battle for trust and that diplomacy can earn from science

The panel included distinguished specialists from national governments (Nicola Verola, Central Director for European Integration, Deputy Director-General for Europe at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Katju Holkeri, Chair of the OECD Working Party on Open Government, Head of the Governance Policy Unit, Public Governance at the Finnish Ministry of Finance; Louis Riquet, Director of Communications at the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs; Ave Eerma, Strategic Communication Adviser at the Estonian Government Office, Chair of the IPCR/Crisis Communication Network (CCN)), from institutions and bodies ((Karolina Wozniak, web communication Team Coordinator at the European Parliament DG COMM; Elpida Chlimintza, Coordinator of the IPCR CCN and attaché to the Council of the EU, DG RELEX, Civil Protection Unit; Craig Matasick, Policy Analyst at the Open and Innovative Government Division of the OECD Public Governance Directorate) and external communication experts (Marco Ricorda, Communications Manager at the Regional Coordination Office for the Mediterranean of the ICMPD; Nikola Hořejš, International Affairs Programme Director at the Czech Society and Democracy Research Institute (STEM); Paul Butcher, Policy Analysts at the European Policy Centre (EPC) and Eva Garzón Hernández, Global Displacement Lead at OXFAM).

Discussion covered general aspects of crisis communication and policy-oriented elements of co-operation.

- On the one hand, the governmental and institutional contributions to the discussion were focused on the strategic challenges revealed/ignited by the crises (OECD, with focus on the "infodemic", on the disinformation responses in the different national frameworks analysed in recent surveys), on the horizontal mechanisms of data exchange, web monitoring, analysis of the "information seeders and spreaders" and feedback on communication campaigns at large scale and co-creative platforms (IPCR and its Crisis Communication Network-CCN; feedback from Italy, Finland, France, Estonia, Czech Institute STEM, EPC and the European Parliament), with a general understanding of the need to reframe the debate based on an objective analysis of weaknesses and inconsistencies;
- On the other hand, the debate offered an insight on the improvements of evidence-based narratives, in particular in the field of migration (ICMPD feedback on the EUROMED migration programme implemented since 2004; continuous analysis of public attitudes on migration and media coverage; reports on policy communication practices enabling communicators to adopt the right values-based policy communication approach; emphasis on socio-psychological and cross-cultural elements with the aim to improve cognitive studies and analytical parameters, focus on the relationship between values and behavioural attitudes, and the need for values-based messaging and diversified communication campaigns; OXFAM on initiatives countering disinformation and misinformation campaign on the same topic, by emphasising the need to invest in media literacy, in building a sense of community to counter the public opinion prejudices, facilitating cultural shifts towards the development of critical thinking, and elaborating accurate attitudinal segmentation studies to have a clear understanding of the crisis roots).

and from trust to regenerate and relaunch itself. The two winning acronyms are the 5Ds (Direct, Digital, c-Disinformation, Diverse and Data) and PROVE (the ingredients to build trust: Pre-bunk misinformation, Reliable information, Offer balance, Verify evidence and Explain uncertainties).

The national contributions that contributed to enriching the debate focused on:

- the capacity to collaborate with academia, liaise with international networks to capitalise on opportunities to counter the concerns and uncertainties caused by the lockdown, liaising with international communities (Lithuania);
- the need to leverage on cross-border cooperation and the need to consider the crisis as a test to re-design communication and branding strategies, transforming the traditional public communication instruments, mechanisms and dynamics, re-thinking of communications strategies and campaigns from a citizen-centric perspective (this has become absolutely mandatory and urgent), emphasizing the need for clarity and for trustworthy sources vs. disinformation often amplified through the digital. Such transformation should help strengthen nation's branding and in turn develop public diplomacy (France);
- the prompt reaction to the increased demand for clear information on government measures to combat the coronavirus spread (more than ever before because citizens have never been so much affected by similar emergencies) and to related restrictions at large scale such as the cross-border mobility, conditions allowing to work abroad, impact on tourism, business-related measures, impact on education, and any other practical consequence on everyday life. Need for governmental authorities to increase and enhance outreach - rediscovered need for sound mobilisation in health policies, never considered a top priority in the previous years. Need to challenge threats from fake news and disinformation; spread of fake news catalysed by citizens' themselves because of their increased search for information from reliable sources. Use of diversified instruments, improvement of translation services for foreigners (platform Euroskop.cz), cooperation with external specialists in choosing technical solutions and facilitating the multiplier effect; investment in an advisory approach answering citizens' questions related on how adapt behaviours (Czech Republic).

Stefano Rolando, complementing the key elements highlighted by Alex Aiken, stressed the need for a multi-oriented strategic communication approach aiming to [re-]gain public authorities' reputation through comprehensive resilience and recovery plans and complementary fully-fledged measures encompassing economy, security, culture and sustaining scientific innovation and prevention. A global multi-dimensional approach is the key to success in country branding.

On Stefano's line was also Paolo Verri, former director of "Matera European Capital of Culture, who stressed the need for inclusive strategies and outlined the project "Italy 2030 - Culture and Cities" and - subject particularly dear to the Club - reminded that the 25th March 2021 would be the 1600th birthday of Venice - place of refugees and symbol of nation branding, city branding, government/governance, care for territories and communities. Paolo recalled the past ten years political developments throughout Europe and the continuous frictions between cities and state, particularly in terms of identity. In his view, once the pandemic is over we will need to reconsider the relations between

cities, regional entities and their relations with the central authorities. It will also be crucial to review the concept of Europe in terms of new global identity (no longer as a "supranational antagonist" of state identities), also to recover citizen's trust and participation.

Christian Spahr and Anthony Zacharzewski highlighted the impact of the crisis in the positive slant, insofar it has created opportunities for new ways of thinking and working. Nothing will be the same as before. The Covid crisis must be also intended as a rehearsal for longer-term action needed, for instance, to tackle other urgent priorities such as climate change (even though it's a longer-term outcome, we still need to take action immediately. Decisions taken at the European scale will effect actions we can take at a regional/ local/domestic level. We all need to draw inspiration from lessons learned and play a proactive role to communicate good values in a coordinated way, to gain reputation and trust.



ISSUES EMERGED AND POSSIBLE FOLLOW-UP

On the pandemic:

- seek synergies and coordinated approaches between political authorities (at national regional and local level), communication specialists and the scientific community, multiplying efforts to ensure continuity in the data exchange and coherence and transparency in all outreach activities
- provide statistics on the vaccination campaigns on a regular basis
- monitor public opinion trends and attitudes, with the aid of behavioural experts and psychologists
- continue to strengthen cooperation with the academic world in monitoring and reporting behavioural trends and developing studies with a view to more effective policies
- sensitise public authorities to take due account of the communication dimension during the elaboration of public health policies
- continue to cooperate with the European institutions and with the international partner organisations in the activities countering disinformation

On crisis communicating (all crises):

- invest in media literacy, reinforce competencies and skills
- identify the roles : who speaks, how and when, and tailor communication to the different audiences
- develop an "error management" culture
- Strengthen ties among national authorities and between national authorities and EU institutions, reinforcing cooperation in preventing, tracking and neutralizing fake news and carrying out ex-post evaluation of methodologies, timeliness and effectiveness
- Activation of the ad hoc inter-disciplinary working group on Capacity Building established in Vilnius in 2018
- Preparation of a seminar on Capacity/Capability Building
- Mapping crisis communication observatories
- Restore trust, privilege fact-checking and promote direct experience (like the Club did visiting Lesbos hotspots and meeting with Doctor Bartolo in Malta)
- Build coherent meta-narratives and appeal to the audience's values and emotions as well (evidence may not be enough)

On public diplomacy/country branding and country reputation:

- elaborate strategic checklists with key parameter indicators to help analyse current trends
- collaborate with international branding trends indexes/reporting agencies
- organise a new seminar on this topic, in cooperation with national and external public diplomacy specialists
- work in partnerships with academic experts to analyse studies on the impact of crises on citizens' behaviours and trust and consequently on countries' and institutions' reputation
- invest in a transformational culture and adapt/reinforce competencies in the field

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CONCLUDING REMARKS and FUTURE AGENDA

Vincenzo Le Voci presented the new issue of the public communication review *Convergences* n° 16, published on the website of the Italian Department for European Policies and thanked the Belgian Government authorities and the co-editors Philippe Caroyez and Hans Brunmayr, inviting all to contribute to the next issues.

He also announced a special publication foreseen in the 2nd semester 2021 to celebrate the 35th Anniversary of the Club of Venice, and invited the audience to consider contributing financially to the initiative.

Future meetings

- **February 2021** | London 4th Stratcom seminar
- **March 2021** | Open Government/Capacity Building joint seminar
- **April 2021** | (postponed to autumn 2021) Greece seminar
- **June 2021** | spring plenary in Serbia
- Work in synergy with international partner organizations (ICMPD, OECD, SEECOM...)

Club of Venice

Intervento introduttivo

Stefano Rolando, Presidente del Club di Venezia

Sono grato a **Diana Agosti, Carlo Corazza e Antonio Parenti** per avere aperto i lavori di questa 34° sessione autunnale annuale del Club di Venezia. Alla quale nel lungo percorso di questa rete operosa si sommano almeno altri 70 eventi che ci hanno fatto crescere professionalmente e civilmente.

Ci sono state consegne - appunto morali e professionali - in questi 34 anni. Quando ero capo dipartimento a Palazzo Chigi, Diana era una speranza, tra i giovani di quel Dipartimento. Oggi è un capo che mantiene e migliora le consegne.

Grato naturalmente al nostro segretario generale **Vincenzo Le Voci** - io lo chiamo il nostro "emigrato calabrese", perché quando torna a casa si commuove ancora - ma Vincenzo è un tassello della nuova Europa, moderna, fervida, europeista, con le porte aperte e amico di tutti. **Tignoso** - come si dice a Roma - per difendere l'autonomia e il ruolo di questo progetto che - **Signor Ministro** glielo voglio dire - è figlio dell'Italia per lo spunto iniziale, ma poi è stato figlio di una pluralità di soggetti che hanno accettato (anche in contesti non scontati rispetto all'europeismo dell'Europa) il format dell'informalità, ovvero della non decisionalità.

In cambio della franchezza del dialogo, del trasferimento vero di conoscenza ed esperienza e, sotto sotto, lavorando per una sostanziale armonizzazione in un terreno che era ed è ancora di forte gelosia nazionale.

Intanto la ringrazio, ministro **Enzo Amendola**, di essere con noi. E di parlare anche a nome di quel tavolo europeo di intenti di chi oggi è al lavoro per cambiare e far crescere l'Europa che protegge i suoi cittadini e le sue comunità.

Ho richiamato prima il tempo ormai lungo del nostro lavoro. Non per nostalgia e francamente nemmeno per la civetteria di invecchiarmi. Ma perché sui questo spunto vorrei concentrare il mio breve intervento di apertura.

Se nel novembre del 1986 abbiamo aperto un primo ciclo di esperienze in un contesto di entusiasmi che erano maturati già nel vertice europeo di Milano dell'anno precedente (quello che decise il mercato unico e che lanciò Erasmus), oggi noi apriamo, dopo tre distinte fasi, certamente una quarta fase. Forse anche un vero e proprio quarto ciclo.

Riepilogo i tratti essenziali.

- **I primi dieci anni** servirono a misurarci con la forza e con un certo primato che nel campo comunicativo aveva la comunicazione di impresa. Ma per farlo dovevamo inventare un altro marketing, un'altra pubblicità, un'altra demoscopia, un altro accompagnamento ai diritti e doveri dei cittadini. Non entro nel dettaglio, ma gli esperti credo mi seguano. Furono anni di vera e propria fondazione della comunicazione pubblica.
- A cui seguì **un altro dodicennio**, dal 1996, che faceva invece i conti con l'invenzione della rete, con nuovi diversi profili professionali, con una forte sinergia europea istituzionale e valoriale. Ma che finì con l'arrivo globale della crisi economico-finanziaria del 2008.

- **E la terza fase** - lo sappiamo tutti noi qui presenti - è stata quella più complessa e anche più tortuosa. La politica ha conflittuato. Il progetto sociale si è fatto ambiguo. La comunicazione si è fatta forse più tecnica ma meno valoriale. Anche se la trasformazione digitale ha lavorato per cambiamenti enormi.
- **Noi ci riuniamo oggi dopo nove mesi di pandemia** e dopo una letalità che ha cifre da guerre mondiali. Non è una *nuova fase* perché stanno accadendo "cose gravi". E' una nuova fase perché c'è chi si arrende e aspetta la fine della crisi. Ma **c'è anche ci lavora nella necessaria revisione di paradigmi e abitudini** e riprogetta condizioni di resilienza, di sostenibilità, di equilibrio tra le ragioni della salute e dell'economia, in cui - scoperta mondiale - senza un'adeguata e competente comunicazione non si arriva a risultato.

Non sta a me entrare nel merito (su cui per altro ho lavorato intensamente in questo anno soprattutto in Università). Perché **il programma che ci attende** schiera relatori di prim'ordine.

E si avvale di key-notes speakers che voglio fin da ora ringraziare.

- Il primo di tutti è **Enzo Amendola**, che non parla mai "di maniera" e che sa le opportunità e i rischi della nostra casa comune.
- Poi il prof. **Alberto Mantovani** membro di una comunità scientifica internazionale in prima linea nel contrasto ma anche nella redazione dell'adeguamento, nel suo campo, di alcuni paradigmi.
- E poi **Lutz Gullner** (esperto di comunicazione strategica), **Robert Govers** (specialista di public diplomacy) e fatemi aggiungere il mio amico **Paolo Verri** (che ha portato al successo l'esperienza di Matera capitale europea della cultura 2019, con cui lavoriamo insieme nel campo del public branding).

Ognuno di loro è parte di quegli *esperti che stanno ormai allargando il tavolo del Club of Venice* in permanenza, triplicando il numero dei membri "di rappresentanza" in uno scambio (quattro/ cinque volte all'anno) prezioso.

Concludo con un veloce riferimento al lavoro di approfondimento fatto quest'anno **sulla relazione tra pandemia e comunicazione**. Nel redigere il rapporto finale (da poco diventato un libro tematico) ho espresso **tre auspici** che penso possano interessare il nostro dibattito:

- Il primo è di immaginare che la **comunicazione scientifica** non sparisca il giorno in cui Coronavirus si sarà arreso, trovando il modo - mi rivolgo anche alla sensibilità del prof. Mantovani - che ci sia un patto politico istituzionale per portare a regime un ruolo permanente della comunicazione scientifica nei nostri paesi.
- Il secondo è che la **mediazione tra i messaggi degli scienziati e quelli del sistema sociale e produttivo** non abbiano più mediazioni a macchia di leopardo tra territori e nazioni, ma un orientamento di mediazione generale di cui l'Europa sappia farsi carico, non per correre dietro a uno scienziato il lunedì e a un imprenditore il martedì, ma per compenetrare logiche e priorità.

- Il terzo è di **spostare una parte della mission generale della comunicazione pubblica verso un programmato abbassamento della quota di analfabetismo funzionale** che c'è nei nostri paesi (e purtroppo in percentuale ancora grave in Italia). E che resta la causa di scarso civismo e scarsa partecipazione oltre a indurre populismo politico.

Troveremo sedi e modi di approfondimento.

A chi ha lavorato all'organizzazione della sessione e agli amici traduttori un ringraziamento speciale.

Buon lavoro a tutti.

Club of Venice

Opening statement

Stefano Rolando, President of Club of Venice

I am grateful to **Diana Agosti, Carlo Corazza and Antonio Parenti** for opening the proceedings of this 34th annual autumn session of the Club of Venice. To which in the long journey of this industrious network there are at least 70 other events that have made us grow professionally and civilly.

There have been deliveries - in fact moral and professional - in these 34 years. When I was head of department at Palazzo Chigi, Diana was a hope among the young people of that department. Today it is a garment that maintains and improves deliveries.

I am naturally grateful to our general secretary **Vincenzo Le Voci** - I call him our "Calabrian emigrant", because when he returns home he is still moved - but Vincenzo is a piece of the new Europe, modern, fervent, pro-European, with open doors and friend of all. "Tignoso" - as they say in Rome - to defend the autonomy and role of this project which - **Mr Minister**, I want to tell you - is the son of Italy for the initial inspiration, but then was the son of a plurality of subjects who accepted (even in contexts not taken for granted with respect to the Europeanism of Europe) the format of informality, or rather of non-decision-making.

In exchange for the frankness of dialogue, for the true transfer of knowledge and experience and, underneath, working for a substantial harmonization in a terrain that was and still is of strong national jealousy.

In the meantime, I thank Minister **Enzo Amendola** for being with us. And to speak also on behalf of that European table of intent of those who today are at work to change and grow the Europe that protects its citizens and its communities.

I recalled the now long time of our work not for nostalgia and frankly not even for the coquetry of getting old. But because I would like to focus my brief opening speech on this point.

If in November 1986 we opened a first cycle of experiences in a context of enthusiasm that had already matured at the European summit in Milan of the previous year (the one that decided the single market and that launched Erasmus), today we open after three distinct phases certainly a fourth phase. Maybe even a real fourth cycle.

I summarize them by essential features.

- The first ten years served to measure us with the strength and with a certain primacy that business communication had in the communication field. But to do this we had to invent another marketing, another advertising, another opinion poll, another accompaniment to the rights and duties of citizens. I will not go into detail but I believe the experts follow me. Those were the years of the foundation of public communication.
- This was followed by another twelve years, from 1996, which instead dealt with the invention of the network, with new different professional profiles, with a strong European institutional and value synergy. But that ended with the global arrival of the 2008 economic and financial crisis.
- And the third phase - we all know this here - was the most complex and also the most tortuous one. Politics conflicted. The social project has become ambiguous. Communication has perhaps become more technical but less valuable. Although the digital transformation has worked for huge changes.
- We reunite today after nine months of pandemic and after a lethality that has figures from world wars. It is not a new phase because serious things are happening. It is a new phase because there are those who give up and wait for the end. But there is also work in the necessary revision of paradigms and habits and redesign conditions of resilience, sustainability, balance between the reasons for health and the economy, in which - world discovery - without adequate and competent communication comes to result.

It is not up to me to enter into the merits (on which I have worked intensely this year especially in the University). Because the program that awaits us hosts first-rate speakers.

And it uses key-note speakers that I want to thank right now.

- The first of all is **Enzo Amendola**, who never speaks "in a manner" and who knows the opportunities and risks of our common home.
- Then prof. **Alberto Mantovani** member of an international scientific community at the forefront of contrast but also in the drafting of the adaptation, in his field, of some paradigms.
- And then **Lutz Gullner** (strategic communication expert), **Robert Govers** (public diplomacy specialist) and let me add my friend **Paolo Verri** (who brought the experience of Matera European Capital of Culture 2019 to success, with which we work together in the field of public branding).

Each of them is part of those experts who are now expanding the Club of Venice table permanently, tripling the number of "representative" members in a precious exchange (four / five times a year).

I conclude with a quick reference to the in-depth work done this year on the relationship between pandemic and communication. In drafting the final report (which has recently become a thematic book) I expressed three hopes which I think may be of interest to our debate:

- The first is to imagine that scientific communication does not disappear the day Coronavirus has surrendered - - I also address the sensitivity of professor Mantovani - finding a way that there is an institutional political pact to bring a permanent role of scientific communication into force in our countries.
- The second is that the mediation between the messages of scientists and those of the social and productive system no longer have patchy mediations between territories and nations, but a general mediation orientation that Europe knows how to take on, not to run behind a scientist on Monday

and an entrepreneur on Tuesday, but to interpenetrate logic and priorities.

- The third is to shift part of the general mission of public communication towards a planned lowering of the share of functional illiteracy that exists in our countries (and unfortunately in a still serious percentage in Italy). And that remains the cause of low civicism and low participation as well as inducing political populism.

We will find locations and ways of studying.

Special thanks to those who worked on organizing the session and to fellow translators.

Good job everyone.

Club of Venice

Discours d'ouverture

Stefano Rolando, Président du Club de Venise

Je remercie **Diana Agosti, Carlo Corazza et Antonio Parenti** pour avoir ouvert les travaux de cette 34e session annuelle d'automne du Club de Venise. Dans le long voyage de ce réseau industriel, il y a au moins 70 autres événements qui nous ont fait grandir professionnellement et civilement.

Il y a eu des livraisons - moraux et professionnels - au cours de ces 34 années. Quand j'étais chef de département au Palazzo Chigi, Diana était un espoir parmi les jeunes de ce département. Aujourd'hui, c'est un patron qui maintient et améliore les livraisons.

Reconnaissant bien sûr à notre secrétaire général **Vincenzo Le Voci** - je l'appelle notre "émigré calabrais", car quand il rentre chez lui, il est toujours ému - mais Vincenzo est un morceau de la nouvelle Europe, moderne, fervente, pro-européenne, avec des portes ouvertes et quelqu'un qui n'a que des amis. "Tignoso" - comme on dit à Rome - pour défendre l'autonomie et le rôle de ce projet. Projet - Monsieur le Ministre, je veux vous dire - qui est le fils de l'Italie pour l'inspiration initiale, mais était alors le fils d'une pluralité de sujets qui ont accepté (même dans des contextes non pris pour acquis au regard de l'europanisme européen) le format de l'informalité, ou plutôt de la non-décision. En échange de la franchise du dialogue, du véritable transfert de connaissances et d'expériences et, en dessous, d'œuvres pour une harmonisation substantielle dans un terrain qui était et est toujours de forte jalousie nationale.

En attendant, je remercie le ministre **Enzo Amendola** d'être avec nous. Et de parler également au nom de cette table d'intention européenne qui est aujourd'hui à l'œuvre pour changer et faire grandir l'Europe qui protège ses citoyens et ses communautés.

Je me suis souvenu du temps maintenant long de notre travail, non par nostalgie et franchement même pas par coquetterie de vieillir. Mais parce que je voudrais centrer mon bref discours d'ouverture sur ce point.

Si en novembre 1986 nous avons ouvert un premier cycle d'expériences dans un contexte d'enthousiasme qui avait déjà mûri au sommet européen de Milan l'année précédente (celui qui a décidé du marché unique et qui a lancé Erasmus), aujourd'hui

nous ouvrons après trois phases distinctes certainement une quatrième phase. Peut-être même un vrai quatrième cycle.

Je le résume par des caractéristiques essentielles.

- Les dix premières années ont servi à nous mesurer avec la force et avec une certaine primauté qu'avait la communication d'entreprise dans le domaine de la communication. Mais pour cela, il a fallu inventer un autre marketing, une autre publicité, un autre sondage d'opinion, un autre accompagnement des droits et devoirs des citoyens. Je n'entrerai pas dans les détails mais je crois que les experts me suivent. Ce sont les années de la fondation de la communication publique.
- Cela a été suivi par douze autres années, à partir de 1996, qui ont plutôt traité de l'invention du réseau, avec de nouveaux profils professionnels différents, avec une forte synergie institutionnelle et de valeur européenne. Mais cela s'est terminé avec l'arrivée mondiale de la crise économique et financière de 2008.
- Et la troisième phase - nous le savons tous ici - était la plus complexe et aussi la plus tortueuse. La politique était en conflit. Le projet social est devenu ambigu. La communication est peut-être devenue plus technique mais moins précieuse. Bien que la transformation numérique ait fonctionné pour d'énormes changements.
- Nous nous réunissons aujourd'hui après neuf mois de pandémie et après une mortalité qui a des chiffres des guerres mondiales. Ce n'est pas une nouvelle phase car des choses sérieuses se produisent. C'est une nouvelle phase car il y a ceux qui abandonnent et attendent la fin de la crise. Mais il y a aussi des travaux dans la nécessaire révision des paradigmes et des habitudes et la refonte des conditions de résilience, de durabilité, d'équilibre entre les raisons de santé et d'économie, dans lequel - découverte du monde - sans communication adéquate et compétente on n'arrive pas au résultat.

Ce n'est pas à moi de rentrer dans le fond (sur lequel j'ai travaillé intensément cette année notamment à l'Université). Car le programme qui nous attend accueille des intervenants de premier ordre.

Et il utilise des orateurs principaux que je tiens à remercier tout de suite.

- Le premier est **Enzo Amendola**, qui ne parle jamais «en quelque sorte» et qui connaît les opportunités et les risques de notre maison commune.
- Puis prof. **Alberto Mantovani** membre d'une communauté scientifique internationale à la pointe du contraste mais aussi dans la rédaction de l'adaptation, dans son domaine, de certains paradigmes.
- Et puis **Lutz Gullner** (expert en communication stratégique), **Robert Govers** (spécialiste en diplomatie publique) et permettez-moi d'ajouter mon ami **Paolo Verri** (qui a conduit au succès de l'expérience Matera Capitale européenne de la culture 2019, avec laquelle nous travaillons ensemble dans le domaine du branding public).

Chacun d'eux fait partie de ces experts qui élargissent désormais la table du Club de Venise de façon permanente, triplant le nombre de membres «représentatifs» dans un échange précieux (quatre / cinq fois par an).

Je conclurai par une brève référence au travail approfondi effectué cette année sur la relation entre pandémie et communication. Lors de la rédaction du rapport final (qui est récemment devenu un livre thématique), j'ai exprimé trois espoirs qui, je pense, pourraient intéresser notre débat:

- Le premier est d'imaginer que la communication scientifique ne disparaît pas le jour de la capitulation du Coronavirus, en trouvant un moyen - - j'aborde ici également la sensibilité du professeur Mantovani - qu'il y ait un pacte politique institutionnel pour mettre en vigueur un rôle permanent de la communication scientifique dans nos pays.
- Le deuxième est que la médiation entre les messages des scientifiques et ceux du système social et productif n'a plus des médiations inégales entre les territoires et les nations, mais une orientation de médiation générale que l'Europe sait prendre et non pas diriger derrière un scientifique lundi et un entrepreneur mardi, mais pour interpénétrer logique et priorités.
- Le troisième est de déplacer une partie de la mission générale de communication publique vers une baisse programmée de la part d'analphabétisme fonctionnel qui existe dans nos pays (et malheureusement en pourcentage encore grave en Italie). Et cela reste la cause du faible civisme et de la faible participation ainsi que du populisme politique.

Nous trouverons des lieux et des façons d'étudier.

Un merci spécial à ceux qui ont travaillé à l'organisation de la session et aux collègues traducteurs.

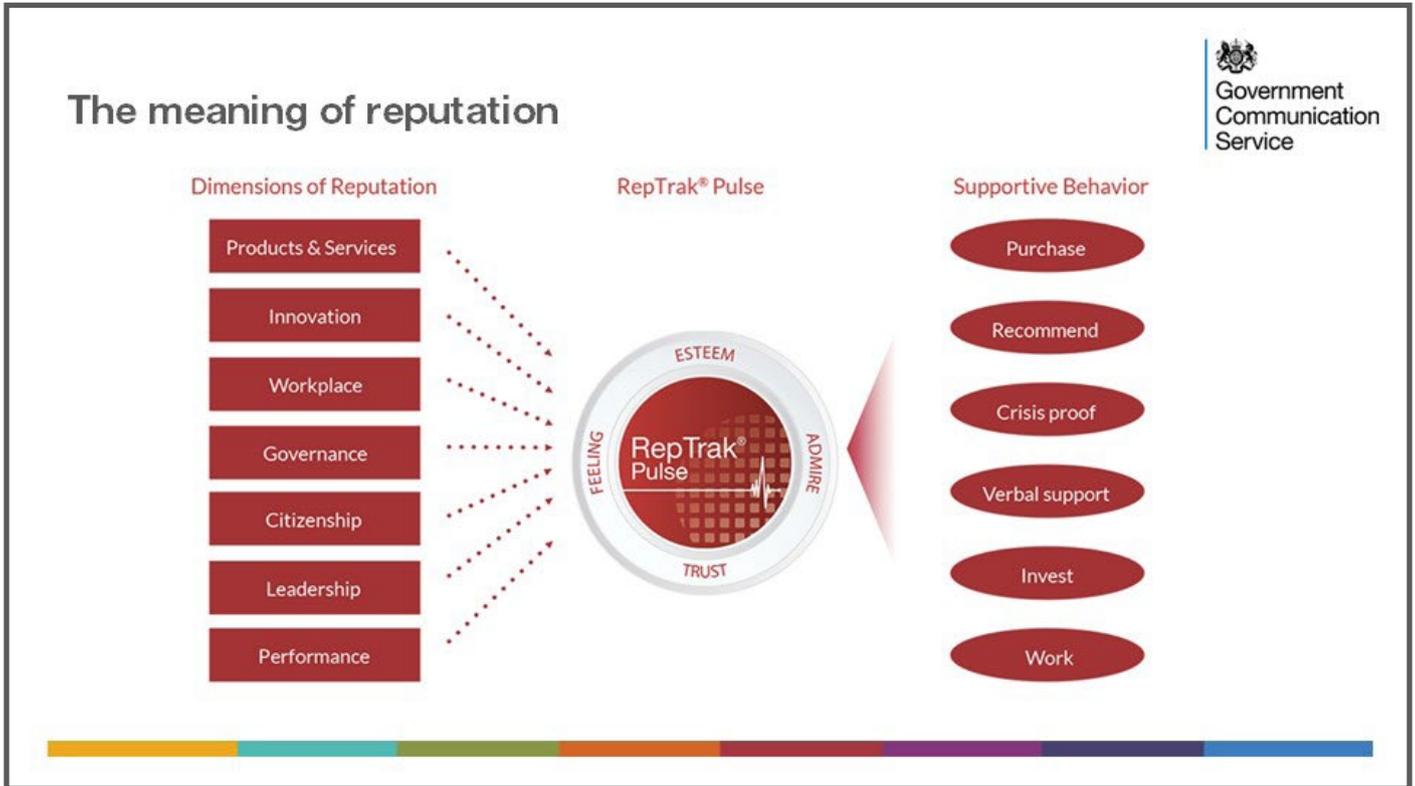
Bon travail à tous.



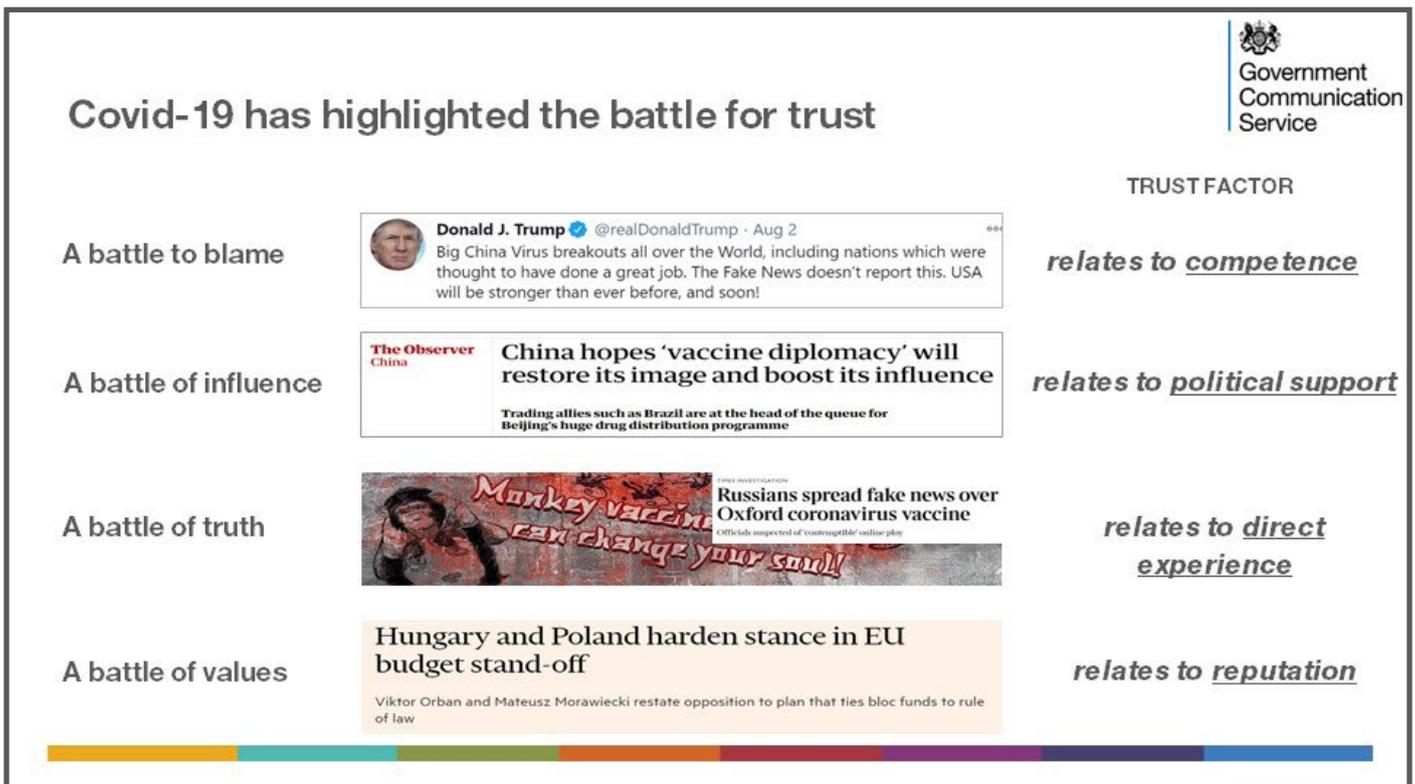
CONTRIBUTIONS

(Extracts)

1) Alex Aiken



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UK Government approach to international communications



Understand & Frame



Collaborate & Deliver

CV-19 Global Health Security

Strategy	Type	Activity
Defend	Analysis and information sharing	Cooperate globally. Daily and weekly insights via shared working group, with discussions and agreements on any
Defend	Joint communications activity	Health state activity, VTDs strategy, XRM working group
Protect	Knowledge and capacity building	Developing policy and communication strategy. Outbreak
Protect		Working with partner governments on global health post
Promote		UK

Report & Evaluate

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Demonstrating global leadership on vaccines and misinformation



1. Lead with partners on equitable access to vaccines

- Built global coalition: WHO, CEPI, Gavi, Global Fund, Wellcome Trust, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- £571 million to COVAX at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) side event



2. Support partners to tackle misinfo, build vaccine confidence

- 75 million people better protected against misinformation through Stop the Spread campaign
- 270,000 engaged with 60,000 inoculated through Go Viral game

PRINCIPLES



PLATFORM



PARTNERING



3. Develop a Global Vaccine Confidence Initiative

- Develop best practice principles with OECD
- Develop a global platform to provide the infrastructure to collaborate
- Partner on joint activity and research

Having impact: 5 Ds



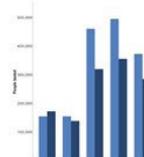
Direct



Digital



c-Disinformation



Diverse



Data



Building Trust: 5 Rules - P R O V E



P

Pre-bunk
Misinformation



R

Reliably
Inform



O

Offer
Balance



V

Verify
Evidence



E

Explain
Uncertainties





Conclusions

1. SCIENCE IS A WEAPON OF DIPLOMACY
2. VITAL ROLE FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION
3. COVID IS A COMPETENCE TEST FOR ALL NATIONS
4. COMMUNICATIONS MUST HAVE IMPACT, BUILD TRUST





**SHAPE OUR
COLLECTIVE FUTURES**



2) Miriam Van Staden

The coronavirus rules

Advice, Measures, Rules, Laws

Letters, emergency ordinances, Temporary Law Covid-19, regulations, speeches, press conferences, debates in Parliament



<https://www.government.nl/topics/coronavirus-covid-19>

The Source File



- > Central government information: www.rijksoverheid.nl & www.government.nl
- > Call centre
- > Infographics & other visuals
- > Campaigns
- > Media
- > Stakeholder communication

3) ICMPD - Marco Ricorda

Demonstrating the relationship between values and attitudes to immigration

- Strongly anti-immigration Europeans tend to value conformity, security, tradition and power above the European average. Conversely, they are far less likely to value universalism, benevolence, self-direction, stimulation or hedonism.
- Europeans strongly pro-immigration tend to have the opposite value orientation, but far more magnified. They have the most skewed value orientation of any group and, above all, value universalism highly and undervalue security and conformity.



Project funded by the European Union



ICMPD

International Centre for Migration Policy Development

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How to communicate on migration using values?

To sum up

- Few pro-migration campaigns contained value-based messaging, whereas all anti-migration campaigns did. Similarly, very few pro-migration campaigns included values besides 'universalism' and 'benevolence', whereas anti-migration campaigns included values associated with both pro- and anti-migration attitudes.
- Future research should robustly test the effects of each of these kinds of communication using experimental methods, be they field, lab or survey experiments.



Project funded by the European Union



ICMPD

International Centre for Migration Policy Development

AGENDA

DAY 1 - Thursday 3 December 2020

9:00 - 9:15

Opening Session

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

- **Diana AGOSTI** - Head of Department for the European Policies, Presidency of the Council of Ministers
- **Fabrizio SPADA** - Institutional Relations, European Parliament Office in Italy
- **Antonio PARENTI** - Head of the European Commission's Representation in Italy
- **Simone VENTURINI** - Deputy Mayor for Social Welfare, Tourism and Economic Development, City of Venice

9:15 - 9:45

Key addresses

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

9:45 - 12:30

Plenary session

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

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

Moderator:

- **Erik DEN HOEDT** - Scientific Director, Humanitas Clinical and Research Hospital; Emeritus Professor, Humanitas University, Milan

Key Note speaker:

- **Prof. Alberto MANTOVANI** - Director, Public Information and Communication, Netherlands, Ministry of General Affairs - member of the Steering Group of the Club of Venice

Panellists:

- **Prof. John CHRYSOULAKIS** - Greece, Secretary-General for Public Diplomacy and the Greeks Abroad, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- **Irene PLANK** - Germany, Director of Communications, Federal Foreign Office
- **Miriam van STADEN** - Netherlands, communication specialist, Government Communication Academy, Ministry for General Affairs
- **Daniel HOLTGEN** - Director of Communications, Council of Europe
- **Tina ZOURNATZI** - European Commission Directorate-General for Communication, Head of Strategic Communications
- **Philipp SCHULMEISTER** - European Parliament Directorate-General for Communication, Head of the Public Opinion Monitoring Unit
- **Meletios DIMOPOULOS** - Rector and Professor of Hematology and Oncology, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
- **Christophe ROUILLON** - Member of the European Committee of the Regions, Mayor of Coullaines
- **Pier Virgilio DASTOLI** - President of the European Movement - Italy
- **Erik den Hoedt** - Club of Venice Steering Group Member, former Director of Communication and Public Information, Ministry of General Affairs, Netherlands

Plenary session

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

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

14:15 - 17:30

Moderator:

- **Danila CHIARO** - Programme Manager, Regional Coordination Office for the Mediterranean, International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)w

Key Note speaker:

- **Lutz GÜLLNER** - Head of the "Strategic Communications and Information Analysis" Division, European External Action Service (EEAS)

Panellists:

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

DAY 2 - Friday 4 December 2020

9:30 - 12:30

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

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

Moderator:

- **Vincenzo LE VOCI** - Secretary-General of the Club of Venice

Key Note speaker:

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

Panellists:

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

Closing Session

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



The Conference on the Future of Europe

Joint declaration on the Conference on the Future of Europe

Engaging with citizens for democracy – Building a more resilient Europe

70 years ago, the Schuman declaration laid the foundations of our European Union. It started a unique political project that brought peace and prosperity, improving the lives of all European citizens. It is now appropriate to reflect on our Union, the challenges we are facing and the future we want to build together with the objective of strengthening European solidarity.

Since its creation, the European Union has mastered multiple challenges. With the COVID19 pandemic, the European Union's unique model was challenged like never before. Europe can and must also learn the lessons from these crises, closely involving citizens and communities.

The European Union has to show that it can provide answers to citizens' concerns and ambitions. European policy must provide inclusive answers to our generation-defining tasks: achieving the green and digital transition, while strengthening Europe's resilience, its social contract and European industry's competitiveness. It must address inequalities and ensure the European Union is a fair, sustainable, innovative and competitive economy that leaves no one behind. To address geopolitical challenges in the post COVID-19 global environment, Europe needs to be more assertive, taking a leading global role in promoting its values and standards in a world increasingly in turmoil.

The increase in voter turnout during the 2019 European election reflects the growing interest of European citizens in playing a more active role in deciding the future of the Union and its policies.

The Conference on the Future of Europe will open a new space for debate with citizens to address Europe's challenges and priorities. European citizens from all walks of life and corners of the Union will be able to participate, with young Europeans playing a central role in shaping the future of the European project.

We, the Presidents of the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission want citizens to join the conversation and have their say on the future of Europe. We hereby jointly commit to listen to Europeans and to follow up on the recommendations

made by Conference, in full respect of our competences and the subsidiarity and proportionality principles enshrined in the European Treaties. We will seize the opportunity to underpin the democratic legitimacy and functioning of the European project as well as to uphold the EU citizens support for our common goals and values, by giving them further opportunities to express themselves.

The Conference is a joint undertaking of the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission, acting as equal partners together with the Member States of the European Union. As signatories of this Joint Declaration, we commit to working together throughout the Conference and to dedicating the necessary resources to this endeavour. We commit to working in the interest of Europe, our citizens, and European democracy, strengthening the link between Europeans and the institutions that serve them.

Under the umbrella of the Conference and in full respect of the principles set out in this Joint Declaration, we will organise events in partnership with civil society and stakeholders at European, national, regional and local level, with national and regional Parliaments, the Committee of the Regions, the Economic and Social Committee, social partners and academia. Their involvement will ensure that the Conference goes far beyond Europe's capital cities and reaches every corner of the Union. Events will be organised under a set of common principles to be agreed by the structures of the Conference.

We invite other institutions and bodies to join in this European democratic exercise. All together, we will make this Conference a success. We will invite the Conference to reach conclusions by Spring 2022 so as to provide guidance on the future of Europe.

a. How

The Conference on the Future of Europe is a **citizens-focused, bottom-up exercise** for Europeans to have their say on what they expect from the European Union. It will give citizens a greater role in shaping the Union's future policies and ambitions, improving its resilience. It will do so through a **multitude** of Conference-events and debates organised across the Union, as well as through **an interactive multilingual digital platform**.

Such Conference events, physical gatherings or in digital settings, can be organised at different levels, including **European, national, transnational and regional level** and will involve **civil society and stakeholders**. Citizens' participation in these events should aim at mirroring Europe's diversity.

While, in light of social distancing measures and similar restrictions in the context of **COVID-19**, the use of digital engagement efforts and activities are of key importance, physical participation and

face-to-face exchanges should constitute an essential part of the Conference.

At the European level, the European institutions commit to organise **European citizens' panels**.

These should be representative in terms of citizens' geographic origin, gender, age, socioeconomic background and/or level of education. Specific events should be dedicated to young people as their participation is essential for ensuring a long-lasting impact of the Conference. The panels should take on board contributions gathered in the framework of the Conference providing input to the Conference Plenary by formulating a set of recommendations for the Union to follow-up on.

Each Member State and institution can organise additional events, in line with their own national or institutional specificities, and make further contributions to the Conference, such as **national citizens' panels** or thematic events bringing together input from different panels.

National and European events in the framework of the Conference will be organised along a set of principles and minimum criteria reflecting EU values to be defined by the Conference structures.

The European institutions will also **reach out** to citizens and promote broader, interactive and creative forms of participation.

Input from all Conference-related events will be collected, analysed, monitored and published throughout the Conference via a **multilingual digital platform**. This will be a place for citizens to share their ideas and send online submissions.

A **feedback mechanism** will ensure that the ideas expressed during the Conference events result in concrete recommendations for EU action.

The **Conference** will be placed under the authority of the three institutions, represented by the President of the European Parliament, the President of the Council and the President of the European Commission, acting as its Joint Presidency.

A lean **governance structure** will help steer the Conference. It will ensure an equal representation of the three European institutions and will be gender-balanced, among all its component parts.

An **Executive Board** will be set up. It will consist of an equal representation from the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission, each having three representatives and up to four observers. The presidential Troika of COSAC will participate as observer. The Committee of the Regions and the Economic and Social Committee, may also be invited as observers, as well as representatives of other EU bodies and social partners where appropriate.

The Executive Board will be co-chaired by the three institutions and will report on a regular basis to the Joint Presidency. The Executive Board will be responsible for taking decisions by consensus, regarding the works of the Conference, its processes and events, overseeing the Conference as it progresses, and preparing the meetings of the Conference Plenary, including citizens' input and their follow up.

A **Common Secretariat**, of limited size and ensuring equal representation of the three institutions, will assist the work of the Executive Board.

A **Conference Plenary** will ensure that the recommendations from the national and European citizens' panels, grouped by themes, are debated without a predetermined outcome and without limiting the scope to pre-defined policy areas. The Conference Plenary will meet at least every six months and be composed of representatives from the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission, as well as representatives from all national Parliaments, on an equal footing and citizens. The Committee of the Regions and the Economic and Social Committee, the social partners, and civil society will also be represented. The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy will be associated when the international role of the EU is discussed. Representatives of key stakeholders may be invited. The Executive Board will draw and publish the conclusions of the Conference Plenary.

The structures of the Conference will agree from the outset and on a consensual basis on the modalities for reporting on the outcomes of the various activities undertaken in the context of the Conference. The final outcome of the Conference will be presented in a report to the Joint Presidency. The three institutions will examine swiftly how to follow up effectively to this report, each within their own sphere of competences and in accordance with the Treaties.

b. What

We, the Presidents of the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission, aim to give citizens **a say on what matters to them**.

Reflecting the Strategic Agenda of the European Council, the 2019-2024 Political Guidelines of the European Commission and the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, discussions will cover, amongst others:

Building a healthy continent, the fight against climate change and environmental challenges, an economy that works for people, social fairness, equality and intergenerational solidarity, Europe's digital transformation, European rights and values including the Rule of Law, migration challenges, security, the EU's role in the world, the Union's democratic foundations, and how to strengthen democratic processes governing the European Union. Discussions can also cover cross-cutting issues related to the EU's ability to deliver on policy priorities, such as better regulation, application of subsidiarity and proportionality, implementation and enforcement of the *acquis* and transparency.

The scope of the Conference should reflect the areas where the European Union has the competence to act or where European Union action would have been to the benefit of European citizens.

Citizens remain free to raise additional issues that matter to them.

c. The principles of the Conference

The Conference is based on **inclusiveness, openness and transparency**, while respecting the privacy of people as well as EU data protection rules. The European Citizens' panels organised at European level are broadcasted, and online submissions as well as documentation are made available on the platform.

The Conference, its governance and events organised in its framework, are also based on the **values of the EU** as enshrined in the EU Treaties and the European Charter of Fundamental Rights.

The Conference is recognisable through a **single identity** and a **Conference Charter** that all organisers of events have to subscribe to.

Déclaration commune sur la Conférence sur l'Avenir de l'Europe

Dialoguer avec les citoyens pour promouvoir la démocratie - Construire une Europe plus résiliente

Voilà 70 ans, la déclaration Schuman a posé les fondements de notre Union européenne. Elle a marqué le début d'un projet politique sans précédent, qui a apporté la paix et la prospérité, améliorant ainsi la vie de tous les citoyens européens. Le temps est désormais venu de réfléchir à notre Union, aux défis auxquels nous sommes confrontés et à l'avenir que nous souhaitons construire ensemble, en vue de renforcer la solidarité européenne.

Depuis sa création, l'Union européenne a relevé de nombreux défis. La pandémie de COVID-19 a mis à l'épreuve comme jamais auparavant le modèle, unique en son genre, de l'Union européenne. L'Europe peut et doit également tirer les enseignements de ces crises, en associant étroitement les citoyens et les communautés à ce processus.

L'Union européenne doit montrer qu'elle est capable de répondre aux préoccupations et aux aspirations des citoyens. La politique européenne doit fournir des réponses inclusives permettant d'accomplir les tâches caractérisant notre génération: réussir les transitions écologique et numérique, tout en renforçant la résilience de l'Europe, son contrat social ainsi que la compétitivité de son industrie. Elle se doit de corriger les inégalités et de faire en sorte que l'Union européenne soit une économie juste, durable, innovante et compétitive qui ne laisse personne de côté. Pour relever les défis géopolitiques qui se poseront dans le contexte mondial de l'après-COVID-19, l'Europe doit s'affirmer davantage, en jouant un rôle de premier plan sur la scène mondiale dans la promotion de ses valeurs et de ses normes dans un monde de plus en plus tourmenté.

L'augmentation du taux de participation lors des élections européennes de 2019 montre que les citoyens européens sont de plus en plus désireux de jouer un rôle plus actif pour ce qui est de décider de l'avenir de l'Union et de ses politiques.

La conférence sur l'avenir de l'Europe ouvrira un nouvel espace de débat avec les citoyens, permettant d'examiner les priorités de l'Europe et les défis auxquels elle est confrontée. Des citoyens européens issus de tous les horizons et des quatre coins de l'Union pourront participer à la conférence, les jeunes Européens

jouant un rôle central pour ce qui est de façonner l'avenir du projet européen.

En qualité de présidents du Parlement européen, du Conseil et de la Commission européenne, nous souhaitons que les citoyens participent à ce débat et aient leur mot à dire sur l'avenir de l'Europe. Par la présente, nous nous engageons conjointement à écouter les Européens et à donner suite aux recommandations formulées lors de la conférence, dans le plein respect de nos compétences ainsi que des principes de subsidiarité et de proportionnalité consacrés par les traités européens.

Nous saisissons cette occasion d'asseoir la légitimité et le fonctionnement démocratiques du projet européen et de favoriser l'adhésion des citoyens de l'UE à nos valeurs et objectifs communs, en leur offrant de nouvelles possibilités de s'exprimer.

La conférence est une initiative commune du Parlement européen, du Conseil et de la Commission européenne, agissant sur un pied d'égalité conjointement avec les États membres de l'Union européenne. En tant que signataires de la présente déclaration commune, nous nous engageons à œuvrer de concert tout au long de la conférence et à consacrer les ressources nécessaires à cette entreprise. Nous nous engageons à œuvrer dans l'intérêt de l'Europe, de nos citoyens et de la démocratie européenne, en consolidant le lien entre les Européens et les institutions qui sont à leur service.

Sous les auspices de la conférence et dans le plein respect des principes énoncés dans la présente déclaration commune, nous organiserons des événements en partenariat avec la société civile et les parties prenantes aux niveaux européen, national, régional et local, les parlements nationaux et régionaux, le Comité des régions, le Comité économique et social, les partenaires sociaux et le monde universitaire. La participation de ces acteurs permettra à la conférence de dépasser largement le cadre des capitales européennes et d'atteindre les moindres recoins de l'Union. Les événements seront organisés dans le respect d'un ensemble de principes communs qui seront arrêtés par les structures de la conférence.

Nous invitons les autres institutions et organes à participer à cet exercice démocratique européen. Tous ensemble, nous ferons de cette conférence un succès. Nous inviterons la conférence à parvenir à des conclusions d'ici le printemps 2022 afin de fournir des orientations concernant l'avenir de l'Europe.

a. Comment?

La conférence sur l'avenir de l'Europe est un **exercice axé sur les citoyens et fondé sur une approche ascendante**, visant à ce que les Européens aient leur mot à dire sur ce qu'ils attendent de l'Union européenne. Elle confèrera aux citoyens un rôle accru pour ce qui est de façonner les politiques et ambitions futures de l'Union, améliorant sa résilience. À cette fin, de **multiples** événements et débats s'inscrivant dans le cadre de la conférence seront organisés dans toute l'Union, ainsi que via une **plateforme numérique multilingue interactive**.

Ces événements liés à la conférence, sous forme de réunions physiques ou en format virtuel, peuvent être organisés à différents niveaux, notamment **européen, national, transnational et régional**, et associeront la **société civile et les parties prenantes**. La participation des citoyens à ces événements devrait viser à refléter la diversité de l'Europe.

Même si, compte tenu des mesures de distanciation sociale et des restrictions similaires applicables dans le contexte de la pandémie de **COVID-19**, les travaux et activités menés dans le cadre d'une participation numérique revêtent une importance capitale, la participation physique et les échanges en face à face devraient constituer une partie essentielle de la conférence.

Au niveau européen, les institutions européennes s'engagent à constituer des **panels de citoyens européens**.

Ceux-ci devraient être représentatifs de la population européenne pour ce qui est de l'origine géographique, du sexe, de l'âge, du milieu socio-économique et/ou du niveau d'éducation des citoyens. Des événements spécifiques devraient être consacrés aux jeunes, leur participation étant essentielle pour que les effets de la conférence s'inscrivent dans la durée. Les panels devraient prendre en compte les contributions recueillies dans le cadre de la conférence, contribuant à l'assemblée plénière de la conférence en formulant une série de recommandations dont l'Union devra assurer le suivi.

Chaque État membre ou chaque institution peut organiser des événements supplémentaires, en fonction de ses spécificités nationales ou institutionnelles, et apporter d'autres contributions à la conférence, telles que des **panels de citoyens nationaux** ou des événements thématiques rassemblant les contributions de différents panels.

Les événements nationaux et européens s'inscrivent dans le cadre de la conférence seront organisés conformément à une série de principes et de critères minimaux reflétant les valeurs de l'UE, qui devront être définis par les structures de la conférence.

64 Les institutions européennes **engageront** également un **dialogue** avec les citoyens et promouvoir des formes de participation plus larges, interactives et créatives.

Les contributions issues de tous les événements liés à la conférence seront recueillies, analysées, suivies et publiées tout au long de la conférence **via une plateforme numérique multilingue**. Les citoyens pourront ainsi partager leurs idées et envoyer des contributions en ligne.

Un **mécanisme de retour d'informations** permettra de faire en sorte que les idées exprimées au cours de la conférence aboutissent à des recommandations concrètes en vue d'une action de l'UE.

La **conférence** sera placée sous l'autorité des trois institutions, représentées par les présidents du Parlement européen, du Conseil et de la Commission européenne, agissant en qualité de **présidence conjointe**.

Une **structure de gouvernance** simple contribuera à piloter la conférence. Elle assurera une représentation égale des trois institutions européennes et un équilibre entre les hommes et les femmes parmi toutes ses composantes.

Un **conseil exécutif** sera mis en place. Il sera composé, sur un pied d'égalité, de représentants du Parlement européen, du Conseil et de la Commission européenne, chacun comptant trois représentants et quatre observateurs au maximum. La troïka présidentielle de la COSAC participera en qualité d'observateur. Le Comité des régions et le Comité économique et social peuvent également être invités en qualité d'observateurs, ainsi que des

représentants d'autres organes de l'UE et, le cas échéant, des partenaires sociaux.

Le conseil exécutif sera coprésidé par les trois institutions et fera régulièrement rapport à la présidence conjointe. Le conseil exécutif sera chargé de prendre des décisions par consensus en ce qui concerne les travaux de la conférence, ses processus et ses événements, de superviser la conférence au fur et à mesure de son déroulement et de préparer les réunions de l'assemblée plénière de la conférence, y compris les contributions des citoyens et leur suivi.

Un **secrétariat commun**, de taille limitée et assurant une représentation égale des trois institutions, prêtera son concours aux travaux du conseil exécutif.

Une **assemblée plénière** de la conférence permettra de veiller à ce que les recommandations formulées par les panels de citoyens nationaux et européens, regroupées par thèmes, fassent l'objet d'un débat dont l'issue n'est pas déterminée à l'avance et dont le champ d'application n'est pas limité à des domaines d'action prédéfinis. L'assemblée plénière de la conférence se réunira au moins tous les six mois et sera composée de représentants du Parlement européen, du Conseil et de la Commission européenne, ainsi que de représentants de tous les parlements nationaux, sur un pied d'égalité, et de citoyens. Le Comité des régions et le Comité économique et social, les partenaires sociaux et la société civile seront également représentés. Le haut représentant de l'Union pour les affaires étrangères et la politique de sécurité sera associé lorsqu'il sera question du rôle international de l'UE. Des représentants des principales parties prenantes peuvent être invités. Le conseil exécutif établira et publiera les conclusions de l'assemblée plénière de la conférence.

Les structures de la conférence conviendront dès le début et sur une base consensuelle des modalités de communication des résultats des différentes activités entreprises dans le cadre de la conférence. Les résultats finaux de la conférence seront présentés dans un rapport qui sera adressé à la présidence conjointe. Les trois institutions examineront rapidement comment donner suite efficacement à ce rapport, chacune dans les limites de sa propre sphère de compétences et conformément aux traités.

b. Quoi?

Nous, présidents du Parlement européen, du Conseil et de la Commission européenne, aspirons à donner aux citoyens **voix au chapitre sur ce qui compte pour eux**.

Dans le prolongement du programme stratégique du Conseil européen, des orientations politiques de la Commission européenne pour la période 2019-2024 et des défis posés par la pandémie de COVID 19, les discussions porteront, entre autres, sur:

l'avènement d'un continent sain, la lutte contre le changement climatique et les défis environnementaux, une économie au service des personnes, l'équité sociale, l'égalité et solidarité intergénérationnelle, la transformation numérique de l'Europe, les droits et valeurs européens, y compris l'état de droit, les défis migratoires, la sécurité, le rôle de l'UE dans le monde, les fondements démocratiques de l'Union et la manière de renforcer les processus démocratiques régissant l'Union européenne. Les discussions peuvent également porter sur des questions transversales liées à la capacité de l'UE à produire des résultats

dans des domaines d'action prioritaires, tels que l'amélioration de la réglementation, l'application des principes de subsidiarité et de proportionnalité, la mise en œuvre et le contrôle du respect de l'acquis et la transparence.

Le champ de la conférence devrait refléter les domaines dans lesquels l'Union européenne est compétente pour agir ou dans lesquels l'action de l'Union européenne bénéficierait aux citoyens européens.

Les citoyens restent libres de soulever d'autres questions qui sont importantes à leurs yeux.

c. Les principes de la conférence

La conférences se fonde sur **l'inclusion, l'ouverture et la transparence**, tout en respectant la vie privée des personnes ainsi que les règles de l'UE en matière de protection des données. Les panels de citoyens européens organisés au niveau européen sont diffusés et les contributions en ligne ainsi que la documentation sont disponibles sur la plateforme.

La conférence, sa gouvernance et les événements organisés dans son cadre se fondent également sur les **valeurs de l'UE** telles qu'elles sont consacrées par les traités de l'UE et par la charte des droits fondamentaux de l'Union européenne.

La conférence est reconnaissable au moyen d'une **identité unique** et d'une **charte de la conférence** à laquelle tous les organisateurs d'événements doivent souscrire.



La Conferenza sul futuro dell'Europa è un'occasione per rafforzare la democrazia europea e riscoprire l'anima del progetto europeo

"Discorso sull'Europa" del Presidente del Parlamento Europeo, David Maria Sassoli, in occasione dell'evento Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Stiftung Mercator e Stiftung Zukunft a Berlino il 9 novembre 2020

Sono molto lieto di poter intervenire e di poter condividere con voi le mie speranze e la mia visione del futuro della nostra Europa in questo incontro, che si sarebbe dovuto tenere a Berlino, luogo simbolo del rinnovamento e della riunificazione europea.

L'Unione Europea, che ha appena festeggiato il suo settantesimo anniversario, è colpita dalla crisi più profonda della sua storia. L'Europa si sta confrontando con una pandemia che sta mettendo a dura prova la sua prosperità. Il Covid-19 è una sfida globale. Se è vero, come suggeriva Jean Monnet, che l'Europa si costruirà affrontando le crisi che le si presenteranno, di certo la sfida del Covid è quella che più di ogni altra rende indispensabili risposte comuni. E non è un caso che già nel mese di marzo, dopo poche settimane di incertezza, l'Unione abbia assunto decisioni che rafforzano la sua azione. Scelte a suo modo storiche, se è vero che ancora a marzo era considerato un tabù parlare di bond europei ed oggi possiamo rallegrarci per la bandiera europea issata a Wall Street in occasione dell'emissione dei bond per finanziare lo strumento dello Sure.

Non siamo alla crisi del 2008. Anzi, siamo usciti da quella logica e da quello spirito che hanno caratterizzato l'ultimo decennio.

L'Unione Europea, d'altronde, serve a questo: a consentire azioni efficaci di governo dello spazio comune nel quadro del nostro sistema democratico. Nessuna nostra Nazione avrebbe potuto affrontare questa sfida da sola. Nessuno potrà farlo in futuro, rispetto alla pandemia, alla sicurezza, all'immigrazione, alle questioni ambientali, alle crisi finanziarie che potrebbero colpire il nostro modello sociale. Unita nella solidarietà, dunque.

E oggi possiamo commemorare l'anniversario della caduta del muro di Berlino con più fiducia. Il crollo di quel simbolo del totalitarismo è stato il trionfo del nostro modello, che trova la sua base politica nella democrazia e la sua base morale e giuridica nella difesa dei diritti delle persone e dei valori fondamentali. Per molto tempo abbiamo creduto che tutto questo fosse sufficiente per essere protetti e al riparo dalle dinamiche del mondo globale. Abbiamo pensato che quello che accadeva fuori dallo spazio europeo non sarebbe riuscito a metterci in crisi, a condizionarci. Le risposte alla crisi economico-finanziaria del 2008, invece, ci hanno resi ancora più esposti, perché le ricadute sulle finanze di molti paesi europei e sulle conseguenti condizioni di vita dei nostri cittadini ci hanno fatto concentrare su noi stessi e hanno fatto perdere di vista l'utilità dell'Unione europea. E inoltre tutto

questo ci ha resi marginali e ininfluenti nella scena internazionale. Abbiamo imparato a nostre spese che più siamo ripiegati su noi stessi, più gli umori anti europei crescono, più il nazionalismo e l'idea delle piccole patrie riprende a correre nei nostri paesi. A capirlo per primi sono stati i nostri cittadini, che nelle scorse elezioni hanno partecipato alle elezioni europee con un'affluenza record premiando le forze europeiste.

Con questa legislatura, un anno fa, dopo elezioni che hanno fatto capire bene i rischi a cui si andava incontro con un sovranismo montante e autodiretto, nelle famiglie politiche europeiste è nata una nuova riflessione. Abbiamo cominciato a credere in noi stessi e a proiettarci in una dimensione nuova. Abbiamo ricominciato a pensare alla nostra funzione e a quale lettura della contemporaneità potesse offrirci la chiave per affrontare le sfide interne e globali.

Sono stati mesi intensi, utili. Insieme abbiamo capito che non potevamo sfuggire alla domanda su quale contributo l'Europa potesse dare per salvare il pianeta. E via via l'ambiente è diventato il paradigma di un nuovo modello di sostenibilità. Sostenibilità sociale e ambientale. Ed è con la proposta di Green Deal europeo, presentato in Parlamento europeo alla fine dello scorso anno, che abbiamo potuto offrire una visione e affrontare la crisi del Covid, assumendo misure inedite e proponendo risposte comuni.

La pandemia ha colpito i più vulnerabili, gli anziani, le persone isolate, le donne, i giovani e le persone con disabilità, ed è servita solo ad aumentare le disuguaglianze nei nostri paesi.

Oltre a queste disuguaglianze all'interno degli Stati, si è verificato un profondo aumento delle disuguaglianze tra gli Stati membri, rivelando l'orizzonte di una forma di disunione tra un Nord e un Sud, un Est e un Ovest con realtà economiche, aspettative e sensibilità molto diverse.

L'Europa, contrariamente a quanto molti temevano - o altri speravano - non si è fatta trovare impreparata. La sfida, certo, è immensa e durerà negli anni. Ce la faremo? Saremo all'altezza di proteggere i nostri cittadini? Saremo in grado di non disperdere il patrimonio di valori che ci hanno consegnato le generazioni che ci hanno preceduto e di fare dell'Europa uno spazio di pace, benessere, e di solidarietà?

Da marzo ad oggi abbiamo fatto tutto da soli. Per la prima volta dal secondo dopoguerra abbiamo affrontato per la prima volta una sfida globale senza una visione comune con il nostro principale alleato, gli Stati Uniti d'America. Non era mai successo prima. E questo ha reso le risposte alla crisi efficaci. Ecco perché siamo soddisfatti che il risultato elettorale negli USA abbia premiato un presidente che apertamente parla di ristabilire un asse con

L'Unione europea e più volte ha lanciato messaggi per una ripresa del multilateralismo.

La prima fase delle risposte europea alla pandemia va concludendosi in questi giorni. Vi saranno risorse imponenti, allentamento delle regole sugli aiuti di Stato, sospensione del patto di stabilità e crescita. E abbiamo la speranza di avere un Quadro finanziario pluriennale all'altezza accompagnato da regole per proteggere meglio lo Stato di diritto.

Si è capito, insomma, che se crollasse un paese o non riuscisse a farcela, tutti gli altri ne subirebbero pesanti conseguenze. Debito comune, prima fra le nostre opinioni pubbliche e poi per le nostre Istituzioni, è diventato sinonimo di solidarietà fra gli Stati. Certo, tante diffidenze devono ancora crollare, tante incomprensioni devono essere riportate a ragione.

La costruzione europea, sempre lenta e molto burocratica, ha subito una forte accelerazione. Saranno le convenienze, le risposte alle difficoltà di cittadini e imprese, a dirci se abbiamo imboccato la strada giusta.

L'Europa ha quindi reagito bene all'urgenza della crisi, ma non dimentichiamo le circostanze che sono state all'origine di questa situazione e che riflettono un metodo decisionale intergovernativo in cui la tentazione dell'interesse nazionale rischia sempre di prevalere sull'interesse comunitario. Lo abbiamo sempre potuto verificare: "la mancanza di solidarietà - diceva Jacques Delors - è un pericolo mortale per l'Europa".

Di fronte ai drammatici eventi che stiamo affrontando, dobbiamo riscoprire quello che Papa Francesco chiama il cammino della fraternità, che senza dubbio ha ispirato e animato i Padri Fondatori dell'Europa moderna di fronte alla consapevolezza che un'Europa divisa sarà impotente e non capace di rispondere a nessun problema.

Ma noi abbiamo già dimostrato di essere capaci di avere una visione comune e di fare la Storia. Ed è per questo che siamo ammirati e invidiati e per tanti nel mondo, siamo un esempio. Esempio di libertà, democrazia, rispetto di valori fondamentali, esempio di non discriminazione.

Siamo arrivati adesso al momento clou: abbiamo fatto molto, deciso stanziamenti, permesso interventi d'urgenza, proposto indirizzi politici per i prossimi anni.

Ora si apre una seconda fase, che è quella dell'aiuto concreto, direi materiale, ai cittadini.

La pandemia ha portato povertà in ampi settori della popolazione, anche in quei paesi che sembravano al riparo.

E questo ci impone di intervenire con misure puntuali e programmate. Ecco perché, come Parlamento europeo, diamo grande importanza ai programmi europei per i prossimi 7 anni.

Il Recovery è un intervento d'urgenza che serve a far ripartire l'economia europea, ma i programmi pluriennali sono il carburante di cui non possiamo fare a meno per far funzionare la macchina.

Se c'è una cosa che questa crisi ci ha insegnato è che è arrivato il momento di aprire una riflessione per rafforzare i meccanismi della democrazia europea che deve essere più efficiente e reattiva ed avere i mezzi per rispondere alle crisi che arriveranno anche dopo il Covid.

Serve più governo dell'Europa e tutti dobbiamo lavorare in questa direzione.

Un dibattito su un'Europa diversa è proprio quello che serve e se ammettiamo di vivere in un mondo di cambiamenti sempre

più rapidi che richiedono adattamenti sempre più frequenti, e se ammettiamo che l'Europa è il livello di governance pertinente di fronte alle sfide globali, non possiamo più permetterci di non avere istituzioni capaci di dare risposte ai nostri cittadini. L'Unione europea si deve adattare al mondo che cambia.

Il Parlamento europeo da anni chiede una revisione del Trattato di fronte all'inadeguatezza dei mezzi di cui l'Europa dispone per affrontare le sfide che abbiamo di fronte.

La Conferenza sul futuro dell'Europa sarà certamente un'occasione per definire, insieme ai cittadini, alla società civile, ai Parlamenti nazionali, il nostro progetto di democrazia europea funzionante. Questa Conferenza è l'ambizione di questa legislatura.

In questa sede desidero esprimere la mia fiducia nell'impegno della Presidenza tedesca del Consiglio dell'Unione europea a raggiungere un accordo tra gli Stati membri, con il Parlamento e la Commissione sulla presidenza di questa Conferenza.

La Conferenza dovrà trarre insegnamenti dalla crisi e dare all'Unione la capacità di adeguare i propri strumenti decisionali per operare in modo più efficace e con mezzi adeguati. Ma sarà anche un'occasione per riscoprire l'anima del progetto europeo. Per questo sono convinto che dobbiamo permettere alla Conferenza di iniziare i suoi lavori al più presto possibile.

Il rinnovamento del progetto europeo per essere ambizioso richiederà un autentico e forte mandato democratico, condizione indispensabile per la sua legittimità e il suo successo.

Da parte mia, con il sostegno di tutti i gruppi politici del Parlamento, ho rifiutato di permettere alla democrazia di essere sconfitta dalla pandemia. Ecco perché abbiamo costantemente adattato i nostri metodi di lavoro in modo che il Parlamento europeo fosse in grado di funzionare, legiferare, discutere e votare. Abbiamo con modalità in remoto consentito al Parlamento di funzionare e all'Unione europea di non bloccarsi. Tutte le nostre Istituzioni devono imparare dalla pandemia e adeguarsi per rispondere alle sfide. Il futuro non ci consentirà di adagiarsi su antichi riti e modalità.

Abbiamo capito l'importanza della rete, la sua forza e la sua portata. E' la rete che ha permesso di tenere uniti i cittadini in questi mesi, agli studenti di studiare, alle aziende di poter lavorare on line, alle opinioni pubbliche di poter partecipare alla vita democratica.

Ecco perché in questi mesi mi sto battendo affinché l'accesso a internet sia riconosciuto come un nuovo diritto umano. La mancanza di internet è una delle principali cause di emarginazione. Ed un suo uso corretto e regolamentato potrà consentire di ridurre le differenze e le distanze soprattutto nelle zone più remote.

Non possiamo più evitare di considerare Internet un accessorio, ma uno strumento della democrazia.

Cari amici,

Non ci troviamo di fronte a una guerra, perché come dice Albert Camus nella 'Peste', la guerra è una cosa stupida. Questa invece è la vita. La nostra vita.

Questo invito ad affrontare le difficoltà del presente è la base stessa della nostra fiducia nel progetto europeo. Come qualsiasi progetto abbiamo bisogno di un nuovo umanesimo perché vogliamo essere protagonisti del nostro futuro e non vogliamo delegarlo ad altri. Siamo europei, veniamo da lontano e abbiamo deciso liberamente di camminare insieme.

Conference on the Future of Europe is a chance to strengthen European democracy and rediscover the soul of the European project

EP President David Maria Sassoli's "Europe Speech" at the event by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Stiftung Mercator and Stiftung Zukunft Berlin, November 9th 2020

I am delighted to have been invited to speak to you today to share my hopes and set out my vision for the future of Europe, at this event originally scheduled to be held in Berlin, a city that symbolises renewal and European reunification.

The European Union, which has just celebrated the 70th anniversary of its founding, is going through the toughest crisis in its history. Europe is dealing with a pandemic which poses a severe threat to its prosperity. COVID-19 is a global challenge. While it is true, as Jean Monnet suggested, that Europe will be built by addressing the crises it faces, the challenge of COVID, more than any other, clearly makes common responses essential. It is no coincidence that as early as in March, after a few weeks of uncertainty, the Union took decisions which paved the way for more concerted action. These were historic decisions, and while in March it was still regarded as taboo to talk about European bonds, today we can celebrate the raising of the European flag on Wall Street to mark the issuing of bonds to finance the Sure facility.

This is not a repeat of the 2008 crisis. In fact, we have put firmly behind us the way of thinking and behaving which characterised the last decade.

This, after all, is the very *raison d'être* of the European Union: to make effective government action possible in our common space, by applying the principles underpinning our democratic system. No one of our nations would have been able to address this challenge alone. No one of them will be able to address similar challenges in the future, whether we are talking about the pandemic, security, immigration, environmental issues and the financial crises that could undermine our social model. United in solidarity must be our watchword, therefore.

Today we can celebrate the anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall with a greater sense of confidence in the future. The collapse of that symbol of totalitarianism marked the triumph of our model, which has its political foundation in democracy and its moral and legal foundation in the defence of citizen's rights and fundamental values. For a long time, we believed that these achievements were sufficient to keep us protected and safe from the reverberations of events further afield. We thought that what happened outside Europe would not destabilise us, would not force our hand in any way. The responses to the 2008 economic and financial crisis,

however, have left us even more exposed, because the impact on the finances of many European countries, and hence on the living conditions of our citizens, has led us to focus on ourselves and to lose sight of what the European Union can do for us. Moreover, we have found ourselves marginalised on the international stage, unable to exert any meaningful influence. We have learned, to our cost, that the more we turn in on ourselves, the more powerful anti-European sentiment grows, the more nationalism and parochialism gain ground in our countries. The first to sense this were our citizens, who turned out in record numbers in the last European elections and gave pro-European forces a vote of confidence.

The start of this parliamentary term, one year ago, after elections which had brought home to us the dangers posed by the rise of sovereigntist self-interest, brought a change of approach on the part of Europe's political families. We started to believe in ourselves and to think more ambitiously. We started once again to think about our role, and think how a proper understanding of the modern world could provide the key to addressing challenges at home and elsewhere.

They were months of hard, but fruitful, work. Together, we realised that we could no longer duck the question of what Europe can do to help save the planet. And, little by little, the environment became the paradigm for a new model of sustainability. Social and environmental sustainability. And by putting forward the proposal for a European Green Deal, presented in the European Parliament late last year, we were able to offer a vision and tackle the COVID crisis, by taking unprecedented measures and proposing common responses.

The pandemic has struck the most vulnerable in our societies, the elderly, the isolated, women, young people and people with disabilities, and has served only to exacerbate inequalities in Europe.

There has been a drastic widening of these inequalities not only within Member States, but also between Member States, revealing the potential for discord between a North and a South, and an East and a West, with sharply differing economic realities, expectations and sensibilities.

Europe, contrary to what many feared - or others hoped - was not caught unprepared. The challenge, of course, is daunting and will take years to address. Will we pull it off? Will we be able to protect our citizens? Will we manage not to squander our inheritance in the form of the values bequeathed to us by previous generations and make Europe an area of peace, well-being and solidarity?

Since March, we have done everything alone. For the first time since the initial stages of the Second World War, we have faced a global challenge without a common vision shared with our main ally, the United States of America. It had never happened before. Our common vision is what made our responses to crises effective. This is why we are happy that the American people have elected a president who speaks openly about re-establishing close ties with the European Union and has made repeated calls for a return to multilateralism.

The first phase of the European response to the pandemic is now coming to an end. Huge volumes of resources will be made available, state aid rules will be relaxed, the Stability and Growth Pact will be suspended. And we hope to have a Multiannual Financial Framework which is commensurate with the challenge facing us, matched by rules which better protect the rule of law.

In short, we have understood that if one country were to collapse or get into difficulties, the consequences for all the others would be serious. Common debt has become synonymous with solidarity among states, a fact acknowledged first by our citizens and then by our institutions. Of course, many misgivings still have to be overcome, and many misunderstandings corrected.

The European integration process, which has always been slow and very bureaucratic, has speeded up sharply. If the responses we offer to the difficulties faced by citizens and businesses are seen as expedient, we will know that we are on the right track.

Europe has therefore reacted well to an emergency, but let us not overlook the circumstances which brought us to this point and which stem from an intergovernmental method of decision-making that can never banish the temptation to put national interests ahead of the Community interest. It is an eternal truth: as Jacques Delors said, 'lack of solidarity is a mortal danger for Europe'.

Faced with the current dramatic events, we must rediscover what Pope Francis calls the 'path of fraternity', which doubtless inspired and motivated the Founding Fathers of modern Europe when they came to understand that a divided Europe would be totally powerless to confront the challenges of the future.

But we have already shown that we can have a common vision and make history. This is why we are admired and envied and why, for many in the world, we are an example. An example of freedom, of democracy, of respect for fundamental values, of non-discrimination.

The moment of truth has now come: we have taken many decisions, approved funding, made provision for urgent action and charted a political course for the coming years.

A second phase is now starting, one that involves the provision of practical, even material, assistance to our citizens.

The pandemic has brought poverty to large sections of the population, including in countries that seemed to be safe from this scourge.

This is why we need targeted, planned measures. This is why we in the European Parliament attach great importance to the European programmes for the next seven years.

The Recovery Plan is an emergency measure to get the European economy back on track, but multiannual programmes are the fuel which keeps the machine running - and it needs all the fuel it can get.

If this crisis has taught us one thing, it is that the time has come to start thinking about how to strengthen the mechanisms of European democracy, to make them more effective and responsive and give ourselves the wherewithal to respond to the crises that will come after COVID.

We need more European governance and we need to work together to bring that about.

We need a debate about a different Europe, and if we accept that we are living in a world characterised by ever faster changes requiring ever more frequent adjustments, and if we accept that Europe is the right level of governance at which to address global challenges, we can no longer afford not to have institutions which are in a position to offer our citizens answers. The European Union needs to adapt to a changing world.

For several years Parliament has been calling for a revision of the Treaty to remedy the shortcomings of the instruments Europe can draw on in addressing the challenges facing us.

The Conference on the Future of Europe will certainly be an opportunity to sketch out, together with EU citizens, together with civil society, our project for a functioning European democracy. The conference is our main priority for this parliamentary term.

Here I would like to express my confidence that the German Council Presidency will secure an agreement between the Member States, and with Parliament and the Commission, on the presidency of the conference.

The conference should draw lessons from the crisis and give the Union the capacity to adapt its decision-making tools, so that it can work more effectively and with the right backing. It will also be an opportunity to rediscover the soul of the European project.

That is why I am convinced that the conference must start work as soon as possible.

If the renewal of the European project is to be properly ambitious, a genuine, strong democratic mandate is needed as a prerequisite for its legitimacy and success.

For my part, with the support of all the political groups in Parliament, I refused to allow democracy to be defeated by the pandemic. That is why we have constantly adapted our working methods to enable the European Parliament to function, legislate, debate and vote. Using remote procedures, we have made it possible for Parliament to function and kept the European Union working. All our institutions need to learn from the pandemic and adapt in order to respond to the challenges we face. The future will not allow us to rely on the old, hallowed methods.

We have understood the importance of the internet, its power and its reach. It is the internet that has made it possible to bring citizens together over the past few months, made it possible for students to study, for businesses to work online, and for the public to participate in democratic life.

That is why I am now pushing for internet access to be recognised as a new human right. Lack of access to the internet is one of the main causes of marginalisation. Its proper, regulated use can reduce divides and distances, in particular in remote areas.

We now have no choice but to regard the internet not as a convenience, but as an instrument of democracy.

Dear friends,

We are not at war, because, as Albert Camus says in *La Peste*, war is a stupid thing. This is life. Our life.

This call to address the difficulties of the present is the very basis of our faith in the European project. Like any project, we need a new humanism, because we want to take the decisions that

will shape our future, and not leave that task to others. We are Europeans, we come from far away and we have freely decided to walk together.

European Mouvement “Manifesto”

di Pier Virgilio Dastoli

Le nostre proposte

Per quanto riguarda la piattaforma online

- Assicurare la traduzione automatica e totale di tutti materiali nelle ventiquattro lingue europee
- Assicurare l'accesso ai profili, alle idee, ai commenti, alle condivisioni e all'organizzazione di eventi ai cittadini non-UE che risiedono sul territorio dell'Unione europea
- Garantire la facilità di accesso alle associazioni rappresentative e alla società civile, al mondo dell'accademia e della ricerca, ai poteri locali e regionali, ai partiti europei, alle fondazioni culturali e agli istituti nazionali di cultura, ai promotori di ICE, ai vincitori dello Spinelli Prize, alle organizzazioni studentesche senza censure preventive o successive
- Creare uno spazio per la pubblicizzazione di eventi nei paesi dei Balcani occidentali candidati all'adesione
- Prevedere l'operatività della piattaforma dopo la conclusione della Conferenza per dare la possibilità alle cittadine e ai cittadini, alle associazioni rappresentative e alla società civile di monitorare il seguito della Conferenza e per reagire alle proposte operative delle istituzioni europee e nazionali fino alle elezioni europee nel maggio 2024

Per quanto riguarda la composizione della Conferenza nelle sessioni plenarie

- Garantire la partecipazione di una percentuale di giovani fra i 15 e i 25 anni pari a quella esistente nella popolazione europea (12.7%) e cioè un totale di almeno 55 giovani sui 433 partecipanti alle sessioni plenarie
- Prevedere la presenza come osservatori di rappresentanti dei poteri locali e regionali e delle loro reti europee (CCRE, Eurocities, Rete delle capitali europee della cultura, Patto dei sindaci per il clima e l'energia, Macroregioni...) al di là dei rappresentanti del Comitato delle Regioni
- Rafforzare la dimensione culturale con la partecipazione come osservatori degli Istituti nazionali di cultura associati nell'EUNIC, delle università delle capitali d'Europa, dei centri di ricerca europei, dei partenariati dei progetti di Europa Creativa...
- Rafforzare il rapporto con il mondo della scuola (docenti e discenti) associando ad esempio ad una plenaria dei rappresentanti dei programmi del PE (Scuola Ambasciatrice del PE, Euroscuola.) ed usando strumenti pedagogicamente innovativi come il “Processo all'Europa” o “l'Europa a teatro”.

Campagna di comunicazione, informazione e sensibilizzazione

- Coinvolgere i servizi pubblici radio-televisivi così come altre reti come Euronews o le radio universitarie (ad esempio EUROPHONICA)
- Garantire la pubblicità e la ritrasmissione di tutti i lavori della Conferenza, non solo nelle plenarie ma anche nei panel e delle riunioni dell'Executive Board
- Sollecitare i partiti europei e le loro fondazioni a svolgere la missione che è stata loro affidata dal Trattato di Lisbona (art. 10 “formare la coscienza europea dei cittadini”)
- Facilitare l'organizzazione di consigli comunali e regionali aperti alla cittadinanza
- Dare mandato - e fornire loro le risorse necessarie - alle rappresentanze dell'Unione europea nei paesi membri (e alle delegazioni nei paesi candidati all'adesione) di promuovere eventi di dibattito sul futuro dell'Europa nei numerosi festival culturali utilizzando anche lo strumento innovativo dei fringe festival

Tramutiamo la speranza in realtà

La Conferenza sul futuro dell'Europa nasce in un periodo di incertezza sui destini del processo di integrazione europea perché – nonostante l'ottimismo diffuso dalle istituzioni europee – non si sa ancora quando partirà il programma per la ripresa dell'economia europea dopo la pandemia bloccato ancora davanti a otto parlamenti nazionali, perché le prospettive di dotare l'Unione di una sua autonomia strategica sono molto fumose in settori sensibili dell'agenda digitale e dell'intelligenza artificiale per non parlare della politica estera e di sicurezza, perché i governi gestiscono gelosamente senza spirito di solidarietà la gestione dei flussi migratori e perché la dimensione sociale (che implica l'equilibrio intergenerazionale, la parità di genere, la lotta alla precarietà e alla povertà) è apparsa ancora una volta nel Vertice di Porto come un settore quasi totalmente chiuso nei confini nazionali.

Eppure, la speranza risiede nel fatto che l'innovazione al centro della Conferenza di far discutere su un piano di uguaglianza cittadini e istituzioni possa scardinare un ingranaggio che, dal Trattato di Lisbona in poi, è stato preso in ostaggio dal metodo confederale e nel fatto che la democrazia partecipativa, usando tutti gli strumenti della società digitale, sia in grado di far riaprire il cantiere delle riforme dell'Unione europea.

Affinché la speranza si tramuti in realtà il Movimento europeo sottopone qui di seguito all'attenzione dell'opinione pubblica prima italiana e poi europee la sua analisi, le sue critiche e un catalogo di proposte costruttive.

Apriamo subito i cancelli del cantiere europeo

Come omaggio alla Francia e al suo Presidente Emmanuel Macron che ha lanciato l'idea della Conferenza il 4 marzo 2019 con la sua lettera ai cittadini europei "per un rinascimento europeo", è stato deciso che la maggior parte dei lavori sul futuro dell'Europa si svolgeranno nell'emiciclo del Parlamento europeo a Strasburgo nel Palazzo dedicato a Louise Weiss, un palazzo inaugurato nel 1999 per ospitare l'Assemblea della nuova Unione ampliata ai paesi dell'Europa centrale.

La scelta di Strasburgo è del resto simbolicamente significativa perché in base al Trattato di Lisbona è la sede ufficiale del Parlamento europeo, l'unica istituzione che rappresenta l'insieme delle cittadine e dei cittadini europei.

Come sa chi sta seguendo l'avvio della Conferenza sul futuro dell'Europa, la principale innovazione rispetto alle precedenti esperienze (sei conferenze intergovernative dall'Atto Unico al Trattato di Lisbona e due Convenzioni sulla Carta dei diritti fondamentali e sul Trattato-costituzionale) dovrebbe risiedere nell'apertura del cantiere europeo ai "non addetti ai lavori" e cioè alle cittadine e ai cittadini con un'attenzione particolare ai giovani nel quadro della **democrazia partecipativa**.

Nel passare dagli auspici ai fatti affidando questo passaggio ad un ristretto comitato di rappresentanti delle istituzioni (*Executive Board*), la preparazione della Conferenza ha fino ad ora subito alcuni tentativi di modifiche sostanziali ed altri tentativi rischiano di aver luogo in un complesso o complicato esercizio di democrazia partecipativa dove l'orientamento di alcuni governi sembra quello di trasformare il confronto fra la società civile ancora inadeguatamente organizzata e le istituzioni in una **vasta consultazione** lasciando poi alle stesse istituzioni il compito di trarre le conseguenze del confronto.

È stata innanzitutto creata dalle tre istituzioni europee ma gestita dalla Commissione una **piattaforma online** (<https://futureu.europa.eu>) per offrire alle cittadine e ai cittadini uno strumento di circolazione di **idee, commenti, eventi e condivisioni**.

Alla data del 19 maggio 2021 e cioè esattamente un mese dopo il suo lancio sono stati creati poco più di tredicimila profili largamente individuali (l'accesso delle associazioni è ancora molto problematico anche se il Movimento europeo in Italia è stata la prima organizzazione a creare un suo profilo il 19 aprile¹ seguito dal Movimento Federalista Europeo il 22 aprile²) se si considera che mediamente il 78 % della famiglie europee ha accesso a internet e che sono stati per ora creati meno di seicento eventi in tutta l'Unione europea.

Il **multilinguismo** non è ancora assicurato totalmente e automaticamente, l'accesso alla piattaforma non è per ora **consentito ai cittadini non-UE** che vivono nell'Unione europea escludendo dunque il 5% della popolazione europea residente così come dal dibattito sul futuro dell'Europa (e non dell'Unione europea) sono stati per ora esclusi i **paesi dei Balcani candidati** all'adesione cosa che non avvenne nella Convenzione sul trattato-costituzionale.

Poiché la piattaforma prevede dieci "argomenti" ("Cambiamento climatico e ambiente", "salute", "un'economia più forte, giustizia sociale e occupazione", "l'UE nel mondo", "valori e diritti, Stato di diritto e sicurezza", "trasformazione digitale", "democrazia europea", "migrazione", "istruzione, cultura, gioventù e sport" che non corrispondono esattamente ai temi della "dichiarazione comune" del 10 marzo a cui si è aggiunto l'argomento "altre idee") e poiché molti eventi toccano più argomenti, un "amministratore" innominato si è auto-attribuito il diritto di censura cancellando dalla piattaforma il resoconto di eventi realizzati o di idee nel caso in cui gli uni e le altre stiano in più argomenti decidendo arbitrariamente in quale argomento debbano stare. Si tratta evidentemente di una censura preventiva o successiva inaccettabile che deve essere denunciata e sottratta al potere dell'"amministratore".

Per assicurare un'ampia partecipazione delle cittadine e dei cittadini alla piattaforma – che la Commissione considera come "il cuore della Conferenza" – è necessaria e urgente una campagna di comunicazione, informazione e sensibilizzazione perché la mobilitazione delle opinioni pubbliche sarà uno dei criteri per misurare il successo del dibattito sul futuro dell'Europa e per aprire dopo la Conferenza una fase di riforma dell'Unione europea che il Movimento Europeo ritiene debba essere costituente con al centro il ruolo del Parlamento europeo.

1 https://futureu.europa.eu/profiles/movimento_europeo/

2 https://futureu.europa.eu/profiles/movimento_federalist/activity?locale=it

Non è previsto un coinvolgimento diretto nella Conferenza **dei poteri locali e regionali** - al di là della partecipazione del Comitato delle Regioni - affinché all'ipotesi della democrazia partecipativa si affianchi la democrazia di prossimità e non è stato concepito il coinvolgimento diretto del **mondo accademico e dei centri di ricerca**, come era invece avvenuto al tempo della Convenzione sulla costituzione europea, o della rete delle **fondazioni culturali** in Europa³ o delle organizzazioni che partecipano a **Europa creativa**.

La **dimensione culturale** non era stata compresa del resto fra i temi indicati nella "dichiarazione comune" del 10 marzo ma è stata aggiunta - insieme alla salute - dalla Commissione sulla piattaforma online.

Sarebbe utile in questo quadro coinvolgere nel dibattito sul futuro dell'Europa l'associazione degli istituti culturali degli Stati membri dell'Unione europea, creata a Bruxelles nel 2007 (**EUNIC European Union National Institutes for Culture**).

Rientra in questo quadro l'ipotesi di un progetto su cui sta riflettendo il Movimento europeo di proporre ai promotori dei molti festival culturali che si svolgeranno in Italia nei prossimi mesi di introdurre nel programma un evento dedicato al dibattito sul futuro dell'Europa⁴.

Varrebbe anche la pena di riflettere sulle modalità di un coinvolgimento diretto dei **partiti europei**, il cui ruolo è specificatamente previsto nel Trattato di Lisbona e la cui partecipazione dovrebbe andare al di là dei parlamentari europei e nazionali poiché ai partiti europei è attribuita la missione di "*formare la coscienza europea dei cittadini*" (art. 10 TFUE).

72 Il **dialogo transnazionale** in cui saranno coinvolti i cittadini, selezionati per sorteggio da una società incaricata dalla Commissione europea, sarà limitato a quattro panel tematici su temi non ancora scelti fra le dieci priorità indicate sulla piattaforma con il coinvolgimento totale di ottocento persone di cui un decimo sarà invitato ad entrare nel cantiere di Strasburgo insieme ad una cittadina o a un cittadino per paese per un totale di 108 pari al numero dei parlamentari europei e dei parlamentari nazionali.

Se ci si basa sulle esperienze di democrazia partecipativa vissute più recentemente ma con alterne fortune in **Belgio, Irlanda e Islanda** in processi di scrittura collettiva di riforme costituzionali vediamo una differenza sostanziale non soltanto dal punto di vista quantitativo ma anche qualitativo che avvalorata il timore di chi ritiene che il coinvolgimento delle cittadine e dei cittadini sarà di fatto limitato ad una vasta consultazione (*citizen's dialogue o citizen's consultation*) ben lontana dall'idea di un ampio dibattito pubblico.

Poiché i temi dei panel non sono ancora stati scelti, le cittadine e i cittadini non sono stati sorteggiati e gli ottanta predestinati ad entrare nel cantiere europeo saranno verosimilmente selezionati

3 Molte delle quali fanno parte di *European Foundations Centre*

4 Citiamo per memoria i più importanti festival culturali che, COVID permettendo, avranno luogo in Italia nel 2021-2022: Festival Internazionale della Storia di Gorizia, Festival dei diritti Umani di Milano, Festival della Comunicazione di Camogli, Festival della Mente di La Spezia, Festival della Scienza di Genova, Festival dell'Economia di Trento, Festival Internazionale di Ferrara, Festival dello Sviluppo Sostenibile promosso da ASviS in molte città italiane, Festival Internazionale del Giornalismo di Perugia, Festival della Letteratura di Mantova, Festival della Filosofia di Modena, Fiera del Levante di Bari, Forum PA di Roma, Meeting per l'amicizia dei Popoli di Rimini, Più Libri più liberi di Roma, Pordenonelegge di Pordenone, Salone Internazionale del Libro di Torino, Festival Leggere&Scrivere di Vibo Valentia ma potremmo citare anche alcuni festival del cinema che sono occasioni di dibattiti culturali come il MedFilmFestival di Roma e il Festival del Cinema del Mediterraneo di Lecce

5 A EPAS si aggiungono le iniziative Euroscuola, European Youth Event, Insieme-per-eu, la Casa della storia europea, il Parlamentarium e il Premio europeo Carlo Magno della Gioventù.

solo a conclusione dei panel, l'emiciclo di Strasburgo si aprirà ai "non addetti ai lavori" in autunno e la **prima sessione plenaria del 19 giugno** potrebbe essere aperta solo alle istituzioni nella misura in cui i parlamenti nazionali e i governi avranno scelto preventivamente i loro rappresentanti.

Per quanto riguarda i **giovani**, che avrebbero dovuto essere i protagonisti del loro futuro, l'idea iniziale dei tre co-presidenti del comitato esecutivo era quella di far entrare nel cantiere solo un giovane e cioè il presidente del Forum europeo della gioventù. Quest'idea inaccettabile è stata immediatamente e parzialmente corretta dal Comitato esecutivo che ha chiesto di introdurre nel sorteggio degli ottanta predestinati al cantiere un terzo di giovani al di sotto di 25 anni portando la percentuale dei giovani nella Conferenza dallo 0,23% al 6,23% e comunque **meno della metà della percentuale di giovani europei fra i 15 e i 25 anni (12,7%) sul totale della popolazione europea**.

In questo quadro si pone la questione del coinvolgimento delle scuole e delle università (docenti e discenti) anche attraverso iniziative europee come il programma del Parlamento europeo rivolto al mondo educativo (le **50 Scuole Ambasciatrici del Parlamento Europeo** - EPAS), le scuole di Open Coesione, il programma Europa=Noi o le reti che partecipano al programma Erasmus Plus e il coinvolgimento degli studenti universitari in mobilità transfrontaliera attraverso *Erasmus Student Network*⁵.

Il Movimento europeo ritiene che sia nello stesso tempo un errore ed un segnale negativo organizzare la prima sessione plenaria della Conferenza il 19 giugno senza la partecipazione diretta delle cittadine e dei cittadini e non avendo ancora dato una risposta alla richiesta delle reti europee della società civile (in particolare *Civil Society Convention*) e delle organizzazioni europeiste (UEF, MEI e JEF) di essere associate alla Conferenza ed è convinto che **il cantiere debba essere immediatamente aperto alla democrazia partecipativa** con una prima selezione fra le cittadine e i cittadini che hanno creato un loro profilo sulla piattaforma online.

Il Movimento europeo propone inoltre di ampliare la composizione della Conferenza ad alcune organizzazioni europee dei poteri locali e regionali come il **CCRE, Eurocities, la rete delle città europee della cultura** e una delegazione del **Patto dei Sindaci per il clima e l'energia**.

Nel riflettere sull'ampliamento della composizione della Conferenza, il Movimento europeo ritiene che sia essenziale associare ai suoi lavori la **Corte di Giustizia dell'Unione europea** e la **Banca Centrale europea** i cui compiti e i cui poteri sono parte essenziale dell'Unione così come essa è oggi ma certamente del futuro dell'Europa nelle sue dimensioni giuridica e monetaria.

Il Movimento europeo attira inoltre l'attenzione sulle seguenti modalità che appaiono indispensabili per allargare il coinvolgimento delle cittadine e dei cittadini insieme alla società civile europea in via di organizzazione e rafforzare la democrazia partecipativa:

- **garantire la pubblicità e la ritrasmissione di tutti i lavori**, dai panel alle sessioni plenarie fino alle riunioni del Comitato esecutivo
- mettere a disposizione del dibattito sul futuro dell'Europa i **servizi pubblici radiotelevisivi** attraverso spazi speciali o all'interno di trasmissioni sui lavori dei parlamenti e coinvolgere la rete delle radio universitarie **EUROPHONICA**⁶.
- introdurre nella "Carta dei cittadini" e nelle modalità di funzionamento della Conferenza una **fase di monitoraggio sui risultati raggiunti** e sul seguito che ad essi sarà dato dalle istituzioni da parte delle cittadine e dei cittadini insieme ai partner sociali e alle reti della società civile a partire dai panel, sulla piattaforma online ed in una valutazione nell'ambito della componente della Conferenza consacrata ai "non addetti ai lavori".

Contemporaneamente all'apertura immediata del cantiere alla democrazia partecipativa e di prossimità il 19 giugno, il Movimento europeo invita tutti i suoi membri collettivi e chi ha aderito alla "piattaforma italiana" nata il 6 settembre 2019 in cooperazione con il Consiglio Nazionale dell'Economia e del Lavoro (CNEL):

- a **creare un loro profilo** su futureu.europa.eu così come il Movimento europeo ha già fatto il 19 aprile e il Movimento federalista Europeo ha fatto il 22 aprile,
- a caricare sulla piattaforma i loro eventi e le idee che dagli eventi sono emerse,
- ad **assicurarne la diffusione in inglese** fino a quando il multilinguismo automatico non sarà totalmente garantito,
- a condividere e/o sottoscrivere le idee di ciascun membro collettivo,
- a introdurre nuovi temi su priorità non previste nella "dichiarazione comune" del 10 marzo inserendoli nella sezione "altre idee" a partire dalla **ristrutturazione dei trattati**, dalla **capacità fiscale dell'UE**, dalla **governance democratica dell'UEM** e dall'**autonomia strategica dell'UE nel mondo**,
- a **moltiplicare gli eventi locali** e a promuovere dibattiti transnazionali,
- a **creare gruppi di riflessione** e di proposta,
- a **comunicare attraverso gli strumenti social** (*web, newsletters, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp, Signal ecc.*) l'esistenza della piattaforma online e le modalità per accedere.

Il Movimento europeo intende coinvolgere altri attori della società italiana che appartengono ai corpi intermedi in una dimensione europea⁷, le organizzazioni che operano nell'economia sociale e i promotori italiani delle iniziative dei cittadini europei (ICE) in collaborazione con EUMANS⁸.

Per mantenere e arricchire la partecipazione a livello italiano e dopo la giornata del 30 aprile - dedicata alle nostre priorità, alla democrazia partecipativa, al ruolo e agli interessi dell'Italia, al cantiere delle riforme - il Movimento europeo ha deciso di promuovere una **seconda giornata di riflessione sul futuro dell'Europa il 18 giugno** alla vigilia della prima sessione plenaria della Conferenza del 19 giugno.



6 www.raduni.org

7 Illuminanti a questo proposito gli studi dell'ASTRID e in particolare quelli su "corpi intermedi nella democrazia di oggi e di domani" (Franco Bassanini, Tiziano Treu e Giorgio Vittadini)

8 www.formyrights.eu

European Mouvement “Manifesto”

By Pier Virgilio Dastoli

Our suggestions

For the online platform

- Ensure the automatic and total translation of all materials in the twenty-four European languages
- Ensure access to profiles, ideas, comments, and the organisation of events from non-EU citizens residing in the territory of the European Union
- Ensure easy access to representative associations and civil society, academia and research, local and regional authorities, European parties, cultural foundations and national cultural institutes, promoters of ICE, winners of the Spinelli Prize, and student organisations without prior or subsequent censorship
- Create a space to advertise events in the candidate countries of the Western Balkans
- Provide for the platform to be operational after the conclusion of the Conference. This would give citizens, representative associations and civil society the opportunity to monitor the follow-up to the Conference and to react to the operational proposals of the European and national institutions up to the European elections in May 2024

Regarding the Composition of the Conference in Plenary Sessions

- Guarantee the participation of a percentage of young people between 15 and 25 years equal to that existing in the European population (12.7%), i.e., a total of at least 55 young people out of the 433 participants in the plenary sessions
- Provide for the presence, in the role of observers, of representatives of local and regional authorities and their European networks (CEMR, Eurocities, Network of European Capitals of Culture, Covenant of Mayors for climate and energy, Macro-regions...) in addition to the representatives of the Committee of the Regions
- Strengthen the cultural dimension with the participation, in the role of observers, of the national cultural institutes associated in the EUNIC, the universities of the European capitals, the European research centres, the partnerships of the Creative Europe projects...
- Strengthen the relationship with the schools, educational institutions and their actors (teachers and learners) by associating, for example, a plenary of representatives of EP programs (EP Ambassador School, Euroscola...) and using pedagogically innovative tools such as the “Process to Europe” or “Europe at the theatre” promoted by EM-IT from 2016

Communication, Information and Awareness Campaign

- Involve public radio and television services as well as other networks such as Euronews or university radios (e.g., EUROPHONICA)
- Ensure publicity and retransmission of all Conference proceedings, not only in plenaries but also in panels and Executive Board meetings
- Urge European parties and their foundations to carry out the mission entrusted to them by the Lisbon Treaty (art. 10 “forming the European conscience of citizens”)
- Facilitate the organisation of municipal and regional councils open to citizens
- Give mandate - and provide them with the necessary resources - to the representatives of the European Union in the member countries in cooperation with EDIC and CDE (and to the delegations in the candidate countries) to promote debate events on the future of Europe in the numerous cultural festivals, using the innovative tool of the “fringe festival” as well.

Let's Turn Hope into Reality

The Conference on the Future of Europe was born in a period of uncertainty about the destiny of the European integration process. Despite the optimism spread by the European institutions, in fact, it is not yet known when the European Economic Recovery Plan will start. The plan is still blocked in front of five national parliaments. The prospects of endowing the Union with its own strategic autonomy are very smoky in sensitive sectors of the digital agenda and artificial intelligence, not to mention foreign, security and defence policy. This is due to the fact that governments jealously manage migratory policies, showing little to no solidarity. Furthermore, the social dimension (which implies intergenerational balance, gender equality, the fight against precariousness and poverty) appeared once again at the Porto Summit as a sector firmly enclosed within national borders.

Yet, there is hope that the innovative idea at the centre of the Conference (making citizens and institutions discuss a plan of equality) can unhinge a mechanism that, from the Treaty of Lisbon onwards, has been taken hostage by the confederal and inefficient method. There is also hope that participatory democracy, using all the tools of the digital society, will be able to usher in a period of reform in the European Union.

In order for hope to turn into reality, the European Movement in Italy and its collective members submit their analysis, criticisms and a catalogue of constructive proposals to the attention of public opinions.

Let's Open the Gates of the European Construction Site

As a tribute to France and its President Emmanuel Macron who launched the idea of the Conference on 4 March 2019 with his letter to European citizens "for a European renaissance", it was decided that most of the works on the future of Europe will take place in the hemicycle of the European Parliament in Strasbourg in the building dedicated to Louise Weiss, a building inaugurated in 1999 to house the Assembly of the new Union extended to include the countries of Central Europe.

The choice of Strasbourg is, moreover, symbolically significant because, according to the Lisbon Treaty, it is the official seat of the European Parliament, the only institution that represents all European citizens.

As anyone who is following the start of the Conference on the future of Europe knows, the main innovation compared to previous experiences (six intergovernmental conferences from the Single Act to the Lisbon Treaty and two Conventions on the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the Constitutional Treaty) should reside in the opening of the European construction site to "non-experts", that is to citizens with particular attention to young people in the framework of **participatory democracy**.

In passing from auspices to facts by entrusting this passage to a small committee of institutional representatives (*Executive*

Board), the preparation of the Conference has so far undergone some attempts at substantial changes and other attempts risk taking place in a complex or complicated exercise of participatory democracy. Some governments seem to aim at transforming the confrontation between the still inadequately organised civil society and the institutions into a **broad consultation**, leaving the same institutions with the task of drawing the consequences of the dialogue.

First of all, an **online platform** (<https://futureu.europa.eu>) was created by the three European institutions but managed by the Commission to offer citizens a means of circulating **ideas, comments, and events**.

As of May 19, 2021, that is exactly one month after its launch, just over thirteen thousand largely individual profiles have been created (the access for associations is still very problematic even if the European Movement in Italy was the first organisation to create a profile on April¹ 19, followed by the European Federalist Movement on April² 22) if we consider that on average 78% of European families have access to the internet and that so far fewer than six hundred events have been created throughout the European Union.

Multilingualism is not yet fully and automatically ensured, access to the platform is currently not **allowed to non-EU** citizens living in the European Union thus excluding 5% of the resident European population. At the same time, **candidate countries have also been excluded from the debate on the future of Europe (and not the future of the European Union) for the time being. Nothing of the sort happened in the Convention on the constitutional treaty.**

As the platform includes ten "topics" ("Climate change and environment", "health", "a stronger economy, social justice and employment", "the EU in the world", "values and rights, rule of law and security", "digital transformation", "European democracy", "migration", "education, culture, youth and sport" that do not exactly correspond to the themes of the "joint declaration" of March 10 to which the topic "other ideas" has been added) and since many events touch on several topics, an unnamed "administrator" has self-attributed the right of censorship by deleting the report of events or ideas from the platform in the event that they follow under several topics, arbitrarily deciding in what subject they should be. This is obviously an unacceptable preventive or subsequent censorship that must be denounced and removed from the power of the "administrator".

To ensure broad participation of citizens in the platform - which the Commission considers as "the heart of the Conference" - a communication, information and awareness campaign is urgently needed. The mobilisation of public opinion will be one of the criteria for measuring the success of the debate on the future of Europe and to open after the Conference a phase of reform of the European Union that the European Movement in Italy and its collective members believe must be constituent, with the role of the European Parliament at the centre.

There is no direct involvement in the Conference of **local and regional authorities** - beyond the participation of the Committee of the Regions - so that the hypothesis of participatory democracy is flanked by a democracy of proximity. Furthermore, there is

1 https://futureu.europa.eu/profiles/movimento_europeo/

2 https://futureu.europa.eu/profiles/movimento_federalist/activity?locale=it

a lack of direct involvement of the **academic world and of the research centres**, contrary to what was the case at the time of the Convention on the European Constitution. The participation of the network of **cultural foundations** in Europe³ and of organisations participating in **Creative Europe** is also missing.

The **cultural dimension** was not included among the themes indicated in the "joint declaration" of March 10 but was added - together with health - by the Commission on the online platform.

In this context, it would be useful to involve the association of cultural institutes of the Member States of the European Union, created in Brussels in 2007 (**EUNIC European Union National Institutes for Culture**) in the debate on the future of Europe.

Within this framework, the European Movement in Italy and its collective members are considering undertaking a new project. The idea is to ask promoters of the many cultural events that will take place over the coming months, to introduce in their programmes events dedicated to the debate on the future of Europe⁴.

It would also be worth reflecting on the modalities of direct involvement of **European parties**, whose role is specifically foreseen in the Lisbon Treaty and whose participation should go beyond the European and national parliaments since the European parties are assigned the mission of "*forming the European conscience of citizens*" (art. 10 TFEU).

The **transnational dialogue** in which citizens will be involved, selected by lottery by a company appointed by the European Commission, will be limited to **four thematic panels** on topics not yet chosen among the ten priorities indicated on the platform. In total, **eight hundred people** will be involved, of which eighty will be invited to enter the Strasbourg construction site together with one citizen per country, for a total of 107 people plus the President of European Youth Forum, equal to the number of European parliamentarians and national parliamentarians.

If we look at the experiences of participatory democracy lived more recently but with varying fortunes in **Belgium, France, Ireland and Iceland** in the collective writing processes of constitutional reforms or Green Deal, we see a substantial difference not only from a quantitative but also from a qualitative point of view that reinforces the fear of those who believe that the involvement of citizens will in fact be limited to a broad consultation (*citizen's dialogue or citizen's consultation*) far from the idea of a broad public dialogue.

Since the themes of the panels have not yet been chosen, the citizens have not been drawn. The eighty chosen to enter the European construction site will likely be selected only after the panels have taken place. The Strasbourg hemicycle will open to "non-experts" in autumn. The **first plenary session on June 19 (tbc)** could be open to institutions alone, to the extent that national

parliaments and governments have chosen their representatives in advance.

As for **young people**, who should have been the protagonists of their future, the initial idea of the three co-chairs of the executive committee was to have only one young person enter the construction site, namely the president of the European Youth Forum.

This unacceptable idea was immediately and partially corrected by the Executive Committee which asked to introduce a third of young people under the age of 25 in the draw of the eighty predestined for the construction site, bringing the percentage of young people in the Conference from 0.23% to 6.23%. This represents, in any case, **less than half the percentage of Europeans between the ages of 15 and 25 (12.7%)**.

In this context, the question arises of the involvement of **schools and universities** (teachers and learners) also through European initiatives such as the European Parliament program aimed at the educational world (as the 50 Ambassadorial **Schools of the European Parliament** - EPAS), the Open Cohesion schools, the Europe = We program or the networks participating in the Erasmus Plus programme and the involvement of university students in cross-border mobility through the *Erasmus Student Network*⁵.

The European Movement in Italy and its collective members believe that it is both an error and a negative signal to organise the first plenary session of the Conference on June 19 (TBC) without the direct participation of citizens and not having yet answered the request of the European networks of civil society (in particular *Civil Society Convention*) and the pro-European organisations (UEF, EMI and JEF) to be associated with the Conference. We also believe that **the construction site should be immediately opened to participatory democracy** with an initial selection among the citizens who have created their own profiles on the online platform.

The European Movement in Italy and its collective members also propose to extend the composition of the Conference to some European organisations of local and regional authorities such as CEMR, Eurocities, the **network of European cities of culture** and a delegation of **the Covenant of Mayors for climate and energy**. Reflecting on the broadening of the composition of the Conference, the European Movement in Italy and its collective members consider it essential to associate in its work the **Court of Justice of the European Union** and the **European Central Bank**. Their tasks and powers are, in fact, an essential part of the Union as it is today as well as it will be in its juridical and monetary dimensions in the future.

The European Movement in Italy and its collective members also draw attention to the following modalities which appear to be indispensable to widen the involvement of citizens together with

3 Many of which are part of the *European Foundations Centre*.

4 We mention some of the most important cultural festivals that, COVID permitting, will take place in Italy in 2021-2022: Festival Internazionale della Storia di Gorizia, Festival dei diritti Umani di Milano, Festival della Comunicazione di Camogli, Festival della Mente di La Spezia, Festival della Scienza di Genova, Festival dell'Economia di Trento, Festival Internazionale di Ferrara, Festival dello Sviluppo Sostenibile promoted by ASviS in many Italian cities, Festival Internazionale del Giornalismo di Perugia, Festival della Letteratura di Mantova, Festival della Filosofia di Modena, Fiera del Levante di Bari, Forum PA di Roma, Meeting per l'amicizia dei Popoli di Rimini, Più Libri più liberi di Roma, Pordenonelegge di Pordenone, Salone Internazionale del Libro di Torino, Festival Leggere&Scrivere di Vibo Valentia. We could also cite some cinematic events that are often the forum for cultural debates such as the MedFilmFestival in Rome, and the Festival del Cinema del Mediterraneo in Lecce.

5 EPAS is joined by Euroscola, the European Youth Event, Together-for-EU, the House of European History, the Parliamentarium and the European Charlemagne Youth Award.

the European civil society in the process of organisation, and to strengthen participatory democracy:

- **Ensure publicity and retransmission of all Conference proceedings** both of panels and Executive Board meetings
- Make **public radio and television services** available to the debate on the future of Europe through special spaces or within broadcasts on the work of parliaments and involve for example the **EUROPHONICA**⁶ university radio network
- Introduce in the “Citizens’ Charter” and in the operating procedures of the Conference, a **phase of monitoring on the results achieved** and on the follow-up that will be given to them by the institutions. Citizens will monitor together with the social partners and civil society networks starting from the panels, on the online platform and in an evaluation within the component of the Conference dedicated to “non-experts”.

Simultaneously with the immediate opening of the construction site to participatory and proximity democracy on June 19 (TBC) the European Movement in Italy and its collective members invite all those who have joined the “Italian platform” born on September 6, 2019, in cooperation with the National Council for Economics and Labour (CNEL):

- to **create their profiles** on futureu.europa.eu as the European Movement did on April 19 and the European Federalist Movement did on April 22;
- to upload their events and the ideas that emerged from the events on the platform;
- to **ensure sharing ideas and events in English** until automatic multilingualism is fully guaranteed;
- to share and / or subscribe to the ideas of each collective member;
- to introduce new issues on priorities not foreseen in the “joint declaration” of March 10, by inserting them in the “other ideas” section starting from the **reform of the treaties, the fiscal capacity of the EU, the democratic governance of the EMU and the EU strategic autonomy in the world;**
- to **multiply local events** and promote transnational debates;
- to **create brainstorming groups;**
- to **communicate through social tools** (*web, newsletters, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp, Signal, etc.*) the existence of the online platform and how to access it.

The European Movement in Italy and its collective members intend to involve other actors belonging to intermediate bodies in a European dimension⁷, organisations operating in the social economy and promoters of European Citizens’ Initiatives (ICE) in collaboration with EUMAN⁸.

6 www.raduni.org

7 In this regard, the studies by ASTRID are illuminating and in particular those on “intermediate bodies in the democracy of today and tomorrow” (Franco Basanini, Tiziano Treu and Giorgio Vittadini)

8 www.formyrights.eu



Pier Virgilio Dastoli is President of the Association of Communicators of Italian Public Administration and President of the Italian Council of the European Movement, member of the Spinelli Group.

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

Finding new ways to speak with stakeholders during the pandemic: National Convention in Czechia

By Igor Blahušiak

National Convention on the European Union is a discussion platform launched by the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic in November 2014. Platform represents a permanent venue for debate on European issues in the Czech Republic. Being well-received by relevant stakeholders, it has transformed in the times of covid pandemic and found new impetus for years to come.

The idea of the National Convention is based on the requirement to lead an intensive dialogue on European issues both with experts and wider public. National Convention brings together representatives of the Government, state authorities, both Chambers of the Parliament, EU institutions, social partners, business, academia and NGOs. Based on suggestion by leading Czech think-tanks, it was established back in 2014 by the Czech Office of the Government.

The main goals of the platform are to:

- Initiate a constructive debate on the direction and priorities of the Czech Republic in the EU
- Create an inclusive platform where government representatives and lawmakers periodically discuss European issues with the civil society, business, experts and social partners
- Help finding the broad consensus on Czech priorities in the EU among various stakeholders
- Formulate recommendations for Czech activities in the EU

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There are two types of activities the National Convention on the EU conducts. Primarily, it conducts stakeholder roundtables on specific EU affairs topics. These are complemented by debates for a general public in regions of the Czech Republic devoted to the topics debated on the stakeholder roundtables. It is steered by the Coordination Council, composed of representatives of state institutions endowed with EU policy coordination, both chambers of the Parliament, leading Czech think-tanks and relevant social partners.

Expert roundtables and recommendations for the Government

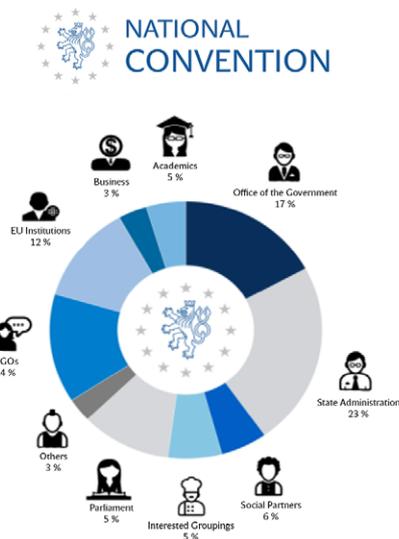
The topics of the round tables are set by the Coordination Council. Two times each year, the Coordination Council proposes the topics and sets basic guidelines for the Convention operation. Proposals for topics are carefully chosen according to current debates on European level. The main aim of the debates is to clarify the Czech position on various European policies.

The roundtable itself is preceded by publication of a backgrounder, written by the so-called expert guarantor. The guarantor is publicly tendered in an open call and it can be either a university, a think-tank, a social partner or basically any other organization with proven experience in EU affairs and dedicated staff. Its role is a much wider than just writing a backgrounder; the guarantor proposes specific questions to be debated at a roundtable (usually 3 or 4), helps with identification of relevant participants, authors of so-called expert opinions, moderating the debate and most importantly: based on the discussion itself, the guarantor drafts recommendations for the government and other relevant decision-makers. Two coordinators from the Office of the Government help the expert guarantor with logistics and PR of each roundtable.

Just a quick word on expert opinions: These are an independent views on a topic debated, intended to incite the discussion at the roundtable. There are usually two or three of them, being sent to the participants in a written form before the meeting (together with a backgrounder) and presented at the beginning of each roundtable. These experts might include not only a responsible line ministry, but also a representative of business, social partners, and academia – even from abroad.

There are on average 10 roundtables per year, organized monthly (with exception of summer recess). Meetings are set for Friday mornings, held in pre-covid times in person. Due to the pandemic, the National Convention switched to online form.

Every and each round table is a place where representatives of the Government, state authorities, both Chambers of the Parliament, EU institutions, social partners, business, academia and NGOs meet and discuss the current issues. A composition of participations is shown at the figure.



OPEN DEBATE ON EUROPE

After a round table, the written recommendations are published on the National Convention website and social platforms (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter). The final recommendations consist of main points and approaches that were endorsed during the debate by the invited experts. Recommendations are further sent to the Government Committee for EU and used to build a Czech position on various topics.

Since 2014, 60 roundtables with more than 4.000 direct participants from approximately 450 institutions have been organized. In first five years only (2014-19), the National Convention published 238 recommendations; with approx. three quarters of them being or having been implemented.

Case study: recommendations on Conference of the Future of Europe

A concrete example how the recommendations proposed by National Convention on the EU shape the Czech position, can be seen in the design of national events organized within the framework of the Conference on the Future of Europe (COFE). The concept note on implementation of activities regarding the Conference on the Future of Europe in the Czech Republic explicitly mentions the recommendations proposed by the National Convention on the EU in November 2020 as a building block for Czech approach towards the Conference. The roundtable brought forward four recommendations; all of them taken on-board when designing the national events within the COFE.

As the first recommendation is to include actors from regional, local and national level and wider public in the discussion. Two lines of debates are recommended – thematic and institutional, with separate audiences of general and expert public. The Convention also recommends discussing only the subjects of most relevance for the general public in Czechia. These might topics such as security and defence, climate change, healthcare and common market.

To create synergies, the discussion should be linked with main topics of Presidency of the Czech Republic in the Council of the EU. The COFE should be used as an access point to raise the awareness of the Presidency of the Czech Republic in the Council of the EU. In person attendance of the debates is better suited for such occasions; however the debates shall switch to online form if the pandemic situation persists.

All above mentioned recommendations were fully implemented into the concept note on the Conference on the Future of Europe. The cornerstone of Czech approach towards the Conference on the Future of Europe is therefore built from recommendations that were published last year, helping the Czech Republic to validate its strategy towards wider public.

Complementary regional dimension

Once the topics for the upcoming round tables are set, National Convention organises in the cooperation with regional EU information offices run by the Government (Eurocentres) debates, workshops and seminars in all regions of the Czech Republic. The main purpose is to debate with the wider public specific topics of European interest. The events are usually organised in line with round tables. Due to covid-19 pandemic, also these seminars switched to online form.

In year 2020, struck by the pandemic, the National Convention on the EU organised 22 online seminars with more than 2.128 citizens attended. From previous experience with regional seminars, the Czech public usually tends to show a higher attendance more when regional or practical issues are presented.

A way forward



The National Convention has proven to be a successfully received project by both relevant stakeholders, general public and also by the state administration. Even though the pandemic greatly impacted its working methods, it also has shown a way forward. At several occasions, online events have been attended by more participants than in-person discussions, allowing connecting successfully national stakeholders with EU-level representatives seamlessly. Therefore, for future post-pandemic efforts, hybrid discussions are being considered as way forward.

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Igor Blahušiak has been serving as a Director of the European Affairs Communication Department of the Czech Office of the Government since 2017, after serving more than 6 years as a Deputy Director. Prior to that, he was dealing with EU policy coordination at the Government level. He also occasionally holds lectures at various Czech universities on current EU Affairs. With academic background in law and EU studies, he holds a Ph.D. in EU law.

Conférence sur l'avenir de l'Europe: Comment réussir la participation des citoyens?

Par Michaël Malherbe

La Représentation du Land de Bade-Wurtemberg auprès de l'UE à Bruxelles a organisé [une table ronde sur les enjeux de la Conférence sur l'avenir de l'Europe](#) sous l'angle de l'implication on et offline des citoyens...

La stratégie de l'UE repose sur 5 piliers : une promesse + des principes + une plateforme web + des panels citoyens + une plénière

Pour Sixtine Bouygues, la Directrice Générale Adjointe de la DG Communication de la Commission européenne, la déclaration conjointe des institutions européennes prend une promesse sans précédent en termes d'« engagement des citoyens pour la démocratie » qui s'adresse à tous les Européens.

Les principes de la conférence sur l'avenir de l'Europe pour être à la hauteur de l'exercice :

- Universalité : tous les citoyens européens sont appelés à s'exprimer ;
- Transparence : toutes les contributions sont rendues publiques et accessibles en ligne ;
- Indétermination : tous les résultats des discussions conduites vont être non prémédités ;
- Engagement : toutes les institutions européennes vont écouter les contributions et assurer des recommandations dans le respect des valeurs de l'UE.

Une plateforme web est le hub de tous les événements, dont la conférence inaugurale lors de la Journée de l'Europe le 9 mai prochain et de toutes les contributions :

- Design à partir d'une civic tech startup financée par un fond européen ;
- Discussion paneuropéenne dans les 24 langues officielles de l'UE avec une traduction immédiate de toutes les contributions ;
- Modération a posteriori et à minima pour ne pas censurer les contributions négatives ;
- Feedbacks avec un partage de data à la fois quantitative et qualitative sur la participation.

Des panels citoyens seront organisés sur la base d'une sélection randomisée des participants sur la base de critères d'équilibre géographique, socio-économique, d'âge et de sexe afin d'assurer une variété et diversité maximale.

Les plénières, les réunions avec les élus, le dernier pilier de la stratégie pour la délibération sur les recommandations du rapport final est toujours en cours de négociation.

Les expériences antérieures inspirantes

Le Land du Bade-Wurtemberg déploie depuis une décennie une « politique pour être entendu » (policy of being heard) menée par Gisela Eler, Conseillère d'État pour la société civile et la participation civique.

La réussite repose sur un équilibre autant d'une part des citoyens pour jouer le jeu de la discussion collective et de la délibération commune pour formuler des contributions constructives que d'autre part des responsables politiques pour écouter les citoyens, vérifier les propositions, réagir activement et rendre des comptes sur leurs décisions.

La fondation Bertelsmann a organisé des dialogues citoyens multilingues transnationaux, Anna Renkamp, Senior Project Manager pour le Program Future of Democracy précise les modalités de cet exercice de démocratie très ambitieux et qualitatif en termes de participation et de contribution des citoyens.

Au final, les premiers résultats en 3 jours sur le site interinstitutionnel de la Conférence sur l'avenir de l'Europe [FuturEU.europa.eu](#) sont encourageants avec déjà quelques milliers d'inscrits et des premiers sujets sur l'économie, le climat et la démocratie européenne...

La conférence sur l'avenir de l'Europe tiendra-t-elle ses promesses de réforme de l'UE ?

Alors que la plateforme numérique est officiellement lancée aujourd'hui, l'exercice inédit de la conférence sur l'avenir de l'Europe interroge, [à voir sur Comocène](#), sur son potentiel démocratique et ses incertitudes...

La vision positivement optimiste de Karine Caunes, rédactrice en chef de la revue European Law Journal

Puisque l'UE sera démocratique ou ne sera pas, l'universitaire veut faire confiance aux citoyens et voir le verre à moitié plein, plutôt que le verre à moitié vide.

Principaux objectifs :

- Information : informer et former les citoyens et donner une forme de co-éducation civique ;
- Participation : demander aux citoyens les sujets à traiter à l'échelle de l'UE ;
- Co-construction : construire ensemble le projet européen pour le XXI^e siècle.

Principales modalités :

- Une participation citoyenne inclusive, participative et transparente avec des panels nationaux et européen et des événements ;
- Des modes de participation présentielle et une plateforme numérique multilingue permettant un partage de préoccupations partagée, premiers pas vers un destin commun ;
- Une question éthique, la charte de la conférence pour réguler les contributions et garder le pluralisme ;
- Un accompagnement à définir afin d'apporter des éléments de réponse et un soutien d'experts à encadrer ;
- Une finalité : des recommandations concrètes de propositions législatives.

Une lueur d'espoir immédiate ? La composition du Conseil exécutif avec les 3 institutions de l'UE rappelle la composition de la Convention sur l'avenir de l'Europe et offre une passerelle possible vers la révision des traités.

Une perspective à plus long terme ? Le mécanisme de consultation des citoyens pourrait être pérennisé afin que la participation donne une sorte de pouvoir d'initiative législative aux citoyens.

Un défi principal ? La mobilisation des Européens qui ne sont ni anti, ni pro et des jeunes.

Le moment pour les Européens de faire de la politique ensemble selon Alberto Alemanno, professeur à HEC Paris, titulaire de la chaire Jean Monnet

Ce qui constitue à la fois une force et une faiblesse, c'est que cet exercice préparatoire des prochaines politiques publiques européenne, personne ne le contrôle sur le plan politique, ni les institutions de l'UE, ni les États-membres.

Le casus belli à l'origine, c'est une idée de Macron, reprise par Ursula von der Leyen, c'est la réforme électorale et la procédure de nominations aux postes clés de l'UE. Or, sur ces sujets, le Parlement européen dispose de l'initiative et la prendra dès le mois de mai pour une adoption avant la fin de l'année, sans attendre les conclusions de la conférence sur l'avenir de l'Europe afin que la future « loi » électorale européenne soit ratifiée par tous les États-membres avant le prochain scrutin européen. C'est bien que le Parlement européen fasse ses devoirs, mais ce n'est pas sérieux de ne pas faire le lien avec la conférence sur l'avenir de l'Europe.

Le potentiel de cette méta-consultation publique européenne, c'est d'ouvrir la boîte de Pandore, d'ouvrir la porte à de nouveaux sujets qui alimenteront les programmes politiques pour les élections de 2024. Le risque serait de rendre justement ces élections plus compliquées si tout est sur les rails.

Le succès de la conférence sur l'avenir de l'Europe serait dans la capacité de l'UE à institutionnaliser l'innovation démocratique de la participation des citoyens.



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

Formé à l'Institut d'Études politiques de Strasbourg (2001-2005) et à l'Université Paris I Panthéon Sorbonne dans le master « Communication politique et sociale », il est un spécialiste de la communication de l'Union européenne, intervenant dans les masters « Etudes européennes » de la Sorbonne-Nouvelle, Paris III et « Affaires européennes » de la Sorbonne-Paris IV et précédemment à l'ENA et à Sciences-Po Lille. Depuis 2007, il anime le blog : « Décrypter la communication européenne » et intervient régulièrement dans la presse et les médias, des débats publics et des colloques.

Ten ways to make the Conference on the Future of Europe a good thing for European Democracy¹

By Anthony Zacharzewski

The [Conference on the Future of Europe](#) (CoFoE) is on the point of being announced. Following [the publication of leaked drafts of the announcement](#), there has been a lot of [commentary](#) about the institutional arm-wrestling, and disappointment about the timescale.

We here at Demsoc do our best to look on the bright side - and the democratic side. Institutional arm-wrestling is the team sport in any capital city; the timescale is definitely short - but what can be done to make even a brief Conference a positive contribution to the developing European democracy?

First, that it is happening at all is a positive sign. We're only three years from the first-ever random citizen participation event the EU commissioned ([the European Citizen Panel](#)). Rather than a standalone experiment, though, the Conference takes place as citizen participation is starting to pick up steam inside the European institutions.

82 The [Horizon Europe Missions pilot](#) was just the first in a series of citizen participation exercises around Europe's research budget. The Conference - though downgraded from the central position it had pre-Covid - fits right alongside. It may be less ambitious than earlier plans (set out in a [handy table](#) by Janis Emmanouilidis and Johannes Greubel of the [European Policy Centre](#)), but being out of the political limelight might even help the process to be a better democratic experiment.

Here are ten ideas for how to make the most of the Conference for Europe's democracy:

1. Make it experimental. This isn't going to be writing a new European treaty, so use the opportunity to test different participative approaches on big questions, including how to join up other processes at different levels.
2. Listening means acting. The response to the European Citizen Consultation of 2018-9 was a sentence in a summit document. The outcome has to be more evident - and has to be clear to participants. The Institutions should flesh out how they will respond, not just promise to read the answers carefully. For comparison, the Irish citizen assembly and several local ones produce recommendations that can go straight to a referendum.
3. Start building civil society links now. It's not hard to imagine a vicious circle of seeming irrelevance leading to civil society inaction leading to minimal responses. Turn it into a virtuous circle by clarifying how civil society can help - and how it matters to their goals, not just the European institutions'.
4. Get officials involved. This is meant to be working at multiple levels - make sure that officials at every level are involved too, either as witnesses, supporting the event management process, or even in special events. Myths around citizen participation are more easily dispelled by taking part in an event than by reading a report - and it helps officials learn how they can use participation in their work.
5. Set a clear pathway for citizen agenda setting. The current draft announcement says, "Citizens are free to raise other issues [than the ones that the Institutions want to talk about]." That's fine, but raising an issue only to have it ignored is worse than being told you can't raise it at all. The online idea generation session should have a clear pathway from idea to agenda.
6. Run past the deadline. Less than a year (depending on how you define "Spring") is not very long - but it's less of a problem if the Institutions plan now to continue the approach beyond the Spring 2022 deadline. It's even less of a problem if they have an exact route by which issues not addressed in this "session" can be picked up later, in the run-up to the 2024 European Parliament elections.
7. Leave a legacy. By the time the Conference draws to a close, the programmes selected as part of the Green Deal to create infrastructure for citizen participation in Europe will be starting up. Use universities and others for independent monitoring and research. Ensure that citizen networks, tech platforms, and relevant conversations are passed from one to the next, so the Conference becomes the first stage of a growing network.
8. Let citizens mark the institutional homework. As in France, let a group of citizens who have been involved in the process review what the Institutions do with it. It may lead to a few uncomfortable comments, but it shows that this is a meaningful process. In France, even if participants were critical of some parts of the implementation, they were strongly supportive of the participatory approach.
9. Ensure that technology is open. The EU has funded excellent open-source tools for democracy, including the foundations of CONSUL and Decidim, and hopefully, the promised digital platform will be based on those. It's equally important, though, that the tools created for this exercise are shared widely. Multilingual dialogue processes on a common European digital framework could speed up the development of a connected European democracy.

Build the foundations for trust. The institutions need to trust the answers they receive. Citizens need to trust that processes are run fairly and without outside influence. The creation of that trust is a long-term effort, longer-term than a single year or a single event series. But as the Hippocratic oath says: *first, do no harm.*

¹ <https://www.demsoc.org/blog/cofoe-friend-of-democracy> - published on 2 March 2021

Ensure that the processes are open, trusted, and used and that the events' facilitation and creation are independent or at least independently verified. That means that as citizen participation at the European level expands, as it will in coming years, the Conference on the Future of Europe will have a legacy to be proud of.

What have we missed, and what would you add? Let us know - and get in touch - europa@demsoc.eu.



Anthony Zacharzewski

Main expertise: Democratic systems and innovation, government policy making, politics.

Anthony is the founder and president of The Democratic Society. He has worked in central and local government in strategic roles for 14 years before founding The Democratic Society in 2006. He has deep practical experience of policy making as an official, and of creating democratic innovations in nine years running the Democratic Society's work day-to-day. He has worked with institutions at every level of government, with health and housing providers, with doctors' groups, planners and developers, and international organisations to design, implement, and test new democratic models and systems.



Communications and the media: state of play

Public communicators and the media sector: *joining forces to preserve good values*

By Vincenzo Le Voci and Kristina Plavšak-Krajnc

As in such multidimensional world and during a complex crisis one dimensional communication cannot not function. Therefore, work in synergy is crucial. Pluralism, freedom and democratic standards can only be safeguarded by joining forces. Public authorities have an outright mandate to guarantee a society where an objective and impartial information, proactive communication, reinforced transparency and media independence are nourished and defended.

What can be done to help public communicators and media specialists to communicate more efficiently and effectively about common policies and values, and improve quality of their work for the benefit of the communities? How to help develop mutual capacities and capability building plans, to better tackle challenging scenarios in regions undergoing conflicting geopolitical scenarios where the rule of law and ethics are under threat?

In its Action Plan subscribed in Venice in December 2019, the Club of Venice emphasised the need for, among others, facilitating synergies and cross-cooperation in the strategic approach in promoting media literacy, mapping media trends and digital media frameworks, fostering exchanges on and analysing media monitoring trends, exploring ground for cooperation with universities, media observatories and international agencies and platforms and contributing to providing a safe environment to produce quality journalism.

Much has yet to be done, and the long-lasting pandemic has emphasised challenges and procrastinated the examination of possible solutions.

The plenary meeting of the Club of Venice in spring 2021 will enable to take stock of policy developments, of the most challenging realities on the ground, and of the engagement of public authorities to find ground for work in partnership. There is a need for public communication to safeguard and reinforcing media freedom and capacities in an age of unrest and unregulated digital [r]evolution.

Convergences n°17 is hosting valuable contributions on work in progress in this field and on possible expectations from this times of transformation of the communication and media landscape.

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The main goals of the platform are to:

- On principles: Club of Venice Charters on capacity building and resilience building and Club of Venice Action Plan on the relations between public communicators and the media sector (see Annexes to the enclosed factsheet on the Club of Venice)
- On leadership and change management required: Momentum for an integrated strategy for Europe's news media
- On challenges to democracy, unfulfilled hopes and attempts: After Trump: Rule of law and Big Tech Regulation
- On leveraging current initiatives and existing rules: Democracy and Digital: trusted media and platform regulation
- Press Freedom and Europe: Wolves, vultures, trolls... plus knights and journalists

Beyond Brussels policies: the Europe's news media sector

By Christophe Leclercq, Marc Sundermann and Paolo Cesarini



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EU initiatives from last December may help renew the news media sector, if implemented fast and jointly. In an open letter, Christoph Leclercq, Marc Sundermann and Paolo Cesarini call for leadership from Berlin, Paris and the Council, and from the press leaders themselves.

Frau Kanzlerin Merkel, M. le Président Macron, M. le Président Michel,

Leveraging recent, upcoming and continuing EU Presidencies, and together with media leaders, you can help upgrade our democracy infrastructure. This is relevant for forthcoming elections: Germany soon in 2021, then France in 2022, and EU in 2024.

Today's democracies depend on the sustainability and credibility of the information ecosystem: a new form of public space emerging from the past symbiosis between politics and press. As you know, deep unbalances in this ecosystem facilitate disinformation, populism and riots.

DISCLAIMER | All opinions in this column reflect the views of the author(s), not of EURACTIV Media network.

The success of the '1992' internal market took both political leadership and a change of mindset within companies. Much overdue, the industrial transformation of the media landscape will need a similar engagement.

A European strategy for the News Media sector

Good new policies are in process, so this open letter advocates concerted actions and speed, to overcome silo-thinking and fragmentation. Dr. Ursula von der Leyen stated at her Strasbourg confirmation that she would preside over a '*geopolitical Commission*' and put *Europe's democracy* among her top six priorities.

The last French-German Summit following-up on the Aachen Treaty focused on '*strategic autonomy*'. British reluctance should no longer get in the way. Putting together these three notions, you could now convey one of Europe's urge: an autonomous and open information ecosystem, grounded on European values.

Indeed, US platforms dominate our public space, maintaining disinformation (and tax elusion). On the other hand, quality media actors gained trust and readership in Covid times, but still struggle economically. The journalism landscape is made chiefly of two subsectors, with different needs.

Broadcaster, mainly public, try to juggle financial support and independence, while getting most politicians' attention. The News Media, mainly private, loses most of its advertising, subscriptions... and journalists.

Disinformation is a symptom, not the cause. Censorship is not the solution and legal action is too slow. Indeed, the related retreat of the media is due to weakened **business models**: gatekeepers do not allocate to quality content fair payments and fair visibility. The real cure is sector-wide rebalancing of the News Media ecosystem. A *European strategy for the media sector* may be called *Medien-Industriepolitik* in Berlin and *politique industrielle des médias* in Paris, or even **media sovereignty**.

This happened for other branches of Europe's economy thanks to a smart mix of proactive policies, funding to uptake technologies and upgrade skills, competition enforcement, and players' visions on their future structure. In the case of media, this also involves tackling disinformation through market-based regulation of dominant players, building on existing **self-regulation**.

Just before Christmas, the European Commission published what one could call the 'Information package'. Complementing recent copyright and audiovisual legislation, this is composed of draft directives on digital markets and services, plus action plans regarding democracy and media.

These texts contain useful concepts, defining '**gatekeepers**' (not to say US platform giants) and paving the way for a **dynamic use of competition rules**, to avoid 'coming after the battle'. Also, innovation funding is planned under the **NEWS action**: this is inspired by the MEDIA programme, which helped save Europe's film industry.

From the four EU 'Info package' documents, the two legislative drafts risk-taking years, like the copyright directive. The two action plans can be enacted faster if properly funded under Creative Europe and Horizon Europe of the EU's final long-term budget, and possibly including some of the recovery finance at the national level.

Chiefly, existing competition rules are the hammer of the tool-box: to be used forcefully, now.

Creating momentum: engagement and speed

Beyond clearer policies, five points will help rebalance the bargaining power between gatekeepers and the press.

First, cooperation or even cross-border mergers between news media companies should be encouraged by competition guidelines, not slowed down.

Second, the proposed News Media Forum is not enough: publishers should unite their scattered advocacy representations.

Third, **media marketplaces and building blocks** such as AI-aided translation may facilitate content sharing, and support prices for content re-use.

Fourth, gatekeepers made commitments to reflect trustworthiness of information sources in their algorithms: **they should finally do it**. Finally, **future media leaders** should gain new skills to cooperate across borders.

Rebalancing the ecosystem will trigger a virtuous circle: more visibility for quality content, hence more advertising, more royalty payments, therefore money for journalists and technology. If investors stop selling out to governments and oligarchs, democracy wins.

However, there is still a lack of attention to Europe-wide media strategies.

On the institutions' side, what is required is policy speed and efficient disbursing of funds. In the past, R&D-inspired funding focused on large projects, with long lead times, often managed by EU agencies.

But even larger news outlets are typically medium-sized organisations, with no Brussels representation, no tendering team, nor a strong balance sheet allowing patience. In line with journalists' or researchers' independence, several tendered EU projects do work with their own juries.

They allocate 'media-sized' funds subject to EU principles and audits, with lighter paperwork and timelines. Building on this, one wide NEWS call for proposals could be issued, triggering competition from journalism partnership projects, not only large organisations' consortia.

On their side, publishers and editors are often attracted by GAFA's investments in media innovation, outpacing public funding. Also, some News Media leaders were worried about 'Brussels' impeding some commercial actions, never offering a strategy for the sector, and privileging broadcasters for the little money made available. But major players are seeing the light: **many publishers joined Microsoft** in calling for a fair system for content payment.

Leadership: both political and industrial

Based on promising EU policy initiatives, where is the umbrella document explaining an overall vision for the News Media sector? Cross references within the December package, plus public relations and consultations are not enough. The NEWS bundle should be filled with life and supported under the programmes Creative Europe and Horizon Europe.

Lessons can also be drawn from national initiatives. For example, the Aachen Treaty provides for audiovisual cooperation. But so far the main French-German contribution is ARTE, now with a European outlook.

Meanwhile, the control of Euronews was lost to an Egyptian investor, and there are few joint ventures between national news media. Belgium is also a telling case: it suffers from separate public spaces without 'cross-border' media.

There is a Group of Commissioners dealing with media, but a dedicated, clear and comprehensive strategy for News Media is still lacking. Commission services are currently reflecting on industrial policy overall: why not use News Media as a new example?

Given the existential importance of quality media for democracy, the European Council could ask the Commission for an overall Communication on News Media strategy and competition, and encourage Member States to think along.

Kanzlerin Merkel, Président Macron, Président Michel: you have the political and personal credibility to create this momentum, among other leaders, and press publishers.

Back in Strasbourg, for the State of the Union speech of January 2022, President von der Leyen could claim visible impact, and not only draft legislation and action plans. For a healthy News Media, and for democracy.



Comment transformer les médias et l'audiovisuel de l'UE ?¹

Par Michaël Malherbe

Particulièrement touchés par la crise du coronavirus, les médias et l'audiovisuel de l'UE font l'objet d'un plan d'action pour soutenir leur relance en tant que pilier de la démocratie, de la diversité culturelle de l'Europe et de l'autonomie numérique...

Un plan de relance pour les médias et l'audiovisuel de l'UE

Pilier n°1 : se redresser avec un soutien financier pour assurer la transformation numérique des entreprises audiovisuelles et médiatiques

Principale annonce dans ce pilier, un budget de 400 millions d'€ avec l'initiative « MEDIA INVEST » pour stimuler les investissements dans l'industrie audiovisuelle sur une période de 7 ans.

Une autre initiative « NEWS » pour regrouper les actions en faveur des médias d'information comprenant un projet pilote d'investissement avec des fondations et d'autres partenaires privés, un accès à des prêts devant être cautionnés par la garantie InvestEU, des subventions et un forum européen des médias d'information en particulier les médias locaux.

Pilier n°2 : se transformer en favorisant la compétitivité à long terme en même temps que la transition numérique

Les actions visent à encourager des espaces européens de partage des données et de l'innovation dans les médias, à promouvoir une coalition industrielle européenne de la réalité virtuelle et augmentée afin d'aider les médias de l'UE à tirer parti de ces technologies immersives et lancer un laboratoire des médias VR centré sur des projets de nouveaux modes de narration et d'interaction.

Pilier n°3 : donner les moyens d'agir avec plus d'innovation, des conditions de concurrence équitables et un accès plus facile à un contenu de qualité pour une prise de décision éclairée

Les citoyens et les entreprises sont au cœur des efforts pour donner les moyens d'agir, notamment en renforçant l'éducation aux médias et en soutenant la création d'une agrégation

d'informations alternative indépendante ; en lançant un dialogue avec l'industrie audiovisuelle en vue d'améliorer l'accès aux contenus audiovisuels et leur disponibilité dans l'ensemble de l'UE.

Les talents européens dans le domaine des médias sont promus en encourageant la diversité devant et derrière la caméra et en mobilisant et en soutenant les jeunes pousses du secteur des médias.

La coopération entre les régulateurs sera renforcée au sein du groupe des régulateurs européens pour les services de médias audiovisuels afin de garantir le bon fonctionnement du marché des médias de l'UE.

Projets financés par l'UE pour soutenir la liberté et le pluralisme des médias dans l'UE

Afin de cartographier les violations de la liberté des médias, défendre les journalistes menacés et soutenir le journalisme collaboratif, la coopération et l'échange de bonnes pratiques, **16 projets sont en cours ou en préparation, représentant plus de 17 millions d'€ de financement de l'UE.**

Projets en cours

- Mécanisme de réponse à l'échelle européenne en cas de violation de la liberté de la presse et des médias : 1,4M€ géré par le Centre européen pour la liberté de la presse et des médias.
- Fonds de journalisme d'investigation transfrontalier : 1,5 M € dirigé par l'Institut international de la presse, déjà plus d'un million d'euros à 49 projets journalistiques.
- Soutien au journalisme d'investigation indépendant et collaboratif et à la liberté des médias dans l'UE avec 5 projets :
 - I) Media4Change – Future Investigative Story Lab, en Lituanie : 218 000 €
 - II) Initiative Journalism Trust avec Reporter sans frontières : conception, test et lancement d'un outil d'auto-évaluation pour les médias en ligne : 422 000 €
 - III) Le 4e pouvoir/puissance – protéger la démocratie par le journalisme d'investigation et les actions contre les fausses informations avec des ateliers et formations pour les jeunes journalistes : 60 000 €
 - IV) Sensibiliser le grand public de l'UE à l'importance de la liberté des médias et du journalisme éthique pour la démocratie, ainsi qu'à encourager le journalisme collaboratif indépendant : 279 000 €
 - V) Exposer l'invisible – renforcer les capacités des journalistes et autres acteurs des médias à mener des enquêtes en ligne et

hors ligne intégrées transfrontalières et interdisciplinaires en toute sécurité : 294 000 €

- Suivi du pluralisme des médias à l'ère numérique avec un Observatoire du pluralisme des médias dirigé par le Center for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom : 1 M €
- Échange d'étoiles montantes des médias pour accélérer l'innovation et accroître la couverture transfrontière: 1,2 M €
- Conseils des médias à l'ère numérique pour une transition des organismes d'autorégulation des médias vers le monde en ligne : 500 000 €

Nouveaux projets

- Liberté des médias et journalisme d'investigation : 3 projets pilotes : 3,9 M €
- Surveillance de la propriété des médias: 1 M €
- Contenu d'actualité audiovisuelle utilisant des plateformes médiatiques dans plusieurs langues de l'UE pour la variété et la disponibilité des actualités audiovisuelles et des programmes audiovisuels informatifs : 1,7 M €
- Conseils des médias à l'ère numérique : 350 000 €
- Opportunités de stages pour les médias de langue minoritaire : 700 000 €
- Production d'actualités basée sur les données : 2 M €
- Éducation aux médias pour tous : 500 000 €

Autres initiatives de l'UE pour les médias

- Création de hubs nationaux de l'Observatoire européen des médias numériques analysant les campagnes de désinformation et leur impact sur la société, promouvant l'éducation aux médias et surveillant les politiques des plateformes en ligne : 9 M €
- Subventions de l'UE pour les médias en ligne à petite échelle : 2,2 M €
- Soutien aux actions d'information relatives à la politique de cohésion de l'UE : 5 M €
- Mécanisme de garantie sur la culture et les industries créatives

Au total, la résilience de l'industrie des médias et de l'audiovisuel de l'UE s'appuie sur les atouts de la diversité et des talents de l'Europe, en protégeant la liberté d'expression, tout en respectant l'indépendance et le pluralisme.



Countering disinformation as an outright co-safeguard democracy

By Viktoras Daukšas and Laima Venclauskienė

DebunkEU.org, is an independent technology think tank and non-governmental organization that researches disinformation and runs educational media literacy campaigns. *DebunkEU.org* provides disinformation analyses in Baltic countries and Poland, as well as in the United States and North Macedonia together with our partners.



In their work, DebunkEU.org utilize the experience of:

- A team of skilled analysts with backgrounds ranging from political science and history to business and media,
- National institutions in our partner countries, providing us with valuable insights on the situation in the Baltics,
- IT magicians with a broad knowledge of AI tools which help us make the fact-checking process faster and fool-proof,
- Lithuanian community of volunteer fact-checkers also known as elves (because of their notorious skills of hunting online trolls).

Because of long shared history, DebunkEU.org cooperates with their colleagues in Latvia and Estonia. Since all three Baltic states broke out of Soviet Union in 1990, the level of threat coming from Russia has grown exponentially. To build resilience to disinformation amongst the citizens of these countries DebunkEU.org had joined forces with analysts and elves from their Baltic neighbours. Poland also faces similar challenges with foreign actors attempting to influence public opinion and undermine democratic processes - therefore, DebunkEU.org have expanded the scope of disinformation analysis and started covering Poland as well.¹

¹ DebunkEU.org website <https://www.debunkeu.org/about>

Collective mandate to

Viktoras Daukšas, Head of DebunkEU.org, has more than 13 years of experience in development of online technologies, out of which over 10 years were spent in media (biggest newsrooms or classifieds) technology development, including a launch of 15min.lt (now the second biggest media outlet in Lithuania). A physicist by education he is also a creative problem solver, helping organisations to tune internal processes and deliver outstanding platforms. Viktoras also holds an M.B.A (The BMI International Executive MBA) from the Baltic Management Institute in Vilnius and M.B.A (Business Administration and Management, General) from BI Norwegian Business School/ISM University of Management and Economics in Vilnius. For the last 4 years Viktoras leads DebunkEU.org, an independent technology think tank that analyses disinformation by combining expert knowledge with AI driven technologies.



Since the start of COVID-19 pandemic DebunkEU.org have focused a substantial part of their work on disinformation related to the coronavirus, since their team noticed that false/misleading content spreads with the same speed as the virus itself. From March 2020 to April 2021, DebunkEU.org analysts spotted **7631 cases** of disinformation about COVID-19.

DebunkEU analytical methodology allows evaluating not only **quantitative parameters** such as mentions of an analysed object but also a number of **qualitative features** of publicity such as narratives and reach. **DebunkReach®** is calculated for every single article taking into account SimilarWeb traffic, Alexa rating, backlinks and social media interactions (reactions, shares and comments). DebunkEU.org analysts define **narratives** by

extracting main points with regards to the object of analysis, further delineating the specific message disinformation/misinformation carries towards the object into sub narratives, if needed. Narratives and **sub narratives** are being developed and updated on a constant basis.

In April 2021, 1,699 articles with false and misleading content from 190 media outlets (including 75 Facebook groups) in English, Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish and Russian languages were identified. **The impact that the analysed articles had on the audience was evaluated at 587.7 million potential contacts, as measured by DebunkReach®.**

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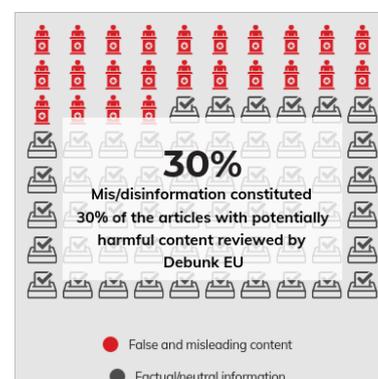
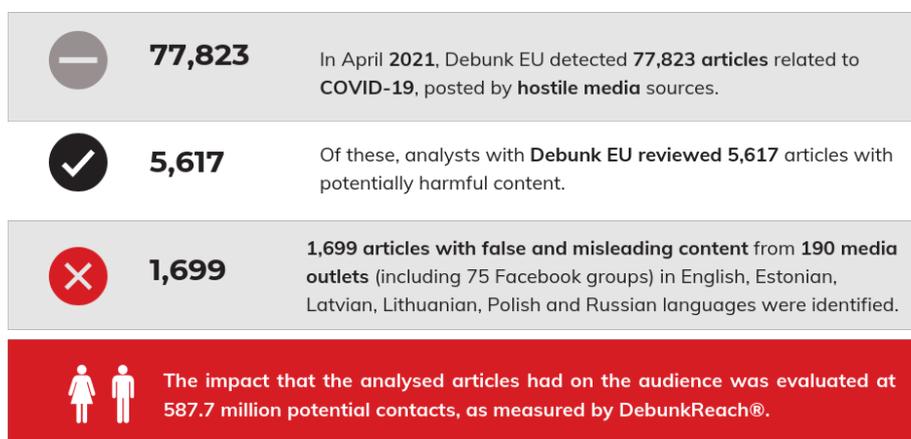


Figure 1 COVID-19 disinformation analysis by DebunkEU.org, April 2021

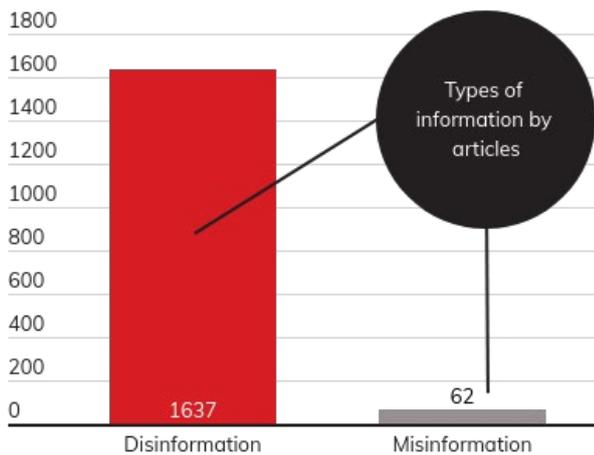


Figure 2 Types of information by articles

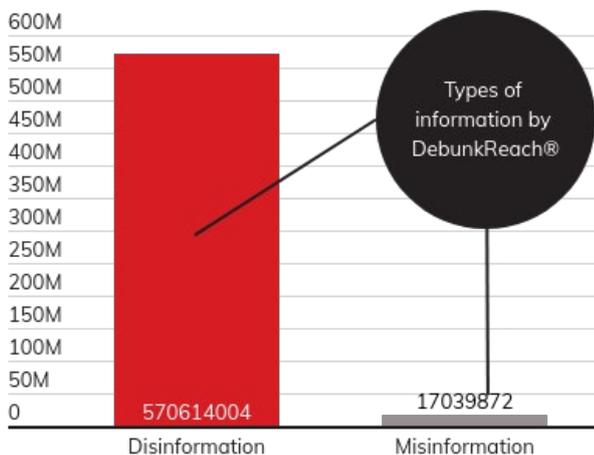


Figure 3 Types of information by DebunkReach®

The share of **disinformation** within the false and misleading content on COVID-19 in April 2021 stood at **96.3%**. Measured by **DebunkReach®**, the share amounted to **97.1%**.

Quite often, there is only a fine line between **disinformation** and **misinformation**, as establishing the intent of creating and/or sharing false and misleading content (is it a deliberate creation or not?) may be a challenge. With **social media** tightening their rules against false and misleading information, some of those holding onto to the false beliefs or disseminating manipulated information for (political) gains turn to **alt-tech platforms**, as in the case of DecentaSpeak in Latvia. **Hybrid-nature** alternatives also exist, such as Wykop.pl in Poland.

The news aggregator **Wykop.pl** is a prototype of Digg.com, launched in 2005. It includes the spaces for **sharing articles, microblogging and user-interaction**, such as live Q&A sessions with public figures and politicians. At the end of 2020, it ranked 5th among the **leading social media platforms and apps in Poland**, being the leading Polish social media service by **number of users**. Wykop.pl has been the **object** of political and COVID-19-related **disinformation analysis/reports** – this is one of the misinformation stories spotted on the website:

What was claimed:

Wearing a face mask is not only inefficient in stopping the spread of COVID-19 (the virus particles are about 10 times smaller than the smallest space between the fibres of any mask), but it also increases the chances of contracting the virus because of oxygen deficiency, as well as bacteria, fungi and other dangerous microorganisms amass on the mask during long-term wearing. Wearing face masks may be a reason of excessive deaths in Poland (over 100,000 registered so far). The data is evidenced by statements of famous scientists, publications in prestigious world medical journals and indirect statements by the WHO¹.

DebunkEU.org verdict:

Layers of face mask fibres capture large respiratory droplets and smaller airborne particles: larger particles slam straight into the fibres and get stuck, whereas the smallest particles are bounced around by air molecules in a random zig-zag pattern, increasing the time they spend in the fibre forest and their chances of getting captured. The combined filtration efficiency increases as everyone wears a mask. When worn properly, face masks do not cause CO2 intoxication nor oxygen deficiency (as is the case with surgeons, who operate for hours wearing them) and/or amass bacteria (disposable masks should be disposable, after all). Excessive deaths in Poland are related to COVID-19 and not the measures to control it, on contrary to popular claims on social platforms.

1 Wykop.pl, 16/04/2021 <https://www.wykop.pl/link/6060847/uwaga-noszenie-maseczek-moze-zwiekszyc-prawdopodobienstwo-zakazenia/>

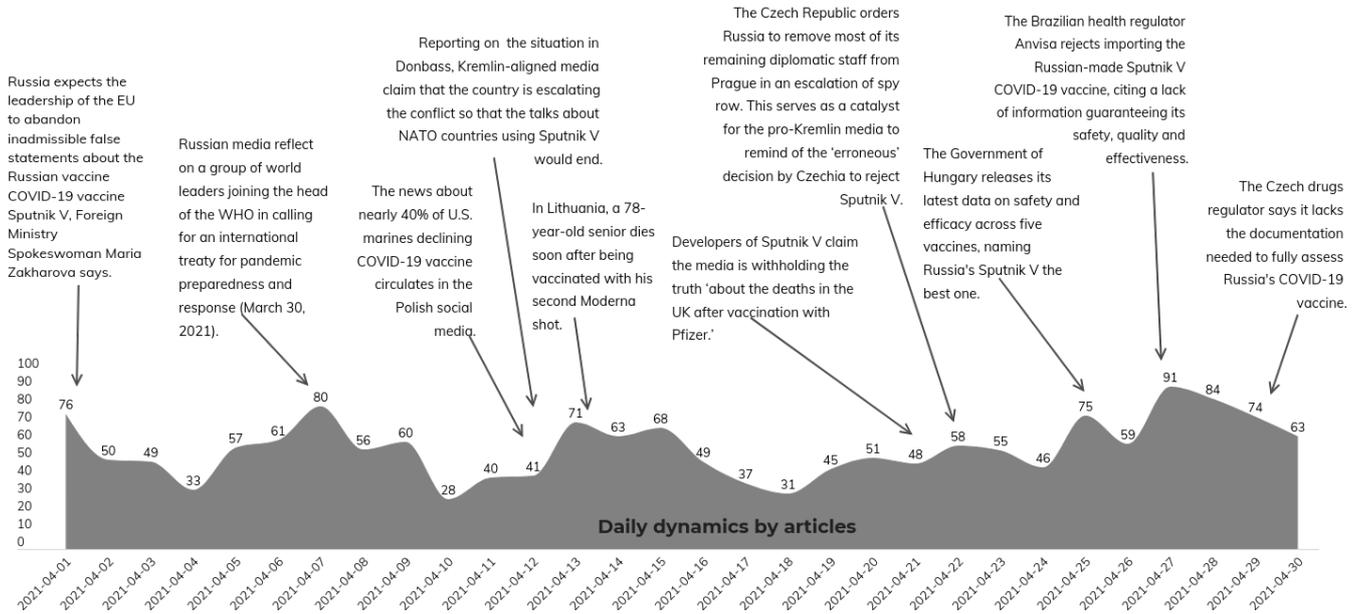


Figure 4 Dynamics of false and misleading content about COVID-19, April 2021

In April 2021, Hyperbolization was the most used disinformation technique as measured by mentions, which means most of the articles employed exaggerated and dramatized statements, such as lockdowns are dictatorship, they strive for total control, ruin our live and businesses and we are doomed to live in the 'new normal.' Selection, just as in the previous month, ranked first in terms of

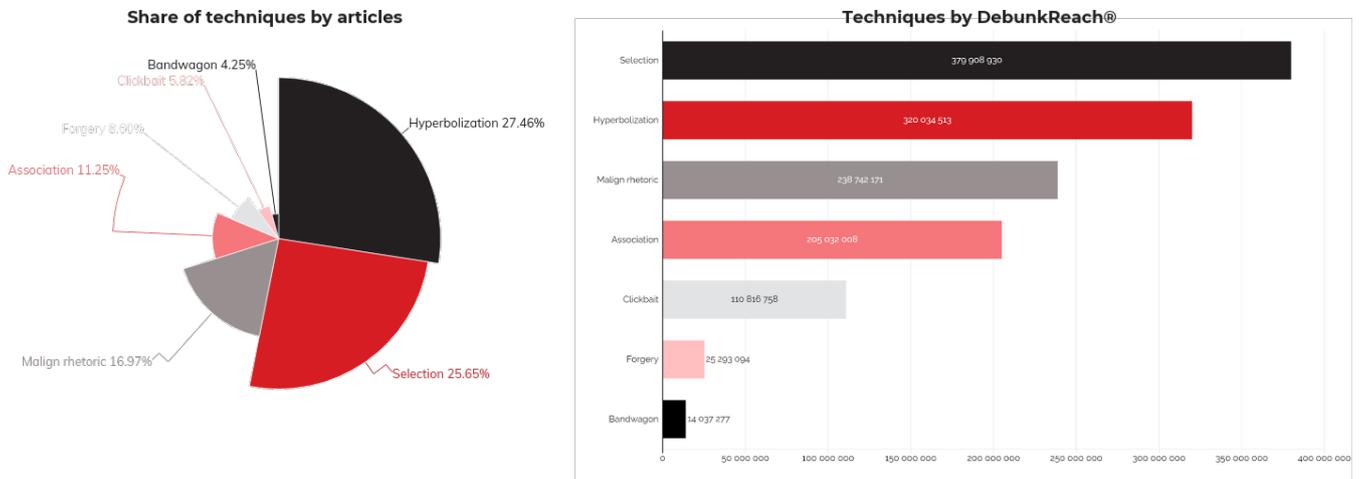


Figure 5 Disinformation techniques by articles and DebunkReach®, April 2021

DebunkReach®, as it was favoured by far-reaching pro-Kremlin media using the technique to selectively, omitting important aspects and leaving the context out of the picture, present such news as data on vaccine (in)efficiency.

False measures to fight COVID-19 was the **top narrative** within the false and misleading coverage on COVID-19 in April 2021, as measured by articles. The sub-narrative **Vaccine has been developed without rigorous testing** added the most to its leading position and was the most pronounced rhetoric overall. Almost 40% of the hits under the sub-narrative were published in Polish. In an attempt to take advantage of anxieties, caused by prolonged lockdown, as well as shortcomings in the national vaccination programme, and pursue

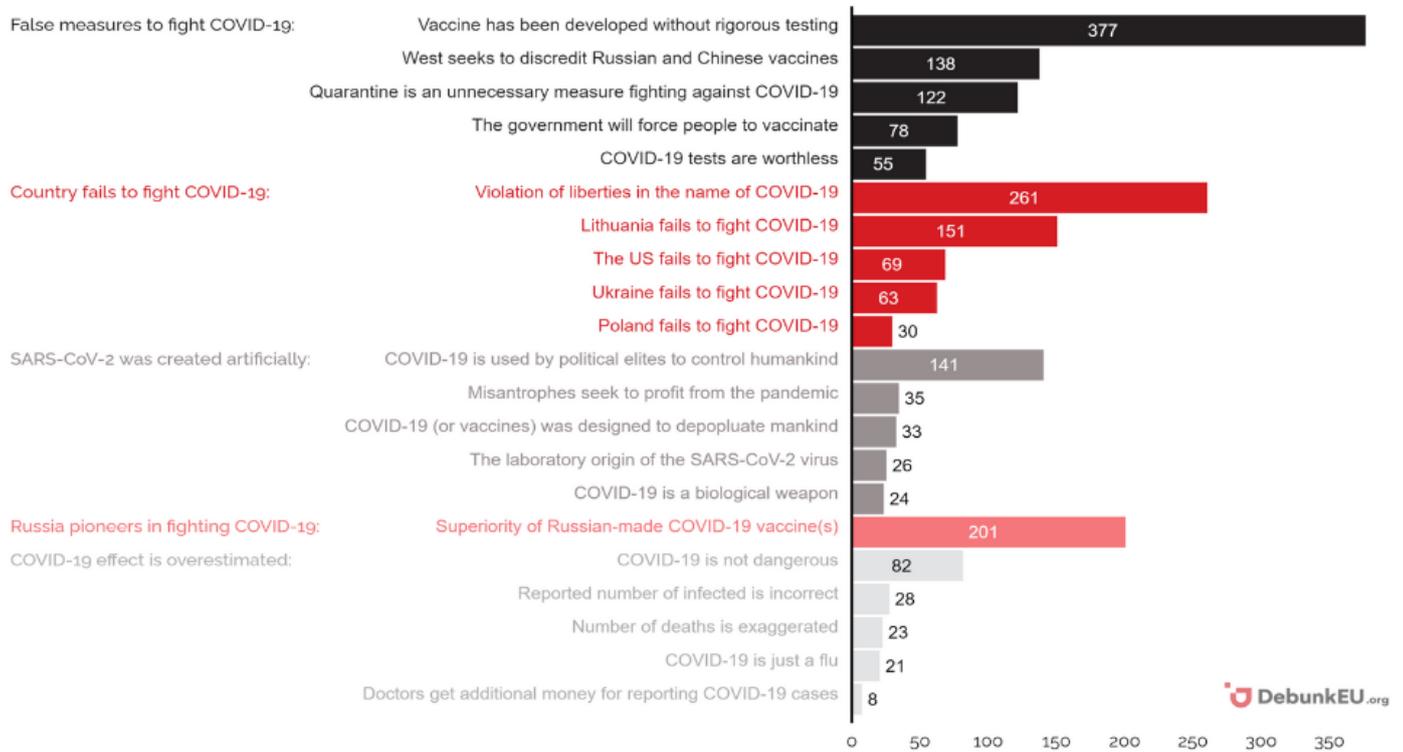


Figure 6 Narratives and subnarratives by articles, COVID-19 disinformation April 2021

the rhetoric of useless and/or dangerous vaccines, **an increasing number of articles claimed that vaccines do not work and there will never be returning to the 'old normal'.**

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Pro-Kremlin media was often using the news on side effects and fatalities correlated to the immunisation with western COVID-19 vaccines as a background to showcase the superiority of the Sputnik V, targeting Western vaccination programmes and jabs. As Hungary and San Marino advanced with giving the Russian shot to their population, these were used to juxtapose the success of using Sputnik V vs. rejecting it.

What was claimed:

Developers of the Russian COVID-19 vaccine has noticed that Western media keeps silent about the fatalities after immunisation with Pfizer vaccine, tweeting about it on Sputnik V account. 'The media reported daily on AstraZeneca's clot issues. Now it is stunningly silent on the fact from UK vaccination data that the death rate following Pfizer vaccination is more than double that of AstraZeneca's. Why?' the tweet said, referring to a report from the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change².

DebunkEU.org verdict:

The report³ published by the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change urges to release full vaccination data to combat anxieties over AstraZeneca jab, stating that a comparison between the shot and Pfizer-BioNTech jab would prove AstraZeneca is as trustable.

The call, however, is manipulated by pro-Kremlin media to claim that there's a conspiracy-like silence about deaths resulting from Pfizer vaccine, as well as to stress the latter's inferiority. The

report is based on the UK Yellow Card scheme⁴, where reported events are not always proven side effects. Moreover, the report itself includes several lines that are crucial to understand the context: 'This data is not complete and does not account for age, which matters particularly in the UK as the Pfizer vaccine was given earlier to older people who may be more likely to die from COVID-19.'

False measures to fight COVID-19 led in terms of DebunkReach®, just as it did while measured by hits. *West seeks to discredit Russian and Chinese vaccines* was the leading subnarrative under this category, even though it was significantly outpaced by *Vaccine has been developed without rigorous testing* with regards to the number of articles (377 vs. 138), occupying sixth spot vs. number two in terms of how far it reached.

However, taking subnarratives into account only, *Superiority of Russian-made COVID-19 vaccine(s)* topped the list, which ranked third in terms of mentions. The differences in the line-up of narratives/subnarratives reflect the potential of the impact the pro-Kremlin media has on amplifying false and misleading content, as well as a high communication effect associated with the above-mentioned parameters.

Similarly, although the number of articles claiming that the *EU fails to fight COVID-19* reduced compared to the peak of the previous month (from 182 to 97), the sub-narrative ranked fifth, as compared to eight position in terms of hits.

² RIA Novosti, 21/04/2021 <https://ria.ru/20210421/pfizer-1729337195.html>

³ Tony Blair Institute For Global Change, 21/04/2021 <https://institute.global/policy/restoring-confidence-workhorse-covid-19-vaccines>

⁴ Reuters, 12/03/2021 <https://www.reuters.com/article/factcheck-vaccine-statistics-idUSL1N2LA28C>

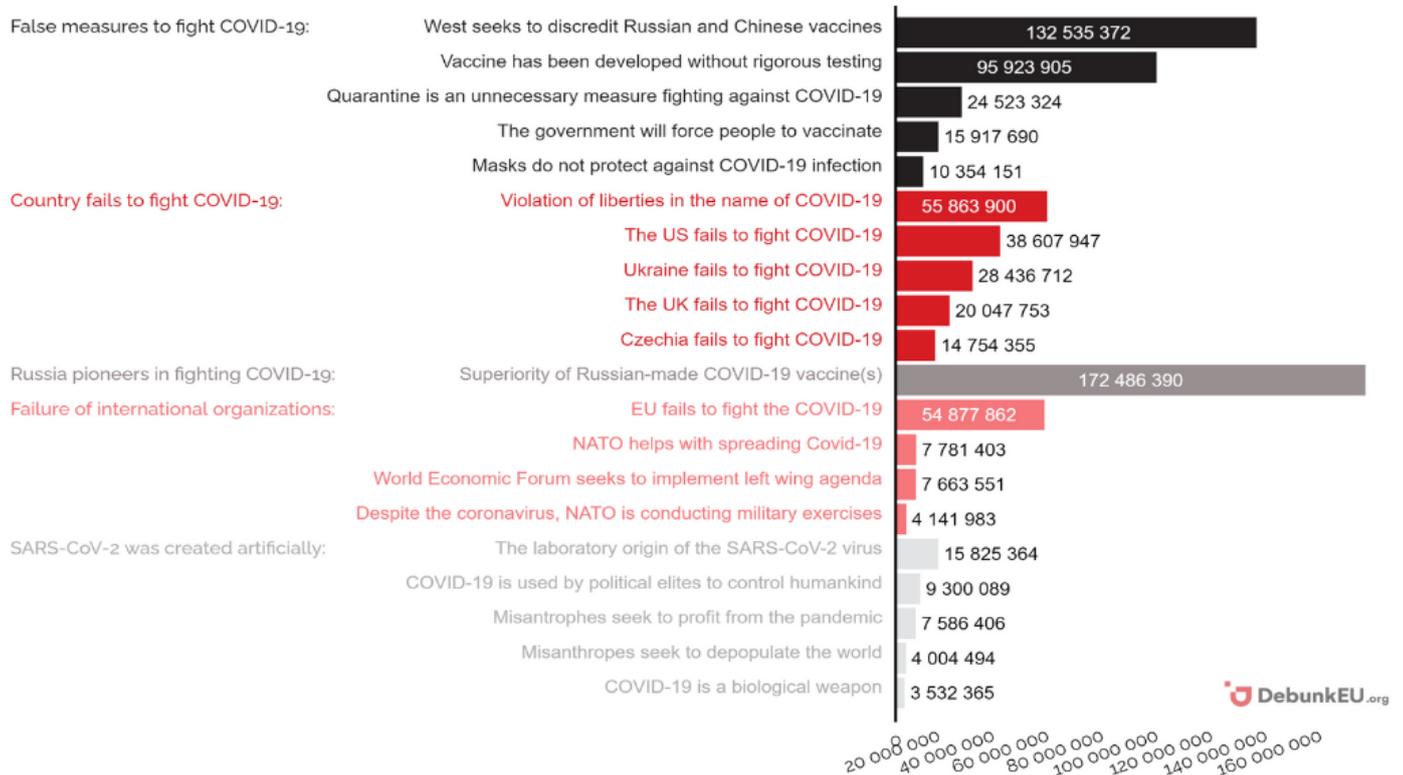


Figure 7 Narratives and subnarratives by DebunkReach®, COVID-19 disinformation April 2021

What was claimed:

Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine has been recognized as the safest and most efficient vaccine, as follows from Sunday's post on the vaccine's official Twitter page.

"The government of Hungary, the 1st EU country to start using Sputnik V, released its latest data on safety and efficiency across 5 vaccines," it reads. "Sputnik V has the best safety (7-32 times fewer deaths cases) and efficiency (2-7 times fewer COVID infections) per 100 000 vaccinated.

Thus, according to the Hungarian data, Sputnik V has up to 32 fewer fatalities and six times lower infection rate than the Pfizer vaccine.

DebunkEU.org verdict:

On April 25, the Hungarian Government published a table giving a break-up of the number of infections and deaths after secondary inoculations with the vaccines currently in use in the country. According to the data, soon afterwards tweeted on Sputnik V account, Sputnik V had up to 32 fewer fatalities and six times lower infection rate than the Pfizer vaccine. Accurate conclusions cannot be drawn from the table, according to a report by Hungary Today . The data ignores multiple conditions that would level the playing field of its variables: what was the number of people vaccinated with each vaccine, how old they were, or what health conditions they had. It also ignores the condition of the pandemic at various points in time, such as Pfizer, for instance, has been used for inoculating the most vulnerable age group and people with chronic illnesses far more than the Chinese and Russian vaccines, whilst Moderna was initially used for people in elderly

care homes. In addition, the former two have been used about two months shorter than Pfizer. The data from Hungarian Government was published within at least 44 articles from the sources on DebunkEU.org hostile media list on April 25-27. These came as a part of a wider campaign by pro-Kremlin media (and Russia's highest officials) of highlighting and amplifying any correlation of Western vaccines with side effects and deaths, juxtaposing these with portraying Spuntik V in positive light only.

Measured by **mentions**, most of the articles with false and misleading content were published in the **Russian** language (a share of **35.0%**, **595 articles**), followed by **Polish (33.1%)** and **Lithuanian (20.1%)**.

Measured by **DebunkReach®**, it was the **Russian** language that reached out to the largest number of potential contacts (a share of **72.5%**, or **425.9 million potential contacts**), followed by **English (33.1%)** (via internationally oriented state-run Russian news outlets, at **25.4%**).

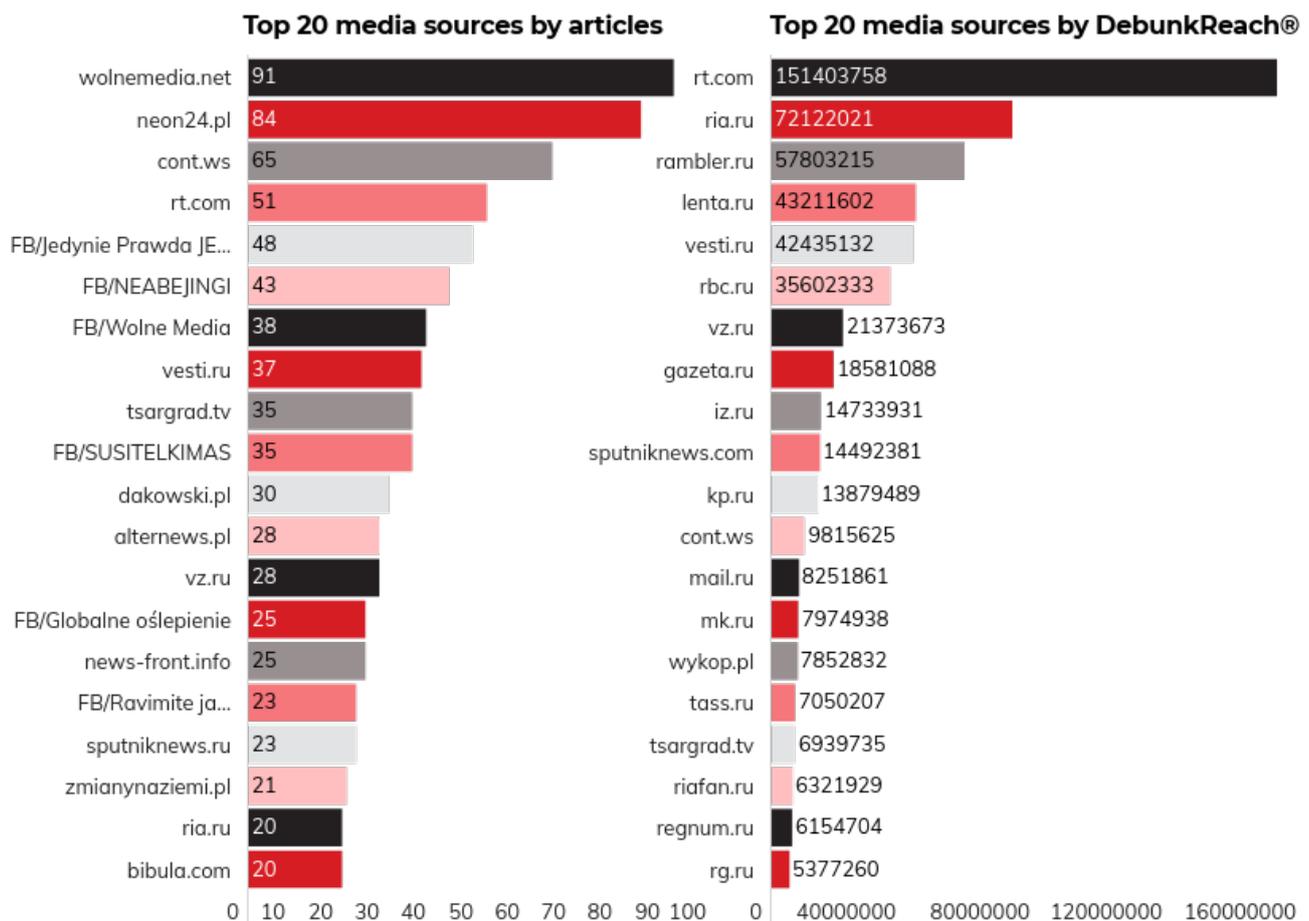


Figure 8 Top 20 sources by articles and DebunkReach®, COVID-19 disinformation April 2021

Measured by articles, the top 20 of media sources was topped by the Polish websites neon24.pl (known for conveying pro-Kremlin messages) and wolnemediap.pl, positioning itself as a 'a non-commercial alternative to mass media manipulation and disinformation', followed by the Russian language platform.

In terms of DebunkReach®, pro-Kremlin media outlets were on top, led by RT, blamed for a series of malign influence operation abroad, RIA Novosti, a part of Russia's state-controlled media group Rossiya Segodnya, headed by Dmitri Kiselyov, known as 'Putin's chief propagandist,' and Rambler, owned by Rambler Media Group, which's sole owner is state-run Sberbank.

Key findings from DebunkEU.org report on COVID-19 disinformation from April 2021:

- In April 2021, disinformation made up 96.3% of the articles with problematic information as measured by hits (by DebunkReach®, the number stood at 97.1%). The share of misinformation stood at 3.7% and 2.9% by DebunkReach®, respectively.
- Most of the articles came in Russian language (35.0%), followed by Polish (33.1%) and Lithuanian (20.1%). Measured by DebunkReach® it was the Russian language that reached out to the largest number of potential contacts (a share of 72.5%),

followed by English (via internationally oriented state-run Russian news outlets, at 25.4%).

- *Hyperbolization* was the most used disinformation technique as measured by mentions, which means most of the articles employed exaggerated and dramatized statements.
- *False measures to fight COVID-19* was again, just as in the previous periods of analysis, the top narrative with regards to mis/disinformation on COVID-19 in the month of analysis, as measured by both articles and DebunkReach®. The subnarrative *Vaccine has been developed without rigorous testing* added the most to that, as Polish fringe and social media sources vigorously reported on side effects and fatalities correlated to vaccination both at home and abroad (UK, Israeli data), elaborating also on such issues as children and vaccination. As before, pro-Kremlin media used the news on side effects and deaths correlated to the immunisation with western COVID-19 vaccines as a background to showcase the superiority of the Sputnik V.
- *Superiority of Russian-made COVID-19 vaccine(s)* topped the list of subnarratives as Kremlin-aligned media manipulated reports on coronavirus vaccine side effects, contracted infections and deaths after immunisation from several countries (including Hungary and Mexico) to claim the inferiority of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine and prove Sputnik V was made to save humanity.

Laima Venclauskienė, a historian by education, has more than 13 years of experience in the media monitoring and analysis field. At Cision Lietuva she was responsible for coordinating the work of the International Coding Department, engaged in processing, summarising, and analysing data from the media outside Lithuania.

Then Laima has worked more than 10 years at Mediaskopas, where she was processing required information from the Lithuanian media, responsible for submission of summaries in English and Lithuanian, and writing quantitative and qualitative analyses.

Since January 2021 as a senior analyst at Debunk EU, Laima is conducting high-quality data and narrative analyses, she is providing monthly disinformation analysis reports on COVID-19 and monthly round-up reports of disinformation trends in the Baltics and Poland.



Conspiracy theories in Poland

By Magdalena Wilczyńska

COVID-19 pandemic is also fertile soil for the spread of conspiracy theories. The fear it causes, uncertainty of the source of the virus, complexity of new mutations and fast development of vaccines – all are a fuel for authors of such theories. Such disinformation is worryingly popular in Poland.

DebunkEU.org experts analysed problematic information flow on April 1-30th. As a result, **142** disinformation articles in Polish language were found, which could be considered as a COVID-19 conspiracy theory. Conspiracy theories account for nearly **25%** of the disinformation about the coronavirus detected by Debunk EU in April in Polish language.

Research by the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun shows that at the end of 2020 as much as **34 percent** of Poles believe that the coronavirus is not of natural origin, but it was created

in a Chinese laboratory. **Almost 1 in 10** believe that the virus is caused by 5G networks. There are some potential explanations why conspiracy theories are so popular in Poland, such as distrust in the government, which leads to distrust of health policies, statements of prominent politicians and leaders who undermine pandemic or sowed distrust in the government via claims that pandemic had been planned. Such statements are being published on some media outlets and then they are vividly shared via social media.

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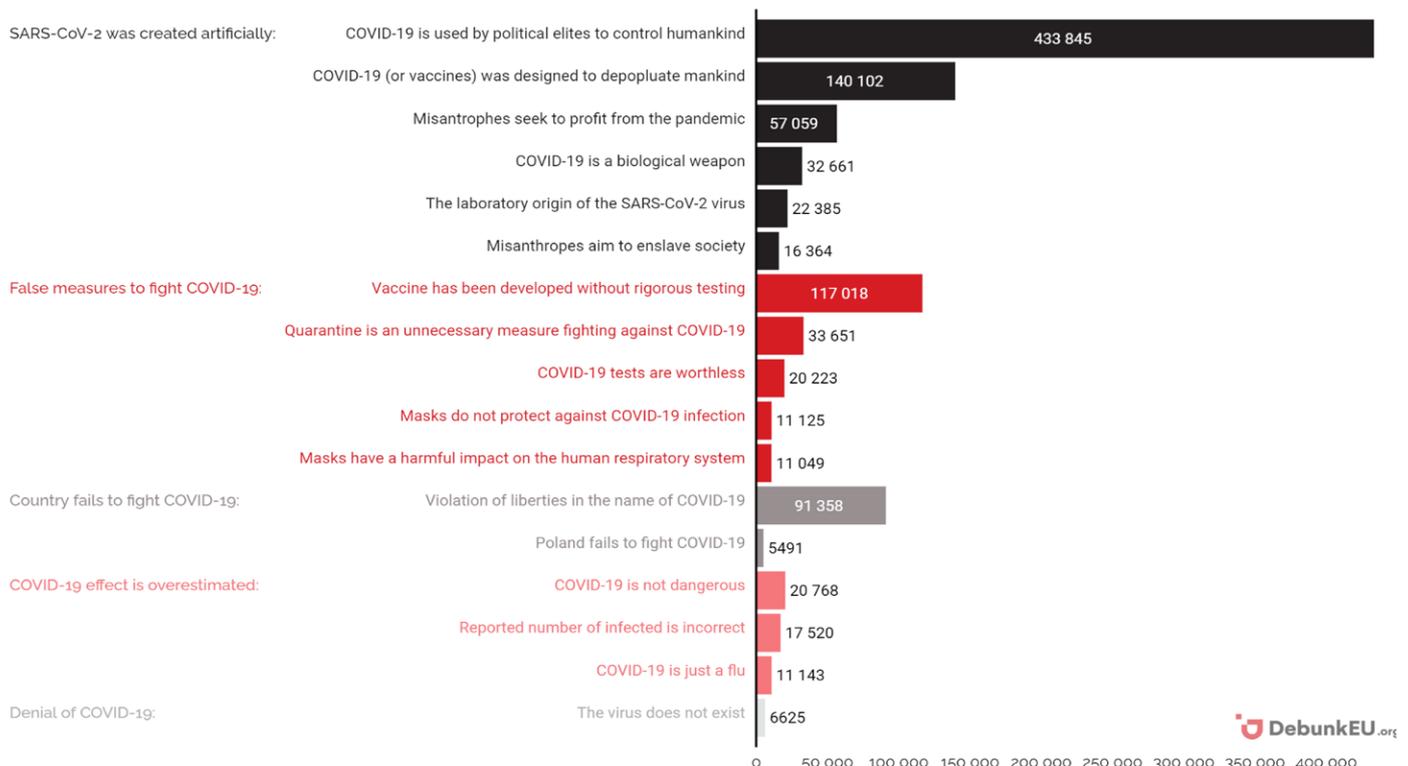


Figure 9 Narratives and subnarratives by DebunkReach® found in COVID-19 conspiracy theories

Conspiracy theories were not **regularly** spread through the period of analysis. The 'problematic information' flow although, was not a reactive one. Different conspiracy theories were spread regardless national events and did not follow national debate. At the beginning of the month conspiracy theories tended to focus on the **New World Order** (Great Reset) theory. Later, increase of **anti-masks** narratives were noted (especially stating that masks are dangerous to human health and are a tool of control people). Through the whole month, but notably more at the end of the period, **anti-vaccine** narratives were spread.

Detected conspiracy theories were used to spread **5 different** disinformation narratives regarding coronavirus pandemic and vaccines. Almost all analysed articles (140) stated that **COVID-19 pandemic was created artificially**. Under this narrative, the claim that **pandemic is used by political elites to control humankind** was the most prevailing one. Commonly, such articles were also including anti-vaccine claims, which state that vaccine was not properly tested or that vaccines are designed to depopulate the world.

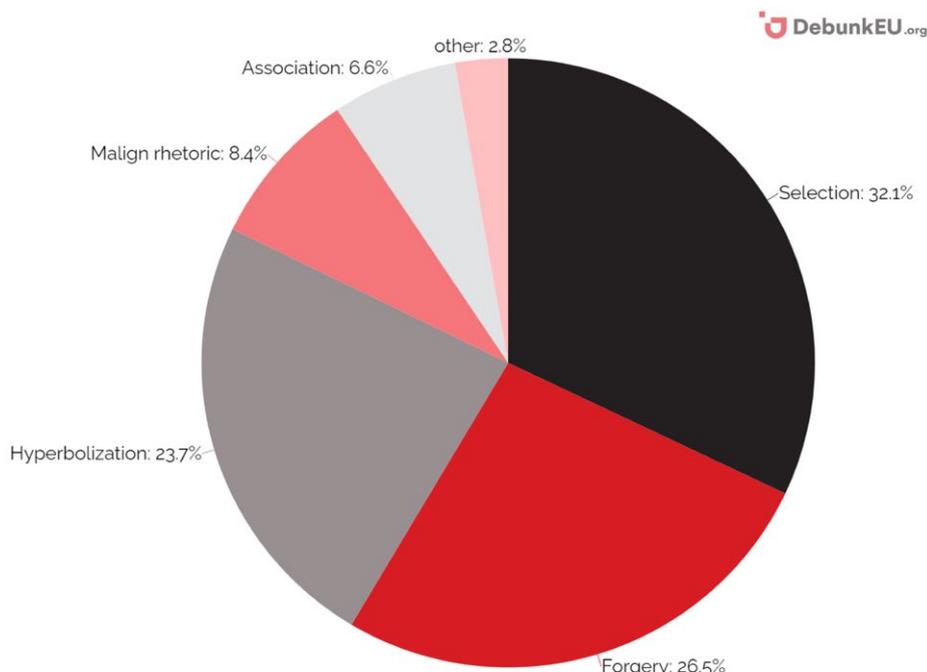


Figure 10 Share of conspiracy theories about COVID-19 by disinformation techniques

The number of falsehoods is one of those parameters that **distinguish** conspiracy theories from other disinformation. To present conspiracy theories technique of **forgery** (forged information, documents, or statements) were used more often compared to disinformation analysed in previous reports on different topics. To juxtapose, in general COVID-19 disinformation in April forgery technique was used only in less than 10% of disinformation.

The most prevailing three media outlets **neon24.pl**, **wolnemedi.net** and **alternews.pl** - spreading conspiracy theories are active

in misleadingly presenting information on coronavirus. From the content analysis we can conclude that **klubinteligencji.polskiej.pl** (almost 10% of disinformation) has spread the most complex conspiracy theory.

Magdalena Wilczyńska graduated law, journalism with a Master's degree in arts (writing) at Warsaw University, but she studied Philosophy, Film Music, Hebrew culture and Finnish language. She was awarded a Master of Laws in Human Rights at the Central European University in Budapest. Currently she is finishing her PhD on Polish Academy of Science with the focus on political influence on the right to education. Magda's professional focus is mostly on freedom of expression, hate speech and right to education. She worked at the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights in Poland where she ran cases on rule of law, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and freedom of association. She cooperated in this regard with the EU and Council of Europe. In recent years her main focus is to raise awareness about unconstitutional changes, rule of law and populism in Poland, thus she cooperates with some Polish NGOs as a Humanity in Action Fellow.



Social media trends - the power of MEMES

By Agnė Eidimaitė

It takes a short scroll through a news feed on any social media platform to stumble upon a meme. Images from well-known movies with jokes written on them usually do not carry a malicious intent (unless bad humour can be considered a crime). However, DebunkEU.org analysis shows that memes became a vessel for disinformation on COVID-19, targeting vaccines and other measures to contain the virus, accusing the media of spreading false information, and supporting conspiracy theories.

TOP 10 sub-narratives

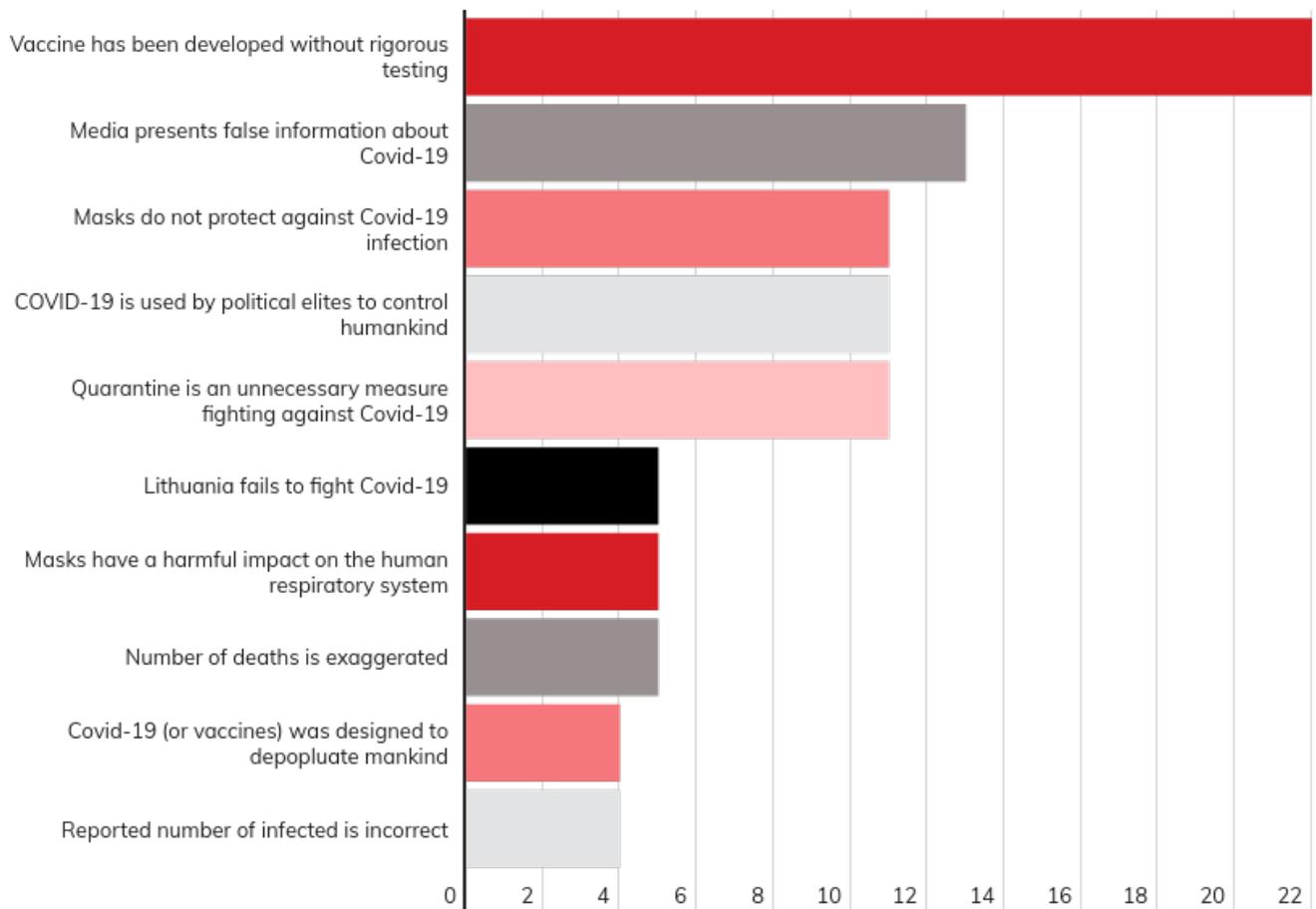


Figure 11 Subnarratives found in misleading memes about COVID-19

Why might memes pose threat?

To put it simply, based on many studies, visual information is perceived way faster by human brain than textual. This is what makes images way more sharable - because who wants to read a long post on Facebook? Memes are even more effective in this regard because usually they are based on well known, recognisable pictures. With an addition of a sarcastic joke in bold letters, a meme can quickly turn from satire to an effective tool to spread misleading information.

Visualized content presents simplistic messages leaving out the facts and amplifying the emotional reaction (e. g. anger or fear)

of the receiver, therefore, creates stronger influence and leaves a longer-lasting memory mark.

Moreover, memes are simple to adapt to the various audience due to ease of access to photo-editing tools. Popular memes tend to be translated into several languages or to spread similar messages presented with different visualizations making them more accessible and comprehensible for wider audiences.

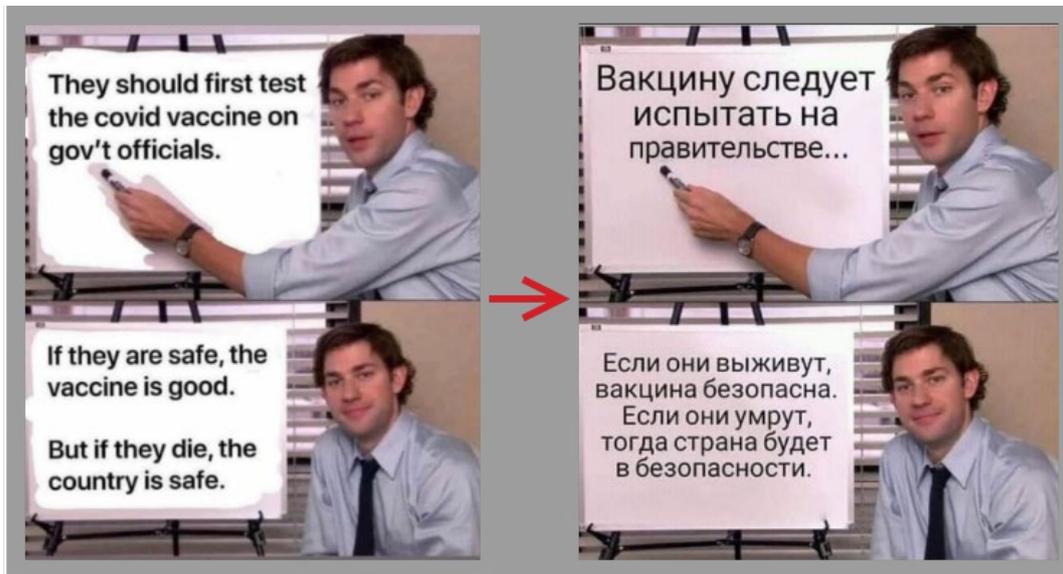


Figure 12 Misleading memes example

Vaccines are dangerous...or even fatal

COVID-19 encouraged the anti-vaxx movement to operate even more actively while the extraordinary situation of the pandemic left a larger part of the society more exposed to false information. Memes targeting the COVID-19 vaccine, vaccination process and other measures to contain virus (e. g. masks and quarantine) have spread on the internet most widely, with a considerable growth in 4th quarter of 2020 caused by the beginning of the vaccination process.

Some of the memes can be considered humorous as they often refer to pop culture images, yet it does not mean they cannot

be deceiving. Such memes tend to exaggerate side effects of vaccines, increase mistrust of their safeness spreading a popular message that pharmaceutical companies do not take any responsibility for their product. As a result, those images evoke negative emotions such as fear or anxiety and enhance mistrust in science and medicine.

Memes also tend to reiterate even more frightful message presenting vaccines as a measure to depopulate humankind. To strengthen the alleged fatal threat, intimidating pictures are used, i.e., images of war or historically known tragedies.



Figure 13 Misleading memes example

Anti-vaccine memes might have a huge negative contribution to people's will to take the jab; therefore, it is crucial to debunk misleading information.

Media exaggerates the threat of COVID-19

Systemic media became yet another target of misleading memes on COVID-19. Similar to the anti-vaccine narratives, negative information about mainstream media outlets has been circulating even before the COVID-19 pandemic. However, in the context of the pandemic those narratives have been amplified even more with news organisations accused of presenting false information, deceiving society, exaggerating the danger of the virus to serve the government, pharmaceutical companies, or powerful businesses which aim to profit from the pandemic.



Figure 14 Misleading memes example

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Enhanced mistrust creates a favourable environment for non-systemic media outlets, various internet blogs, or social media pages to grow their popularity and share fabricated or manipulated information about the pandemic more widely. Consequently, lost trust in official information and underestimation of the threats burdens the measures taken to stop the virus.

Conspiracy theories in pictures

The worldwide pandemic stimulated the growth and diffusion of conspiracy theories. Bill Gates, George Soros, Henry Kissinger, and other influential persons are used as targets, presenting them as misanthropes who aim to control or depopulate humankind. Moreover, conspiracies concerning COVID-19 commonly seek to deny the origin of the virus i.e., claiming that it was created artificially.



Figure 15 Misleading memes example

You might read this and think – well I would never believe that Bill Gates wants to put a micro-chip into us all. So why such messages are so widespread? Conspiracy theories claim to be able to explain complex and sometimes disturbing events by allegedly detecting patterns and making causal inferences. They are psychologically attractive because usually conspiracies are more flattering than the truth and might turn into a coping mechanism, especially in such extreme and uncertain times as worldwide lockdown; this way, conspiracies find a way to spread even more quickly and widely during the pandemic.

Needless to say, conspiracy theories pose a great threat to the individuals believing in them and, by extension, to the wider society as well, causing polarisation, diminished mistrust in science and government institutions, enhanced anxiety.

Vaccine wars

Since the beginning of the pandemic, development of a COVID-19 vaccine has been regarded as a testimony to the effectiveness of a country's health care system and its technological superiority, as well as a powerful political instrument. Expression of geopolitical tension and the competition between manufacturers of vaccines is also expressed in memes.

Many political scientists and officials in Europe and the U.S. expressed a negative response to the Russian vaccine Sputnik V and warned that Russia is ready to use the vaccine as a political tool to manipulate countries. Memes sarcastically picturing Russian president Vladimir Putin as a "saviour" voice dissatisfaction of the manipulative actions of Russia as well as a critique to the European countries which decided to buy the product.

On the contrary negative communication is conducted against Western producers of vaccines claiming that the West uses energy dependency to pressure countries not to buy Sputnik V.

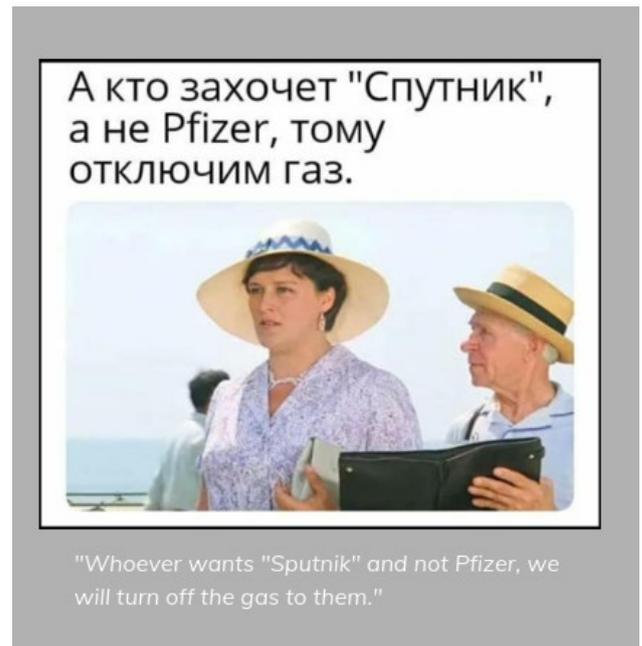


Figure 16 Misleading memes example

For this analysis, DebunkEU.org looked through 119 misleading memes concerning COVID-19 in 26 Facebook groups or pages, posted throughout the period of March 17th, 2020 – March 15th, 2021.

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Figure 16 Misleading memes example

Historian by education, **Agnė Eidimtaité** works at DebunkEU.org as a disinformation analyst and researches false and misleading content spread about Lithuania by hostile media sources. Her interests also include the history and political development of Transcaucasia and Central Asia countries and nations, the role of European Union outside its borders, and the role of civic society in the democratization process.



Tackling misinformation

Working Together to Build Global Vaccine Confidence and Support an Inclusive Recovery

(<https://www.oecd.org/gov/open-government/taking-misinformation-working-together-to-build-global-vaccine-confidence-and-support-an-inclusive-recovery.htm>)

On 10 February 2021, the OECD held the virtual Tackling Misinformation event, hosted by the UK Government, as part of an effort to identify and develop good practice principles on government communication responses to misinformation. This event brought together more than 300 participants, comprising primarily government officials from around 50 countries. It also served as the occasion to convene the OECD Experts Group on Public Communication, as well as welcome the participation of representatives from other key formal and informal OECD bodies.



Governments are operating in a new and rapidly changing information environment where the spread of misinformation can strongly influence people's behavior, as well as reduce trust and confidence in official institutions and policies. Through the lens of the COVID-19 pandemic, this event explored how misinformation is undermining public support for vaccines, posing a severe risk to acceptance and uptake. It also looked at how public communicators and other key actors are rising to this challenge.

The event showcased how effective public communication can build vaccine confidence, as well as how the development of OECD good practice principles can be used to guide misinformation responses. In interventions and interactive discussions, participants expressed support for the principles and interest in contributing collaboratively to their development.

The Tackling Misinformation event took place in two parts:

Part 1

Speakers discussed about misinformation trends and the innovative actions public communicators are taking to tackle this issue. The first part of the event included interventions from the following speakers:

Kersti Kaljulaid, President of Estonia
Elsa Pilichowski, Director of the Public Governance Directorate, OECD
Nadhim Zahawi, Minister for Business and Industry and Minister for COVID Vaccine Deployment, Department of Health and Social Care, UK Government
Professor Heidi Larson, Professor of Anthropology, Risk and Decision Science, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

Dr Sander van der Linden, Professor of Social Psychology in Society, University of Cambridge

Elena Savoia, Deputy Director of the Emergency Preparedness, Research, Evaluation & Practice Program (EPREP), Harvard University

Melissa Fleming, Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications, United Nations

Rodney Ghali, Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet of the Impact and Innovation Unit, Privy Council, Canada

James Sorene, Deputy Director, COVID-19 Vaccines Communications, Department for Health and Social Care, UK Government

Tim Chatwin, VP Communications and Public Affairs, Google EMEA

Alex Aiken, Executive Director of Government Communication Service, UK Government

Part 2

The session included breakout groups that encouraged substantive and active discussions on key themes. Participants reflected and shared ideas on how governments can utilize their expertise in addressing misinformation and engage in the development of OECD good practice principles. This part of the event included remarks from the following speakers:

Katju Holkeri, Chair of the OECD Working Party on Open Government

Michael Nathan, Director of the Government Information Service, France

Vincenzo Le Voci, Secretary-General of the Club of Venice

Stephen Ivie, Head of Campaigns, HMG Russia Unit, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, UK

Jussi Toivanen, Chief Communications Specialist (StratCom and Crisis Communications), Government Communications, Prime Minister's Office, Finland

Dr. Bruno Monteiro, Coordinator, Experimentation Lab for Public Administration, Administrative Modernisation Agency, Portugal

Aura María Cifuentes Gallo, Digital Government Director, Ministry of Information Technologies and Communications, Colombia

Alessandro Bellantoni, Head of the Open Government Unit, OECD

Gerald Mullally, Deputy Director of Communications at the Cabinet Office and Head of the UK Government Communication Service International (GCSI), United Kingdom

Negazionismo e legge dei piccoli numeri

di Riccardo Viale

Uno degli errori più comuni del giudizio umano è quello di generalizzare da pochi casi. Bertrand Russell lo aveva sintetizzato bene nella nota metafora dello sfortunato tacchino induttivista. La credenza che si era formato negli anni precedenti sulla premura degli allevatori nel tenerlo in buona salute non bastò ad evitargli di venire sgozzato alla vigilia di Natale.

Generalizzare da pochi casi significa credere che i "piccoli numeri" (pochi casi) invece dei "grandi numeri" (molti casi) possono dare origine a leggi e farci fare delle previsioni. Ciò ci porta a credere che eventi rari siano la norma e che le prime informazioni che leggo sul web rappresentino gli indizi di una regolarità sottostante. Soprattutto se sono dati che confermano alcune nostre ipotesi di partenza.

Questo fenomeno sembra corrispondere a molti fenomeni di negazionismo e cospirazionismo esplosi in questi anni. Se sono sospettoso verso l'autorità costituita e leggo alcune informazioni sul web che mi confermano i sospetti, la mia generalizzazione negazionista comincia a rafforzarsi, per consolidarsi ulteriormente con la fornitura di dati a sua conferma da parte degli algoritmi di "news feed" dei "social network" ed ancora di più nel caso trovi un gruppo di affini in cui inserirmi.

Negazionismo verso il cambiamento climatico e il danno del tabacco e cospirazionismo sulle scie chimiche e l'abbattimento delle Torri Gemelle a New York si generano con questi meccanismi cognitivi da tacchino induttivista. Durante la pandemia da Covid 19 se ne sono visti tanti esempi. Un testimone oculare vede una autoambulanza vuota ma a sirene spiegate o va in ospedale e trova un reparto Covid mezzo vuoto, quindi il pericolo della pandemia è solo una messinscena. Un suo amico usa la idrossiclorochina e guarisce, quindi vi è una congiura delle autorità sanitarie contro l'efficacia del suo utilizzo. Si trova con amici in una festa dove non si usa la mascherina e nessuno si infetta, quindi la tesi della contagiosità e del distanziamento sociale è un bufala per ridurre la libertà personale del cittadino. Una persona vaccinata contrae lo stesso l'infezione quindi i vaccini non servono. E così via.

E' la distorsione cognitiva della "legge dei piccoli numeri" il responsabile principale del pensare negazionista. Non vi sono strane patologie cerebrali alla sua base come si è sentito dire in qualche trasmissione televisiva sulla base di studi singoli (piccoli numeri) senza grande autorevolezza scientifica. Sicuramente anche il profilo di personalità è rilevante. Cospirazionismo e negazionismo si alimentano da una tendenza paranoide di mancanza di fiducia e di sospettosità sistematica verso gli altri ed in particolare verso chi rappresenta il potere costituito.

Da ultimo in questi giorni tra le strane affermazioni che si sono sentite, forse la più "originale" è stata quella di incolpare Karl Popper di essere ispiratore della giustificazione negazionista. L'argomento in soldoni è il seguente: dato che Popper propone come unica possibilità epistemologica quella della confutazione delle ipotesi e non quella della verifica, allora ciò giustifica i negazionisti che cercano dati contrari alle tesi prevalenti e, quando li trovano, pretendono il riconoscimento sociale. Sostenere che nessuna ipotesi deve essere accettata come vera sembrerebbe

scardinare la fiducia nell'autorità della scienza. Ovviamente in filosofia la frittata può essere rivoltata come si vuole.

Nel caso di Popper la lettura è però quantomeno faziosa. Popper si occupa della logica della giustificazione di asserzioni di tipo universale (come tutti i cigni sono bianchi) e, giustamente, sostiene l'impossibilità di provare la loro verità (impossibilità ad osservare tutti i cigni nell'universo) ma solo la loro falsità (il famoso cigno nero). Non si occupa della maggior parte delle ipotesi scientifiche che interessano i negazionisti, quelle di tipo statistico. Esse sono la preponderanza oggi in ambito scientifico ed affermano solo la probabilità che avvenga un certo fenomeno non che esso sia sempre presente. Si basano sui grandi numeri ed ammettono una piccola percentuale di fenomeni contrari (le code nella distribuzione).

Quando Popper sostiene lo spirito critico nella scienza è proprio per combattere i comportamenti autoingannevoli di chi va in cerca solo di conferme delle proprie tesi, spesso costruite sui "piccoli numeri", come il tacchino induttivista.



Riccardo Viale is Full Professor of Behavioral Sciences and Cognitive Economics at the Department of Economics and President of BIB-Behavioral Insights Bicocca of the University of Milano Bicocca. He is also a professor of behavioral economics at the School of Government and at the School of European Public Economics of LUISS, Rome. Lecturer and scholar over the years in various foreign universities and research centers including the universities of Oxford, Columbia, Pennsylvania, California-Santa Barbara and the Max Planck Institute for Human Development in Berlin. He is the Founder and Secretary General of the Herbert Simon Society and President of the Cognitive Insights Team at the Collegio Carlo Alberto in Turin. Editor in Chief of *Mind & Society* (Springer). In the 90's he was adviser on research and innovation policy to the Italian Prime Minister and to the Minister of University and Research. From 2010 to 2014 he was Director of Italian Cultural Institute of New York. He is currently Head of Italy Behavioral Insights Team at Prime Minister Department of Civil Service. He is the author of many books and publications including the forthcoming "Handbook on Bounded Rationality" (Routledge, 2021) and "Nudging" (The MIT Press, 2021).

Negationism and the law of small numbers

By Riccardo Viale

One of the most common errors of human judgment is to generalize from a few cases. Bertrand Russell had summarized it well in the well-known metaphor of the unfortunate "inductivist turkey". The belief he had formed in previous years about the care of farmers to keep it healthy was not enough to prevent it from being slaughtered on Christmas Eve.

Generalizing from a few cases means believing that "small numbers" (few cases) instead of "large numbers" (many cases) can give rise to laws and make us make predictions. This leads us to believe that rare events are the norm and that the first information I read on the web represents clues to an underlying regularity. Especially if such data confirm some of our starting hypotheses.

This phenomenon seems to correspond to many phenomena of negationism and conspiracy that have exploded in recent years. If I am suspicious of the established authority and I read some information on the web that confirms my suspicions, my denier generalization begins to strengthen, to further consolidate with the provision of data in its confirmation by the "news feed" algorithms of the "social network" and even more if you find a group of relatives to join.

Denialism with regard to climate change evidence and the damage of tobacco and conspiracy theories about chemtrails and the downing of the Twin Towers in New York are generated through these inductivist turkey cognitive mechanisms. During the Covid 19 pandemic, many examples have been noticed. An eyewitness sees an empty ambulance but with sirens blaring or goes to the hospital and finds a Covid ward half empty, so the danger of the pandemic is just a hoax. A friend of his uses hydroxychloroquine and heals, so there is a conspiracy by the health authorities against the effectiveness of its use. One is with friends at a party where masks are not used and no one gets infected, hence the contagiousness and social distancing thesis is a hoax to restrict the citizen's personal freedom. A vaccinated person still contracts the infection: so, vaccines are not needed. And so on.

The cognitive distortion of the "law of small numbers" is the main cause of negationist thinking. There are no strange brain pathologies at its base as it has been heard in some television programs based on single studies (small numbers) without great scientific authority. Surely the personality profile is also relevant. Conspiracy and denial are fuelled by a paranoid tendency of lack of trust and systematic suspiciousness towards others and in particular towards those who represent the established power.

Recently, among the strange affirmations that have been heard, perhaps the most "original" was that of blaming Karl Popper for inspiring the denier's justification. The argument in a nutshell is the following: since Popper proposes as the only epistemological possibility that of the refutation of the hypotheses and not that of the verification, then this justifies the negationists who look for data contrary to the prevailing theses and, when they find them,

be perceived as undermining confidence in science's authority. Obviously in philosophy the omelette can be turned over as you want.

In Popper's case, however, the reading is at least biased. Popper deals with the logic of the justification of universal assertions (as all swans are white) and, rightly, he argues the impossibility of proving their truth (impossibility to observe all swans in the universe) but only their falsity (the famous black swan). He does not deal with most of the scientific hypotheses that interest the deniers, the statistical ones. Today they are the prevailing ones in the scientific field and only affirm the probability that a certain phenomenon may occur, not that it be always present. They are based on large numbers and admit a small percentage of opposite phenomena ("queues in distribution").

When Popper supports the critical spirit in science, he does it precisely to combat the self-deceptive behaviors of those who go in search only of confirmation of their theses, often built on "small numbers", such as the "inductivist turkey".

Climate resilience needs community roots¹

by DEMSOC

Maintaining food, protection, homes for wildlife, and improved air quality is our gift to future generations. These acts of preservation are apt metaphors when thinking about the impact our actions have on the climate around us.

The trees we wander past each day provide us with many more benefits than we give them credit for. Take a walk through any city, and you'll see that trees can sprout anywhere at any time.

The problem is that unless a city cultivates deep roots of community and citizen participation and sets the right conditions for young shoots to emerge, or tends to plants as they mature, then the city will not develop a dense, strengthened canopy for sustained climate futures.

Just like the tree, cities and regions also need to create spaces for climate resilience to take root.

Inclusive spaces, where opinions from a diverse range of actors can be meaningfully heard, and complex challenges that governments cannot tackle alone can be collectively addressed. Most importantly, cities and regions need to create environments with strong collaboration roots and where citizen participation can bloom and, just like the trees, improve a city's long-term climate resilience, creating a healthy, clean future for everyone. However, the problem is that sometimes you need to take a pretty long walk, through several cities, to find such well-rooted collaboration.

Our Democratic Climate Model highlights how democratic principles can lead cities and regions to respond differently to climate change.

The Model is underpinned by meaningful participation and legitimised by continuous community consent. A vital feature of the Model is that it strengthens democratic institutions in the long term through citizen participation.



Herein lies the democratic climate conundrum.

Despite this type of famed citizen participation, it is currently on a distant and abstract level, with very few citizens involved.

Participation is still a very long, long walk away from most interested citizens and their daily lives.

The UN and the EU are famed for leading the way to include citizen voices during climate negotiations.

From the 1992 Rio Declaration to the 2020 European Climate Pact as part of the European Green Deal, citizens have had some form of a voice in climate-related decision-making.



What about involvement closer to home?

The good news is that cities and regions are mostly aware of the importance of addressing climate change. City leaders are starting to reimagine city life without chronic congestion, polluting buildings, and shrinking green spaces.

The bad news is that too many cities and regions have their efforts hampered by low-levels of citizen participation.

Dialogue, however, is fading away, critically when residents need to adjust to new climate laws, and more importantly, have a say in shaping legislation.

The call for greater citizen participation in climate decision-making processes is far from a new suggestion.

What we see now, though, is a massive disconnect between the enthusiasm of climate-opinionated residents and the engagement of such communities in participatory processes that can create more climate-friendly ways of living, working, and playing in a city.

Why is there a disconnect?

In short, it seems that the old ways of working, through narrow dialogues, a homogeneity of voices, and technocratic, short-term solution-based thinking, are stunting the process.

¹ <https://www.demsoc.org/blog/climate-resilience-needs-community-roots> - published on 11 March 2021

Citizens are fatigued by being told what to do by those in power and want agency and ownership over decisions that impact their quality of life. They wish to do away with top-down decisions where citizen participation is an afterthought or box to tick. Cities and regions are coming around to this idea and want increased community acceptance and support for climate measures. They are also aware that investments in this process will yield new insights based on lived experience, local knowledge, and expertise. However, the road is not easy.

In short, it seems that the old ways of working, through narrow dialogues, a homogeneity of voices and inefficiently planned meetings, are stunting the process. Meaningful participation requires the transformation of the usual systems to create lasting structures that address complex challenges, such as climate change. Citizen participation for climate resilience is needed now.

EIT Climate-KIC Healthy, Clean Cities Deep Demonstrations

Along with several design partners, Democratic Society took up the challenge of inspiring cities to experiment with new approaches to citizen participation as part of the [EIT Climate-KIC Healthy, Clean Cities Deep Demonstrations](#) project consortium.

Democratic Society also wanted to use this experience to develop a scalable model that could be experimented with in any city, anywhere.

The project brought together experts from financing, innovation, carbon accounting, and citizen participation to design and conduct strategic work programmes with cities.

Crucially, Democratic Society also employed Local Connectors in each city, skilled practitioners with expertise in policy and civic engagement, social innovation and design for sustainability, and locals in the cities they worked in.

They collaborated with city leaders and consortium design partners and joined the dots between the diverse actors involved. They worked towards a good transition that included government bodies, civil society organisations, grassroots groups, journalists, and businesses.

The locations for these programmes? The 14 European cities of Amsterdam, Edinburgh, Kraków, Križevci, Leuven, Madrid, Malmö, Maribor, Milano, Niš, Orléans, Sarajevo, Skopje and Vienna.

With the facilitation in place, the Deep Demonstrations were then designed to achieve systematic change in a range of climate resilience priority areas.

These were mobility, logistics, housing, building environment, waste and the circular economy, energy, and urban greening.

The participatory elements of the Deep Demonstrations as led by Democratic Society utilised the concepts of community placemaking conversations, hyperlocal governance, climate assemblies, opportunities for co-production and co-ownership, different models of collaboration between city governments and citizens, and embedding participation in transition governance.

Learnings about meaningful collaboration

Looking back at 18 months of reimagining quality of life in 14 European cities, a lot is to be learnt.

One message is clear: city leaders can better address climate challenges by embedding democratic principles, such as collaboration, power-sharing, and transparency in their climate resilience work.

More in-depth and broader citizen participation can help to reimagine life in cities and generate buy-in for policies.

One message is clear: cities can better address climate challenges by embedding democratic principles, such as collaboration, power-sharing and transparency in their climate action work.

Introducing our Climate Democratic Model

Here we present the first iteration of a Democratic Climate Model based on our learnings from the Deep Demonstrations project. We would also like to invite you to provide your feedback and engage us in a discussion.

The Model is illustrated through the tree analogy. While trees come from seeds, the seeds themselves do not contain the resources needed to grow them.

Instead, the seeds that sprout from the conditions around them and the roots that provide the tree with a sound footing to draw in nutrients create stability and grow towards the surface.

The nodes of connectivity between the roots broaden the possibilities of a nurtured and nourished canopy above. Just like the tree, climate resilience needs deep roots in communities that policies serve.

The Model features three parts: Rooted vs. Weak collaboration, The City Canopy, and an Actor Framework.

Rooted vs. Weak Collaboration

Rooted vs. Weak Collaboration visualises the degree to which strong or weak collaboration roots unlock climate resilience in cities, now and for future generations.

Rooted collaboration

'Rooted collaboration' shows the benefits of cultivating deep roots of community and citizen participation so that cities develop a dense, strengthened canopy for sustained climate futures.

Weak collaboration

Conversely, 'Weak collaboration' is what happens without firm roots, where lack of citizen participation risks collapsing the city into a non-inclusive and non-sustainable climate future.

The City Canopy

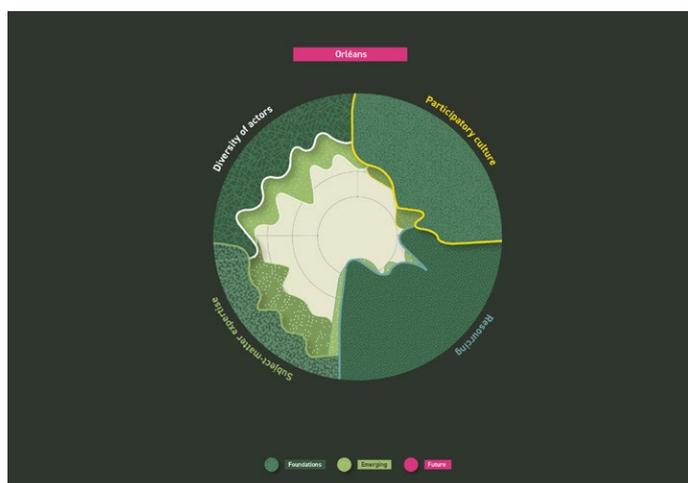
The 'City Canopy' is a tool for mapping the scales of climate resilience developed through rooted collaboration.

In this model, the denser the canopy that covers a city, the more likely its structures and processes support rooted collaboration, shifting the city or region towards strengthened citizen participation and climate policy governance that will stand the test of time.

Our findings across the 14 Deep Demonstrations cities suggested that four elements are central to ensuring a city can progress towards climate resilience: **1) Diversity of actors; 2) Participatory culture; 3) Subject matter expertise; 4) Resources.** Each of these elements has several characteristics that we use to calculate a City's Canopy.



The presence of these four elements are mapped to three layers: *Foundational, mobilising factors, Emerging shifts,* and the scale of *Future possibilities* in the city to increase the density of their canopy for climate resilience.



Actor Framework

The Actor Framework helps us explain the types of actors involved in the Democratic Climate Model, what roles they play, and how their roles must evolve to bring about just and sustainable climate futures. Types of actors include artists, activists, researchers,

grassroots groups, civil society, companies, governments, and journalists.

In every city and region, different actors participate to different degrees. How much and how actors come together has a bearing on the degree of rooted collaboration for climate resilience. We also use the actor framework to calculate the diversity of actors element in the City Canopy.

Like all parts of the Democratic Climate Model, this framework will continue to evolve. We invite your feedback.

Let us take a closer look at how the Deep Demonstrations played out in Orléans Métropole, France. This city saw the opportunity to bolster its participatory culture and question old ways of working.

The vision

The vision for our Democratic Climate Model is that it can be used to inspire more collaborative engagement, more profound thought about who and what we value, and embed democratic principles for just climate transitions in thousands of cities and regions.

The ultimate goal is for an interconnected, international network of climate-resilient cities and regions - liveable areas, where citizens are engaged and live their best lives within vibrant, inclusive, and socially-just communities.

If there is one message you should take away from this article it is this:

Yes, cities and regions need to find new ways to involve citizens in climate decision-making. Still, they cannot do this without city leaders, funders, and active citizens in the climate space, reflecting on how they need to act differently. We can help with that.

Democratic Society, through strengthening governance, participation, and civil society, can help you make the best use of the Model outlined in this article.

We aim to help build individual and institutional capacity on citizen participation and governance using democratic principles and a more sustainable climate approach.

Democratic Society's strength is our local presence in the cities and regions we are working in.

Let's partner together for democracy and climate. Let's root democracy and climate action in our cities, regions, towns, and villages across Europe.

If you would like to know more about our Democratic Climate Model, please get in touch with Nadja Nickel, Programme Director, Climate.

Don't forget to tell us what you thought about the Democratic Climate Model outlined in this article. How does it differ from what you see in your community? How could it be improved?

A case study of the Orléans Métropole, a grouping of 22 local councils participating in the Deep Demonstrations project. We look at what mobilising factors are in place amongst the city leaders to encourage participation, the shifts that have taken place during the Deep Demonstrations, and what the future holds for the Métropole.

Acknowledgements

The Healthy, Clean Cities Deep Demonstrations project was financially supported by EIT Climate-KIC.



Democratic Society worked as the design partners within the project consortium with Dark Matter Labs, Bankers Without Boundaries, and Material Economics to inspire 14 cities with new ways of imagining, trialling, and learning to work towards a just transition. The project was carried out by an extensive team at Democratic Society, which included local connectors in all 14 of the participating cities.

Actor Framework adapted with permission from Panthea Lee/Reboot. Illustrations by Orlagh O'Brien. Copyright-free stock images from Pixabay. Citizens' Assembly Glasgow photos by Chris Watt Photography. Orléans photo by Hugo Delauney from Unsplash.

Kate Goodwin is a Design & Research Specialist at Democratic Society, supporting the design and development of participation tools and approaches for democratic citizen engagement in areas of social, economic and environmental complexity. She has over 16 years' experience in participatory design, service and strategic design, and design leadership in the public and private sector in Australia, the UK and the USA. Her work has ranged across social impact, criminal justice, higher education, financial services, and government programmes. Kate holds a Master of Science (Information Systems) from the University of Melbourne, Australia, and is a School of System Change, London alumni.



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Nadja Nickel is the Programme Director Climate at Democratic Society. Her work focuses on addressing the climate challenge by addressing the democratic challenge, ensuring a healthy, clean future that benefits everyone. Previously, Nadja was the Managing Director of WithoutViolence, a non-profit advocacy agency for the social sector. At WithoutViolence, she applied lessons learned from behavioral science to solutions-focused advocacy on the issue of violence prevention. In past positions at GIZ, she advised former Federal President Köhler in his role on the UN Secretary General's High-level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Nadja holds an MA in Peace and Conflict Studies from Uppsala University, Sweden.



Dr. Paola Pierri is currently Head of Design and Research at Democratic Society, where she is working to ensure the development of new thinking and learning processes that can advance democratic practice and promote better and more inclusive democratic design. She has been previously a Research Fellow at the Weizenbaum Institute in Berlin, researching questions of Digital Inequalities and Digital Sovereignty. She has experience lecturing and researching on the topic of democratic design and social movement in different Universities across Europe. She is currently Visiting Professor at the Polimi in Milan, working on the topic of design justice and digitalisation of public services. She has a background in political theory and a doctorate in Design Anthropology from the London College of Communication.



Reputation & the art of communicative leadership

By Stavros Papagiannas

From December 2020 to January 2021, the RepTrak Company, formerly known as the Reputation Institute - one of the world's leading research and advisory organisations for reputation - surveyed 68,577 respondents in the 15 largest economies on the planet: Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, South Korea, Spain, the UK, and the US.

The purpose of the Global RepTrak100 study is to measure the corporate reputation of 100 companies by asking the public questions about the emotional appeal of each company. The study scores the companies on seven dimensions: innovation, governance, products and services, workplace, citizenship, leadership and performance.

As a result of the pandemic, companies face an increasingly complex set of pressures and demands from stakeholders, including significant shifts in societal engagement and corporate citizenship expectations and acute uncertainty about the future. If COVID-19 has shown us anything, it is the importance of every stakeholder in a company's ability to function and thrive.

110 From the answers of the survey, we learn that despite the many challenges of 2020, the increase in corporate reputation worldwide indicates that not only did this year's winners respond to these simultaneous crises, but they also communicated their responses to their stakeholders determinedly.

Today's winners will become tomorrow's even bigger winners, capturing hearts and minds at a pivotal moment in time. In 2021, the top 100 companies achieved a "strong" global Reputation Score of 74.9 points vs 73.1 points in 2020, a 2.5% increase year-over-year. This global Reputation Score reached its highest point ever in 2021, maintaining a positive trajectory since 2018.

For Communication Leaders, this means that :

1. There is no such thing as a wrong time to focus on reputation. With corporate reputation reaching new highs in a year of turmoil, it is time to get rid of the notion that there are good or bad times to focus on reputation. If reputation scores can improve in 2020, they can improve anytime.
2. Global public wants companies to take a stand and communicate what they are doing to address the moment's problems. We would not have seen such notable increases in scores if people wanted more of the same.
3. The data shows that reputation is not static. It is fluid, constantly evolving, and does not always act in ways you would expect. It is critical that Communication Leaders continuously measure and monitor their corporate reputations to scale up initiatives that resonate and quickly dial back those that don't.

The survey shows that companies with established reputation strategies are at risk of losing ground due to seismic events or disruptive companies entering their space. Just because something has worked in the past is no guarantee it will work in the present. In fact, younger and younger generations are expecting more from business leaders. As we see in this year's data, companies had to do more just to maintain their ranking. Staying the same was equivalent to falling behind.

What was considered 'good' in 2020 is only 'average' in 2021, so companies looking to leverage their reputation as a competitive advantage need to up their game.

Reputation changes constantly, and as this year highlights, your communications strategy needs to adapt just as quickly. If your approach does not continuously measure your reputation and adjust your communications to changing stakeholder perceptions, you are already behind.

Reputation, trust, credibility, confidence, trustworthiness, acceptability, respectability are all words that are very much connected. In the book *Trust Inc. Strategies for Building Your Company's Most Valuable Asset*, Robert Easton notes that trust is an essential agent of social development and organisational sustainability. It operates in and allows for the intricate web of interaction between individuals, institutions, communities and society. We use words like glue, catalyst, energiser or connector to describe trust. Most trust dialogue in today's world is about the trust deficit.

In their book *The New Digital Age*, Google top executives Eric Schmidt and Jared Cohen note that we will see a growth of organisations that cater to privacy and reputation concerns soon. This industry already exists with online reputation companies such as Reputation.com or Brandyourself.com which use various techniques to remove or dilute unwanted content from the internet.

Most of these tactics fall under the umbrella of SEO processes. During the financial crisis which started in 2008, it was reported that different Wall Street bankers hired online reputation companies to help them to minimise their appearance on the internet. In the future, this kind of organisations will diversify as the demand will increase.

Communication is the most important skill that a leader can possess. It is fundamental in building trust. It contributes in creating an environment of credibility around leaders that enables them to lead effectively and deliver results.

However, communication only cannot make us trust someone who seems to be untrustworthy. But it can help create a culture in which trust can thrive. Politicians or captains of industry who want to build trust with the principal stakeholders have a plethora of communication tools at their disposal, and competent communication professionals to assist them. But above all they have to be ethical, tell the truth in a polite way and avoid polarisation.

A trusted leader should be open and honest. His or her vision should be sustainable, credible and consistent. A leader should have the courage to ask important questions and be prepared to have more significant questions posed of them. A communicative leader should be approachable, respectful and express concern for the people.



Stavros Papagiannas

Founder of Steps4Europe - Managing Director StP Communications - Author Rebranding Europe

With a background including positions such as Communication Officer at the European Commission and Press Officer and Spokesperson to diplomatic missions in Brussels, Stavros Papagiannas is currently the Managing Director of PR consultancy StP Communications & the founder of Steps4Europe. This non-profit association aims to reinforce the European Public Sphere & promote the values of the EU.

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

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

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

Twitter : @StPapagiannas

#DigitalDiplomacyRevolution

By Claudio Camarda

What is the impact of the increasing connections between Foreign Affairs and Social Network? How broadly is diplomacy expanding through the web?



"It's not the end of the world, but the beginning of a new era #DigitalRevolution is in act". Isn't it time to analyze how social media and, more broadly, internet have revolutionized our life from different angles of our societies?

- 112 Social networks such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram or Whatsapp have changed our way of communication, and the hyperbolic transformation of the media landscape is working much faster than any possible structured approach throughout a regulatory or semi- or self-regulatory framework. The new scenario has new key players - not necessarily always state-actors - and often not 100% certified genuine, objective entities, that are leading the way to the new future.

Summarise what happens in a remote corner of the universe by typing in 280 characters, disseminating the widest variety of content on any subject of nowadays life, sending images (authenticity to be always verified) and staying connected on line with the entire world was unimaginable some years ago.

Is this something to be scared with or is this the symptom of a more connected and more conscious world? Or...is the truth lying, as usual, in between?

Who can deny that, a decade ago, during the blooming of the Arab Spring all the people owning a laptop or a smartphone could share fresh, crucial information on the developments of ongoing demonstrations in the Arabic countries through their own blog, a tweet and a Facebook post?

Meanwhile, governmental authorities and international organisations understood the enormous opportunity that could be seized by exploiting these new web instruments to influence audiences, promote their values and strengthen relations among themselves and with their usual and their potential audiences.

This gave the impulse to new efforts to facilitate diplomatic officials to experiment new different communication channels.

Digital diplomacy, known as **eDiplomacy**, is a new concept to develop, enhance and strengthen through technological innovation the practice of foreign policy through the increasing use of web strategies and instruments, investing in interactive media and in particular in the use of social media. Foreign ministers, consuls and ambassadors are being increasingly encouraged by their own government to engage in social networking by participating directly in different forum-type discussions and online conferences (proliferated in particular during the pandemic constraints). This has been giving the chance to reach a hyper-local audience on a global scale.

This new direct way to expand outreach enables diplomats to communicate their views on distinct issues: demonstrating the transparency policy of their country; following and predicting possible developments; formulating and [indirectly] implementing foreign policy values and [behavioural] principles; influencing and identifying possible geo-socio-political targets; and often also using soft diplomacy approach to inspire commitment and engagement on common foreign policy objectives.

E diplomacy was used for the first time in 2002 by James Holmes, ambassador of the US State Department, who created a particular taskforce which year after year was transformed in a real "Office of eDiplomacy"¹. The encrypted platform used by the US department was the same used by CIA and FBI to track criminals and to send information.

While experienced diplomats are struggling to "keep the pace" and getting themselves enough acquainted throughout quick media literacy and digital skills acquisition, there is a robust re-thinking of how to multiply support and reinforce advocacy to

1 see "E-Diplomacy: Using Technology to Advance Foreign Relations" Open Forum - speech given by Ambassador Holmes, Director of the e-Diplomacy Office in Washington on 20.2.2003 (<https://2001-2009.state.gov/s/p/of/proc/17914.htm>) and intervention of the Chairman at the same open forum : <https://2001-2009.state.gov/s/p/of/proc/20127.htm>.

integrate new technologies in foreign policy. Expanding blogging culture, wikis, digital diplomacy training, diversification of professional networking methodologies through virtual student internships and also digital academies devoted to international affairs. E-Diplomacy *de facto* promotes an organizational culture for innovation that allows State diplomats to increasingly lead the foreign policy process from home and abroad, building at the same time higher professional competences and capacities.

This is not only an external process, but also a key strategy to optimise internal organisation structures and practices. For instance, the most prominent eDiplomacy program is: **Diplopedia**, which is the State Department's internal collaborative online wiki. People create and edit articles on public wikis on the Internet, Department personnel use Diplopedia to create and expand reference tool for knowledge-sharing information about the Department, its programs and offices, and other matters concerning international affairs subjects.

Meanwhile, social networks have changed our way of thinking and making decisions. Twitter in particular has rapidly become a critical vector through which states and civil society seek to further foreign policy goals or influence public opinion. For this reason, a group of public relation managers and communicators keen on diplomacy have introduced **Twitplomacy**, which is the leading global study of world leaders on social media. This big study analyzes the interactions of different World Leaders, International Organizations, Foreign Affairs Ministries, Governments and citizens.

Here are, in brief, some **statistics** about the diplomatic world in 2020: the most followed in Facebook among World Leaders was the former US President Trump with 88 million followers; the most active in Facebook was the Phillipin Foreign Minister, Teddy Locsin Jr. Instead, via Instagram, the most active leader, with an average of 44 posts per day, is Jabatan Perdana Menteri Negara Brunei Darussalam, Prime Minister of Brunei, and the most followed on Instagram, with 50 millions of followers, is Narendra Modi, the Indian Prime Minister.

Among the organizations, the most followed on Twitter is the United Nations, with around 13 million followers; the most "liked" among the international Organizations is the World Health Organization, with 11 millions of followers in Facebook (these figures certainly increased owing to the ongoing pandemic).

Social Media has become a formidable communication tool allowing the broadcast of short messages to millions of followers. But at the same time we have to take it with a pinch of salt, because we only looked at the bright side.

Many will remember an incident occurred in April 2013, when the US embassy sent out a tweet which included a link to a segment on Jon Stewart's Daily Show where he criticized, in his satirical style, the Egyptian government's arrest of the political satirist, Bassem Youssef. Egyptian government authorities were not amused, and responded by protesting for the US embassy's use of "negative political propaganda." At that point, the embassy took down its Twitter account and removed its previous link, restoring the feed online, and the US ambassador issued a formal apology to Egypt. No need to comment on the former US president, with many "falls of grace" during his presidency mandate at the White House. He was one of the first World Leaders to be banned by several social media to spread hatred during the event of United States Congress on 6th January 2021.

There is no other way to pursue digital diplomacy effectively except through loosening these reins of control. In the words of Alec Ross², "The 21st century is a terrible time to be a control freak". Users of social media who do not engage in substantive, real-time exchanges are unlikely to make their voices heard. There is no time to lose for governments, foreign affairs and embassies; they have to complete the process of diplomacy revolution soon, because there are still some countries that use hybrid system: internet and post.

"In the end, the work of diplomats continues even while others fight. So, it's not necessarily true that everyone needs to march", said David Brin, American scientist and author of science fiction, in a famous quote. Paraphrasing his words, we could say, that the work of diplomats is not does not stop with social media, but it continues to be carried out in different bureaus.

² Alec Ross is an American technology policy expert, He was Senior Advisor for Innovation to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.



Claudio Camarda has more than 5+ years of professional experience in communication, PR and Social Media management, gathered by working for international organizations, such European Council, and multinational companies and as an independent blogger.

Claudio is the CMO of Ethics4growth, a company that helps enterprise, startups and individuals to be profitable in an ethical and sustainable way, taking care of our environment.

He graduated in Media and Public Relations at Newcastle University, and with a Bachelor degree in Political Science and International Relations at Luiss Guido Carli.

Based in Madrid, he speaks English, Spanish and French and German, and he is interested in everything in link with social media and diplomacy.

Club of Venice: Provisional programme 2021-2023



2021 (35th year of activity of the Club)

London (on line event), 25 February 2021
4th Seminar on Strategic Communication

Brussels (on line event), 18 March 2021
Seminar on Communication and Open Governance in a Time of Crisis

Serbia (on line event), 10-11 June 2021
Plenary meeting

Greece, autumn 2021
Thematic seminar

Venice, 2-3 December 2021 (dates tbc)
Plenary meeting - 35th anniversary of the Club

2022

Grenoble, February 2022
**Seminar on the role of public communicators
in fostering participative democracy**

London, March 2022
5th Stratcom seminar

May 2022 (venue to be defined)
Plenary meeting

Prague, September/October 2022
Thematic seminar

Venice, November 2022
Plenary meeting

Venice, November 2021
Plenary meeting

2023

London, February 2023
6th Stratcom seminar

Brussels, early spring 2023
Thematic seminar

June 2023 (venue do be defined)
Plenary meeting

September 2023 (venue to be defined)
Thematic seminar

Venice, November 2023
Plenary meeting

Aknowledgments

The Club expresses its gratitude to its members from Belgium, the Czech Republic, Italy, Netherlands, the Republic of Serbia and the United Kingdom

Many thanks also to the Steering and the Advisory Committees of the Club, the European Parliament, the European Commission, the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), the OECD, the Democratic Society (DEMSOC), the Open Government for Europe (OGfE), the Herbert Simon Society (HSS), the Open Government Partnership (OGP), EURACTIV, the European Movement-Italy, the European Policy Centre (EPC), the International Office on Migration (IOM), DebunkEU.org, the Italian Association of Public Communicators of the Public Administrations (COMPA), The Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Paul Butcher, Claudio Camarda, Pier Virgilio Dastoli, Viktoras Daukšas, Agnė Eidimaitė, Kate Goodwin, Melissa Julian, Danijel Koletic, Maria Koomen, Christophe Leclercq, Michaël Malherbe, Nadja Nickel, Stavros Papagiannas, Paola Pierri, Kristina Plavsak-Krajnc, Karina Urbanavičiūtė, Laima Venclauskienė, Riccardo Viale, Magdalena Wilczyńska, Anthony Zacharzewski and our other external collaborators for their proactive support.

This edition was made possible thanks to the collaboration of the Directorate-General for External Communication of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister in Belgium



