

# convergences

Public communication in Europe | Communication publique en Europe



## FOCUS ON

### Venice plenary, November 2022

- EU recovery and resilience plan and social challenges
- Resilience vs hybrid threats and disinformation
- Capacity/capability building plans in progress

### London 6th Stratcom seminar, March 2023

- Communicating geo-political challenges for Europe
- Cooperation among international partners
- in the field of strategic communication

### Cyprus plenary, June/July 2023

- Public Communicators' role in Crisis Management
- Migration as a key challenge for governmental communication

### Dubrovnik seminar, September 2023

- Relaunching communication on the EU enlargement process
- and promoting the EU macro-regional strategies

### Malta – ICMPD/EURO-MED Conference on migration narratives, October 2023

- Strengthening the partnership spirit

### Venice plenary, November/December 2023

- Debate on the future of public communication
- 2024 European elections communication campaign
- Investing in Artificial Intelligence and Social Media
- Lessons learning from global reports and surveys
- Expertise Centre project in progress





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# Agence, amie ou ennemie ?

Par Philippe Caroyez et Vincenzo Le Voci

*When the revolution comes  
Some of us will probably catch it on TV,  
with chicken hanging from our mouths  
You'll know it's revolution because there  
won't be no commercials<sup>1</sup>*

The Last Poets

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A la suite de la chute du mur de Berlin, l'OCDE avait pris l'initiative de mettre en place (avec l'assistance et la participation de services d'information de ses pays-membres) un programme de formation des communicateurs publics des "nouvelles démocraties".

Pour ceux qui y prêtaient leur concours<sup>2</sup>, comme "formateurs", il est vite apparu que les questions – les interrogations – portaient davantage sur les relations avec les "agences privées" (de la publicité et de la presse) que sur les actions et les canaux de communication mis en place par les services publics des démocraties installées ! Comme si ces communicateurs publics des "nouvelles démocraties" avaient intuitivement une méfiance de l'un et une connaissance de l'autre et, peut-être, une méfiance de l'un commandée par l'autre, dans la situation particulière dans laquelle ils se trouvaient.

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Cela n'a certes pas valeur d'examen approfondi de la littérature, mais du survol d'ouvrages généraux sur la communication publique apparaît un intérêt porté aux relations entre les services de communication et les gouvernements (comme s'ils

étaient des entités distancées !), les journalistes, la presse et les médias, voire les ONG – pour ne retenir que les intervenants avec lesquels s'établissent des formes de "coopérations" (économiques ou de travail)... mais rien n'y a été trouvé sur les relations qu'entretiennent, pourtant, nos services avec les agences dites de publicité et de communication<sup>3</sup>.

C'est singulier et interpellant quand on connaît la nécessité du recours à ces agences (que nous prenons ici au sens large pour ce qui est de leur nature et celle de leurs champs d'action) pour la réalisation de bon nombre de nos actions et activités de communication (pour la rencontre des besoins en la matière que nous ne pouvons nous-mêmes pas satisfaire) et, dès lors, l'importance (quasi stratégique) de celles-ci.

Dans la description et la théorisation des systèmes d'information des pouvoirs publics ("SIPP"<sup>4</sup>), l'opérateur économique "agence" semble donc ne faire l'objet d'aucune attention particulière, alors qu'il y tient incontestablement une place et un rôle !

Plus particulièrement, dans l'éco-système de la communication publique, la relation autorité-agence(s) – qui n'est, bien sûr, qu'un élément dans un "schème" bien plus complexe – semble n'avoir suscité aucune étude académique, sans doute parce qu'elle n'est pas intégrée dans les schémas canoniques des théories communicationnelles, sûrement parce que cette relation se (con)fond dans le seul "émetteur"<sup>5</sup>.

Outre quelques "soubresauts" épisodiques, liés (négativement) à des "problèmes" ou contestations d'attribution de marchés publics de services de communication ou (plus positivement) à d'éventuelles revendications sectorielles de regroupements professionnels (généralement sur les conditions de mise en concurrence et de coopération), les communicateurs publics et leurs services – eux-mêmes ! – portent fort peu d'intérêt aux

- 1 The Last Poets (précurseurs de la culture rap et hip-hop, héros de la défense des droits civiques aux Etats-Unis). Extrait de la chanson emblématique 'When the revolution comes'.
- 2 Philippe Caroyez participait au programme à Budapest.
- 3 Nous ne parlons pas, évidemment, ici des documents (fiches, brochures ou articles) de nos services et de nos organisations professionnelles qui portent sur les relations avec les agences en termes pratiques et de conseil, généralement dans le cadre de l'application de la réglementation sur les marchés publics et de législations ou régulations nationales.
- 4 Eric de Grolier, "L'organisation des systèmes d'information des pouvoirs publics". Etudes et recherches, UNESCO. Paris, 1978 (181 pages).
- 5 Emetteur, sous l'angle de la communication, ou commanditaire "adjudicateur", sous l'angle économique.



relations qui nous occupent ici.

De cette *invisibilisation* (intellectuelle pour les uns, plus “politique” pour les autres) résulte l'absence d'interrogations et de débats véritables sur leur(s) rôle(s), leur importance, nos relations à elles, notre professionnalisme et nos compétences dans ce cadre ... et nombre de problèmes qui peuvent en découler (de connaissance du marché, de capacités professionnelles ou économiques, légaux, déontologiques, ... voire idéologiques).

Pourquoi en est-il ainsi ?

On peut aisément formuler l'hypothèse explicative que l'agence n'apparaît pas parce qu'elle ne doit pas apparaître, qu'elle n'agit que dans les coulisses du système productif de nos services.

C'est à ce point que la formalisation contractuelle de nos relations dans ce cadre peut (ce qu'on peut aisément comprendre) contenir quantité de clauses de confidentialité (taire les budgets, interdiction de faire mention des actions conçues et réalisées au titre de promotion de la firme, ...) et d'"abandon de paternité" (interdiction de signer le matériel produit, transfert intégral (!) des droits d'auteur, ...).

Un motif supplémentaire tient peut-être aussi à des raisons plus subtiles, liées aux *images* (partiellement fausses, mais agissantes) qui se rattachent aux acteurs concernés :

- celles d'une administration publique “incapable” d'agir entièrement seule et, donc, dépendante en partie pour une part de son action publique, d'autant si elle revêt une dimension problématique (questions de santé ou éthiques, modifications de comportement, recensement, participation à des scrutins ou consultations, ...). Ce qui est ici en jeu est spécifique au(x) service(s) public(s) : l'identité et la légitimité ;
- celles des agences perçues souvent comme très onéreuses, fortes consommatrices de moyens et de budgets ... et trop marquées par leurs habitudes et les techniques de la publicité commerciale.

On peut aussi formuler l'avis que c'est un débat et un champ de questionnement où il n'est pas aisé d'entrer dans la mesure où nos services, face aux problèmes qui peuvent se poser, voire face aux demandes/revendications éventuelles des organisations professionnelles représentant des agences<sup>6</sup>, peuvent se trouver démunis, limités et contraints qu'ils sont par des obligations légales et budgétaires, notamment ... si pas par des questions qui sont de la compétence du gouvernement, lui-même soumis aux mêmes limites et contraintes et peu enclin à l'ouverture de débats ou commissions sur l'organisation, la conduite et l'évolution de la communication publique<sup>7</sup>.

S'il peut en être ainsi, c'est à nos services qu'il appartient d'agir et de “lever le voile” :

- dans le contexte professionnel, en interne et lors de nos

échanges, mais aussi (avec le soutien de nos autorités) avec les organisations représentatives des agences, en ouvrant un débat utile et raisonnable, conscient de ses propres limites ;

- auprès des publics, par plus de transparence, d'explications, voire de pédagogie.

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*“Communication publique. Gouvernement (autorité publique), ami ou ennemi ?”<sup>8</sup> c'est en ces termes qu'un magazine professionnel réputé de la publicité titrait l'un de ses articles.*

Singulière manière d'aborder la question... signe d'une certaine phraséologie publicitaire binaire et sans nuances ou volonté de provocation de boutiquiers déçus, plus que souhait de susciter le dialogue, si pas le débat ?

Quoi qu'il puisse en être, saisissons la balle au bond.

Malgré notre titre “clin d'oeil”, nous ne renverserons, toutefois, pas la question, puisqu'elle ne peut pas être posée au travers de cette (soi-disant) alternative et, donc, certainement pas en ces termes.

Pour rencontrer des besoins de services<sup>9</sup> de communication (divers, multiples et variés<sup>10</sup>) qu'ils ne peuvent (effectivement) pas rencontrer par eux-mêmes, nos services doivent faire appel à des opérateurs économiques<sup>11</sup> en capacité d'y répondre, qu'ils sollicitent, informent, mettent en concurrence, sélectionnent et, finalement, retiennent en agissant selon ce que prescrit la réglementation relative aux marchés publics<sup>12</sup>.

La relation avec les opérateurs économiques, ici des “agences” (diverses, multiples et variées), s'opère donc dans un cadre strictement normé.

L'agence ne saurait ainsi être ni un “ami”, ni un “ennemi” et pas davantage un “partenaire” ; c'est littéralement un co-contratant ... ce qui ne réduit ni son rôle, ni son importance.

Il ne faudrait, d'ailleurs, pas prendre le prétexte de cette situation et du cadre normé qui la génère pour voir et prendre la relation avec les agences sous un angle strictement bureaucratique, unilatéral et uniquement fonctionnel.

C'est le défi quotidien de nos services où, dans nos projets, dans l'expression précise de nos besoins et de la manière d'évaluer objectivement les offres, dans le suivi de l'exécution des prestations et notre capacité à être agile et d'évaluer les actions menées ... bref, dans nos relations avec les agences, nous devons être à la hauteur et faire preuve du plus grand professionnalisme.

Il doit en être ainsi de la relation dans le cadre de la réalisation d'un marché, d'actions et d'activités de communication.

6 Encore une fois au sens large et donc dans divers domaines d'activités de communication

7 Les Pays-Bas et leurs commissions successives en la matière ou la Grande-Bretagne sont sûrement les exceptions qui confirment cette règle.

8 Titre original “Overheidscommunicatie. De overheid, vriend of vijand?”. PUB, magazine bimestriel, 12-2021, Bruxelles. Pages 78-82.

9 Il s'agit plus rarement de fournitures. Les travaux sont eux exceptionnels.

10 De l'impression de brochures à l'organisation d'un spectacle grand public retransmis à la télévision dans le cadre d'un événement public ; de la mise en place et de l'animation de consultations citoyennes au développement de sites internet, en passant par tout l'éventail des actions et supports des campagnes publiques d'information.

11 Pour reprendre la terminologie de la législation sur les marchés publics.

12 Cette réglementation (de source communautaire transposée dans les législations nationales) est principalement en cause, elle n'est pas la seule ; il peut aussi s'agir - complémentirement - d'autres réglementations (comme le droit intellectuel, dont le droit des auteurs) ou régulations.

Mais il doit, également, en être ainsi dans le cadre d'une politique plus générale de relations avec les agences et les associations les représentant.

Sans pour autant forcément viser la conclusion d'engagements réciproques ou de chartes<sup>13</sup>, il nous semble nécessaire que nos services s'engagent ou continuent à s'engager sur la voie d'une politique générale, transparente, de nature à favoriser les meilleures relations avec les agences, notamment en répondant à leurs demandes et revendications quand elles sont légitimes et compatibles avec les contraintes de nos services.

Il s'agit, notamment :

- d'être irréprochable dans les procédures de mise en concurrence, les critères de sélection et d'attribution et leur évaluation. C'est une évidence, aux termes de la loi, mais elle doit être rappelée et nos services doivent en faire la promotion, par exemple en communiquant sur leur politique et leurs cadres de valeurs et de déontologie ;
- d'exercer une veille des tendances, des moyens et des composantes du marché économique des agences ;
- de planifier au maximum du possible nos projets pour éviter d'imposer des délais trop courts aux agences ;
- de viser au maximum du possible une planification programmatique et budgétaire permettant la réalisation d'activités pluriannuelles, capitalisant d'une action à l'autre auprès des publics-cibles ;
- d'être d'une grande précision dans l'expression de nos besoins et des objectifs visés, dans les documents du marché et lors des "briefings" ;
- d'avoir la préoccupation d'agir, à la fois, dans un cadre de simplification administrative et sans abus quant aux demandes faites et exigences posées lors des mises en concurrence. En accord avec la législation et les services d'inspection, dans des circonstances à définir, une rétribution des offres devraient pouvoir être envisagées par nos services qui n'y auraient pas encore recours ;
- d'être transparent mais aussi de faire preuve de pédagogie envers les agences quant aux contraintes administratives, budgétaires et légales auxquelles nos services sont soumis ;
- ... ;
- et finalement, d'avoir le même souci de professionnalisme, de compétence et d'expertise pour nos services et collaborateurs que celui que nous avons pour les agences et que nous recherchons et exigeons d'elles !

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Dans le contexte des marchés publics et de la relation de nos services (ici adjudicateurs) avec les agences dans ce cadre, plusieurs points retiennent notre attention.

Nous devons appeler de nos vœux, comme nous le lisons, que *"(...) les responsables de communication et les services marchés développent une culture commune, se forment mutuellement à la règlementation des commandes publiques et aux métiers de la communication et instaurent une collaboration permanente tout au long du processus achats/marchés (...)"*<sup>14</sup>.

Il ne faudrait pas, toutefois, s'en tenir à ce *couple vertueux* sans inclure dans cette "culture commune" ceux vers qui nos services se tournent, à qui ils soumettent leurs demandes.

Et ceci suppose, outre des actions de sensibilisation et d'information des agences et opérateurs économiques du domaine de la communication (comme déjà évoqué), le développement d'une culture commune propre aux marchés publics de communication, qui intègre la spécificité de son objet et celle de tous les intervenants.

Cette culture commune, n'est pas qu'un *état d'esprit*, elle doit se fonder, notamment, sur la connaissance approfondie du secteur économique de la communication (ses composantes, ses pratiques, son actualité), la connaissance approfondie des législations et réglementations en cause (marché public, droit intellectuel, ... déontologie), la réflexion, la recherche et le débat pour une utilisation "stratégisée" et optimisée de ces éléments tout au long du processus d'achat (de la définition du besoin à la vérification finale de sa réalisation).

C'est cette culture commune qui fonde une politique et, dialectiquement, en résulte, en organisant et en encourageant la formation de base et continue, une attention particulière pour cet aspect des politiques et actions publiques, les échanges professionnels, le partage organisé des pratiques, la recherche et les liens avec les milieux académiques et économiques.

Les initiatives de cette sorte existent, mais sont encore trop peu systématiques et intégrées. Il en est de même pour leur évaluation (quand elles se font).

C'est à l'image des statistiques relatives aux marchés publics qui restent quantitatives et, pour tout dire, sans effet ... alors qu'elles pourraient faire l'objet de collectes et d'analyses sur le plan qualitatif, portant, en l'espèce, sur la performance, par exemple :

- de la procédure de passation retenues et des critères utilisés ;
- du dispositif contractuel mis en place pour l'exécution du marché ;
- des gains effectifs réalisés lors des négociations (ou des avancées réalisées en termes de solutions dans les dialogues compétitifs) ;
- du passage de l'offre acceptée à son exécution effective ;
- de l'action de communication et des outils de mesure et de vérification eux-mêmes ;
- mais encore d'éléments comme l'allotissement ou l'accès des petites et moyennes entreprises (ce qui intéresse de près les petites agences) et le respect d'exigences sociales, environnementales et de durabilité.

Pour faire simple, le besoin a-t-il était satisfait, a-t-on réalisé l'objectif fixé, les diverses exigences ont-elles été respectées ... et la promesse de l'offre acceptée a-t-elle était mesurée et effectivement réalisée ? On conviendra qu'une certaine routine de nature bureaucratique<sup>15</sup> ou – pour être de bon compte – l'obligation de passer rapidement aux activités suivantes (qui est le lot de beaucoup de communicateurs publics) ne

13 Certains services nationaux l'ont fait.

14 Corinne Labbouz. "Les marchés publics de communication" in "Les collectivités publiques à l'épreuve des technologies de l'information". Revue Legicom, 2011/2 (N°47), pages 97 à 112 (ici page 112). Victoires Editions, Paris.

15 Même si les opérations de vérification et de réception conforme des prestations sont des obligations légales.



permettent pas toujours de se poser ces questions ... et d'y répondre !

Au-delà des obligations déjà faites en matière de récolte et de transmission de données statistiques pour les marchés publics (en dessous ou dès les seuils européens), il serait nécessaire que naisse (nationalement et au niveau communautaire) un observatoire de la commande publique<sup>16</sup>. Nos services centraux pourraient en prendre l'initiative (sectorielle) pour ce qui est des marchés publics de communication.

Dans ce contexte d'efficacité et de performance (auxquelles nous sommes tenus *a priori*), pour les marchés complexes et particulièrement les campagnes de communication, on veillera particulièrement à :

- retenir la procédure (permise par la législation) la mieux adaptée à l'objet du marché. C'est une évidence, mais elle n'est pas toujours rencontrée. Beaucoup de "choix" sont encore faits en fonction de la possibilité de mener des négociations, voire d'échapper aux obligations de publicité, ce qui conditionne – par ailleurs – la valeur du marché, dès lors établie par alignement sur les seuils légaux et pas sur une estimation raisonnée ! On notera encore le poids des habitudes qui ne conduit pas à remettre en question les procédures généralement suivies, principalement les appels d'offre et les procédures négociées, alors qu'il pourrait être envisagés d'autres procédures ou modalités de passation, comme les marchés pluriannuels avec des tranches conditionnelles, les accords-cadres, les contrats communs ou le dialogue compétitif<sup>17</sup>;
- adopter une approche stratégique qui consiste à s'interroger sur les avantages qu'il pourrait y avoir à scinder (bien sûr pas artificiellement) le marché en création et recommandation / production / achat médias - diffusion. A ce dernier égard, un "media buying" confié directement à des agences dont c'est la spécialisation peut garantir une rentabilisation maximisée de l'impact d'une campagne ; d'autant si l'autorité publique (nationale) ou un service central de communication concentre les achats médias, afin de peser sur les conditions tarifaires ou les remises sur volumes, comme le font les principaux annonceurs commerciaux. Dans le top 10 des annonceurs, on pourra retrouver Procter & Gamble, jamais l'Etat avec ses nombreux services et entreprises publiques !
- établir des critères de sélection (selon les cas) et d'attribution qui soient réellement pertinents et performants, ce qui pour des marchés complexes (et, notamment, les campagnes de communication en sont) n'est pas aisé et devrait pouvoir se nourrir de réflexions et d'échanges sur les bonnes pratiques en la matière tant avec les homologues qu'avec le secteur des agences ;
- élaborer dans les documents des marchés, de l'avis de marché à la contractualisation liée à son attribution, des exigences de performance mesurables et des sanctions pour le cas où elles ne seraient pas atteintes, l'un n'allant

pas sans l'autre. Il peut, par exemple, s'agir de mesures et de post-tests administrés par des agences spécialisées, indépendantes du prestataire,

- dans ce cadre, traiter la question de l'évaluation des éléments d'une offre qui présentent une dimension de performativité (comme une promesse de lectorat, de vision ou d'impact) introduits d'initiative ou pour répondre à une exigence de l'adjudicateur.

Sur ce dernier point, autant nos services se doivent de mesurer les résultats (donc *a posteriori*) des actions de communication qu'ils mènent, autant il est, par contre, singulier de faire le constat qu'il n'y a pas de place qui soit faite dans nos débats et quasi pas d'études<sup>18</sup> sur l'évaluation (donc *a priori*) des offres faites par les agences soumissionnaires dans le cadre des appels d'offres auxquels nos services sont soumis, au terme de la réglementation des marchés publics qui s'applique à eux (sans exception).

S'il n'est pas toujours aisé de mesurer et d'évaluer les résultats de nos actions de communication et leur impact, il l'est encore beaucoup moins quand il s'agit d'évaluer (dans l'absolu et comparativement) les propositions qui nous sont faites – dans le cadre d'offres – *sur papier*.

Il ne s'agit pas de dire que ces évaluations ne se font pas, puisque la législation sur les marchés publics impose l'énonciation de critères d'attribution au nombre desquels nous trouverons logiquement et normalement de telles évaluations. Le propos est de dire que l'importance et la difficulté de ces évaluations ne suscitent manifestement pas d'échanges et de débats professionnels. Et ceci alors que si l'évaluation *a posteriori* n'est pas toujours aisée, bien qu'elle repose sur des éléments réalisés ; celle *a priori* l'est encore bien moins encore, quand elle ne peut se fonder que sur des supposés, des possibilités, des probabilités fondées (ou pas) sur des relevés statistiques, tout en sachant que ce sont **pourtant** ceux-là qui fondent nos choix et les actions et dépenses qui en découlent.

Ce constat est d'autant plus particulier que la question est essentielle (dans nos choix et leur justification, dans l'évaluation des politiques publiques, dans la relation avec les agences soumissionnaires – si pas avec les agences en général) et qu'elle est commune à tous nos services, confrontés à l'obligation d'objectiver leurs choix et dépenses, tout en les articulant avec les obligations légales qui leur sont faites en matière de passation des marchés publics et que tous nous partageons du fait de réglementations européennes communes transposées dans nos législations nationales.

Tout ceci alors que l'un (quand nous y avons recours !) mesure nos réalisations, mais que l'autre (que nous sommes légalement tenus de faire !) oriente nos choix ...

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16 Ce qui formellement va au-delà des marchés publics au sens de la législation. A titre d'exemple un tel observatoire existe pour l'administration de la Région wallonne (Belgique). <https://marchespublics.wallonie.be/pouvoirs-adjudicateurs/acteurs/observatoire-de-la-commande-publique-wallonne.html>

17 Dialogue compétitif qui peut être une solution intéressante pour des marchés complexes de communication, principalement pour le dialogue qu'elle impose avec les agences sur les solutions proposées et la possibilité de négocier les offres finalement introduites.

Voir :

– "Fiche explicative – Dialogue compétitif – Directive classique". Commission européenne. Direction générale Marché intérieur et Services. Politique des marchés publics. Document CC/2005/04 (10 pages).

– Corinne Labbouz, op. cit., pages 104-105. Pour cette chercheuse Française " (...) s'agissant de marchés de communication institutionnelle pluriannuels, de campagnes thématiques ou d'opérations complexes, le dialogue compétitif apparaît particulièrement bien adapté au secteur de la communication" (page 104).

18 Lorsque ces études existent, elles se limitent, toutefois, aux aspects légaux des critères d'attribution et pas à la pertinence et à l'efficacité de ceux-ci.

Reste un dernier point, à savoir la création possible par nos services de leur propre agence technique, comme ce fût le cas aux Pays-Bas et en Grande-Bretagne.

Il peut s'agir de diffusion / distribution, de media planning et de media buying, mais encore de production, voire de création.

Nous n'irons pas plus loin dans le développement de cette politique ou pratique particulière. Il serait intéressant de lire les confrères concernés au sujet de ces expériences.

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A l'égard de ce que nous venons d'évoquer, le Club de Venise a - dès sa création - porté une attention particulière aux questions de professionnalisation et de ce qui fonde le professionnalisme. Ce sont aussi ses initiatives sur le "capacity building",

dès 2008.

Il reste, maintenant, à toujours remettre le travail sur le métier et à ouvrir plus largement le chapitre des marchés publics de communication ...et, dans ce cadre, des relations avec les opérateurs économiques (agences et prestataires).

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**Il y a là, à coup sûr, matière à penser et à agir pour nos rencontres et échanges.**



# Agencies, friend or foe?

By Philippe Caroyez and Vincenzo Le Voci

*When the revolution comes  
Some of us will probably catch it on TV,  
with chicken hanging from our mouths  
You'll know it's revolution because there  
won't be no commercials<sup>1</sup>*

The Last Poets

Following the fall of the Berlin Wall, the OECD took the initiative of setting up (with the assistance and participation of the information services of its member countries) a training programme for public communicators in the 'new democracies'.

For those who took part<sup>2</sup>, as "trainers", it soon became apparent that the issues - the questions - revolved more around relations with "private agencies" (advertising and press) than around the actions and communication channels put in place by the public services of *established* democracies! It was as if these public communicators in the 'new democracies' intuitively distrusted the one and knew the other, and perhaps distrust of the one

1 The Last Poets (precursors of rap and hip-hop culture, heroes of civil rights defense in the United States). Excerpt from the emblematic song 'When the revolution comes'.

2 Philippe Caroyez took part in the programme in Budapest.



dictated by the other, in the particular situation in which they found themselves.

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This is certainly not an in-depth review of the literature, but an overview of general works on public communication reveals an interest in relations between communications services and governments (as if they were distant entities!), journalists, the press and the media, and even NGOs - to mention only those players with whom forms of 'cooperation' (economic or working) are established... but nothing has been found on the relations that our services maintain with so-called advertising and communications agencies<sup>3</sup>.

This is peculiar and puzzling, given the need to use these agencies (which we take here in the broadest sense of the term in terms of their nature and fields of action) to carry out a large number of our communication actions and activities (to meet the needs in this area that we ourselves cannot satisfy) and, consequently, their (quasi-strategic) importance.

In describing and theorising public authority information systems<sup>4</sup>, the 'agency' economic operator therefore seems to receive no particular attention, even though it undeniably has a place and a role to play!

More specifically, in the eco-system of public communication, the authority-agency relationship - which is, of course, only one element in a much more complex system - does not seem to have been the subject of any academic study, no doubt because it is not integrated into the canonical systems of communication theories, and certainly because this relationship is confused with or merged into the 'originator' alone<sup>5</sup>.

Apart from a few episodic 'jolts', linked (negatively) to 'problems' or challenges to the award of public contracts for communication services or (more positively) to possible sectoral demands from professional groups (generally concerning the conditions of competition and cooperation), public communicators and their services - themselves! - take very little interest in the relationships we are dealing with here.

The result of this *invisibilisation* (intellectual for some, more 'political' for others) is the absence of any real questioning or debate about their role(s), their importance, our relationship with them, our professionalism and our skills in this context... and a number of problems that may arise from this (knowledge of the market, professional or economic, legal, ethical... or even ideological capacities).

Why is this so?

One can easily formulate the explanatory hypothesis that the agency does not appear because it should not appear, that it only acts behind the scenes of the production system of our services.

It is at this point that the contractual formalisation of our

relations within this framework may (understandably) include a number of confidentiality clauses (no mention of budgets, no mention of actions designed and carried out to promote the company, etc.) and 'abandonment of authorship' clauses (no signing of the material produced, full transfer [!] of copyright, etc.).

There may also be more subtle reasons for this, linked to the (partly false, but effective) *images* associated with the players involved:

- those of a public authority "incapable" of acting entirely on its own and, therefore, partly dependent on its public action, all the more so if it has a problematic dimension (health or ethical issues, changes in behaviour, census, participation in ballots or consultations, etc.). What is at stake here is specific to the public service(s): identity and legitimacy;
- those of the agencies, which are often perceived as very expensive, high consumers of resources and budgets... and overly influenced by the habits and techniques of commercial advertising.

One may also say that this is a debate and a field of questioning which is not easy to enter into insofar as our departments, faced with the problems which may arise, or even faced with the possible demands/requests of the professional organisations representing agencies<sup>6</sup>, may find themselves powerless, limited and constrained as they are by legal and budgetary obligations, in particular. ...if not by issues that fall within the remit of the government, which is itself subject to the same limitations and constraints and is reluctant to open discussions or set up committees on the organisation, management and development of public communication<sup>7</sup>.

9

If this is the case, it is up to our departments to take action and 'lift the veil':

- in the professional context, internally and during our exchanges, but also (with the support of our authorities) with the organisations representing agencies, by opening up a useful and reasonable discussion, aware of its own limitations;
- with the target audience, including agencies and various service providers, through greater transparency, explanations and even a pedagogic approach.

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"Public communication. Government (public authority), friend or foe?"<sup>8</sup> was the headline of one of the articles published in a well-known professional advertising magazine.

A singular way of approaching the question... a sign of a certain binary and undifferentiated advertising phraseology or a desire to provoke disappointed shopkeepers, more than a desire to provoke discussion, if not dialogue??

Whatever the case, let's seize the moment.

3 We are not, of course, referring here to the documents (fact sheets, brochures or articles) produced by our departments and professional organisations which deal with relations with agencies in practical and advisory terms, generally in the context of the application of public procurement regulations and national legislation or regulations.

4 Eric de Grolier, "L'organisation des systèmes d'information des pouvoirs publics". Etudes et recherches, UNESCO. Paris, 1978 (181 pages).

5 Originator, from a communications point of view, or "awarding" client, from an economic or legal point of view.

6 Once again, in the broadest sense of the term, and therefore in various areas of communication activity.

7 The Netherlands and its successive committees on the subject and the United Kingdom are surely the exceptions that confirm this rule.

8 Original title: "Overheidscommunicatie. De overheid, vriend of vijand?". PUB, bi-monthly magazine, 12-2021, Brussels. Pages 78-82.

Despite our 'tongue-in-cheek' title, we will not, however, turn the question on its head, since it cannot be asked through this (so-called) alternative and, therefore, certainly not in these terms.

In order to meet the needs for communication services<sup>9</sup> (which are many and varied<sup>10</sup>) that they cannot (effectively) meet on their own, our departments have to call on 'economic operators'<sup>11</sup> capable of meeting those needs, whom they approach, inform, encourage to put in a bid, select and, finally, contract with by acting in accordance with the regulations governing public procurement contracts<sup>12</sup>.

The relationship with economic operators, in this case 'agencies' (many and varied), therefore takes place within a strictly standardised framework.

The agency can therefore be neither a 'friend' nor a 'foe', no more than it can be a 'partner'; it is literally a co-contractor ... which does not diminish its role or its importance.

Moreover, this situation and the standardised framework which generates it should not be used as a pretext for viewing the relationship with the agencies from a strictly bureaucratic, unilateral and purely functional angle.

This is the daily challenge for our departments, where, in our projects, in the precise expression of our needs and the way we objectively evaluate bids, in the monitoring of the execution of services and our ability to be agile and evaluate the actions taken... in short, in our relations with agencies, we must be up to the task and demonstrate the utmost professionalism.

10 This must be the case for the relationship within the framework of a contract, actions and communication activities.

But it must also be the case in the context of a more general policy governing relations with agencies and the associations representing them.

Without necessarily aiming for the conclusion of reciprocal commitments or charters<sup>13</sup>, we feel it is necessary for our services to commit or continue to commit themselves to a general, transparent policy, likely to encourage the best possible relations with agencies, in particular by responding to their requests and demands when they are legitimate and compatible with the constraints within which our services operate.

This means, in particular:

- being irreproachable in the competitive tendering procedures, the selection and award criteria and their evaluation. This is self-evident under the terms of the law, but it must be reiterated, and our services must promote it, for example by communicating their policy and their framework of values and ethics;
- monitor trends, resources and components of the agency

market;

- plan our projects to the greatest extent possible to avoid imposing excessively tight deadlines on agencies;
- aim, insofar as possible, for programmatic and budgetary planning that enables multi-year activities to be carried out, capitalising from one action to the next with target audiences;
- be extremely precise in expressing our needs and objectives, in contract documents and during briefings;
- take care to act within a framework of administrative simplification and avoid making excessive requests and imposing excessive requirements during competitive tendering. In agreement with the legislation and the inspection services, in circumstances and conditions to be defined, it should be possible for our services which have not yet made use of the possibility to consider paying for bids;
- be transparent about objectives and decisions, but also explain to agencies the administrative, budgetary and legal constraints to which our services are subject;
- and finally, have the same concern for professionalism, competence and expertise for our services and staff that we have with regard to the agencies and that we seek and demand from them!

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In the context of public procurement and the relationship between our services (here the contracting authorities) and the agencies in this context, there are a number of points to which we would like to draw attention.

We should be hoping and praying, as we read, that "(...) *communication managers and procurement departments develop a common culture, provide each other with training in the regulations governing public orders and, in the communications professions, and establish ongoing collaboration throughout the procurement/contracting process (...)*"<sup>14</sup>.

However, we should not confine ourselves to this *virtuous couple* without including in this 'shared culture' those to whom our services turn and to whom they submit their requests.

And this presupposes, in addition to awareness-raising and information campaigns for agencies and economic operators in the communications field (as already mentioned), the development of a common culture specific to public communications contracts, which takes into account the specific nature of the subject and that of all those involved.

This common culture is not just a *state of mind*; it must be based, in particular, on in-depth knowledge of the economic sector of communication (its components, its practices, its current events), in-depth knowledge of the legislation and regulations involved (public procurement, intellectual property law, ethics, etc.), reflection, research and debate for a "strategic" and

9 Supplies are rarer. The works are exceptional.

10 From printing brochures to organising a show for the general public broadcast on television as part of a public event; from setting up and facilitating citizen consultations for the development of websites and including the whole range of actions and media for public information campaigns.

11 To use the terminology of public procurement legislation.

12 This regulation (originating at Community level and transposed into national legislation) is mainly at issue. It is not the only one; other regulations (such as intellectual property rights, including copyright) or rules may also be at issue.

13 Certain national services have done so.

14 Corinne Labbouz. "Les marchés publics de communication" in "Les collectivités publiques à l'épreuve des technologies de l'information". Legicom, 2011/2 (No. 47), pages 97 to 112 (here page 112). Victoires Editions, Paris. Original quote in French.



optimised use of these elements throughout the purchasing process (from the definition of the need to the final verification of its realisation).

It is this common culture that forms the basis of a policy and, dialectically, results from it, by organising and encouraging basic and continuing training, a particular focus on this aspect of public policies and actions, professional exchanges, the organised sharing of practices, research and links with academic and economic circles.

This also means recognising and encouraging the study of “public communication markets”, through a *process of professionalisation*, as a specific professional and academic practice and discipline, with appropriate courses of study, recognition of the profession, the necessary exchanges and the setting up of study and knowledge dissemination groups<sup>15</sup>.

Initiatives of this kind do exist, but they are still not systematic or integrated enough. The same applies to their evaluation (when such is carried out).

Much like the statistics on public procurement, which remain quantitative and, to put it bluntly, without effect when they could be the subject of qualitative collection and analysis, focusing, in this case, on performance, for example:

- the award procedure used, and the criteria applied;
- the contractual arrangements put in place for the performance of the contract;
- the actual gains made during negotiations (or the progress made in terms of solutions in competitive dialogues);
- the transition from the accepted tender to its actual execution;
- the communication campaign and the measurement and verification tools themselves;
- but also, elements such as allotment or access for small and medium-sized enterprises (of particular interest to small agencies) and compliance with social, environmental and sustainability requirements.

Simply put: was the need satisfied, was the objective achieved, were the various requirements met... and was the promise of the accepted bid measured and effectively realised; similarly: is the value of the results commensurate with the investment in time, team and budget?

One can agree that a certain bureaucratic routine<sup>16</sup> or – to be fair – the need to move quickly on to the next activities (which is the lot of many public communicators) does not always allow for room to ask these questions ... or answer them!

In addition to the obligations already in place to collect and transmit statistical data on public procurement contracts (below or above the European thresholds), a public procurement observatory<sup>17</sup> should be set up (at national and Community level). Our central services could take the (sectoral) initiative in the case of public communications contracts.

In this context of efficiency and performance (to which we are bound a priori), for complex contracts and particularly communication campaigns, the following must first be ensured:

- using the procedure (permitted by law) best suited to the purpose of the contract. This is obvious, but it is not always the case. Many “choices” are still made on the basis of the possibility of conducting negotiations, or even of avoiding advertising obligations, which – moreover – determines the value of the contract, which is then established by aligning with the legal thresholds and not on the basis of a reasoned estimate! There is also the weight of habit, which does not lead to questioning the procedures generally used, mainly invitations to tender and negotiated procedures, when it could be envisaged, when they are more appropriate, to use other procedures or methods of award, such as multi-annual contracts with conditional tranches, framework agreements, joint contracts or competitive dialogue<sup>18</sup>;
- adopting a strategic approach that involves considering the advantages of splitting the market (obviously not artificially) into creation and recommendation / production / media buying – broadcasting. In this last respect, media buying entrusted directly to agencies specialising in this area can guarantee maximum return on a campaign's impact; all the more so if the (national) public authority or a central communications service concentrates media buying in order to influence pricing conditions or volume discounts, as the main commercial advertisers do. In the “top 10” of advertisers, we can find – today as has long been the case – Procter & Gamble, but never the State with its numerous public services and companies!
- establishing selection criteria (depending on the case) and award criteria that are truly relevant and effective, which for complex contracts (and, in particular, communication campaigns are complex) is not easy, and the process of establishing such criteria should benefit from discussions and exchanges on good practice in this area both with counterparts and with the agency sector;
- including measurable performance requirements and penalties for failure to achieve them in contract documents, from the contract notice to the contract award, as the two go hand in hand. This may, for example, involve measurements and post-tests administered by specialist agencies independent of the service provider,

15 As in France, the “Groupe d'étude des marchés de prestations de communication” (Study Group on Communication Services Contracts), set up within the Legal Affairs Department of the Ministry of the Economy, publishes the “Guide de l'achat public de prestations de communication” (Guide to public procurement of communication services).

16 Even though the verification and acceptance of services are legal obligations.

17 This formally goes beyond public procurement as defined in the legislation. By way of example, such an observatory exists for the government of the Walloon Region (Belgium). <https://marchespublics.wallonie.be/pouvoirs-adjudicateurs/acteurs/observatoire-de-la-commande-publique-wallonie.html>

18 Competitive dialogue can be an interesting solution for complex communications contracts, mainly because of the dialogue it requires with the agencies on the solutions proposed and the possibility of negotiating the bids ultimately submitted.

See:

– “Explanatory note – Competitive dialogue – Classic directive”. European Commission. Directorate General Internal Market and Services. Public procurement policy. Document CC/2005/04 (10 pages).

– Corinne Labbouz, op. cit., pages 104-105. According to this French academic: “(...) when it comes to multi-annual institutional communication contracts, thematic campaigns or complex operations, competitive dialogue appears to be particularly well-suited to the communication sector” (page 104). Original quote in French.

- subjecting our communications actions and activities to evaluations designed to measure their results and performance in relation to the investment made in terms of time, personnel and public expenditure<sup>19</sup>.
- in this context, dealing with the issue of evaluating the elements of a bid that linked to performance (such as a promise of readership, vision or impact) introduced on initiative or to meet a requirement of the contracting authority.

On this last point, as much as our departments have a duty to measure the results (*a posteriori*) of the communications actions they undertake, it is also unusual to note that there is no place in our discussions for and virtually no studies<sup>20</sup> on the topic of evaluation (*a priori*) of the bids made by the agencies submitting bids in the context of the calls for tender to which our services are subject, under the terms of the public procurement regulations that apply to them (without exception).

Although it is not always easy to measure and evaluate the results of our communication actions and their impact, it is even less easy to evaluate (in absolute terms and comparatively) the proposals made to us - in the context of tenders - *on paper*.

This is not to say that such evaluations do not take place, since the legislation on public contracts requires the setting out of award criteria, among which we will logically and normally find such evaluations. The point is that the importance and difficulty of these evaluations clearly do not give rise to professional discussion and debate on the matter.

Although *a posteriori* evaluation is not always easy, despite being based on what has been achieved, *a priori* evaluation is even less easy because it can only be based on suppositions, possibilities and probabilities founded (or not) on statistical data, in the knowledge that these are the very data on which our choices and the resulting actions and expenditure will be based.

This observation is all the more puzzling given that the question is essential (in our choices and their justification, in the evaluation of public policies, in the relationship with the tendering agencies - if not with the agencies in general) and that it is common to all our departments which are faced with the obligation to objectify their choices and expenditure, while linking them with the legal obligations imposed on them in terms of public procurement and which we all share as a result of common European regulations transposed into our national legislation.

All this while one (when we use it!) measures our achievements, but the other (which we are legally obliged to do!) guides our choices...

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There is one final point, which is that of our services setting up their own technical agency, as is the case in the Netherlands and the UK.

This may involve broadcasting/distribution, media planning and media buying, as well as production and even creation.

We will not go any further into the development of this particular policy or practice. It would be interesting to read about these experiences from the colleagues concerned.

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With regard to what we have just mentioned, the Club of Venice has - since its inception - paid particular attention to the issues of professionalisation and the foundations of professionalism. It has also been involved in capacity building initiatives since 2008.

All that remains now is to keep working on the topic and to open up the issue of public communication contracts more widely, as well as, in this context, relations with economic operators (agencies and service providers).

**There is certainly plenty of food for thought and action here for our meetings and exchanges.**



19 On this topic, the following guide may be of interest: "Evaluating the financial impact of public sector marketing communication". Central Office of Information, London, 2011.

20 Where such studies exist, however, they are limited to the legal aspects of the award criteria and not to their relevance and effectiveness.





# Club of Venice - Plenary Meeting

30 November - 1 December 2023, Venice

## Agenda

### **Preliminary draft (as of 27 November 2023)**

Meeting venue: Palazzo Franchetti, San Marco 2847, Venezia

#### **DAY 1 - Wednesday 29 November 2023**

**19:00**

##### **Welcome reception**

(Council of Europe premises, Venice Office) in the framework of the CoE Days initiative

#### **DAY 2 - Thursday 30 November 2023**

##### **PLENARY MEETING**

**8:30 - 9:00**

##### **Guest's registration**

**9:00 - 9:30**

##### **Opening Session**

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

- **Raffaele FITTO**, Minister for European Affairs, Italian Government (TBC)
- **Fabrizio SPADA**, Head of the Institutional Relations Department, European Parliament Information Office in Italy (TBC)
- **Antonio PARENTI**, Head of the European Commission Representation in Italy (TBC)
- Representatives from the regional/local authorities

**9:30 - 10:00**

##### **Key address**

- **Stefano ROLANDO**, President of the Club of Venice

**10:15 - 12:45**

##### **Plenary session - Round Table**

**"The future of public communication": framing challenges and turbulences, building resiliencies, supporting policies and delivering trustworthy narratives**

- Geopolitical influences and pressure on communicators
- The analytical capacity to capture public opinion's signals
- Ensuring coherence and comprehensiveness
- The need to invest in preventing drifting from communication strategies to communication contingencies
- Reinforcing cross-ministerial coordination and inter- governmental cooperation
- Partnerships as a leverage instrument to liaise with the EU institutions
- Cooperation with civil society and the media's added value
- Openness and transparency

##### **Moderator:**

- **Erik den HOEDT**, Netherlands, Director of Communications, EcoFin Ministry, Vice President of the Club of Venice

##### **Key Note speaker:**

- **Alessandro LOVARI**, Associate Professor, Department of Political and Social Sciences, University of Cagliari (Italy)

**Panellists:**

- **Lars-Erik TINDRE**, Director, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Communications department, Sweden
- **Giuseppe ZAFFUTO**, Spokesperson for the Council of Europe Secretary General
- **Maja MAZURKIEWICZ**, Co-Founder & Head of StratCom, Alliance for Europe
- **Alberto MONTROND**, M.A. Senior Preparedness Fellow & Diplomatic Liaison, Emergency Preparedness, Research, Evaluation and Practice (EPREP) program, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, USA
- **Kristina PLAVSAK KRAJNC**, Founding Member, Media Forum, Center for public communication, Ljubljana
- **Luigi DELL'AQUILA**, European Project Manager, European Laboratory on Training, Education and Citizenship (EuLabTEC)
- **Marco MAGHERI**, Secretary-General of the Italian Association of Public Communicators (COMPA)

**12:45 - 14:00****Lunch****14:00****Family picture****14:15 - 17:15****Plenary session****14:15 - 15:30****"Communication strategies for the European elections 2024: synergies and work in partnership"****Moderator:**

- **Vincenzo LE VOICI**, Secretary-General of the Club of Venice

**Key Note speaker:**

- **Philipp SCHULMEISTER**, Director of Campaigns, European Parliament, DG Communication

**Panellists:**

- **Aude MAIO-COLICHE**, Director, Strategic Communications and Foresight, European External Action Service (EEAS)
- **Anja TREBES**, Head of Unit for Communicating Europe, Press and Information Office of the Federal Government, Germany
- **Jens MESTER**, Head of Unit, Interinstitutional Relations, Corporate Contracts & EDCC and Communication Coordinator for the European elections 2024 at the European Commission DG Communication
- **Katja ŠARE**, Head of Sector, Public and Cultural Diplomacy, Information and Public Relations, Ministry of European and Foreign Affairs, Croatia
- **Marco INCERTI**, Director of Communications, European University Institute, Firenze-Fiesole (Italy)
- **Verena RINGLER**, Director, European Commons & AGORA European Green Deal
- **Q&A session**

**15:30 - 15:45****Coffee break****15:45 - 17:15****"Cooperation in Capacity and Capability building (I) - Top priorities"**

- OECD findings, latest projects and analyses
- WPP new Global Report
- Harvard on the Global Forum on Information (Lisbon, 26-28 September 2023)
- Project "European Expertise Centre for Public Communication": work in progress

**Moderator:**

- **Danila CHIARO**, Manager, EUROMED Migration, International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

**Key Note speaker:**

- **Giulia GIACOMELLI**, Senior Strategic Communications Officer, Founder, GDG Inspire, Stratcomms & National Security Policy (TBC)

**Panellists:**

- **Karine BADR**, Policy Analyst, Open Government, Civic Space and Public Communication Unit, Open and Innovative Government Division, Public Governance Directorate, OECD and Fiona SPEIRS, Head of Academy, UK Government Communication Service
- **Eugene FARRELLY**, Assistant Principal, Government Information Office, Department of the Taoiseach, Ireland
- **Fiorenza BARAZZONI**, Director-General, Department for European Affairs, Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Italy

- **Maria Laure VAN HAUWAERT**, Executive Director EU Institutions & Belgium, WPP - The Government and Public Sector Practice
- **Fabiana ZOLLO**, Associate Professor of Computer Science, CA' FOSCARI University, Venice
- **Anthony ZACHARZEWSKI**, President, The Democratic Society and Léna NDOYE, EU Project Manager, The Democratic Society
- **Cesare BUQUICCHIO**, Scientific director CRESP - Emergency risk communication for public health - University of Pisa

17:15 - 17:30

## First day summing-up - issues emerged

(Club Steering Group representative)

20:30

## Official dinner

Venue: Ristorante Antico Martini, Campo Teatro Fenice 2007 (TBC)

# DAY 3 - Friday 1 December 2023

## PLENARY MEETING

9:30 - 12:30

### "Cooperation in Capacity and Capability building (II) - Top challenges"

- Artificial Intelligence: ongoing developments and impact on governments' and institutions' communication strategies and investments
- Digital communication priorities (liaising with crisis comm civil protection and prevention centres)
- Analysis of social media dialogue feedback: measuring added value and communicators' engagement (challenges and opportunities)

#### Moderator:

- **Dr. Siniša GRGIĆ**, Ambassador of Croatia to Sweden

#### Key Note speaker:

- **Amanda SVENSSON**, Deputy Director for Applied Data & Insight at the UK Cabinet Office

#### Panellists:

- **Luzia STROHMAIER**, Board Member of „Bundesverband professioneller Bildanbieter“, AI expert of the Austria Press Agency
- **Jessica PIERCE**, UK, Deputy Director, Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office
- **Simon PIATEK**, Digital Lead, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, UK
- **Petra BEZJAK CIRMAN**, Director of the Government Communication Office, Slovenia
- **Yves STEVENS**, Spokesperson, National Crisis Centre, Belgium, Chair of the EU IPCR Crisis Communication Network (CCN)

15

10:45 - 11:00

## Coffee break

- **Carys WHOMSLEY**, Director, Digital Risk, Head of Research and Thought Leadership, Digitalis
- **Andrea BARONCHELLI**, Professor of Complexity Science, City University of London
- **Rebecca OBSTLER**, NATO Headquarters, Head of Digital
- **Daniel HOLTGEN**, Director of Communications, Council of Europe
- **Tonia DAMVAKERAKI** (TBC)

12:30 - 13:00

## Closing Session

- Reflections on the issues emerged during the plenary meeting
- Planning for 2024: key-events:
  - \* 7th Stratcom seminar (in cooperation with the UK GCSI) - London, 14-15 March 2023
  - \* Seminar on media freedom (in cooperation with the Government of Slovenia, Directorate for Communication) - Ljubljana, 26 April 2023
  - \* Spring 2023 plenary (Ireland - June, dates to be defined)
  - \* Work in synergy with international partner organizations (OECD, ICMPD, SEECOM, SEEMO, DEMSOC, CAP'COM, Harvard/Ca' Foscari, Council of Europe, HSS...)

13:00 - 14:30

## Lunch

(offered by the Council of Europe)

15:00 - 16:30

## Social event organized by the hosting Italian authorities

Guided visit to the Doge's Palace (Palazzo Ducale)





# Riunione plenaria – discorso introduttivo

*Key Address - Stefano Rolando, Presidente del Club di Venezia*

Autorità, cari colleghi e amici, ringrazio calorosamente tutti coloro che hanno preso la parola per i saluti istituzionali. Saluti che noi mettiamo doverosamente in testa ai nostri lavori e rispetto a cui noi misuriamo una parte della domanda che riguarda le funzioni qui rappresentate.

Dall'altra parte, la domanda è costituita anche dalla nostra storia e dalle nostre esperienze.

Quando 37 anni fa, qui a Venezia, si aprì questo cantiere di dialogo, confronto, forse persino di sinergia, tra i capi della comunicazione istituzionale dei paesi membri dell'Unione europea (allora in passaggio da 9 a 12) e delle tre principali istituzioni europee (Commissione, Parlamento, Consiglio) – un tavolo smilzo rispetto a oggi – venti, venticinque partecipanti contro i più di cento di oggi – **c'erano pensieri simili e contesti dissimili** rispetto a oggi.

## **Erano simili tre aspetti:**

- la tensione professionale a far bene questo difficile mestiere;
- l'orientamento ad essere al servizio delle istituzioni e al tempo stesso al servizio dei cittadini;
- l'idea che tra Stato e Mercato non si deve creare né dipendenza gerarchica né conflitto ideologico.

## **Erano dissimili almeno tre altri aspetti contestuali:**

- la politica (intesa come mediazione e visione del futuro) è oggi più debole, conta troppo sulla esigenza della propria visibilità, occupa spazi eccessivi rispetto al rapporto indipendente che sarebbe necessario nell'equilibrio tra sistema istituzionale e sociale;
- la dinamica comunicativa delle imprese era fortemente orientata ai consumi e quella istituzionale alle regole e ai servizi, con una separazione sostanziale; mentre oggi le situazioni di crisi (socio-sanitarie, migratorie, occupazionali) portano a necessarie convergenze;
- in più la tecnologia delle comunicazione – è persino superfluo dirlo – si muoveva nell'architettura del '900 pre-digitale; oggi la tecnologia non è più un mezzo ma è un ambiente, un linguaggio, un format relazionale; è la dicotomia dei poteri contemporanei cioè moltiplica la velocità e la capacità cognitiva ma moltiplica anche la manipolazione e la falsificazione.

Vorrei dire, con chiarezza, **che non rappresento questa differenza per la nostalgia di quegli anni.**

La nostalgia della mia stessa gioventù (avevo 38 anni in quella prima seduta qui a Venezia, alla Fondazione Cini all'isola di San Giorgio).

Parto invece dalla tavola rotonda che prenderà il via tra poco e che è dedicata al *"futuro della comunicazione pubblica"*.

La modera un mio amico e nostro vicepresidente, **Erik den Hoedt**, che ha fatto una larga parte di questo lungo tratta di strada con noi. E può considerarsi un senior, anche se ancora in autorevole attività, come capo della comunicazione del Ministero dell'economia olandese.

E la introduce un giovane collega – moderatamente giovane e ben affermato, forse uno dei migliori della emergente generazione degli studiosi della materia – che per altro si è laureato con me da un bel pezzo. Ed è uno degli interpreti più originale del rapporto tra questa disciplina e la trasformazione digitale. Non posso dire che **Alessandro Lovari** sia uno junior, ma certo è parte delle discontinuità a cui ho accennato.

Insomma, è un'ottima coppia per immaginare i cambiamenti diciamo da qui alla fatidica metà del secolo in corso. Non perché sia facile immaginare qui cosa succederà nel 2050. Ma perché quella data è il traguardo minimo per parlare di cose che non sono ancora compiutamente decise.

E con questo voglio anche dire grazie al nostro Segretario generale **Vincenzo Le Voci** e allo **Steering Group** per il senso di opportunità che hanno avuto nel confezionare un programma che – in un'epoca di imperante *presentismo* – usa la **parola "futuro" in una agenda di lavoro** di chi ci crede e non fa convegni pro-forma.

Anche qui **provo a esprimere tre postulati.**

Il panel se vorrà li criticherà ovvero utilizzerà qualche frammento per validare o no un'ipotesi.

- **Il primo postulato** appartiene alla cornice istituzionale della comunicazione governativa dei paesi europei che si confronta oggi con il rispetto dei limiti delle competenze che appartengono al sistema comunitario. Esso ha voce per alcuni temi, ma non ha voce rispetto a questioni cruciali di oggi e dell'immediato futuro. La domanda è frequente. Le crisi che sono sotto i nostri occhi

– crisi globali e planetarie, che pongono l'esigenza degli Stati Uniti d'Europa, perché ci sia un soggetto con la forza globale di un "global player" – saranno, nei 27 anni che ci separano al 2050, un fattore più forte dello scontro in atto con la ripresa dei nazionalismi e dei sovranismi interni non ad una nazione, a uno stato, ma ad un semplice sistema di trattati con cessioni di limitate sovranità? Nessuno ci vieta di formulare una previsione. Non abbiamo poteri decisionali, dunque siamo liberi di immaginare una cornice oppure un'altra che definisce l'evoluzione del vero commitment della materia di cui noi qui discutiamo. La mia modesta opinione è che in questo lasso di tempo la Gran Bretagna tornerà sui suoi passi. Perché la geopolitica mondiale lo richiede e perché ci sarà un'evoluzione di classe dirigente in cui conterà di più l'opinione degli attuali giovani e non lo sguardo indietro a un '900 tramontato. E questo riporterà un asse appunto geopolitico che oggi va trovando un equilibrio di posizione attorno alle crisi e alle guerre e che – vedremo che cosa dirà la relazione di Mario Draghi sul futuro della competitività europea che gli è stato chiesto dalla presidente von der Leyen – è sempre più obbligato a **ragioni di bilancio comune, di gestione comune del debito e di comune politica della sicurezza**.

- **Il secondo postulato riguarda il ritorno di un chiarimento e di una separazione – concettuale e di prassi istituzionale – tra la comunicazione politica, che è la benzina della democrazia, e la comunicazione appunto istituzionale che riduce la componente faziosa ed elettorale e fa crescere le strategie di spiegazione e di servizio.** Questa riduzione di eccesso di invasione, materia di molti paesi ma anche vizio sempre più segnalato da studiosi e professionisti seri – deve essere decretato dalla rappresentanza politica in seno alle nostre istituzioni. E questo è un classico cane che si morde la coda. Il postulato è pensare che la forza progettuale di professionisti e studiosi (con alle spalle università e centri di ricerca, diciamo pure il modello con cui è evoluto questo "Club di Venezia") potrebbe o comunque dovrebbe mostrare i pregi e le opportunità di interesse generale attorno ad un modello di regolata separazione, facendo leva proprio sul rinnovamento dei modelli formativi della materia. Oggi limitati ad aggiornare le tecniche ma molto poco con le visioni connesse alla qualità della democrazia, al vantaggio competitivo di istituzioni più raccordate con la società e alla ripresa di dialogo di componenti del sistema comunicativo. Cose oggi troppo separate.
- **Quest'ultimo aspetto riguarda appunto il terzo postulato. Lo esprimo con parole semplici e spero chiare. Liberare la comunicazione istituzionale da un eccesso di imposizione politica, non vuol dire retrocedere la cultura istituzionale al vecchio paradigma giuridico-amministrativo, da cui ci è voluto mezzo secolo per fare brecce necessarie. Quelle che hanno fatto passare un po' di cultura economico-gestionale e un po' di cultura sociologica e filosofica per salvare istituzioni avulse. Dico che la visibilità della politica deve essere parte dei costi della politica, non caricata in modo vessatorio sulle risorse che servono per far funzionare il sistema paese e per dialogare con i soggetti sociali. Quindi il terzo postulato riguarda lo spazio che deve intervenire per far crescere modelli sussidiari. Rispetto al ruolo**

comunicativo delle imprese. E rispetto al ruolo comunicativo del privato sociale e dell'associazionismo di scopo. Non c'è crisi del nostro tempo (migrazioni, ambiente e sostenibilità, transizione digitale, trasformazione del mercato del lavoro, diritti umani e civili, eccetera) che riesca a veder ridotto il peso dell'analfabetismo funzionale senza che si mettano in campo forme strategiche di cooperazione tra istituzioni, imprese e rappresentanze sociali. Il modello sussidiario che si può immaginare dispone di alcuni studiosi ed esperti che già ci e quindi parte da cantieri già avviati che richiedono implementazione e investimenti energetici e creativi.

Da qui **il mio suggerimento finale** alla piccola ma molto significativa comunità che oggi si raccoglie nella sua esperienza di cenacolo laico e di interpretazione critica di una professione che è anche una missione.

**Due sono conclusivamente i paradigmi perseguibili:**

- **comprendere la natura transitoria dei processi di cui stiamo parlando** in ordine a cui o restiamo in un contesto in cui **la libertà di pensiero, parola ricerca è garantita dalle scelte costituzionali** o le professioni della comunicazione pubblica ritornano sotto l'egida delle spinte che, nella storia e in larga parte del mondo, rendono queste professioni importanti perché asservite alla propaganda; mentre quella appartenenza di libertà permette un margine *bottom up* rispetto a cui le tragedie alle nostre spalle e alla nostra attuale vista mostrano una residua possibilità;
- **comprendere che la cultura dell'ascolto sociale** è oggi una componente di base di queste professioni non per spiare il popolo ma per concepire la comunicazione sempre in un eterno servizio tra mutazione della domanda e l'aggiornamento del sistema dei diritti individuali e collettivi; è una cultura che può significare servizio oppure marketing commerciale ed elettorale per lo sfruttamento ingiustificato dei dati che la potenza dell'evoluzione digitale mette a disposizione.

Credo che i comunicatori pubblici abbiano il diritto di schierarsi in materia di etica professionale.

**Questi due paradigmi sono infatti leve di militarizzazione degli apparati oppure leve di integrazione sociale degli apparati** che mettono gli operatori istituzionali del futuro di fronte ai modelli che il '900 ha già sperimentato come antagonisti (pur in epoca di macchine da scrivere meccaniche e non di **scoperta dell'intelligenza artificiale**).

- Uno è stato modello **ricavato** dai **principi costituzionali della responsabilità e dell'obiezione di coscienza**.
- L'altro è il **modello** ricavato dall'**obbedienza alla filiera gerarchica**.

Ai giovani che entrano nelle carriere – finché ciò sarà possibile – deve essere conservato il diritto di usare queste parole soprattutto quando le loro motivazioni vengono largamente da quelle categorie – **educazione, salute, sicurezza** – in cui la funzione pubblica grazie alle tecniche e alle scienze si rende utile e quindi necessaria.





# Réunion plénière – discours introductif

*Key Address - Stefano Rolando, President du Club de Venise*

Autorités, chers collègues et amis, je remercie chaleureusement tous ceux qui se sont exprimés pour les salutations institutionnelles. Des salutations que nous mettons consciencieusement en tête de notre travail et à l'aune desquelles nous mesurons une partie de l'exigence qui concerne les fonctions ici représentées.

D'un autre côté, la question est aussi faite de notre histoire et de nos expériences.

Lorsqu'il y a 37 ans, ici à Venise, s'ouvrait ce lieu de dialogue, de comparaison, peut-être même de synergie, entre les responsables de la communication institutionnelle des pays membres de l'Union européenne (passant alors de 9 à 12) et des trois principales institutions de la Européens (Commission, Parlement, Conseil) - une table étroite par rapport à aujourd'hui - vingt, vingt-cinq participants contre plus d'une centaine aujourd'hui - il y avait des pensées similaires et des contextes différents par rapport à aujourd'hui.

## Trois aspects étaient similaires :

- la **tension** professionnelle pour bien faire ce travail difficile ;
- l'**orientation** d'être au service des institutions et en même temps au service des citoyens ;
- l'**idée** qu'il ne faut créer ni dépendance hiérarchique ni conflit idéologique entre l'État et le marché.

## Au moins trois autres aspects contextuels étaient différents :

- la politique (comprise comme médiation et vision de l'avenir) est aujourd'hui plus faible, s'appuie trop sur le besoin de sa propre visibilité, occupe des espaces excessifs par rapport au rapport d'indépendance qui serait nécessaire dans l'équilibre entre le système institutionnel et social ;
- la dynamique de communication des entreprises était fortement orientée vers la consommation et la dynamique institutionnelle vers les règles et les services, avec une séparation substantielle ; alors qu'aujourd'hui les situations de crise (socio-santé, migration, emploi) conduisent à des convergences nécessaires ;
- en outre, les technologies de communication - cela va sans dire - ont évolué dans l'architecture pré-numérique du 20e siècle ; aujourd'hui la technologie n'est plus un moyen mais un environnement, un langage, un format relationnel ; c'est la dichotomie des pouvoirs contemporains, c'est-à-dire

qu'elle multiplie la vitesse et la capacité cognitive mais multiplie aussi les manipulations et les falsifications.

**Je voudrais dire clairement que je ne représente pas cette différence à cause de la nostalgie de ces années-là.**

La nostalgie de ma propre jeunesse (j'avais 38 ans lors de cette première séance ici à Venise, à la Fondation Cini sur l'île de San Giorgio).

Au lieu de cela, je pars de la table ronde qui va bientôt démarrer et qui est consacrée au « futur de la communication publique ».

Le modérateur est un de mes amis et notre vice-président, **Erik den Hoedt**, qui a parcouru une grande partie de ce long voyage avec nous. Et il peut se considérer comme un haut placé, même s'il exerce toujours une activité d'autorité, en tant que chef de la communication du ministère néerlandais de l'Économie.

Et il est introduit par un jeune collègue - moyennement jeune et établi, peut-être l'un des meilleurs de la génération émergente d'universitaires dans le domaine - qui a également obtenu son diplôme avec moi il y a un certain temps. Et il est l'un des interprètes les plus originaux de la relation entre cette discipline et la transformation numérique. Je ne peux pas dire qu'**Alessandro Lovari** soit un junior, mais il fait certainement partie des discontinuités que j'ai évoquées.

Bref, c'est un excellent couple pour imaginer les changements, disons, d'ici la fatidique moitié du siècle en cours. Non pas parce qu'il est facile d'imaginer ici ce qui se passera en 2050. Mais parce que cette date est l'objectif minimum pour parler de choses qui ne sont pas encore totalement décidées.

Et avec cela, je voudrais également remercier notre secrétaire général **Vincenzo Le Voci** et le **Groupe de pilotage** pour le sentiment d'opportunité qu'ils ont eu en élaborant un programme qui - à une époque de présentisme dominant - utilise le mot "futur" dans un agenda. du travail de ceux qui y croient et ne tiennent pas de conférences pro forma.

## Ici aussi, j'essaie d'exprimer trois postulats.

S'il le souhaite, le panel les critiquera ou utilisera quelques fragments pour valider ou non une hypothèse.

- Le **premier postulat** appartient au cadre institutionnel de la



communication gouvernementale dans les pays européens qui est aujourd'hui confronté au respect des limites des compétences appartenant au système communautaire. Il a une voix sur certaines questions, mais il n'a pas de voix sur les questions cruciales d'aujourd'hui et de l'avenir immédiat. La question est fréquente. Les crises qui sont sous nos yeux - crises mondiales et planétaires, qui posent la nécessité pour les États-Unis d'Europe d'avoir un sujet doté de la force globale d'un « acteur mondial » - seront, dans les 27 années qui nous séparent d'ici 2050, un facteur plus fort que l'affrontement en cours avec la reprise du nationalisme et du souverainisme au sein non pas d'une nation, d'un État, mais d'un simple système de traités avec des transferts de souveraineté limités ? Personne ne nous empêche de faire une prédiction. Nous n'avons aucun pouvoir de décision, nous sommes donc libres d'imaginer tel ou tel cadre qui définit l'évolution du véritable engagement du sujet dont nous discutons ici. Mon humble opinion est qu'à ce moment-là, la Grande-Bretagne reviendra sur ses pas. Parce que la géopolitique mondiale l'exige et parce qu'il y aura une évolution de la classe dirigeante dans laquelle l'opinion de la jeunesse actuelle comptera davantage et non le regard sur un XXe siècle révolu. Et cela ramènera un axe géopolitique qui trouve aujourd'hui un équilibre autour des crises et des guerres et qui - nous verrons ce que dira le rapport de Mario Draghi sur l'avenir de la compétitivité européenne que lui a demandé la présidente von der Leyen - est de plus en plus obligés pour des raisons de budget commun, de gestion commune de la dette et de politique de sécurité commune.

- **Le deuxième postulat** concerne le retour d'une clarification et d'une séparation - pratique conceptuelle et institutionnelle - entre la communication politique, qui est le carburant de la démocratie, et la communication institutionnelle qui réduit la composante partisane et électorale et accroît les stratégies d'explication et de service. Cette réduction des invasions excessives, affaire de nombreux pays mais aussi vice de plus en plus signalé par des universitaires et des professionnels sérieux, doit être décrétée par la représentation politique au sein de nos institutions. Et c'est un chien classique qui court après sa queue. Le postulat est de penser que la force de planification des professionnels et des universitaires (avec derrière eux les universités et les centres de recherche, disons le modèle avec lequel ce "Venise Club" a évolué) pourrait ou en tout cas devrait montrer les mérites et les opportunités d'intérêt général autour de un modèle de séparation régulée, tirant parti du renouvellement des modèles formateurs de la matière. Aujourd'hui, nous nous limitons à actualiser les techniques mais très peu aux visions liées à la qualité de la démocratie, à l'avantage compétitif des institutions plus liées à la société et à la reprise du dialogue des composantes du système de communication. Les choses sont trop séparées aujourd'hui.
- Ce dernier aspect concerne **le troisième postulat**. Je l'exprime avec des mots simples et, je l'espère, clairs. Libérer la communication institutionnelle d'un excès d'imposition politique ne signifie pas reléguer la culture institutionnelle au vieux paradigme juridico-administratif, à partir duquel il a fallu un demi-siècle pour réaliser les percées nécessaires. Ceux qui ont transmis un peu de culture économique-gestionnaire

et un peu de culture sociologique et philosophique pour sauver des institutions détachées. Je dis que la visibilité de la politique doit faire partie des coûts de la politique, et non grever de manière vexatoire les ressources nécessaires au fonctionnement du système national et au dialogue avec les sujets sociaux.

Le troisième postulat concerne donc l'espace qui doit intervenir pour faire croître les modèles subsidiaires. Respect du rôle communicatif des entreprises. Et en ce qui concerne le rôle de communication du secteur social privé et des associations motivées. Il n'existe pas de crise de notre époque (migration, environnement et durabilité, transition numérique, transformation du marché du travail, droits de l'homme et citoyens, etc.) qui puisse réduire le fardeau de l'analphabétisme fonctionnel sans que soient mises en place des formes stratégiques de coopération entre institutions, entreprises et représentants sociaux. Le modèle subsidiaire que l'on peut imaginer compte des universitaires et des experts déjà présents et part donc de projets déjà en cours qui nécessitent une mise en œuvre et des investissements énergiques et créatifs.

D'où ma **dernière suggestion** à la communauté petite mais très significative qui se réunit aujourd'hui dans son expérience de cénacle séculier et d'interprétation critique d'une profession qui est aussi une mission.

En fin de compte, **deux paradigmes peuvent être poursuivis** :

- comprendre **le caractère transitoire des processus dont nous parlons** pour que soit nous restions dans un contexte où la liberté de pensée, la recherche de mots est garantie par des choix constitutionnels, soit les métiers de la communication publique reviennent sous l'égide des pressions qui, dans l'histoire et dans une grande partie du monde, donnent de l'importance à ces professions parce qu'elles sont soumises à la propagande ; tandis que l'appartenance à la liberté laisse une marge ascendante par rapport à laquelle les tragédies derrière nous et selon notre vision actuelle montrent une possibilité résiduelle ;
- comprendre que **la culture de l'écoute sociale** est aujourd'hui une composante fondamentale de ces métiers non pas pour espionner les gens mais pour concevoir la communication toujours dans un service éternel entre l'évolution de la demande et l'actualisation du système de droits individuels et collectifs ; c'est une culture qui peut signifier un service ou un marketing commercial et électoral pour l'exploitation injustifiée des données que la puissance de l'évolution numérique rend disponibles.

**Je crois que les communicateurs publics ont le droit de choisir leur camp en matière d'éthique professionnelle.**

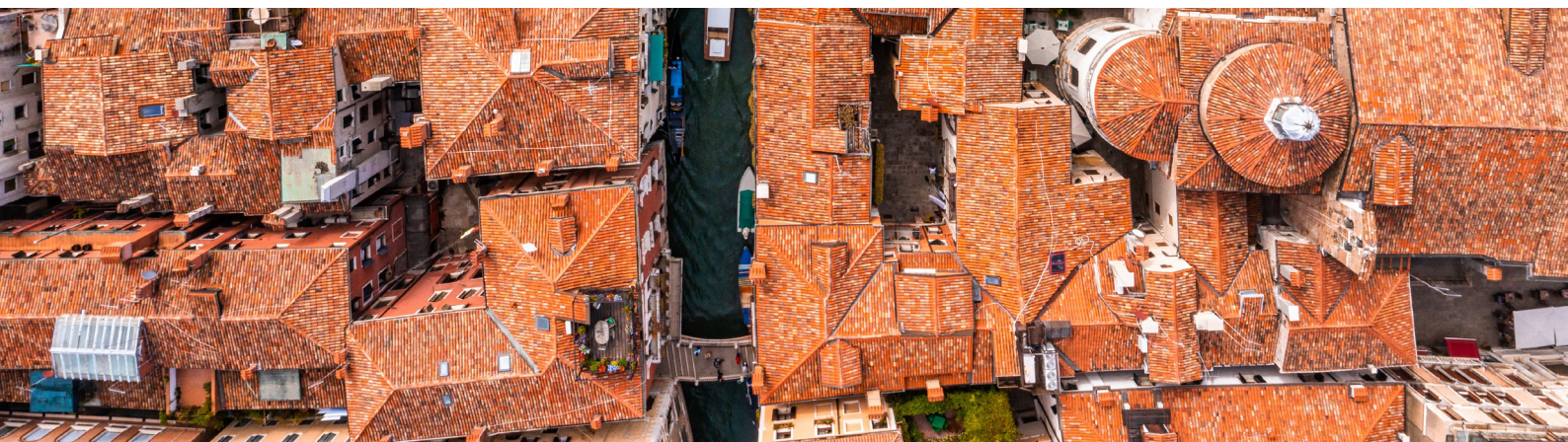
Ces deux paradigmes sont en fait des leviers de militarisation des appareils ou des leviers d'intégration sociale des appareils qui mettent les opérateurs institutionnels du futur face à des modèles que le XXe siècle a déjà vécus comme antagonistes (malgré l'ère des machines à écrire mécaniques). et non de la découverte de l'intelligence artificielle).

- L'un d'entre eux était un modèle dérivé des principes constitutionnels de responsabilité et d'objection de conscience.

- L'autre est le modèle dérivé de l'obéissance à la chaîne d'approvisionnement hiérarchique.

Il faut conserver aux jeunes qui entrent dans une carrière - aussi longtemps que cela est possible - le droit d'utiliser ces mots, surtout lorsque leurs motivations proviennent en grande

partie de ces catégories - éducation, santé, sécurité - dans lesquelles la fonction publique, grâce aux techniques et aux sciences, est le rend utile et donc nécessaire.



## Plenary meeting – introductory speech

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*Key Address by Stefano Rolando, President of the Club of Venice*

Authorities, dear colleagues and friends, I warmly thank all those who spoke for institutional greetings. Greetings that we dutifully put at the head of our work and against which we measure part of the demand that concerns the functions represented here.

On the other hand, the question is also made up of our history and our experiences.

When 37 years ago, here in Venice, this site of dialogue, comparison, perhaps even synergy was opened between the heads of institutional communication of the member countries of the European Union (then going from 9 to 12) and of the three main institutions the Europeans (Commission, Parliament, Council) - a slim table compared to today - twenty, twenty-five participants compared to more than a hundred today - there were similar thoughts and dissimilar contexts compared to today.

Three aspects were similar:

- the professional tension to do this difficult job well;
- the orientation to be at the service of the institutions and at the same time at the service of the citizens;
- the idea that neither hierarchical dependence nor ideological conflict must be created between State and Market.

At least three other contextual aspects were dissimilar:

- politics (understood as mediation and vision of the future)

is weaker today, relies too much on the need for its own visibility, occupies excessive spaces compared to the independent relationship that would be necessary in the balance between the institutional and social system;

- the communication dynamics of companies were strongly oriented towards consumption and the institutional one towards rules and services, with a substantial separation; while today crisis situations (socio-health, migration, employment) lead to necessary convergences;
- furthermore, communication technology – it goes without saying – moved in the pre-digital architecture of the 20th century; today technology is no longer a means but an environment, a language, a relational format; it is the dichotomy of contemporary powers, that is, it multiplies speed and cognitive capacity but also multiplies manipulation and falsification.

I would like to say, clearly, that I do not represent this difference because of the nostalgia of those years.

The nostalgia of my own youth (I was 38 years old in that first session here in Venice, at the Cini Foundation on the island of San Giorgio).

Instead, I start from the round table that will start soon and which is dedicated to the “future of public communication”.

The moderator is a friend of mine and our vice-president, Erik den Hoedt, who has done a large part of this long journey with us. And he can consider himself a senior, even if still in an

authoritative activity, as head of communications of the Dutch Ministry of Economy.

And it is introduced by a young colleague - moderately young and established, perhaps one of the best of the emerging generation of scholars in the subject - who also graduated with me quite some time ago. And he is one of the most original interpreters of the relationship between this discipline and digital transformation. I can't say that Alessandro Lovari is a junior, but he is certainly part of the discontinuities I mentioned.

In short, it is an excellent couple for imagining the changes, let's say, between now and the fateful half of the current century. Not because it is easy to imagine here what will happen in 2050. But because that date is the minimum target for talking about things that are not yet fully decided.

And with this I also want to say thanks to our General Secretary Vincenzo Le Voci and the Steering Group for the sense of opportunity they had in putting together a program which - in an era of prevailing presentism - uses the word "future" in an agenda of work of those who believe in it and do not hold pro-forma conferences.

Here too I try to express three postulates.

If it wants, the panel will criticize them or use some fragments to validate or not a hypothesis.

- The first postulate belongs to the institutional framework of governmental communication in European countries which today is faced with respecting the limits of the competences that belong to the community system. It has a voice for some issues, but it has no voice with respect to crucial issues of today and the immediate future. The question is frequent. The crises that are before our eyes - global and planetary crises, which pose the need for the United States of Europe, for there to be a subject with the global strength of a "global player" - will, in the 27 years that separate us to 2050, a stronger factor than the ongoing clash with the resumption of nationalism and sovereignty within not a nation, a state, but a simple system of treaties with transfers of limited sovereignty? Nobody stops us from making a prediction. We have no decision-making powers, therefore we are free to imagine one framework or another that defines the evolution of the true commitment of the matter we are discussing here. My humble opinion is that in this time Britain will retrace its steps. Because world geopolitics requires it and because there will be an evolution of the ruling class in which the opinion of current young people will count more and not the look back at a bygone 20th century. And this will bring back a geopolitical axis which today is finding a balance of position around crises and wars and which - we will see what Mario Draghi's report on the future of European competitiveness that was asked of him by President von der Leyen will say - is increasingly obliged for reasons of common budget, common debt management and common security policy.
- The second postulate concerns the return of a clarification and separation - conceptual and institutional practice - between political communication, which is the fuel of democracy, and institutional communication which reduces the partisan and electoral component and increases the

strategies of explanation and service. This reduction of excess invasion, a matter for many countries but also a vice increasingly reported by serious scholars and professionals - must be decreed by political representation within our institutions. And this is classic dog chasing its tail. The postulate is to think that the planning strength of professionals and scholars (with universities and research centers behind them, let's say the model with which this "Venice Club" evolved) could or in any case should show the merits and opportunities of general interest around a model of regulated separation, leveraging the renewal of the formative models of matter. Today we are limited to updating the techniques but very little with the visions connected to the quality of democracy, the competitive advantage of institutions more connected with society and the resumption of dialogue of components of the communication system. Things are too separate today.

- This last aspect concerns the third postulate. I express it in simple and hopefully clear words. Freeing institutional communication from an excess of political imposition does not mean relegating institutional culture to the old legal-administrative paradigm, from which it took half a century to make the necessary breakthroughs. Those who have passed on a bit of economic-management culture and a bit of sociological and philosophical culture to save detached institutions. I say that the visibility of politics must be part of the costs of politics, not burdened in a vexatious way on the resources needed to make the country system work and to dialogue with social subjects.

Therefore the third postulate concerns the space that must intervene to make subsidiary models grow. Respect to the communicative role of companies. And with respect to the communicative role of the private social sector and of purpose-driven associations. There is no crisis of our time (migration, environment and sustainability, digital transition, transformation of the labor market, human and civil rights, etc.) that can see the burden of functional illiteracy reduced without strategic forms being put in place of cooperation between institutions, businesses and social representatives. The subsidiary model that can be imagined has some scholars and experts who are already there and therefore starts from projects already underway that require implementation and energetic and creative investments.

Hence my final suggestion to the small but very significant community that today gathers in its experience of a secular cenacle and of critical interpretation of a profession that is also a mission.

Ultimately, there are two paradigms that can be pursued:

- understand the transitory nature of the processes we are talking about so that either we remain in a context in which freedom of thought, word research is guaranteed by constitutional choices or the professions of public communication return under the aegis of the pressures which, in history and in a large part of the world, make these professions important because they are subservient to propaganda; while that belonging to freedom allows a bottom up margin against which the tragedies behind us and in our current view show



a residual possibility;

- understand that the culture of social listening is today a basic component of these professions not to spy on the people but to conceive communication always in an eternal service between the change in demand and the updating of the system of individual and collective rights; it is a culture that can mean service or commercial and electoral marketing for the unjustified exploitation of the data that the power of digital evolution makes available.

I believe that public communicators have the right to choose sides when it comes to professional ethics.

These two paradigms are in fact levers of militarization of the apparatuses or levers of social integration of the apparatuses that put the institutional operators of the future face to face

with the models that the 20th century has already experienced as antagonists (despite the era of mechanical typewriters and not of the discovery of artificial intelligence).

- One was a model derived from the constitutional principles of responsibility and conscientious objection.
- The other is the model derived from obedience to the hierarchical supply chain.

Young people entering careers - as long as this is possible - must be preserved the right to use these words especially when their motivations largely come from those categories - education, health, safety - in which the public function, thanks to techniques and sciences, is makes it useful and therefore necessary.







# Club of Venice - Plenary Meeting

1 - 2 June 2023, Nicosia

Outcome by Vincenzo LeVoci

## Public communicators' role in crisis management; sharing expertise, analytical and planning skills; capacity building in progress; migration narratives as a global challenge

Communication professionals from more than 20 countries (UE and beyond) convened in Nicosia to share their views on ongoing crises and to analyse global trends in the organisational challenges. This plenary was also attended by representatives from international organisations (WHO, ICMPD, IOM), academies (EUI-OPAM, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine), digital experts and managers of debunking platforms to discuss possible cooperation in capacity building, resilience plans and disinformation debunking.

Countering malicious information, building synergies and engaging qualified trustworthy experts to improve the outreach strategies were the themes at the centre of discussion.

The participants focused on ways and means to work together to effectively design and assess campaigns and ensure consistency with the communication narratives on all priority topics. Migration was chosen as a key topic in the aftermath of the recent tragedies with several casualties occurred in the Mediterranean. The dual approach in communicating these key issues – handling contingencies and learning lessons for accurate preventive measures – is crucial, for both political authorities and communicators. The importance of deliver a clear and honest communication and the capacity to increase trust in data exchange and to reinforce ties between Member States governments and EU institutions in the information and communication strategies was deemed indispensable to avoid growing citizens' lack of confidence in their national authorities and in the EU's added value.

Strategic communication is recognized as absolutely vital to provide coherence and structure to our joint communication strategies. Continuous training is a must. The digital landscape being in continuous fast evolution, there is an urgent need for establish stronger ties with external experts who can provide

suggestions for environmentally sustainable solutions, for increasing interoperability and for set up realistic capacity building goals to interact with the communities and build trust in pan-European and national public services based on solid communication infrastructures.

As a follow-up to the main elements emerged from the previous Stratcom seminar held in London, the plenary in Cyprus emphasised the need for an increased focus on enriched information provision for the most vulnerable, less equipped and remote audiences and for an increased behavioural analysis through accurate research studies, in order to contribute to build collective resilient responses and anticipate possible priority communication targets in times of crisis.





# Club of Venice - Plenary Meeting

1 - 2 June 2023, Nicosia

## Agenda

Meeting venue: Filoxenia Conference Center Thrakis 17, Nicosia 2112, Cyprus

### DAY 1 - Wednesday 31 May 2023

19:30

*Welcome dinner*

*Venue: AIGAION Greek restaurant, Ektoros 40, Nicosia 1016*

### DAY 2 - Thursday 1 June 2023

#### PLENARY MEETING

9:00 - 9:30

#### Opening Session

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

- **Aliki STYLIANOU**, Director of the Press and Information Office, Ministry of Interior, Government of Cyprus
- **Andreas KETTIS**, Head of the European Parliament Liaison Office in Cyprus
- **Nikos ISARIS**, Deputy Head of the European Commission Representation in Cyprus
- **Vincenzo LE VOCI**, Secretary-General of the Club of Venice

9:30 - 10:00

#### Key address

- **Stefano ROLANDO**, President of the Club of Venice

10:00 - 10:15

#### Coffee break

10:15 - 12:45

#### Plenary session

**"Public Communicators' role in Crisis Management"**

- State of play: challenges, deadlines, public opinion trends
- Cooperation among governments, with the institutions and with platforms of key sectors of society (international partner organisations, scientific communities, academies, agencies, media, etc.) in debunking misinformation and disinformation
- Coherence and comprehensiveness
- New plans of resilience vs. hybrid threats (including cybersecurity trends)

**Moderator:**

- **Erik den HOEDT**, Netherlands, Director of Communications, EcoFin Ministry, Vice President of the Club of Venice

**Key Note speaker:**

- **Aliki STYLIANOU**, Director of the Press and Information Office, Ministry of Interior, Government of Cyprus

**Contributions:**

- National authorities:
  - \* **Mykolas MAZOLEWSKIS**, Public and Media Relations, Spokesperson, Permanent Representation of Lithuania to the European Union
  - \* **Anne KUCKERT**, Trainee Official, Embassy of Germany to Cyprus
  - \* **Michal BIZNAR**, State Advisor for Strategic Communication, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Slovakia



- **Yevhen FEDCHENKO**, Chief Editor, Stopfake.org, Ukraine
- EU Institutions:
  - \* **Christopher COAKLEY**, European Parliament, Spokespersons' Office
  - \* **Zbigniew GNIATKOWSKI**, European Commission DG COMM, Information and Communication Officer – Disinformation Response
- **Jakub KUBŚ**, Senior Disinformation Analyst and OSINT researcher and **Viktoras DAUKSAS**, Head of Debunk.org, Lithuania
- **Karine BADR**, Senior Policy Analyst, Open Governance Division, OECD Headquarters, Paris

12:45 - 14:00

## Lunch and family picture

14:15 - 17:15

## Plenary session

14:15 - 15:45

### "Capacity and Capability building in progress"

- global reporting
- analysing global trends in the organisational challenges
- focus on AI and other technological impact on professional standards
- sharing expertise (European expertise centre project, new reports and additional projects from international partners)
- macro-regional strategies as a leverage to identify and build upon commonalities

#### Moderator:

- **Ana FEDER**, Regional Portfolio Manager, International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

#### General Introduction:

- **Alessandro LOVARI**, Associate Professor, Department of Political and Social Sciences, University of Cagliari (Italy): "Optimising planning, analytical and strategical capacities and joining forces towards an increasingly professional role of public sector communication" (*speech delivered by Vincenzo Le Voci*)

#### Key Note speaker:

- **Bettina HAUSMANN**, International Executive Coach and Trainer

#### Contributions:

- national authorities:
  - \* **Tiziana ANTONELLI**, Communication Officer, Department of the European Policies, Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Italy
  - \* **Susanne WEBER**, Head of Unit 'Digital', Federal Chancellery, Austria
- **Laure VAN HAUWAERT**, WPP, Director, "Institutions" (the new Global Report)
- **Tim NGUYEN**, Head of Unit, World Health Organization, Epidemic and Pandemic Preparedness and Prevention, Geneva
- **Carys WHOMSLEY**, Director, Digital Risk, Head of Research and Thought Leadership, Digitalis, UK
- **Robert WESTER**, Director, Berenschot Europe, NL
- **Simon PIATEK**, Digital Leader, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, UK
- **Tonia DAMVAKERAKI**, Senior Project Manager, Scope ("EU Blockchain")
- **Danijel KOLETIĆ**, CEO of Apriori World, founder of PRO-PR, South-East Europe conference on communication and public relations, Croatia

15:45 - 16:00

## Coffee break

17:15 - 17:30

## First day summing-up - issues emerged

(Club Steering Group representative)

20:00

## Official dinner

**Venue:** Restaurant «Stoa tou Dimitri», 28 Digeni Akrita Str., Nicosia 1045

# Introductory speech

Key Address by Stefano Rolando, President of the Club of Venice

Saluto molto calorosamente tutti i partecipanti, in presenza e da remoto, ringrazio gli organizzatori ciprioti e il governo della Repubblica di Cipro che hanno acconsentito lo **svolgimento della plenaria pre-estiva del Club di Venezia, cosa che ci ha risolto qualche** incertezza di localizzazione. Grazie alla magnifica idea di ritorno a Cipro, partner generoso e attivo del nostro sodalizio. Ringrazio **Vincenzo Le Voci**, il nostro segretario generale, che mantiene uno standard di dedizione alla sua missione senza sapere che il carattere informale del *Club di Venezia* non gli porterà forse neppure una onorificenza ufficiale da Bruxelles o dai Paesi membri, ma resterà sempre amico di tutti coloro che lo hanno visto e lo vedono lavorare con passione e competenza.

Io mi scuso con tutti i partecipanti per non avere avuto la possibilità di essere fisicamente tra di voi. Questa volta era proprio impossibile a causa di una recente operazione chirurgica che è andata bene ma che mi obbliga a regole e controlli.

Spero che Cipro mi dia ancora un'occasione per conoscere questa grande isola del Mediterraneo che a lungo è stata, a partire dalla fine del Quattrocento, terra della Repubblica di Venezia e quindi dovrebbe essere considerata un membro d'onore del Club di Venezia.

Ho molto apprezzato lo schema dei lavori che è stato varato dallo Steering Group.

- In partenza lo sviluppo dell'analisi **del processo di comunicazione istituzionale nel quadro delle crisi e delle emergenze** che mantengono la priorità di agenda in Europa.
- Poi **l'adeguamento dei modelli organizzativi e funzionali** che nascono riveduti e aggiornati proprio dalle elaborazioni delle crisi, a cominciare da quella sanitaria, senza tralasciare quella militare e geopolitica, quella migratoria e quella legata all'interdipendenza delle transizioni della trasformazione digitale, dell'impatto delle misure sulla sostenibilità e dal generale adeguamento di un processo relazionale finalizzato ai piani speciali di investimento contro le crisi.
- Apprezzo che, nel nostro tavolo, i ruoli di stimolazione vengano sempre più assunti da esperti, studiosi, giovani e preparati. Come è il caso del panel che si occupa appunto di *Capacity building*. Ciò segna un definitivo passaggio di modalità interna, una volta limitato al confronto di esperienze attraverso le testimonianze dei capi dei servizi di comunicazione istituzionale governativi. Ora esteso all'intreccio con centri di analisi e di didattica, intreccio che segnala che, senza un aggiornamento costante di metodiche e metodologie, questa professione così particolare non riuscirebbe ad assicurare non solo il *trait-d'union tra governi e società*, ma non produrrebbe il valore aggiunto informativo che le buone istituzioni debbono produrre e assicurare.
- È quello che io chiamo (assegnandovi una evidente priorità) **lo scopo superiore della spiegazione istituzionale**. Che

è un diritto-dovere che si fa strada in un quadro che deve mantenere una certa indipendenza dalla comunicazione politica. E deve tenere in grande considerazione la **valutazione dell'insufficienza percettiva da parte dei cittadini** non solo circa i fatti e l'andamento delle regole, ma riguardante la percezione corretta dei *processi*. Ciò in tempi di manipolazione e impedimenti alla trasparenza e a fronte del fatto che **la distorta percezione altera la centralità della cultura statistica ed è fonte di eccessi di speculazione politica**.

- Dunque, su questi **aspetti di deontologia e di consolidamento degli strumenti di gestione professionale** di questo genere di mission si gioca sempre più la **chiarezza di ruolo dei comunicatori**, rispetto al parallelo ruolo degli uffici stampa e di che amministra la notiziabilità. Materia che ovviamente è un requisito molto importante per i governanti. Che, tuttavia, una certa modernità ed efficacia delle *funzioni di accompagnamento sociale e di spiegazione* possono persino migliorare, perché introducono un naturale coefficiente di credibilità di cui tutte le funzioni relazionali beneficiano.

Come voi sapete in tutti i nostri Paesi e, per aspetti di carattere generale, anche nel quadro della demoscopia europea che fa capo a Eurobarometro, si tende spesso considerare con una **certa preoccupazione che gli indici di fiducia dei cittadini nei confronti delle istituzioni non siano uniformi né territorialmente né per ambiti di competenza**.

Poche istituzioni – paese per paese – sveltano con ampie maggioranze di fiducia.

Quasi sempre sono quelle che presidiano servizi sociali di primaria importanza (come la scuola, l'ordine pubblico e non dappertutto la salute).

Mentre gli ambiti che amministrano la democrazia raramente raggiungono indici soddisfacenti. È chiaro che una valutazione attenta – declinata per paesi e territori e poi rivista in forma comparata in ambito generale europeo – è parte integrante del sistema di stimolazione e correzione della professione dei comunicatori istituzionali.

Anche quando non viene loro ordinato dall'autorità politica a capo di questa o quella istituzione. L'operatore deve sapere se fronteggia consenso o dissenso pregiudiziale.

Deve sapere se il vulnus è attorno alla qualità della spiegazione o al riverbero di questioni che potremmo riassumere nel termine *“di immagine”*.

Fino a partecipare in forma pragmatica e tecnica quotidiana alla valutazione generale della **salute delle istituzioni**, argomento che vale anche per le forme costituzionali, tanto nei paesi a regime repubblicano quanto a regime monarchico (tanto che è stato al centro di tutti i commenti nel recente trapasso della corona inglese).

A differenza del trattamento mediatico che segue le regole del **trading topic** – cioè l'aria che tira concentra informazione e il resto va ai margini – la comunicazione istituzionale macina più *materia grigia* e dunque è meno influenzata dalla forte selezione del “*passa solo quello che fa notizia*”.

Faccio questi accenni semplicemente per segnalare ad amici e colleghi che intervengono in questi panel a **non avere remore ad affrontare aspetti di autonomia nella condizione di formazione professionale permanente** anche quando essa non sembra costituire una preoccupazione delle istituzioni a cui appartengono.

Il *Club di Venezia*, grazie alla sua informalità, ha rappresentato per i colleghi di alcuni paesi l'occasione per **scoprire e valutare situazioni di diversità** e soprattutto l'esistenza di *performances* migliori della propria.

Non si distribuiscono premi e medaglie. Non c'è competizione. Ma è questa una grande **occasione per indurre fenomeni di attenzione ai cambiamenti** che valgono anche per i giovani freschi di studi e valgono soprattutto per funzionari più stagionati.

Soprattutto valgono in contesti meno creativi e meno sollecitati a comprendere i fattori di debolezza nell'esercizio di una professione che, se non si autocorregge, viene a poco a poco marginalizzata da processi di intermediazione digitale.

E anche da questo punto di vista dibattiti come quello in corso sulla **sperimentazione di piattaforme create dalla cosiddetta Intelligenza Artificiale** su cui – chiariti aspetti connessi a privacy – l'auspicio è di far procedere la sperimentazione e discutere degli adattamenti necessari, senza chiudere gli occhi davanti a un vento che può avere la stessa portata rivoluzionaria dell'ingresso in scena 28 anni fa di Internet.

Ecco, tra le varie crisi e le nuove forme di *capacity building*, noi ci avviciniamo ad un tema che prima o poi dovremo affrontare in modo serio e monografico: **la trasformazione epocale delle professioni connesse alla comunicazione istituzionale**. Bisognerà tenere conto di vari aspetti, che non sono rubricati nei manuali che si occupano solo di *tecniche realizzative*, ma sono rubricati in un dibattito diciamo pubblico, segnato anche dai conflitti.

C'è un tema di **analisi sul rapporto conflittuale tra comunicazione istituzionale e comunicazione politica** e c'è anche un **tema di necessario riavvicinamento tra la comunicazione istituzionale, la comunicazione sociale e la comunicazione di impresa**.

Quest'ultima non è solo orientata alla vendita. È parte anche di un dibattito necessario su temi generali (come l'ambiente, il lavoro, i programmi di sviluppo, la politica di attrazione e di investimento, la salute, l'educazione di base, eccetera), rispetto al cui trattamento da parte di singole imprese e soprattutto di associazioni di impresa io parlo, da tempo, di **vera appartenenza, sotto questo specifico aspetto, al tavolo della comunicazione pubblica**.

Uno degli insegnamenti del rapporto tra istituzioni e situazioni di crisi intrecciate a cui ho fatto prima riferimento è che

il **riavvicinamento tra le fonti istituzionali e quelle sociali** (di cui l'impresa è parte) costituisce un fattore oggi obbligato di *schema operativo* nei contesti di crisi.

E siccome i contesti di crisi stanno assumendo carattere permanente, correndo in parallelo o in forme interdipendenti, sta maturando il problema di **immaginare un protocollo europeo, nazionale e territoriale di legittimazione di un quadro relazionale già in atto**, ma ogni volta chiedendosi il numero di telefono o facendosi dare il biglietto da visita.

È più che evidente che il format a regime di questo confronto sia nelle cose. E credo che il Club di Venezia potrebbe dare – magari nella prossima plenaria – alcune risposte nuove confrontando le esperienze di questi diversi ma anche molto simili ambiti professionali, anche aprendo il discorso sul **riorientamento della didattica formativa**.

Mi sono fatto prendere da questo discorso. E credo di avere quasi esaurito il tempo di un indirizzo generale introduttivo. Tuttavia, con qualche spunto che tenevo da tempo a portare alla vostra attenzione.

**Rinnovo ringraziamenti e saluti a tutti, naturalmente e come sempre anche agli interpreti.**

E ora in particolare a chi animerà la discussione programmata.

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Je salue chaleureusement tous les participants, en présence et à distance, je remercie les organisateurs chypriotes et le gouvernement de la République de Chypre qui **ont accepté de tenir la session plénière pré-été du Club de Venise, ce qui a résolu pour nous certaines incertitudes de localisation**. Grâce à la merveilleuse idée de retourner à Chypre, partenaire généreux et actif de notre association. Je remercie **Vincenzo Le Voci**, notre secrétaire général, qui maintient un niveau de dévouement à sa mission sans savoir que le caractère informel du Club de Venise ne lui vaudra peut-être même pas un honneur officiel de Bruxelles ou des pays membres, mais il reste toujours l'ami de tous ceux qui l'ont vu et le voient travailler avec passion et compétence.

Je m'excuse auprès de tous les participants de ne pas avoir eu l'occasion d'être physiquement parmi vous. Cette fois c'était vraiment impossible à cause d'une opération chirurgicale récente qui s'est bien déroulée mais qui m'oblige à des règles et des contrôles.

J'espère que Chypre me donnera une autre occasion de connaître cette grande île méditerranéenne qui a longtemps été, depuis la fin du XVe siècle, terre de la République de Venise et doit donc être considérée comme **membre honoraire du Club de Venise**.

J'ai beaucoup apprécié les grandes lignes des travaux qui ont été lancées par le Groupe de Pilotage.

- Commencer le développement de l'analyse du **processus de communication institutionnelle dans le contexte des crises et des urgences** qui maintiennent la priorité de l'agenda en Europe.



- Ensuite **l'adaptation des modèles organisationnels et fonctionnels** qui ressortent révisés et actualisés précisément des élaborations des crises, à commencer par celle sanitaire, sans négliger celle militaire et géopolitique, celle migratoire et celle liée à l'interdépendance des transitions de la transformation numérique, de l'impact des mesures sur la durabilité et l'adaptation générale d'un processus relationnel visant à des plans d'investissement spéciaux contre les crises.
- J'apprécie que, dans notre table, **les rôles de stimulation soient de plus en plus assumés par des experts, des universitaires, des jeunes et des personnes bien préparées**. Comme c'est le cas du panel qui traite précisément du renforcement des capacités. Cela marque un passage définitif à la modalité interne, autrefois limitée à la comparaison des expériences à travers les témoignages des responsables des services gouvernementaux de communication institutionnelle. Désormais étendu à l'imbrication avec les centres d'analyse et d'enseignement, imbrication qui signale que, sans une mise à jour constante des méthodes et des méthodologies, cette profession particulière ne serait pas en mesure d'assurer non seulement le trait d'union entre les gouvernements et la société, mais pas celui-ci produirait la valeur ajoutée de l'information que de bonnes institutions doivent produire et assurer.
- C'est ce que j'appelle (en lui attribuant une nette priorité) **la finalité supérieure de l'explication institutionnelle**. Ce qui est un droit-devoir qui s'insère dans un cadre qui doit conserver une certaine indépendance vis-à-vis de la communication politique. Et il doit prendre en considération **l'évaluation de l'insuffisance perceptive par les citoyens** non seulement en ce qui concerne les faits et l'évolution des règles, mais **en ce qui concerne la perception correcte des processus**. Ceci en période de manipulations et d'entraves à la transparence et face au fait qu' **une perception déformée altère la centralité de la culture statistique** et est source de spéculation politique excessive.
- Ainsi, sur ces **aspects de déontologie et de consolidation des outils professionnels** de gestion de ce type de mission, la lisibilité du rôle des communicants se joue de plus en plus, par rapport au rôle parallèle des bureaux de presse et de ceux qui administrent les informations. Une question qui est évidemment une exigence très importante pour les dirigeants. Ce que, cependant, une certaine modernité et efficacité des fonctions d'accompagnement social et d'explication peuvent même améliorer, car elles introduisent un coefficient naturel de crédibilité dont bénéficient toutes les fonctions relationnelles.

Comme vous le savez, dans tous nos pays et, pour des aspects d'ordre général, également dans le cadre des sondages d'opinion européens pilotés par l'Eurobaromètre, on a souvent tendance à considérer avec une certaine inquiétude que **les indices de confiance des citoyens dans les institutions ne sont pas uniforme ni territorialement ni par domaines de compétence**.

**Peu d'institutions – pays par pays – s'envolent avec de larges majorités de confiance.**

Ce sont presque toujours ceux qui président aux services

sociaux de première importance (comme l'école, l'ordre public et, pas partout, la santé).

Tandis que les sphères qui administrent la démocratie atteignent rarement des niveaux satisfaisants.

Il est clair qu'une évaluation attentive - déclinée par pays et territoire, revue sous une forme comparative dans un contexte européen général - fait partie intégrante du dispositif de stimulation et de correction du métier de communicants institutionnels.

Même lorsqu'ils ne sont pas commandés par l'autorité politique qui dirige telle ou telle institution. L'opérateur doit savoir s'il fait face à un consentement préjudiciable ou à une dissidence.

Il doit savoir si la vulnérabilité se situe autour de la qualité de l'explication ou de la réverbération des enjeux que l'on pourrait résumer dans le terme « image ».

Jusqu'à participer sous une forme technique pragmatique et quotidienne à l'évaluation générale de **la santé des institutions**, un argument qui vaut aussi pour les formes constitutionnelles, aussi bien dans les pays à régime républicain que monarchique (à tel point qu'il a fait l'objet de tous les commentaires dans la récente transition de la couronne anglaise).

Contrairement au traitement médiatique, qui obéit aux règles du **trading topic** - c'est-à-dire que le climat actuel concentre l'information et le reste va à la marge - la communication institutionnelle traite davantage de la matière grise. Et donc il est moins influencé par la forte sélection de *"seul ce qui est de l'actualité est publié"*.

Je fais ces allusions simplement pour signaler aux amis et collègues qui participent à ces panels de **ne pas hésiter à aborder les aspects de l'autonomie dans la condition de la formation professionnelle permanente** même quand cela ne semble pas concerner les institutions auxquelles ils appartiennent.

Le *Club de Venise*, grâce à son caractère informel, a représenté pour les collègues de certains pays une opportunité de **découvrir et d'évaluer des situations de diversité** et surtout l'existence de meilleures performances que les leurs.

Les prix et médailles ne sont pas distribués. Il n'y a pas de concurrence. Mais c'est une belle **occasion d'induire des phénomènes d'attention aux changements** qui s'appliquent aussi aux jeunes fraîchement diplômés et sont surtout valables pour les fonctionnaires plus âgés.

Elles sont surtout valables dans des contextes moins créatifs et moins sollicités pour comprendre les facteurs de faiblesse dans l'exercice d'un métier qui, s'il ne se corrige pas, est progressivement marginalisé par les processus d'intermédiation numérique.

Et aussi de ce point de vue des débats comme celui en cours sur **l'expérimentation de plates-formes créées par la soi-disant intelligence artificielle** sur lequel - après avoir clarifié les aspects liés à la vie privée - l'espoir est de laisser l'expérimentation se poursuivre et de discuter des adaptations nécessaires, sans fermer les yeux devant un vent qui pourrait

avoir le même impact révolutionnaire que l'arrivée d'Internet il y a 28 ans.

Ici, parmi les crises diverses et les nouvelles formes de renforcement des capacités, nous abordons un thème auquel, tôt ou tard, nous devons faire face de manière sérieuse et monographique : **la transformation épineuse des métiers liés à la communication institutionnelle**. Il faudra prendre en compte divers aspects, qui ne sont pas répertoriés dans des manuels qui ne traitent que des techniques ou des pratiques de mise en œuvre, mais qui sont répertoriés dans un débat public, également marqué par des conflits.

Il y a un thème d'analyse sur **la relation conflictuelle entre communication institutionnelle et communication politique** et il y a aussi **un thème du nécessaire rapprochement entre communication institutionnelle, communication sociale et communication d'entreprise**.

Ce dernier n'est pas uniquement axé sur les ventes. Elle s'inscrit également dans un débat nécessaire sur des sujets généraux (tels que l'environnement, le travail, les programmes de développement, la politique d'attraction et d'investissement, la santé, l'éducation de base, etc.), dont je parle depuis un certain temps du traitement des entreprises individuelles et surtout des associations professionnelles, d'une **véritable appartenance, sous cet aspect spécifique, à la table de la communication publique**.

L'un des enseignements du rapport entre institutions et situations de crise imbriquées que j'évoquais plus haut est que **le rapprochement entre sources institutionnelles et sociales** (dont l'entreprise fait partie) constitue aujourd'hui un passage obligé du schéma opérationnel en contexte de crise.

Et puisque les contextes de crise prennent un caractère permanent, fonctionnant en parallèle ou sous des formes interdépendantes, **le problème d'imaginer un protocole européen, national et territorial de légitimation d'un cadre relationnel déjà en place mûrit**, mais en demandant à chaque fois le numéro de téléphone ou en obtenir une carte de visite.

Il est plus qu'évident que le format pleinement opérationnel de cette confrontation est dans les choses. Et je crois que le *Club de Venise* pourrait donner - peut-être lors de la prochaine session plénière - de nouvelles réponses en comparant les expériences de ces domaines professionnels différents mais aussi très similaires, ouvrant également la **discussion sur la réorientation de la formation pédagogique**.

Je me suis laissé emporter par ce discours. Et **je pense que je n'ai presque plus de temps pour une simple allocution générale d'introduction**. Cependant avec quelques petits sujets que je voulais depuis longtemps porter à votre attention.

**Encore une fois, merci et salutations à tous, naturellement et comme toujours aussi aux interprètes.**

Et maintenant en particulier merci à ceux qui animeront la discussion.

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I warmly greet all the participants, both face to face and remotely, and I thank the **Cypriot organizers and the government of the Republic of Cyprus who agreed to hold the pre-summer plenary session of the Club of Venice**, which resolved some location uncertainties for us. Indeed, with the magnificent idea of returning to Cyprus, a generous and active partner of our partnership. I thank **Vincenzo Le Voci**, our secretary general, who maintains a standard of dedication to his mission without knowing that the informal nature of the Club of Venice will perhaps not even bring him an official honour from Brussels or from the member countries, but he will always remain a friend of all those who have seen and see him work with passion and competence.

I apologize to all the participants for not having had the opportunity to be physically among you. This time it was really impossible due to a recent surgical operation which went well but which obliges me to rules and controls.

I hope that Cyprus will give me another opportunity to get to know this large Mediterranean island which has long been, since the end of the fifteenth century, land of the Republic of Venice and therefore should be considered an **honorary member of the Club of Venice**.

I greatly appreciated the outline of the works that was launched by the Steering Group.

- Starting the development of the analysis of the **institutional communication process in the context of crises and emergencies** that maintain the priority of the agenda in Europe.
- Then the **adaptation of the organizational and functional models** that arise revised and updated precisely from the elaborations of the crises, starting with the health one, without neglecting the military and geopolitical one, the migration one and the one linked to the interdependence of the transitions of the digital transformation, of the impact of the measures on sustainability and the general adaptation of a relational process aimed at special investment plans against crises.
- I appreciate that, in our table, the **roles of stimulation are increasingly being assumed by experts, young and well-prepared people**. As is the case with the panel that deals precisely with *Capacity building*. This marks a definitive passage of internal modality, once limited to the comparison of experiences through the testimonies of the heads of the government institutional communication services. Now extended to the interweaving with analysis and teaching centres, an intertwining which signals that, without constant updating of methods and methodologies, this particular profession would not be able to ensure not only the *trait-d'union* between governments and society, but not it would produce the information added value that good institutions must produce and ensure.
- It is what I call (assigning clear priority to it) the **higher purpose of institutional explanation**. Which is a *right-duty* that makes its way into a framework that must maintain a certain independence from political communication. And it must take into great consideration the **evaluation of the perceptive insufficiency by the citizens** not only regarding the facts and the evolution of the rules, but regarding the

correct perception of the processes. This in times of manipulation and impediments to transparency and in the face of the fact that distorted perception alters the centrality of statistical culture and is a source of excessive political speculation.

- Therefore, on these **aspects of deontology and consolidation of the professional management** tools of this kind of mission, the clarity of the role of the communicators is played more and more, with respect to the parallel role of the press offices and those who administer the news. A matter which is obviously a very important requirement for rulers. Which, however, a certain modernity and effectiveness of the functions of social accompaniment and explanation can even improve, because they introduce a natural coefficient of credibility from which all relational functions benefit.

As you know, in all our countries and, for aspects of a general nature, also in the framework of the European opinion polls headed by Eurobarometer, there is often a tendency to consider with some concern that the trust **indices of citizens in institutions are not uniform neither territorially nor by areas of competence**.

**Few institutions – country by country – soar with large majorities of confidence.**

They are almost always those who preside over social services of primary importance (such as school, public order and, not everywhere, health).

While the spheres that administer democracy rarely reach satisfactory levels. It is clear that a careful evaluation - declined by country and territory and then reviewed in a comparative form in a general European context - is an integral part of the system of stimulation and correction of the profession of institutional communicators.

Even when they are not ordered by the political authority that heads this or that institution. The operator must know if he faces prejudicial consent or dissent.

He must know if the vulnerability is around the quality of the explanation or the reverberation of issues that we could summarize in the term "image".

Up to participating in a pragmatic and daily technical form in the **general assessment of the health of the institutions**, an argument that also applies to constitutional forms, both in republican and monarchical regime countries (so much so that it was the focus of all the comments in the recent transition of the English crown).

Unlike media treatment, which follows the rules of the **trending topic** - that is, the current climate concentrates information and the rest goes to the margins - institutional communication deals more with *grey matter*. And therefore, it is less influenced by the strong selection of "only what is news passes".

I am making these hints simply to signal to friends and colleagues who take part in these panels **not to have hesitations in dealing with aspects of autonomy in the condition of permanent professional training** even when it does not seem to be a concern of the institutions to which they belong.

The Venice Club, thanks to its informality, has represented for colleagues from some countries an opportunity to **discover and evaluate situations of diversity** and above all the existence of better performances than their own.

Prizes and medals are not distributed. There is no competition. But this is a great **opportunity to induce phenomena of attention to changes** that also apply to young people fresh out of school and are especially valid for more seasoned officials.

Above all they are valid in less creative contexts and less solicited to understand the factors of weakness in the exercise of a profession which, if it does not correct itself, is gradually marginalized by digital intermediation processes.

And also from this point of view debates such as the one underway on the **experimentation of platforms created by the so-called Artificial Intelligence** on which - aspects related to privacy clarified - the hope is to let the experimentation proceed and discuss the necessary adaptations, without closing our eyes in front of a wind that may have the same revolutionary impact as the arrival of the Internet on the scene 28 years ago.

Here, among the various crises and the new forms of capacity building, we are approaching a theme that sooner or later we will have to face in a serious and monographic way: **the epochal transformation of the professions connected to institutional communication**. It will be necessary to consider various aspects, which are not listed in manuals that deal only with techniques of making, but are listed in a public debate, also marked by conflicts.

There is a theme of analysis on the conflictual relationship between institutional communication and political communication and there is also a theme of the necessary rapprochement between institutional communication, social communication and business communication.

**The latter is not only sales-oriented.** It is also part of a necessary debate on general topics (such as the environment, work, development programs, attraction and investment policy, health, basic education, etc.), with respect to whose treatment I have been speaking, for some time, of individual companies and above all of business associations, of true belonging, under this specific aspect, at the table of public communication.

One of the lessons of the relationship between institutions and intertwined crisis situations to which I referred earlier is that the **rapprochement between institutional and social sources** (of which the company is a part) constitutes an obligatory factor today of the operational scheme in crisis contexts.

And since crisis contexts are assuming a permanent nature, running in parallel or in interdependent forms, **the problem of imagining a european, national, and territorial protocol for legitimizing a relational framework already in place is maturing**, but each time asking for the telephone number or by getting a business card.

It is more than evident that the fully operational format of this confrontation is in things. And I believe that the Club of Venice could give - perhaps in the next plenary session - some new



answers by comparing the experiences of these different but also very similar professional fields, also opening the discussion on the **reorientation of educational training**.

I got caught up in this speech. And I think I have almost run out of time for an introductory general address. However, with some ideas that I have long wanted to bring to your attention.

Once again, **thanks and greetings to all**, naturally and as always **also to the interpreters**.

And now in particular to those who will animate the scheduled discussion.



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# Delivering and networking in an era of turbulences

*Speech by Alessandro Lovari*

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The current contemporary context is characterized by political, social, and technological turbulence that requires communicators to take a leap forward and undergo a paradigm shift towards a new level of professionalism and a more fluid role.

Indeed, some of the established practices and skills that have been solidified over the years are now obsolete or called into question due to societal risks, the rapid pace of technological innovations, as well as the activism of connected citizens who, from their roles as “prosumers” (both producers and consumers), are able to create what Tim Coombs calls “paracrisis” (potential crises that remain dormant only on social media without further development), thereby exposing the inefficiencies and delays in public and institutional communication.

Today, continuous training is required. On one hand, it needs to be specialized to address the new communication trends brought about by the media and digital landscape (such as writing, planning, message management, visual selection, etc.). On the other hand, communicators also need to possess managerial, technological, statistical, legal, and sociological competencies in order to understand communication scenarios and implications, as well as critically and responsibly evaluate digital platforms without falling hostage to algorithmic logic.

We are faced with what we can define as a “centaur communicator,” to borrow Gunther’s term, who can navigate both inside and outside the organization, engaging with offline and connected audiences, moving seamlessly between in-person events, chatbots, and artificial intelligence solutions. Artificial intelligence itself represents a concrete challenge today that needs to be critically embraced rather than rejected in a Luddite manner, understanding that every technology, as the Krazemberg Law states, is neither inherently good nor bad, but it is also not neutral.

Furthermore, today’s communicator is no longer able to operate effectively alone in numerous domains. In what is referred to as the “connective society,” the working model revolves around networking, creating partnerships, and engaging in variable cooperation with other organizations to tackle contemporary challenges. This necessitates relational and negotiation skills, which must also take into account diverse territorial and cultural contexts. The term “cultural” brings to mind the various communication cultures of administrations that often tend to isolate themselves and avoid networking, often out of fear of losing power and visibility.

Instead, the challenge for communicators lies in the network and, above all, in the act of networking. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted this, along with the fight against “infodemics” and disinformation, which now require coordinated efforts and integrated yet diverse perspectives. Does this mean that the communicator will lose their central role? No, but it does require a repositioning that takes them out of their traditional comfort zone in order to build new competencies and skills that enable them to work at their best and in a professional manner. Stefano Rolando, in one of his books, referred to communicators as social architects, those who construct something for society through communication. This metaphor is highly relevant today and I leave it to you as food for thought for the continuation of your work.

# What I would refrain from doing during a crisis, from a communication's point of view

*Speech by Aliko Stylianou*

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Let me start by saying that it is a great pleasure to host the Club of Venice Conference in Nicosia and even more an honour for the opportunity of meeting you all.

Let me tell you a story, Cyprus is the island of storytelling... I guess it has to do with the fact that Cyprus is the island of Culture and a place where many civilisations meet.

The story is about the Cyprus financial crisis in 2013. I will skip the background to the reasons which led to the Cyprus financial crisis in 2013 and concentrate on the communication part of handling the financial crisis.

I will, also, to refrain from giving a definition as regards to what is a crisis, because if I have learned anything it is this: Almost everything can be defined as a minor or a major crisis, or a series of them, depending on how one deals with it. If it's dealt with properly, one might even reap gains from it and credibility can be enhanced. Otherwise the spill over effect of a bad handling can give us a headache for a long, long time.

Towards the end of 2012, when we started off our communication plan, we had no idea what was at stake and how things would develop. I was appointed Spokesperson of the Central Bank of Cyprus in October 2012, five months before the bail-in, which took place in March 2013.

My first impression was that there seemed to be no specific communication plan nor a standard field theory. We only had a general guideline that for whatever was said in public, any kind of criticism, any leakages to the media, we should respond ASAP and set the record straight.

The Governor of the CBC at the time, had appointed several external communication advisors to draft a communication plan. I was not part of it, my remit was to implement it with what information was available to me. When we were putting the plan into effect, I realised I didn't have all the information. I came to this conclusion when I compared contradictory stories and statements in the media. Moreover, and without any intention to offend anyone, when we got into the wild there was no real assistance from any of the over 20 external communication advisors hired especially, due to many reasons, like the language barrier, lack of expertise in crisis situations, lack of knowledge of Cyprus' banking industry, lack of cooperation and coordination among themselves, lack of consistency, lack of work space and technical means to execute their tasks due to their number, etc. The most important thing, though, was that there was no realization that this kind of public campaigns had

nothing to do with conventional Advertising or PR methods. That is why, no one seemed to know "What do we do next..." and in which context.

However, it is fair to say that amid all the uncertainty, there was one thing we all agreed on: it was going to be complex, fiendishly so and a bit of a rushed job, lacking all the grandeur lend in such occasions. Indeed, lots of important facts did not get sorted and all too many mistakes were made and needed to be corrected.

To be more precise, since I was assigned the task of making public statements, I came to a point where I had no other option than to start a game of tennis in communication. By that, I mean that we concentrated on winning the game at the tiebreak, not because we were brilliant and "fit" but because of our opponents unforced errors. I have to say that this was a potent technical trick.

Instead of concentrating on the facts, which we didn't have handy, we concentrated on making impressions and creating perceptions. Or, in another way of saying this, we used the theory of Quantum Gravity, demonstrating that what we knew about reality, was ambiguous.

This tactic initially worked. Almost everything was new to the public, especially the jargon used. We had to "Keep Appearances", especially when it had to do with peoples' money and the Bank's reputation.

There is no doubt that if we had all the information available to us from the onset, we would have been prepared and our judgement as to the nature of our communication plan would have been entirely different. As I've said, initially, we experienced a "smooth" transition as regards peoples' reaction. However, it was not long before the hardship inflicted to the Cypriot society began to show its teeth.

In a very dubious political environment, the Central Bank of Cyprus had undertaken the task of explaining why harsh decisions on the Cyprus financial system had to be made. We had to deal with the "the Human Story" in the midst of the financial crisis. In the aftermath, I am sceptical about this line of action. Why? Past performance. The Central Bank of Cyprus did not have previous experience in this area. And to be honest, you don't really expect central banking to make decisions based on human trauma. However, rightly or wrongly, we did engage into this reasoning and as a result of the "jargoning" we did, however only initially, manage to gain points despite the wave



of political outrage and attacks which followed suit.

I can't emphasise enough that whenever our arguments were based on facts, reasonableness and data, they were welcomed by the general public and this line of action allowed us to stay out of political games and safeguard our independence. When we couldn't use reasoning and had to establish our exposure and arguments by creating perceptions, the "opponents" and the public would eventually sense that and they would come back with their facts. It is also interesting to note that their collection of facts and counterarguments, actually, originated, from inside the Central Bank itself. There were information leakages from people inside the Bank who disagreed with the Bank's official policy. When we were confronted with these assertions in public, we had to come back with new facts, complicating rationales, because we actually had to deal with answering to our "own" people inside the Bank. Most of the time it had to do with providing multiple interpretations of data and facts. It felt like a lost tour guide who could not scrutinise a map in front of paying holiday makers... You can imagine...

We reached a point where our options were twofold. We either had to continue with ambiguity or we had to turn to "damage control" and minimise losses. In the middle of a campaign, though, it's not easy to beat a hasty or cowardly retreat without being noticed...

It hurts when you realise you are wrong, I guess in all strands of life. I am sure that regret is a powerful emotion and a universal one. Needless to say why psychologists are lately increasingly fascinated by the purpose and nature of regret... But, we had to admit that we had to change course, at least internally. We did that because at every stage of the campaign, it was obvious that we overpromised. At every stage of the campaign, reality found us out. Alas, we are what we do. So, we had to act as if we half-expected what was happening all along.

So, we slowly but steadily retreated from the limelight in an eloquent way, keeping our public exposure to the very minimum and consistently making references to the constraints of our remit as technocrats. Our main line was that we were merely implementing what was decided at the political level. Our task was to concentrate on minimising losses, not on gaining points.

In promoting this line and concentrating solely on this, we considered that we had regained the lead. However, we did not anticipate the extent of the damage caused already to the Bank's integrity, we did not anticipate the magnitude of the public's outrage. I still remember the disbelief, the anger. This is where I would say that certain moments in life are kept in the memory forever... They did not view our actions as a high watermark in efforts to correct the situation. They didn't like the way we acted, they considered us in charge of all ill doing, they viewed us as dangerous creatures. Undoubtedly, the exposure bespattered the Bank's reputation and we are all aware of the high cost of a bad reputation.

We should have had this in our mind all the time, before making any decision. We should have had the Bank's reputation in mind at all times.

We got involved into politics, ideologies and theories and we

were viewed as an institution encrusted by scandal whose day of reckoning was approaching. Our response was to announce our intention of running an internal investigation, in addition to the other two investigations run in the major commercial banks of the island, as a way of locating those whose actions led to the financial crisis. Meanwhile, unsecured depositors and shareholders paid the bill. All that, cannot go unnoticed. There's a magazine whose reference to Cyprus I find very appropriate here. It goes: "Did you hear that? No? Well, it's not exactly the other shoe dropping, but the Cyprus bank bailout is still quite a milestone. It's the second-costliest, in terms of GDP, on record".

I am not in favour of public trials staged by media which effectively can create a widespread perception of guilt or innocence before a verdict in a court of law. I am not in favour of high-profile political show trials. I am not in favour of breaking bank secrecy except, of course, under certain conditions. However, that is not to be confused with informing the public with facts. I'm a stern supporter of providing data, it constricts corruption.

Turning to media involvement, that was another determinant factor in the whole process. Bail-in hit the finances of all media groups in Cyprus. I will not mince my words; regardless of the stance the media held and whom they supported before the crisis, during and after the crisis, they needed information to write front cover stories and attract as much advertising as possible. On our side, we needed to transmit our information and messages and we needed the media channels to do that. As a result, media became our fellow travellers, though for a short while. During that brief period, we managed to shape the information environment and create perceptions in a way favourable to our arguments.

However, it was not long before media itself became a source of information to our adversaries. Moreover, as I said before, those who weren't briefed by us, managed to acquire undisclosed information from other sources inside or affiliated to the Bank. All this conflicting information created a chaotic situation. Positive perceptions about our decisions/policy succumbed. We didn't always have concrete counter arguments to provide, we weren't always able to be consistent. Every side had a story to tell, all at the same time.

The icing on the cake was that, despite making public all that "variety" of information, the end result was dire confusion which in effect hushed up any scandal from surfacing. Touché...

Looking back to the crisis in March 2013, it was no accident, in the sense that an accident cannot be foreseeable. What took place in Cyprus in 2013 was foreseen since at least four years, as was later revealed in confidential documents leaked to the media, it did not seem to be neither the result of insidious undercurrents nor a decision imposed on an unwitting nation. The reason why the warnings were not heard, can be expected; it had to do with the political opportunity cost at the time, outright policy mistakes, dubious conduct, personal agendas and of course the island's penchant for scapegoating, i.e., the usual scenarios.

And by this I arrive at the theme of my presentation today: What would I refrain from doing during a crisis, from a

communication's point of view? What does it all add up to?

There is no other way, change happens irrespective of our intentions, irrespective of our hesitation to give up the outdated business model because it's a comfortable zone for us to work in.

In the real world, I would refrain from engaging in a communication exercise without computing the following 20 factors:

1. Ability to be consistent: If data and empirical evidence show that that's not possible, then a cost benefit analysis (CBA) is essential to measure the impact of implementing any plan and its impact, ultimately, on the reputation of the Organisation.
2. Awareness and understanding of the Organisation's mission or purpose: By this I mean, what service does the organisation offer and if it has managed to stay out of trouble? It's important to remember that nobody is proud to work for or promote an organisation which is embroiled in scandal.
3. Early planning of the Organisation's objectives. Setting the strategy whilst bearing in mind that this not a "soda advertisement" but a public campaign with technical language.
4. Forming teams of people who know their job, who have communication skills and the ability to work together, complementing each other.
5. Providing these people with the means to execute their job.
6. Checking logistics, IT, security systems, cyber attacks.
7. Assembling and making available all related information to people involved in the process: By this I mean providing the teams with ALL information in order to be able to get people thinking from the onset and being able to assess the whole picture.
8. Setting guidelines for reaction from disbelievers: Only someone who is well prepared can improvise.
9. Setting the motto of being honest at all times when it comes to communicating to people: Gaining trust. You can't always guess what tricks are up your opponents' sleeves nor the information available to them. People "liking" you, will help you maintain credibility.
10. Briefing the organisation's staff: Explaining to people internally what is going on and what it is expected of them, i.e. preparing your "ambassadors". Reputation begins from the inside. By doing this, you also minimise leakages.
11. Setting a plan to transmit information externally based on evidence not emotions or false impressions.
12. Have a contingency plan ready.
13. Keeping a sentimental distance from developments, in order to keep calm and be able to think straight.
14. Allowing yourself time to think before making public statements or actually before reacting in any way in public. It's the only way to avoid detrimental mistakes with consequences to the reputation of the Organisation (I refer to the Press Conference on 26 March 2013 and the Governor's reference on keeping Laiki Bank on a ventilator until February's 2013 presidential elections).
15. Flexibility: Communication is an ongoing process, not a

one-time event so you need people with skills of adapting and improvising at any time.

16. Swiftiness: During a crisis you don't always have time to evaluate your initial goals. Decisive action when dealing with a crisis is a cardinal rule.
17. Having friends/colleagues you can trust and ask for their honest opinion.
18. Be able to accept honest opinions...
19. Be consistent.
20. Be prepared.

And, then, in case things don't turn up the way you want to, you need to have a "blame game" strategy already at hand... But that's part of the follow up "story".

On the early morning of the 26th of March 2013, I felt as if the sun melted the northern hemisphere and I was living in a generalised inferno.

However, my colleagues and I at the Central Bank, had to work.

How about: The old and new lessons and do we ever learn?

I sincerely wonder if we do. Allow me to explain myself: Before dealing, communication-wise, with the financial crisis in 2013, I had to deal with the July 2011 crisis when 98 containers of explosives at the Evangelos Florakis Naval Base in Cyprus, exploded. The incident is recorded as being the worst peacetime military accident in Cyprus. Thirteen people were killed and 62 injured. The explosion severely damaged the island's largest power station, responsible for supplying over half of Cyprus' electricity (the EU had prognosticated that the cost of the explosion was over 10% of the island's economy).

It is worth mentioning that both crises were politically exploited in exactly the same manner.

Communication-wise, both crises had similar trends, despite the difference in their nature. The same mistakes took place, the same omissions took place. Only the people were different. So, what should we have done differently? I refer you back to the afore-mentioned 20 points.

Turning to the present, I was having a conversation concerning communication strategies centred on the difference between "uncertainty Vs risk", in the sense that when we refer to risk, there is always a correlation to reward (the higher the risk the higher the return). Nowadays, we only hear about uncertainty and that makes things difficult to handle as there is no obvious link to reward. In this way, you allow yourself to skip the data and logic and work only with sentiment and perceptions.

Having said all that, regardless of any communication method used, I believe that we should put mechanisms in place in order to improve any situation which has to do with managing a crisis. We need to set a strategy, even if it means hard work. Just by applying a "style" of communication, will not save the day, unless you just want to buy time.

One thing I've learned from the 2013 crisis, is that a naively realistic picture can be gravely misleading, bearing incalculable

cost and negative impact on reputation.

Another lesson learned is that it is an art to get to a gradual normalisation of a previously extreme situation.

Last but definitely not least, is that if the political will is there, you can make anything happen. Once you have the political will, that's a good signal.

So, let us be productive and start from asking ourselves if we learn at all and how would we react in future crises. Let's see if we will do anything different when dealing with future situations in relation with how we reacted in the past and after we have reviewed the results of our actions.

Thank you so much for your attention.

P.S.: It might interest you to know that "according to most studies, people's number one fear is public speaking. Number two is death"! (Harvard Business Review, September 30, 2010, by JD Schramm).

**Aliki Stylianou**  
**Director, Press and Information Office**  
**Republic of Cyprus**

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# Blockchain Technologies: challenges and opportunities

*Speech by Tonia Damvakeri*

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Blockchain technology has the potential to significantly impact future integrated public communication strategies **by enhancing transparency, security, and trust** in government communications.

Here are some possible impacts of blockchain on public communication and suggestions on how governments can invest in this regard:

1. **Enhanced Transparency:** Blockchain's decentralized and immutable nature can provide a transparent platform for public communication. Governments can use blockchain to record and timestamp official announcements, policy updates, and press releases. This ensures that the information remains tamper-proof, auditable, and easily verifiable by the public.
2. **Improved Security:** Blockchain's cryptographic algorithms make it highly secure against data tampering and unauthorized access. Governments can leverage blockchain to secure sensitive information and communications, protecting them from hacking attempts and data breaches. This helps in maintaining the integrity of external communications.
3. **Increased Trust and Authenticity:** Blockchain enables the creation of digital signatures and certificates, which can be used to verify the authenticity of government communication. By using blockchain-based certificates, governments can ensure that the messages they send are genuine, thereby increasing trust among citizens and external stakeholders.
4. **Streamlined Collaboration:** Blockchain can facilitate

efficient collaboration between government agencies and departments. By using blockchain-based platforms, **governments can securely share information, streamline workflows, and improve coordination. This can result in more effective and consistent external communication.**

**\*Decentralized Social Networks:** Traditional social networks are typically centralized and prone to issues such as censorship, data breaches, and privacy concerns. Blockchain-based social networks can distribute control and data across a decentralized network, empowering users and reducing the influence of intermediaries.

To strengthen their external communication and keep their outreach efficiency standards up, **governments should consider the following investments:**

1. **Blockchain Infrastructure:** Governments should invest in building robust blockchain infrastructure that can support their communication needs. This includes establishing secure networks, implementing consensus mechanisms, and developing smart contract capabilities. This is currently actively supported by the European Blockchain Services Infrastructure (short EBSI), that is managed by the European Blockchain Partnership (composed by representatives of all EU Member States + Norway + Liechtenstein, as well as the European Commission).
2. **Training and Expertise:** Governments need skilled professionals who understand both the technical aspects of blockchain and the specific requirements of public communication. Investing in training programs and hiring experts

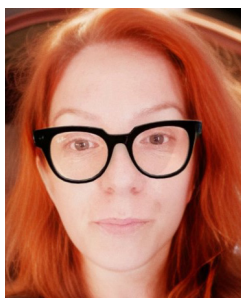


in blockchain technology can ensure efficient implementation and utilization of blockchain for public communication purposes.

3. **Pilot Projects and Proof of Concepts:** Governments can start with **small-scale pilot projects** to test the effectiveness of blockchain in their communication strategies. By conducting proof of concepts and gathering feedback, governments can assess the feasibility and potential benefits before scaling up.
4. **Collaboration with Industry and Academia:** Governments should collaborate with industry experts, blockchain startups, and academic institutions to leverage their expertise and experience. Collaborative efforts can help in identifying innovative solutions, sharing best practices, and addressing any challenges associated with implementing blockchain in public communication.

5. **Regulatory Framework:** Governments should develop clear regulatory frameworks that address the legal, privacy, and security aspects of blockchain implementation in public communication. A well-defined framework will provide guidance to both the government and its stakeholders, ensuring compliance and trust in the system.

By investing in blockchain technology for public communication, governments can strengthen their outreach, improve transparency, and foster trust among citizens and external stakeholders. However, it is important to note that blockchain is not a one-size-fits-all solution as its widespread adoption and integration into existing systems will require addressing issues of scalability, usability and regulatory challenges. So, prior to any action it should be carefully evaluated and customized to meet specific communication needs and objectives.



**Tonia Damvakeraki**, is a policy researcher and senior project manager, with more than 20 years experience in research and innovation policies. She is the Managing Director of the EU Blockchain Observatory and Forum since 2020, aiming to achieve convergence of large-scale adoption as well as convergence of blockchain with other key enabling technologies like AI, IoT and Big Data Analytics.









# Club of Venice - Plenary Meeting

24-25 November 2022, Venice

## Top challenges and priorities for European communicators

By Vincenzo LeVoci

**Top priorities and challenges for Europe, with focus on the recovery and resilience plans. How governmental communication must enhance outreach capacities and adapt to the growing citizens' concern (war in Ukraine, societal fears of the possible instability of energy resources provision, risks of social unrest). Need for promoting higher literacy standards, risks' knowledge, stronger ties with civil society and enhanced cooperation with sociologists and scientific communities in countering disinformation**

Communication professionals from 22 countries (UE, UK, Ukraine and beyond) met in Venice to tackle new emergencies for governments and institutions – new challenges, new difficult times for Europe and risks for our democracies. The Russian invasion of Ukraine opened a new breach in the society just when our societies were starting to plan for recovery and rebuilding living standards after the pandemic.

It is another crucial moment for Europe and for the whole world. Crisis communication is back under the spotlight!

The new plenary was attended by governmental communicators, including representatives from the crisis management centres, who expressed their compassion for those directly involved in the Ukraine crisis and their admiration for the way that country was showing its strength and determination to handle that dramatic scenario for its people. Communicating solidarity and moral support must be accompanied by concrete help to the Ukrainian population. In this context, the main question raised in the debate was how to link up governments' communication with the general sentiment in society, by keeping informed their audiences as accurately, transparently and constructively as possible.

It was emphasised how the common effort through the inter-governmental reinforced cooperation in communicating openly about real time threats and informing citizens on how the EU intends to react to the Russian invasion must be translated into an increased focus on empowering communication professionals in their work on resilience-building. Another indispensable element is the need to increase cooperation with the EU institutions. Meanwhile the support of behavioural scientists is crucial to providing precious feedback for the communication



strategies to be implemented in this regard.

How can governmental communication contribute to meet citizens concern in Europe during these worrying times? How to conduct surveys and gather information needs and concerns? How to use risk communication to inform people about dangers? How to avail of trustworthy analytical and debunking platforms? How to ensure comprehensiveness when communicating recovery and resilience strategies?

While reflecting on how to ensure the provision of accurate information against this worrying scenario, the participants acknowledged the ongoing implementation of capacity building projects carried out, among others, by the OECD and the Club of Venice in order to optimise training standards for communicators (academic features – initiatives aiming to share concepts of modern strategic communication principles and tactics and participatory governance from around the world, and to enhance cooperation between communication organisations all across Europe). Ad hoc surveys revealed that the most pressing topics are the need to detect and handle dis- and misinformation, the need for increased citizen's consultations and dialogues, the support to social-media listening and interaction, the need for invest in designing citizen engagement strategies and for building partnerships and optimising analytical skills.







# Club of Venice - Plenary Meeting

24-25 November 2022, Venice

## Agenda

Meeting venue: *Fondazione La Biennale di Venezia  
Ca' Giustinian (Palazzo Giustinian), Calle Ridotto, 1364/a, 30124 Venezia*

### DAY 1 - Wednesday 23 November 2022

19:00

#### Welcome Reception

*(Council of Europe premises, Venice Office)*

### DAY 2 - Thursday 24 November 2022 (9:00 - 12:45)

#### PLENARY MEETING

9:00 - 9:30

#### Opening Session

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

- **Diana AGOSTI**, Head of the Department for European Policies, Presidency of the Council of Ministers
- **Fabrizio SPADA**, Head of the Institutional Relations Department, European Parliament Information Office in Italy
- **Massimo PRONIO**, Head of Communication and Outreach, European Commission - Representation in Italy
- a representative from the City of Venice

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9:30 - 10:00

#### Key address

- ..... , Ministry for European Affairs, Italian Government
- **Stefano ROLANDO**, President of the Club of Venice

10:00 - 10:15

#### Coffee break

10:15 - 12:45

#### Plenary session

**"Top priorities and challenges for Europe" (session I)**

- Communication strategies on the recovery and resilience plans and their implementation at national and European level - coping with deadlines, ensuring coherence and comprehensiveness
- Europe energy crisis
  - \* Communication instruments
  - \* Cooperation between Member States and Institutions
  - \* Cooperation with civil society and the media
  - \* Public perception and citizens' expectations

**Moderator:**

- **Erik den HOEDT**, Netherlands, Director of Communications, EcoFin Ministry, Vice President of the Club of Venice

**Key Note speaker:**

- **Prof. Nicoletta PARISI**, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan, Italy

**Panellists:**

- national contributions:
  - \* **Claus HÖRR**, Austria, Director, Federal Chancellery, member of the Club of Venice Steering Group
  - \* **John CONCANNON**, Ireland, Director-General, Global Ireland Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- institutions:
  - \* **Raffaella DE MARTE**, European Parliament, DG Communication, Head of the Media Services Unit
- **academic world, civil society, international organisations and national communication associations:**
  - \* **Marco MAGHERI**, Secretary-General of the Italian Association of Public and Institutional Communication
  - \* **Christian SPAHR**, Secretary-General of the Assembly of European Regions
  - \* **Giuseppe MACCA**, CEO of ethics4growth

**12:45 - 14:00****Lunch****14:15 - 17:15****Plenary session****14:15 - 15:45****"Top Challenges in Europe" (session II)**

- Crisis communication: public communicators and top political and social priorities: what is at stake (promoting risks' knowledge), how to better liaise with geopolitical experts, sociologists and scientists and countering disinformation in progress
  - \* War in Ukraine
  - \* Resilience vs. hybrid threats (including cybersecurity trends)
  - \* Climate change: COP-27 UNCCC (Sharm El-Sheikh, 3-20 November 2022): lessons learned on the communication strategies before and during the Conference
  - \* Health: preventive communication and monitoring

**Moderator:**

- **Danila CHIARO**, Manager, EUROMED Migration, International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

**General Introduction:**

- **Alessandro LOVARI**, Associate Professor, Department of Political and Social Sciences, University of Cagliari (Italy): *"The role of public sector communication in facing key challenges"*

**Key Note speaker:**

- **Verena RINGLER**, Director, European Commons & AGORA European Green Deal: *"Communicating the European Green Deal – perspectives from the field"*

**Panellists:**

- national contributions:
  - \* **Ave TAMMENIIT**, National Coordinator for Risk and Crisis Communication, Government of Estonia and Chair of the IPCR Crisis Communicators' Network (CCN)
  - \* **Amb. Marco PERONACI**, Permanent Representative of Italy to the EU Political and Security Committee
  - \* **Herman WIERSEMA**, Netherlands, Head of Communications at National Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Security (NCTV) and the National Crisiscenter (NCC)
- institutions:
  - \* **Sara AHNBERG**, European Parliament, Coordinator, Disinformation team, Spokesperson's Unit
  - \* **Istvan PERGER**, European Commission, DG COMM, Head of Sector "Governance, Strategic Coordination and Disinformation Response"
- academic world, civil society and international organisations:
  - \* **Karine BADR**, Senior Policy Analyst, OECD
  - \* Joint contribution from Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health: **Elena SAVOIA**, Deputy Director, Emergency Preparedness Research Evaluation & Practice Programme and **Alberto MONTROND**, Senior Fellow & Diplomatic Liaison

**15:45 - 16:00****Coffee break****17:15 - 17:30****First day summing-up - issues emerged***(Club Steering Group representative)***20:00****Official dinner****Venue:** Taverna La Fenice, Sestiere.San Marco 1939, Venice



## DAY 3 - Friday 25 November 2022 (9:30 - 13:00)

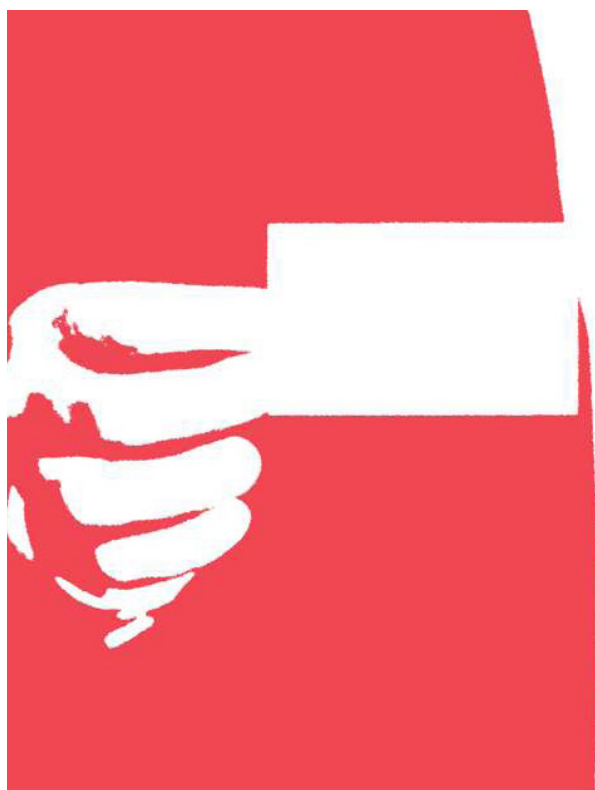
### PLENARY MEETING

9:30 - 12:30	<p><b>"Capacity/Capability Building"</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Organisational Challenges: an overview of existing structures and potential developments</li></ul>
9:30 - 10:00	<p><b>Key-Note speaker:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Simon BAUGH</b>, Chief Executive, Government Communication -Service,United Kingdom</li></ul> <p><b>Q&amp;A session</b></p> <p><b>ROUND TABLE</b>, moderated by <b>Vincenzo LE VOICI</b>, Secretary-General of the Club of Venice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Contributions from:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* <b>Jolijn le RUTTE</b>, Learning and Development Advisor and <b>Jolanda MOS</b>, Project Manager, Netherlands, Government Communications Academy</li><li>* <b>Igor BLAHUŠIAK</b>, Czech Republic, Office of the Government, Director of the European Affairs Communication Department</li><li>* <b>Johanna WAJDA</b>, Poland, Deputy Director, Department of Public and Cultural Diplomacy</li><li>* <b>Fabiana ZOLLO</b>, Assistant, Computer Science, University of Ca' Foscari, Venice, Italy</li><li>* a representative from the European Institute for Public Administration (EIPA) (TBC)</li><li>* <b>Ana FEDER</b>, Regional Portfolio Manager, International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)</li><li>* <b>Alberto CONTARETTI</b>, Project Manager, RAN Policy Support</li></ul></li><li>▪ <b>European Communication Expertise Centre: work in progress</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* results of the preliminary survey and organisational road-map at short and mid-term (contribution by <b>Robert WESTER</b>, Manager, Berenschot EU)</li><li>* future cooperation with international organisations and external specialists</li></ul></li><li>▪ <b>OECD project on an International Communication Academy</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* work in progress and deadlines (contributions by <b>Karine BADR</b>, Senior Policy Analyst, OECD and <b>Fiona SPEIRS</b>, UK Cabinet Office)</li><li>* possible cooperation with the Club of Venice</li></ul></li></ul>
10:45 - 11:00	<p><i>Coffee break</i></p>
12:30 - 13:00	<p><b>Closing Session</b></p> <p><b>"Top priorities and challenges for Europe" (session I)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Reflections on the issues emerged during the plenary meeting</li><li>▪ Planning for 2022: key-events:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* <b>6th Stratcom seminar</b> (in cooperation with the UK GCSI) - London, March 2022 (dates to be defined)</li><li>* <b>Spring 2023 plenary</b></li><li>* <b>Work in synergy with international partner organizations</b> (OECD, ICMPD, SEECOM, SEEMO, DEMSOC, CAP'COM (poss. joint seminar in Nice, HSS...))</li></ul></li></ul>
13:00 - 14:30	<p><b>Lunch</b></p> <p><i>(offered by the Council of Europe)</i></p>
15:00 - 16:30	<p><b>Social event organized by the hosting Italian authorities</b></p> <p><i>Visit to the Basilica of San Marco</i></p>

# Lettera da Venezia - Comunicazione e guerra russo-ucraina.

by Stefano Rolando on November 26, 2022 in Comunicazione e situazioni di crisi, Dibattito storico-politico, Europa, Il Mondo Nuovo (online), Istituzioni, Media e informazione, Podcast, Politico internazionale, Università e ricerca

Rubrica "// biglietto da visita", sul magazine online Il Mondo Nuovo, lunedì 28 novembre 2022



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Versione audio :

**A margine di una conferenza europea sulla materia, alcune riflessioni sul dibattito tra gli operatori professionali, con l'opinione in diretta dell'amb. Marco Peronaci (rappresentante diplomatico italiano al Comitato UE Sicurezza)**

Buongiorno, sono Stefano Rolando, la settimana scorsa la mia lettera-audio proveniva da Rabat, per una conferenza euro-mediterranea sulle migrazioni. Cioè su come si forma, ma anche come cambia, la rappresentazione di questo processo, antico e moderno, degli abitanti della Terra.

Oggi - come vedete c'è una agenda fitta in questa parte dell'anno! - la mia lettera-audio è da Venezia.

Dove, esattamente a Ca' Giustinian (sede della Biennale, in cui negli anni '70 Carlo Ripa di Meana organizzò la famosa Biennale del dissenso, dando voce all'ovest alla grave crisi di libertà che vi era nel comunismo dell'est Europa) si è svolta la **36a assemblea plenaria della comunicazione istituzionale in Europa**.

**Un tavolo permanente che si chiama Club di Venezia**, di cui mi occupo fin dalle origini.



Il breve richiamo alla *Biennale del dissenso* ci ricorda - per le cose di cui qui stiamo parlando - quanto sia importante anche ora tenere aperto il dialogo soprattutto con l'altra Russia.

Ebbene uno dei temi centrali di questa sessione, sempre sui nodi delle crisi del nostro tempo, ha riguardato come evolve, che obiettivi ha, a cosa serve, nel bene e nel male, la comunicazione sulla guerra.

Si parla delle varie forme della rappresentazione dell'epicentro cruciale, fin qui irrisolto, della guerra che dal 24 febbraio la Russia di Putin ha scatenato nel territorio dell'Ucraina, trovando l'imprevista resistenza del popolo ucraino e forse l'altrettanto poco prevista ma dura reazione - militare, oltre che politica

- dei paesi dell'Unione Europea, non solo degli americani e della NATO.

Tra i quaranta membri dei panel di discussione, proprio su questo argomento, anche l'ambasciatore Marco Peronaci, rappresentante diplomatico italiano presso il Comitato per le Relazioni esterne e la Sicurezza guidato dallo spagnolo Josep Borrell. Alla fine dei lavori mi ha dato le sue opinioni e mi fa piacere interporle con questi miei brevi commenti.



Marco Peronaci

Innanzitutto, uno sguardo sull'importanza che la comunicazione ha assunto in questa guerra. Provando a dire, seccamente, con quali qualità e quali difetti.

#### Marco Peronaci

*Qualità: l'Europa ha dimostrato di trovare, di fronte a quella che è la terza crisi epocale, in questi ultimi quindici anni, cioè una guerra nel cuore dell'Europa, una voce unica e cioè l'unanimità degli Stati membri potendo anche contare sul sostegno dell'opinione pubblica per svolgere il suo sostegno, anche militare, all'Ucraina. Considerato che l'Europa è sempre stata un'animata "erbivora", questo va considerato come un atto di crescita di un progetto politico. Cioè questo vuol dire che le istituzioni hanno funzionato e che la comunicazione è riuscita a raggiungere la gran parte dei cittadini che per adesso sostengono la causa ucraina. Difetti: rispetto a certi atti di puntuale aggressione alle nostre reti informative anche da parte di attori che non sono quelli russi ma anche altre potenze ostili, l'Europa risponde ancora in maniera frammentaria. Su questo c'è ancora un lavoro da fare per costruire delle capacità anche tecniche di risposta che consentano di ridurre il livello di vulnerabilità soprattutto delle istituzioni.*

Dietro al sipario che, con competenza, un diplomatico italiano in prima linea sul monitoraggio costante della guerra descrive, si celano scenari diversi.

- Dapprima, c'è un livello poco scrutabile da parte dei cittadini.

Perché l'informazione e la comunicazione, soprattutto in chiave digitale, sono diventate **una vera e propria arma della guerra**. Non si preoccupa di

- "spiegare" le cose, nel senso di esercitare un servizio, colpisce da entrambe le parti i cittadini **a scopo propagandistico** (anche se in questo caso i russi hanno una taglia extra-large).
- Ma c'è anche **un livello caratterizzato da un evidente coraggio professionale**. Quella di molti giornalisti, spesso anche giovani e civilmente animati, che entrano tutti i giorni nelle nostre case attraverso diversi canali, diversi telegiornali, alcuni giornali a stampa, **che rischiano la pelle** per mettere al contrario il mondo in condizione di vedere e di sapere. Credo che mai una guerra sia stata vista così da vicino.
- E ancora - sempre per segnalare i piani diversi dell'argomento - c'è **un doppio racconto degli eventi**. Quella delle **istituzioni che rappresentano le parti in conflitto** e quello (pur mediato) delle stesse **opinioni pubbliche dei paesi coinvolti** ma anche dei paesi che, pur schivando fin qui le bombe e le macerie, si sentono abbastanza coinvolti, come succede un po' in tutta Europa. Quindi anche l'opinione pubblica italiana. Il modo con cui l'opinione dei cittadini è raccontata appartiene soprattutto alla demoscopia. Che registra paure, speranze, conoscenza e misconoscenza, capacità o meno di valutare i processi reali. **I governi in conflitto sono parte - pur con le evidenti faziosità - della realtà di una guerra. Le opinioni pubbliche sono parti del delicato mondo della percezione**. Con i suoi chiaroscuri, con convincimenti e insicurezze che si rincorrono ma che pesano poi, in qualche modo, sulla politica dei paesi.
- E ancora - limitando a quest'ultimo ambito l'elenco dei piani diversi della comunicazione di guerra - c'è ancora un ambito umanamente relevantissimo. Quello rappresentato da chi subisce direttamente e più crudelmente la guerra. **Civili colpiti vigliaccamente per fiaccare il paese invaso**, che è un modo di fare la guerra fuori dalle regole, che avviene spesso introducendo il concetto di "crimini di guerra". Qui ci sono storie, frammenti di storie, che costituiscono narrativamente una tessera importante del mosaico informativo. Sia quando **riguardano i dolori o il coraggio di un popolo**, sia quando riguardano **la miseria o l'arroganza o a volte anche la fragilità degli invasori**.

Questi piani della narrazione da febbraio stanno costantemente nell'agenda mediatica europea, scalzando sostanzialmente la precedente presenza totalizzante della pandemia.

Ma negli ultimi tempi sono anche attraversati tutti da **una minaccia ancor più totale**, fin qui rimasta appunto ancora una minaccia. Mi riferisco alla **minaccia nucleare**. Come si colloca questa per ora invisibile arma, ma che tutti possono sentire anche riferita a se stessi e non solo al teatro di guerra, nelle trame comunicative di cui stiamo parlando?

Ancora l'opinione di Marco Peronaci.

#### Marco Peronaci

*Questa è un punto molto importante. Anche perché Putin si è reso conto di aver perso la guerra-lampo e quindi si*



*e reso canto dell'insufficienza de/lo strumento bellico per vincere la guerra territoriale e ha iniziato ad agitare lo spauracchio de/ nucleare. Questa e uno strumento che, per la prima volta, abbiamo visto agitare in modo così chiaro e netto, ma fino adesso non e stato un elemento decisivo. Perche non ha ne ristretto la capacita ucraina di rispondere all'aggressione ne modificato le decisioni degli stati europei che hanno continuato a sostenere logisticamente, politicamente, militarmente e finanziariamente e anche accogliendo profughi, i cittadini ucraini. Deva dire che per adesso e una minaccia che appare spuntata.*

Proviamo a immaginare ora una cosa impossibile.

Cioe che tutta questa ridondanza comunicativa non ci sia. Così da mantenere in incognito il teatro di guerra e di mantenere nella beata incoscienza e quindi nella piena irresponsabilità i cittadini.

A pensarci davvero questa sarebbe una tragedia forse anche peggiore della guerra stessa.

Infatti, una regola polemologica sempre valida e che **un conflitto, anche grave, ha possibilità di evolvere solo se raccontato, solo se rappresentato**. Pur incorrendo nei tanti rischi di distorsione e manipolazione.

Per questo - e l'argomento qui a Venezia e stato oggetto di molti interventi, di giovani e meno giovani operatori, di docenti e analisti - e importante e necessario che la complessità comunicativa venga studiata in tempo reale, riferita sempre a verifiche, ad analisi delle fonti, alla discussione sulle implicazioni.

Per capire **quanta verità, quanta manipolazione, quanto rischio, persino quanta opportunità** essa contenga.

Ed ecco un'ultima riflessione dell'ambasciatore Marco Peronaci al riguardo.

#### Marco Peronaci

*Questa e un tema delicato perche noi non abbiamo nel bilancio de/le istituzioni dell'Unione europea ne una struttura dedicata ne una pasta di bilancio dedicata a una materia connessa al contrasto al/a disinformazione. Questa a differenza de/la Russia che, come tutti sanno, finanzia e paga direttamente uffici con decine di giovani che fan no dei troll. Noi non lo abbiamo ne vigliamo aver/a. Ma la capacita di monitorare la disinformazione e di agire anche in maniera preventiva, puntua/e e reattiva ad eventuali falsificazioni e una strada che le istituzioni europee cogliono percorrere e anche portare avanti insieme a soggetti privati, a universita a think tanks, a centri autonomi, perche cio significa soprattutto irrobustire quella che chiamiamo alfabetizzazione mediatica che e un tema che riguarda tutte le societa occidentali anche nel quadro de/la rivoluzione digitale. Quindi c'e mo/to da fare al riguardo. Stiamo per esempio lavorando in questo momento sul codice di condotta digitale, stiamo lavorando sul tema di accesso a internet. E stiamo predisponendo elementi a live/lo europeo che ci permettano di avere una situation awareness mo/to piu forte rispetto a queste iniziative.*

Quella della ricerca valutativa e stata, per altro, anche l'esperienza che ho condotto nella mia università attraverso un Osservatorio sulla comunicazione di crisi che ci ha permesso di **produrre un dossier di opinioni e valutazioni che fa sintesi proprio su questi temi dei sette mesi di pesante laboratorio**.

Mesi in cui abbiamo, con ansia ma anche con civile coinvolgimento, riversato molte attenzioni.

- il dossier edito da Lumi edizioni e reperibile in rete (spero lo sia già ma lo sarà certamente presto) con l'allusivo titolo, tra virgolette (perché il copyright del titolo e di un tale Fedor Dostoevskij), **"Delitto e castigo"**.

E comunque sempre dall'attenzione critica di studiosi arrivano in libreria in questi giorni altri testi di valutazione.

- Michele Mezza, giornalista e docente (già corrispondente della Rai da Mosca), ha curato Net-War, edito da Donzelli, sul ruolo dei sistemi digitali in questa guerra.
- E Angelo Turco, professore di Geografia umana, ha pubblicato Geopolitica, informazione e comunicazione nella guerra russo Ucraina, edito da Unicopli.


Insomma, istituzioni, media, università ed editoria - in contesti diversi, con lingue diverse - hanno il loro modo di concorrere alla battaglia pur secondaria di questa brutta guerra.

Quella in cui si rafforza oggi la comprensione e, per domani, si rafforza forse una soglia più alta di prevenzione.

Partecipare non solo dichiarare un'emozione. Ma anche affrontare modernamente la strada non facilissima della valutazione. **Con questo vi ringrazio per l'ascolto. A risentirci presto**

# Building capability means change in a changing world

by Fiona Speirs, 25 November




Government Communication Service

Government Communication Service


**The UK Government Communication Service** is the professional body for public communicators working in government departments and agencies

- 48 government departments
- Over 300 agencies and other public bodies
- Around 7000 members



**GCS STRATEGY**  
THE GCS STRATEGY WILL INFORM THE NEXT 3 YEARS OF COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITY.


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Government Communication Service

Communications as a profession - as was

- **Siloed sub-disciplines:** once in press office, always in press office
- **Most staff without a qualification** relevant to the profession
- Staff might move internally into communications **without prior skills**
- **Career pathways** expected to be linear: move upwards, or stand still
- A fixed **annual planning** process
- The **agency** makes the campaign



HM Government  
Government Communications Plan  
2015/16

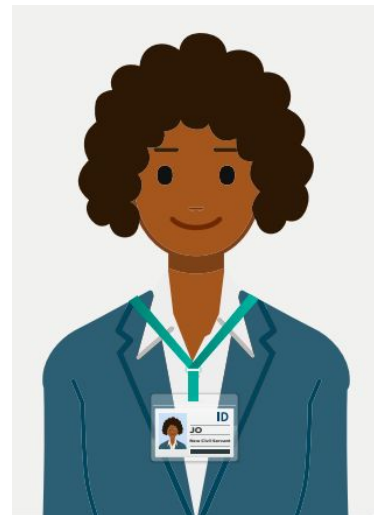
### Meet Rupert

- **Head of Campaigns** at the Ministry for Employment
- A **civil servant for 25 years**; came in on the Fast Stream after studying History at university
- **Progressed his career steadily**, working his way up from Communications Assistant
- Has **worked with many agencies** over the years, who create and produce his campaigns
- He's attended **ad-hoc training** days internally but has never had the time to do more
- He sometimes **worries** about how he would cope if his team's budget were cut...



### Meet Jo

- Started career as a **Digital Communications Assistant** for a small consulting firm
- Has come into government as a Campaigns Executive to **"make more of a difference"**
- Is great at **making eye-catching content** but knows nothing about how communications work in government
- Wants to progress her career, but **isn't sure which "field"** she belongs to
- Hopes her time in government will be **worthwhile for her** as well as society...



### Trends in the external environment are driving change

#### Data & technology



Volume & sophistication of data increasing exponentially  
Opportunity to target right message to right people at right time

#### Fragmented media landscape



Social media echo chambers means different groups with own opinions reinforcing beliefs  
We need to create content that cuts through the noise

#### Fragile trust & false content



Emotion beats evidence as a source of  
We need to create emotionally resonant and factually accurate content to change hearts and minds

#### Need for efficiency



There is pressure to deliver better value for money and to demonstrate impact  
Efficiency can drive innovation by forcing us to think about how to deliver differently

#### Changing professional expectations



People today want interesting, meaningful and purposeful work, a strong L&D offer and to be stretched and progress according to talent and skills



## We are developing a world-class learning and development offer

A renewed focus on developing **high quality skills in house**

The data analysis, numeracy and software savvy of an **engineer** combined with the storytelling, creativity and empathy of an **artist**

**Breadth** of knowledge with **deep** and specialist knowledge in one or more areas

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## What does the evidence tell us we need to deliver?

### OECD and GCS reports highlight

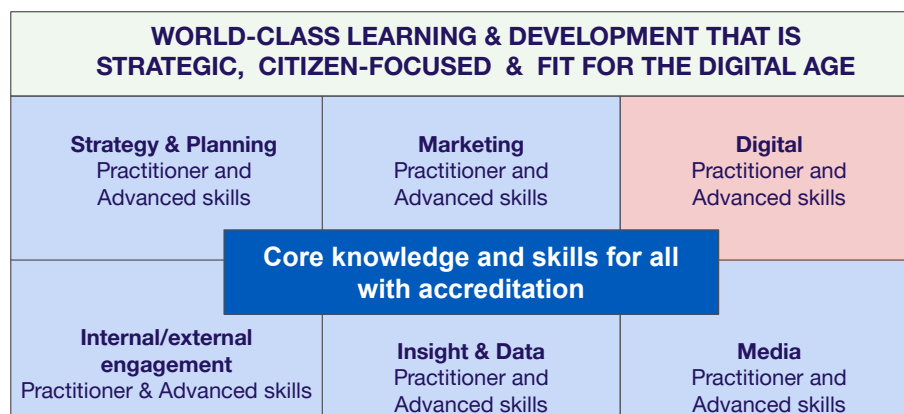


### Listening to learners



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## Achieving breadth and depth with the curriculum



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## Collaborating with OECD

### OECD Communications Network and Academy

#### Raising the bar

##### Capability and Community

###### Learning and capability build for practitioners

Courses, case studies, masterclasses, forums and exchange of ideas

Functional and thematic approaches

##### Leadership

###### A bespoke leadership programme for senior communications professionals

Will help address their unique challenges and address issues which require a multilateral approach

##### Research & Innovation

###### Access to an OECD platform for sharing reports and tools on public communications

Will enable the sharing of evidence and tools for innovation

### The value to us as member country of OECD's Network and Academy

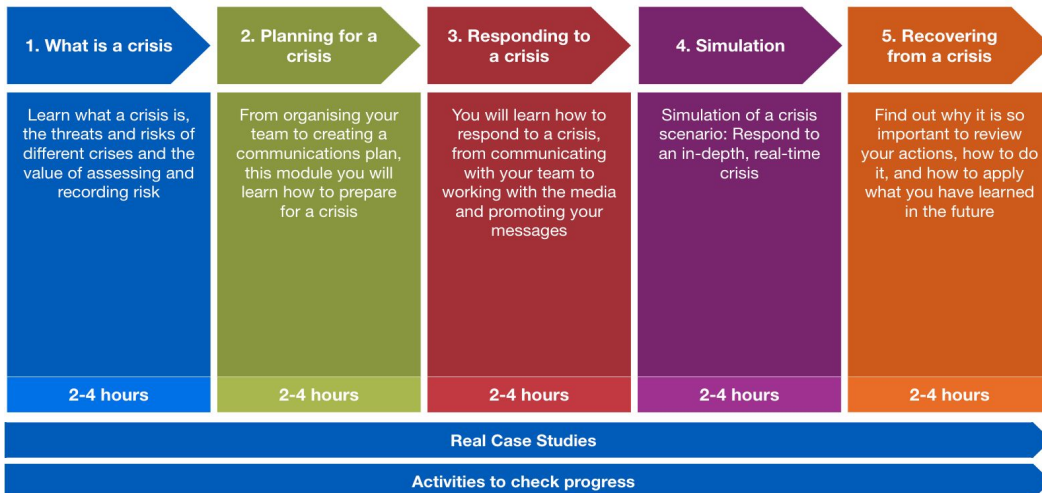
- **Skills and status:** a recognised profession raises the profile of communications as a lever of government
- **Global standards:** holding us to account
- **Courses and resources:** ability to learn from the best of what's elsewhere
- **Community:** connecting with peers at practitioner level enables exchange of ideas
- **Leadership:** communications leaders in government are in a unique position and can mutually support
- **Careers:** pathways could include secondments and exchanges to enrich work experiences



#### OECD Report on Public Communication The Global Context and the Way Forward Report Highlights



## We are contributing a run of our Crisis Communications Course



## We will combine course delivery with collaborative toolkit development

Participants in the OECD pilot will experience:



High quality online learning delivered over 6 weeks, requiring a time commitment of 2-4 hours per week



Self-directed study modules on the UK government's digital learning platform, accessible at any time



Online support from the UK's Government Communication Service



Virtual induction session to meet other learners



Access to course materials 3 months after the completion date



**Collaborative build of a crisis toolkit together in real time**

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**Fiona Speirs** is Deputy Director, Head of the Global Communications Academy at the Cabinet Office of the UK Government





# 6th Seminar on Strategic Communication

## Shared understanding and campaign work among European strategic communicators

9-10 March 2023, London

### Across Europe public information is a powerful force for good, when used well

Public information is a powerful force for good. It enables people to make better decisions about their lives. Communication can help democratic governments improve lives. But to succeed, governments across Europe must improve their professional practice in the light of the four challenges of increasing technology, pervasive disinformation, rising public expectation and the accelerating speed of the media cycle.

The challenges that face us have never been greater. The continuing Ukraine crisis, economic issues and climate change sit alongside the rapid advancement of new technologies creating opportunities and challenges. What hasn't changed is communication's importance as one of the four main levers the government has to affect change (alongside legislation, regulation and taxation). To help mitigate these issues communicators must embrace innovation and continuous improvement, while maintaining the highest ethical standards.

At the 6th StratCom seminar of the Club of Venice the following recommendations emerged:

1. Delivering at pace (particularly in time of war)
2. Build domestic resilience to support crisis communications
3. Nurture trust in government communications to help combat disinformation
4. Commitment to understanding and utilising new technologies
5. Strengthening partnerships.

The UK was delighted to host the Club of Venice in London in March 2023. The seminar heard powerful contributions from senior leaders. We have included some of these in an annex but all the ideas we discussed are reflected in our conclusions. GCS Chief Executive Simon Baugh said that we needed to focus on the 3Ps - addressing the pace of change, building effective

partnerships and training our people to be the best. This sums up many of the issues raised in London. And Lithuanian Ambassador Eitvydas Bajarūnas warned us to raise our game, less we are playing the equivalent of chess, while our opponents are playing ice hockey.

*The aim of all government communicators remains the same; creating the conditions to provide information to enable people to make good choices. We need to constantly evolve, anticipate and keep pace with technological change, be audience-focused and demonstrate our effectiveness. Through our leadership, people, practices and sharing good practice in this forum, we can continue to deliver more effective communications and campaigns, work across boundaries to innovate, come together to share best practice and learn together how to embrace the opportunities presented by new technology to better inform our citizens.*

**Alex Aiken**  
Executive Director  
UK Government  
Communications Service

**Vincenzo LE VOICI**  
Secretary-General  
Club of Venice

### Introduction

In March 2023, London hosted the 6th Club of Venice seminar on Strategic Communications. This year the discussion was, unsurprisingly, driven by the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, with five recommendations emerging on:

1. Government communication must deliver at pace and currently bureaucracy and risk averse decision making holds it back. For 'truth well told' to be delivered to the population, government communicators need to operate with speed and confidence in their professional capabilities supported by the politicians and senior leaders. There are some good examples about coordinated cross government communication and the OECD Project offers ways of enhancing this capability and deepening cooperation.
2. The nature of the threats to Europe mean that communicators have a role to help build domestic resilience, both in times of crisis and to prepare populations. Delivering in a crisis requires a coordinated cross government approach

with sufficiently trained and tested capabilities to support the government. The models being developed in the UK, Belgium and the Netherlands offer an opportunity to test these capabilities.

3. Nurturing trust across political systems is a core goal for government communicators particularly as part of the Antidote to disinformation. This will mean a whole of society approach where trusted partners can explain the good that public service can do and public information is underpinned by a code of ethics which improves its trustworthiness.
4. The Industrial Revolution is coming to public information as it is to all other areas of society. The capabilities to utilise technology are not yet fully embedded in communication teams and this will require a program of learning, training and sharing experiences across European governments.
5. Strengthening partnerships should be a key goal for public service communicators. In a digital common connected and always on world the number of people who can be brought in to support public service goals enables government working on behalf people to have greater effect.

In his introductory speech, Italy's Ambassador Terracciano, Director-General for Public and Cultural Diplomacy, invited European communicators to consider what our public diplomacy will look like after the war. Now Russian aggression in Ukraine has driven home the perennial challenge of border-related conflict, our approach to diplomacy has changed. As a global community we need to take a new approach, where we apply our fresh understanding of the importance of international alliances, cohesion and coordination to the new global picture.

Throughout the seminar, speaker after speaker came back to this idea of building better partnerships and coordination mechanisms. We as communicators need to coordinate

together to share what works, but also re-energise efforts to deepen our partnerships with colleagues in policy; build supportive networks across quality, free press; and do more to work with the private sector. By developing partnerships at the grassroots level, particularly in a crisis, we can reach citizens at speed through sources they trust.

The war has highlighted some significant barriers regarding the need to build trust with citizens, particularly those who may be vulnerable to the narratives of hostile states. While the European Commission has given us clear evidence that trust in the EU is relatively high (47% of Europeans tend to trust the EU; 32% tend to trust national governments<sup>1</sup>), it is clear this is still not high enough. Low trust increases the risk posed by disinformation and citizen vulnerability to hostile actors. We need to continue refining our approaches to increase trust in a meaningful and sustainable way.

Speakers lauded innovation as one of the most important tools to help communicators manage the fast-paced, highly stressful demands that come from communicating alongside a conflict. From shifting to Telegram when Whatsapp was blocked to delivering a 'how digital tech works' curriculum to 10 -14 year olds in Austria, communicators are finding creative solutions to challenges. As new technology like Artificial Intelligence or the Internet of Things matures, we can look forward to seeing how communicators adapt to and embrace these new opportunities.



In the UK, teams working on the Ukraine response set up daily information updates on Twitter, which has proved extremely popular, offering the media as well as citizens regular and reliable facts. Teams have co-located with colleagues in the Ministry of Defence, to allow for closer and more joined-up working. As teams have got used to the way of working, the loops between policy and communications have grown tighter and now content can get online within minutes.

1 <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2872>

## 1. Delivering at pace in conflict

The Russian-Ukraine war has shifted our understanding of and approach to strategic communications. The work of European communicators has changed significantly to reflect the pace at which communications now moves and the new challenges that have emerged. However, it is also clear that the pace of work is also dramatically speeding up the pace of innovation.

Social media has been at the heart of this new rate of activity, with both positive and negative consequences. One example of this is in the UK, where it took 14 years to get x followers on Twitter. In the past year, follower count has doubled.

Communicators have built new working cadences and structures to allow them to respond faster than ever before to events and misinformation. Building a strong relationship with colleagues who can provide data and sources, so that they trust communications colleagues will use them accurately, has been critical as communicators around Europe have needed to proactively pre-bunk and de-bunk misinformation at speed. However, while social media content is perhaps more in the control of a communications team, there has also been the need to ensure that opinion leaders trusted by citizens, including community leaders, have the right information to share in the media. One tactic that has been tested is ensuring that external trusted voices and opinion leaders are cleared to receive high-level information in

daily crisis updates, ensuring that they are well-informed for the day's media round. This is particularly important to reach minority or marginalised groups, who may be more mistrustful of official Government spokespeople.

## 2. Building domestic resilience to crisis

Following on from the unprecedented experiences of tackling the Covid-19 pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, it has become apparent that nations need to build domestic resilience to crisis, with different countries testing and refining a range of approaches.

After the last three years, it is recognised that potential crises are never far away. So, robust systems are needed that ensure planning is done far in advance of the crisis emerging, so effective communications can be rolled out at pace when necessary.

Such models must acknowledge that vulnerable and at-risk communities are often most impacted by risk materialisation, as seen in the current cost of living crisis. Communicators need to prepare communications on civil emergency risks for such communities, dedicating resources to better understand their barriers to action. Engaging with communities to develop co-produced materials, working with local and national partners they trust and producing tailored communications will avoid unintentional stigmatisation.

Many countries have identified strengthening shared values and support for democracy as foundational to building citizens' resilience to mis- and disinformation. Actions to promote this have included campaigns, multi-lateral events such as the Summit for Democracy, and education-focused initiatives with students. Underpinning such initiatives is the core idea that citizens who trust each other and their Government institutions are likely to be less vulnerable to false narratives by hostile actors<sup>2</sup>.



Sweden devotes significant resource to promoting democratic values, including working with academics to build a fact-based case for why democracy is beneficial and launching the Drive for Democracy Initiative in 2019.

2 <https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/transparency-communication-and-trust-the-role-of-public-wave-of-disinformation-about-the-new-coronavirus-bef7ad6e/> communication-in-responding-to-the-



One model which policy and communications professionals might find useful is the **UK Resilience Framework**, which helps put the right structures, advice and knowledge in place to make sure that everyone in the UK has the best chance at getting through a crisis.

The map's model is driven by a citizen-focused approach including measures like giving more power to local resilience forums, recognising ministers are not always best-placed to deliver a message and measuring socio-economic resilience with annual polling to measure perceptions and awareness of risk, allowing us to build evidence-based responses. The framework puts effective communications at the heart of domestic resilience building; you can find out more about the specific risk communications approaches included in the framework by visiting the [UK Government website](#).

### 3. Sharing trusted messages

A critical piece of insight to emerge from countries' response to the pandemic has been that understanding the gap between citizen's perception of risk and the actual level of risk is key to communicating more effectively in times of crisis. People's perceptions of risk, rather than the actual risk itself, determines their actions. The obvious example of this was in the contrast in behaviours related to non-pharmaceutical interventions between March 2020 and March 2021, when as citizens' sense of risk reduced, so did their likelihood of wearing masks or washing hands. This means that the goal of risk or crisis communications is to build a shared understanding between citizen and Government of the level of risk faced.

When we apply this approach to threats at the regional, national and international levels, it shows that offering the greatest possible transparency in our communications on threat levels to citizens must be paramount. In addition, any communications need to be underpinned by concrete actions for people

to take, reinforced by independent voices providing factual information.

It is also vitally important to share information via the channels and people that citizen's trust, which are not necessarily Government channels or spokespeople, and to reflect priorities and indeed values that resonate with citizens. Audience segmentation and regular insight-gathering is the cornerstone of this, as well as effective community partnerships and use of trustworthy multipliers that allow Governments and institutions to quickly tap into networks in times of crisis.

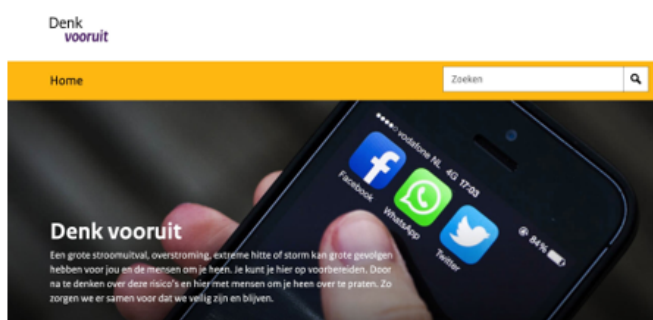
### 4. Utilising new technology

Emerging technology, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT), Augmented Reality (AR) and blockchain are influencing communication practice around the globe. Hostile State Actors have long been using technology as part of their arsenal in the information space, now democratic governments need to view these innovations as opportunities to be utilised, as opposed to threats to be guarded against.

There are some examples of this shift in attitude; NATO has started to plan for emerging technologies, to close the gap in resource and capability so that legitimate, fact-based public communications can compete. They are developing new AI certification standards, including quality controls and risk mitigation, that will help align new AI and data projects with NATO's Principles of Responsible Use, which were approved in October 2021 as part of NATO's first ever AI strategy.

Cooperation is inherently needed to capitalise on emerging technology's potential to transform communications' function, mission and operation. Maximising the opportunities presented by emerging technology requires cross-government coordinated action and taking a strategic approach. In practice this does not mean simply following trends or using new channels

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In the Netherlands, the 'If you are worried' campaign, which stimulated conversation about risk awareness and promoted preparing an emergency kit, is a useful example of risk-informed communications in action. The campaign was focused on messaging that encouraged Dutch people to trust themselves – trust that they know what to do, and that government would help them. You can find the campaign website at [www.denkvooruit.nl](http://www.denkvooruit.nl).

ad hoc, but rather strengthening communications systems by:

- building an understanding of emerging technology into specifications of personnel requirements when recruiting;
- creating a sustainable education offer, providing training to increase knowledge around emerging technology among existing staff bases;
- amending procurement procedures to make it easier for staff to access emerging technology; and
- undertaking any organisational or structural changes to remove barriers to using emerging technology, i.e. restrictive procurement.

Coordination and interconnection across public and private sector partners operating within the rules based international system is also critical to establish principles for the responsible use of emerging technology at a quicker pace, closer to speed at which new technology is being invented.

The UK government's communication service strategy 2022-25 addresses the need for all communicators to harness AI and new technologies, where data driven insights and experimentation have driven better outcomes, recognising the need to value- and be seen to value - innovation, experimentation and creativity. Encouraging departments to focus on innovation, including mandating communications teams to spend 10% of their budgets on new communication approaches to test and learn, driving this need to better harness the tools at our disposal towards a revolution in digital, data and content creation skills. Exploring how new technologies can be harnessed to enhance the impact of government communications could allow AI to be utilised to perform routine first tasks that are manually reviewed by humans to save time and create greater efficiencies. There is the potential of language models, improving the ability to communicate to citizens in a greater number of languages at speed and the potential of AI to support communicators with consultations by being able to summarise policy decisions and update citizens, as well as using chat bots to enhance a citizen's experience when using certain government services.

## 5. Strengthening partnerships

One of the most important lessons democratic nations need to take from the invasion of Ukraine is the importance of cohesion; public diplomacy and communication should prioritise cooperation, not competition.

Following the phenomenal example set by the government and people of Ukraine, the security community has been increasing collaboration since Russia invaded, with huge impact. Shared intelligence in the form of the declassification and distribution of information has been critical in combating hostile efforts, enabling prebuts to be delivered at the pace needed to be effective. Broadening the list of partners the security community works with has also been beneficial. Understanding the interests of our audiences and meeting them there has shaped our approach. By partnering with organisations and voices that resonate with our audiences, our communications have delivered additional impact. This has been particularly true for

soft power partnerships - with sport and cultural organisations both large and small, for example. Their impact at both local and global levels can be huge, and enables a reach further than through government channels alone.

Broadening governments' partnership with media providers, like the big digital platforms and more traditional forms of journalism, is essential to maintain governments' ability to uphold stability and the shared values within our society. The Edelman Trust Barometer 2023 found that a shared media environment has given way to echo chambers, making it harder to collaboratively solve problems. Media is not trusted, with especially low trust in social media. Independent media often provide a responsible editorial voice, which helps to protect and nurture democracy. To ensure they can continue to operate, governments should play a facilitator's role in building the capacity of independent media providers.

At the same time governments need to recognise the big role social media and search engines play in shaping society and should be working towards co-regulation. Institutions have given credit to the voluntary actions taken by organisations like Facebook and Twitter, such as Twitter banning over 70,000 accounts associated with the QAnon conspiracy theory group, but more join up is needed to combat what the UK Government's Communications and Digital Committee recently called the "often unreasonably inconsistent and opaque" moderation decisions made by the largest platforms. Establishing the level of partnerships needed to make co-regulation work will take time, but it is worth the investment to start to repair trust in legitimate sources of information.

Similarly, investing in building partnerships with emerging powers in Africa and Asia is key to combating the aggression of hostile states. For these efforts to be successful governments need to learn from the past and seek to establish dialogues that are mutually beneficial and equal, avoiding communications that imply one partner is more senior than the other. Insight has shown that growing partnerships in Africa and Asia can benefit from an understanding of the local context there, as communications that are based in values and emotions make messages more resonant and impactful on both attitudes and behaviours, supporting policy objectives via persuasion.

To facilitate partnerships between communicators the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has launched the OECD Public Communication Network. Members of the network have been able to access a new online course on crisis communications, as part of the OECD's work to build standards for public communications that are global.

The same collaborative approach was noticed in the EU's and its Member States' initiatives to strengthen cooperation and coordination in crisis communication, as emerged in the contributions to the seminar from the national Belgian and Dutch national crisis centres, that are also proactive members of the EU IPCR mechanism and its Crisis Communication Network (CCN), and from the European External Action Service who drew the attention of the participants to the agenda of the Global Gateway process.

## Conclusion

Over the course of the two days, a number of key learnings came up, which colleagues from across Europe referenced as having been critical in their response to the challenges faced by their nations. These are three key takeaways that ran as themes through the panels:

### Share expertise and break down silos

- Sharing knowledge and skills needs to happen at a number of levels: internally, between organisations, between Government and the private sector, and between nations.
- There has been a huge cultural shift towards a more open approach to sharing intelligence, building on the recognition that the best way to counter disinformation is with verified facts.
- Coordinated working structures can also support breaking down silos, such as the co-location between the UK's Ministry of Defence and the Government Communications Service during the Ukraine response.
- Building cooperation to capitalise on emerging technology's potential to transform communications' function, mission and operation is critical.

### Build systems that support innovation

- Planning in advance how to procure in a crisis will allow communicators to access critical tools they need, at pace.
- Building capability in new technologies into recruitment will allow communications teams to have the skills to identify new approaches and embrace the potential of new communications tools.
- Building teams that are comfortable with risk, celebrating being daring and trying something new, as long as you are using robust evaluation to measure whether it worked or not.

### Build trust with audiences

- It is crucial to understand the gap between citizen's perception of risk and the actual level of risk. This is the key to communicating more effectively in times of crisis.
- There needs to be sustained pre-planning to build networks that will reach citizens, including vulnerable or at-risk groups, to ensure resilience to threats.
- Communicators need to understand and make use of the information sources most trusted by audiences, such as defence intelligence or community leaders.
- With falling trust in the media as a whole, there is a need to build the resilience of independent media providers, who are relied on by citizens as authoritative editorial voices.

## About the Club of Venice

The Club of Venice is the informal group of Europe's most senior and experienced government communications professionals. Founded in 1986, and named after the city where its first meeting took place, the Club of Venice brings together senior government communication professionals from around the world to discuss issues related to strategic communication, public affairs and other related global topics. It convenes several times each year to provide members with an opportunity to discuss issues of mutual interest, share experiences and best practice, and offer mutual support.

Since its creation, the Club has aimed to promote professionalism and best practice for government communicators – from Paris to Podgorica, Athens to Amsterdam, Riga to Malta. By providing members with access to an unrivalled pool of communications expertise, as well as information and support, we hope that governments across Europe continue to benefit from this exchange of knowledge.

For more information, contact [Vincenzo.LeVoci@skynet.be](mailto:Vincenzo.LeVoci@skynet.be)

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# 6th Seminar on Strategic Communication

## Shared understanding and campaign work among European strategic communicators

9-10 March 2023, London

## Final Agenda

Meeting venue: Institute for Civil Engineers,  
1 Great George St, London SW1P 3AA, United Kingdom

### DAY 1 - Thursday 9 March 2023

18:15 - 19:30

#### "Spring challenges for Europe"

Setting the scene for 2023 and 2024: cooperation among International partners in the field of strategic communication

introductions:

- **Alex AIKEN**, Executive Director, UK Government Communications Service
- **Vincenzo LE VOICI**, Club of Venice Secretary-General

Speakers:

- **Simon BAUGH**, Chief Executive, UK Government Communications Service - UK Government communications and European partnership
- **Jessica PEARCE**, Deputy Director of National Security Communications, UK Cabinet Office - The UK Resilience Framework
- **Iain BUNDRED**, Head of Public Policy, YouTube UK & Ireland - The Fog Of War Report
- **Colin STRONG**, IPSOS, Head of Behavioural Science and Professor at Nottingham University Business School - New World Disorder Report
- **H.E. Eitvydas BAJARŪNAS**, Ambassador of Lithuania to the UK

### DAY 2 - Friday 10 March 2023 (9:30 - 17:45)

#### PLENARY MEETING

8:30 - 8:45

#### Welcome statements

8:45 - 9:15

#### Introductory speeches

- **Address by Ambassador Pasquale TERRACCIANO**, Italy, Director-General for Public and Cultural Diplomacy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation: "The new frontiers of Public Diplomacy and the role of Strategic Communication in a world of crucial geopolitical challenges"
- **Address by Claire PIMM**, UK, Director, National Resilience Communications at Cabinet Office: "2022 communication lessons in the field of defence"
- **Q&A**

9:00 - 11:00

## Plenary Session 1

### Communication strategies as a key instrument to share good values and improve democracy

- focus on OECD project to sustain democratic societies - <https://www.oecd-events.org/public-governance-ministerial-global-forum/en/>
- segmentation/scanning methodologies to building effective public service communications

#### Moderators:

- **Alex AIKEN**, Executive Director of Communications, International Relations and Security, UK Government
- **Vincenzo LE VOCI**, Secretary-General of the Club of Venice

#### Panellists:

- **Alessandro BELLANTONI**, OECD Headquarters, Head of the Open Government and Civic Space Unit, Public Governance Directorate
- **Mikey HOARE**, UK, Director of National Security Communication at Cabinet Office
- **Victoria FLODH LI**, Sweden, Ambassador and Director for Communication, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- **Kevin KELLY**, Ireland, Head of Press and Communications, Department of Foreign Affairs
- **Elena SAVOIA**, Co-Director Emergency, Preparedness, Research, Evaluation and Practice Programme, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, USA
- **Alberto CONTARETTI**, Project Manager, Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) Policy Support

11:00 - 11:15

## Coffee break

11:15 - 12:30

## BREAK-OUT SESSION - 2

### Communicating with emerging powers in Africa and Asia

- analysis, assessment, planning communication and media scenarios
- making the case for a rules-based system (encouraging co-operation on communicating values and agendas)

#### Moderator:

- **Danila CHIARO**, Project Manager, EUROMED Migration, International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

#### Panellists:

- **Aude MAIO-COLICHE**, Director, Strategic Communications and Foresight, European External Action Service (EEAS)
- **Jeff WILSON**, UK, Head of Communications for Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, the British Overseas Territories, and the Middle East, Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office
- **Maike WEITZEL**, Germany, Desk Officer Global South, Strategic Communications Department, Federal Foreign Office
- **David COMBS**, US State Department, Acting Director, Office of Research, Research and Analytics, Bureau of Global Public Affairs
- **Alberto MONTROND**, Diplomat and Senior Fellow at Harvard University, USA, Founder of the Institute for Democracy & Merit, Republic of Cabo Verde, Former Member of Parliament
- **Sarah SHEIL**, European Parliament, Directorate-General for External Policies of the Union, Head of the "Communication and Outreach" Unit

11:15 - 12:30

## BREAK-OUT SESSION - 3

### Detecting and countering disinformation and misinformation practices in time of societal turbulences

- debunking: data sharing (case study Lithuania - **Viktoras DAUKSAS**, Director, DebunkEU.org)
- building alliances among platforms (case study Ukraine - **Yevhen FEDCHENKO**, Chief Editor, Stopfake.org and **Ruslan DEYNYCHENKO**, Executive Director, Stopfake.org)

#### Moderator:

- **Erik DEN HOEDT**, Netherlands, Director of Operations, Ministry of General Affairs, Vice President of the Club of Venice

**Panellists:**

- **Dante BRANDI**, Italy, Head of Communications Coordination, Directorate-General for Public and Cultural Diplomacy Italy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- **Klimentini DIAKOMANOLI**, European Commission, DG Communication, Political & Economic Intelligence Unit, Author of "Fake news: what does Europe do?"
- **Dominik PRESL**, Senior Policy Advisor for Strategic Communication and Counter- Disinformation, Office of the Government of the Czech Republic
- **Maia MAZURKIEWICZ**, European Free Media Association (Warsaw)

12:30 - 13:45

*Coffee break*

13:45 - 15:00

**BREAK-OUT SESSION - 4**

**New communications. Emerging technology and how it is influencing communication practice**

- Artificial Intelligence impact on public communication, Quantum and Metaverse: current trends
- Engaging and interacting within the social media: capacity building implications

**Moderator:**

- **Angela KELLETT**, UK, Head of Insights, GCS International, Prime Minister's Office & Cabinet Office Communications

**Panellists:**

- **Susanne WEBER**, Austria, Head of Digital Communication, Federal Chancellery
- **Rebecca OBSTLER**, NATO HQ, Head of the Digital Outreach and Communications Technologies Section, Public Diplomacy Division
- **Adrian COOPER**, Head of the Training Institute for Migration Capacity for the Mediterranean, International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)
- **Giulia GIACOMELLI**, CIVIPOL Strategic Communication Consultant for the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), GDG Inspire Founder and Chief Consultant

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13:45 - 15:00

**BREAK-OUT SESSION - 5**

**Growing disinformation threats and geo-political challenges: how big powers are trying to infiltrate South-East Europe**

- **Resilience to Disinformation – the Lublin Group 40 point plan**  
<https://mfa.gov.ua/storage/app/sites/1/Docs/the-lublin-triangle-joint-report-on-counteracting-disinformation.pdf>  
Introduced by **Colonel Dariusz NIEDZIELSKI**, Poland, Chief Specialist, StratCom and Media Branch, Operations Center of the Ministry of National Defence
- **Authoritarians on a Media Offensive in the Midst of War. The Informational Influence of Russia, China, Turkey, Iran and the Gulf States in Southeast Europe. KAS' 11 recommendations about how to neutralise disinformation**  
<https://www.kas.de/en/web/medien-europa/single-title/-/content/new-publication-authoritarians-on-a-media-offensive-in-the-midst-of-war>  
Introduced by **Dr Rumena FILIPOVA**, Chairperson, Institute for Global Analytics

**Moderator:**

- **Lutz GÜLLNER**, Head of the Strategic Communication Division, European External Action Service (EEAS)



#### Panellists:

- **Robert KOPAL**, Croatia, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister for National Security, Ph.D., Associate Professor at Tenured University College, Chairman of the Board at EFFECTUS University in Zagreb – introduced by **Katja ŠARE**, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Affairs
- **Aliki STYLIANOU**, Cyprus, Director, Press and Information Office, Ministry of Interior
- **Jurgita GERMANAVIČIENĖ**, Lithuania, Deputy Head of Communication and Cultural Diplomacy Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- **Joanna WAJDA**, Poland, Deputy Director, Department of Public and Culture Diplomacy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- **Richard CHALK**, Strategic Communication specialist, Manager REOC Communication, UK

15:00 - 15:10

*Coffee break*

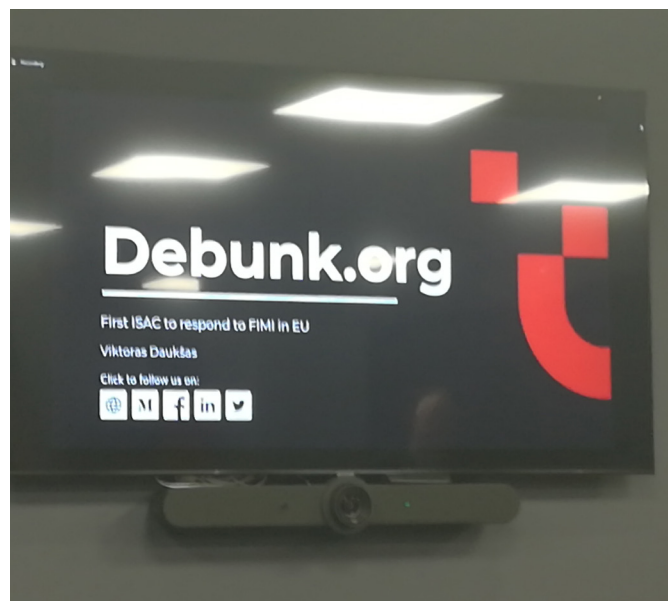
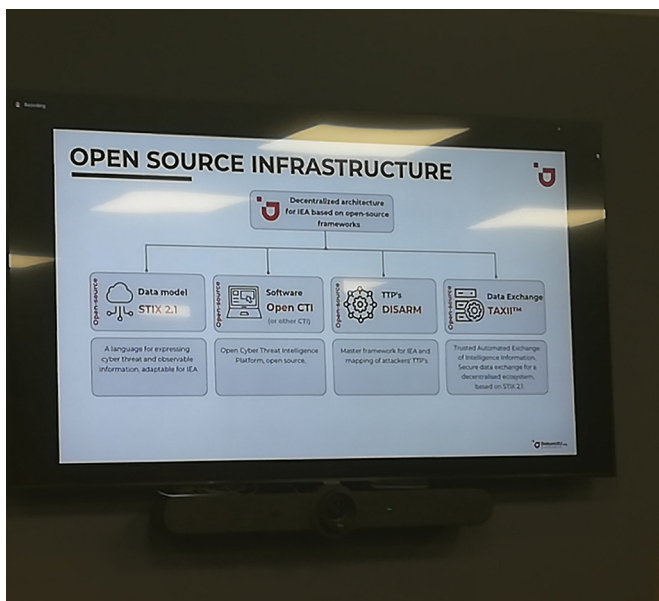
15:15 - 16:30

## PLENARY - SESSION 6 – SMEATON ROOM

### Building societal resilience. Short-term crisis handling and long-term strategies

- Debriefing from the breakout sessions and main issues emerged from the plenary sessions (ensured by the four sessions' leaders/moderators)
- EU Member States' crisis management communication strategy
  - \* **Herman WIERSEMA**, Netherlands, Head of Communications, and **Francien MACHIELSE**, Communications specialist at National Coordinator for Counter-terrorism and Security (NCTV) and the National Crisis Center (NCC)
  - \* **Pauline REMIENCE** and **Yves STEVENS**, Belgium, Spokespersons at the National Crisis Centre
  - \* **Moderator:** Vincenzo LE VOCI, Secretary-General of the Club of Venice
- Closing remarks  
(**Alex AIKEN**, **Vincenzo LE VOCI**)

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# Club of Venice

## Seminar on communicating EU enlargement and EU macro-regional strategies

28-29 September 2023, Dubrovnik (Croatia)

## Final Agenda

Dubrovnik Meeting venue: Lazareti, Frana Supila

### DAY 1 - Thursday 28 September 2023 (18:30 - 21:30)

#### PRESENTATION OF THE MEETING & WELCOME RECEPTION

18:30 - 19:00

Guests' registration

19:00 - 20:00

Reception continues during the introductory session:

- Welcome speech by the Croatian hosting authorities
- Welcome speech by dr. Katarina DORŠNER, Councillor of the City of Dubrovnik
- Presentation of the programme and objectives of the seminar (Vincenzo LE VOCI, Secretary-General of the Club of Venice, introducing a video message from Prof. Stefano ROLANDO, President of the Club of Venice)
- Exchange of views

20:15 - 22:00

Dinner (Lazareti, Frana Supila)

### DAY 2 - Friday 29 September 2023 (9:15 - 17:45)

#### FULL-DAY SEMINAR

8:45 - 9:15

Guests' registration and coffee

8:45 - 12:45

EU ENLARGEMENT (round table moderated by Vincenzo LE VOCI)

- Address by Ambassador Zvonimir FRKA-PETEŠIĆ, Chief of Staff of the Prime Minister of Croatia, former Director of the Communication Strategy for the National Referendum on Croatia's entry to the EU
- "Croatia and the EU: 10 years experience as a Member State – achievements and challenges – the crucial role of communication strategies in this field"

### Policy key-Note: "EU Enlargement: state of play"

- **Jaromír LEVIČEK**, Team Leader Strategic Communication – Western Balkans and Türkiye, European Commission Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), European Commission
  - \* What is at stake: Challenges for governmental and institutional authorities and their communicators
  - \* The impact of geo-political turbulences
  - \* Media coverage and public opinion trends
  - \* Keeping the momentum and dynamizing the communication agenda: meeting citizens' expectations
  - \* Partners/Multipliers

10:30 - 10:45

### Coffee break

#### Panellists:

- **Government representatives**
  - \* **Josip BRKIĆ**, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
  - \* **Matija OČURŠČAK**, Croatia, Head of Sector for Southeast Europe and EU Enlargement, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs
  - \* **Maria TYROPOLI**, Greece, First Secretary (Communication), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General Secretariat for Greeks Abroad and Public Diplomacy, Directorate of International Communication
  - \* **Mykolas MAZOLEVSKIS**, Lithuania, Spokesperson, Permanent Representation of Lithuania to the EU
  - \* **George Silvan SURUGIU**, Romania, Senior Communication Specialist, General Secretariat of the Government
  - \* **Peter GRK**, Slovenia, National Coordinator for Western Balkans, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
  - \* **Gordana DESPOTOVIĆ ĐEKIĆ**, Montenegro, Communication Officer, General Secretariat and Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- **Andrea ČOVIĆ VIDOVIĆ**, European Commission Representation in Croatia, acting Head of Representation and Head of Press and Media
- **Mirjana IVANOVIĆ**, Secretary-General, South East Europe Public Sector Communication Association (SEECOM)

12:45 - 12:55

Summing-up and distribution of an updated communication guidance paper on EU enlargement (new version of the guidelines issued at the end of the Club of Venice seminar in Poreč in 2009)

12:55 - 13:00

### Family picture

13:00 - 14:15

### Lunch





14:15 -15:45

**THE EU MACRO-REGIONAL STRATEGIES** (round table moderated by Vincenzo LE VOICI, Secretary-General of the Club of Venice and Kristina PLAVŠAK KRAJNC, Founder, Media Forum, Center for Public Communication, Ljubljana)

- The four strategies: addressing common challenges, pursuing common objectives
- Lessons learning from an integrated approach: implementing the principles subscribed in the Declarations of Catania and Grenoble
- Revamping and strengthening the communication actions on the strategies: the role of the governmental and institutional communicators
- Potential policy developments
- Inspiration for possible partnerships and the role of multipliers and ambassadors

15:00 -15:15

*Coffee served during session (no break)*

#### Key Introduction

- **Johan MAGNUSSON**, Team Leader Danube and Baltic Sea Regions, European Commission Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO)

#### Panellists:

- **Tea IVANIŠEVIĆ**, Italy, Communication Officer, Department of Cohesion, Presidency of the Council of Ministers
- **Lidija PANSEGRAU HADROVIĆ** Croatia, Counsellor, Directorate-General for Europe, Division for European Macro-regions, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs
- **Gordana DESPOTOVIĆ DJEKIĆ**, Montenegro, Communication Officer, Ministry of European Affairs
- **George Silvian SURUGIU**, Romania, Senior Communication Advisor, General Secretariat of the Government
- **Yves CHARMONT**, Délégué général, Cap'Com, France

15:45

#### Issues emerged

Summing-up and possible developments (including work in progress on the Club of Venice project for a European Centre for expertise in Public Communication (ECPC) – presentation from Robert WESTER, Director, Berenschot Europe)

16:00

- Adoption of the updated CoV guidelines on communicating enlargement
- Closing remarks (hosting Croatian authorities and Club of Venice representative)

16:15

#### Social event

*Guided Tour of the City of Dubrovnik  
City Walls and fortresses ([tzdubrovnik.hr](http://tzdubrovnik.hr))*

18:30

#### Dinner

**Venue:** restaurant Dubravka, Brsalje br. 1

<https://www.nautikarestaurants.com/dubravka-restaurant-cafe/hr/>



# Club of Venice

## Communicating enlargement

### A new Club of Venice guide

28-29 September 2023, Dubrovnik (Croatia)

Seeking to become a Member of the EU is a major political decision for the country wishing to join; but any enlargement has as well far-reaching consequences for all Member States as it influences the functioning and future development of the Union.

Accession negotiations are different from the normal diplomatic negotiations held between two or more states. They are “unequal” negotiations in the sense that the content—namely the body of EU law known as the *acquis communautaire*—is not negotiable: the applicant must accept it as it stands and is only able to obtain transitional arrangements in duly justified cases in areas where the adaptation of legislation to Community law in the applicant country is particularly difficult.

In addition, both the preparation phase of accession negotiations (i.e. the drafting of the Commission's opinion) and the actual negotiations between the Member States of the EU and the applicant country/ countries involve a lengthy process which can take several years. The topics covered during the negotiations are mostly very technical and difficult to explain in simple words to the public at large. Negotiating positions drafted by the Commission after it has analyzed the applicant country's arguments are often considered too favourable to the applicant and are tightened up when adopted unanimously by the Member States. As a result, they may often be seen as a “diktat” and as humiliating for the acceding country.

Under these particular circumstances, communication plays a crucial role not only in informing citizens continuously about progress during the negotiations but also in trying to keep the level of public support for enlargement high. People should be informed in an objective way, false expectations avoided, inaccurate information corrected and unjustified fears allayed.

All those countries which joined the EC/EU after its initial establishment have had to face the difficult task of preparing their citizens for enlargement.

- Without efficient pre-enlargement communication, lengthy negotiating processes can generate misperceptions and anxiety in the public opinion and accession referenda cannot be won;
- without preparation of the citizens in the existing Member States, negative reactions and surprises may occur (see the negative impact of enlargement in the referenda held in 2005 on the Constitutional Treaty in France and in the Netherlands).
- Communication should not end with accession. On the contrary, it should continue in order to maintain public

support and to explain to citizens the changes which EU-membership will bring and the new opportunities it will offer.

Considering that communication about enlargement is a topic which concerns Government communicators in all Member States and candidate countries, the Club of Venice, in line with its tradition to dedicate meetings to specific topics of general interest and particular importance, held two Workshops on ‘Communicating Enlargement’, respectively in 2009 in Poreč and in 2011 in Brussels.

The aim of these meetings was to discuss the experience of countries which had joined the EU during the three most recent waves of enlargement (1995, 2004, 2007) as well as the path of Croatia and Turkey in their ongoing negotiations, and also to identify best practices in communication as well as similarities in the kinds of challenges to be met when implementing the strategies put in place to this end by the governments of the Member States and the accession countries and by the EU institutions.

The first workshop at Poreč on 21 November 2009 at the invitation of the Government of Croatia dealt with the communication challenges during the different phases of the enlargement process, focused on communication strategies, communication tools, products and target groups, and tried to identify success factors for enlargement communication.

The second workshop was hosted by the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions in Brussels on 10 February 2011. It examined public opinion analysis dynamics and media coverage of enlargement as a priority topic at national and European level, including the impact evaluation of Government and EU institutions communication strategies and discussed the role and added value of civil society components in enlargement communication.

Moreover, the Club also dedicated one session of its semi-annual plenary meetings held in Venice in the following years and lastly in Bar (Montenegro) on 6-7 June 2019, where the theme of revamping communication on enlargement was tackled in strict correlation with re-connecting Europe to its citizens and with the common endeavour to strengthen cooperation in resilience building against disinformation and growing populism.

# Communication challenges during the different phases of the enlargement process

## In the candidate country

### Pre-negotiation phase

Government information campaigns about the EU should start already when a neighbouring European non-EU country is setting itself the political objective to join the Union. In many of these potential future candidate countries far-reaching national measures are needed to adapt to fundamental EU principles and standards before even being able to envisage an application to become a member of the EU.

Communication is necessary to ensure the understanding and the support of the population already in this preparatory phase preceding an eventual demand for membership.

In most countries, public support for EU membership is high at the moment of application. In general, the political class is in favour of membership. There have been, however, some exceptions, such as in Norway and Iceland, where the governments had only a small parliamentary majority in favour of the application and where public opinion was split between supporters of and opponents to membership.

After formal presentation of the letter of application, it is necessary to continue informing citizens about "EU basics", the enlargement process and its timetable: "What are the rules of the game? When you join a club you have to accept all the club's rules. What is the *acquis communautaire*? Accession always takes a very long time—be patient. Government should not raise false expectations."

The period during which the Commission's opinion on the request for membership is being prepared—which generally takes at least one year—should be used to provide general information about the EU for the broad public in the candidate country and to prepare specific groups of the population for necessary changes and adaptations to EU rules.

This first phase should be used not only to constitute the negotiating team and to build up EU knowledge and expertise in all government departments, but also to train communication specialists and to set up a team able to inform the media and the population (not only the own citizens living in the country, but also those residing abroad, the so-called "diaspora") at any time about specific problems that may be emerging and being tackled and the enlargement process as a whole.

Multipliers such as journalists, leading personalities representing interest groups, regional and local politicians, social and economic professionals and school teachers should be targeted specifically. Training for journalists and study trips for selected multipliers to get to know the institutions of the EU and their working methods are particularly recommended. The candidate country's Mission to the EU in Brussels has a central role to play in this respect.

A data base containing all relevant information for media representatives and the public should be built and put at the disposal of speakers, teachers, civil society groups and other multipliers. This data base should include power-point presentations, factsheets, podcasts, recorded interviews and other visuals on accession-related topics of broad interest and should be continuously updated all along the enlargement process. All this material should be constantly updated.

### Negotiation phase

With the start of the negotiation phase the information campaign needs to be stepped up. General information activities should continue, but priority should be given to detailed information about matters under discussion in the negotiations.

A well-functioning communication network with a **clear chain of command and coordination mechanisms** should be in place. The chief negotiator(s) at political level, as well as at civil servant level, and the Mission to the EU in Brussels should play a central role as information providers. They should inform the media before and after each negotiating session about the progress made, the solutions envisaged or reached, and any outstanding issues. Communication specialists within the negotiating team and the relevant government departments should be able to answer any specific questions, rectify immediately any inaccurate information and calm any fears.

It seems particularly important not to raise false expectations: after all, it is not the EU that wants to join the applicant country! Therefore, in areas of differing law and rules it is up to the candidate to bring its legislation and standards into line with those of the EU. When informing the public about the negotiations, it is essential also to present the position of EU Member States and the arguments supporting that position. This goes hand-in-hand with an evaluation of the efforts needed to bring the necessary adjustments into effect. Those sections of the population most affected by such adjustments should be informed thoroughly about all measures needed, the "price to be paid" and the advantages to be expected after accession.

As a rule, communication about **negotiations should always be immediate and transparent**.

However, in some cases it may be necessary to impose certain restrictions, for instance when candidate countries submit position papers to the Commission during the course of the negotiations. In such cases it would be advisable not to reveal the full text of the candidate country's negotiating bid, but to provide information merely on the general content and to give full details only when negotiations are complete.

It is also crucial to involve timely government and the relevant ministers in order to defend the outcome of the negotiations and to assume political responsibility for them. Also of great importance in this respect are a well-functioning communication network and a support structure of communicators with detailed knowledge of the negotiation topics and an ability to explain solutions in simple, easily understandable language.

### Ratification phase (Referendum)

At the end of the negotiations all energies should be mobilised to



ensure the support of the majority of the population for accession. Best use should be made of the sense of relief, or even euphoria, which is generally felt at the end of a lengthy negotiation process. More than ever it is important to explain and defend the outcome of the negotiations in simple terms and to justify the solutions proposed for problem areas. In addition to concerted action by the whole communication team, and a set of coherent messages underpinned by statements made by the negotiators involved in the different negotiation chapters, it is particularly important that a leading role should be played by the political class in favour of accession. Politicians should be supported by the network of pro-EU interest groups and civil society organisations.

This is also the moment to run publicity campaigns in favour of accession using all media channels, but placing particular emphasis on TV and radio slots, the internet and outdoor campaigns using billboards and organising public events (EU buses, concerts, exhibitions, discussion fora, etc.). TV debates giving the floor both to prominent defenders and opponents of enlargement, as well as to members of the studio audience, provide a particularly relevant means of reaching the public at large.

Campaigns should have a simple message (such as “We are Europe”, “Together, instead of alone”) which should be used by all those involved and on all supports.

The maximum mobilisation of resources and energies in favour of acceptance of the Accession Treaty is essential in the run-up phase to the referendum. Referenda tend to polarise public opinion: they raise passions and opponents, the latter often deliberately using false information to win support for rejection. The supporters’ camp should seek to be convincing and passionate, appealing not only to the intellect but also to sentiments and emotions.

Anti-accession activists can easily enter the referendum-campaign and get instant publicity acquiring national status at little cost. Media do not act as filter against extremists but often as facilitator of anti-accession sentiments. Social media and anti-European web platform are easily amplifying this polarizing phenomenon and there is unfortunately no whatsoever behavioural code that could prevent from spreading disinformation concerning the EU.

Moreover, political parties find it usually difficult to counter No-campaigns of extremist opponents as they are designed to fight elections rather than referenda. They are focused on national or regional politics and not sufficiently familiar with European affairs. They also lack the right vocabulary to explain the EU. Political parties alone will not win the referendum. Civil society has to be mobilized and has to campaign at all levels for months.

Monitoring of the impact of communication activities is crucial in order to fine-tune the campaign and to develop tailor-made products for specific groups using the media best suited to each one. Without a team of professionally trained experts in evaluation applying monitoring at all stages of a campaign and analyzing public opinion trends on a regular basis, citizens’ support to the negotiating process could be at risk.

Recent referenda on different matters have shown that interactive media—and particularly the most powerful social media platforms and dynamic blogs—are playing an increasing role in influencing the way citizens vote. This applies especially to young people. An active and responsive presence of the pro-camp on the blogosphere is essential. Communication teams should always include specialists in interactive media, while pro-European civil society groups should be encouraged to make active use of the web. Governmental and institutional experts engaged in a dialogue through the social media should be adequately trained and entrusted by their management to wide room for interacting therein.

When all is said and done, it is political engagement which will be the determining factor in building momentum and encouraging people to identify themselves with the “yes” camp in the referendum. Mobilizing the electorate to ensure a high turnout will be crucial. Experience shows that the higher the participation in the referendum, the bigger the chances for a positive result.

### Post-enlargement phase

The communication effort should not end with accession. Experience shows that in countries where intensive EU communication ended straight after the referendum, public support for membership decreased significantly.

The big changes brought about by enlargement should be properly explained to citizens in order to increase understanding and acceptance.

The public at large, and in particular those groups of the population with specific concerns (e.g. farmers, liberal professions, entrepreneurs, students) should be informed about the possibilities for aid from the EU (subsidies, structural funds, research programmes, mobility programmes, etc.)

Citizens should get information about the day-to-day activities of their country inside the EU institutions. **It is particularly important that an EU dimension is reflected in general government communication on current affairs, so as to promote an understanding that work at EU level is to be regarded in the same way as work at national level.** EU membership should gradually become part of the national identity.

## In the Member States

### Information campaigns

In order to prepare citizens in the Member States for any forthcoming enlargements, there is a need for long-term information campaigns led by governments, regional and local authorities, as well as by European Commission Representations, Offices of the European Parliament and civil society organisations. Enlargement information campaigns organized before and after the accession of new members were particularly successful when events took place at local level in cooperation with local authorities and civil society groups (e.g. in Finland, Poland, Romania).

EU citizens need to be convinced that the accession of new

members will be an opportunity and a source of enrichment for the EU and that it will undermine neither the achievements of the EU, nor the jobs or living standards of EU citizens. On the contrary, it will be a lever for contributing to the consolidation of the democratic values on which the EU was founded, filling gaps and facilitating citizens' path to a better and safer future and for tangible achievements.

A win-win strategy aimed at softening the so-called 'Enlargement fatigue' ought to involve the EU Institutions, first and foremost the European Commission, which should be able to provide for a solid technical assistance to candidate countries so as to help them promote themselves in the EU citizens' opinion.

Past experience shows that often too little has been done to ensure a better understanding of the benefits of enlargement among Member States' citizens. This was particularly true in the case of the big 2004 enlargement and indeed led to negative attitudes in several Member States which had an influence on a number of indirectly related decisions (i.e. the referenda on the Constitutional Treaty).

Whilst the accession of Croatia, the last country to acquire the EU membership, was generally positively seen by citizens in Member States, the case of Turkey remains highly controversial and divisive at political level as well as in public opinion, also in the light of the social and political developments experienced in that country in the last decade.

Meanwhile, negotiations with Serbia and Montenegro have made significant progress, but at this stage it is unpredictable when they will be completed. Meanwhile, the political authorities and the communication experts from both the national and European bodies have the moral duty to speak with citizens in an objective and transparent way, in order to inform their audiences on a regular basis and avoid raising misperceptions and misunderstandings.

Information campaigns should help to overcome fears and prejudices. We notice, however, little enthusiasm of Governments to take initiatives on a question which is negatively perceived by a large majority of the population in several Member States.

#### Long-term good-will campaigns

The candidate countries also need to conduct long-term good-will campaigns in all Member States, starting from the moment they apply for membership and continuing at least until accession and preferably beyond.

Campaigns of this kind should aim at increasing support for the accession of the applicant country and thus create a positive climate ahead of negotiations and in the build-up to ratification of the accession treaty by all Member States. Emphasis should be laid on topics which can show real progress and concrete positive perspectives and are therefore likely to influence public opinion favourably and to increase awareness and understanding of the newcomer(s) (e.g. by focusing on culture, traditions, tourism). To achieve this, every instrument of public diplomacy should be deployed.

## The evolution of public opinion on Enlargement

Today there are eight current candidate countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine) and two potential candidates (Georgia and Kosovo<sup>1</sup>)

Citizens' opinions on enlargement are highly diverging in the different Member States. Eurobarometer polls do not show an "EU average trend". However, it can be noticed that today enlargement is not considered as a priority and that the public support for enlargement is decreasing all over the EU.

In 2009, when the Club held its first seminar on communicating this topic, only 26% of EU citizens believed that enlargement is a good thing, an exception being Poland with 69% of the population in favour of further EU enlargement. At that stage, the majority of EU citizens were "tired" of enlargement. The only candidates or potential candidates which were considered positively were Switzerland, Iceland and Croatia.

After fourteen years, in February 2023 (Eurobarometer's data), 47% of Europeans tend to trust EU and 32% tend to trust national governments. Trend is almost reaching 50%, also owing to the general support to Ukraine vs the fearful Russian invasion. Meanwhile, 45% of Europeans have a positive image of the EU, 36% a neutral image and 18% a negative image and 62% keep optimistic about the future of the EU.

The latest report drawn up by the European Commission is its communication on the EU Enlargement Policy drawn up on 12 October 2022 (doc. COM(2022) 528 final) refers, among others, to:

- the European Council endorsement on 23 June 2022 of the Commission's proposal to recognise the European perspective of three applicant countries: Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, and to grant the status of EU candidate country to Ukraine and Moldova
- the "full and unequivocal commitment" confirmed by the EU leaders to EU membership perspective of the Western Balkans.

## Communication Strategy: a pre-requisite for a successful campaign on enlargement

A specific strategy for communicating on enlargement should be an integral part of every candidate country's overall strategy for accession to the EU.

The communication strategy should comprise the following essential elements:

- **Objective:** To ensure public support for EU membership, provide information to the public at large and particularly to groups of the population most affected by changes brought

1 This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

about by accession, as well as to parts of the population with little knowledge (in general: the higher the level of information, the higher the level of support for membership).

- **Organisational framework:** The best structure is regarded as follows: first the Office of the Prime Minister (as leader and overall coordinator), then the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, followed by the Ministry for European Affairs (Office for European Integration), the line ministries, the chief negotiator and the Mission to the EU in Brussels.
- **Co-ordination and chain of command:** A clear distribution of roles and precise definition of the rules of command are crucial. Without smoothly functioning coordination between all those involved in the enlargement process, no successful communication will be possible. Regular coordination meetings, including strategic evaluations of the impact and fine-tuning of information activities, are required. The Mission to the EU in Brussels should always be involved. The objective should be “Many voices—a single message”.
- **Monitoring of public opinion and impact evaluation:** The evolution of the public opinion and changes in citizens' attitude towards membership in the EU should be closely monitored at all stages of the enlargement process. To this end, Eurobarometer opinion polls should be used together with specific national opinion polls. Focus groups should be consulted and interviews and media analyses should be performed to give a more detailed insight in the public perception of potential problems related to enlargement. Social experts' reports and research should complement the monitoring and impact evaluation and help to define target groups for specific kind of information as well as to adjust information products and messages.
- **Communication team:** Well-trained communicators with a solid knowledge of European integration processes and EU legislation should be the main people involved in implementing the communication strategy. The team should represent all departments of government, as well as the chief negotiator and the Mission to the EU, and need to be able to cover every chapter of negotiation. It should also include communication professionals covering all types of media, including well trained specialists on the internet and social networks. Governments and institutions should invest in creating internal infrastructures to monitor disinformation threats 24h/24h, 7 days/week and work in partnership with trustworthy external platforms specialized in detecting and debunking false information. This is one of the main operational objectives recognized as a priority by the governmental senior communicators convened in plenary in Vilnius in June 2018, who recognized that the only effective way to increasing European societies' resilience to disinformation is by strengthening structured cross-border and cross-sector cooperation among governmental and institutional stakeholders, with communicators playing a key role.
- **External professional expertise:** The advice of PR professionals should be sought when designing and running PR campaigns in favour of membership and in particular when preparing for a referendum.
- **Financial resources:** Sufficient budgetary means should be provided to run the strategy throughout the whole enlargement process and, in particular, to cover the cost of intensive

campaigning in all media with a broad outreach in the period between the end of the negotiations and the referendum. A budget should also be set aside for post-enlargement communication.

- **Interaction with the European Commission and the EC Delegation in the acceding country:** The European Commission, and in particular the Head of the EC Delegation and his staff, play an important supportive role in explaining the EU and the advantages of membership. Close coordination and integration of the Delegation's activities into the overall communication strategy are therefore important.
- **Networking with communicators in Member States:** The communication team should establish close contacts with communication specialists in Member States having practical expertise in enlargement communication. These specialists can give valuable advice on best communication practices and guidance on envisaged communication measures.
- **Use of the existing networks:** Networks composed of regional and local entities as well as interest groups (e.g. Chambers of Economy and Labour, Federations of Industrialists, Trade Unions) and pro-European civil society organisations should be used as multipliers, addressing themselves to their members and to those sections of the population they can reach best.
- **Political engagement:** The strategy will only be successful if the government and all political forces in favour of enlargement give their full support throughout the accession process. The personal engagement of leading politicians and their readiness to assume responsibility for the outcome of the negotiations are fundamental in terms of convincing citizens and building trust.

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## Communication Tools and Products

Enlargement is priority news throughout the accession process in every acceding country. In order to make the best use of this media interest, it is essential to establish privileged relations between the communication team and the media. A contact network with journalists should be set up which allows news and messages to be conveyed, false information to be rapidly corrected, interest in the EU to be raised public understanding of accession to be increased.

Since the EU, its institutions and its decision-making processes are complex, it is important that journalists reporting on the EU and enlargement should fully understand what is going on and are able to explain matters in a clear and simple manner. For this reason, appropriate training for journalists is crucial. Study visits for journalists to Brussels, involving information meetings at the Commission, the EP, the Council and the Mission to the EU of the candidate country, are very useful means of creating a body of journalists specialised in EU affairs.

Correspondents in Brussels for TV, radio and the biggest national newspapers play an essential role in providing well-informed news about the EU on a daily basis. The spokespersons of the Missions to the EU and the chief negotiators should make best use of the network of EU correspondents and journalists specialised in EU matters by organising regular press-briefings



and background talks.

All types of media are suited for enlargement information campaigns. Social networks have increasingly become one of the strongest channel for interactive traffic and dialogue on this policy matter, with high risk of being affected by disinformation or manipulated biased debates. It should, however, be borne in mind that in some countries the TV chains are still the best means of reaching a large audience and in particular those parts of the population which do not have access to the internet. Radio and print-media should not be overlooked either.

Internet web sites, blogs and interactive social media are playing an ever increasing role in today's information society and their impact will be decisive in mobilising the younger generation and winning its support.

Brochures, leaflets, newsletters billboards and posters remain valuable tools for achieving visibility and stimulating people's interest in enlargement and the EU, but these tools can only be effective if conceived as part of an integrated approach.

Conferences, lectures, forum discussions, exhibitions, Europe Days, Europe Weeks, EU competitions for school teams, social events, EU information stands and buses all constitute useful ways of informing citizens and getting them personally involved. All these measures and activities should aim at stimulating interactive exchange with citizens, engaging them in favour of enlargement.

70 EU Info Points and Info Centres as well as call centres (EU phone) should serve as complementary tools for answering citizens' questions about the EU and increasing the level of information among the population.

## Target Groups

### General Public

The aim of any communication strategy on enlargement in a candidate country should be to ensure the broadest possible support for membership, and at least a majority in the referendum on the accession treaty. The main target group should therefore always be the general public. However, efforts should be made in identifying those sectors of the population that are skeptical as regards the EU enlargement and understand the reason for their agnostic or critical position, to verify if this is caused by lack of information or distorted/incorrect communication.

The amount of information about the EU is usually very low at the start of the enlargement process. It is, therefore, important to organise educational information campaigns. These activities, together with more specific communication about the opportunities, advantages, possible disadvantages, benefits, costs and potential problems should continue throughout the enlargement process and even beyond, in order to deepen EU knowledge and understanding with a view to maintaining support and confidence in the EU.

## Specific target groups

### Multipliers

Multipliers are essential to increase the impact of communication activities and to reach the public at large, as well as specific sections of the population. The different groups of multipliers should be targeted specifically through tailor-made communication measures such as study visits, press briefings, training programmes, thematic conferences and seminars. Networks of multipliers should be created and continuously supplied with the latest news on enlargement and on hot topics, empowering multipliers and motivating them to circulate information and support accession within their constituencies.

**The following groups of multipliers should be targeted in particular:**

- **journalists (with special emphasis on editors/sub-editors and local media)**
- **regional and local authorities**
- **interest groups**
- **civil society groups, NGOs**
- **school teachers**

**Groups particularly affected by the changes resulting from membership**

- farmers
- fishermen
- entrepreneurs, business community
- liberal professions
- students

**Persons not actively seeking information (could be in particular women, the elderly and other citizens residing in peripheral regions)**

**Youth**

**Vulnerable groups of the population (e.g. minorities)**

## Success Factors

- Broad political and government support,
- Long-term communication efforts,
- Sufficient human and financial resources (capacity building perspectives, first on training on interaction and on evaluation methods),
- A communication strategy which forms part of a national accession strategy,
- Regular coordination between all communication partners,
- The motivation, know-how and professionalism of the communication team,
- Networking with multipliers,
- Good cooperation and coordination with EU Delegations,
- Good cooperation and coordination with civil society organisations within the EU and in the accession countries concerned,
- Coherent messages tailored to suit specific groups, to reflect progress in the negotiations and to adjust to public opinion as it evolves,
- Open and transparent dialogue with citizens.

# MACROREGIONAL STRATEGIES

## CROATIAN EUSAIR PRESIDENCY

by Lidija Pansegrau Hadrović

Macroregional strategies are a form of territorial cooperation used by the European Union to address common challenges faced by specific regions across different countries. These strategies aim to promote economic, social, and territorial cohesion by fostering collaboration and coordination among member states, regions and other stakeholders. There are four macro regional strategies: the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR), the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR), the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian region (EUSAIR) and the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP). Each of those strategies focuses on leveraging the unique strengths and resources of the regions involved to achieve sustainable development and address shared issues such as environmental protection, innovation, connectivity and many others.

When founding the MRS the EU set a rule of three NO-s which can be understood as follows:

1. No new financing – While MRS may facilitate the coordination for funding and resources from various EU funds and other financial instruments (so called EMBEDDING), they do not have a dedicated budget. They primarily serve as a framework for aligning existing funding programs and initiatives to support the agreed-upon priorities and objectives.
2. No new structures/organisational bodies – they complement the existing policies and initiatives of the member states, aiming to enhance their effectiveness by fostering collaboration and synergy across borders and administrative levels.
3. No new legislative – MRS are not legally binding, meaning they do not impose mandatory regulations on the member states involved. Instead, they rely on voluntary cooperation and coordination among the participating countries and regions.

Republic of Croatia is a member of two Strategies – EUSDR – the Danube Strategy and EUSAIR – Adriatic Ionian Strategy and the Adriatic Ionian Initiative AI (the Initiative). EUSDR has 14 members: Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine.

The EUSAIR/AII has 10 members: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, North Macedonia, San Marino, Serbia and Slovenia.

### Croatian presidency for the EU Strategy for the Adriatic Ionian Region and the Adriatic Ionian initiative

The Croatian Presidency of the EUSAIR and AI coincides with the 10th anniversary of the launch of the Strategy and the 24th anniversary of the founding of the Initiative, as well as the 10th anniversary of the Republic of Croatia's membership in the European Union. So far, Croatia has chaired the Strategy once (2015-2016) and the Initiative three times (2000-2001; 2007-2008; 2015-2016).

In May 2022 Croatia overtook the stone flower, the Presidency of the EUSAIR and AI, from Bosnia and Herzegovina and will be presiding until May 2024, when the stone flower goes to Greece.

This Presidency was prepared and is being held in a time of significant social, political and economic changes caused by two consecutive world crises – the COVID-19 pandemic and the aggression on Ukraine. The effects of these crises are manifold, deep and long-term, and affect policymaking across Europe and beyond. With its Presidency Programme Croatia attempted to shape and adapt the priorities and activities of its Presidency also to a wider context, assessing new challenges through the prism of macro-regional cooperation.

One of the key focuses of the Croatian Presidency is the ongoing revision of the Strategy and its re-evaluation in the context of new circumstances in the Adriatic-Ionian macro-region and the European Union. Croatia also encourages reaching a more balanced emphasis between the maritime (blue) and inland (green) components of the Strategy in its future development, and readily considers all initiatives that may lead in that direction.

Following these basic guiding principles, the motto of the Croatian Presidency of the Strategy is "Blue-green Strategy for the future". The Programme of the Presidency is structured around three political and three thematic priorities.

## A. Political Priorities

- Strategy transformation in a new macro-regional environment
  - \* Achieving a better balance between blue and green components of the Strategy
  - \* Contribution to the EU enlargement process and inclusion of new participating countries in all processes during the new financial period
- Completion of the revision process – towards a more social EUSAIR

EUSAIR has four pillars (blue growth; transport/energy; environment and tourism). Croatia is a lead partner in the 4th Pillar – tourism. Right now the Strategy, after 10 years, is being in the process of revision. On the basis of the proposal of the Republic of Croatia the member states agreed to introduce a new pillar – SOCIAL PILLAR. The social pillar will be dealing with youth, gender equality, social inclusion and similar themes.

- Institutional linkages in the framework of macro-regional strategies

## B. Thematic priorities:

- Greater resilience through better connectivity
  - \* Transport connectivity
  - \* Energy connectivity
  - \* Digital connectivity
- Sustainable growth and tourism

Promoting the application of measurable indicators of sustainable tourism

For the countries of the Adriatic-Ionian region, tourism is one of the largest GDP contributors. Planning and developing sustainable and green tourism are important measures for fighting climate change. Some of the key challenges for tourism sector in the Adriatic-Ionian region are temporal and spatial imbalance of tourism activities, imbalanced distribution of burden between geographical areas, and a very distinct seasonal nature of business operations.

Croatia will promote the application of measurable indicators of sustainable tourism, stressing the importance of a clean sea as a common resource. Considering the importance of tourism for

**Protection of biodiversity through sustainable fisheries**  
**Marine robotics and advanced technologies in the blue economy**  
**Reduction of microplastics in the environment and protection of the sea from sudden pollution**

- Social cohesion

## CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE ADRIATIC AND IONIAN INITIATIVE

One of the goals of the Croatian Chairmanship of the Initiative will be to continue with the good practices of past chairmanships, especially in certain areas that have gained in importance during the long years of Initiative's activities, such as EU enlargement, empowering women, the youth, and cooperation within the framework of traditional Initiative's Fora.

The Croatian Chairmanship of the Initiative will focus on the following issues:

- **EU enlargement** – Croatia sees the EU enlargement process as very important for the Initiative and supports the accession of participating countries to EU membership, in accordance with the conditions and set criteria, and based on individual achievements. Croatia will continue, in cooperation with the participating countries and the Permanent Secretariat of the Initiative, to advocate for swift entry of all participating countries into EU membership.
- **Empowering women** – In recent years, this topic has gained importance and is woven into numerous regulations and programmes, but practices still lag behind the set goals. During its Presidency, Croatia will continue with previous good practices, and initiate and support all efforts aimed at raising awareness of this topic as well as improving the current situation, with an emphasis on education, the position of women in the labour market and inclusion.
- **Youth** – the European Commission designated year 2022 as the European Year of Youth, while 2023 is known as the European Year of Skills. The Initiative recognised the importance of this issue in participating countries which are particularly affected by brain drain and demographic problems. During its Presidency, Croatia will continue working with young people, promoting inclusiveness, importance of education, equal opportunities – recognising the problems of young people as one of the most important issues for the overall prosperity of the region.
- **University cooperation – civil society Fora** – Civil society Fora of the Initiative (universities, chambers of commerce, cities) have traditionally been its very important partners. The Croatian Presidency will encourage raising awareness and increasing the visibility of these Fora and of the Initiative itself to a wider audience. Croatia will particularly emphasise the cooperation between universities. Croatia sees the European Universities initiative as an ambitious long-term vision of increasing academic excellence and creating universities of the future.

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In order to promote the priorities stated in this Programme, during its Presidency/Chairmanship Croatia is organising a series of activities at different levels.

On 20. June, a Launching conference of the Presidency of EUSAIR was held in Zagreb, followed by Conference on nautical tourism (Zagreb) and Workshop on EU-funded Marine Robotics and Applications ("EMRA 2023") (Šibenik).





On 4-5 July 2023 there was a very successful Women Empowerment Conference in Zagreb. Strong Women for a Stronger Adriatic Ionian Region. With the strong support from EC and the EC representation in Zagreb about 200 participants from all EUSAIR countries participated in various panels: STEM, agriculture, women in business and of course one panel was dedicated to our future – the youth in the region!



There is more to come! One of the priorities of the EUSAIR/AII chairmanship is Youth; together with the University of Split, (UniAdrion) we are organising a big youth conference in Split on 15/16 of November 2023, ADRIATIC IONIAN REGION IS YOU(TH). Take a look at the agenda, there are a lot of international organisations, UniAdrion, FAIC, EC and various stakeholders dealing with youth as AiNureccplus, CDI, POPRI etc.

**Join us in Split!**

*The Croatian presidency is coming to an end in May 2024, with the big event – ANNUAL FORUM. Follow us on the [www.adriatic-ionian.eu](http://www.adriatic-ionian.eu)*

*You are invited to all our events!*

**Lidija Pansegrau Hadrović**, a career diplomat at the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia.



Born and raised in Croatia, after getting the University degree in Zagreb, entered the Foreign Office in 1993, where she is still working today.

The first post abroad was in the Embassy of the Republic of Croatia in Prague, Czech Republic, working as a cultural attaché.

Coming back to Zagreb, and spending some time in the Protocol of the Ministry, in 2003 starts her post in Berlin, in the Embassy of the Republic of Croatia as the Head of the Consular section, until 2007. In 2011 starts her 4 years term in the Consulate of the Republic of Croatia in Frankfurt, Germany and changes later to the Consulate of the Republic of Croatia in Hamburg, Germany, serving next three years as Acting Consul General.

Since 2021 back in the Ministry in the Division for European Macroregions, as deputy national coordinator for EUSAIR and EUSDR as well as a member of the AII Committee of Senior Officials (CSO).

She has two sons and speaks English, German, Czech and Spanish, with a splash of Italian.

# EURO-MEDITERRANEAN MIGRATION NARRATIVES CONFERENCE

5-6 October 2023, Valletta (Malta)

## Final Agenda

Venue: Spazju Kreattiv – St James Cavalier Centre for Creativity  
Pjazza Kastilja Pope Pius V Street Il-Belt Valletta, VLT 1030

### DAY 1 - 5 October 2023

1:00 PM	<b>Networking Lunch at the conference premises</b>
2:30 PM	<b>Opening and Scene setting</b> <b>Maître de cérémonie:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Ms. Danila Camilleri Chiaro</b>, Manager, EUROMED Migration, ICMPD</li></ul>
2:30 PM	<b>Welcome address by organizers and host country representatives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Ms. Christianne Caruana</b>, Director of Global Issues, Directorate General for Global Issues, International Development and Economic Affairs, Minister for Foreign and European Affairs and Trade, Malta</li><li>▪ <b>Mr. Michele Amedeo</b>, Deputy Head of Unit, Migration, Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), European Commission</li><li>▪ <b>Prof. Stefano Rolando</b>, President, Club of Venice</li><li>▪ <b>Mr. Julien Simon</b>, Head of Mediterranean Region, ICMPD</li></ul>
3:15 PM	<b>Overview of the workshop objectives and agenda</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Ms. Danila Camilleri Chiaro</b>, Manager, EUROMED Migration</li></ul>
3:30 PM	<b>Session 1: The State of Migration in the Mediterranean – key challenges for public communicators in the current landscape</b> <b>Introduction &amp; Moderator:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Mr. Vincenzo Le Voci</b>, Secretary General, Club of Venice</li></ul> <b>Co-Moderator:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Ms. Danila Camilleri Chiaro</b>, Manager, EUROMED Migration, ICMPD</li></ul> <b>Interventions from countries:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Ms. Diandra Buttigieg</b>, Director, Migration Directorate, Ministry for Home Affairs, Security, Reforms and Equality, Malta</li><li>▪ <b>Mr. John Chrysoulakis</b>, Secretary General, Greeks Abroad and Public Diplomacy, Greece - Online</li><li>▪ <b>Mr. George El-Jallad</b>, Counsellor, Head of the EU Department Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants, Lebanon</li><li>▪ <b>Mr. Mohamed El Kazaz</b>, Deputy Editor-in-Chief, Head of the Interviews Department, Al-Ahram Newspaper, Egypt</li></ul> <b>Panel discussion and interventions from audience</b>

4:30 PM

## Session 2: Role of Public Communication in informing Migration Narratives

### Moderator:

- **Ms. Danila Camilleri Chiaro**, Manager, EUROMED Migration, ICMPD

### Panellists:

- **Dr. Bassim Al Dahamshah**, Ministry of Interior, Director of Nationality and Foreigners Affairs – Online
- **Ms. Lehana Crochet**, Migration and Development Officer, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, France – Online
- **Ms. Hélène Brousseau**, Project Manager, Africa Division, CFI French Media Development Agency - Online
- **Mr. Diego Gitano**, Programme Officer, Club de Madrid - Online

### Plenary debate

5:30 PM

## Wrap up Day 1

7:30 PM

*Networking dinner – The Harbour Club Restaurant, Valletta*

## DAY 1 - 5 October 2023

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9:00 AM

## Session 3: Communicating During Migration Crises

- Understanding the role of public communicators during migration crises
- Crisis communication best practices and ethical considerations
- Communicating migration through the web: risks and opportunities

### Moderator:

- **Mr. Vincenzo Le Voci**, Secretary General, Club of Venice

### Panellists:

- **Ms. Yusra Sidani**, Council Member, Municipality of Beirut, Lebanon
- **Dr. Yaser Shalabi**, Social Policy Specialist and National Expert, Palestine
- **Ms. Donya Smida**, Regional Portfolio Manager and Head of Office for Tunisia and Libya, ICMPD
- **Ms. Aitana Radu**, Lecturer, Faculty of Media and Knowledge Sciences, University of Malta

### Panel discussion and interventions from audience

10:00 AM

## Session 4: Preventive Communication for Safe Migration, Addressing disinformation and Media Literacy

- Strategies to counter misinformation and disinformation to promote media literacy
- Communicating on the risks of irregular migration
- Encouraging legal and safe migration pathways
- Examples/Best practice

### Moderator:

- **Danila Camilleri Chiaro**, Manager, EUROMED Migration



**Panellists:**

- **Ms. Alice Parker**, Head of International Deterrence Communications on Illegal Migration, Home Office, United Kingdom
- **Ms. Ayaat Allah Elhabbal**, Journalist, Al Masry Al Youm Newspaper, Egypt
- **Ms. Elizaveta Sklyarova**, Strategic Communications Desk Officer, German Federal Foreign Office, Germany
- **Mr. George Surugiu**, Senior Communication Advisor, Chancellery of the Prime Minister of Romania

**Panel discussion and interventions from audience**

**11:00 AM**

*Coffee break*

**11:30 AM**

**Session 5: Designing Long-Term Communication Strategies for Migration Policies**

- Elements of an effective communication strategies
- Setting objectives, identifying target audiences, and selecting communication channels
- Building partnerships (cross-border alliances, with expert communities, academic world, NGOs)
- Good practices and discussion

**Keynote "Communication Drives Migration Capacity Partnerships"**

- **Mr. Julien Simon**, Head of Mediterranean Region, ICMPD

**Moderator:**

- **Erik Den Hoedt**, Director of Communications, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate, The Netherlands

**Co-Moderator:**

- **Mr. Vincenzo Le Voci**, Secretary General, Club of Venice

**Panellists:**

- **Dr. James Dennison**, Professor, OPAM, European University Institute
- **Mr. Eugene Farrelly**, Assistant Principal, Government Information Service, Ireland
- **Mr. Adrian Cooper**, Head of MCP MED Training Institute
- **Mr. Robert Wester**, Managing Director, Berenschot-EU, Centre of Communication Expertise

**12:45 PM**

*Lunch break*

**2:30 PM**

**Session 6: Implementing and Evaluating Communication Strategies**

- Practical tips for strategy implementation and monitoring
- Measuring the impact of communication efforts (including awareness raising campaigns)

**Moderator:**

- **Danila Camilleri Chiaro**, Manager, EUROMED Migration

**Panellists:**

- **Dr James Dennison**, Professor, OPAM, European University Institute
- **Mr. Florian Trauner**, Co-Director of BIRMM, VUB's Interdisciplinary Research Centre on Migration and Minorities, Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) – Online
- **Ms. Golda Roma**, Migrants Resource Centres, ICMPD,
- **Ms. Audrey Misquith**, SKEI Unit, Parim Project, ICMPD – Online
- **Ms. Katharina Hahn-Schaur**, Research Officer, Research, ICMPD

**3:30 PM**

**Closing and Next Steps**

**Next Steps:**

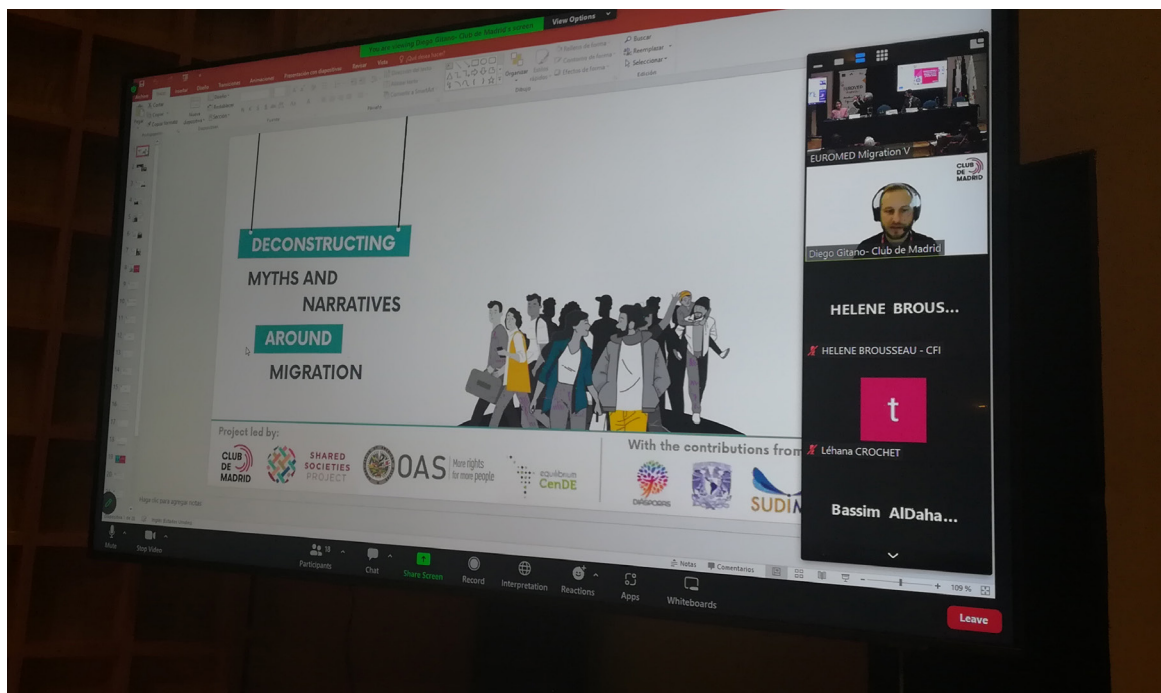
- **Ms. Danila Camilleri Chiaro**, Manager, EUROMED Migration, ICMPD
- **Mr. Vincenzo Le Voci**, Secretary General, Club of Venice

#### Closing remarks:

- **Ms. Christianne Caruana**, Director of Global Issues, Directorate General for Global Issues, International Development and Economic Affairs, Minister for Foreign and European Affairs and Trade, Malta
- **Mr. Michele Amedeo**, Deputy Head of Unit, Migration, Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), European Commission
- **Prof. Stefano Rolando**, President, Club of Venice
- **Ms. Ana Feder**, Regional Portfolio Manager for the Mediterranean, ICMPD

4:30 PM

Cultural programme – Museum of Archaeology, Valetta



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# Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships to enhance Capacities to communicate on Migration in the Mediterranean Region: Insights from the 2023 Euro-Mediterranean Migration Narratives Conference.

by Danila Chiaro, Manager at ICMPD Regional Office for the Mediterranean

In an era marked by unprecedented global migration, effective communication stands at the forefront of shaping informed public opinion and fostering international collaboration. Experts and professionals gathered recently in Valletta, Malta on 5-6 October for the **2023 edition of the Euro-Mediterranean Migration Narratives Conference** organised to discuss concrete aspects of current communication strategies for migration with experience sharing from the Euro-Mediterranean region and beyond. The conference generated a series of comprehensive conclusions and recommendations, shedding light on the path toward more nuanced and impactful migration communication, as well as the strategic need recognised by all partners to invest more in communications on migration given the highly volatile geopolitical environment.

The EUROMED Migration Narratives Conference (EMNC) is the annual flagship communication event of EUROMED Migration, a programme focused on migration governance funded by the European Union and implemented by ICMPD. Organised in cooperation with the Club of Venice and the support of the Government of Malta, the EMNC has contributed to the consolidation of a community of practice of governmental Euro-Mediterranean communicators, providing a unique platform for migration communication stakeholders and reputable experts

to jointly devise approaches and strategies to address the most salient needs related to migration communication in the region and beyond. In a continuous strategic effort to promote integrated and balanced communication on migration as strong instrument to facilitate the development of evidence-driven migration policies, the EMNC (organised in its previous editions in Malta, Tunis, Athens, Paris and Rabat) examines the issues that determine the past, present and future of migration narratives.

The 2023 EMNC theme revolved around fostering Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships to enhance Capacities to communicate on Migration in the Mediterranean region, and brought together key stakeholders, experts, and officials to discuss the pressing challenges surrounding migration communication. The conference aimed to provide insights, share experiences, and providing recommendations to formulate effective communication strategies to address migration communication challenges.

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## Developing Sustainable, Comprehensive Communication Strategies

A resounding consensus emerged among participants regarding the necessity for holistic and enduring communication strategies in the domain of migration. Rethinking the approach from crisis-driven responses to consistent, long-term strategies was deemed crucial. One key focus was on depoliticizing migration communication and eliminating militarized language. By ensuring narratives are rooted in verified information, these strategies foster evidence-based discourse, eliminating biases and propaganda. Participants emphasized the importance of recognizing communication as extending beyond campaigns, emphasizing the role of day-to-day citizen interactions.

## Tailoring Communication Strategies to Target Audiences

The conference highlighted the significance of tailoring communication approaches to specific target audiences. Understanding the intricacies of demographics, beliefs, motivations, and literacy levels of migrants and the public was deemed essential. Delivering messages that resonate with their values and emotional needs not only builds trust but also offers alternatives to perilous migratory journeys. This personalized approach was shown to be considerably more impactful than security-centric messaging.

## Creating Platforms for Dialogue and Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships

Establishing open communication platforms emerged as a vital necessity. These platforms, connecting communicators along migration routes and fostering collaboration between European and Southern Partner countries, were deemed imperative. Encouraging multi-level partnerships among national and local authorities, international organizations, and civil society was highlighted. Such collaborations amplify the influence of communication campaigns and promote the sharing of expertise among stakeholders.

## Enhancing Communicators' Capacities

Investing in training and capacity development for communicators, including media professionals, was emphasized as a foundational pillar. This investment ensures a comprehensive understanding of the complexities surrounding migration, enabling fair and evidence-based communication. Empowered communicators are pivotal in shaping public opinion constructively. Relevant initiatives such as the communications curricula developed by the ICMPD

Migration Capacity Partnerships' Training Institute, and the European Centre for Public Communication can contribute to develop

## Conducting Impact Assessments on Communication Initiatives

The conference stressed the importance of incorporating rigorous impact assessment frameworks at the formulation stage of communication initiatives. Clear objectives, framed in comparison to scenarios without the campaigns, were deemed vital. Pilot research in origin and transit countries, integrating social science with social psychology, and adopting a behavioural approach to strategic communications were underscored as essential steps toward achieving meaningful impact.

In conclusion, the conference served as a platform for innovative ideas and collaborative efforts. The shared insights and recommendations have set the stage for new partnerships on migration communication, that are sensitive, informed, and deeply impactful. By embracing new communication strategies, the global community can work together to foster understanding, dispel myths, and ultimately create a more conducive environment for sustainable migration policy development supported by effective communication strategies.

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# Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships to enhance Capacities to communicate on Migration in the Mediterranean Region: Concept Note

5-6 October 2023, Valletta (Malta)

*The EUROMED Migration Narratives Conference (EMNC) is the annual flagship communication event of EUROMED Migration V (EMM5), a programme focused on migration governance funded by the European Union and implemented by ICMPD. Organised in cooperation with the Club of Venice, the EMNC has contributed to the consolidation of a community of practice of governmental Euro-Mediterranean communicators, providing a unique platform for migration communication stakeholders and reputable experts to jointly devise approaches and strategies to address the most salient needs related to migration communication in the region and beyond.*

## The main theme

### Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships to enhance Capacities to communicate on Migration in the Mediterranean Region

In a continuous strategic effort to promote integrated and balanced communication on migration as strong instrument to facilitate the development of evidence-driven migration policies, the EMNC (organised in its previous editions in Malta, Tunis, Athens, Paris and Rabat) examined the issues that determine the past, present and future of migration narratives.

The 2023 EMNC theme revolves around **fostering Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships to enhance Capacities to communicate on Migration in the Mediterranean Region**.

Migration is a pressing issue that affects both EU Member States and countries in North Africa and the Middle East. Effective public communication plays a crucial role in informing public opinion, dispelling myths, and fostering better understanding of migration policies. To address the complex challenges and opportunities in the Mediterranean region, the conference aimed at enhancing the capacity of public communicators to effectively communicate on migration-related topics. The sessions will focus on crisis communication, preventive communication, and the development of long-term communication strategies for migration policies in the Mediterranean region.

The Euro-Mediterranean region is the perfect laboratory to share experiences and develop innovative policy communication approaches because of its unique nature and entangled history. Countries in the North of Africa and Middle East are becoming more and more a prominent destination for people on the move, both in contexts of forced displacement and economic migration. The European Union (EU) has experienced the challenges and opportunities associated with migration,

especially due to the recent and still ongoing crisis in Ukraine, and its enlargement process has added a new dimension to these dynamics. Moreover, the very recent geo-political turbulences in the African continent, lastly the political crisis and consequent instability in Niger and Sudan, may accentuate the risks of a worrying impact on migration. Nowadays more than ever, effective public and governmental communication is crucial in addressing these issues and fostering informed discussions, trust, and cooperation among stakeholders. The event in Valletta offered concrete strategic input, sharing tools and practical examples to address salient elements of the issue, including via the *Migration Capacity Partnerships* approach that places efficiency and effectiveness at the heart of the narratives building, with communication at its core.

The conference discussed the pressing need for enhanced communication strategies and capacity development in the context of the different dimensions of migration in the region and beyond, taking into consideration different governance levels and mechanisms. By bringing together communication professionals, governmental and local officials, academia representatives, experts, and other relevant stakeholders, the conference managed to capture interest and fostered an increased joint reflection to enhance collaboration and shared learning.

## Sub-themes for the conference program

### Addressing Communication Gaps

Public and governmental communication plays a vital role in informing public perceptions, dispelling misinformation, and ensuring an informed understanding of migration and complex policy issues. By focusing on multi-stakeholder partnerships and regional cooperation, the session aims at contributing to **identify the existing gaps in communication strategies** and jointly providing integrate solutions to foster capacity development in this crucial area. A **specific focus** shall be devoted to communication initiatives and strategies on **irregular migration**, such as awareness raising campaigns and communications actions, as well as their impact assessment.

### Focus on Capacity Development

Communicating on sensitive policy areas such as migration and EU enlargement requires specialised skills and expertise. The issue of **capacity development** in this domain will



be addressed by equipping participants with **practical tools, knowledge, and competencies to navigate sensitive topics**, engage diverse audiences (including educational and social networks and social and scientific communities), and address in particular resilience-related challenges (not only focusing on the communication plans, strategies and techniques, but also on the interactions with the media sector with the public diplomacy's implications) in an effective and responsible manner. The **European Expertise Centre on public communication project and the Migration Capacity Partnerships Training Institute for the Mediterranean** will be presented as innovative practices in this field.

### Supporting Evidence-Based Decision Making

By promoting accurate information, trust-building, and transparency in public and governmental communication, the conference will enable evidence-based decision making on migration and EU enlargement. Participants will gain insights into best practices, innovative approaches, and case studies, empowering them to develop informed strategies and policies and **fighting disinformation and misinformation**.

### Empowering Stakeholders

The conference triggered deep reflection on ways and means to **empower stakeholders** involved in migration management and EU enlargement by providing them with the necessary skills, knowledge, and resources to effectively communicate with diverse audiences. In this context, in fully recognizing the role of stakeholders as key communicators and crucial influencers, it sought to enhance their capacity to convey accurate and compelling messages. The issue of awareness raising campaigns was highlighted, with a specific focus on monitoring and evaluation and impact assessment.







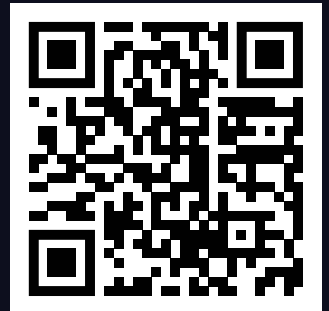
PRESIDENCY OF  
THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE  
**DIRECTORATE OF  
COMMUNICATIONS**

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# Global Response to Hybrid Threats

Stability. Security. Solidarity.

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# Stratcom Summit 2023

## Global Response to Hybrid Threats: Stability. Security. Solidarity.

24-25 November 2023 – İstanbul, Türkiye

### Introductory Concept Note

In the ever-evolving landscape of strategic communication, the challenges faced by states and nations have become increasingly complex and multifaceted. The 21st century has ushered in a new era where traditional military conflicts intertwine with sophisticated digital threats, creating a paradigm shift in security dynamics. The emergence of hybrid threats, characterized by the fusion of conventional, irregular, and asymmetric methods, poses a significant challenge to decision-makers worldwide. These threats blur the lines between war and peace, leveraging technology and globalization to manipulate information, spread disinformation, and weaken the very fundamental structure of communities. An all-inclusive, strategic communication approach is key for global resilience, stability, and security. Organized by Republic of Türkiye's Directorate of Communications, the Stratcom Summit '23 delves deep into the heart of the matter, exploring the nuanced strategies and collaborative efforts required to counter hybrid threats effectively.

### Stratcom Summit 2023: Global Response to Hybrid Threats

The Stratcom Summit, which has annually convened since 2021, has evolved into a unique platform where knowledge converges, ideas flourish, and alliances are forged, uniting representatives from numerous countries and sectors. It has hosted over 300 speakers and welcomed thousands of guests from more than 50 countries, evolving into a renowned global platform for strategic communication. Furthermore, Stratcom, as a brand, includes various side events such as the Stratcom Youth, Stratcom Abroad, Stratcom Academy, Stratcom Forum, and Stratcom Hackathon, further enriching the landscape.

As we look forward to the Stratcom Summit'23 which scheduled to take place in Istanbul on November 24-25, 2023, under the theme "Global Response to Hybrid Threats: Stability. Security. Solidarity," the stage is set for a dynamic exchange of ideas, experiences, and strategies.

### Key Focus Areas

The summit's theme reflects the urgency of addressing hybrid threats, which blur the lines between war and peace, leveraging both traditional and cyber methods. These threats challenge the resilience of states and societies while increasing their impact through disinformation and manipulation. As a result, this year's summit focuses on the following key areas: understanding and identifying hybrid threats, covering crisis communication and best practices, unraveling the strategies to counter disinformation, promoting civil preparedness and resilience, and global networking for collaborative solutions.

For registration and more details, please visit the official website: <https://www.stratcomsummit.com/>

# The good, the bad and the ugly.

## Communicating in a vulnerable world.

*by Erik den Hoedt, director of communications Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate of the Netherlands, vice-president of the Club of Venice*

*Speech as delivered the 5th of May 2023 in Plitvice (Croatia) at the PRO-PR, a leading Public Relations Conference at the Balkans.*

In 1966, long before the days of video recorders, DVD players and streaming services, the movie 'The good, the bad and the ugly' was released. One of the so-called Spaghetti Westerns, with which director Sergio Leone and composer Ennio Morricone became world famous. Nothing about the movie is what it seems. The film looks like a glorious Hollywood production, but apart from the actors it is almost entirely European. The sweeping vistas of arid landscapes are reminiscent of Texas and New Mexico, but the cameras were largely set up in southeastern Spain. Clint Eastwood, who plays the role of the fortune and bounty hunter Blondie in the film, is a classic gunfighter in his shooting skills, but his character bears little resemblance to the justice-driven Hollywood cowboy. Blondie is not the protector of fallen women nor does he avenge the death of his old mother. Blondie's motives are all about money. Yet 'the good' in the film title refers to him. Lee van Cleef, in the role of Angel Eyes, is 'the bad'. If you see the film you will conclude that this is a correct characterization, although his badness is not of the deranged kind such as that of The Joker in Batman, for example. His badness is calculating and in a single moment in the film, he shows his softer side. Brilliantly played by Ely Wallach, Tuco, in his stupidity, greed and mix of suspicion and credulity, is nothing but ugly.

The film is about three men who are looking for a gold treasure in the chaos of the American Civil War. Tuco knows the location, a graveyard, Blondie knows the name on the tombstone under which the gold lies. They need each other, but throughout the film it is clear that they do not trust each other and want to kill each other once they have the gold. This also applies to Angel Eyes, 'the bad', who follows the duo like a shadow.

The film provides a wonderful metaphor for the topic I want to discuss today in several ways. How do we achieve our goals in a world full of mistrust as a government? And how can communication play an effective role in this?

Contrary to what is often assumed, democratic societies do not rest on a foundation of laws and financial regulation. Of course, the constitution and other laws are essential to our society. The same applies to taxation, subsidies, investments and government services. But these are systems that can only exist if there is sufficient trust. Trust in each other, in institutions and companies and in the government. It is my firm belief that the basis of our democratic society is trust. A trust that has proven itself and that is guarded. Without this trust,

democracy cannot be maintained and government laws and regulations become coercive measures to keep their own citizens in line. Communication is changing from information and accountability to propaganda, disinformation and outright lies. Unfortunately, this is currently happening in many places around the world.

Everyone of us uses the word trust. Often at times when trust has been damaged. Consider, for example, someone who has been robbed by his help in the household. "I never expected this, I trusted her completely." Or two partners, one of whom has been unable to resist the temptation of an affair. The angry words and tears indicate how much it hurts when trust is betrayed in a relationship. Not surprisingly, relationships are built on trust and not on altar vows. In my language we have a proverb that goes: trust comes on foot and goes on horseback. I think most languages have similar sayings.

In the examples mentioned above, it is all about personal trust. When we look at trust in our society and the role of government in it, we are talking about institutional trust. It is good to examine what institutional trust is, what elements it is made up of. Over the years it has become clear to me that institutional trust rests on three pillars. Each individually contributes to trust, but only in the right combination do they provide a powerful foundation for democracy. The pillars are *capability*, *trustworthiness* and *empathy*. I will explain them one by one.

*Capability* refers to the ability to efficiently achieve the intended results. Think of a road that is built by or on behalf of the government. The road must be built quickly and at reasonable cost and not become unusable after a few years because of large holes in the asphalt. But the role of government is not limited to infrastructure. Also in education, health care, safety and in many other areas government plays a crucial role in society. A role that extends far beyond the front door of individual families. A government that provides good services in an efficient manner will gain more trust from its citizens than a government that falls short in this respect. Compare it with your dentist. If you bite into a delicious Croatian Kifle or Licitar after an expensive treatment and your tooth gets stuck in the cake, your confidence in the dentist will be damaged. The same goes for contractors who deliver a house with leaking taps and the wrong kitchen worktop and restaurants who don't take hygiene and the freshness of their ingredients too seriously. We do not trust companies that deliver poor quality. We also do not trust a government that provides bad services. However, there is a big difference between companies and the government. There are many companies, but you only have one government where



you live. If you have exchanged your bad dentist, plumber or restaurant for a good entrepreneur who does deliver quality, you will soon be satisfied again. You can only change your government if you move to another municipality or emigrate to another country. The government is a monopolist. In my long career in government, it has often surprised me that civil servants are so little aware that they work for a monopolist and do not consider how deeply the government intervenes in people's lives. In fact, the government is a man to whom you are married off at birth. It seems to me it is this man's duty to be above all a good husband.

The second pillar of trust is *trustworthiness*. Is the government doing what it says it is doing? Is it reliable, or is it distorting the facts? In our democracies we have systems that monitor this form of trust. Everyone was taught Montesquieu's *Trias politica* in school. The importance of the separation of powers in a democracy cannot be underestimated. Every time the judge rebukes the government - my government - I cry as a civil servant, but cheer as a citizen. A government that fails to deliver on its promises and only tells half the truth when faced with critical questions from the press or individual citizens is even more damaging to confidence than a government that performs poorly. It is not for nothing that civil servants who enter the service of the Dutch central government must take an oath that they will be a reliable and honest civil servant. And it is paramount that, in addition to a system of external control, there is also good internal supervision. This is what our citizens deserve. There is no place for corruption in government.

I call the third pillar *empathy*. As a government communicator it is my task to emphasize the importance of the first two pillars to my political bosses and policy makers. But I have no direct influence on them. However in *empathy* my colleagues and I can make a difference. It's all about communication here. Contemporary and timeless communication. Communication based on the basic attitude of really wanting to connect with citizens and the willingness to effectively implement this. How time consuming and sometimes even painful this can be. We discovered long ago that as a government we should not only send messages, but above all we should be able to listen carefully. And... more importantly, that we have to do something with what we hear. That 'having to do something' is very often something else than giving the individual citizen his way. The mistake that I think the government makes systematically is to view its citizens as as a spoiled consumer, someone who only pursues his own comfort. I think that most citizens are quite capable of seeing that they are part of a larger whole, society, and understand that they cannot have their own way in everything because their individual interests sometimes do not coincide with the general, the collective, interest. In my opinion, the government operates too much from distrust of citizens. This could be a major cause for citizens and government treating each other as opponents. This is not very effective for trust. You may fear an opponent, but you don't trust him.

Unfortunately, I don't have the time to go deeper into these three pillars of trust. But I 'trust' you understand what I mean. Let us now turn our attention to the state of trust in our society and, in particular, in our governments. Downright bad I can tell you.

The most recent Eurobarometer, a large-scale survey among EU citizens, shows that 48% characterize the provision of public services as 'bad'. In Luxembourg and my own country, the Netherlands, the judgment is relatively mild. But in Italy, Greece, Portugal and Romania, more than 60 percent of the population is dissatisfied. Four out of ten Europeans say they do not trust the national legal system. These percentages also vary greatly per country. In Finland and Denmark, the distrust is 11 percent. But here in Croatia, 66 percent are not confident. Almost two out of three citizens in Europe (63%) indicate that they have no confidence in their own national government. In Slovakia this is even 82%. I find it downright sad to note that colleagues who have become civil servants out of conviction to work for the public interest and consider themselves 'the good', are seen by many citizens as 'the ugly' or even 'the bad'.

So the confidence in government and many democratic institutions is weak. Communicators should be well aware of this. If the sender is not trusted, the message will be distrusted. If previous attempts have not succeeded - for example to improve healthcare, reduce crime or properly accommodate asylum seekers - people will be critical about new attempts, no matter how attractive the new policy instruments are being introduced. Therefore, be modest in your communication. It is better to underpromise and overdeliver than to predict a great result.

My own country, the Netherlands, has long been regarded as a so-called high-trust society. Citizens' trust in each other, but also in the government, was high. This was not so much due to the empathy of the government, but mainly because the government was seen as protective and fair. After a serious flood disaster in 1953, the *delta works* - a large system of dams - were completed in a short time, which protects our country, of which half is below sea level. People from all over the world still come to see how we have achieved this. It fills us with pride. In the decades after World War II, almost everything was scarce. But the scarcity was distributed fairly and every child was offered access to higher education, with the state taking on almost all the costs. The Netherlands quickly became a wealthy country. That also helped to strengthen confidence. An important contribution to wealth was the exploitation of natural gas. In 1959, one of the largest gas fields in Europe was discovered in the north of the country. The gas came out of the ground almost for nothing and within a few years the millions of polluting coal stoves were replaced by central heating fueled by the clean gas. Clean indeed, because nobody had heard of CO2 problems. We had so much gas that we could sell a lot of it abroad. The Netherlands grew rich, but the remote north of the country barely benefited. Ultimately, this had dramatic consequences. A few decades ago, small earthquakes suddenly started to occur in the area where the gas was extracted. The companies and the national government that together took care of the exploitation initially downplayed the problem. The earth sank a little because the gas disappeared. It was all deep underground. The tremors would stop on their own. Nothing to worry about. To make the comparison with the spaghetti westerns: the government tried to maintain the illusion of a tough, indestructible landscape of the American wild west. But nothing seemed what it was. The houses and saloons on the film set consisted only of

wooden facades. But behind the brick walls in the north of the Netherlands people were living. The earthquakes did not stop, but even increased in intensity. Meanwhile, tens of thousands of houses, churches and other buildings have been severely damaged. Part can be propped up, part must be broken down. The residents are scared and angry. It has now been decided to stop the extraction of the gas completely in the near future. You can imagine how bad this is now that we want to become independent of siberian gas after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. With the high gas prices, we could even have earned extra from the gas. Later we will probably conclude that the earthquake problem has accelerated the transition to sustainable energy, but now it is a severe problem. The damage and anger in the north of the country is so great that continuing to extract gas is not an option. It was decided years ago to compensate the residents and to make extra investments in the area. But the way this has happened so far has only fueled the anger. Instead of immediately making a grand gesture and giving each resident a considerable amount of money, regardless of the demonstrable damage, the damage had to be measured separately for each house. This turned out to be an impossible task. The entire compensation scheme is bogged down in bureaucracy. The national government fell short on all three pillars of reliability. It was not confident about the seriousness of the situation, was unable to repair the damage and showed insufficient compassion. Only recently has the government apologized to the residents of the affected area and made promises to invest billions of euro's in the region. Too late, too little, say the residents.

This is one of the examples that have seriously damaged the confidence of the Dutch population in politics and the government. In all cases, this concerns incidents to which the government did not react properly. At least not initially. The problems were at first played down and when action was taken, the government wrongly relied on the ability of officials and systems to take the right measures at the individual level. Instead of showing empathy, citizens were distrusted. I fear that every country has such examples.

This lack of trust makes the job of the government communicator difficult. And our task has never been easy. This has to do with the position of the government in society and its role in the public debate. Many of my colleagues mistakenly assume that the government, as the guardian of the public interest, is neutral and above the parties. It is true that the government is unbiased in the sense that it should treat every citizen in the same way in equal circumstances. In principle, the government will also offer every entrepreneur who operates within the law the same opportunities. But that's different from being neutral. The government itself is also a participant in social intercourse. In producing or stimulating certain services, it is in the middle of the field of economic activities. We call the services it provides collective because they concern the whole of society, but they are offered to individual citizens and companies. Laws and taxes, another important activity of government, are imposed on citizens and businesses. It is understandable that these can be perceived as restrictive, even if their background is precisely to protect and strengthen society as a whole. Too often I encounter a mentality within the government to determine

what is good for the people. As if the government represents 'the good'. Concepts, tools and communication are too often a reflection of thinking out of a system. It is true that society is a system, but it is so complex that the government will never be able to fully understand it, let alone steer it. The government should adopt a modest attitude

Today we are guests in the Plitvice Natural Park, a beautiful nature reserve. An area that needs protection, because otherwise it cannot preserve the beauty and diversity of its flora and fauna. This not only applies to areas such as this place, but now also to the earth as a whole. A sustainable society and economy is perhaps the greatest challenge of our time. The title of this conference, 'Green public relations, green responsibilities', is well chosen. It's about giving responsibility and taking responsibility. Governments will have to play an important role, or even lead the way, in the energy transition. But how can we properly fulfill this role if the interests seem to be so conflicting and the government is so little trusted? The young climate activists who protest for a better world see themselves as 'the good'. In their eyes, the producers and suppliers of fossil fuels are 'the bad'. They think the government lacks vision and is unwilling to make the right decisions. For them government represents 'the ugly'. But despite all this distrust, 'the good, the bad and the ugly' will have to solve the problem together.

The government has strong instruments at its disposal, such as legislation, taxation and subsidies. But these cannot be used in the classical way. Trust is too fragile for that and the interests of various groups of people, industries and countries seem to diverge too much. Nevertheless, as guardian of the public interest, the government will have to set a clear course. This is by definition controversial. Communication is essential in this process. First, to make clear that a course is needed. Second, to explain the course. Third, to admit that the chosen course is going to hurt. The most important thing is that everyone understands the course. That everyone is convinced that this is necessary, even if it harms their own interests. At least initially. The government will have to show that the objections have been heard and that they have been taken into account, insofar as this was possible. A clear course and the demonstrable willingness to stick to it is a first step in gathering the necessary confidence.

The course will have to be translated into concrete, measurable actions. The government cannot watch from the sidelines. The government itself is a participant in the economic and social arena. To be effective, it will have to operate as a partner of citizens and businesses. But can you be a successful partner if you are so little trusted?

I go back to the beginning of this lecture. Blondie, 'the good' and Tuco, 'the ugly' were looking for a gold treasure. They needed each other, because one knew in which cemetery the treasure was buried and the other knew the name of the grave. They did not trust each other, but were condemned to each other. The same is true in the current climate debate. The various parties have little mutual trust, but in fact they cannot do without each other. The climate activists and pioneers of green energy have the vision, the fossil energy giants have the research departments and the money. Governments have the task and

instruments to steer the process in the right direction. They don't have to trust each other completely to work together. The goal is so great that distrust cannot ultimately stand in the way of cooperation. Incidentally, the need to cooperate in this case is even greater than in the film. A sustainable future is not a treasure that can fall to one of the parties, but it is an indivisible future for all of us.

Despite the fact that confidence in the government is low and our democracy is under pressure as a result, I am moderately positive. If the government acts as a pragmatic partner in every process and adheres to the three requirements of reliability - show expertise, be honest and genuinely interested - then we can achieve a lot together. The government need not be seen as 'the good', but certainly not as 'the bad' or the 'ugly' either. The government is "one for all and all for one." But that is from another film, which I would like to talk another time.



**Erik den Hoedt** (1959) studied Human Geography at the University of Groningen. He held various management positions within the Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics and various ministries. He has been active in government communications since 2002. He was Director of Communication and Information at the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, director of the Public and Information and Communication Office. He is currently Director of Communications at the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate.

He regularly gives presentations and training in various countries in the field of government communication, especially on the importance of trust in government. Since 2010 he has been actively involved in the Club of Venice, currently as Vice President.



# Making Migration Vocational Education and Training better

by Adrian Cooper – Head of Institute – Migration Capacity Partnerships Training Institute

It all started with a simple question: how can we make training for migration practitioners better?

Working for the International Centre for Migration Policy Development, a 30-year-old international organisation that aims to globally 'make migration better' through its three-pillared approach of research, policy and capacity development, it was perhaps not the most innovative question. Maybe not, but we believe that our answer to that question is not only innovative but has proven its success beyond any initial hopes.

Training makes up a significant proportion of international capacity development actions, so finding ways to improve how it is done, not just in terms of scope and scale but also quality and sustainability simply makes institutional sense.

Thus was the [Training Institute on Migration Capacity Partnership for the Mediterranean](#) born.

Our starting point just over two years ago was to consider the macro, accepting the sheer complexity of the contemporary situation resulting from the wider educational context and the specific peculiarities of the migration field. We would then move to the micro, identifying concretely what could be done without disposing of everything that had been done before. Key to this work was a solely functional mindset. This was not to be a purely academic exercise, the solution needed to be both feasible and sustainable in real world terms.

The evolution of Vocational Education and Training (VET)<sup>1</sup> in Europe is one of a gradual (often glacial) shift to homogeneity led by the needs of industry, not only establishing but aligning standards to allow application and recognition across industries regardless of national boundaries. As such, a more classically 'we are Europe' example would be hard to find. Although a stated goal at the birth of the European Union, progress was slow until the latter stages of the 20th century. It was then that the recognition of the real benefits that specific, quality assured learning and qualifications for particular professions brought became established – improved performance, motivation and mobility, expanded markets, and rationalised resource costs. VET is now a ubiquitous, pan-industry norm. Health, hospitality, energy, engineering, finance, education, construction, security – operating in any of these would now be unthinkable without competently skilled practitioners developed through effective learning structures. This emphasis on sector over geography also provides a framework of professional commonality that minimises extrinsic factors while actively promoting expanded

cooperation. We don't think of Europe and non-Europe, we think of the industry. Just as communication is improved by a shared language, educational harmonisation therefore has become the lingua franca of vocational collaboration.

Unfortunately, the migration sector has largely bucked this trend and still remains generally around a couple of decades behind others. At the risk of oversimplification, the reasons for this include the vagaries of the field itself, the staggering diversity and sometimes conflicting nature of the roles involved, and key actors' often uneasy relationship with their own professionalised learning. Migration as an industry is reactive rather than proactive in nature, being notoriously defined by diverse and ever-fluid external influences; what is required of a practitioner can change from one day to the next depending on political, regulatory, economic or social factors. Counterintuitively and particularly perplexing given the emphasis on training in international development is also a persistent undervaluing and under resourcing of education to drive internal improvement; from those who simply don't see the need, to the prevalence of influential 'experts' and decision makers who lack any technical competence to do so.

This is not to say that progress has not been seen. One need look no further than the EU's two main migration-related agencies, Frontex and EUAA and the heavy emphasis they rightly put on vocational education as a means to achieve their goals to see that. However, both are creations of the 21st century, focus on very specific areas of migration and primarily operate within the internal European dimension. To be truly relevant our solution would need to speak to as many incarnations of migration practice as possible as well as being equally applicable to internal and external dimensions.

ICMPD's honest appraisal was that VET in migration needed a radical rethink if it was to be fit not just for today or tomorrow but the foreseeable future too. A meaningful solution needed to blend mainstream VET practices with those of international development, provide sufficient rigidity to allow for standardisation while also being flexible enough to incorporate the variations across borders, and demonstrate a qualitative and quantitative gain as well. No easy task.

As with most innovations, moving from a hotly debated concept to reality was only possible because of like-minded supporters. In the case of the Training Institute this came from ICMPD in the Mediterranean itself (subsequently formalised as part of its Migration Capacity Partnerships approach) as well as donors in

1 Vocational Education and Training (VET) ensures skills development in a wide range of occupational fields, through school-based and work-based learning (OECD).

the form of Malta, Austria, Denmark and the EU, all of whom saw the problem and were willing to try to do something about it.

### **So, what did we come up with?**

The reason we have 'for the Mediterranean' in our official title is because we realised that we needed to start this within a single defined region before scaling up if it was shown to work. The Mediterranean region was an ideal choice benefiting both from the strong support from senior management there and the close relationship with our initial list of targeted Southern Partner countries – Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, and Tunisia with Morocco hoped to join soon. To bridge the gap between Europe and the Southern Partners, we positioned ourselves in Malta, simultaneously allowing easy access to all our partners while taking full advantage of the extremely proactive support the Maltese government provided.

We then identified the three most obvious gaps in the traditional approach – partnership, quality assurance and accessibility.

## **Partnership**

Understanding that sustainable change requires the full participation of all stakeholders the Training Institute redefined the traditional donor-beneficiary relationship to one where full involvement and ownership of all was assured from the start. Critically this meant that all countries, European or not, sit on the Institute's Governing Board with an equal vote. The actions of the Institute are directed solely by that Board. This is not a passive arrangement however. All members contribute to the achievement of our outputs to the best of their ability, whether that be funding, expertise or facilities, at strategic and technical levels. In tandem with this is the Training Institute's approach to curriculum development. Instead of beginning with a set of courses that our partners choose from, it is the Governing Board that state the courses they need, the Training Institute's task is to create those. This effectively replaces the usual simple donor-beneficiary dynamic with instead a 'joint leadership, shared responsibility' approach. Functionally, this active participation means that we operate more as a community of practice where all of our stakeholders have ownership in very real terms, significantly enhancing both buy-in and sustainability.

## **Quality Assurance**

To counter the previous lack of both standardisation and formal recognition of learning for students, the Training Institute was first formally licensed with the Maltese national education licensing body (the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority) as a Further Education Institute and Awarding Body. That means that the Institute can issue European accredited courses that result in formal qualifications and academic credits fully recognised and transferrable across Europe. This was the first time that an international organisation such as ourselves had achieved this, in itself transforming the benchmark for the industry. Now students can expect formal qualifications for courses that are clearly defined. To reiterate our credentials we then also obtained certification to the ISO 2001:2018 standard

for (Educational Organisations Management). Complying with the above is no easy feat, requiring a complete rewriting of our operating procedures and meaning we must operate within very strict guidelines. This is a small cost to pay however.

## **Accessibility**

The majority of migration practitioners routinely face serious barriers to gaining access to suitable training. The main causes of this are a lack of products that are directly relevant to their experiences needs, and contexts; the expectation of significant time and financial investment; and both linguistic and educational pre-requirements. The Training Institute systematically dismantled each of these.

All our training is developed in partnership not only with acknowledged experts in their field as well as input from Frontex and EUAA, but also with representatives of the country requesting the course. This ensures that products are designed specifically for the students in mind. The courses are designed in a modular fashion, divided into short individual lessons. The concise, targeted duration of the courses not only increases students' ability to take part but also reduces the impact of additional pressures (temporal, cognitive, social, financial etc.) inherently felt by adult learners. All of our products are available in any of the three languages of the region (English, Arabic and French) barriers and training is only delivered by our Authorised Trainers. These are subject matter and pedagogical experts who are primarily recruited from the Mediterranean itself, ensuring that students receive training not only from a professional educator but also in their own language and sensitive to their realities.

### **Now, two years later what has been achieved?**

The statistics speak for themselves, we now have a training library of 27 in-person and online bespoke courses, 13 of which are formally accredited. We have 11 licensed training premises across four countries and a network of over 50 authorised trainers. We've delivered over 50 courses to just under 500 students from across the region, 365 of whom have received European qualifications and academic credits.

But beyond the data, most importantly we've been able to bring VET to those who need it most and seen a change in our industry as a whole.

Of course it hasn't been easy. As with any start-up we've struggled with resources (you've never needed more than two hands to count the Training Institute staff and far too regularly could have done so with one), been frustrated by unexpected setbacks and worked ourselves to the point of exhaustion more than once. But it's been worth it.

The journey doesn't stop here though. There is still so much to do. The demand for this new way of doing capacity development training, capacity partnerships, far outstrips our current ability to answer it. New courses need to be created, delivery mechanisms expanded, new partners including developing public-private partnerships to reach. The list goes on. But ICMPD and the Training Institute are ready to do it all... and more.



Communications is an essential aspect of effective migration governance however, like so many other valuable skills, has previously been overlooked by formal vocational education. Because of this one of the Training Institute's proudest achievements has been the collaboration with the EuroMed V project that saw the creation of the accredited 'Award in Communication for Migration Policy Essentials'. Delivered for the first time in September this year we can now offer migration communications practitioners both within and outside of Europe not only with the core competences to work more efficiently but also provide them with recognised qualifications that demonstrate that learning.



**Adrian Cooper** is the Head of the ICMPD Training Institute on Migration Capacity Partnership for the Mediterranean. With 30 years of migration governance experience in both state and international organisation roles, Adrian is a training professional and passionate advocate of life-long vocational education. Adrian holds a master's degree in International Development from the University of Bath, and a postgraduate diploma in Criminology and Criminal Psychology from the University of Portsmouth.



# CLUB OF VENICE

## Provisional programme 2023-2025



2023
London, 9-10 March 2023 6th Stratcom seminar "Shared understanding and campaign work among European strategic communicators" (crisis comm, emerging technologies, capacity building)
Nicosia (Cyprus), 1-2 June 2023 Plenary meeting
Dubrovnik (Croatia), 28(evening)-29 September 2023 Thematic seminar on Communicating EU enlargement and EU macro-regional strategies
Valletta (Malta), 5/6 October 2023 Euro-mediterranean Conference on migration narratives (co-organised with the ICMPD and the Maltese Ministry of European and Foreign Affairs and Trade)
Venice, 30 November-1st December 2023 Plenary meeting

2024
London, 14-15 March 2024 7th Stratcom seminar
Slovenia, 26 April 2024 Thematic seminar Communicating enlargement, Media Freedom
Ireland, June or July 2024 (dates and venue to be confirmed) Plenary meeting
Belgium or Greece, September or October 2024 (to be confirmed) Thematic seminar on public diplomacy, reputation management and crisis communication
Venice, end November 2024 Plenary meeting
2025
London, March 2025 8th Stratcom Seminar
May or June 2025 (venue to be defined) Spring plenary
Malta or Slovakia, autumn 2025 Thematic seminar
Venice, end November 2025 Plenary meeting

# Acknowledgments

The Club expresses its gratitude to its members from  
Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Italy, Netherlands,  
Türkiye and the United Kingdom

Many thanks also to the Steering Group and the Advisory Committee of the Club,  
the European Parliament, the European Commission,  
the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD),  
Alessandro Lovari, Tonia Damvakeraki 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











