



Club of Venice
1986-2011

25

Years of
Public Communication
in Europe



25 Years of Public Communication in Europe

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FOREWORD

Aurelio Sahagún Pool, Hans Brunmayr



Twenty-five years ago, when the Club of Venice was founded, the Berlin wall was still up, the European Community had only twelve members, the change to European Union in Maastricht, the Euro, enlargement to 25 and 27 Member States and the Treaty of Lisbon were in the future, and Internet did not even exist.

Stefano Rolando, Director-General for Information in the Italian Prime Minister's Office, and other Directors of Communication of the European Governments felt the need for dialogue, exchange of experiences and discussion among European public communicators. Development of best practices in Institutional Communication should help our national authorities and the European institutions to spread the knowledge of the benefits and challenges that the building of Europe meant to our countries and their citizens. We were then quite aware that European citizenship was an instrument in the hands of everyone living in the Community that gave additional guarantees of peace, progress, and rights.



But we had, as well, the certainty that the building of Europe could not be accomplished without the presence and active partnership of the rest of the European nations, still outside the Community.

We did not want to build up another official body. The European Institutions, then, as now, have their proper role in that field. We just wanted to become better in our jobs and to contribute to the

major efforts of European Governments and Institutions in constructing Europe.

It was agreed that Government communicators should meet regularly as a Club. And we had the privilege of being allowed by the Mayor of Venice to use the name of the *Serenissima* for our club and the city as our regular venue. It was not just a choice between European towns that may have given us similar privileges. It was true that Venice had been and still is one of the centers of European Culture, but it was equally meaningful for us that Venice had always been a peaceful place of encounter for the merchants, the diplomats, the artists in a conflict shattered Europe. Venice was, as well, where European occident and European orient converged. And last, but not least, we could not resist the bewitching beauty of Venice, the *genius loci* which since always has inspired our works.

So, the Club of Venice was born with modest aims and great dreams. We put into the spirit of our meetings the evidence of our rich common cultural heritage and our history shaped by Christianity and enlightenment .

After the fall of the Berlin wall, the Club welcomed colleagues from Central and Eastern European countries in anticipation of enlargement to 25 and 27 EU-Members and it continues to invite countries which are candidates for accession to the Union.

At the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Club, the world has changed, and is changing in a dimension that can only be compared to the time in which humans invented to cultivate the land, or to write, or to print. Only that those revolutions took hundreds if not thousands of years, and the one we are living is unfolding in the time of a single generation.

Globalization, climate change, the rise of a multipolar structure of power, the cybernetic transformation of production, with its correlate of the shrinking of manpower needed in industry, agriculture and trade, the ageing of populations in developed countries, the interdependence we share in the energies' field, the superpower of financial markets getting out of control of governments or whatever political system trying to impose rules for a rational distribution of wealth, those are the realities, the challenges we face.

And on top of all, increasing even more the opportunities and risks of this situation, we are living the almost instant birth of global communication networks, not controlled by political or financial powers, allowing individuals to connect directly to millions of other individuals, and influence social attitudes and movements of until now unknown potential for conflict and unforeseen developments.

During the 25 years of existence of the Club of Venice institutional communication and the profession of public communicator have undergone profound changes. We had to adapt to new information technologies, learn to use the information and communication potential of the internet and the interactive media. Today communication is generally recognized as an essential part of any successful government policy. This implies that the public communicator disposes of the necessary professional profile and knowledge and is not only able to present government or EU-policies in a convincing way, but also to reach out to the public using the most appropriate communication tools.

The agendas of the Club's meetings reflect the new challenges for our profession. From general exchange of views and experiences they became more and more focused on the different tasks Government communication directors face in their daily work. We deal now regularly with interactive web-communication, inform each other about the latest developments of social networks and their potential for public communication as well as the necessary guidelines for their use by civil servants; we discuss crisis communication analysing case studies and elaborate on the best national and European co-ordination structures. Capacity building and professional training are other items of particular attention. The communication on Europe, on its policies, on European elections, on EU-enlargement as well as public diplomacy seen from a national and from a European perspective have as well become central themes of our work.

The rhythm of meetings of the Club has evolved from one annual gathering to two plenary conferences and several thematic workshops per year, demonstrating the great utility of the Club's work for Government and EU-Institutions communicators. We are encouraged by this interest and take it as a mandate to pursue our work in the years ahead continuing to help European public

communicators to contribute within their professional capacities and attributions to successful government and European policies in the interest of all European citizens.

The present book contains a selection of testimonies, case studies and essays illustrating different fields of the Club's work and sketching tracks for future action.

Aurelio Sahagún Pool is one of the founding fathers of the Club of Venice. Communications Advisor, former Communications Director for the Spanish Prime Minister in Moncloa. He was the creator of the Venice Club logo (a detail of the main facade of St. Marco, symbol of a city crossway of peoples and cultures, with a yellow lion on a blue background with sparkling stars). Aurelio lives in Budapest since 2010 and continues to be one of the most enthusiastic sources of inspiration for the Club.

Hans Brunmayr is Honorary Vice-president of the Club of Venice. He is a former Director-General at the Council of the EU having been in charge of communication and information policy since 1995 and for press, communication and protocol from 2002 to 2007. Before joining the Council he served as a diplomat for Austria in Paris, Buenos Aires, The Hague and in Brussels as Deputy Head of the Austrian Mission to the EU.



Ljubljana - plenary meeting, 5-6 June 2008

25 years of the Club of Venice

An essential, informal, experimental project

Stefano Rolando



I have already described – first at the tenth anniversary of the Club of Venice and then at the twentieth – how, between 1985 and 1986, the idea arose, and became established, of creating a permanent link between those responsible for institutional communications of the European governments and those of the Community institutions, while at the same time respecting the system of states and the process of integration (two ways of representing the nature, the politics and the very identity of Europe).

I shan't go back over the details here. But I recall the climate, or, more precisely, the aims and the hopes. 1985 saw the beginning of Jacques Delors' decade (two terms of office) as President of the Commission. A period marked by the return to prevalence of the culture of planning, when a European politics confined to a series of "faits accomplis" gave way to an exploration of possible changes. An approach that was the glory of the early 1950's, the period of the founding fathers, and a definitive affirmation of the culture of peace, cooperation and development among countries which had historically fought each other.

The united Europe's southward expansion was achieved in 1986, with the entry of Spain and Portugal, two countries which had known long dictatorships and which, following Greece, were readmitted to the race to catch up with the great democracies of the West.

Alongside the historic Franco-German axis (the horizontal axis of the Community system) we also needed to envisage a strengthening of the vertical axis, in terms not only of the Anglo-Italian relationship – which even at the Milan summit in 1985 was to be one of dispute and agreement, opening the way to the necessary idea of the "complete internal market" – but also the important new vision of a Europe from the Baltic to the Mediterranean.

I mention these points simply to say that it was then possible for some headway to be made as regards the idea of taking up a "forbidden dossier" – such as citizen information – in a Europe that was both integrated and still highly disparate.

Why "forbidden dossier"? Because Europe – which had tied its inception to economics and not to culture; to the sensible alliance between coal and steel, not to the problematic alliance between languages or between philosophies and literatures – regarded many new dossiers as "common dossiers", but with the reservation that each country would inform its citizens/electors of Europe's successes (and constraints) in its own way. A safeguard of the sovereignty principle that persists to this day.

But a basis of "community" was also needed, at least in regard to three very important issues:

- affirmation of the principle of institutional communication as a tool to serve the public and not to disseminate government propaganda (which is what the Second World War was fought over);
- promulgation of a code of conduct for the players involved (following on from the previous point) as being loyal to the institutions but also loyal to their community;
- affirmation of a shared knowledge among the governing classes, among administrators and among the citizens themselves in terms of the information flows from the States to the European institutions and vice versa (and already at that stage, quite clearly, the constitutional relationship of the States with their territorial authorities).

A formal meeting place to discuss the issue already existed in Brussels, mainly frequented by diplomatic representations operating under the banner of “say little, do little, decide little” (the situation has slightly improved over the last 25 years, but not by much).

The only possibility – as it seemed to a young director-general like me, aged 37, who had begun working fifteen years earlier as a researcher for the Commissioner for Industrial and Technological Affairs, the Italian Altiero Spinelli (who, with his great depth of vision, looked towards a stronger and more strategic Europe, as against the national egoism of member states) – was to create an “informal” meeting place aimed at direct, personal knowledge among decision-makers and to establish a path that was focused on a common perception of “dossiers”.

Thanks to those dossiers, the British (for all their scant faith in Community bureaucracy) would have been able to demonstrate their great professional superiority in the field of publicity management; the French, their experience of anticipating and studying the process of communication through a modern use of public opinion research; the Germans would explain the relationship between federal state and territory so that the citizen did not lack precise and timely information concerning legislation; and the Nordic countries in general would describe how they favoured listening to their citizens on an organised basis. For the Italians, at that point in time, the task was to rebuild practically from zero an institutional competence that had remained dormant for so many years, having being consigned to the worlds of politics and the media. But now it returned to a European model of active competence, on the urging of Giuliano Amato, the then under secretary of state of the government (led by Bettino Craxi), who appointed a study group to make proposals for relaunching the process of institutional communication. The group, of which I was a member, began by looking at examples of what was done in the other European countries.

Thus did the Venice Club open for business. From a study of the way in which others operated, there emerged a clear pattern of trends and functions which, simply through a process of mutual acquaintance and comparison, would eventually have shaped a common professional consciousness – and perhaps, one day, a set of requirements that Europe would regard as fundamental if the relationship between public authorities and the citizen was to develop in a more uniform manner.

When I was asked to take on the tasks that flowed from the study group’s report, I almost immediately contacted the colleagues whose activities had, a few months before, been precisely the “object of study”. The idea of a permanent link was also put to the European Commissioner for Culture and Information, who happened to be Italian – Carlo Ripa di Meana – and who had been particularly associated with Venice, having presided over the Venice Biennale during the 1970s. He caused quite a stir for having anticipated the political climate of Europe with the experiment of the Biennale of Dissent in the countries of eastern Europe.

Venice was a place of so many identities, an extraordinary crossroads of east-west and north-south relations. For centuries the independent Serenissima was universally regarded as a kind of neutral city, where non-protocol gatherings, free of any national prejudice, could be held. Gatherings that were also open to the representatives of candidate states, or anticipated topics that did not appear on formal Brussels agendas. The colleagues (first the Frenchman, Joseph Daniel, then the Englishman, Neville Taylor) were decisive in sharing an idea that eventually came to fruition in the autumn of 1986 – on 3 and 4 October, to be precise – with the holding of the first meeting. That meeting took place against the backdrop of the mists that make Venice an almost surreal, and certainly a poetic city, in the magnificent premises of the Cini Foundation. Carlo Ripa di Meana himself spoke, as did the mayor of the city, thus indicating that along with the states, represented by little flags, there was the might of Europe and the history of its cities. A meeting that marked out a journey which so far has seen (in Venice and many other parts of Europe) some fifty meetings, each time more wide ranging, more substantive, deeper, and more specialised.

I should like to include a question and answer in this brief introductory note, not forgetting to offer my heartfelt thanks to all those – starting with Vincenzo Le Voci – who have worked so hard to bring this book to publication.

The question is: what has changed and what has stayed the same in this quarter century during which Europe's most fragile, temporary, destructured organisation has shown life and vitality?

The methodological approach has remained the same: acquiring knowledge together in order to take decisions, including separate decisions.

Likewise, the respect shown to the diversity of institutional and professional stories that give rise to the traditions which explain the diversity but which are also irrepressible characteristics of the various national identities.

Likewise, again, the balance between institutional ties (the civil service cultures) and professional allegiances (in journalism, communication, the application of technology).

The concept of the social demand for public communication has changed: rather than a need, it is increasingly an entitlement.

The role of the mass media is seen differently: then, as a necessary stage for nearly everything, today, as part of a distributive architecture where the Web is taking on a central position, a disintermediating role, a cost-curbing function.

There has been a change in the idea of interactivity, which still remains a partly unresolved issue (communicating on the Web is never a unilateral act, but the means of receiving reverse flows are still inadequate) but opens the way to a different kind of training for operators, who are now better able to take the social sciences and socio-economic research into account.

For some years, either at meetings of the Venice Club or in other European settings (most recently the conference held by the Committee of the Regions, with the support of the Venice Club among others, at the European Parliament in Brussels at the end of 2010), I have raised the question of promoting shared rules of conduct and an equally shared occupational status for public communication in Europe.

With the first, it would probably be possible to regard as a cultural necessity the idea that public communication is not merely a stream of legal explanations and a condition of access but also involves the development of the cultures of branding and the organisation of participatory democracy and new forms of public debate.

With the second, it would be possible to consolidate that relational profile of the public services which in all countries are becoming as important as were, historically, those of book-keeping and the law but whose legitimacy still varies greatly from country to country, and to do so in such a way as to make the domestic impact less significant than that demanded by the need for institutional efficiency and social cohesion.

Hundreds of civil servants, practitioners and experts have passed through the Club of Venice. They have come, one after the other, speaking languages that have, with time, become more familiar, better understood.

The question we always asked was whether, year after year, the policy would have had the same familiarity, the same informality, as those topics and those languages.

Politicians can of course communicate better than civil servants; they can simplify more, and get to the essence of what moves the world forward or holds it back. But here we have always taken the view that the citizen would have been better served if politicians and institutional professionals had remained respectful of each other's roles.

The question is posed: the answers are sometimes encouraging, sometimes less so.

But there is another twenty-five years' work to resolve the problem. Isn't there?

Stefano Rolando was for ten years (1985-1995) the Director-General for Information in the Italian Prime Minister's office. He has since held other jobs in the publishing world and in the institutions. He is a tenured professor of the Theory and Methods of Public Communications at the University of Milan. He has been the Italian representative on the UNESCO Scientific Council.

He is the founder of the Club of Venice and its Honorary President.



Venice - plenary meeting, 19-20 November 2009



Chapter 1

Testimonies

« Pursuing a dream »

The contribution of Belgium to the Club of Venice

Hans Brunmayr



Mieke van den Berghe



Olivier Alsteens



Philippe Caroyez

Mieke van den Berghe, Director-General of the Belgian Federal Information Service, has been the “founding member” of the Club of Venice since the very beginning. She took inspiration in the discussions and exchange of experiences with her homologues from other Member States in building up her services in Belgium.

“Every time when I came back from our Club meetings in Venice I surprised my collaborators and even the Prime Minister with mountains of new ideas which I proposed to put into practice in our daily work. It was a demanding task, but we succeeded. Numerous guides, leaflets, communication campaigns and spots where inspired by the Club. The structures and the system of public communication, the way to optimize public information campaigns, all this came from Venice.

My estimated Dutch colleague Hans van der Voet, to whom I owe so many ideas, put it rightly: “It is better to copy a good idea instead of inventing a bad one”. Learning from each other and realizing that everybody is faced with similar problems is maybe the essence of our meetings and it helps us to find the right solutions in our work.”

Mieke and Nicole Chauvelle from France, assisted by Philippe Caroyez, have also edited and distributed during several years the Club’s magazine called “Convergences” and initiated the first Club’s website.

When Stefano Rolando ceased his work at the Italian Prime Minister’s Office and when meetings in Venice could not be organized, Mieke van den Berghe took over the torch and kept the flame of the Club alive in organizing in autumn 1997 and 1998 two annual meetings in Bruges, the “Venice of the North”.

It was also Mieke who, through her decisive action, encouraged other colleagues to follow her example and helped to establish the practice to hold meetings in different Member States.



When Mieke left her functions at the helm of the Belgian Government Information Service in 2001, she continued to contribute actively to the life of the Club and to inspire its debates as Honorary Vice- President.

Her successor Olivier Alsteens kept up the strong Belgian engagement for the Club in sharing his profound professional knowledge and experience with us, animating the deliberations and suggesting topics of general interest . Olivier always took a very active part in the discussion of questions related to EU communication and to social media. On his initiative and upon his invitation the Club held two workshops on social media and web communication in Brussels in 2009 and 2010.

Philippe Caroyez assisted Mieke and Olivier all over the years as Director at the Belgian Federal Information Service and Counsellor for the External Communication Directorate-General at the Prime Minister's Office. We owe him particular gratitude for his numerous contributions to our meetings which were always accompanied by a touch of typically Belgian humour and for making this publication possible.

A wonderful Club with wonderful people *A small story about great things*

Niels J. Thøgersen



Flattering: Yes. Pleasing: No. But I believe it takes a little bit more of an explanation.

Why is it so? For many happy reasons.

In the mid 80ies life was full of new opportunities. One of them was that even public institutions and their political masters were equipped with an eye-opener on communication. Even they now understood that good policies, good behaviour, good products (meaning results) were nothing. Unless they were communicated properly. And not just to the happy few - or to the usual suspects. But to the people at large. Those who actually paid for the whole lot. This was not only the situation in one or two particularly enlightened countries. It was universal. At least in Europe.

In this situation two masters of communication and "here-stops-the-buck responsible" of their respective governments' services took the initiative to create the Club of Venice. Our friends Stefano Rolando and Mieke van den Berghe. The "founding parents". This is the short version of a great initiative.

Now, first question: who should be invited to join the Club? The top bosses (and not the political ones) of the information and communication services of the then 9 EU-governments. But what about the European institutions? The attitudes were split. Especially our British friends - and their (then) natural allies had great difficulties with that. But the final outcome was that the Commission (which in particular was under suspicion) could join as a sort of observer. On the condition that it was sitting quietly and shyly looking down on the floor like an innocent virgin! This was the situation for quite some time.

Second question: who should represent each country? The whole *raison d'être* of the Club was that the REAL communication bosses in each government were there - personally. At each meeting. All respect for the spokesmen at the Permanent Representations in Brussels. But they normally (excuse me) have no clue about how communication is run in their home countries. This is not their job. They are paid to present their country and in particular their visiting ministers in the best possible light to the media. Therefore: yes to the back-home bosses, no to the Brussels-based spokesmen (with a few exceptional exceptions!) It has been like that. But it has also meant that the "trade union of Brussels based spokes-persons" often has been quite suspicious towards the Club. For the very wrong reasons!

Third question: what should the Club discuss? Communication, of course. But what communication? Let me say it this way: I have personally never learned so much about communicating road safety, anti- AIDS, anti-smoking and pro-developing aid as in those years. All respect. But on Europe? No - not a word.

Fourth question: in what form should the Club gatherings be held? Never any doubt: in a very informal way. No formal agendas. No formal speaking points. And in the beginning no minutes either. And no list of members. Everybody could speak freely - would not risk to be unpleasantly confronted later with a slip of the tongue. It was from the beginning a professional exchange of experiences and best practices among friends. Among like-minded.

This is certainly an important part of the (secret) success of the Club!

Fifth question: how should the Club develop? With the enlargements of the EU in 1986, 1995 and 2004 it was evident that the Club would expand in exactly the same way. But it was in my view a very wise decision some years ago also to include the candidate countries. Not as observers, but as full members. For everybody's sake. And it has proven to be a great asset.

Sixth question: where to meet? Lovely Venice and its Fondazione Cini took the wonderful and brave decision not only to invite the Club. But also to pay for everything. I know of no opponents of this initiative. We have really enjoyed being the guests of the Venetian pearl. The meetings on the islands (no easy escape possible) and also the evening and night life in the city itself. Who can forget the Club members walking together in 30 cm water at the St. Marco Square at midnight some years ago? Who can forget getting lost with new Club friends in the medieval alleys in the night? Who can forget the lovely dinners in a prison, in the Casino or in a music restaurant? Still exchanging views and facts about the best of communication!

Seventh question: when did Europe arrive at the agenda? As always in such cases: step-by-step. No real decision about it. It just happened. And today it's all one way or the other about Europe. About HOW. Not about WHY.

There still has to be something for the politicians to do! I believe that we all feel that we have found a good way of running things. And on the top of that the Commission does not have to play virgin anymore!.

Everybody agrees that one of the colleagues from a member state should be the coordinator. Not the institutions. And the experience we have had with that practice has so far been very convincing. And all the many participants during the 20 years? Apart from the “founding parents” I will mention nobody. As we say in Danish: “Nobody mentioned - nobody forgotten”. But they all have a warm place in my - and I’m sure in everybody’s - hearts and minds.

Finally, a few personal recommendations to the Club:

- Keep it informal. At any price.
- Keep the present rhythm of meetings, with specialised meetings/seminars from time to time - as we’ve been doing recently following a good practice initiated years ago at the Commission on topics like opinion polls, web information and Call Centres.... By using this approach one can earn very quickly a strong experience
- Make sure that as many countries as possible take active part in the meetings
- The VeniceNet: develop it further. It has a lot of potential. I was responsible for it in the beginning. Since Vincenzo and the Council have taken it over, the web platform is increasingly improving. And don’t forget: To make it better is not only a question of using it more. It also means that we all have to contribute more. Make it a point in your personal “To-Do-List”.

I might have made you happy and content with these remarks. Hopefully not sad or angry. Under all circumstances.

I am now bullet proof. Dependent of nobody inside or outside the Club. But professionally very much attached to the purpose of the Club and to what we are all trying to do together.

Congratulations to the Club with the first 25 years!

Niels Thøgersen is Honorary Vice-President of the Club of Venice. Earlier director of communications in the European Commission, specialist in EU affairs, he is now working with interactive communication tools, not least the use of social media in public communication. Education: political science.

25 is one of the most beautiful birthdays

Judit Gyárfás Fekete



One of the most beautiful birthdays is when one turns 25. Actually, the first one may be more exciting but that can be hardly remembered by the *person fêted*; in this case it is the relatives who really enjoy themselves. At the age of 25 we have enough experience in store, we have long left childhood behind, and though it is difficult to acknowledge it, step by step we find ourselves adults. We have a whole life ahead, our achievements reach the peak and it is not too late for any changes, either.

The Club of Venice turned 25 this year. We wish to express our feelings of respect and gratitude towards the founding mother – Mieke Van de Berghe- and father Stefano Rolando, towards the enthusiastic professionals of immense erudition Niels Thogersen, Hans Brunmayr, as well as towards the coordinators, Mike Granatt and Vincenzo Le Voci and all those who spared no effort in view of the development during the last quarter- century. We, the “late-

comers” owe them deep gratitude for founding a club which provably stands the test of time, is useful and enjoyable to the member countries’ communication specialists and the staff of the institutions as well.

I can only regret to be a member of this Club since 2003 only. I admit I have taken part in 17 meetings to date. The anxiety and fear for the unknown experienced at the start were replaced by the positive feeling that finally there is a place where discussing professional dilemmas would not result in a loss of prestige, where themes and solutions can be brought up, the use of which - adapted to the respective circumstances as best practice - would bring the best result. A place where solutions have been found for problems similar to those existing in my home country; where I have met colleagues concerned about similar matters to mine and found goodwill and friends.

These lines written by Mieke in the Club’s 20 years anniversary book do stand the test of time: *“Mieux vaut copier une bonne idée que d’en concevoir une mauvaise.”* The Venice Club helped me a lot not only in becoming familiar with the best practice but also in carrying out communication activities in my home country. Thanks to Benoit Woringier it was here that we first understood how many opportunities are offered by the Management Partnership agreements. At the Club meeting in Ljubljana we agreed with Olivier Alsteens that the following ES/B/H Trio Presidency should have a common logo and common communication programmes. I started to attend the Club meetings with more and more joy, fully relaxed and would not miss to be present for anything in the world. I confess, the Venice Club meetings meant for me a real priority.

To me it was a great honour to become a coordinator of the EU communication project in schools, alongside my Italian colleague Anna Maria Villa. Budapest offered to organise the thematic meeting in connection with the EU communication in schools, which took place on 12-13 April 2011, only a few months before the jubilee 25th anniversary of the Venice Club at the plenary meeting in Venice.

We are already planning the next session with Anna Maria Villa.

So far I have taken part in the Venice Club meetings as the communication director of the Hungary. From now on I can be present at such an event – so important for me – as an emeritus Club member and Honorary Vice-President.

Judit Gyàrfas Fekete is Honorary Vice-President of the Club of Venice. She is a communications advisor and a former Deputy Director-General at the Department of Communications and Public Affairs of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

A valuable place of reference

Anna Maria Villa



I myself joined the Club of Venice soon after I became director of the Communication Office at the Department of European affairs, a sector of the Prime Minister's Office, in 2008. My first international meeting was the autumn conference of the CoV held in Venice in that year. I was quickly amazed and pleased by the informal and constructive nature of the Club meetings.

The first thing I noticed was the approach to the different topics. They are all handled in an informal, relaxed and friendly manner. I instantly understood the true nature of the Club. It was a forum in which we could meet regularly and feel free to express our own opinions without having to be "formal" and "official". This comfortable approach taken by everyone served to reinforce our common values, and to create a shared sense of "belonging" to the Union. This is essential to maintaining and developing the European Union. I think that the Club of Venice is the perfect forum to discuss ideas and suggestions in a very simple, direct and effective manner. It is always a great pleasure for the members to meet and share our experiences, doubts and opinions. This is why I try my best not to miss any of our special meetings!

During these first years of membership, I was impressed by the way the Venice Club has been gaining more and more importance and I have no doubts that all the members are in agreement to continue cooperating to maintain the Club as a place of reference for us all. Special thanks is due to all the people organising the Club meetings. In addition, I am sure that it is unanimous that very special thanks should be given to Vincenzo Le Voci, who is the very essential "light house" of the Club.

Anna Maria Villa is Coordinator of the Office for European citizenship at the Department of European Policies at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. In addition to the training for civil servants on European issues, the Office is responsible for important communication activities addressed to citizens, youth in particular, on the programmes and opportunities offered by EU, as well as on the added value of being "European citizens".

Anna Maria also earned a sound experience in the international and European affairs at the Ministry of Environment, where she followed the Eco-Audit regulation and the management committee for Life and Medspa funding.

Growing ahead of formal boundaries

Jan Veenman



Since 1997 until last September 2010 I was member of the Club of Venice on behalf of the Netherlands. During all these years I really enjoyed the meetings of the Club because of the pleasant atmosphere and the always fruitful contacts. The idea of an informal platform for exchanging ideas and experiences on government communications without the boundaries of formal responsibilities I always found essential for the meaning and functioning of the Club. Over the years the Club was really growing always ahead of the formal structures. I was in favor of that because if communication people cannot meet and understand each other who else can? Due to these developments the Club had to find out new ways of how to set up interesting meetings. That was not always easy. For example the Club had to take care of the fact

that the contribution on the agenda from "Brussels" has increased. Understandable on one hand, but on the other hand the essence of the Club is to exchange knowledge, experiences and ideas among each other. The small scale meetings on specific themes work well and the VeniceNet is thanks to Vincenzo valuable although delivering content on a constant basis is – as with all the websites- always the problem. Nevertheless a good instrument.

During my first years in the Club of Venice one of the main topics was how to improve effective communications by campaigns. In the recent years this has moved on to the meanings, possibilities and experiences with the social media. The pallet of communication means is still increasingly growing which is good but gives the problem that new means are coming but in most cases older means like TV and newspapers are still valuable. This gives all kind of strategic and in these times also financial discussions.

One of my topics during the last years was capacity building. Effective ways of how to exchange knowledge and experiences and how to make this information accessible. But also how to make communication as an always to be considered "soft" instrument more accountable. In my opinion a stronger "common ground" for our communication discipline is essential, otherwise communication stays a light weight instrument. In the Netherlands we were able to make progress on this during the last years for example with "Communicatieplein" as a knowledge base. We still have so much to learn and exchange of what communication can do and how it should function. Improvements in this respect are really necessary. Because communication is so connected with actual politics this will stay a process of two steps in front and – at present times- one step behind?

I congratulate the Club with its 25th anniversary and I hope that the Club will stay as alive as I have experienced it. My present job is a totally different one – although communication expertise is always useful, but I hope that from time to time I am able to visit the Club and to meet my friends.

Jan Veenman, former Director for Public Relations and Communications at the Dutch Ministry for General Affairs, is at present project Director at the Dutch Government Building Service.

Venice seen from the bank

Philippe Caroyez



That morning we were particularly shaken in the water taxi that took us from the back of the Hotel "Luna" at the pier of the Isola di San Giorgio... when, shortly after, seen from the window of the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, the return of "motoscafo" to San Marco and Canal Grande seemed suddenly so calm to us.

No doubt, those moments shared with colleagues of the Club can summarize on their own - metaphorically - what meetings of the Club of Venice have been able to bring to national and European public communicators: the necessary distance, but also the relativity of their positions and experiences, when they are compared, confronted, and shared.

The Club was founded by Stefano Rolando, then young Director-General for Information at the Presidency of the Italian Council of Ministers, who had the idea following his country's EU Presidency in 1985, with the aim not to lose the benefits of contacts established during this mandate. It met for the first time in Venice in 1986, when the nine EC-Member States had just become twelve, by welcoming three "young democracies".

This explains the formation of the Club which is based around concerns and professional exchanges, while remaining informal, and without official structures. It is surely what makes its originality and interest: what is sometimes a (relative) "weakness" can also be its real strength.

The other national services of the member countries rapidly joined the core group, as well as representatives of European institutions, which from the beginning have been associated as "guests". A representative of the Council of Europe has also been present for some time.

The informality of the Club has enabled open discussion, without complacency, and in particular, welcoming representatives from the information services of the candidate countries before the enlargement waves of 1995, 2004 and 2007. Fruitful cooperation was born and still continues with the other candidate countries. Reflection and exchange on a professional basis have been a constant concern and a requirement to avoid the "temptation" by "diplomats" and other "spokespersons". The Club has achieved a lot in this area, sharing views on the common "national" themes (health, employment, traffic safety, ...), on Community topics (the Treaty of the Union, the introduction of the euro, the European elections, enlargement and integration, the EU Constitutional Treaty, ...), on more recent cooperation issues (crisis communication and public health, fight against terrorism, ...), without neglecting the inter-institutional EU policy concerning information, communication and cooperation with member countries in this context (Citizen's first, PRINCE, Memorandum of Understanding, ... up to "Plan D" and now "Management Partnerships").

For a while, the Club also published the information magazine "Convergences" and, with the current help of the current Council Secretariat, it set up and supported the Internet platform "VeniceNet". But the main contribution of the Club is definitely for those who have the privilege to attend, the spirit that peers have instilled, namely the constant concern to develop and implement a professionalized and democratic public communication.

By “democratic” we mean: what is of general interest, non-partisan and to serve the public or the necessary public debate. There are “questions” that have always been, if not central, at least regularly underlying our relations: the statute of public communication in our countries (whether guaranteed or not by law, regulated or not), the structure of our national services (more or less “close” and depending on those in power or ever “changing”, according to the ruling majorities) and our missions (mostly media-oriented, or rather turned towards the citizens) fuelled our early discussions. The prospect for enlargement to 25 countries with the integration of the former “Eastern Bloc” oriented the debate on the “democratic transition”. Then came the move to 27 Member States and other enlargement opportunities that revamped the debate on the integration and gave it new meaning, including for communicators (identities, branding, public diplomacy, neighbourhood communication, ...).

“Professionalism” is both the answer to the democratic will and its guarantee.

In addition to discussions on case studies, the work of the Club has always included, as a “leitmotiv”, a reflection on the methods and means as well as on the profession itself of “public communicator” and its functions. Over time, from “demoscopia”, as our Italian friends say, to decentralised distribution of brochures, through call centers, communication below and above the line, Internet and Web 2.0 and today’s social media ..., resources and distribution channels were analysed and their respective virtues were compared, with a view to limiting the distance between public institutions and citizens. We have seen that it is not always the case, that campaigns are not systematically evaluated ex-ante and ex-post and, often, the ratio between the financial resources and the real impact is unfavourable.

During these 25 years, the Club has continued to emphasize the need for recognition, by academic circles and by the states themselves, of the profession and the necessary lifelong training for “public communicators”; all of which must be realized in a regulated environment, granting effective right of public access to information, organization of public communication and ethics.

However, we must admit that, if the spirit of the Club has contributed to achieve concrete results via its members (as the French “Ordinance” on public communication or the Italian law No. 150 or the “Code of Ethics for Federal Communicators” in Belgium), it did not manage to translate the convince the Convention to include an article on the citizen’s right to information in the draft EU constitutional treaty.

After 25 years, views, best practices and contributions exchanged are important; it remains however to preserve the achievements of the Club, to support and promote ever more extensively the result of its meetings. Maintaining proximity and regular exchanges between officials in charge of the national communication services and delegates of the Council Working Party on Information; the new developments of the “VeniceNet” platform on a cooperative basis, with the support of the Council Secretariat; frequent thematic meetings with the presence of national experts; and major initiatives such as the annual “EuroPCom” conference organized by the Committee of the Regions and supported by the Club, are indeed concrete prospects for the future.

Philippe Caroyez, sociologist and postgraduate in labour sciences, sociology of work and labour law, has worked in public communication since 1985, first as director at the Federal Information Service and currently as advisor in the Directorate-General for External Communication of the Chancellery of the Belgian Prime Minister. He has been a member of the Club of Venice since 1992.

A key link in communicating about Europe

Agnieszka Kudlińska



The European Union has been a work in progress for the last 55 years. Poland joined the European family in 2004. Today, the people of Poland – who backed their country's accession to the EU in a nationwide referendum – are staunch supporters of European integration.

Enlargement-related changes within the EU also affect the policy of social communication on European issues. Both the European institutions and Member States have stepped up their efforts to hold a more comprehensive dialogue with their citizens.

In February 2006, "The White Paper on European Communication" was published. In June 2007, the European Council underscored the need to enhance communication between European institutions and citizens. In October 2008, the "Communicating Europe in Partnership" political declaration was adopted. Communicating about Europe and dialoguing with its citizens have become an important part of the European project – an important task for both European institutions and Member State administrations.

The Club of Venice also occupies an important place in this process.

My adventure with the Club of Venice began in September 2003.

As the director of the department dealing with European information in Poland, I was invited to take part in the plenary session which – in keeping with tradition – was held in autumn in Venice.

This took place at a time when Poland was running an intensive information campaign in the run-up to Poland's EU accession. Poles wished not only to learn how the EU operates and what the decision process is like, but also posed many practical questions dealing with studying, working, and travelling in the EU.

At the Club's session, which I attended for the first time, issues discussed included the information campaign ahead of the European Parliament elections, enhancing EU's dialogue with its citizens, as well as the communication between European institutions and Member States.

All of these issues had a key significance for me in my everyday work. What especially interested me was how to get citizens interested in the European Parliament elections – in 2004, Poles were going to vote for Members of the European Parliament for the first time in history. Subsequent sessions were devoted to important matters on the EU agenda, including communication priorities, European education, and modern communication tools. Topics discussed by the Club of Venice always addressed current problems of European communication. These were all important topics from the point of view of people responsible for information policy in Member States and European institutions.

The exchange of information, sharing good practices, but also taking up those issues which did not go according to plan – all this is especially important for us, people who in their everyday work talk about the EU with their co-citizens.

Thematic workshops, organized in between the Club's plenary sessions, have an important role to play. The workshops – devoted to European education in schools, public diplomacy, or web communication 2.0 – served as an inspiration for our national information campaigns. For me personally, the workshops organized by our Austrian colleagues – devoted to the practical aspects of co-operation in the framework of the Management Partnership – were of particular importance.

Today, looking back across the years, Management Partnership is an extremely important and useful instrument. We must remember, however, that at the very beginning things were not that simple. Complex and lengthy procedures, as well as the lack of experience in implementing similar inter-institutional projects – this was a cause for concern. That is when our friends from Vienna invited all of the interested parties, the Member States implementing or planning work on the Management Partnership, and experts from the European Commission and Parliament directly involved in the project on the EU side.

Together, we discussed ways in which we could streamline co-operation in the framework of the Partnership. The meetings had a practical significance for co-operation between Member States and European institutions in the field of communication.

People sometimes ask us: "What is the added value of the Club of Venice?" "How does it differ from all of the other fora for discussion about the European Union?"

The answer is simple: it is the only regular forum which enables experts and practitioners to co-operate in the area of European communication. The forum does not hesitate to address difficult issues. They are easier to discuss when we know that we are talking with our friends.

The Club's informal nature and the lack of administrative structures is, in my opinion, one of its great assets. Opinions are exchanged freely. We talk with one another as professional communicators, not as representatives of individual institutions.

The web of contacts created as a result of this is helpful in our day-to-day work. Looking up information via Venice Net is often faster and more effective than sending an official correspondence.

The fact that we are able to meet regularly among Member States and European institutions constitutes the basis for joint initiatives.

Sometimes it is not easy to find the time in our official agendas to participate in all of the Club's initiatives, but there is no doubt in my mind that time spent with the Club is well invested.

Wishing you all the best for the years to come and fruitful co-operation within the Club of Venice.

Agnieszka Kudlińska – Lawyer, Director of European Information Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Poland. She is involved in creation and implementation of all communication strategies on European integration in Poland since 1999.



Chapter 2

Government Communication in Europe: A State of play

Government Communication in Six European Countries¹



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This chapter deals with the operations of communication in six European Countries. The selected countries share many similarities. All of them are member states of the European Union. Five of them – Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Estonia and Germany – belong to the Baltic Sea region. The fifth country – Netherlands – is a close neighbour to this region. The countries selected share a long history of close interaction. An examination of how these six countries have chosen to develop systems for government communication might in consequence tell us something about the general situation in this part of Europe. It also offers important insight into issues that are relevant for a much wider circle of countries. The communications map is changing rapidly. We are witnessing the advent of new technologies and communication opportunities at an ever-increasing pace. Audiences across Europe are growing more informed and more demanding. How are these challenges being met? Our research was performed through in-depth interviews with centrally placed individuals in each country's central communications unit (where such a unit exists). We also asked our respondents to complete a written questionnaire. In some cases, their answers were accompanied by official documents. We have used some of these documents as an additional source of information.

This chapter focuses on the following issues:

- How are government communications activities organised? Specifically: how is

¹ Study elaborated in 2011 on commission of the Swedish government. Heads of information of six Nordic countries members of the EU were interviewed about their organisation's mission, structure and expertise, communication objectives, challenges and future developments.

coordination achieved when a complex organisation such as government offices are expected to act consistently in a multitude of circumstances?

- What tools are used? Specifically: what is the attitude towards new, interactive and social media?
- How are relations between different categories of actors managed? Specifically: how do you manage relations between civil servants and politically appointed staff and to what extent are distinctions made between “political” and “neutral” information?
- How are communications activities evaluated? Specifically: how do the information professionals in our study address the task of defining and measuring the public value of government communications?
- What future challenges do the various communications units see today, and how do they intend to meet them?

The chapter describes government communications in each country in relation to the questions above. The countries are presented in a particular order. We begin with the Nordic countries, starting with Sweden. Estonia is next in line. Then we turn our attention to the Netherlands and Germany. In a final section, conclusions are drawn and comparisons made, one conclusion being that differences can be observed between the “northern” countries and the “southern” ones (Netherlands and Germany).

Finally, a note of caution. We would like to point out that data about the size of communications units (e.g. number of employees) are not easily comparable between countries. The size of ministries or communications units may reflect different organisational structures. For instance, in some countries ministries are large. In others, ministries are small and independent public agencies play an important role in government administration.

We, the authors take full responsibility for the content of the chapter. We thank the respondents for their willingness to participate and the wealth of interesting information they have offered us.

Sweden

The Government Offices of Sweden form a single integrated public authority comprising the Prime Minister’s Office, 11 government ministries and the Office for Administrative Affairs.

A total of 4 800 persons are employed at the Government Offices. Of these around 200 are political appointees. Approximately 100 officials (excluding political appointees) are involved in information and communication activities.

The Prime Minister and each minister have his or own staff of political advisers and press secretaries who liaise with the media, issue press releases, etc. Following the general election in September 2010, a State Secretary for Government Communications was appointed at the Prime Minister’s Office – this is a new role, which is expected to strengthen coordination and cooperation between ministries and different parts of the information organisation. The Prime Minister’s Office has no information officers of its own but employs the services of Information Rosenbad (see below) for strategic and operational support.

Each ministry has its own information department or a small group of information officers who report to the ministry’s administrative head. Information departments at ministries vary in size – from two or three staff members to around 30. The largest ministerial information department is the Press, Information and Communications Department (PIK) at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Duties include responsibility for the editorial content of a number of websites and blogs, for the maintenance of the 100 or so websites used by Swedish missions abroad, and for internal communication within the Swedish foreign service. The department also maintains a round-the-clock media service for Swedish and international journalists.

The Office for Administrative Affairs is a joint resource for the Government Offices as a whole. It provides and develops resources and functions of a cross-ministerial character, for example, finances, employer-employee issues, IT services, library issues and information and communication. The Permanent Secretary at the Prime Minister's Office is head of the Office for Administrative Affairs.

The central, strategic and coordinating information department known as Information Rosenbad is part of the Office for Administrative Affairs. (Rosenbad is the name of the building where the Prime Minister's Office is located.) Information Rosenbad is responsible for developing, coordinating and disseminating internal and external information about the work of the Government and operations at the Government Offices. This involves responsibility for developing and managing the "infrastructure" required to conduct communication activities at the Government Offices, for example, the official websites, intranet, press centre, and a common graphic profile. It serves as the communication department for the Office of Administrative Affairs and provides strategic and operational support to the Office's executive and the Prime Minister's Office.

Information Rosenbad plays a coordinating role in a number of ways – via its relatively new editorial desk, through weekly meetings with representatives of the Prime Minister's Office and via networks of information and communication professionals, for example, web and intranet editors, and the heads of information and communication from all the ministries.

The Swedish Government works according to a collegial principle. Cabinet decisions are taken collectively and all ministers share the same degree of responsibility for the decisions taken. The Prime Minister is responsible for the appointment of individual ministers, but according to the Constitution he or she has no greater responsibility for Cabinet decisions than any other minister. This means that individual ministries in Sweden are relatively speaking strong and also to a certain extent, self-governing.

Cabinet meetings are strictly formalised, and in practice they are just a means of registration of decisions which have already been made. The actual negotiations within the Government take place during informal government meetings. In addition, bilateral negotiations between ministers and civil servants at ministries are compulsory when two or more ministries are affected by an issue. As we shall see, this consensus approach to decision-making influences the *modus operandi* of Information Rosenbad. Swedish government is traditionally very transparent. The principle of public access to official records is, by international standards, very generous. The public has a right to information in all cases where records do not explicitly and formally fall under the Secrecy Act, and the rules governing when this is possible are strict. So the Swedish public (and not least journalists) expect the state and the public sector in general to be very forthcoming with information.

Each ministry works under a high degree of autonomy. This means that Information Rosenbad has little opportunity to coordinate activities on the basis of central decisions or a governmental hierarchy. Coordination has to be achieved in an informal manner through personal contacts, consultations and networks of communication professionals. How well this works is largely dependent on the attitudes of individuals involved. Achieving coordinated communication is about navigating a situation with many decision-makers. The means to this end more closely resemble diplomacy than the exercise of authority.

The ministries and the Office for Administrative Affairs all have formal rules of procedure for many functions. How these procedures are formulated can vary between ministries, particularly where communication is concerned. In other words, Information Rosenbad's efforts to coordinate communication activities are complicated by the fact that ministries do not have a common approach.

Information and communication should be transparent, clear and objective according to the overarching policy guidelines. Although the formal status of these guidelines is not entirely clear – owing largely to the semi-autonomous organisational structure of the Government Offices, on the whole the principles are respected and applied across ministries.

The guidelines reflect a demarcation between the policy information generated by the ministers' political staff and the more "neutral", factual information supplied by information officers. Most members of a minister's politically appointed staff – press-secretaries, special advisors and state secretaries – are involved in communications activities, for example, with the preparation of speeches, study visits, press conferences, etc. Information officers at each ministry and at Information Rosenbad compile facts and background information to put the Government's decisions and the activities of the Government Offices in a context. The extent of cooperation between the two "branches" varies. At some ministries political appointees work very closely with the ministry's information department, in others there is less coordination.

In practice, it is not easy to draw a clear line between "political" and "neutral" messages, and views on this issue have fluctuated over the years. To take one example, Information Rosenbad is responsible for information about administrative matters such as working conditions or gender equality at the Government Offices and will present facts and figures in response to enquiries from the media. However situations can arise where such information might become "politically relevant" and a press secretary might need to comment on behalf of his or her minister. The means to resolve such issues and allocate responsibility are based on close contact between information officers and press secretaries. However, there have been cases when opposition parties have accused the Government Offices of crossing this fine line, alleging that the Government Offices have in practice performed advocacy for the political parties in power. This can be a sensitive issue in Sweden and is a common topic of discussion at the GO. In other words, there is a need for increased awareness of the dilemma posed by this issue and an ongoing dialogue between politically appointed staff and civil servants.

The most important channel of communications for the Government and the Government Offices is the website. Filmed interviews with ministers and webcasts from press conferences and seminars are becoming an increasingly important means of making information accessible to the public. Over the last few years there has been a drop in the overall production of printed material. Communication activities involving social media are not very developed, although the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications have launched a number of initiatives to open up dialogue with citizens and special interest groups.

Common performance indicators need to be further developed. Individual ministries perform follow-up studies in order to evaluate communications activities. Analytical tools for the website are available for providing statistics on page views and analyses of visitor behaviour. But there is generally a need for more stringent and uniform methods and standards for defining targets and following up on them.

An important challenge for government communication in Sweden is how to achieve greater coordination thereby increasing overall effectiveness and utilising economies of scale – and not least clearer and more accessible information for citizens, the media and public agencies. The

decentralised organisation makes it difficult to achieve the desired degree of coordination. The main strategy to meet this challenge is to deepen contacts between all relevant actors and increase the sense of common targets and trust. An important task is to deepen relations with officers at the executive level in all ministries. Much would be gained if all employees at the Government Offices regarded information and communication as an integrated part of their duties. The alternative would be to create some kind of steering document defining common standards and procedures. But this is a cumbersome and slow method, and results are uncertain.

Another challenge is finding a way to use social media as an integrated part of government communications effectively and efficiently within the framework of existing resources. The issue of “political” versus “neutral”, factual information and the role of civil servants once again comes into play here. Information officers have drafted a communications strategy and government lawyers are currently studying recommendations on the use of social media issued recently by the e-Government Delegation.

How does the Swedish Government handle information about the European Union? The challenges resemble the ones described above. Each ministry has its own channels to Brussels and is responsible for EU affairs in its sphere of interest. The Minister for European Affairs and her staff at the Prime Minister’s Office are responsible for the coordination of horizontal EU issues at the GO. Finally, there is the Swedish Permanent Representation to the European Union. Information Rosenbad’s job is to support various communication activities and to coordinate the information generated by all these actors so that events and decisions at the EU level are easier to follow and understand. Once again, the challenge is achieving coordination in an organisation characterised by a multitude of actors and offices.

Denmark

As we have seen, Sweden has a relatively decentralised communications organisation. Denmark goes one step further – according to our interviewee, it is “super decentralised”. Denmark stands out among the countries studied as it has no central coordinating unit – all responsibility lies with individual ministries. This is the reason why our source in the case of Denmark is an officer at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In all the other countries, the officers we interviewed came from a central unit with responsibility for coordination.

At the Ministry of Foreign Affairs responsibility lies with the individual unit. Each unit is responsible for communication both on a daily basis and in the long-term. Furthermore, communication is included in everybody’s job description. However, in each unit there is a person responsible for coordination, whose task it is to ensure that the unit follows the communication plan. This person is a communications professional with strategic skills whose job it is to keep up-to-date with communication activities in other parts of the ministry.

With such a “super-decentralised” organisation, how is coordination achieved? Part of the answer is that coordination is achieved on a case-by-case basis. For some areas, task forces are formed when the need for coordination has been identified in meetings between the directors of communication from different ministries. Furthermore, the politics of the government – the subject-matter of communication – is coordinated at the political level. Since the communications function follows the policy-makers’ decisions, the result is coordination in such a sense. Coherent policy leads to coherent communication and information.

In addition, there are certain coordinating documents. The guiding legal framework emphasises the importance of making policy and the decisions taken by government known to the public,

making it possible for them to follow the work of government. What this means in practice for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is explained in a three-year communication plan. This is the document that everyone adheres to and that informs their activities.

The current Communication Policy for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is valid for the period 2010-2013. This policy – which states, aims and forms communications activities on a general level – starts off by introducing five “rules to live by” when planning and performing activities, as follows. Communications must be focused (maximise effect by prioritising and being target-oriented), proactive (set the agenda), open (as far as possible meet expectations of transparent government), credible (be able to respond rapidly without compromising facts) and be based on dialogue (listening as well as talking). These criteria should guide all communication, and they should form the point of departure for the assessment of activities and the performance of individual staff members.

The policy continues by describing three areas for communication and the relevant target groups. The first is communicating internationally to groups such as citizens, media, politicians, NGOs, partners, enterprises and investors. Strategic goals are that the communication should support understanding of Danish interests and of “Denmark and our values”. Furthermore, dialogue should be achieved with target groups and good service must be offered as and when international crises arise.

The second area is communication on the domestic front. Target groups resemble the ones identified abroad: citizens, media, politicians and opinion leaders, NGOs, partners, the education sector and enterprises. Strategic goals are that government should offer knowledge about international conditions, make people aware of what is being done abroad in such fields as foreign affairs and development aid, and actively inform in the event of an international crisis.

Thirdly, the policy lays down guidelines for internal communications within the ministry and the foreign service. The target group consists of all employees in Denmark and abroad. Goals are to bring employees in Denmark and those abroad closer together. They should identify with each other – “experience a common identity” – and share a sense of belonging to the same organisation. Consequently, sharing knowledge has high priority. The same is true of communications as a tool to smooth the path of organisational change. Finally, the policy addresses lateral communications: domestic and international communications should not be performed in isolation from each other. The same goes for external and internal communications.

The policy ends by presenting some strategic priorities for the coming three years. These are:

- Proactive work with press and media. Criteria for success are that the Foreign Office plans and executes media activities that influence the image of the Ministry in the media. The media should feel that the Ministry is an agenda-setter.
- Strengthened dialogue through social media. Success criteria: the launching of more activities in social media of a “professional” standard in such media, where the greatest effect can be expected. Target groups should feel that the Ministry engages in dialogue.
- Multimedia (“living images”) as an important tool. Target groups should be able to experience what is happening, which will enhance the credibility of other forms of communication. Success criteria: increased use of “living images”.
- Better internal communications. Success criteria: a more coherent organisation across all units and departments.

Implementation of the communications policy is monitored in a number of ways. Each unit must include reports on progress in its annual reporting. Every communication activity, or use of an important channel for communication, should be evaluated when performed. Finally, an impartial evaluation of the Ministry's communication activities must be performed every three years. This evaluation should focus on selected target groups.

The communications policy guides the activities of the civil servants. Thus staff do not function as assistants to the policy makers. Content should be "neutral", and should not promote a particular party or minister. This latter task is the responsibility of the political staff. Of course, the civil servants collaborate with the political staff, but they strive to be independent so as not to put their neutrality at risk. The ambition is to draw a clear line between "promoting" and "informing".

Working in a political environment while at the same time remaining "neutral" is thus a challenge. Retaining neutrality is also perceived as particularly challenging when using social media. These allow dialogue and close contacts with interested people of all kinds. The question being asked by information professionals in Denmark is how they can focus on a constructive dialogue in social media without losing their integrity as civil servants.

As noted above, the Danes have high ambitions when it comes to a strong media presence. But the media landscape has its own logic and is evolving at increasing speed. The question is how to perform well under such circumstances while staying true to ideals such as trustworthiness and openness. This dilemma becomes especially apparent in a decentralised organisation built on individual responsibility. Opportunities are easily lost – through a person's absence or a faulty Internet connection. Right now, the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs is tackling these challenges by creating processes to increase speed of action. Staff are undergoing training, and projects are under way to explore how to make the best use of new media.

How is information about the European Union conducted? Once again, the decentralised organisation in Denmark colours the process. Each Ministry is responsible for handling EU affairs in its field of activity. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has certain general responsibilities such as supplying basic facts about the Union.

Finland

The Government Communications Unit is a part of the Prime Minister's Office. It is responsible for providing information about the Prime Minister and the Government, and it coordinates the distribution of information from the Ministries. The Communications Unit disseminates information on Government decisions and informal meetings, evening sessions and Cabinet committees. Furthermore, it organises press conferences for the Prime Minister and Government as a whole. The Unit is also responsible for the distribution of Government information about the European Union and related planning, management and other functions. The Communications Unit employs twelve people. Each ministry has its own communication unit.

Approximately ten different laws and statutes regulate government communications, the most important one being the act concerning openness of government. This states that everything is by default open, with the exception of military secrets and information that might affect the stock market. Furthermore, a new set of guidelines for central government communications was approved by the Prime Minister in 2010. These guidelines include regulations, instructions and recommendations, which should form the basis of each individual ministry's communication strategy.

The guidelines offer a good summary of how the Finnish Government views the role of communications. They set out by describing the modern communications landscape and its challenges. The public is more active. Social media make networked peer communications possible. The Internet has lowered the threshold for participation. In this new world, the ability of public authorities to control communication has declined. This means that government communications must adapt. New forms of cooperation between politically appointed ministers' assistants and communications units must be found. Communications must be monitored more extensively, and evaluation has to shift from media evaluation to "the monitoring of fields of openness".

The guidelines, a rather extensive document, set out to describe how these challenges must be met. It starts off by stating that "...communication is not only a duty; it is also an opportunity for each authority to perform its tasks effectively". It follows that each authority is responsible for defining priorities as well as target-groups and partners. Communications must be regular and consistent, and staff must be equipped for unexpected situations. It is vital that civil servants have the necessary training and supervision.

We have seen how Denmark experiences a conflict between acting with speed while at the same time staying true to ideals, such as reliability. The Finnish guidelines touch on the same issue when describing the basic principles of communication that must be adhered to: "The main principles of efficient, effective government communications are openness, reliability, impartiality, speed and interaction. ...Reliability should not, however, be compromised for the sake of speed."

The guidelines go on to state that authorities must have an up-to-date communications strategy based on the government's programme. The importance of communications also affects the way in which information and communication activities are organised: it should be taken into account in human resources and planning/budgeting, and "the person responsible for communications must be a member of the organisation's management group. It is the duty of civil servants to inform those handling communications at a sufficiently early stage about any matters pending or awaiting decision."

How should activities be performed? A large part of the document discusses principles according to channels or target groups. Here are some examples:

- Government-to-citizen communications should be implemented through interactive means. This also involves taking into account feedback received from the public.
- Media communications must be open, active, service-oriented and impartial. Officials should respond to media contacts and be able to act as experts in contact with the media. Briefings and information packs on the Internet should be prepared for the media.
- Stakeholder and expert communication activities are generally organised in the context of information events, meetings, seminars, consultations or hearings.
- International communications are the responsibility of each ministry, agency or institution within its own branch of government.
- EU communications should be handled according to the same principles as government communications in general. Each institution is independently responsible for information in their own field.
- Internal communication and the flow of information: senior management and supervisors have a key role. In extensive projects involving change it is recommended that a separate internal communications plan be prepared.

- Organisation-specific procedures should be created for activities involving social media. These procedures should be incorporated in the organisation's other guidelines relating to communications and interaction.

The guidelines also ascertain that it is often difficult to draw the line between “neutral” and “political” communication. A basic principle should be that ministries’ purely party-political “positions and statements as well as speeches and travel plans are made public via the parties’ communications channels”. In other words, the solution to the problem is to seek a clear distinction between situations in which the political party should be the sender, and occasions when government officials should do this work.

Finally, the guidelines address the issue of monitoring. Efficiency and effectiveness should be monitored regularly. This should be done by systematically monitoring and analysing media, open sources and public feedback. The same goes for internal communications. They should also be assessed regularly. To this end, a communications monitoring and evaluation system should be created.

It is important to note that the Central Government Communications Guidelines are very recent; the Prime Minister signed them in September 2010. They show how the Finns perceive the challenges that need to be met and how they are preparing to meet them. They do not necessarily reflect common practice in Finland today.

As the guidelines are implemented they will lead to more common standards throughout the government offices. Today, heads of communication from all ministries meet to achieve coordination, seeking to find points of consensus. Sometimes special temporary task forces are formed. An example is the coordinating task force that was set up to deal with the Finnish EU presidency.

Finland would seem to have some way to go before social media are used to the full. Today the website is the main channel for external communication, and press conferences are a fairly frequent occurrence. Some ministries – such as the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – seem to have made some progress in this area. The Government Communications Unit is not yet involved in the use of social media. Today, the task is to develop necessary skills before such communication can be initiated. The same goes for monitoring and evaluation systems. Such systems are being put in place. Selected criteria, such as press clippings and interviews with stakeholders, are to be evaluated.

In short: what we are witnessing in Finland is the first stages of reform. A new communications environment has been identified, and a strategy for action has been formulated. The reform process is sanctioned from above, by the Prime Minister.

Estonia

Estonia too has a decentralised system of executive power. The Government Office and the 11 ministries are autonomous when it comes to decisions about human resources and communications budgets. Each ministry has a communication unit with between two to six members of staff. The Government Communication Unit within the Government Office, currently employs nine persons who are civil servants.

Until this year, government communication was not mentioned in any Estonian legal statute. In January 2011 the Estonian Government adopted a regulation called “Rules of the Government”

where a basis for better coordination is outlined. It states that the Government Office is to ensure, in cooperation with the ministries, that the public is informed of government decisions and activities in a uniform and open manner. It goes on to say that the ministries must notify the Government Office well in advance when issues involving public communication arise and that the Office may issue instructions for the organisation of government communication. Furthermore, the Government Communication Unit has published a "Government Communication Handbook", which touches on issues such as ethics when communicating and examples of best practice.

Communications are further coordinated in a "soft" way through weekly meetings with all the heads of communication at the ministries. During these meetings current issues on the government agenda that are felt to require attention are discussed. The Communications Unit also organises and provides training for all communications officers within ministries and agencies. This training offers both general skills and specific training such as crisis communication. Informal relations play an important role: being a small country, relatively few people are involved in communications activities, and they know each other personally. This goes for both civil servants and politically appointed advisors.

Estonia tries to maintain a clear distinction between information that is provided in the name of a ministry, government or civil service and information of a more "political" nature where the political parties are the source of communication. When a journalist asks for information in the second category the civil servants do not reply. Instead, they forward the question to the political party in question or, when relevant, to Parliament.

Estonia stands out from other countries when it comes its choice of communication channels. A recent history of Soviet occupation with no freedom of speech or information lead to the adoption of a policy of radical openness in terms of governance when Estonia achieved independence. An example is the – probably unique – routine where civil servants from the Government Communication Unit are present at government sessions and publish news directly and in real time from these meetings – a kind of live blogging communicating government decisions. Anyone who wishes can follow these blogging activities on the Government's website or via RSS and e-mail subscription.

In other words, citizens have immediate access to information about all decisions taken by the Cabinet. Estonians take for granted that they should get such information within minutes. After the government meeting a press conference is organised with the Prime Minister and other ministers. Since journalists already know what decisions have been taken they can concentrate on asking the Prime Minister to expand on issues of interest. This "live blogging" service was set in place in 2000, and has been used since then.

Another special trait of Estonia is the use of social media. We have seen that most countries have a website, and are in the process of introducing (or experimenting with) interactive or social media. In Estonia, it is the other way around. A consolidated website is not yet in place, but will be soon. On the other hand, it is routine to use Twitter and Facebook, upload videos to Youtube or stream press briefings via ustream.tv. Flickr is used in some cases for sharing photos, while Slideshare, Google docs and Issuu are used for making slides and other documents more accessible. These tools are attractive firstly because they ensure quick distribution in a country where the number of Facebook users is high and secondly because they are cost-effective. Information is also published in newsletters that people are free to subscribe to.

The main tool for auditing or evaluating activities is the annual media survey, with about 100 journalists participating. Participation is anonymous. This survey, which has been in use for

more than 10 years, asks specific questions about communication activities. An interesting element in the survey is the comparison between, or ranking, of ministries. Journalists are invited to rank agencies and ministries according to specific criteria such as the quality of media relations, how fast they respond to questions, how accessible press officers and ministers are, etc. The survey makes it possible to identify which agencies or ministries have improved and which ones might need more help.

Opinion polls among the general public are used ad hoc for evaluation of the Government's major communication efforts. A good example is the information campaign related to the Estonian adoption of the euro. Such polls and surveys are outsourced to non-governmental research companies, and their results are published online.

How is the future perceived in Estonia? What are the main challenges that have to be met in order to communicate efficiently in the future? An important challenge is to define and implement a relevant channel strategy. Communication is growing increasingly fragmented; there are so many channels and so much information to disseminate. The challenge is to be able to provide different kinds of information in different channels – in other words addressing relevant audiences in the right way and being accessible in the right channels. The objective is to help people to participate in civil society, which means that they must be able to find information.

Another challenge is crisis communication. Better coordination between and common guidelines for all government agencies need to be developed. This must be done by training, planning and identifying routines that will enable government ministries and agencies to work well together during a crisis.

The Netherlands

In three of the countries above – Sweden, Finland and Estonia – the central communications functions are in contact with representatives of the Prime Minister's Office. Denmark has no such central coordinating unit.

The Netherlands is an example of yet another model. Here, the central communications function is split into two offices. On the one hand, there is the Government Information Service, which assists the Prime Minister in his communication, formulates and coordinates the general communication policy of the Dutch Government and its Cabinet ("Cabinet Office") and also handles the communications of the Royal Family. The Government Information Service also coordinates individual ministries' activities, for instance by gathering press officers (spokespersons) at weekly meetings where the coordination of communications strategies, messages and working visits are discussed.

On the other hand, we find the Public Information and Communication Office – which is the larger of the two units. This office is responsible for shared services. The Public Information and Communication Office coordinates and evaluates communications campaigns, purchases advertising space, runs the Public Information and Communication Office/call centre, manages the content of websites (intranet and public website), offers expertise and a training centre. The Public Information and Communication Office is financed via collective budgets, but it also charges "participation fees" for several services such as campaigns and communications research. Individual ministries have their own budgets, which may be used to purchase services from the central service unit.

As in many other countries, there is no legal document that regulates government communications. The work of the Public Information and Communication Office follows the law that states that

government should be open and provide public information. There is no law governing what information should be communicated or what methods should be used. There is also a code of conduct. This code is quite general, for example, it states that information should be fair and objective. It also contains a section dealing with press and media contacts.

Each ministry has its own communications department. Each department is staffed with about 40 people, which amounts in total to 400-500 members of staff in 11 ministries. By Dutch standards this is a small organisation; the total staff (policy-making officials) in government amounts to 11 000 persons. The Public Information and Communication Office is not a shared service in the sense that ministries hire their staff. What happens is that they collaborate on certain projects. From the point of view of the public it does not seem to make much difference who handles communication. The public do not make a distinction between ministries and the Public Information Office; they see "government" as a whole.

Interaction between civil servants and political staff is very important. In the other countries we have studied, two issues have been prominent. One of them concerns how to maintain a distinction between "political" and "neutral" information. The other issue concerns how communication can be coordinated when the organisation consists of a central unit on the one hand and individual ministries on the other. The Dutch system also has similar concerns, but to a lesser extent. However, coordination between the various ministries is intensive and in general effective. It is also accepted that the Cabinet and its ministers and state secretaries play the leading role. Therefore each minister or state secretary has a political staff of one person at the most. They function as a liaison between minister/state secretary and members of parliament and the political parties. In consequence, the issue of coordination is less salient. If government is well coordinated on the political level it also means that government communications are coordinated.

It is the political leadership (ministers and state secretaries) who decides what to communicate, but in general they do not decide how issues should be communicated in the Government's official channels. When interests collide between civil servants and political staff, it is the ministers/state secretaries who decide. Consequently, a valuable skill for civil servants is the ability to foster political sensitivity in order to understand the world of the politicians. The staff of the Public Information and Communication Office must be able to foresee needs at the political level.

The main tool for communication is the website. Since last year there is a common website for all 11 ministries. It has one million visitors per month but is not the main channel for reaching the general public in terms of (political) impact. The main channel is media relations. Press releases combined with press conferences are very important. For some ministries, advertising is an important channel. Advertising is used when there is a need to inform the public about new rules or when campaigns are launched to enhance understanding of the political system. Sometimes the Public Information and Communication Office uses advertising agencies for specific projects, and the Office can function as an intermediary between a ministry and an agency because of its greater experience of purchasing advertising.

Evaluations are mandatory for mass media campaigns aimed at the general public on behalf of the central government. These are conducted by means of a target group survey before and after the campaign in order to isolate the effect of the campaign. Furthermore, a general evaluation report is sent to Parliament every year. The quality of several other services, such as the public information desk, is constantly monitored. Quantitative measures such as numbers of visitors and press clippings are also used, but these are not connected to any real communication goals. They are more of an "historical evaluation".

A current challenge is how to relate to social media. Several ministries use social media. Last year a general guideline was issued for all civil servants listing the do's and don'ts in social media (integrity, political awareness, etc). As is the case in other countries, the fact that information flows rapidly in these media poses a challenge. Information from the government needs to be correct, and it often takes time to get the facts right. If Government has to correct information too many times this could lead to loss of credibility. Another problem in connection with social media is the role of the individual civil servant.

Another challenge is finding the right tonality when communicating. It is felt that change is needed with information suppliers becoming more of a "partner" and less of a "parent". It is necessary to make this change in tonality in the near future, because the willingness to accept government as a self-evident source of correct and good information about politics is being undermined by a general decline in trust in authorities.

With regard to information about the European Union, the Netherlands have a system similar to the other countries in our study. Such information is the responsibility of the ministry handling a certain area and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Public Information and Communication Service is not much involved in communicating the European Union and issues that are salient on the European level.

Germany

The Press and Information Office of the Federal Government (BPA) answers directly to the Federal Chancellor and is responsible for the cross-portfolio external communications of the Federal Government. As in other countries examined above, individual ministries have their own external communications functions, which handles issues within their own policy area. On cross-portfolio issues, the ministries and the BPA work closely together, the BPA fulfilling the overall coordinating function.

Each unit has its own budget. The BPA has by far the largest budget of all ministries. External communications work in the Federal Government is not governed by any specific legal framework. The needs and boundaries of external communications derive directly from the constitution.

In many of the countries studied above, an important issue is how to deal with relations between political and non-political staff. In Germany, the BPA is not only directly answerable to the political level (the Federal Chancellor). Her State Secretary, the Government Spokesperson, is directly in charge of the BPA and its 450 employees. The State Secretary is responsible for media information and for the Federal Government's external communications activities. An important instrument in achieving consistent communications is the daily teleconferences between the Government Spokesperson and the ministerial spokespeople. Thus, the distinction between politicians and civil servants does not apply when it comes to government communications in Germany.

There is, in consequence, no strong distinction made between "political" and "neutral" information. The task of the BPA is to help the Chancellor when explaining the aims and substance of Government action and communicate the situation to the country's citizens.

This information generally goes beyond that which might be used using neutral terms such as "notification" or "information". Presenting a situation involves explaining background and why the particular approach was chosen rather than an alternative one. The information provided aims to represent the Federal Government's position in any controversial discussion and promote understanding. An important line is however drawn between government communication and

party-political election campaigning. It is not permitted for the Federal Government to use its communications resources for the purposes of winning an election campaign.

Information is provided to the media through regular press conferences, press releases and briefings. Furthermore, alongside the website of the Federal Government there is also a special website for journalists containing upcoming events and further information. All of these means of obtaining information are also open to international correspondents.

Citizens can stay up-to-date via the various online BPA and federal ministry resources. Printed materials such as brochures, leaflets, notices and posters are also available in all policy areas.

The use of social media is not especially common. At present, the Chancellor's podcast is the only example of social media used by the Federal Government. An assessment is currently under way of which other new media could and should be used by the Government. Some individual ministers use Twitter.

Performance and impact analysis is always designed and defined specifically for each measure. When putting out advertisements, for example, perception and advertisement recall are significant indicators in performance analysis. The necessary data is compiled using surveys or, in the case of online communications, using ad views and log file analysis. In the case of events, feedback forms are used to gauge satisfaction and determine whether measures were well suited to achieving their goals, for example.

Given the important role of the political level in Germany, it is quite logical that perceived challenges are of a political nature. Since communications depend on the political agenda, it is not possible to identify future challenges today. They are deemed likely to involve the impact of demographic development on the social security system, currency stability in the euro zone and developments in the European Union. Specific communications measures are regularly discussed and prepared during the inter-ministerial round table discussions described above.

The BPA has a duty to inform citizens about the policies of the Federal Government and explain them. This also applies to the Government's European policy. In this case, the particular goal is to give citizens an understanding of the advantages of EU membership and to promote understanding for Europe. Within this framework, the BPA also provides information on the working and decision-making procedures in the European Union and clarifies how national governments and the EU institutions interact. The theme of Europe is also comprehensively communicated through the Federal Government's websites, the magazine "Deutschland aktuell", the Government's annual report and other publications.

The BPA is also involved in a management partnership with the European Commission, the Federal Government and the European Parliament. The management partnership, initially concluded for a four-year period in 2005, complements the Federal Government's ongoing European policy communications activities. The partnership was extended for a further four-year period at the beginning of 2010.

In addition, the ministries' European policy communications activities are raised and coordinated at the regular ministry meetings.

Comparisons and conclusions

Comparing the six countries, a clear north-south difference can be seen. In the Nordic countries and Estonia a clear distinction is made between civil servants and political appointees. Government communication is an administrative (or bureaucratic) function governed by its own “non-political” or “neutral” logic. In Holland and Germany politically appointed spokespersons play an important role when deciding what is to be communicated and when.

In all countries ministerial autonomy can be noted. In all countries, except Denmark, the autonomous ministries are expected to interact with some kind of central communications unit, which can be more or less close to the Prime Minister’s office. This results in a coordination challenge. A clear pattern can be observed: how this coordination challenge is solved depends on where the country is placed in relation to the north-south line. In more “political” systems, coordination is reached on the political level. A well-coordinated government, where spokespersons cooperate effectively, will also be coordinated in terms of communications.

Countries belonging to the “north” have another task to attend to. They have to devise some kind of organisational principles for how civil servants are to interact. Different ways of doing this can be observed: informal discussions and groups (e.g. Sweden), some kind of guidelines (e.g. Finland), establishing common standards through common training (e.g. Estonia) or finding forms to organise common projects when issues of an inter-ministerial nature arise. (e.g. Denmark). Finally, it is also possible to devise regulations that govern interaction between the central unit and the ministries (Estonia). Most countries use a combination of some or all of these means. The two “southern” countries use some of them to supplement the coordination offered by the political level.

Basic tools for communication are common for all countries. Media contacts play an important role. Websites are very important everywhere. Brochures and other printed material are widely used. In all countries we note an interest in new, social and interactive, media. But the six countries vary with regard to the speed of adoption of these channels for communication. Estonia is without question at the forefront. All possible tools or media are used; the system of live blogging from Cabinet meetings is unique.

Some respondents identify challenges with the new media landscape. Interactive and social media offer promise, but how can they be used in a governmental setting? When a civil servant is active in a community via Facebook for example how is professional neutrality to be maintained? Is there a risk that the quick exchange of information in these new media might tempt government communication organisations to make mistakes? Or is the alternative to respond slowly and as a consequence risk losing in relevance?

There are any number of questions, but it is not a bold guess that government has to engage in these new media if it wants to be present where it can attract citizens’ attention. The fact that different countries have engaged to different degrees and have tested different models should be seen as an advantage: it offers an opportunity for exchanging experiences and learning from other government communications units.

Other, more general challenges are also related to complexity and speed in communications. Being well coordinated is becoming more important as the communication environment grows more complex. Governments might need to figure out the channel strategies, in much the same way as is being done in other sectors. Audiences are becoming more demanding and critical (and being critical can also be seen as a healthy sign in a democratic system, not just a problem) – demanding

correct information more or less instantly when it is needed. This brings us back to the issue of relevant tools. It also brings us back to the issue of organisation.

So: there are differences between the countries we have studied. Some of them reflect different democratic systems and political cultures. Others reflect similar ambitions, but where countries have operated at different speeds and used different tools. In one area, however, we come close to uniformity. It is when assessing and evaluating the efficiency of communication. More or less the same tools are used: quantitative data supplemented with qualitative research on stakeholders or media. Some differences are noted concerning how results from such research is used. Once again, it is Estonia that stands out. No other country uses results to rank ministries according to how well they provide service to their audiences.

Communications in the UK: state of play Government and the Dance with Communications: *Coming Full Circle in the 21st Century*

Anne Gregory



Introduction

On 19th of January 2004, the UK Government published “An independent review of Government communications” (Phillis, 2004), known as The Phillis Review, after its Chair, Robert Phillis. The Government declared it would implement the Review’s recommendations in full.

One of the recommendations was the appointment of a civil servant of the most senior rank, a Permanent Secretary, to lead the information (or communications as it is now known in Government) profession. This appointment might be regarded as the zenith of the profession in Government, but the history leading to and the

issues around the Review are part of an unfolding narrative in Government Communications.

The story behind the events of the first decade of the 21st Century can be traced to 1994 when Alistair Campbell was appointed as Press Secretary for the Leader of the Opposition, Tony Blair. Together with Peter Mandelson who organised Labour’s Election Campaign, they ran an effective media machine and Labour won the General Election in 1997 with a landslide, whereupon Alistair Campbell became the Prime Minister’s Director of Communications. 1997 is the turnkey date for the changes in Government communications that led to the Phillis Review of 2004.

The Arrival of the Blair Government

In opposition, the Blair Government had seen the role of communications as vital to furthering and enacting their policies. On their ascent to power the Government passed an Order in Council, so that Alistair Campbell and Tony Blair’s Chief of Staff, Jonathan Powell, had the authority to instruct civil servants. This bringing together of civil service communicators and Special Advisers under one Director of Communications was fundamental. According to Sir Robert Phillis (House of Lords, 2009) and the three most senior civil servants the author interviewed (the two Permanent Secretaries

for Government Communication and the Director General who headed the profession before the Phillis Report), the view of the new Government was that the GIS was not well equipped in news and media management in particular, and that the service overall needed upgrading to deal with the modern world of communication.

In September 1997, the Cabinet Secretary of the time Sir Robert Butler, appointed Robin Mountfield to review GIS. The Mountfield Report, as it became known (Cabinet Office, 1997) was published in November 1997 and identified a number of weaknesses. These included significant variation in practices and effectiveness of the press function across Departments. On some occasions there was a breakdown in coordination between civil servant Press Officers and Special Advisers (temporary civil servants, appointed politically) when briefing the media. There were also suggestions that some departments had been briefing against others and some senior members of the Lobby press corps (political journalists with privileged access to MPs and the PM's office) complained about losing an impartial and 'on the record' service as provided by civil servants.

In response, Number 10 set up a Strategic Communications Unit, answerable to the Prime Minister, working through the Chief Press Secretary (a civil servant). The Government also introduced reforms to the Lobby (the daily media briefings by the PM's office), including on-the-record briefings with attributable sources. The Government sought to encourage clarification of roles and closer cooperation between Press Officers in Departments and Special Advisers. Finally the GIS was re-named the Government Information and Communication Services (GICS) in an attempt to indicate a renewed focus on two-way communication with the public (House of Lords, 2008).

Following the Mountfield Report the Director General of GICS, Mike Granatt (Granatt, 1998), prepared a follow-up document for Mr Mountfield in June 1998. He had elicited the views of GICS staff, which indicated poor morale. This was supported by the Institution of Professionals, Managers and Specialists (the relevant civil service trade union), who attributed the fall in morale to recent changes in Departmental Heads, increased demand for Press Officer services without additional resources, poor management and inadequate training and career development opportunities (House of Commons, 1998). In the two years following the 1997 election, 17 of the 19 Departmental Heads of Information left office.

However it was events in early 2000 that brought things to a head. The most notorious occurred on 9th September 2001 when Special Adviser Jo Moore, based in the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions, advised civil servants by e-mail that they should release "anything that we want to bury", given that attention would be deflected following the terrorist attacks in the US. After reprimands and an apology, Ms Moore continued in her post. On 14th February 2002 reports alleged that Ms Moore had urged release of adverse rail statistics on the day of Princess Margaret's funeral - this was countermanded by Director of Communications Martin Sixsmith. There followed a debacle which resulted in both Ms Moore and Mr Sixsmith resigning.

These events were investigated by the Public Administration Select Committee (House of Commons, 2002). Their report recommended a 'radical external review of Government communications' and that the review should look not only at the effectiveness of GICS, but at the respective roles of civil servants and Special Advisers with responsibility for communications. There were other issues that threatened the integrity of the communications service. For example, in December 2002, after denials from the Prime Minister's Office, it emerged that Tony Blair's wife had brought property for her son, via the fraudster boyfriend of her lifestyle adviser – an embarrassment for the Prime Minister, but not something his office should have handled. There was also controversy about the role Mr Campbell played in evidence presented to Parliament supporting the case for entering the war in Iraq. It was claimed he had "sexed up" one dossier of evidence.

The Phillis Review

Amid mounting clamour about the politicisation of the civil service, spin, inappropriate use of Government services and an increasingly adversarial relationship between the press and the Government, the Government set up the Phillis Review which reported in 2004. Phillis gave its judgement that there had been a “three way breakdown in trust between Government and politicians, the media and the general public”. P.2.

It recommended far reaching changes in government communication, the most relevant for this paper being:

- The appointment of a civil servant of the most senior rank – a Permanent Secretary - who would lead the civil service communication profession. The authority of Special Advisers to direct civil servants was ended.
- The renaming of GICS to the Government Communication Network (GCN), open to all civil servant communicators, including those not appointed through the GICS formal process.
- A redefinition of the role and scope of Government communications since the Review found that on the whole, the civil service and not grasped the potential of modern communications as a service provided for citizens.
- That each Department’s communications activity must contribute to the achievement of the Department’s overall policy objectives.
- A greater emphasis and investment in regional and local communications.

In March 2004, Howell James, a former Special Adviser in a number of Departments, was appointed as the first Permanent Secretary, Government Communications and based in the Cabinet Office which supports the Cabinet – the supreme decision-making body in Government. The Cabinet Office co-ordinates activity across Government Departments.

The period of Permanent Secretaries, 2004 to 2010

During the period that the first Permanent Secretary was in office, many of the propriety issues were dealt with and the “temperature was taken down” with the media. He also focused on developing the communications community, now called the Government Communication Network (GCN) and instigated a number of co-ordinated training and guidance initiatives open to, but not compulsory for, all Government Department.. The aim was to embed standards and inject some consistency of approach. At the same time, a substantial effort was put into developing a strategic planning model which was more marketing-based and aimed at achieving behaviour change. This was of particular interest to civil servants and special advisers who operated in the policy-making area and at the time that Howell James left in 2008, it is true to say that communications expertise on insight generation was more accepted as a part of policy development.

Given that many of the systems and structures had been put in place by his predecessor, the focus of the second Permanent Secretary Matt Tee, was very much on the development of civil servant communicators. Four specific issues characterised his period in post:

- addressing professionalism and capability in the service
- rising to the changes that the proliferation of digital media presented

- a major increase in spending on marketing and advertising with large-scale behaviour change programmes being put in place such as the Change 4 Life obesity programme. Indeed, Government became the country's largest advertiser, a situation justified because of the ambitious policy goals that it had in place
- the requirement to service the media 24 hours per day with a specific concern being the authorisations required from Ministers around the clock.

In May 2010 a new Coalition Government came to power led by David Cameron. From the beginning of his tenure he made it clear that reducing the country's deficit was to be a priority. In the same month, a freeze was placed on all Government marketing and advertising activity. As a result the annual volume of communication activity commissioned through COI (who procure a substantial proportion of Government marketing communications work) fell from £540 million in 2009/10 to £125 million (Tee, 2011). The post of Permanent Secretary was declared redundant and the post holder left government service in March 2011.

The period of the Permanent Secretaries represents a particularly high symbolic point in Government Communications. Having a voice at the heart of government in the Cabinet Office and at such a senior level advanced and defended the cause of communications. The Permanent Secretary role provided entry to the highest levels of Government and secured influence in Departments that would not have been possible for someone of lesser rank. What then for the future of Government communications?

A view of the Future

In beginning to formulate a position for the future it is important to be reminded of the purpose of Government communication. To quote the House of Lords Communications Committee (2008):

"One of the most important tasks of Government is to provide clear, truthful and factual information to citizens. The accurate and impartial communication of information about government policies, activities and services is critical to the democratic process." (P.7)

The requirement to provide clear and factual information to citizens to serve the public interest is at the heart of the British democratic process. Representative democracies require "informed consent". Citizens to carry out their electoral duties in a knowledgeable way and are able to hold Government to account by being provided with factual information on their performance and policies. The notion of informed consent is not however, without its complications. As Gaber (2007) points out, citizens want politicians to be honest and accountable, but at the same time politicians have another agenda, that is, to secure the approval and votes of citizen's at the next election. The inclination is therefore, for politicians to constantly push for communications which achieve a positive impact rather than total public enlightenment. A career civil servant, who is bound by rules of impartiality and is apolitical, communicates on behalf of a government which is inherently political.

Furthermore, there is inevitably an inbuilt political bias if the party in government has machinery at its disposal to explain its policies whereas there is no facility for opposition parties to avail themselves of similar help for their communication efforts.

One of the complaints of those involved in communication, is that communicators are not involved in policy decisions early enough to be able to influence that policy. Indeed, as mentioned earlier, the first Permanent Secretary went to some lengths to bring together policy and communications staff by persuading policy civil servants that communications expert could bring valuable "Insight"

to the policies they were developing. The paradox is that being involved in policy decisions means that communicators are more likely to “own” them and they are hence, more likely to defend and promote those policies rather than just explain them.

With these thoughts in mind, within the next three years this author posits that the following is likely to happen:

- There will be a replacement for the Permanent Secretary post but it is likely to be at the most optimistic, Executive Director level, or become the responsibility of the most senior civil servant communicator in Government at the time.
- The recent trend of appointments of Directors of Communications sitting at Board level within Departments will slow down and as incumbents leave, they are likely to be replaced by individuals of a lower grade.
- As Directors of Communications see their career opportunities limited (and there is still little transfer from the communications specialism to other specialisms in Government) more of them will leave.
- There is a risk that as less senior people are recruited to or remain in the communications specialisms, that communications will be marginalised in the policy development process and could revert to the position pre-2000, where there was a preponderance of press officers employed to “deliver the message”. However, in future this will include to the “virtual press” - the Web-based media - too.
- While there has been undoubted progress in the skills, knowledge and overall capabilities of the communications cadre, and while there are plans to continue that, without a champion at the senior level, a coordinated and coherent approach to recruitment, retention, capability development and career progression is less likely.
- Professional communicators could be susceptible to political direction by Special Advisers or others in the absence of a senior figure to enforce propriety.
- There will be an increase in support for marketing activities, given recent successes. As a result the balance of communication work could well shift from a primary duty to ensure that citizen's are well-informed, to one where behaviour change programmes take greater prominence. There are clear dangers for the democratic process if the primary purpose of government information is viewed in this light by Government and citizens alike.

This may seem quite a bleak assessment of the future of UK Government Communications, but in coming to this view, the author is also comparing the pattern of Government Communications with the cycle of fortune of communications in other parts of the UK's public and private sectors. Crises often propel communicators to the heights of organisations but once the crisis is passed, the lessons learned are quickly forgotten. It appears to be the “fate” of communications that it is doomed to an endless cycle of advancement and regression depending on the perception of risk that an organisation faces at any one time.

Conclusions

The beginning of first decade of the 21st-century in UK Government Communications was one of turmoil and uncertainty. The new Labour government had come into power in 1997 and found the Government Information Service wanting. A large number of Directors of Communications in Departments left and civil servant communicators became susceptible to political influence. The recruitment and selection process for professional communicators came under threat and the career pathway, development and professional respect for communicators followed suit. At the end of the first decade it appears that Government Communications has reverted to this position.

It appears that Government Communications in the middle of the first decade of the 21st Century reached a peak in attention and recognition. The ardent hope is that the lessons learned will not be dissipated as the second decade progresses, but much depends on the leadership of the profession in the future.

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Slovenia: From Capacity Building to Professionalism in Communication

Nada Serajnik Sraka, Matjaž Kek and Branko Vidrih



Nada



Matjaž



Branko

Introduction

While there is probably no government today that does not communicate with the public, the means and methods of public communication differ considerably from one to another. Particularly noticeable are differences in the understanding of communication and related communication activities. Some countries have developed their communication for decades, and now this is not used only to promote political views, but also to inform the public about government activities – policies and actions – the creation of which often involves various representatives of the public. Countries with a well developed public communication system also boast an efficient structure, as well as high standards, which ensure that communication is on a par with other government functions. But there are also governments that often do not realize that communication is essential part of their job and is fundamental for its functioning. They believe that the knowledge is power and sharing it would diminish their power and influence. These countries do not see the need to raise their own communication capacities because they believe that media outlets are sufficient for spreading the government messages to population. Too often this vital part of the government process is referred to as “just PR”, “publicity budgets”, “propaganda machines” or “spin doctors” and is in slim times cut more easily than other core business like police protection, road building, human services.

Government communication

Government communication (also public information, government information, government public relations) encompasses the communication activities of government bodies which are aimed at informing the public, encouraging dialogue, reaching consensus, and acquiring support for the implementation of the government’s policies. The majority of politicians and the public also see no difference between public relations and media relations. Government officials greatly depend on public support and public opinion, and the mass media can provide the greatest dissemination of messages and views.

Undoubtedly, the mass media are among the most important publics, but they are not the only one. The stakeholders in government public relations are a vast and diverse group of internal and external publics (i.e. employees, interest groups, state and local officials, the business community, political parties, professional associations, citizens), which cannot be reached only through the mass media. Many other channels and tools are required for this.

Government communication should be viewed as the management of communication with different internal and external publics, and not merely as publicity or propaganda. Communication should be recognised as a policy itself, but also as part of policy making. In practice, communication is mainly used when a particular policy is ready to be implemented, and less so in the process of its creation.

Capacity Building

Capacity building is understood in practice as assistance in developing certain skills or competences for upgrading performance of a body or organisation. In reality, it should be much more. Capacity building is, according to UN definition about organising an enabling environment, setting up appropriate policy, legal and administrative frameworks and management structures, implementing processes and procedures, developing human resources, strengthening of managerial systems and equipping individuals with the skills, knowledge and training which will enable them to perform effectively. The needs for capacity building are great, but appreciation of the problem is still relatively low. There is most interest among local governments, communities and NGOs, but central governments and the private commercial sector also need support. There are no ready-made solutions. Experiences and expertise can be shared between various partners, and programmes can be developed or tailored to meet the needs of individual countries, organisations or departments.

Although the literature reveals many different approaches, the essential building blocks of capacity building are:

- development of a legal and Institutional framework (legal and regulatory changes to enable organisations, institutions and agencies at all levels and in all sectors to enhance their capacities, understand needs and expectations and develop working or ethical principles),
- infrastructure and organisation (the combination of governance, organisational design, individual job descriptions and inter-functional coordination),
- management (the sum of capabilities for providing directions, monitoring, assessment and responding to internal and external changes, ensuring the effective and efficient use of organisational resources, and implementing all key organisational and programmatic functions),
- cooperation (the sum of capabilities and skills, like collaborative strategic planning, project management, conflict resolution, finance management, team building, performance management),
- resources (human, finance, equipment, skills, knowledge, experience),
- professional development (training (formal and informal), access to referential literature, case studies, peer exchange opportunities and research studies),
- benchmarks (consulting engagements, peer conventions/gatherings, exchange opportunities, professional networking, coaching, measurements of an organisation's internal performances, the adoption and adaptation of best practices from other organisations),
- culture (the connective tissue that binds together shared values, behavioural norms and the organisation's orientation towards performance).

Capacity building in government

Capacity building is often discussed in connection with government communication. A review of the available literature shows that authors mostly describe the nature and features of government communication, but also, between the lines, mention communication capacities as a prerequisite for organising effective government communication. Among practitioners, the one most often used explanation being 'improving the effectiveness of government communication by all kinds of means to exchange knowledge and experience' (Veenman, 2009)¹.

Different countries approach the function and development of government communication in different ways. Some are aware of the importance of an ordered environment that enables planned and coordinated communication by the government and its agencies. But practice also reveals cases where communication structures are decentralised and uncoordinated, and no regular budget for continuing communication efforts is assured. Across ministries, there is a lack of qualified communication staff, and they are often uneven in capacity, status and organisation. Staff lacks a clear job description, regular communication training and the necessary support to perform their tasks effectively. Some EU countries have developed and time-tested all support systems and many standards, which they continuously upgrade in order to ensure professional services administered by skilled communication professionals, provide training to their civil servants and policy advisers, and develop new knowledge.

Case Study: Slovenia

The development and implementation of government communication in countries which had to establish and develop government communication systems – e.g. the transition countries of the CEE – shows that 'capacity building' can be understood in a broader sense than just staff training. Slovenia can provide an interesting example for studying the development, organisation and implementation of government public relations. After gaining independence in 1991, Slovenia had to establish anew all functions and systems of its civil service, including government public relations. Government public relations in Slovenia have a relatively short tradition. Prior to 1990, there were practically no PR advisers in the Slovenian civil service. One exception was the Ministry of the Interior, with a department where a single person was employed to handle public relations, i.e. informing the media and the general public about the Ministry's work. However, the government had a central information office whose organisation and tasks varied through the years. The beginnings of the government information office go back to 1945, to the first Press Office of the People's Government of Slovenia. The Office of Information was established in 1958. It was succeeded by the Executive Council Information Secretariat in 1960 and the Republic Information Committee in 1980. After the first democratic election in Slovenia in 1990, the Republic Information Committee was renamed the Republic Information Secretariat, and later, just ahead of Slovenia's declaration of independence, became one of the 22 ministries, i.e. the Ministry of Information. In 1993, it was transformed into the Government Public Relations and Media Office, a separate professional government service. In 2007, it was renamed the Government Communication Office (GCO).

Milestones in development

At the time of Slovenia's struggle for independence, the then information office faced a great challenge and played a major role in informing the world about what was happening in Slovenia. During the struggle, the office ran a media centre for the domestic and international press, learning

1 Presentation at the Capacity Building Workshop, Club of Venice, October 2009

some of the most important aspects of its work in the process.

No sooner had Slovenia gained independence than it had to establish itself as a new sovereign country on the map of the world. In addition to public relations, national branding and public diplomacy had become important, as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had no such department. The lack of experience meant that Slovenia would simply have to 'learn by doing'. The 1990s saw several monumental events (two visits by the Pope, a visit by the US President Bill Clinton, the Bush-Putin Summit in Slovenia, first appearances at the Lisbon and Hannover expos, a meeting of CEFTA heads of state or government, etc.). While these events directed international attention to Slovenia, they presented an unprecedented professional challenge.

The late 1990s and the onset of the twenty-first century were marked by Slovenia's joining the EU and NATO. Citizen communication was the key, and the Office made its first attempts at planning and implementing communication campaigns. At first, the Office was assisted by foreign advisers and implementation consortia of domestic and foreign communication agencies. During this time, the Office established a networked communication infrastructure (web sites, toll-free telephone lines, information centres, etc.), which are still very much in use today.

Soon after the EU and NATO accessions (2004), preparations began for another two major government projects – the introduction of the euro (2007), and Slovenia's Presidency of the Council of the EU (2008). Both presented a tremendous logistical, administrative and communications operation. At the same time, the Office designed, developed and implemented – at first at home and later abroad – the national brand 'I feel Slovenia'. After 2008, when there seemed to be no major challenges left for government communicators, the new and even more demanding tasks emerged in the times of financial, economic and social crisis. And it is here that the significance of capacity building becomes evident, not just in the sense of establishing a network of communication units, but also in appreciating the role of communication in the policy-making process. The latter has yet to be mastered.

Capacity building in Slovenia

The legal and institutional framework

Government public relations in Slovenia embody the right to information, i.e. the right to access to public information, which is a fundamental human right, and is defined in more detail by the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia, the Access to Public Information Act (2003), and the Public Media Act.

The Government Rules of Procedure stipulate that the government's work is public. The public character of the government's work is ensured through press conferences, internal presentations and communications distributed via other information and telecommunication media. The government PR officer and the Government Communication Office ensure that the work of the government and ministries is public.

The beginning of the systematic organisation of ministry and government PR offices goes back to 1994, when the Government took several decisions concerning the activities of the Government Information Office aimed at domestic publics, and its organisation, including a decision which required "all ministries – acting upon the Public Media Act – to draft regulations to speedily implement suitable methods of ensuring the public character of their work, disseminating information to the public and appoint an individual responsible for ensuring that all work is public." These decisions provided a legal basis for a systematic approach to ensuring that the work of government institutions is open to the public.

The competences and organisation of the central government PR office are laid down in the Decision defining the tasks of the Government Public Relations and Media Office, which stipulates the Office's main tasks: ensuring the public character of the government's work, providing professional support to the government spokesperson and PR departments of ministries and government offices, and planning, implementing and coordinating the government's general promotional activities.

The Civil Servants Act also stipulates the separation of political and professional functions. When the act was passed in 2003, the previously combined functions of Government Spokesperson and Director of the Government Communication Office were separated. While the former moved to the Office of the Prime Minister, in terms of work the post has remained strongly tied to the GCO.

As departments and the list of communication functions grew, the need emerged to organise them systematically and implement communication principles. In collaboration with external partners, the GCO developed the 'Organisational Model of Government Communication of the Republic of Slovenia', which was approved by the Government in 2007 and is still used. The document provides the basis for organising public relations and communication services within the government, ministries, and government offices, establishes uniform professional standards, and determines the mode of coordination between offices i.e. public relations advisers of individual government institutions with the Government Spokesperson and the Government Communication Office, thus establishing the standards for the communication of government policies to the public.

Communication infrastructure

Government communication is planned and carried out by a central communication office and by the communication units in line ministries or other agencies. The Government Communication Office is a professional service, headed by the Director (a civil servant appointed by the government) who, together with the Government Spokesperson, ensures the circulation of information between the government, its representatives, and the domestic and foreign publics. While the Office is subordinate to the Government Secretary General, it communicates the policies and activities of the whole Government. The Office consists of two departments, one for communication with the domestic and foreign media and the other for direct communication projects. Its main tasks include informing, advising, supporting, coordinating and liaising.

The Government Spokesperson, located within the Office of the Prime Minister, issues statements on behalf of the government, heads press conferences following cabinet sessions, and answers journalists' questions on government decisions. He is a political appointee. Each ministry and some of their offices have separate communication units, which provide comprehensive and prompt information about matters pertaining to the work of individual ministries and/or government offices. Organisation permitting, units may be divided into two sections – one for media relations and the other for public relations. The roles of political and civil service communication staff are separated. In this way, continuity of work is preserved regardless of political changes. A minister may appoint the head of PR or their personal spokesperson – a post dependent on the minister's term in office – as the ministry spokesperson. At present, only three ministries have political communication advisors, while official spokespersons are virtually unheard of (exceptions being, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Police and the Armed Forces). However, Slovenia did employ spokespersons during its EU Presidency in 2008¹.

¹ Policy-makers and communicators were trained as spokespersons specifically for the Presidency. The function ended with the Presidency.

Larger bodies under the ministry (such as the Police, the Slovenian Armed Forces, the Tax Administration, the Customs Administration, the Environmental Agency, and the Veterinary Administration) employ their own communication officers. These work within a separate unit; in some cases they coordinate their work with communication officers of competent ministries or the heads of communication services of the ministries in question.

Managing communication

Ministries today see the role of PR as maintaining relations with the media, informing the general public and taking care of promotion. But only few ministries give much thought to internal communication. Some PR units have protocol duties and produce reminders. Their most typical tasks include written communication (press releases, web content and Q&A), editing publications and web sites, and organising events. So far, there has been very limited use of the social media¹.

Centralised strategic communication planning is not a usual practice, and annual plans (joint or exclusively for ministries) are not a general rule. Communication officers must often focus on short-term, operational concerns, which prevent them from taking on new tasks, such as systematic audience research, strategic planning, evaluation of communication programmes or direct communication with the public.

Ministries use a variety of consultation and participation approaches when dealing with target publics; most publish draft acts and preliminary measures on their web site before these are actually discussed by the cabinet. One step towards improving communication between citizens and the Government is the online application *Predlagam vladi* (I propose to the government), which enables the public to contribute their suggestions to improve government policies and measures.

Cooperation and coordination

Government PR officers cooperate on a daily basis in covering major government events and policies, coordinating answers to questions posed by the media and other publics, and coordinating press releases following cabinet sessions.

There is less strategic inter-departmental coordination. As a rule, ministries run their own communication projects. With major government initiatives (the pro EU and NATO accession campaign, euro introduction and events of national significance); the Government Communication Office takes over strategic planning, leadership and coordination, and collaborates with the relevant government bodies and external partners. When more specialised issues need to be communicated (e.g. anti-crisis measures, social reforms, climate change), there is less collaboration. Since ministries are relatively independent as to their communication methods and agenda, good coordination often depends on political will and understanding of a particular project.

There is ample professional support for government communication. The Office is the main body responsible for following domestic and international media (monitoring and press clipping), analysing media reporting, drafting key points for public opinion polls (monthly polls from 2001 to 2006²), monitoring viewer ratings of the main TV programmes, and organising training courses for government PR officers.

1 Data from the 2010 survey.

2 Public opinion polls were conducted by the Public Opinion and Mass Communication Research Centre (CJMMK) of the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana.

Collaboration between the Government Spokesperson, the GCO and PR officers of ministries is vital for keeping the public abreast government decisions. Such collaboration includes the timely discussion of major issues, selecting government representatives, and drafting press releases and other materials. Although a coordinating body of all PR officers has been proposed, it has not yet been formalised. Under the incumbent Government, however, ministry PR officers meet on a regular basis to exchange information and coordinate activities.

Resources

In 2010, some 100 civil servants (44 are in the Police and the Armed Forces) occupy communication positions at the national level. The Government Communication Office employs 43 staff, 30 of whom work on communication projects; all are civil servants. There is also a small PR service working for the Prime Minister (currently employing two people), while the GCO provides professional and technical assistance. At present the Government does not have a spokesperson.

Most ministries have relatively small press/public relations units; the number of staff varies. The incumbent government (2008–2012) has 17 PR departments at ministries. Most (12) are separate units, while some are part of the Minister's office. All PR heads have access to the ministry leadership. Although communicators are civil servants, some may lose their position when governments change, which disturbs the continuity of PR services.

Staff numbers in PR offices have always been low. If, in the 1990s, ministries employed one or two people, today's average is two to five employees. One exception is the Ministry of Defence with the Slovenian Armed Forces (17) and the Police (27). As a rule, government offices employ one PR officer each.

The employees use two titles – a civil servant's grade and a professional title. The highest civil servant grade is Secretary (11), followed by Undersecretary (5), and several ranks of advisers (23). The two professional titles are PR Advisor and PR Officer. The staffing of PR departments is the domain of individual ministries. Most communication officers are trained in journalism, marketing communication, economics, political science, or related fields. All PR staff should be familiar with the know-how and skills of strategic and operational PR.

The Model¹ lays down the responsibilities and competences of a PR advisor, and ministries generally consider these. Task descriptions vary in practice and seldom reflect what employees actually do. Some ministries have developed internal handbooks of standards, which have not necessarily been coordinated with those of other ministries.

In addition to the PR and communication departments, in some ministries other staff also carries out information and communication duties, although they are not linked to the PR and communication unit. A survey in 2010 lists several tens of employees who take on protocol duties, provide technical or editorial support for web sites, assist in organising events, or publishing materials separately from the PR department.

Activities planned by the GCO are financed from the state budget. Only a few ministry PR departments have their own funding; most are required to apply for funds on a project-by-project basis, which greatly reduces their responsiveness and efficiency.

1 Organisational Model of Government Communication of the Government of Slovenia.

Professional development

In accordance with the Civil Servants Act, PR officers have the right and duty to be trained at work and improve their expertise. However, no system of professional training for civil servants is currently in place.

Between 2004 and 2007, the GCO organised training on a regular basis (seminars were organised in collaboration with the Dutch Government Information Service (GIS)¹. In 2006 and 2007, the GCO, in collaboration with Slovenian and international government PR advisors, organised modular training, which served as a preparatory course before the EU Presidency.

The GCO and GIS discussed with the Administration Academy of the Republic of Slovenia the possibility of organising regular training for communicators, and including a module on communication for administrative managers; unfortunately, the talks were unsuccessful. After 2008, the Academy began outsourcing most of its programme. In recent years, the GCO has organised occasional lectures or thematic meetings where case studies are presented and knowledge on a particular specialised topic is exchanged. Some government communicators are members of professional associations, such as the Public Relations Society of Slovenia (PRSS) and IABC Slovenia, and they attend events for professionals (meetings, the annual conference). In 2010, the Public Sector Section in PRSS was revived; it will strive to focus more on government public relations.

Benchmarks

There is ample interest in international examples and cooperation with foreign government PR officials, which is also carried out in practice.

The most important project was collaboration with the Dutch GIS (1999–2007), which helped Slovenian government communicators familiarise themselves, with practices from the Netherlands and the rest of Europe. The Dutch government PR system also partly served as a model for Slovenia's own Organisational Model of Government Communication and several other professional standards.

As part of the preparations for the EU and NATO accession and the introduction of the euro, the GCO enlisted the help of international experts, particularly PR professionals from EU institutions and NATO. As part of the preparations for the EU Presidency, Slovenian communicators exchanged experience with their colleagues from other EU member states that had presided over the Council of the EU before (Austria, Ireland, Finland, the Netherlands, and Germany). To support the introduction of the euro in Slovenia, the European Commission provided professional assistance in the form of a twinning project in which Slovenian representatives collaborated with the Dutch and Lithuanian.

Since 2004, the GCO's representatives have been actively participating in the Club of Venice. Such collaboration provides a view of the public relations practice of other EU member states facilitates the exchange of experience and serves as a model for designing professional standards.

Towards professionalism

Government public relations in Slovenia have not existed even for two decades. They began as modest efforts, developed through learning by doing, and made it to adulthood.

1 The Netherlands Government Information Service (GIS) provided technical assistance to EU candidate countries.

While the comparison with the present state shows significant progress, it also reveals drawbacks that are no cause for celebration. The government's greatest achievement at the system level is the approval of a model of organisation and activities. Although the model is good, it is not being consistently followed in practice.

Today, all government bodies have separate PR units. The communication system has been institutionalised, yet there are still differences among bodies. Unfortunately, there is a serious lack of staff, and given the current staffing limits in the civil service, the situation will not change soon. The division into political and professional functions is being observed. The GCO has strengthened its role as a strategic leader and liaison institution. Work is successfully coordinated between government bodies; however, this is rather on the tactical than strategic level. The communication coordination of heads of PR units has not been formalised. Training is sporadic; there is a lack of a systemic long-term training programme.

Further steps need to be taken towards the professionalization of the field in order to improve the efficiency, responsiveness and accountability of government public relations in Slovenia. The Organisational Model could be upgraded with a clear and widely accepted government communication policy adhered to by all government bodies. The communication system requires greater stability (maintaining or strengthening PR units), the strategic aspect of communication needs to be highlighted (communication should become an integral part of policy-making), and a system of regular long-term education should be established for a variety of users (novices, junior and senior PR officers, administrative managers).

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Matjaž Kek, graduated in journalism in Ljubljana. He was first responsible for the public information and communication system at the National Council of the Trade Unions of Slovenia. He worked as Head of the Public Information Department at the National Information Committee (which later became the Ministry of Information, and now the GCO), where he cooperated in the preparation of the Public Media Act. A key player in relations with foreign public during and after Slovenia's struggle for independence, Matjaž took over the Department for international PR and became Head of the European Affairs Department (1997), successfully managing the Slovenian public information programme on the EU and on Slovenia's accession. In 2004-2005 he was Director of the Government PR and Media Office. At present he is the Head of the Department for Communications Projects in the GCO.

Branko Vidrih, graduate in journalism, is currently employed at the Slovenian Government Communication Office which he joined in 1987, starting to work in the "Public Relations" domain at the National Information Committee (former GCO). His professional expertise covers various aspects of governmental Public Relations, with emphasis on media relations. At present, he is the Head of the Media Relations sector.

Governance through the pooling of tools

Bruno Denoyelle



Since the 2000s, in France, the Government Information Service (SIG), in its role as coordinator of government communication, has been faced with a huge increase in public websites, and more recently in Facebook pages, YouTube channels and applications managed by Ministries. Faced with this multiplication of communication media, a strategy for pooling tools and sharing knowledge was entrusted to the SIG in December 2000, following the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Government Reform.

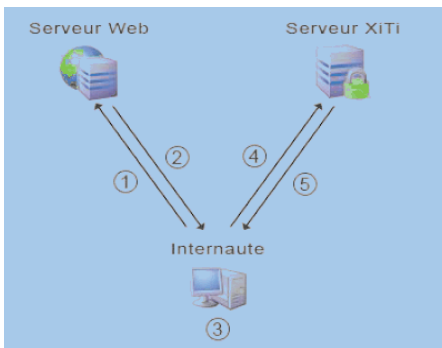
Stat@gouv: the setting up of a performance culture

The two projects which created pooling at the level of government websites were the Club des Webmestres, a monthly meeting of the operations managers of government websites and the setting up of the stat@gouv device, a pooled tool for measuring the audience of public websites. The latter made it possible for Ministries to find out about the expectations of internet users, but also to pool financial and human resources, to possess indicators measuring the performances of all the websites, to allow relevant comparisons to be made between these different public websites and to analyse as precisely as possible the journeys taken by the public within the public web.

This tool, which has been operational for over 10 years, initially included some sixty websites, then up to 650 sites by 2009, before the project to rationalise public websites was set up. Today, the audiences of 300 public websites, 200 embassies and 100 prefectures are measured every day, with an average of between 20 and 25 million single visitors and 200 million pages viewed each month (2/3 of French Internet users), i.e. the fifth largest French network of websites, behind Google, Microsoft and Facebook, but ahead of Yahoo and the press groups.

On a daily basis, this device allows Ministries to have an online interface which gives them access to all the data regarding consultations on their website, in the form of figures and graphs. The accounting method used is that of markers, requiring the prior integration of specific tags onto the different pages of the website (diagram). The main aim of Stat@Gouv is to measure consultations of the pages of a website, making it possible to determine the volume of visits per article, the expressions searched for on the search engines used to access the website, the duration of the consultations, and the breadcrumb trails within the website. More advanced functions can be set up, particularly click zones, which make it possible to determine the “hot” and “cold” zones of a web page, and even to automate statistical reporting through daily personalised reports by email.

This abundance of data on the behaviour of Internet users collected over the last ten years is the raw material for organising the network of public websites, through the studies presented by the SIG during the Club des Webmestres, for example. But above all it allows the performances of a website to be discussed on the same basis. As the SIG centralises and monitors access to this information, the tool also has the function of monitoring the public web. Finally, the tool is made available to Ministries free-of-charge, as is training in this tool.



Diagram

- (1) *The Internet user requests a website on the server hosting the site.*
- (2) *This server sends the contents of the page (images, texts, etc. and the XiTi marker).*
- (3) *The Javascript operates on the computer of the Internet user, gathering information.*
- (4) *The marker requests an image on the XiTi server, passing the information in parameters.*
- (5) *The XiTi marker sends the requested image (1 pixel on 1 pixel).*

E-régie (E-advertising): exploiting audience potential

In 2006, thanks to Stat@Gouv and a detailed analysis of the high-traffic areas of the public internet, the SIG took the decision to set up a government advertising department, open only to public advertisers and based on the principle of the exchange of visibility. A website wanting to advertise on it must place an advertising corner on the home page of its website or on the pages with the highest traffic.

There are several aims: to disseminate information on government measures as cheaply as possible, to set up highly targeted communication campaigns, which are difficult to organise on other media, and to provide an opportunity for users to continue their visit when they have finished browsing or to produce an alert in the event of a crisis. In the same way as Stat@Gouv, the E-régie system allows each Ministry to create its own e-marketing culture through the assessments and analyses supplied by the SIG, and thus to allow the web operators and communications managers of the Ministries to discuss a common subject, leading to extremely fruitful exchanges.

Currently, the device brings together almost sixty websites, with almost 2 million displays a day, some fifty campaigns a month and an average click rate of 0.25% thanks to a high affinity between the campaigns and the media. In total, more than a hundred campaigns use this system each year in addition to purchasing space or as an exclusive means of distribution. The power of the network and its targeting will continue to improve, thanks to new supports such as mobiles and applications.

FilGouv: pooling of contents and monitoring of their exchanges

In the same way as the previous two devices, the arrival of the government video platform Fil Gouv marked a new stage in the approach to public communication on the Internet. The previous tools based their analyses on websites, but Fil Gouv focuses on the content. Thus, content is no longer linked to a site, but is considered an element in itself, whose consultations, quality and even location can be monitored, both inside and outside the government web.

These functions embody the concepts of virality, but also allow the content to be managed inside and outside the web, once again allowing more detailed analyses of user behaviour and greater monitoring of the information displayed on the websites.

In addition to these advanced functions, the video platform has, as with the other two devices, allowed the Ministries to enjoy reliable, high-performing technology, free-of-charge, allowing them to use tools to unify the main public sites, thereby creating one single network, with contents, indicators and common, high-performing means of promotion.

The future of pooling

Although the current projects provide satisfaction, the pooling process is far from finished, as on the one hand the reduction in financial means encourages it and on the other hand it allows relative stability in its development and management over time, despite changes in government. As the current challenge for Ministries is the increasing number of digital media, the aim of the SIG over the next few years is to simplify the technical side of website management for the Ministries, by providing them with pre-formatted tools adapted for the characteristics of government communication, particularly as regards security and accessibility for people with disabilities. This also makes it possible to free up time for the most important aspect, the content, rather than devoting time to the vessel, as is too often the case.

The Stat@gouv system operates with AT internet Analyser NX technology

The E-régie system operates with Real Media 24/7 Open Adstream 7.3 technology

The Fil Gouv system was tailor-made and operates with AT internet Analyser NX technology for video monitoring.

Presentation of the “E-régie” Inter-Ministerial Ad-Server

Context

The setting up of the Stat@Gouv system demonstrated that the government web was an asset for government communication, but until then had been used insufficiently or not at all as an online support for the communication campaigns coordinated by the SIG. In fact, between 20 and 25 million web users visit a government website every month. Government sites thus represent one of the leading networks of websites in France.

However, there is a recurrent and increasing need to use public websites as an online vector for inter-Ministerial communication, but these websites can respond only by displaying unsatisfactory logos or links.

Furthermore, in addition to the budgets spent on purchasing online space on private websites, it could be interesting to integrate promotional spaces dedicated to the Government’s online campaigns onto public websites.

In March 2006 therefore, it was decided to set up a system which made it possible to manage ads on government websites. The system currently includes some fifty websites and is continuing to grow.

Objectives of the E-régie project

The Ad Server is an IT device (software+server) for managing promotional campaigns which makes it possible to programme the dynamic display of ads on web pages.

The main objectives of the Ad Server system, known as E-régie, are to:

- disseminate Ministerial campaigns which include an online aspect on government websites;
- make it possible to distribute information ads instantly in the event of crisis communications;
- promote traffic within the government web (distribution of specific campaigns depending on affinities and the observed practices of the users of different government websites,

create ad hoc campaigns for government sites which do not have a web communication budget);

- analyse and monitor as closely as possible the conversion rate of these campaigns with a view to managing them closely and dynamically.

Formats selected for ads

The formats selected for E-régie are IAB standards, in animated gif or flash format with a maximum size of 50 Ko.:

- 468*60
- 728*90
- 180*150
- 300*250

Definition of campaign priorities

Campaigns linked to the following areas are considered as priorities:

- government action;
- an event, an item of news;
- current government information.

Levels are defined per campaign and per website.

There are three possible levels :

- 1=high
- Priority government campaign (eg. apprenticeship)
- Government campaign linked to current events (eg. pre-completed declaration)
- Government campaign of a Ministry on its own site (eg. sustainable development on the Ecology website)
- A government campaign by a Ministry will have a high level of priority on its own website.
- 2=medium
- Government campaign in affinity with the target of the website
- Promotion of a website connected to current events
- 3=low
- Government campaign of a lower priority than the target
- Promotion of a new website

After graduate studies in public law and political science, **Bruno Denoyelle** led a consulting agency in public communication (2002-2008) before becoming communication adviser at the Information Service of the French Government ("Service d'Information du Gouvernement" - SIG - Prime Minister's office), where he is in charge of digital and international questions (2008-present)."

Chapter 3

Communicating Europe: What is at stake

Communicating Europe in a true partnership: challenges and opportunities

Vincenzo Le Voci



Is it time to assess the current situation of how governments, institutions and public authorities are communicating in Europe and on Europe? In such a complex scenario, where the global crisis is affecting international relations, single countries, banks, individual communities and single citizens, does it still make sense to get together and try to set up coherent and forward-looking communication plans or are we just endeavouring to do this just for the sake of justifying chimeric strategies just as part of our existence?

Communication as a true challenge. Translating theory into practice has always been the main dilemma. How is it being done in Europe?

The Club of Venice has been trying to investigate on this issue throughout its several meetings, fostering exchange of best practice and developing its own agenda around two main routes: Capacity building and a systematic analysis of the different national scenarios.

The main question is: should we continue to talk about a “European communication policy”?

And the answer can only be one: YES. It is a “virtual” policy with an enormous potential as it can lead policies towards success. It can make the difference. The chain of events that took place in the last 10 years in the field of communication provide indisputable evidence that there is a way to communicate together on common values, provided that there is the political will, honesty, transparency and that the key players operate on equal footing.

Communication is a crucial task. What is at stake? Governmental and institutional actors have no doubts:

- Filling the gap between the EU and its citizens: a priority and a must
- Bridging between representative and participative democracy
- Going local
- Accountability
- Joint effort and coherence

In order to achieve concrete goals in this field, two main conditions are to be fulfilled: 1) to have a mission, a vision; 2) to have the communication skills required to operate in a win-win context.

And the two winning factors are the above-mentioned common values (European identity and consciousness of what has been achieved since the creation of the Union, in terms of citizens' rights), and the certainty of the EU's concrete impact.

The difficulties and challenges encountered throughout the recent years are well known:

1. Capacity building: the need to claim and legitimate the role of public communicators – seeking models, proving impact, consolidating structures from evidence of successful examples
2. The so called “blame game” and the lack of political engagement, two interrelated factors which complicate life for communicators, owing in particular to:
 - The peculiarity of the EU Council structure, where the Ministers are called to play a dual role: as representatives of the national interests and key components of the Council’s authority as an institution; hence, the need to strike the right balance and seek convergences
 - MS’ different structures, sensibilities and priorities: European Affairs are dealt within the Prime Minister’s umbrella or within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or by independent agencies and committees (in particular, in the accessing countries) or in some cases are not well framed
 - Electoral turn over and possible change in political objectives
 - The conjunctural crisis and consequent structural changes (see the recent trends in the UK as depicted in Anne Gregory’s contribution to this book)
3. The negative outcome of the French and Dutch referenda in 2005 and the Irish referendum in 2008)
4. The negative record in the turnout of the June 2009 European elections
5. The traditional “cacophony” of the EU institutions
6. The apparent decreasing interest in Brussels-based European press.

Against this scenario, communication professionals have been striving to give their utmost to search a common road for cooperation. There is no alternative to seeking joint strategies, examining realistic orientations, sharing views and best practice, research and analysis, and drawing lessons to act together for the benefit of citizens.

We have been witnessing Europe’s progress in the 90s: concrete success in a number of policies, enlargement euphoria, a new wave in the framework of transparency and access to information (from Maastricht, through Birmingham, Nice, Amsterdam...through the winning examples of pan-European information campaigns for the European Single Act and the euro introduction)

Meanwhile, in the 90s the most developed model of inter-institutional cooperation and of cooperation between the EU institutions and Member States as regards information and communication about the EU was “PRINCE”, defined in the EU budget as an “Information programme for the European citizen - information activities for specific policies”.

PRINCE was not strictly speaking a ‘programme’, but rather a mechanism aiming at financing priority information projects on the EU to be carried out in partnership between the EU institutions and Member States, with the latter playing therein a minor role, administratively speaking.

PRINCE was set up in 1995, largely upon the initiative of the European Parliament, to concentrate initially on three priority topics: “Citizens of Europe”, “Building Europe together”, and “The Euro”.

According to the European Commission, PRINCE was going to be governed by the following principles:

- Proximity and decentralisation: for this purpose, a significant number of projects financed under PRINCE were conceived, defined, carried out and followed up “on the spot” by the Commission representations in the Member States, the European Parliament being associated via its external Offices.
- Partnership: this would concern both the Member States (on the basis of signed conventions) and civil society (by means of calls for proposals).
- Flexibility and transparency: the action set out clear and visible priorities and aimed to enable the Commission and Parliament to plan within a solid budgetary framework.

But in practice... it hasn't worked that way.

- The Commission's representations in the Member States often encountered difficulties in managing the PRINCE funds (lack of a true “authorizing officer”; no capacity for absorption, owing to insufficient human resources).
- The various partnership formulae with the Member States have not given the expected results (excess of bureaucracy, lack of planning).
- The PRINCE budget was progressively split into several budget lines, with responsibility for allocation divided between several Commission DGs. The lack of a “central” interlocutor within the Commission for PRINCE has increased the difficulties in the budgetary planning and in the implementation of the various information activities. This dispersal has generated further delays in the examination of the initiatives envisaged by the Member States and often discouraged them from launching proposals.
- The European Parliament and the Commission committed themselves from the outset to fixing the guidelines of PRINCE within the Inter-institutional Group on Information (IGI). But because of the mechanisms and balances of power in the budget exercise, there has always been the risk that the IGI be perceived as a debating forum without real decision-making capacity. And in this context, the Council has very often highlighted that the inter-institutional cooperation was unsatisfactory.

The new impetus came from Commissioners Vitorino and Wallström. As I mentioned earlier, the last ten years have marked a revolution in terms of interaction among the EU institutions and between institutions and Member States.

From 2001 to 2004 the Commission adopted three communications tabling proposals for the reinforcement of cooperation in the field of information policy and communication strategies on the EU, which led the Council to adopt three corresponding sets of Conclusions¹.

As a matter of fact, the new concept of “work in partnership” started to be developed by the Commission in 2004. In its communication COM 196 of 22 April 2004 it introduced the different

1 Commission proposals: 10511/01 (COM(2001) 354 final of 29.06.2001), 10875/1/02 REV 1 (COM(2002) 350 final of 28.10.2002 and 9068/04 (COM(2004) 196 final of 22.04.2004).
Council conclusions: 13944/1/01 REV 1, 14925/02 and 9962/04 + ADD 1.

models of partnership (management, strategic, one-off) which immediately drew the interest of several Member States.

Meanwhile, "Communicating Europe" reached its highest peak in Ireland in spring 2004, with a huge international conference in Wicklow. But something in the "enthusiastic mechanism" got wrong and, in the course of one year, we crashed in a totally different scenario. And the crisis generated in France and the Netherlands from the negative referenda which cast a shadow on the entire process. Counter-reactions ? Well, it's an old story with « shades of gray » : to make it short, after a long "reflection period", the adoption by the Commission of its Action Plan¹ and Plan-D², and in particular of its White Paper for a "European Communication Policy" (yes, denominated "a policy") (February 2006)³, and a long consultation process with four international conferences⁴, it was only in October 2007 that the Commission submitted its paper « Communicating Europe in Partnership »⁵. With a disappointing proposal: signing an Inter-Institutional Agreement, which was deemed by Member States an insufficient and weak instrument to relaunch the cooperation on communication.

In particular, the Council rejected the Commission's proposal for an IIA since, rather than containing concrete measures to reinforce cooperation, it was deemed bringing Member States additional unnecessary requirements and burdening administrative obligations. And, most important, taking into account the different Member States' sensibilities in this field, there was a potential risk that, by agreeing with the IIA, the Council would act "ultra vires".

Nevertheless, in April 2008 the Council left the door open to an alternative option by adopting a set of conclusions⁶ in which it gave mandate to the Slovenian presidency to negotiate tri-laterally to reach a viable solution. After negotiating from May to October 2008, the « Trilogue » gave positive results which led to the signature, on 22 October 2008, during the French presidency, of the Joint Declaration « *Communicating Europe in Partnership* »⁷.

It took so long –someone said- to "give birth to a little mouse"... But it was the first time that a political commitment in this field was put "pen to paper": in the common declaration we can read about "synergies", "role of the IGI", "selection of common priorities", "pragmatic partnership", "networking", the "going local" approach, the involvement of civil society, multilingualism, reporting exercise....altogether, in a renewed spirit.

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- 1 Action Plan to improve communicating Europe by the Commission - doc. 11547/05 - Commission doc. SEC(2005) 985 final.
 - 2 Doc. 14775/05 (COM(2005) 494 final of 13.10.2005
 - 3 Commission's White Paper: doc. 5992/06 (COM(2006) 35 final of 02.02.2006); Council reaction: report from the Working Party on Information - doc. 10226/06 + COR 1.
 - 4 Madrid, October 2006 (public opinion); Bergamo, November 2006 (citizen's engagement - civil society); Helsinki, December 2006 (media's involvement) and Berlin, January 2007 (identifying the most suitable instrument to reinforce cooperation).
 - 5 Doc. 13829/07 (COM(2007) 568 final) + ADD 1 (SEC(2007) 1265 = impact assessment), ADD 2 (SEC(2007) 1267 = summary of impact analysis) + ADD 3 (COM(2007) 569 final = proposal for an interinstitutional agreement).
 - 6 Doc. 8528/08 of 17.04.2008.
 - 7 OJ C 13 of 20.01.2009, p. 3.

Recent developments:

- 2009 joint priorities
 - European elections (June 2009)
 - Energy and climate change
 - 20th Anniversary of the democratic changes in Central and Eastern Europe
 - Europe's response to the financial crisis and the economic slowdown
- 2010-2011 joint priorities
 - Climate action and Energy (including energy security)
 - Driving the economic recovery and mobilizing new sources of growth (including the Europe 2020 strategy)
 - Making the Lisbon Treaty work for citizens

with the Council pointing out that flexibility (adaptation of the priorities to the national realities as needed and due attention to the macro-regional dimension) must be taken into account.

Let's look briefly at the current trends:

Partnership in progress

- Tri-lateral (Commission+MS+EP)
 - 18 Management Partnership Agreements (MPAs) (AT,BE,DE,EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, IT, LV, LT, MT, PL, PT, SI, SK, SE)
 - MPAs in preparation (RO, BG)
 - 3 Strategic Partnership Agreements (CY, CZ, IRL) (CY and CZ could evolve into a MPA...)
 - One-Off Partnership Agreements: door still open
 - First 3 MPAs evaluated (DE, SI, HU)

Budget: limited, but with a gradual well promising increase (2009: 6.3M€; 2010: 7.3M€; 2011: 10.3M€; 2012: 11M€)

Types of activities: information campaigns for youngsters and in schools, teachers' training, pedagogical toolkits, environmental awareness-raising campaigns, discussion forums, seminars, conferences, website activities, social media, online surveys, contests (EU quizzes, online games), concerts, festivals, publications

- Bi-lateral (Commission+EP)

European Public Spaces (EPS); they have a key role in the promotion of the EU's cultural dimension, with focus on each Member State's richness. Currently activated in 13 capitals: Berlin, Copenhagen, Dublin, Helsinki, Lisbon, Madrid, Nicosia, Prague, Riga, Rome, Stockholm, Tallinn, Vienna

Budget: 1.44 million € (= 110.000€ per EPS)

Types of activities: LUX Prize / European Media Programme Prize, Theatre, Films, Exhibitions, Young artists' performances, Children's competitions, Lectures and debates on EU issues, Book presentations.

And... here comes the support given by the Venice Club in this field

With the great cooperation of the Press and Information Department of the Austrian Federal Chancellery, the Club organized two constructive workshops in March 2009 and March 2010 which

were attended by representatives from Member States and institutions and enabled all the players to clarify outstanding issues and focus on possible ways and means to improve and expedite the implementing measures. This trend is confirmed in 2011: the parties involved are increasingly interacting and trying to resolve the operational difficulties, and this goes to the advantage of the whole mechanism...and ultimately, of the citizens.

In practice,

concrete **PARTNERSHIP ACHIEVEMENTS:**

- Commission agreed with the principle of equivalence in the procurement procedures: good deal!
- All key players endeavouring to act more and more in line with commonly agreed communication priorities
- Increase in networking
- More impact in terms of « going local »

real **CHALLENGES:**

equal footing

- * limited budget
- * need to harmonize negotiating standards
- * need more flexibility to adapt priorities to the local reality
- * improve networking and cooperation with the intermediary bodies
- * need to better identify the priorities from the outset – get out of generic definitions

advance planning

- * evaluation: criteria and actors
- * quid of the countries who haven't signed partnership agreements?
- * how to see partnership agreements? as "intermediary" instruments? as "complementary" instruments? as part of cross-cutting plans?
- * need to share information with Member States on the EPS' added value

...which, added to other **HUGE COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES:**

- EEAS' communication strategy and Public Diplomacy in progress
- Commissioner Reding's mandate : a shift in the communication objectives? What impact on the inter-institutional agenda? One Commission's communication approach or more sectoral approaches?
- Relations with civil society

...do not make the communicator's life easy!!!!

The recipe to **build a true communication policy** remains unchanged:

- Emphasise capacity building: push on training and exchange of models
- Promote mutual trust, cooperation and transparency among the key actors
 - Reinforce partnership programmes
 - Create and develop more European Public Spaces
 - Monitor implementation and cost-efficiency
 - Set up a structured evaluation system
- Conciliate priorities (national, trans-national and pan-European)

As it stems from the contributions of many friends and colleagues to this publication, the Club of Venice continues to play by all means an outstanding role in this framework. I stand ready and honoured to provide my humble support to make this happen.

Vincenzo Le Voci, co-coordinator of the agenda of the Venice Club, is a Council official since 1992. He has worked on Transparency and Information Policy issues since 2001 and is currently coordinating the work of the Working Party on Information. Within the EU Council Secretariat he consolidated his experience by working for the Linguistic Division, Research and Development, Education and Culture and Staff Training Depts. Before reaching the EU framework in 1992 he worked in the NATO as Housing Manager for the US Air Force (1985-1991).

Management Partnerships: the Club's impact on the recent developments

*The Austrian experience: leading constructive discussions
as a key to reinforcing partnership esprit*

Claus Hörr



"There is this Club of Venice. Go there. Lots of interesting people gather there." This is what our dear friend Maria Stoppacher¹, who sadly died much too early, told me after I had started my new job at the Federal Press Service in 2004. I was hired to take care of all the journalists and their direct enquiries during Austria's EU presidency. Well, lucky me - I was about to meet my counterparts in Europe. Apart from the fact that Venice is always worth a trip in November, on November 18th I was on my way to San Servolo. In short:

Expectations surpassed

After quietly following the discussions, I realized that "Communicating Europe in Partnership", a term I had heard of about approximately 2 million times before, appeared to be real at the Club's meetings. The people there lived it and continued to do so until today. If you need a contact person for organizing an event in Brussels - there you have it. If you need examples for EU-TV-Ad-campaigns, you need to look no further. If you need information on how other governments present themselves on social media pages, you got it - sometimes even via the VeniceNet forum . If it looks like you are going to fail due to bureaucracy - this is the place you need to turn to for help.

¹ Maria Stoppacher was Director-General of the Austrian Federal Press Service. She died in 2004 in the Tsunami in Thailand.

Informal, Chatham House Rules¹

The whole thing works instantaneously, informal under Chatham House Rules - this may be the reason why it is successful. Opinions are exchanged frankly and problems are openly addressed. No one needs to worry that statements are taken as commitments. The aim is to create mutual understanding and helping each other. This leads me to the next point:

“Management Partnership”²

After a hesitant start, “Management Partnership” has now become the role model of collaboration among the many institutions, which deal with the topic of “Communicating Europe”. While in 2008, after the Austrian delegation agreement, only three EU member states were part of it, today there are 18, and negotiations with some more are being carried on right now. Lots of it was achieved thanks to the Club of Venice - a small portion of the success story also goes to Austria. By 2006 the Management Partnership was discussed at almost every plenary meeting. It was all about swapping ideas for concrete projects e.g. how to convey more information about Europe in to schools kids, projects about the climate change or how the European Parliament is elected and lots more. Unforgotten are lots and lots of discussions on how to get the partnership off the ground faster and help it come to life. Our debates were always frank and constructive.

Had it not been for these discussions, I doubt that Austria would have been on board since 2008. Without the experiences of the pioneers from Germany, Hungary and Slovenia our start would have been much later and more than bumpy. Frankly, I am not even sure that I would have gotten the advantages of this partnership. Please allow me to dearly thank Waltraud Jahn-Hommer, Judit Gyárfas, Nada Serajnik Sraka and Claus Sørensen and the team of the commission, who sometimes had a hard time with us.

Workshops

Sometime in 2008 the topic became really dominant. It would have gone beyond the scope of the plenaries and, I’m pretty sure, it would have started to bore some people.

Fortunately, the Club came up with the idea of organizing workshops for special subjects earlier, everything on an informal basis of course. So it was pretty obvious one had to be arranged for “Management Partnership”. No sooner said than done, the first one took place the following February in Vienna³. The group came up with an analysis of the strengths and the weakness of the management partnerships. Furthermore, it presented some proposals on how to make the partnerships better and fill them with more life.

Some of the strengths are: the institutionalized collaboration of the key players, the systematic planning and, of course, the fact that it is fully funded by the Commission.

Some of the challenges: the administrative complexity, the question of evaluation and the fact that the communication priorities among the institutions are presented pretty late.

1 <http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/about/chathamhouserule/>

2 see: COM(2004)196

3 February 13th 2009, 23 participants from Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia, Spain and Austria as well as the Commission, the Council Secretariat, the Parliament; for details see respective protocol at VeniceNet.

Some of the proposals:

- Applying for grants is currently an extensive procedure; concentrate on procurements
- Designate an Intermediary Body which is in your chain of command
- Projects can also run over the whole period of the Delegation Agreement (up to 4 years)
- Try to concentrate on the strategic approach of the management partnership.

The “Austrian Formula”

One topic of the workshops was the obligatory use of the European Financial Regulation.

In every day life and work this obligation proved to be extremely time-consuming as the intermediary bodies, i.e. the institutions responsible for the projects, often simply did not have enough knowledge on how to handle the EU financial rules. One suggestion therefore was, after the Commission had given its blessing, simply to install national financial regulations.

The Commission acted on this suggestion and empowered it at the end of 2009.

This new opportunity was one of the central ideas of the second workshop concerning management partnerships which took place in early 2010 in Vienna. The Commission presented its basic principles on how the Member States, if they wish so, could apply the national financial rules. According to that the Commission may accept that the audit, accounting and procurement systems of the Intermediary Body are equivalent (art. 56 Financial Regulation). For that the following conditions have to be fulfilled:

- Respect of fundamental principles (same “philosophy”: transparency, proportionality, equal treatment, non-discrimination)
- EU Public Procurement Directive transposed and applied
- A declaration, signed by both sides, Commission and Member State, has to be amended in the Delegation Agreement.

This is just one of the many examples on how the Club of Venice has made an impact over the past 25 years. I want to state it again: the key of the success was, is and always will be its informal character. It makes it possible to realize things which - done in an official way - would take much longer to become reality.

However, truth be told: even the Club of Venice will not solve the European communication problem. This would require more political inspiration, political will and “guts”.

In any case, we, the Club, can proud ourselves about having raised awareness, touched on sensitive issues and found intellectual and very practical solutions. First and foremost we have created a mutual and deep appreciation - be it among the Member States or the institutions and yes - quite simply in the “Club”!

Claus Hörr, Federal Chancellery of Austria, Director at Federal Press Service, responsible for Media Service and EU-Communications (since 2004). Prior to that, radio journalist in Vienna with special focus on European issues.

Thanks to Maria Stoppacher for opening me the doors of the Venice Club and to my friend Peter Leinfellner for translating.

Final Report Introduction and Summary

- English version -

**Evaluation of the work
of the Management Partnership "aktion europa"
between the Federal Government and the European Commission**

aktion europa



Die
Bundesregierung



EUROPAISCHES PARLAMENT



Europäische Kommission

Contracting Authority:



Presse- und Informationsamt
der Bundesregierung

com.X Institut

Submitted by: com.X - Institut für Kommunikations-Analyse & Evaluation

03.11.2009

Evaluation report on "Aktion Europa"

contracted by the German Presse und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung

1. Introduction and themes of the evaluation

The European Commission's Communication of 2 July 2002 presented a policy concept on how to better communicate to the general public. The prime objective of the information and communication strategy is *"to improve perceptions of the European Union, its institutions and their legitimacy by enhancing familiarity with and comprehension of its tasks, structure and achievements and establishing dialogue with the general public."* The strategy aims at closer inter-institutional cooperation and the development of structured partnerships with the Member States.

One of the three possible forms of partnership offered to the Member States is the "Management Partnership" which requires the respective partners of the EU to set up management structures dedicated to the partnership with the staffing and financial resources being contributed by the respective Member State whilst the EU funds the measures. By providing a planning and management structure the partner ensures that these funds (in addition to the other Member State activities designed to communicate European issues) are used for measures of the EU's information and communication strategy. In December 2005 the Federal Republic of Germany signed the delegation agreement, thereby becoming the first Member State to enter into a Management Partnership of this kind with the EU. The delegation agreement sets out the tasks and regulates the details of implementing the communication measures, the reporting duties and the use of control instruments.

The work of the Management Partnership is implemented by two entities: the coordination team and the intermediary body. The coordination team steers the activities of the Partnership and prepares an annual communication plan. The EU is represented by the European Commission Representation in Germany and representatives of the European Parliament Information Office in Germany whilst the Federal Republic is represented by the Foreign Office and the Press and Information Office of the Federal Republic. The latter has a dual function as it is represented in the coordination team and also acts as intermediary body with the administrative responsibility for implementing the projects of the communication plan. Following a total of 14 fully implemented public relations projects from the three communication plans of 2005, 2006 and 2007 the work of the Management Partnership as a whole is to be evaluated as from 2008. The evaluation takes into consideration all aspects of relevance to the assessment of the Management Partnership. In addition to the members of the coordination team and the intermediary body (internal stakeholders), members of the civil society operating in communication and public relations work for the dissemination of European policy are also incorporated who in some cases have implemented projects at an operational level or who are to be viewed as important external stakeholders even if they are not directly involved in projects. All are encompassed by the evaluation through in-depth interviews.

The evaluation similarly focuses on the communication projects themselves. On the basis of project documents that provide information as to the nature, extent, implementation and results of the projects, a meta-analysis is conducted that gives a summary assessment and classification of the projects.

1 An information and communication strategy for the European Union, COM (2002) 350 final.

The evaluation is intended to answer the following fundamental questions, classified according to efficacy, relevance and efficiency:

1. How effective is the work of the Management Partnership?

- To what extent has the Management Partnership been basically able to implement the EU's communication priorities and to bring them into line with those of the Federal Government?
- Has the Management Partnership created added value compared with the public relations work so far performed to communicate Europe in Germany?
- What is the influence of the Management Partnership on the activities of the partners involved? Have activities of the partners merely been substituted or has the communication of Europe in Germany really been improved?
- Have synergy effects been created between the stakeholders involved as a result of the Management Partnership that extend beyond its scope?

2. How relevant is the work of the Management Partnership?

- To what extent do the topics addressed by the Management Partnership correspond to the communication priorities of the European Commission and the Federal Government?
- How are the results achieved from the communication measures to be assessed in terms of objectives and the envisaged target groups?

3. How efficient is the work of the Management Partnership?

- Were the funds provided used appropriately under consideration of the objectives achieved?
- Are the structures and procedures of the Management Partnership efficient and are they appropriate to contributing to the achievement of Management Partnership objectives?

2 Summary

The main objectives of the Management Partnership are "to improve perceptions of the European Union, its institutions and their legitimacy by enhancing familiarity with and comprehension of its tasks, structure and achievements and establishing dialogue with the general public".¹

The Management Partnership in Germany largely satisfies these objectives. This assumption is founded on a meta-analysis² of the 14 measures of the Management Partnership in the evaluation period from 2005 to 2007, and also on in-depth interviews with 19 current and former members of all four EU institutions involved in the German Management Partnership and with 18 representatives of civil society organisations concerned with Europe.³

Important target groups are addressed by the Management Partnership projects. These are primarily young people and also journalists/multipliers along with the general public. The measures implemented are usually dialogue-based. Optimisation potential does of course exist and there is

1 An Information and Communication Strategy for the European Union, COM(2002) 350 final, p. 11

2 Meta-analysis means that the measures, some of which were already completed, were not the direct focus of the analysis but rather the documents and evaluations existing on them.

3 An impact analysis (ideally before and after) in the target groups was not envisaged for the evaluation and was also no longer possible, which is why the term "assumption" is used.

scope to achieve even more reach and efficacy. However, with an overall budget of € 1.7 million for the measures of the first three years, their results and the impact that may be derived from them are considerable. At all events the measures represent a quantitative and qualitative added value compared to the endeavours to communicate Europe in Germany up to now. An additional objective is also achieved, namely an intensification of the exchange of ideas and cooperation between the EU and the Federal Government in communicating European issues, with recognisable effects and synergies that go beyond the scope of the Management Partnership itself.

2.1. How effective is the work of the Management Partnership?

To what extent has the Management Partnership been basically able to implement the EU's communication priorities and to bring them into line with those of the Federal Government?

As a consequence of the shortcomings recognised in communicating Europe, the 14 measures implemented between 2005 and 2007 focus completely or predominantly on communicating fundamental European values and basic issues of the EU. This similarly applies to 14 of the 16 measures of the following years. Gearing these measures to communicating fundamental European issues makes sense and is commensurate with the basic conviction of the partners in the Management Partnership. By contrast, if issues of a more topical nature had been chosen even the formulation of the messages to be communicated may have been considerably more difficult in view of the political differences between the institutions of the European Union and amongst the governmental partners themselves.

Young people are the prime target group: eleven of the fourteen measures in the period between 2005 and 2007 and eleven of the sixteen measures implemented in the following years are aimed at this target group.

According to "Plan D", formats are designed to be citizen friendly and dialogue oriented: eleven of the fourteen measures are dialogue-based with the majority of the measures focusing more on quality than on quantity of the contacts. Has the Management Partnership created added value compared with the public relations work so far performed to communicate European policy in Germany?

The Management Partnership has led to an intensification of the dialogue-based communication of Europe to the public in general and young people in particular. Measures with this approach already exist in the Federal Press and Information Office and German Foreign Office, but the added value of the Management Partnership is essentially undisputable amongst internal and external stakeholders alike, even if viewed pragmatically, this is primarily a quantitative effect (*"more money for more measures"*)¹.

All in all the Management Partnership has given prominence to the topic of Europe on the communication agenda even without any national reasons existing for this. In the year of the German EU Council Presidency the budget for communicating Europe in the Federal Press and Information Office was € 6.6 million compared to some € 1.7 million in years without any special influential factor. Against this background the € 700,000 per annum placed at the disposal of the Management Partnership represent a "background hum" or a sound footing for the communication of Europe. The Management Partnership also has a positive effect on the exchange of ideas and cooperation between European and national entities. Whilst this happens even without the

1 Short literal or paraphrased citations without indicating source here and in the following always in italics and taken from the interviews with the internal stakeholders.

Management Partnership, one new aspect is that a "constant structured dialogue takes place" through the Management Partnership. The involvement of two national institutions (Foreign Office and Federal Press and Information Office) in the Management Partnership is therefore viewed by all to be an advantage. The joint appearance of the Federal Government, EU Parliament and Commission in communication measures under the logo or roof of "*aktion europa*" has a positive signal effect: "*We are pulling in one direction in matters of basic values and fundamental issues of Europe and beyond.*"

What is the influence of the Management Partnership on the activities of the partners involved? Have activities of the partners merely been substituted or has the communication of Europe in Germany really been improved? A distinct increase in the communication of Europe compared with the ex-ante status is clearly recognisable. Whilst the substitution of the activities of the partners to communicate Europe is possible, in the overall analysis it can be assumed that there have been no mentionable substitutions. The existing relationship of trust and self-regulation in the stakeholder group are the tools of control here. A special role is attributed to the regular dialogue between the partners on "other" activities in the area of communicating Europe.

5 The Commission's contribution in the period of reflection and beyond: Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate COM(2005) 494 final. [Note from the authors: Following the rejection of the EU constitutional treaty in France and the Netherlands.]

Have synergy effects been created between the stakeholders involved as a result of the Management Partnership that extend beyond its scope?

Synergies beyond the scope of the Management Partnership may be discerned but are difficult to quantify. The regular cooperation in the Management Partnership primarily facilitates working together also within other contexts. All in all a fundamentally better level of information is achieved on planned and ongoing campaigns and measures amongst the partners, permitting overlaps in content and scheduling to be avoided.

Synergy effects are also achieved at the project level as a result of the continuation of successful measures of the Management Partnership by national partners such as nationwide information events for young people promoted by the Federal Press and Information Office and staged by the Bürger Europas e.V. Another synergy effect is the fact that the national partners now regard the basic communication of Europe beyond the scope of the Management Partnership to be a natural part of their work.

2.2 How relevant is the work of the Management Partnership?

To what extent do the topics addressed by the Management Partnership correspond to the communication priorities of the European Commission and the Federal Government?

The Inter-Institutional Group on Information¹ (IGI) has prepared six priority information subjects from which the Management Partnership has selected the "Future of the Union" and has addressed this focal subject in 5 of 14 measures. This subject was chosen under consideration of the known information and communication requirements of German citizens. The remaining nine measures fall under the heading of subject area 6, namely "Other Information and Communication Measures".

¹ The Inter-Institutional Group on Information (IGI) is composed of representatives of the Commission, of the EU Council and of the European Parliament. It is responsible for coordinating the communication of EU issues.

The partners discuss the annual communication priorities of the Commission and, where possible, incorporate these in the national communication themes. Communicating Europe through measures of the Management Partnership and event related national communication complement each other. The *"Council Presidency acted as a driving force in the work of the Management Partnership"* for example. In 2007 larger common projects were implemented such as the "50 Cities Tour"; outside "special" years such as this the Management Partnership ensures a high basic level of communication on Europe, also on the agenda of the Member State.

Fundamental differences between Federal Government and European communication arose only in the run up to the "European elections 2009" (communication plans 2008/2009). The importance of the elections is undisputed by the partners. Nevertheless, the Federal Government largely rejected promotional measures with reference to the judgement passed by the Federal Constitutional Court of 1977 "Restrictions on state publicity work in pre-election periods". This "conflict" implies that with longer term planning under consideration of "major events" such as elections, the different expectations placed on the Management Partnership by its members and any conflicting objectives can be avoided; this planning could then also include deliberations on a more flexible use of funding by the partners. How are the results achieved from the communication measures to be assessed in terms of objectives and the envisaged target groups?

All in all the stakeholders in the Management Partnership assume that the great majority of the measures will reach the target groups and achieve the communication objectives. The analysis of the measures largely confirms this estimation. By contrast, individual projects, such as the "Young People's Congress", or the "Theatre Workshop" have not been able to achieve the intended effects at all or not to the full extent. Projects implemented on the basis of an action-oriented, interactive and usually educational approach function particularly well in terms of achieving the intended objectives. They have relatively high numbers of participants and comparatively high media range due to attractive ideas, functioning cooperation and effective media work. Examples of this are "Young People Train Young People", "Mobile in Europe" or "Teaching Materials". In future one of the focal areas of the measures is to be placed on action-oriented projects.

As in the majority of similar programmes, the measures of the Management Partnership primarily reach people who are interested in politics and Europe and are open to these subjects, as well as the better educated. From the point of view of the participants it would be desirable to also address those who are difficult to reach. This would require a move away from a cognitive to a more emotional approach and a far higher budget. The difficulty of achieving an appropriate target group and measure mix has emerged time and again in the preparation of the communication plans. Fundamentally different approaches compete with each other: is emphasis to be placed on own projects or on the support of civil society projects, for example? Are the citizens to be addressed individually first and foremost or is the target group to be journalists, town mayors and other multipliers. Is the range/coverage all important or is dialogue decisive? There is no doubt about the central importance of young people as target group. It is clear that this problem can never be solved completely but that a balance must be achieved between breadth and depth. This would appear to have been largely successful.

2.3. How efficient is the work of the Management Partnership?

Were the funds provided used appropriately under consideration of the objectives achieved?

In the first three years the Management Partnership implemented 14 projects with a volume of € 1.621 million. In addition € 156,500 was expended in this period on personnel costs at the Federal Press and Information Office with the intermediary body (corresponding to approximately 2 posts).

The Foreign Office states 0.7 posts involved with the Management Partnership, the European Parliament 0.2 and the Commission 0.9, totalling a further € 150,000. Good contact figures or range are achieved with the funds deployed: in excess of 300,000 documented personal and more than 150 million documented medial contacts. This results in an average price of € 4.75 per personal contact and a contact cost per thousand of € 7.10 for the medial contacts (calculated without personnel expenses of the partners).¹

In the estimate of the parties involved at least € 250,000 would have to be available in a Management Partnership per budget year for the Management Partnership to be worthwhile. However, in order to achieve a mentionable impact in Germany, € 700,000 or now € 900,000 p.a. are necessary. The partners view a minimum volume for individual projects of € 40,000 to be expedient because the administrative volume increases enormously with the large number of small projects.

Are the structures and procedures of the Management Partnership efficient and are they appropriate to contributing to the achievement of Management Partnership objectives? Despite the great pressure of time placed on the launch of the German Management Partnership and the pilot character without previous experience, it has nevertheless been possible to realise a number of measures which may be assessed positively all in all. This means that ultimately methods were found using which in the opinion of almost all stakeholders work may be conducted with a view to achieving results on a basis of partnership. However, there are also points of criticism:

The delegation agreement, the central contract for a Management Partnership, is seen to be difficult to understand and in part complicated by the national partners (particularly by the Federal Press and Information Office with the intermediary body). The Commission argues that it is required to satisfy its duty to account for the use of public money and this necessitates corresponding regulations. Irrespective of the contractual regulations the actual cooperation with the Commission and the European Parliament is generally viewed to be very good and partnership-based. The overall bureaucratic expense is estimated to be too high: actual problems at the start arose due to differing German and European procurement and budgetary laws. The employees at the Federal Press Office first had to be familiarised with the latter first. The processes of calling up funding from the EU were also too complicated on the whole and procurements of the Management Partnership are viewed to be more work intensive than is otherwise the case at the Federal Press and Information Office; reporting was also extensive. The distribution of work between coordination team and intermediary body was modified after initial experience. The partners initially assumed that measures adopted by the coordination team would be implemented by the intermediary body largely independently. However, at the request of the partners, working groups were set up for measures with equal representation of partners. Whilst this has created a dual structure which has replaced the original lean idea with only two working levels, it has been possible in this way to bring more expertise to project implementation.

Additional coordination work arises due to the fact that two national partners cooperate in the Management Partnership. Nevertheless, the construction with the Foreign Office and Federal Press and Information Office is viewed to be good because more ideas and know-how are contributed. From the point of view of the European partners, the coordination of the common position of the

1 On the basis of current data a CPT for advertising of € 15 to € 16 can be calculated for newspapers; qualified sales staff contacts may be used as similar comparative value for personal contacts which are usually ten times higher than the calculated 4.75 €. See chapter 7.1 for more detail

Federal Government (represented by the two highest federal authorities) before the meetings of the coordination team would facilitate the speedy adoption of decisions, however. The role of civil society stakeholders remains unclear for the Management Partnership. This is intensified by the differently interpreted and unclear relationship of the Management Partnership to "aktion europa". The Management Partnership appears under the word mark "aktion europa". The "Round Table on Europe Communication" also takes place under this logo. The Round Table is open to the NGOs in particular with the result that some civil society stakeholders have gained the impression that the role of the NGOs is greater in the Management Partnership. There were and continue to be different views amongst the partners on this point. The different views of the relationship between the Management Partnership and "aktion europa", also causes potential in outward presentation and communicative bundling, which is virtually branding, to go unused.

2.4. Recommendations

We derive the following recommendations on the basis of the evaluation results:

Maintain the basic mix of range and dialogue orientation

We recommend that the path so far taken of a mix of "broad-based impact", and "dialogue with the citizens" be maintained, keeping emphasis on the latter. Ideally, projects of the Management Partnership bring together action-oriented approaches that permit the participants to deal in-depth with the complex themes and motivate them to pursue this further, incorporate local stakeholder networks whilst simultaneously making use of the opportunities presented by professional media and communication work. Greater attention should therefore be placed in future on offering and implementing a coherent communication concept with primarily event- and dialogue-oriented formats.

Create a higher ranking process and procedural order for the Management Partnership

Some of the structures and processes followed by the German Management Partnership for four years now have basically not been regulated so that room for interpretation continues to exist and this ultimately affects cooperation. This refers in particular to stipulating the role of the partners in bidding and implementation processes by the intermediary body. The coordination team does make decisions here but rules of procedure for the Management Partnership that group and clarify issues of this nature would be useful.

Define the relationship between the Management Partnership and "aktion europa"

Defining the relationship between the Management Partnership and "aktion europa" is important for the same reason. The incorporation of the Management Partnership measures under the heading of "aktion europa" permits a move towards the creation of a brand identity, provided the partners are suitably visible. This should be intensified because it is difficult to perceive the Management Partnership as one project with joint output. Instead the Management Partnership appears as an entity involved in various measures.

Enhance web presence

The efforts of "branding" could be strengthened by a better common web presence which could also increase range and the dialogue orientation of the measures implemented by the Management Partnership.

Prepare a long-term communication concept

So far the measures have been implemented on the basis of annual planning that correlates the subjects, target groups and communicative approaches and assigns them to projects. It would be a good idea to work on the basis of a written longer term communication concept that analytically derives target groups, themes and the selection of formats. Many basic aspects could also be regulated, providing a framework for the preparation of annual communication plans. Before election years, for example, and under consideration of the strict historically founded limitations to publicity work of the executive in pre-election periods, this would provide scope for common projects to be defined at an early date and permit existing flexibility in the appropriation of funds to be fully exploited, and thereby avoid a situation in which the Federal Government is required to invite tenders for public relations procurement within the framework of the Management Partnership which may be potentially non-constitutional. In the same way, the preparation of a long term communication concept should also basically define which roles the civil society stakeholders may play.

Create transparency with respect to the existing activities of the partners

Whilst the Management Partnership has led to more transparency in terms of which Europe-related communication measures the individual partners implement, this should be systematised, e.g. in the form of a continuously updated and available list. In this way a first analytical foundation would be created for the preparation of a communication concept which can pinpoint gaps or shortcomings with respect to target groups, subjects and formats and also generate synergy effects. This would also facilitate "substitution monitoring". Extending this list to create a database and breaking it down to the scheduling level would also lead to a useful data source, e.g. for NGOs. Coordination problems (in situ), as perceived by the civil society stakeholders, could possibly be avoided in this way.

Systematize the evaluation of measures and reporting within the group of partners

In the same context it is recommended that the evaluation of measures also be systematised to a greater extent. The results of the evaluations so far conducted frequently do not permit a more in-depth comparison and quite often not even a comparison of the base data of measures that are comparable. The contractors should therefore be given binding requirements on the reporting of quantitative ratios capable of standardisation (number of participants, medial range). Systematic knowledge of success and weaknesses of the measures would make further planning easier. However, the reporting within the group of partners should also be presented and discussed in a suitable form.

Simplify procedures and cut bureaucracy

With respect to a possible reduction in bureaucracy in the interaction between the national and European levels the weaknesses perceived by the partners should be examined in terms of their match with reality so as to be able to discuss any specific improvement suggestions making full use of the legal scope available.

In connection with the preparation of a written communication concept suggested above, the partners should also discuss, for example, questions on the desired number and size of the projects to be conducted, along with the administrative expense for the intermediary body, and their formal nature (e.g. are framework agreements expedient or is the transfer of funding to individual partners possible?).

From the Club...to actual cooperation

Philippe Caroyez

Our communication initiatives obviously need to be rubber-stamped by the authorities who beget them but it also has to be stressed that some of the initiatives are actually formulated within the context of the Club itself. Either taking their cue from what is unveiled within this forum or developed as a result of opportunities the Club meetings provide for exchanges of ideas and contacts. This is particularly true in the case of involving several Member States in the implementation of joint communication activities.

Two recent examples can be singled out under this heading.

A common logo for the first Trio Presidency.



Prime Ministers José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero (ES), Herman Van Rompuy (B) and Gordon Bajnai (H) shake their hands at the official presentation of the logo of the Presidencies' Trio

In the light of the initiative devised by Olivier Alsteens, who was the Director-General for External Communication (Belgium) at the time, working in cooperation with his Spanish and Hungarian colleagues, the three countries launched an international competition open to young art and design students, who were required to design a common logo that could nonetheless be adjusted to the needs of the Trio Presidency and the three relevant countries. Over 300 projects were sent in. Adopting the principle of diversity within unity, the three countries each opted for their own selection system (jury, public vote and jury, public vote) on the basis of which 30 projects were submitted to the grand jury, formed by the three countries.

The successful project turned out to be one sent in by a Belgian student.

Against the specific background of the first Trio Presidency, the common logo may have taken the form of three national versions but it did enable the interested parties to act on the basis of a unique identifier, thus underscoring the need to ensure consistency with the approach agreed upon. The project also formed part of the 'Management Partnership' approach, thus representing a new development in terms of a communication campaign involving three Member States.



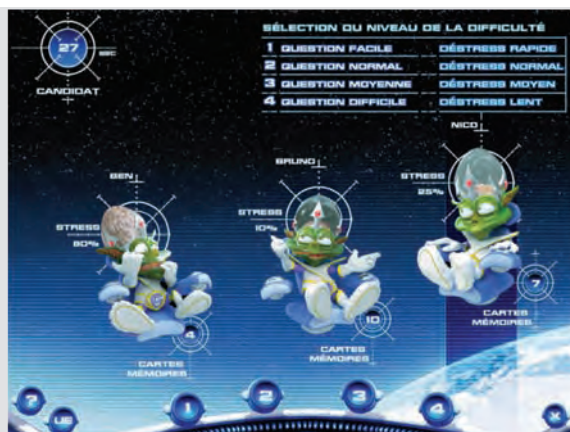
The imminent launch of a networking platform called “Neurodyssée”

Against the background of the ‘Management Partnership’, the Commission representation in Belgium and the Directorate-General for External Communication attached to the Belgian Prime Minister’s Chancellery have been working in close contact with each other to produce a role-playing game called “Neurodyssée”, which is designed to help the over-12s discover Europe.

Awarded the special jury prize during the 2010 “Serious Game Expo” in Lyon and enjoying the support of the European Commission, the game will be available in the 23 European Union languages. What is special about the game is the decision to develop it on a progressive (maps, DVD, on-line) and cooperative basis so as to create a shared approach to ensure the content is gradually expanded.

The shared approach means two conditions have to be met: first of all, the need to arrange for rights to be transferred to the European authorities and all the Member States and, second, the creation, now underway, of an online networking platform, to allow (by late 2011) each Member State to add content (questions, answers and information) and make it available to the other Member States.

Several Club colleagues have shown a keen interest in the initiative and in the idea of distributing a DVD version in their home countries, or even a translation into the language of a candidate country. During the Club’s April 2011 workshop in Budapest, on the theme of “communicating Europe through the classroom”, a priority highlighted by both the Commission and the EU Council’s Working Party on Information, we stressed the need for this kind of system for awarding contracts and the opportunities thus offered – within the context of the ‘Management Partnership’ or elsewhere – for promoting bilateral or multilateral cooperation.



The role of the Internet in the French referendum campaign on the EU Constitutional Treaty

Jean-Yves Nicolas



*presentation made in Venice - plenary,
3-4 November 2005*



The role of the Internet In the referendum campaign on the Constitutional Treaty

**Club of Venice
3-4 November 2005**



ROLE OF THE INTERNET

The first « political » battle online : the French referendum campaign

- **Mobilised :**
 - The party websites
 - The institutional websites
 - The activists websites
 - The internet users
- **The « NO » camp was able to recognize and invest in the field of online information**
 - Very early
 - With a perfect management of the calendar
- **The « YES » has become a « No » to « No »**

Page 2

ROLE OF THE INTERNET

- **Thanks to the Internet, the Internet users have new tools at their disposal to:**
 - Feed the debate: sites, blogs, ...
 - Transfer information : blogs, mails, forums, campaign kit, ...
 - Analyse information : search engines, use of statistical measuring, semantic search

Page 3

ROLE OF THE INTERNET

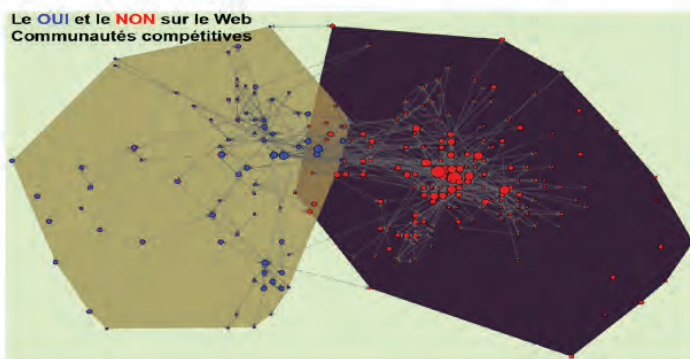
1. The online information reveals a geography

- The websites of the "No" in the referendum were predominantly on the Internet (two times more).
- The websites of the "No" camp had nearly 3 times more links between them (no to no) than the websites of the "Yes" camp.
- The "No" websites have also benefited from a better shift to online media (72 exchange links against 47 for the "Yes" sites).

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ROLE OF THE INTERNET

YES and NO on the competitive web communities

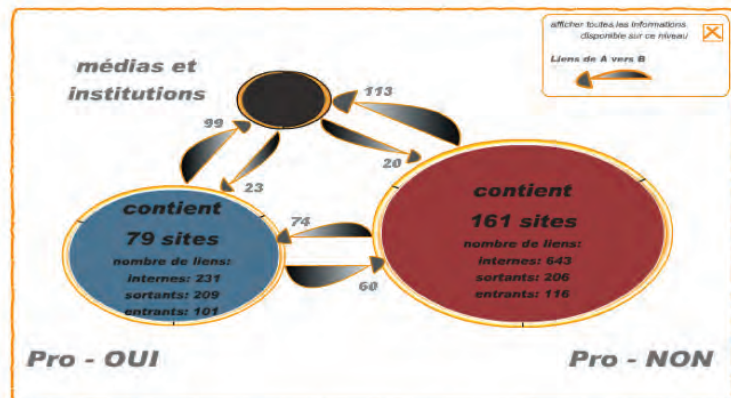


« YES » sites

« No » sites

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ROLE OF THE INTERNET



Page 6

ROLE OF THE INTERNET

2. Activists websites in tight networks

- The websites of associative movements are part of existing networks, with many ramifications to other protest sites, even with communities of internet users.
- The number of websites referring to links is very important within the **reference strategy** : the more a website is put forward on other websites with html links, the more its popularity will enable it to appear at the top of the pages with query results on search engines.
- **Examine and analyse information** : search engines, use of statistical measures, semantic search

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ROLE OF THE INTERNET

3. Party websites wrongfully integrated in the debate places (forums, blogs, mail)

- The websites of the "Yes" camp were less visible on the Internet. They were more connected to the network of institutional websites than to associative or community websites, which could attract and bring the internet users together.
- Those websites, most recent in their establishment, were less referred to by other sites and especially less referred to by those sites that allow the transfer of information (forums and blogs). Hence, they emerged less on search engines and were only accessible to an already well informed audience.

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ROLE OF THE INTERNET

4. The institutional websites did not take off

- Almost exclusively composed of links to institutional websites, moderately consulted and with a low presence on community networks, where the debate has been shifted.
- The combination of a network of less important, less consulted and less diverse websites ends up in a network that is relatively cut off from the outside world and therefore not very accessible from the outside.

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ROLE OF THE INTERNET

Recommendations :

- Consider the web as an information area where networks are being formed in a logic of area occupation.
- Prefer multi-thematic approaches on the European debate, in order to have a pattern of websites.
- Set up a network (distribution list) of on-line actors (think tanks, pressure groups, institutions)
- The role of websites is to inform or to organise discussions. It is therefore recommended to be complete and to use a variety of links in order to safeguard neutrality.

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ROLE OF THE INTERNET

5. New techniques open a field for debate

- **Hypertext as a pedagogic law tool**
 - The tree structure of legal texts, consisting references to other texts which complicates or even inhibits reading, becomes easier to read with a hypertext structure.
- **Statistical analysis of texts - semantic case**
 - The referendum debate has resulted in interesting statistical work and analysis about the occurrences of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe (TCE).
 - This calculation was used as an argument to shed a new light on the text: how many times were the words « market » and « competition » used in comparison to the words « social » or « people », etc.
- **The web has a memory, accessible to all**
 - Be aware that in the information society, the history of statements and positions of the different players are accessible to a very reactive, internet civil society.

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ROLE OF THE INTERNET

- **Viral diffusion of information and cyber activism**

- The website <http://citoyendecision.over-blog.com.br/> has in particular well used the techniques of viral marketing for the dissemination of arguments against the European constitution. They created a « NO chain » on the internet to reach as many people as possible and this in a fast manner.

- **Collaborative tools and collective intelligence in the discussions**

- The collaborative websites such as « Wiki » have been used during the campaign. Common positions, discussion issues built in a collaborative way, have emerged.
- Viral marketing allows us to test campaigns, ideas and arguments "in vivo".

Recommendations :

- Watch the Internet to track the appearance and selection processes of themes and arguments
- Use the internet more as a place for the development of arguments

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ROLE OF THE INTERNET

- **New opinion leaders and the reclassification of information :**

- Some cyber activists separate themselves from others and become really famous. These leaders can sometimes see their legitimacy exceeding that of too « institutional » actors.

Recommendations :

- Support upcoming opinion leaders or instigate them
- Watch and reclassify the information regularly

Jean-Yves Nicolas was head of the communication project set up by the French Ministry for Economy and Finances for the transition to the euro (1995-2002). From 2002 to 2007, he was responsible for European Affairs within the Government Information Service (SIG) within the Prime Minister's services and in particular for the coordination of governmental communication on Europe. From 2007 to 2010, he was in charge of the Information Centre on Europe in Paris, managing "Touteurope.eu", main French portal on EU information. He is currently member of the mission "Economic changes" of the "General Economic and Financial Control" Service at the French Ministry for Economy, Finance and Employment.

Bridging the gaps

Ylva Tivéus



PERSONAL CONTEXT

Five years have past since the last celebration of Club de Venice. Five years that corresponds with my function as director for multimedia communication in the European Commission. I succeeded Niels Jorgen Thøgersen, who was the real moderniser of institutional communication at the time when DG PRESS became DG Communication. From 2006 to 2010 I was responsible for several of his creations – such as the EUROPA website, EBS, the Videotheque, the Europe Direct Call Centre, AV productions etc. To this were added publications, media monitoring, media networks, internal communication and promotion.

The last five years saw the emergence of social media and increased expectations of the citizens to have their voices heard in the future development of Europe. The Commission swiftly responded to this challenge by entering the blogosphere, by setting up its own channel on EU-Tube, by inviting to on-line debates and real life citizens' panels. We also started to build up physical and on-line European public spaces, where Europeans of different views, cultures and ages could meet to discuss topics of their choice. In parallel, a strategy was adopted to build up European media spaces, to facilitate production and broadcasting of Radio and TV programs on EU topics and a wider on-line distribution of articles from the written press in Europe. All with the ambition to bridge the increasing gap between the Institutions and the citizens and to try to get out of the pure national spheres of interest.

In tackling these challenges, it has been a great asset to have had the opportunity to test and discuss new ideas among peers facing the same challenges in their own environment. What has been particularly useful is the informal and independent role of the Club, where members have left national, political and institutional positions at the door and assumed a professional and collegial attitude to the issues presented. In this respect the Club has personified the ambitions and given a real meaning to what it takes to 'Communicate Europe Together'.

Looking through my files, I see that I personally have presented and received feedback on such different items as call centres, Internet, Euranet, EuroNews, social media, EU-Tube, school communication, crisis communication, enlargement, public diplomacy and the European Year of Volunteering. In doing so, I have achieved two objectives – to inform and to learn. I have also found the Venicenet very useful to find presentations and speeches that can inspire.

POLITICAL CONTEXT

In his Political Guidelines of September 2009, President Barroso called for a Europe of ambition; a Europe of values and a Europe that puts people at the heart of the agenda. Empowering citizens to be involved in decisions affecting their lives, ensuring transparency on how those are taken and allowing them to contribute actively to find solutions (in both representative and participatory democracy) will increase the legitimacy of those decisions.

The President has expressed a wish to redouble these efforts and to rekindle a passion for Europe, a new pride and feeling of connection between the EU and its citizens.

By creating a “citizenship portfolio” in the Commission, President Barroso entrusted VP Reding to translate the concept of citizenship into concrete results. An important step towards this direction is the Report on EU Citizenship, presented by VP Reding on 27 October 2010. The report stresses that citizens must have easy and direct access to information on the EU, understand the rights the EU offers and the opportunities it opens up to them. Europe must literally be at their fingertips, or just a phone call away.

In the European Economic Community of 1957, individuals were considered primarily as economic actors. The Treaty of Maastricht in 1992 introduced for the first time the principle of “Union citizenship”. Since then Europeans have acquired new rights. European integration is not any more just about markets but also about the commitment to make the daily lives of the European citizens’ better and easier.

The Treaty of Lisbon takes a step further by recognising that the citizen must be the first beneficiary of EU policies. It gives increased responsibilities to the EU Institutions to create a Citizens’ Europe. It provides a framework for a broader notion of European citizenship and offers citizens new opportunities to make their voices heard. The Treaty provides a formal legal basis for the right of citizens to participate in the democratic life of the Union, with a clear framework for European citizens’ initiatives and gives to the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights a legally binding force.

COMMUNICATION CONTEXT

In the current political, economic and social situation in the EU, it is important more than ever to keep working together and to use our resources and channels in a coherent and structured way. In the three major Institutions we are all aware that we can not reach out to all citizens from Brussels or even from the capitals in the MS. We need to work with a decentralised approach, actively involving actors (politicians, media, business, civil society, volunteers) at the local and regional level. We need to mobilise and valorise the excellent channels we already have – such as the local members of the Committee of the Regions and the Economic and Social Committee! I am very glad these two Institutions are members of the Club and I see increased opportunities for synergies in our efforts to reach out to the citizens.

We are also aware of the fact that to get the support, participation and commitment of the citizens, we need active citizens who understand and relate to the European institutions and what we are working to achieve: namely to make Europe a better place to live in. We don’t need citizens as spectators we need them as active partners. We need people who are prepared to defend and to contribute to a better Europe. The worst that can happen to Europe today is an attitude of indifference or a feeling of doomsday on the part of the citizens. A belief that everything we have obtained is for granted and not worth fighting for.

With Commissioner Barnier’s words: “We need to demonstrate urgently once more that Europe has a purpose and that we have a common interest in being together in the 21st century. And this needs to be demonstrated without falling back on the fears and slogans of the past, but by being in tune with today’s world”.

Another serious threat is the growing intolerance – which has its roots in the fear of others and the fear of the different. This attitude nurtures xenophobia, populism, nationalism, discrimination, extremism and insecurity and threatens fundamental European values and achievements.

To fight these tendencies, statements from Brussels will not be enough and traditional media neither. A recent Eurobarometer reveals that 81% of Europe's citizens use television as their principle source of information on European affairs and 56% would look for information about EU via television. At the same time only 50% tend to trust television; and 66% still feel they are not well informed. Even worse off are women where 72% admit they are not well informed and inactive citizens being at home (78%) or unemployed (76%). I believe these figures speak for themselves.

We need to use both information and communication and to arrive at the right balance between a top-down (supply driven) and a bottom-up (demand driven) approach. Only then do we have a chance to reach and engage citizens. Research shows that key drivers for creating engagement are information that is unique, up-to-date and easy to understand.

The new directorate in DG COMM, called "Citizens" which I am responsible for, focuses on the citizens and their needs within DG COMM's overall communication mandate, with the intention to increase the legitimacy and concrete impact of decisions made by the EU institutions and to increase ownership and engagement in the European Union by its citizens.

The starting point is that

- People have a right to accessible and understandable information;
- European citizens should be aware of their rights and opportunities;
- Citizens should feel they are listened to and have their questions and concerns dealt with;
- The Commission is open for dialogue with the citizens and the different actors in civil society on all major EU policy issues;

Within DG Communication of the European Commission we therefore concentrate our work on improving information to the citizens by:

Providing easy access to information via a one-stop shop for citizens, including a single telephone number and website (EUROPE DIRECT Contact Centre- EDCC) combined with the network of some 500 Europe Direct Centres across the member states; targeted visits to the Commission for multipliers and stakeholders, a modernised Visitors' Centre, which is more attractive and better equipped with modern multimedia facilities, so as to be able to receive more visitors to the Commission.

Raising awareness on the functioning and impact of the EU in general and on European citizenship and citizens' rights in particular and by producing and disseminating easy-to-read basic and concrete information to the citizens on the impact of EU policies. Special focus is put on targeted material for schools and young people on-line and off-line.

Stimulating active participation and ownership among European citizens through structured and related policy dialogue with civil society organisations at European level and through the activities of the Europe Direct Networks at local level; The Commission is also supporting meetings and projects involving local authorities, civil society and think-tanks under the "Europe for Citizens" program 2014-2020 and projects focusing on common history and shared values.

Arranging European Years on topics of relevance to the citizens involving all institutions, Member States, media, civil society and other stakeholders at European, national, regional and local level. 2011 is the European Year of Volunteering – a year which in itself brings us concrete evidence that

solidarity and compassion still are fundamental and rooted values for Europeans. The European Year 2013 is designated to the Citizens and their rights and opportunities in the European Union and will precede our next common challenge as EU communicators - the 2014 European elections.

To succeed with these ambitions we need to work together to find the most efficient and successful ways of not just closing the information gap to the citizens but also to install a sense of optimism and engagement for how to further strengthen and develop the European Union.

The role of the Club could be to provide a free and common space for EU communicators to analyse lessons learned and to test new ideas. Obviously the character of the Club is informal. Strategic decisions concerning co-operation among European Institutions on communicating Europe take place within existing institutional structures.

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The future of communicating the European Parliament

Juana Lahousse-Juárez



The European Parliament counts among one of the oldest common institutions in Europe. It began in 1952 as the 'Common Assembly' of the European Coal and Steel Community. Comprised of 78 parliamentarians drawn from the national parliaments of Member States, it possessed no legislative powers and functioned mainly as a forum for discussion and debate. Today, the European Parliament is the world's only supranational institution with binding legislative powers. Additionally, the Parliament is unique in that its 736 members are directly elected by the citizens of Member States. In short, within a span of 50 years, the European Parliament has evolved from a relatively small consultative body to a fully fledged institution directly answerable to citizens back home.

Following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty on 1 December 2009, the EP is now responsible for legislating nearly all European Union (EU) directives in co-decision with the Council of the European Union. Political communication conducted by the EP is therefore crucial not only in informing EU citizens on the purpose and function of the EP, but more importantly, keeping them updated on current legislative issues so they feel empowered to make informed decisions when casting their ballots for future Members of the European Parliament (MEPs).

Yet, as the European Parliament, along with numerous other directly elected parliaments and legislature, has learned to be answerable and accountable to its citizens on paper, this does not automatically presume active citizen's involvement, participation nor interest in parliamentary affairs or the work being done at the European level. In other words, granting citizens the right to oversee the works of the Parliament does not necessary mean that citizens will care enough to actually exercise that power. As such, it becomes the responsibility of the Parliament to actively reach out to its citizens, engage them and incorporate their views in the legislative process.

In addition, the difficulties States normally faces when communicating to citizens is multiplied 27 times here. The EP has to market its message to the citizens of 27 independent States, each with their own national government, language, and cultural identity.

The central question thus becomes, how do you communicate to citizens of 27 Member States who speak a combined 23 official languages about the European Parliament? The obvious answer, as every successful entrepreneur knows, is that one always needs to cater to the needs of the customer and adapt to the expectations of the audience. As such the EP employs on a daily basis a diverse spectrum of communication tools and platforms in order to directly reach as many citizens as possible.

Physically, the EP has European Parliament Information Offices (EPIOs) staffed with press officers and EP specialists in the capitals of all 27 Member States as well secondary offices in major cities. The EP also maintains one of the world's largest websites. All content is hosted in the 23 official languages. In 2009 alone, there were over 16 million single visits to europarl.europa.eu. Additionally, the Parliament also runs EuroparlTV--a web-based online streaming TV with content in all 23 official languages. Furthermore, the EP is now poised to fully immerse itself in web 2.0 technologies and consolidate its position within the social media sphere.

In short, the updated communication strategy of the EP focuses on perfecting the communication tools through lessons learned and best practices in order to establish a sustainable two-way dialogue between the EP and its constituents. The ultimate aim is to create a truly vibrant democracy in which the voices of average citizens are heard loud and clear by the policy-makers of the EP, and ultimately, of the EU. The following pages will trace the steps of how this updated EP communication strategy came to be and perhaps shed light on which direction it will evolve to meet future demands.

The 2009 European Elections

Prior to the European elections in June 2009, a series of surveys were conducted amongst citizens in all 27 MS. They revealed major gaps in citizens' basic knowledge about the EP as an institution and how it functions. More startling was the fact that, a month prior to the elections in May, a majority of citizens self-identified 'not sufficiently informed to go vote' as one of the top reasons for planning not to vote in the upcoming elections. (See Table 1)

Table 1: Citizen knowledge of the EP ¹

1. For each of the following statements about the European Union, could you please tell me whether you think it is right or wrong. (DK=don't know)

	EB68*			EB71		
	Right	Wrong	DK	Right	Wrong	DK
a. The Members of the EP are directly elected by the citizens of each Member State	48%	31%	21%	53%	23%	24%
b. The EU's budget is determined jointly by the EP and the Member States	60%	10%	30%	54%	12%	34%
c. Within the Eu, decisions in legislative terms (laws and directives) are taken jointly by the EP and the Member States	--	--	--	53%	16%	31%
d. Each Member State has the same number of members of the EP.	--	--	--	48%	20%	32%
Average	--	--	--	52%	18%	30%

2. And in your opinion, do MEPs sit in the European Parliament according to...?

	EB68*	EB71
Their nationality	44%	36%
Their political allegiance	33%	36%
DK	23%	28%

3. If you do not go to vote in the European elections of June 2009, will it be because...? (Up to 5 max)

	PreEE
I believe that I am not sufficiently informed to go vote	62%
My vote will not change anything	61%
I don't know enough about the role of the EP	61%
I believe that the EP does not sufficiently deal with problems that concern me	59%
I am against Europe, the European Union, the European construction	18%

* EB68=autumn 2007, EB 70= autumn 2008, EB71=Jan-Feb 2009, PreEE=May 2009

However, upon closer examination, it becomes clear that citizens have become better informed about the EP as elections approached. Notably, between autumn 2007 and spring 2010, 16% more citizens have self-identified as being well informed on the activities of the European Parliament. In the same period, the percentage of citizens self-identifying as badly informed has decreased from 73% to 68%. (See Table 2).

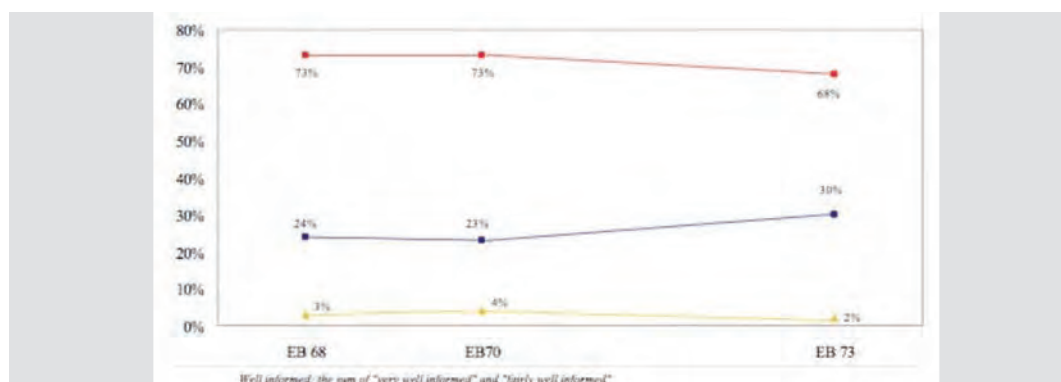
1 European Parliament Standard Eurobarometer (Standard EB 71), European Elections 2009, TNS-Opinion, analysis March 2009, fieldwork mid Jan-mid Feb 2009; European Parliament Pre-electoral survey (First wave), European Elections 2009, TNS-Opinion, analysis May 2009, fieldwork 4 - 15 May 2009

One can assume that all else being assumed equal, the only major factor different between 2007 and 2009 was the presence of the upcoming elections in June 2009 which brought with it Europe-wide election campaigns resulting in a momentarily heightened interest in European affairs. In post-election surveys, an average of 67% of citizens in all 27 MS stated that they remember seeing the election campaign in some form, compared to only 36% who answered yes to a similar question after the elections in 2004.¹ So why this jump?

Over the past years, election after election, campaigns became more and more coordinated using all available communication platforms--printed, audiovisual, online sites, social media, etc. And more and more the election campaigns became massive synchronized information campaigns aimed at getting the word out about the elections and informing citizens on the key legislative issues that future MEPs would potentially be debating. This development not only created a common sense of identity on the EU level, but also, with the help of the European Parliament Information Offices in the Member States, reached out to regional actors and branched to local communities where conference and debates were held attended by candidates and accessible to all citizens.

It is interesting to note in Table 2 that the start of the trend in increased informativity coincides with the start of DG COMM's Europe-wide information campaign prior to the European elections. It is heartening to observe also that the trend did not stop or reverse when elections were over but continues to this day. This latter fact is mostly due to an updated communication strategy which codified much of best practices achieved during the election season into common, everyday practice for the EP. The exact details of this revamped communication strategy will be elaborated in the following section.

Table 2: Level of Subjective information²



Yet though the synchronized Europe-wide communication strategy was a success, mass information campaigns launched six to nine months before elections that take place every five years is hardly going to alter citizens' perceptions of the EP³. In the end, though the decrease was less

1 European Parliament Special Eurobarometer 320 (Standard EB 71.3), 2009 Post election survey, TNS-Opinion, analysis July 2009, fieldwork 12 June - 6 July 2009; European Commission Flash Eurobarometer 162, Post European elections 2004 survey, TNS-Opinion, analysis July 2004, fieldwork June 2004

2 European Parliament Eurobarometer (EB Parlemeter 73.1), Parlemètre February 2010, TNS-Opinion, analysis May 2010, fieldwork 29 Jan - 17 Feb 2010

3 Ibid.

substantial than past election and less than predicted, voter turnout obtained an all-time low of 43%. Perceptions, like habits, are constructed with time. It requires a permanent, sustained communication effort on the part of the EP to alter citizen perceptions in any meaningful way.

Parliament's Updated Communication Strategy

Following the start of the current 7th legislature and the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the EP Bureau, composed of the EP President, 14 Vice-Presidents and 5 Quaestors in an advisory position, adopted in July 2010 an updated EP communication strategy. Thanks to Parliament's enhanced role and powers under the Lisbon Treaty, the institution's political nature is taking on greater significance and needs to become more visible.

The new strategy represents a paradigm shift in the way DG COMM thought about communication. Drawing upon the lessons learned in the past from pan-European information campaigns (with its all-inclusive nature with respect to dissemination platforms, its emphasis on going local, and its effort to elicit the active participation of citizens), DG COMM would, in the future, not only run campaigns to inform citizens about the EP, but would also facilitate a means for citizens to provide continuous evaluation and feedback to their MEPs. The two main approaches emphasized by the new strategy are firstly, to enhance communication on the political aspects, to highlight the politics happening at the Parliament and secondly, to go local, to exit Brussels and actively reach out and connect with citizens at the local level, in their towns and villages, in their homes. The overall goal is to bring EU policies closer to EU citizens and EU citizens closer to EU policies.

One of the greatest challenges facing the European Parliament today is visibility. It not only has to consistently compete with national parliaments for news coverage, but because it is situated in Brussels, information dissemination is made more difficult due to the physical distance and the language and cultural barriers. Additionally, the spirit of compromise which exists within the European Parliament, though it embodies good policy-making, is much harder to sell to the general public

First and foremost, Parliament's updated communication strategy clearly defines DG COMM's main role as 'bring[ing] EU policies and politics closer to EU citizens'. The strategy recognizes the need to enhance the EP's visibility through timely and effective communication of Parliament's political decision-makers - from the committee stage to plenary - thereby highlighting the political nature of the institution and establishing a closer link between MEPs and citizens. Specifically, DG COMM is called on to:

1. focus on high-quality content production;
2. place an emphasis on events-based communication;
3. adopt a service-oriented approach;
4. embark upon a decentralised approach.¹

Organized under three flagship projects (see Table 3), all guidelines attest to Parliament's ambition to launch proactive, ongoing dialogue with EU citizens and raise its profile in the media, through a balanced combination of face-to-face contact and use to modern, sophisticated communication technology.

1 'Updating Parliament's communication strategy', D(2010)32767

Table 3: EP Flagship Projects and Subcategories¹

A. Consolidating Parliament's role in a new media marketplace	Upgrading services to the press Parliament's internet presence Sharing content Promoting EuroparlTV and integrating it into digital communication Interactivity
B. EP information offices and future challenges	Defining target groups and setting up enduring networks 'Going local' Institutional contact points Modernising existing visitor facilities Making the Visitors' Centre a success Setting up a House of European History
C. Better services for the public	Adopting an integrated approach to the reception of visitors Building lasting links with visitors Measuring public opinion Active communication campaigns

To start, traditional press releases are no longer the only, or even the most effective, tool for reaching the media. At the same time a direct connection with the public and potential opinion multipliers is becoming increasingly important. Therefore, the existing machinery for information dissemination will be expanded to incorporate new avenues of transmission. New media, those that employ web 2.0 platforms, complements traditional media outlets and represents a way for the EP to communicate directly to citizens, especially young citizens. Meanwhile, EPIOs will be made responsible for implementing the EP's overall communication strategy in the 27 Member States, regions, towns and cities where they will be encouraged to adapt both the tools of diffusion and informational content according to the national context and based on regional/local interests. Additionally, upgrades will be made to the services provided to individuals who visit the EP's physical premises in order to better engage them in democratic dialogue.

Globally, the EP is committed to providing high-quality content productions, be it print or audiovisual, to the press but more importantly, also consolidate Parliament's presence in the new media marketplace, namely web 2.0 technologies and social platforms. Here are some numbers for reflection. In 2009, there were 964 journalists accredited to the EU institutions, 1561 television crews present at the European Parliament, and 5,550 minutes of EP video material used by TV channels. In addition, the Parliament also keeps a regularly updated Youtube, Facebook, Myspace, and Flickr account. With over 80,000 fans on Facebook, the European Parliament far outruns the US Congress who only has 11,385 fans.²

Good communications is always adapting itself to the needs of the end users. The best communication aims to connect with information recipient on a personal level and solicit a response. Therefore, the overall aim of this updated communication strategy is to establish a permanent, interactive and decentralised dialogue with citizens. To this end, one of the EP's major communication priorities will be to raise its profile and enhance its credibility and familiarity

¹ Ibid.

² Directorate for the Media, DG COMM, EP, 'A Presentation of the EP Press Service', March 2010; Facebook friends figures are taken directly from the Facebook pages of European Parliament and US Congress, Sept 2010.

amongst EU citizens. Furthermore, external information and communication will be developed in closer partnership with civil society multipliers and identified stakeholders. Together, these guidelines will contribute significantly to the Lisbon Treaty's spirit of democracy, assure the commitment to institutional transparency and enable the EP to better serve its citizens.

Communicating values

In the end, communication is not so much about the tools used as the information provided and the content received. Placing a press release on Facebook does not automatically make it more interesting; uploading a video on Youtube does not guarantee more viewers if the visual content is not appealing. When communicating to an audience, one must never forget the basics. One must not get caught up in obsessing over the right tool of communication but must always focus on providing substantive content in all communication materials.

For an institution, such as the European Parliament, this entails firstly, the construction of a coherent 'institutional identity' that resonates amongst the general public, an identity that people can connect with, relate to, and rally around. For example, in the United States, the prevailing undercurrent that flows underneath all Congressional actions is the upholding of the inalienable rights and civil liberties as enshrined in the *Declaration of Independence* and codified by the *Bill of Rights*. Similarly, the *European Parliament operate at all times under the European Union's Charter of Fundamental Rights* which espouses the values of dignity, freedom, equality, solidarity, citizens' rights and justice.

Having values and linking them with policy decision is only the beginning. The next step is to communicate those policies, to market that identity, to the general public in the form of tangible results. At the end of the day, it is the policy that determines the quality of the communication.

Looking Ahead

With the adoption of the updated EP communication strategy, DG COMM has worked at constructing and implementing a functional Action Plan: 2010-2014 which aims at translating the various aspects of the strategy into concrete actions leading towards tangible results. For too long, DG COMM has positioned itself as a passive reporter of main legislative outcomes of the European Parliament. It is now time to evolve beyond the role of a news provider and take up responsibility in actively engaging EU citizens and fostering their interest and involvement in European legislative affairs.

Given this, all actions within the Action Plan are constructed to target specific groups. It is the first time DG COMM is proposing to establish, with a medium-term vision, an integrated set of targeted actions between all its services working towards a single goal: the 2014 elections. It is all about sustaining a permanent communication effort throughout the remaining of this legislative term. Parliament's communication tools already enjoy an excellent reputation. These are our greatest assets and it is time to maximise their efficiency in order to communicate in a holistic manner the EP to its constituents. The actions are organized around three distinctive sets of activities, including services to Members to allow them to better reach media and citizens, activities targeting the media and those directly engaging citizens. All actions will be subjected to progress reviews with full implementation set for 2014.

At the heart of the Action Plan lies the central philosophy that since the EP is a cooperative process between MEPs, the media and citizens, the role of DG COMM should be one of active facilitator. It is MEPs who formulate the message, the media whom transmits the information, and the citizens

who reserve the right to either listen or disregard the news based on preferences and interests. In between all this, DG COMM will do its best to offer services that assists the works of the three actors and fosters their interdependence so that the message created is the message transmitted is the message received.

Conclusion

Like all parliaments and legislatures on all levels, the European Parliament must gain citizens' support for its ideals and actions in order to justify its existence. The EP must not only promote itself, promote the activities of its MEPs, but also become more inclusive of citizen ideas and input. To do so, the EP needs to continuously adapt its communications to fit the needs and expectations of citizens, bearing in mind at all times that the EP exists as the political conduits of their views.

However, it is important to bear in mind that the EP is only one of the many institutions governing the EU. As stated in the EP resolution on 'Journalism and new media'¹, adopted by the EP Plenary on 7 September 2010, the EU is a complex entity, which is not easily explained. Significantly, the resolution notes that lack of online news and information on the EU and its institutions is not the problem, which in fact lies in the availability of a wide range of information without any real order of priority, leading to a situation in which too much information kills information. In addition, though all the institutions have launched their own news platforms, all have faced difficulties in attracting the attention and interest of a broad section of the public because they are often not sufficiently clear or understandable mostly owing to the use of overly technical language that is very off-putting for people who are unfamiliar with EU issues.

Therefore, because legislative power is shared between the Parliament, the Commission and the Council, who have their own disparate communication strategies, there is not one simple solution for communicating better the EU. What is required is that all EU institutions build upon the foundations of cooperation outlined in the joint declaration 'Communicating Europe in Partnership'² to enhance cooperation and together create a vibrant, sustainable European public sphere characterised by the opportunity for all EU citizens to participate.

EU institutions must not communicate with a hundred different voices. Yet neither should they be bureaucratic institutions giving joint monotone pronouncements on the European Union. Communicating in partnership means each institution communicating separately, but focused on European issues. It means communicating in lively, constructive ways to generate discussion and debate on the European Union amongst EU institutions, amongst EU citizens.

The EP, especially, is aware of this fact and is thus continuously working towards not simply informing citizens but communicating to them, actively engaging them on EU issues through ever-deepened cooperation with its partner institutions. It is the only way forward.

Juana Lahousse - Juárez is Director-General of DG Communication of the European Parliament.

1 'Journalism and new media - creating a public sphere in Europe', EP A7-002/2010

2 The Commission's communication 'Communicating Europe in Partnership' is in COM(2007) 568. The joint Declaration was published on OJ C 13 of 20.1.2009, p.3.

Communicating networks: a winning factor

Communicating Europe “going local”

Laurent Thieule



Communicating on Europe and in Europe is probably the most exciting challenge faced today by public communicators: a huge challenge for European democracy.

What kind of communication on the EU is expected by European institutions, Member States, regions, cities, and, above all, our 500 million fellow citizens?

While admitting their scepticism and lack of knowledge about how the EU functions and complaining that the institutions appear distant, Europeans would like, nevertheless, to be more and better informed about Europe.

They want to know:

- who runs Europe and how;
- what is Europe's role, place and weight in the world;
- how does it protect us from the consequences of globalization;
- what advantages does it bring to a social and sustainable economy and its enterprises;
- to what extent does it change people's lives, or, more prosaically, what does it bring them
- "What do I get from the EU?"

Public opinion and public debate are organized around these major issues and find their place in European, national and regional spheres.

How to respond? How to feed these public global and decentralized spheres, via half a million individuals, by means of information that makes the construction of Europe more transparent and accessible?

The Lisbon Treaty has introduced a new political architecture to the European Union, with a new distribution of power and, of course, the rise of new actors. Only time will tell if, with Lisbon, the EU can become more democratic, efficient and transparent, and, ultimately, more accessible and acceptable to its citizens. Therefore, in our turn, we need to quickly find a new architecture for communicating Europe, adopting a multi-level approach which connects, through a network, European institutions, Member States, regions and cities.

There is space for all, messages for all, a European ideal to share, a multitude of histories of Europe to tell our media and our citizens, provided that we act in a coordinated, organized and professional manner.

- A communication space for all: one of the challenges of this new Communication on Europe is that it must be endorsed by faces familiar to the citizens: obviously by European Parliamentarians, but also by members elected in the territory, presidents of regions and mayors, who will join these institutional leaders who usually convey communication on the Union.

This “multi-face” communication is a key factor in making Europe familiar and accessible.

We need to share a European ideal and a vision: it is crucial for the European institutions to deliver common messages to the public and to orchestrate these messages from Brussels, at inter-institutional level. From this huge responsibility stems the key tasks of the Interinstitutional Group on Information (IGI), which defines the communication priorities as well as the orientation of policies and joint decisions which are subsequently translated into practice across member states and territories, to respond to very diverse public opinions and expectations.

- A communication by evidence is nevertheless essential: how and in what terms does the Union contribute to improving the citizens’ everyday life? We are entering a domain where, I reiterate, there’s a need to tell a multitude of stories in Europe, with facts and results which are easy to understand. This is what men and women from our regions, our cities and our countryside are waiting for.

We need to make Europe affordable and practical for the citizens.

How do we go about raising the profile of this new form of public communication about Europe?

In Brussels, relations among the European institutions are already functioning better. There is improved harmony, but we must go further.

The institutions have pooled their efforts to provide a platform for cooperation and have organized from Brussels, in and with the Member States, a series of communication activities based on clear pre-defined thematic messages and objectives. The institutional players are fully associated with, and involved in, this inter-institutional cooperation symbolized by “Communicating Europe in Partnership”.

That said, the expression “going local” must not be pre-empted from its meaning or content, but, on the contrary, it has to become one of the focal points and strongest features of European communication.

What do we mean by that?

- without a deliberately decentralized approach of communication on the Union in the Member States and their territories,
- without the adaptation of regional and local communication to the territorial realities, and
- without the commitment of the political players to permanently take the lead in the European debate in European cities and regions, and be held accountable for their decisions taken at Community level,

our quest for public trust and support will remain flawed and unworkable.

Let’s admit it: this is the situation today.

Decentralized communication must become one of the challenges of the next decade for the European Union.

“Let’s not be afraid to open routes from Brussels to the decentralized communication in the territories.”

We must not go back to a time when it was easier to nationalize Europe's successes and to make Brussels responsible for its failures. Today sees the start of a new way to regionalise the successes of the EU. So how to optimize and strengthen the organization of this local communication? How do we "seduce" public opinion (yes, that's right, public opinion!) ?

In each Member State, we should multiply synergies between, on the one hand, the representations of the European Parliament and the European Commission, and on the other, between local authorities and their associations. Honourable Members of the European Parliament, Members of the Committee of the Regions, the presidents of the regions and mayors must be able to identify strongholds for communicating Europe.

The contribution provided by regions and cities, as well as by their elected representatives, offers major advantages for successful communication in Europe:

- being in proximity with their citizens, regionally and locally elected officials enjoy a true climate of confidence in their constituency;
- they have the widest knowledge of their citizens' expectations from Europe;
- they are granted by them legitimacy to inform their own people on the Union;
- they are popular and are leading social networks with thousands of supporters (as is the case for Nichi Vendola, President of the Puglia Region (Italy) and member of the Committee of the Regions, who has more than 500,000 fans on Facebook).

Regions and cities and their elected representatives thus have a key role to play. This decentralized communication is unquestionably a real movement, but the phenomenon must be amplified.

As with European parliamentarians, mayors, presidents of the regions and other locally-elected individuals – of whom almost 700 are members of the Committee of the Regions - are increasingly playing a role as spokesperson for the Union towards their citizens:

- in association with them, political entities and community networks at both European and national level are key components of operational communication relays;
- in their own local environment, they are closely connected with professionals of public communication, responsible for designing and setting up information campaigns, organizing events, producing and maintaining communication instruments;
- they enhance, on a daily basis, their relations with regional and local media, which remain, in my opinion, the best information relays for Europe.
- we all know that local authorities can mobilize budgetary resources and communication means to carry out effective information activities which are easy to merge with those initiated by the European institutions and their representations in each Member State.

It is also time to reflect on what could be a common strategic approach to communicate on Europe and in Europe.

We are facing a democracy of 500 million citizens, with many different expectations and very distant from what is often perceived as our Brussels-based "ivory tower".

- Do we have any other choice than communicating around these women and men who live in our territories?
- Do we have any other choice than speaking less of our respective European institutions and more on behalf of the European Union as a carrier of a successful project?

- Shouldn't we consider the setting up of a true communication policy that could unite this successful "Made in Europe" project (Erasmus, Regional policy, Galileo, ...)?
- Should we not imagine working towards the setting up of an "EU political brand" ("Branding Europe") – transposing what is already being carried out by cities, regions and Member States?

This is a strategic challenge for European construction and for the EU's place in the public opinion. I don't recall any single political project that has succeeded without popular support and without being understood by its citizens.

EU's communication is itself a political project. Imagining, producing and sharing it... is up to us.

Laurent Thieule is Director for Communications, Press and Events at the EU Committee of the Regions.

Building capacity for the new Europe: involving organised civil society

Peter Lindvald-Nielsen

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC¹) is a long-established institution set up under the Treaty of Rome. However, it is a relatively new member of the Venice Club. As a small advisory body, the EESC benefits from its membership of the Venice Club by learning from best practice and by building up networks that make for improved synergies and help the Committee reach out to European citizens.

To expand its communication capacity, the EESC draws on the experience and skills of its members. This policy area is currently managed by one of the Committee's two vice- presidents and its

1 The EESC in a few words
What is the European Economic and Social Committee and what does it do?
It is a European advisory body. It has members from all the EU countries, representing different economic and social sectors in society: employers, workers, NGOs and various other organisations. In the European decision-making process, its role is to advise the other European institutions (the European Commission, Council of the European Union and European Parliament). The EESC gives them its point of view on particular issues, in documents known in euro-speak as "opinions".
Who are the EESC's members?
The 344 members come from organisations throughout the 27 EU Member States. Each member belongs to one of the Committee's three major groups, "Employers", "Workers" and "Various Interests". Their job is to work together to reach a consensus, so that the Committee can issue "opinions" that reflect the interests of the greatest number.
Why is the Committee's work important?
Through the various civil society organisations represented by the EESC, ordinary people in Europe can make their views heard and influence decisions taken at European level.
Want to find out more?
Surf <http://www.eesc.europa.eu>



communication strategy is worked out by a Communication Group made up of 9 EESC members.

In the course of discussions in the Communication Group, it became clear that the European public cares little about institutions. People want to know what is actually happening on the European scene – all the more so if this is presented from a national or regional angle. For that reason, the Communication Group decided that the EESC should launch a project whereby young people would be given the opportunity to meet Committee members on their home ground and talk about real and tangible issues.

As a result, we organised an event specifically geared towards young people, called *Your Europe Your Say*. This is not in any sense a groundbreaking novelty as our friends in the European Parliament regularly stage sessions for young people, as do many national parliaments. Nevertheless, the innovative thing from the Committee's point of view was to have EESC members go out to schools before the pupils' visit to Brussels and engage in real dialogue with the young people on a specific, tangible issue, in this case, young peoples' use of alcohol. Local and regional media coverage of the event also further boosted the impact of the meetings.

Again, the EESC very much drew on the examples set by its friends from the Venice Club. For instance, the European Commission took on board a German government idea and launched a project called *Back to School*, whereby, in connection, say, with a country holding the EU presidency, government and EU officials, including ministers and commissioners, would go back to their old schools to discuss European issues.

In the EESC, as well as actively supporting the Commission's Back to School project, we took the idea even further and had our members visit to the winning school in each Member State.

From January to March, members volunteered to go back to schools to present not the Committee, but Europe, and to engage in genuine debate with the young people aged between 16 and 18 years of age on the use of alcohol.

We were thus well prepared to welcome 150 students and teachers to Brussels for a two-day plenary in April. The visitors were given every facility – with interpretation, expert assistance and break-out groups. They were exposed to lobbyist influence and the faced challenge of agreeing on "rapporteurs" and of negotiating and voting.

This was "*hands-on democracy*" in an international context. As an institution, it was refreshing having new eyes look at an old policy issue and, for the participants; it gave them real experience of how democracy works.

We also had to meet young people where they are: in other words, we had to dust down our knowledge of the social media. Again, we were able to draw on the work done in the Venice Club on this issue. We set up a Facebook page and thus established proper lines of communication before, during and after the event. It was all good fun.

At the end of the event, we took stock of what had been achieved. We had reached out to schools in 27 Member States. Members visited schools, bringing Europe to young people in their own language. In many places, the winning schools were outside the capitals, generating a great deal of local interest and widespread media coverage. We benefited from input into our political work and

undoubtedly also inspired young people to engage in dialogue and democracy, be it representative or participatory. We also forged cross-border links and we demonstrated in practice that we can solve problems in Europe by talking with each other – even where we do not share a common language and a common culture.

After the event, we had the privilege of presenting our experience of this project at a Venice Club workshop. Hopefully we have inspired our friends in the Member States and the other institutions by showing that, even though we are small, we are allowed to think big.

Peter Lindvald-Nielsen is Head of Communication at the European Economic and Social Committee.

Chapter 4

Key issues for Public Communication

Capacity building in government communication: how it all started within the Club of Venice

Jan Veenman



Capacity building is a term for improving the effectiveness of government communication by all kinds of means to exchange knowledge and experience.

It offers programmes to improve the ability to reach a better communication between government and the public. Communication is a relatively new profession which has to act in an environment which is more and more demanding.

Citizens have increasing requirements about communication from and which the government, the media field is increasingly complex and so on.

Ministers and leading civil servants have high expectations. On the other hand-to be honest-in general knowledge and position of our discipline of government communication is still rather weak. In The Netherlands there is an ongoing debate about the necessity of a code of conduct and other means to improve the position.

Two basic questions are:

- what are the requirements of a communication expert within government
- what basic knowledge about communication is needed by other civil servants like policy advisors.

What is crucially needed is the development, exchange and conservation of knowledge on the field of government communication. To improve this there is a whole programme of trainings/ courses, seminars, publications and communication tools like a C-planner.

The aim of this is to strengthen the relation between policy and communication (factor C), to improve the quality of the communication discipline (leerroutes) and provide facilities for implementation of knowledge and expertise. For example, by a communication website, a communication knowledge monitor, a newsletter, platform publications, rules and guidelines, exchange meetings etc. Therefore we have the Academy for Government Communication.

Hence, by talking about capacity building I will be pleased to share all practical details on how we are getting organized on this issue in The Netherlands, in particular by a structured programme executed by the above-mentioned Academy for Government Communication. And I am looking forward to discussing within the Venice Club how this subject is being developed in the other EU Member States at national level, exchanging concrete experiences and valuable feedback on work in progress (possibly through thematic workshops organized in Brussels).

Operational tracks drawn up in view of plenary meeting in Venice
on 18/19 November 2010

- 1) Requirements for a successful public communicator:
 - a. What capacity is needed to run effective public communication operations: management and business, leadership, professional profile, skills, writing skills, journalistic experience, policy experience, private sector experience
 - b. Recruitment and promotion assessment processes
 - c. Social media expertise
- 2) Requirements for a successful public communication operation:
 - a. Leadership and management, business process,
 - b. Media monitoring, social network monitoring, public surveys, monitoring customer requirements (Ministers, officials)
 - c. Campaign evaluation
- 3) Legal and institutional framework
 - a. Special laws and professional regulations for public communicators
 - b. Ethical rules
 - c. Codes of conduct, in particular for use of social media
- 4) Training and professional development
 - a. National training models, evaluation of results achieved
 - b. Assessments of needs, best practices
 - c. Exchange of training materials
 - d. Existing - and creation of new - exchange programmes for public communicators
 - e. Possible cooperation MS - EU Institutions in organizing and funding training schemes (academic courses for public relations, public affairs)
- 5) Exchange of information
 - a. Share and spread best practices
 - b. Networking between specialists in MS and EU Institutions
- 6) Follow-up within CoV
 - a. Break-out group and discussion in plenary at Venice plenary
 - b. Interactive CoV platform / Forum on the Venicenet
 - c. Creation of a small CoV working group of capacity building specialists
 - d. Organization of capacity building workshops at regular intervals and evaluation of results plenary
 - e. Club initiative to achieve co-funding of training programmes
 - f. Production and maintenance of a capability map

Capacity Building Proposal

Mike Granatt

Aims

We live in a communication environment of extraordinary complexity. It includes multiple broadcasters, 24/7 rolling news, interactive news platforms, and the unprecedented ability of individuals to develop and command national and international audiences. Every informed observer agrees that it has never been more important for Governments' communication professionals to have the right skills, structures, processes and tools.

There is, however, little information available regarding;

- a. What capacity is needed to run effective communication operations;
- b. Where the instances of best practice can be found within the EU's 27 national governments and its institutions; and
- c. Where capacity is lacking across the same governments and institutions.

There are instances of best practice across the EU that could usefully be shared (the Netherlands Effective Communications paper provides an example). However, until now there has been no single exercise to map existing skills sets, best practice and gaps in capacity. Mapping is essential to ensure the best exchange of expertise and knowledge; this is the aim of this project.

Methodology

The project will comprise a survey which will identify (a) existing capacity and capabilities and (b) the skills and expertise that Member States would like to build. The key issues to be covered include recruitment, training and planning.

It is important to realise that we are dealing with up to 28 different systems. That means 28 cultures, sets of assumptions, sets of rules, structures and glossaries. Before the survey starts, a small team must create a common set of definitions and ground rules.

Key issues to be covered:

- Recruitment procedures
 - Standardised assessment to centralised standards - if not, what? What qualifications required?
- Legal and Institutional framework
 - Do special laws and regulations exist?
 - Is there a code of conduct or ethics? What does it cover?
- Structure and funding of government communication. (There are many different structures among EU governments and institutions. The survey would focus on operational areas supporting policy presentation and delivery. This would include the communication structures within the prime minister's office and a typical ministry, and specialist organisations such as the information ministry.)

- Number of staff, hierarchy, grade/rank systems/defined roles/reporting mechanisms
- Funding mechanism and financial control: Central or devolved (ministry) budgets? Central or devolved control?
- Evaluation standards and mechanisms: Is campaign evaluation mandatory or optional? If mandatory, what measures must be included? If not, what measures are typical? How is cost-effectiveness measured? Are baseline and tracking surveys used for major campaigns? Who conducts the evaluation?
- Where does accountability for the effectiveness of campaigns lie? Are they scrutinised by the finance ministry, the PM's office, Parliament?
- Strategic planning/coordination with policy-makers
 - How are communications objectives prioritised across government and within ministries?
 - Do ministry communication departments work together on specific campaigns? How is this organised?
 - Who ensures that policy and communication objectives stay connected?
 - How are long-term strategy and short-term goals linked?
 - Are communications professionals involved in the preparation of policy proposals?
 - When the policy delivery is being considered, at what stage are communication professionals brought in? Is it early enough?
- Systematic application of research, media analysis and monitoring
- Training and professional development
 - What formal qualifications are staff expected to have?
 - Is systematic and permanent training offered to communication staff?
 - Which education/course/training/learning facilities are available and on which topics?
 - Do staff participate in transnational training and/or exchanges? If so who do you cooperate with?
 - What new skills/knowledge/capacity does this training offer?
- Tools
 - Overview:
 - o Which types of media and techniques do communication professionals regularly use, e.g. mainstream news media, on-line news media, social media, blogs, websites, advertising, direct marketing, viral marketing, publications?
 - o What is the breakdown of expenditure between the main tools, i.e. advertising, direct marketing, press offices, on-line techniques?
 - o Is the balance of use changing? Where will the balance lie in ten years?
 - o Can you provide any recent surveys that show the relative effectiveness of these techniques?
 - o Are there trends in the public's use of different media which are driving the techniques used by government?
 - The internet:

- o How does the government use websites? One central portal, individual ministry sites?
 - o Does the government use virtual press offices? How?
 - o Does the government use Facebook, Twitter, SecondLife, LinkedIn etc? How and when?
- Is there a government intranet? How is it used? Do communication staff have their own intranet and what is it used for?
- Is there a central press centre? How and when is it used?
- Does every ministry have a press office (for liaison with the news media)? Is it directed by permanent civil servants or political appointees (i.e. temporary civil servants appointed by ministers)?
- Are there any political appointees with specific communication responsibilities?
- Social media expertise
 - What is government's general level of awareness about the public's use of social media, and its importance?
 - Is training available to re-skill communication professionals with social media expertise?

Expected outcomes

Mapping the capacity requirements and skills among the EU 27 member states plus the EU institutions would enable us to:

- Form a broad view of communication practices and trends across the EU27 member states and the institutions
- Highlight the existing gaps in expertise and capacity
- Match those that possess skills/expertise with countries lacking skills and knowledge
- Share and spread best practice
- Develop context-specific solutions
- Exchange capacity building professionals
- Exchange training materials and resources
- Establish more relevant CoV Working Groups on Capacity Building

Platforms

There are several options for hosting a 'Capacity Building' platform which would allow the matching of expertise and gaps:

1. Web-based survey hosted via Venicenet or a dedicated website
2. Interactive discussion hosted on an online platform
3. A Venice Club event hosted in London or Brussels

Interactive mechanisms have the advantage of starting a constructive dialogue around existing capacity and where it is lacking.

Practical decisions around hosting platforms can be taken at the October 2010 meeting.

Capacity building survey - Can you help me?

Mike Granat, Kate Moffat



Dear Colleague,

As many of you will have heard in Warsaw, over the past year the Club's Capacity Building Working Group has been developing a survey of members. It is designed to capture data from Member States and Institutions about communications structures within ministries and across governments; and frameworks and requirements for government communicators.

The overall objective is to identify:

- areas of particular strength,
- ways to share best practice across the Member States
- and to find out which Member States are interested in, or could benefit from, help with their training and development needs.



The Club of Venice anticipates using this data to demonstrate a need for European Commission funding for communications training, and to support a funding application.

It would be very helpful if all members of the Club complete the survey. It would also be very helpful if you could circulate this link to your senior colleagues in other ministries within your member state, or departments within your institution. This will help us build as complete a picture as possible.

The deadline for survey responses is Friday, 30 September 2011. This will allow us to analyse the results ahead of the next plenary session in Venice in November.

Best wishes

Annex

Capacity building Working Group survey

Introduction

This survey has been created to help the Club of Venice Capacity Building Working Group to build a picture of the diverse Government communications functions within Member States, including (but not limited to) structures within Ministries, structures across Governments, and training requirements and frameworks for Government communicators. The overall objective is to identify areas of particular strength, ways to share best practice across the EU27, and determine which Member States are interested in, or could benefit from, assistance with their training and development needs. The Club of Venice anticipates using this data to demonstrate a need for European Commission funding for communications training, and to support a funding application.

The survey aims to assess:

1. Behavioural skills needed by communications professionals
2. Knowledge needed by communications professionals
3. Experience needed by communications professionals
4. Seniority and responsibility structures within Government communications

[Questions 1-3 will utilise a matrix response format: recipients will be asked to grade all categories from 1 = not important at all to 5= extremely important]

1. Which behavioural skills do you find most important in building capacity?
 - a. Managing relationships
 - b. Ability to facilitate a process (e.g. organising a meeting)
 - c. Forming and maintain relationships with experts
 - d. Teamwork
 - e. Networking
 - f. Influencing without power
 - g. Managing upwards
 - h. Other (please specify)
2. What knowledge-based skills do you find most important in building capacity?
 - a. Media technology
 - b. Psychology and behavioural science
 - c. Research and evaluation techniques
 - d. Strategy and planning skills
 - e. Political sensitivity
 - f. Other (please specify)
3. What experience do you think it is most important for Government communicators to have?
 - a. Policy launches
 - b. Public emergencies (e.g. natural disasters)
 - c. Civil disturbances (e.g. rioting)
 - d. Awareness raising campaigns
 - e. Environmental campaigns
 - f. Referendums
 - g. Public / stakeholder consultations
 - h. Other (please specify)
4. What professional levels do you currently use, and what are their training requirements and qualifications?
 - a. New entrants to the profession
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No
 - iii. Please describe qualification and training requirements
 - b. Team members
 - i. Yes

- ii. No
 - iii. Please describe qualification and training requirements
- c. Team Leaders
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No
 - iii. Please describe qualification and training requirements
- d. Senior Managers
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No
 - iii. Please describe qualification and training requirements
- e. Ministerial Press Spokespeople
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No
 - iii. Please describe qualification and training requirements
- f. Directors – responsible for all communications within a Ministry
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No
 - iii. Please describe qualification and training requirements
- g. Directors responsible for communications across more than one Ministry
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No
 - iii. Please describe qualification and training requirements
- 5. Would you like help from a fellow professional from another other Member State to assess your training needs?
 - a. Yes please
 - b. No thank you

Special laws and professional regulations for public communicators: the Italian experience

Tiziana Antonelli



Capacity building is a broad concept. In common usage it refers to forms of assistance offered to persons and organizations (for example, governments of developing countries) that need to amplify certain skills or, more generally, to improve their capacities. In a modern institutional context, capacity building includes the development of human resources, of skills and of management, but also the building of *administrative and organizational* structures that will ensure the growth of efficient systems of management and participation in the different areas of *policy*.

“Capacity” to produce what? In terms of political cohesion, one would say to produce public goods and collective services. In

more general terms, to raise the quality of life of the citizens, for example by improving access to knowledge, by improving the quality of services, by creating opportunities for individuals and for businesses, and by promoting an atmosphere of trust between stakeholders¹.

And in terms of public communication? Over the last few years the Club of Venice has dedicated an area of its activities to this question², organizing workshops on the dynamics involved, and regularly discussing the findings in plenary sessions. We have looked at crucial questions for our profession (How to improve the communication capacities of governments towards their citizens? How to identify the necessary structures, skills, resources, management, formation, instruments etc.), attempting to provide concrete answers – through the comparative analysis of *best* but also *worst practices, lessons learnt etc.* – with the aim of getting to the point where the formulation of common proposals becomes viable.

In this spirit the CoV plenary meeting of November 2010 welcomed the “strategic tracks and operational issues” put forward by the coordinator, Mike Granatt. The present article deals with one of these tracks³, that is, the legal and institutional framework of public communication, with particular attention being given to “special laws and professional regulations for public communicators”⁴.

Italy is in fact one of the few European countries which has norms for this sector, and has had them for some ten years now. This article will present what is in effect the key Italian law in this regard, that is, Act n. 150/2000, together with some other related legal provisions. Wherever possible, direct citation will be preferred to synthesis or commentary, to allow the reader to form a clearly documented opinion on this material.

THE ITALIAN EXPERIENCE. The activity of communication and information began to acquire a certain importance in the Italian public administration at the beginning of the 1990s, at a time at which a new relationship between State and citizen (also as regards legislation) was evolving, marking the passage from an anonymous and self-referential administration to a transparent and user-oriented one. The period of reform has seen numerous normative initiatives, beginning with the fundamental Law n. 241/90 on transparency and access to documents. This does not establish thoroughgoing public or institutional communication, but it does affirm the right/duty of the administration to provide information, to activate participation in its structures, to promote the simplification of procedures and to reorganize its services and its offices, in order to gain both a new legitimacy and full European collocation. Law n. 142/1990 articulates, especially for local administrations, organizational autonomy in matters of participation and access to information. The legislative decree 29/1993⁵ obliges the public administration to set up Offices for Public Relations (*Uffici per le relazioni con il pubblico*), structures dedicated to communication, staffed with appropriately qualified personnel.

1 Cfr. Dossier Capacity Building. L'evoluzione del concetto. Dalla cooperazione allo sviluppo alla modernizzazione delle PA europee (2006), a cura del Coordinamento Tecnico Programma Empowerment – Formez.

2 Cfr. Jan Veenman (NL) was one of the pioneers of this CoV dossier.

3 I presented a contribute on this question at a themed workshop in Brussels on 15 October 2009.

4 The other four points (each with its specific sub-themes) were the following: a) Requirements for a successful public communicator, b) Requirements for a successful public communication operation, c) Training and professional development, d) Exchange of information.

5 Decree issued by the Government through an enabling act of parliament.

The legislative turning point. In 2000, after ten years of normative renovation, the Italian parliament approved a law introducing a radically new framework - itself the result of a complex five-year itinerary - with the unambiguous title of: "Disciplinary procedures for the activities of information and communication within the public administration." (Law n. 150/2000).

This is a watershed law in the sector, "one of the first general provisions in Europe to give specific objectives, professional legitimacy, and an organizational framework to the activities of information and communication of public administrations, as well as establishing the important connection between these activities and the formation of operatives."¹

Objectives and areas of application. This legislation, in affirming that the purpose of disciplining the activities of information and communication is that of bringing into effect "the principles of transparency and the effectiveness of administrative action", stresses the fact that such activities can not only make an administration more open and transparent, but also make it more efficient in the pursuit of its institutional tasks. But what are the activities involved? All those undertaken by the Italian public administration "at home and abroad."² (a vast range, therefore), "aiming to provide: a) information to the mass media, through the press, audiovisual means and telematic instruments; b) external communication to reach out to citizens, communities and other bodies by every possible technical and organizational means; c) internal communication within each body.

The law therefore differentiates between *informational* activities (in which the flow of data is unidirectional, from information-holder to receiver) and *communication* activities (in which the flow of information is circular, in a relationship in which both parties are active). This applies not only to the recipients of messages, but also to the public servants entrusted with this responsibility (see below "Structures"). This distinction appears, however, clearer in theory than in practice, where information and communication are characterized more by their continuity than their separation³, and the areas of responsibility of the different offices tend to overlap or converge.

The law also stipulates that "the information and communication activities aim, in particular, to: a) raise awareness of the legal provisions, in order to facilitate their implementation; b) illustrate the institutions' activities and functioning; c) facilitate access to public services, promoting their awareness; d) widen and deepening knowledge of relevant topics of public and social interest; e) promote the internal processes of procedural simplification and structural modernization (...); f) promote the image of the public administration, as well as of Italy in general, in Europe and worldwide (...).

The structures. Which offices are charged with responsibility for information and communication? According to the law, "information activities are implemented through the spokesperson and the Press Office. The communication activities are implemented through the Office for Public Relations, as well as similar structures such as citizen's desks, public administration one-shop desks, multi-functional desks and enterprises desks".

The Press Office is therefore responsible for the transmission of information and knowledge via the mass media; the spokesperson, a figure appearing for the first time in the Italian state machinery,

1 Stefano Rolando, *Economia e gestione della comunicazione nelle organizzazioni complesse*, Cedam, 2010.

2 "What is meant by 'public administrations' is all bodies administrated by the State" among which schools, universities, regional, provincial and local authorities, chambers of commerce, bodies of the national health service.

3 Cfr. "La funzione di comunicazione nelle pubbliche amministrazioni", ed. Gregorio Arena, Maggioli, 2001.

assists directly – on the basis of reciprocal trust – the hierarchy of the administration; the Office for Public Relations promotes and verifies the quality of the services offered, through external communication activities (towards citizens) and through internal activities (towards other structures operating within the administration).

In particular:

1) The Press Office is staffed by persons listed on the national register of journalists. These may include public servants or individuals from outside the public administration having appropriate qualifications, to be specified in a forthcoming regulation (DPR n. 422/2001). "The Press Office is directed by a coordinator, who takes up the functions of Head of the Press Office and, as instructed by the management body, liaises with the information bodies assuring the highest degree of transparency, clarity and timeliness of communications on matters of interest of the administration". These responsibilities are incompatible with other forms of professional activity in journalism and public relations.

In relation to the role of the spokesperson, that of the staff of the Press Office is characterized "in some way as less political-institutional and more administrative and of service", with "an autonomy with regard to the hierarchy of the administration which – according to the law – should be put into practice with transparency, clarity and timeliness"¹.

2) The body in charge of the public administration can be assisted by a spokesperson, whether internal or external to the administration, "in the management of relationships of a politico-institutional character with the media". The spokesperson, like Press Office staff, may not engage in other activities in the sectors of journalism or public relations.

3) The Office for Public Relations aims to address "citizens singly and in associations (...), according to the following criteria: a) to guarantee the exercise of the rights of participation, access and information (...); b) to facilitate citizens' use of services (...); c) to promote the adoption of telematic interconnection systems and coordinate the civic networks; d) to run checks on the quality of the service, paying attention to user ratings and feedback from citizens and internal operatives; e) to guarantee the mutual exchange of information between the Office for Public Relations and the other structures operating within the administration, as well as among the Offices for Public Relations of the different administrations".

Communication Programmes. Another part of the legislation concerns the annual communication programmes. By November of each year, public administrations are required to set up a plan of the communication activities they wish to carry out in the following year. The programme is forwarded to the Department of Information and Publishing (Presidency of the Council of Ministers), which is in charge of setting out a general annual communication plan, to be approved by the Council of Ministers.

PROFESSIONAL REGULATIONS FOR PUBLIC COMMUNICATORS. Following the approval of the law 150/2000 a regulation, (regarding which only key points can be mentioned here) was adopted. This regulation: "identifies the qualifications needed for the access of personnel to information and communication activities. It establishes the framework of training courses aimed at providing professional qualifications to personnel that already carry out activities regarding information and communication in the public administration. It further establishes the minimum

1 Roberto Grandi, *La comunicazione pubblica*, Carocci, 2001

requirements of public and private parties authorized to carry out training regarding matters of information and communication of public administrations.” (DPR¹ 422/2001).

As regards the Office for Public Relations, the decree which set them up assigned them “qualified staff, having a proven capacity for contact with the public, and supported where necessary by appropriate training”. The Regulation adds that at management level a degree in Communication Sciences, Public Relations, or similar is required, and graduates in other disciplines will require a post-graduate qualification in these specializations.

As regards the Press Office, the law 150/2000 requires that personnel be listed in the national Register of Professional and Freelance Journalists; in addition, for the Head of the Press Office “the possession of cultural qualifications set out under current law and contract provisions relating to the access to employment in public administration” is also required, in other words, a degree. For staff assisting the Head of the Press Office in her/ his institutional functions and in direct relations with the media, only the listing in the National Register of Journalists is required.

As regards the spokesperson, the Regulation does not specify either the professional category or the educational background and qualifications required. Generally it is a journalist, but not necessarily. All that is necessary is that the person has gained the trust of the hierarchy of the Administration.

In the first phase of implementation (now accomplished) the administrations could authorize existing personnel to fulfill the functions of communication and information, even where they did not have the requisite qualifications, but they were required to take training courses (of 60, 90, or 120 hours, depending on their roles and seniority) to be completed within two years of the regulation being adopted.

Certain administrations are excluded from the regulations laid down by the law 150/2000, among which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which employs only career diplomats in its Press Office.

“Directive on the communication activities of public administrations” (2/2002). Communication as an integral part of the activities of the public administration.

At approximately two years from the framework legislation the then Minister for the Civil Service, Franco Frattini, issued a directive² which “provides public administrations (...) with guidelines for coordination, organization and monitoring of the structures, instruments and activities prescribed by the law in the field of information and public communication. The directive differs from the law establishing the framework in its emphasis on communication (as the title shows), clarifying its parameters and stressing its value.

With the law 150/2000 and the DPR n. 422/2001 (...) - the premise states - “Public communication ceases to be an additional, residual segment of the action of public administrations, and becomes an integral part of it, as has occurred for many years in the sector of business and of the market of products and services”.

The citizens are thus endowed with a new right, defined for the first time as “right to efficient communication”. The Directive particularly values the role of the “interactive tools of communication

1 Decree of the President of the Republic, which is legally binding in the Italian legal system.

2 A ministerial directive is a provision implementing a law; it is a non-legislative, administrative act, serving to orient implementation (as the term suggests).

on line”, which the administrations should consider to be “central and decisive”. This therefore fills, at least on this level, a gap in the l. 150/2000, which contained no specific reference to the web.

With regard to operative modalities for the coordination of the various structures of communication, within each administration it will be possible to construct a coordination structure having the function of programming, orientation and coordination of the planned activities.

The Department of Civil Service (Presidency of the Council of Ministers) is further committed to continuously monitoring the implementation of the law n. 150/2000 (a commitment that was maintained, unfortunately, only for the first few years); to verifying failures and to promoting an integrated public communication. It sets out the tasks of the Offices for Public Relations, of the Press Offices and of the spokespersons in detail. It also contributes to resolving the problems encountered by small administrations (village councils, etc) in the application of the l. n. 150/2000, allowing them to establish Press Offices and Offices for Public Relations as part of a consortium, as long as the latter covers a resident population of not less than 25.000. A central role is attributed to training which, besides professionalizing the resources, should also standardize the level of preparation of the staff involved in communication offices. One section is dedicated to the type of language utilized in the administrations, which must be simple, clear and comprehensible.

Finally, to ensure that the provisions may be fully implemented, the directive requires the administrations to commit at least 2 per cent of the available income to communication and information activities, and insists that the application of the directive itself will be a criterion of evaluation of the achievement of the management of each administration. The latter must therefore indicate – in their annual “directive” concerning the allocation of resources and strategic objectives – the communication measures they intend to adopt, in line with the Government programme.

ONGOING PROBLEMS. The law 150/2000 has left several issues unresolved – coordination between the different administrations, monitoring the various activities, evaluation of the results achieved – which have only in part been clarified by successive legislation and are, therefore, still awaiting solutions. It did, however, have the merit not only of recognizing the strategic value of public communication, but above all of establishing appropriate structures in all administrations, staffed by specialised professionals.

But has the law been implemented? From the most recent monitoring report (published as long ago as 2004), the perception expressed by the administrations of the level of implementation was quite high (85%), even if only half of the sample surveyed completed the questionnaire. In general, it is clear that some version of the organizational model stipulated by the law has been put in place in a majority of the central administrations (e.g. Ministries), while the division of tasks seems rather less clear and less standardized. Often the spokesperson and the Head of the Press Office, especially in the smaller administrations, coincide, and the Office for Public Relations is normally more restricted than that prescribed by law, in its dimensions, relevance and functions. Many of the nobler recommendations contained in the directive have not been applied due to its objective “weakness” as an instrument (a ‘directive’ doesn’t have the power to enforce, or to sanction). It remains true that the sector of public communication is particularly difficult to regulate for many reasons: the vertiginous evolution of technology, that can render legislation obsolete in the space of a few months; the difficulty mentioned above of keeping the professional roles and tasks separate, the need to defend the autonomy of institutional communication from political pressure; the regressive resistance of the bureaucratic machinery to change and to coordination (in Italy, but not only). All of this a law may challenge, but certainly not overcome.

The cultural and behavioural transformations of the public administrations are naturally slow and generational. They can barely keep pace with the actual employment of new communication tools, which instead keeps on increasing in public as well as private organizations. The results obtained in terms of the quality of the communicative processes are a good indicator of the point of development of this curve of experience, although the narrative is still of “work in progress”¹. It is true, however, that, drawing lessons from the past, “changes are more successfully introduced in the presence of a law which provides a framework”, a law which, like this one, can be used as a powerful instrument of innovation within the PA. “The law is, therefore, as always, a necessary but not a sufficient condition”².

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Web Communication and Social Media

CLUB OF VENICE 2.0 - A decisive drive ahead

Niels Jørgen Thøgersen



One of the important activities for the Club is how to use the internet in public communication. Over the last 3-4 years we have organized a range of workshops and discussions in our plenary meetings on this topic. Presenting new ideas and experiences. Inviting experts from outside to join us in these discussions. And also started some concrete initiatives to the benefit and inspiration of everybody.

A number of other contributions (Stephen Clark, Ylva Tiveus, Aurelie Valtat, etc.) to this book explains in more details about what has happened and what we all can learn from it.

What we have done so far:

The Club itself has a couple of years ago launched a specific project called LIVING EUROPE (www.livingeurope.eu). Its purpose is to use the web to open up the European public space in such a way, that anybody has easy and free access to follow what is happening in other countries, also if he or she does not understand the language of that country. LIVING EUROPE is monitoring more than 4000 on-line media every ten minutes. And it presents

- 1 Cfr. Gregorio Arena, *La funzione di comunicazione nelle pubbliche amministrazioni*, Maggioli, 2001 cit. in Stefano Rolando, op. cit.
- 2 Roberto Grandi, op. cit.

the results on a home page, which any user can adapt according to her or his interests. And on languages a click can machine translate any article into more than 20 languages. The machine translation into English is still the best one. Not a completely correct translation, of course. But good enough to understand what the text is about.

We have recently also added hundreds of blogs of politicians from around Europe to the monitoring. This gives you a live access to knowledge about what is being discussed out there right now.

The LIVING EUROPE service is free and accessible to everybody. It has been built and constantly improved with active help from all members of the Club of Venice. And not least by a great work done by Erik van der Goot and Martin Atkinson at the EU Joint Research Centre in Ispra, Italy. Without them and their very creative efforts LIVING EUROPE would never have materialized.

The great challenge for LIVING EUROPE now is its pro-active promotion. As soon as people know about it and has seen it in practice they always get very excited. So promotion, promotion, promotion is what is now needed by everybody inside and outside the Club.

Another initiative of the Club in the Internet area has been to create a so-called WEB 2.0 ANIMATION GROUP. Its members are volunteers from the different member states and the EU institutions. And the purpose is to ensure a permanent follow-up to workshops, plenary discussions and an efficient flow of information and experience in the area of web and public communication. The Group is open to anybody in the Club and its activities. The plan is to make it more active and dynamic in the months to come.

The Web 2.0 Discussion Forum in the internal VeniceNet is a good tool for exchanging inspiration and ideas in between meetings.

Web 3.0, incl. the semantic web, has also been high on our agenda. With active participation by specialists from outside. An area to be further developed.

What we agree about web 2.0, incl. social media and public communication

What we all agree in this work is that web 2.0 activities, and not least social media, have come to stay – also in public communication. And we only see the beginning of this process. Development is and will be so fast that serious predictions on where we all are in a few years time are almost impossible.

What is certain, though, is:

- Web 2.0 tools, incl. social media, bring you where people are. And more and more so. Especially as broadband will be the norm and as very performing mobile devices like smartphones and PC tablets conquer the market
- Use of web 2.0 is not a technical problem, but one of attitudes and mentality
- You don't have a choice. In modern communication you must use them. And as the UK government says in its Guide on social media to all officials: Use them. But remember you are government
- Accept that you will loose some control. A citizens driven communication will by nature force you to follow what they are interested in and not not what you think is important
- Remember it is crucial that you – like in all communication – keep your credibility intact. Never compromise on this point. Say you don't know, if you don't. Never pretend you know and do things you don't.

- Web 2.0 tools, incl. social media, can never stand alone. They have to be used in an intelligent communication mix. With interactive home pages, blogs, YouTube, TV, etc. Make sure that each of them makes efficient back-up to the others.

What could the Club's next decisive steps be in this area

- 1) A GUIDE on Social Media and Public Communication is in preparation – partly based on the results of our previous workshops and other contributions. It will be made available on-line and be updated when necessary
- 2) Our work in special Workshops, On-Line Fora and Webinars have to be strengthened for the Club's members and their staff
- 3) Cooperation with others (be it non-EU countries, international institutions and the corporate sector) should be promoted actively, as we are all confronted with the same challenges and working with and for the same citizens
- 4) An external presence of the Club (such as on the professional social network LinkedIn and/ or on our own home page) is in preparation and will increase the interaction with others
- 5) Training in web 2.0 communication could be initiated as a joint project for those who are interested – perhaps back-to-back with other Club meetings (plenaries, workshops, etc.)
- 6) Exchange programmes for communication officials would be a very welcome way to ensure an efficient flow of experience and ways of using web 2.0
- 7) Guiding for recruitment of specialists in social media would be very welcome for many. Whom to hire. For which tasks. In what time perspective. Many have great experience to share
- 8) Circulation of good sources on social media and their development will help everybody. Just to mention a few of today's interesting sources:
 - LinkedIn group on FUTURE SOCIAL MEDIA: http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=661127&trk=myg_ugrp_ovr
 - LinkedIn group on INTELLIGENT SOCIAL MEDIA: http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=2515715&trk=myg_ugrp_ovr
 - Facebook Group on SOCIAL MEDIA NEWS: <http://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/groups/188514661179949?ap=1>
 - Blog on THE NEXT WEB: <http://thenextweb.com/>
 - CNET: <http://www.cnet.com/>
 - SOCIAL MEDIA BIZ: <http://www.socialmedia.biz/>

There are, of course, many more. And new ones come every day. Let's pool our efforts and resources in an on-line Forum to ensure that we are all up to date on all what is important and shaking

- 9) Create USER PANELS to guide and advice you on the best use of social media. Some already did. Let's learn from that and develop it further
- 10) And EXTERNAL EVALUATIONS are crucial for ensuring the best use of limited resources. Why do that alone each of us. Why not compare notes and learn from each other also in this often costly area.

The Club of Venice is now 25 years old. The time is ripe for moving decisively into its next 2.0 stage. Why not let its pro-active, stimulating and coordinating role in the use of Web 2.0 in modern public communication be one of the cornerstones of its further development.

Predictions for 2011 and Beyond - Social Media: Where do we go from here?

Presentation at the workshop in Brussels - February 2011

Nick Jones¹



- What do we mean by social media?
- What do we do already?
- Where have we got to?
- What are the predictions?

Definitions: a reminder

Simple actions define social media

- 'Online technologies and practices that are used to share opinions and information, promote discussion and build relationships.'
- "It's a fusion of sociology and technology, transforming monologues (one to many) into dialogues (many to many) and is

the democratization of information, transforming people from content readers into publishers."
(Source: Wikipedia)

- Does it allow you to **create, connect and share** more easily?

And defined digital engagement :

- dialogue: moving from broadcast to conversation;
- not only listening but responding;
- two way collaboration sharing information, data, opinion, discussion;
- building and sustaining rational and emotional relationships;
- moving audience from awareness to action;
- Metaphors:
 - Engineering: power is transmitted when gears engage;
 - Emotional: the ring on the finger is a commitment to share and listen.

Social media is simply telling and listening to the stories.

The knack is keeping the story going

- Nottingham City Council youth services, and other areas, worked with the local COI office to create interesting social media activities for disenfranchised youth - taking part in social media became an activity in itself.
- Part of a Department for Education programme to encourage participation in positive activity.

¹ Picture: acknowledgments: Paul Clarke (flickr)

- Chartered Institute of Public Relations award winner.
- The combination of PR (public relationships) and digital skill sets is a powerful one.

Digital behaviour is everyday behaviour.

Social media is everyday digital behaviour¹

- 73% of homes have Internet access (ONS 10/10)
- Adults spend 14.2 hours online per month (ONS 10/10)
- 37m online (Kantar 06/10)
- Viewing video up 37% YoY (Comscore 04/10)
- 44% of Internet users have a social network profile (ONS 10/10)
- 25m on Facebook, 90% using it weekly, 60% daily (Facebook Q4/10)
- 62% of major organisations using Twitter to publicise but only 27% for customer service (econsultancy 09/09)
- 6% expect a reply in 10 minutes! (IAB 01/11)
- 35% of mobile users use their phones to get news online (AOP 07/10)
- 22% of mobile users use their social networks on their phones (AOP 07/10)
- 52% rise in over 50s using social media on their mobiles
- Rise of multi-screen usage leading to Splinternet

1. Social media will integrate, blur and interrupt

- Greater integration of social media across other media on many screens
 - o Specifically increased use of hash tags and TV
- A general blurring of lines between:
 - o communication and services
 - o messages and experiences
- This will cause continuous attention to a single media be replaced by continuous partial attention across many screens
 - o You used to solely concentrate on reading a newspaper
 - o You now Google a story subject for more
 - o Check what Twitter is saying
 - o **Post a comment about it**

2. Social media gets serious: The ballad of 'Beer' Brown

- As organisations become more social, they will grapple with: issues of reputation management, security and privacy like never before.
- Social media being used in backlashes against corporations.
- This could force organisations to become more risk adverse and cautious with their social media activity.

1 UK data.

"The Beer Drinker's Bill Bryson" (Times Literary Supplement)

"The thing is, Stella owners AB-Inbev and I are not on speaking terms at the moment. I no longer get press releases from them, and I certainly don't get invited to events such as the launch of Stella Cidre, which happened yesterday.

Was it something I said?

Anyway, in the absence of any facts, I'm left with no alternative but to fabricate an utterly spurious and quite unfair conversation about this latest marketing triumph."

<http://petebrown.blogspot.com/2011/02/some-cheap-shots-and-infantile-musings.html>

Serious coordination too...

Serious: as the comms model is changing

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| • FROM: Command Control | TO: Collaboration |
| • FROM: The Passive Citizen | TO: Active Participation |
| • FROM: I invent - I direct - I do | TO: I invite - We invent - We or You do |

Government partners + commercial partners + media partners + Civic partners = DELIVERY

...and it's got to be perform if we are to avoid a comms outcome gap

- TODAY: MORE CONTROL
 - WORK IN PROGRESS: REDUCE PAID. INCREASE OWNED AND EARNED
 - TOWARDS A LESS CONTROLLED SCENARIO: Finite capability of owned and earned. Accept outcome shortfall?
3. **But we can tackle it by starting close to home and using some common sense**
- Greater focus on social media for internal comms as organisations search for meaningful, valuable ways in which they can use tools effectively.
 - Social media becomes part of the job description of the masses, not just a job title for the few. Which begs the question:
 - Will the term 'social media' lose it's cache as organisations realise that it's less smoke and mirrors and more common sense?
 - If the US army can organise and manage social media access in the field so can your organisation.



4. This stuff works. Social functionality will improve the communication effect

- German research study
- 4-8% increase in the communication effect
- Moderate social functionality best
- The less interested the respondent is in policy the higher the enhancement of communication effects social media delivers.

Source: Daniel Heine, <http://www.slideshare.net/ionsanion/government-communication-on-the-social-web-3289811>

5. Smart listening will help optimisation of communication activity, service delivery

- Listening is just one example of the predicted Internal Comms activity
- Organisations will dedicate resources to listening and measurement
- To try to figure out how what people are saying in social spaces can effectively be embedded into various functions across organisations
- “We need to engage with citizens so they can INFORM us”. Prof. Jacqueline McGlade
- “Every citizen is a sensor”, Brian Humphrey for Los Angeles Fire Department
- From a government perspective, the drive for ‘more for less’ will put an emphasis on both end-to-end evaluation and real-time optimisation
- We may see more withdrawal into the off-line world as bloggers stop blogging (it can be exhausting) The Limey in Bermuda blog was a high profile and influential blog that generated many comments and debate, often heated. Its author retired from blogging when the heat started to obscure the debate and affect his personal life
- Social media relationships are not just for Christmas.



6. Keep on crowdsourcing

- We also foresee more crowdsourcing across government to satisfy public appetite for digital participation and engagement

Social media isn't just for a small metro elite:

- Asking citizens to post, comment and rate.
- Massive scale. YF: 500k+ visits, 400k+ visitors, 15k+ ideas, 73k comments, 38k votes.
- Lot's of 'hands on deck'.
- Be careful in the future when crowdsourcing. "A lot of crowd-sourcing now feels like a bit like begging.. only lazier" (Tom Smith, Collaborative Software Specialist University of York).

The rules have changed



Let's keep talking...

- Search #gov20
- Twitter @nickjonescoi
- Nick.jones@coi.gsi.gov.uk
- New COI guidance: Moderating Online Discussions
<http://www.coi.gov.uk/guidance.php?page=380>
- More standards and guidelines: e.g. social media, ideo etc www.coi.gov.uk/webguidelines
- Usability toolkit www.coi.gov.uk/usability

Nick Jones is director of interactive services at COI, the Government's centre of marketing excellence. Nick's team delivers digital projects for public sector clients, such as the RAF, working with multiple suppliers. Nick also contributes to government guidance and standards on social media and digital engagement. Prior to joining COI he contributed to digital policy at the Cabinet Office and was seconded to run the Department of E-Government for the Government of Bermuda. A former Jupiter Research analyst he co-founded New Media Age in 1994. Nick has a MA in Geography from the University of St Andrews, Scotland. Nick tweets as @nickjonescoi.

Social Media enter the Communications mix

Stephen Clark



Origins

The honour of being the first European institution to use social media goes to the Commission, whose “EUTube” channel was launched on YouTube in June 2007. It was an early success, helped along by a splendid media furore over a video advertising the MEDIA programme¹, and undoubtedly opened eyes in the EU environment to the potential of online communication outside the traditional framework of institutional websites. EUTube continues to post good creative content and enjoy decent viewing statistics. To be fair though, EUTube was from the outset primarily an outward-oriented communications platform whose social dimension (comments function) was always a secondary factor.

Subsequently, it was the European Parliament which pioneered and still leads the way in the use of social media in EU institutional communication. This fact is closely linked to the nature of Parliament itself and the particular imperatives it responds to as the directly elected deliberative body in the EU.

The immediate stimulus came ahead of the 2009 European elections, in the period when, as usual, Parliament’s communications services were required to undertake an awareness-raising campaign. At the time, the political authorities were particularly worried about polls indicating the possibility of low turnout, but had also seen the 2008 US presidential campaign in which candidate Barack Obama had demonstrated the potential of social media in building support. Clearly, some of the Obama magic would be more than welcome in the European context.

The formal mandate to Parliament’s communicators thus included an instruction to employ “web 2.0 tools” in the pre-election campaign. This rather open instruction should however not be taken to indicate any lack of understanding at the political level of what they were asking for. Not only was the Obama campaign very fresh in everyone’s minds, but the thoughts of MEPs were already turning to their re-election campaigns and the use of social media was increasingly seen as a necessary part of the re-election effort. In this, Members of Parliament were and remain ahead of the broader institutional curve in respect of social media, and have been correspondingly enthusiastic and supportive of the social media efforts of the administration.

A March 2009 study by consultant Fleishman-Hillard found that, even at that stage, a third of MEPs “used social networks extensively”. However, these efforts were then – and still are – aimed primarily at a national electorate, and no real effort had yet been made to use social media as a means of interactive communication with a wider European audience.

¹ Slated by a gleeful British tabloid press as the Commission’s “porno video” and still by a huge margin the most viewed video on EUTube

Institutionally, the playing field onto which Parliament's DG Communication stepped was therefore largely empty, something which was of course both an opportunity and challenge. On the one hand, there was the obvious early adopter's advantage, a possibility to occupy a space online before the competition really heated up; on the other, there was almost no advice or guidance available and precious little benchmarking possible. This represents the antithesis of the environment normally favoured by prudent public institutions. The potential downside was however mitigated by the low entry costs of this form of communication and the ethos of the online community, which welcomes experimentation and is accepting missteps by communicators if openly acknowledged. In the case of Parliament's early foray into the social media, the reaction outside was almost universally positive, not only for the content and interaction it brought, but also for what it said about Parliament itself, which was perceived by the online commentariat as breaking the mould of the fuddy-duddy EU institution. A typical reaction, this from well-known euro-blogger Nosemonkey, on this occasion referring to the web team's Writing for (y)EU blog, was: they seem to get it – both tone and approach are altogether different from what we've seen from official EU bodies to date¹.

Early endeavours, anxieties and success

Interactivity online first came to the Parliament not in fact via a social media platform, but via the temporary elections website launched at the beginning of 2009, which incorporated for the first time online polls, a comment function and a weekly discussion question. These features combined full multilingualism, a strict ex-ante moderation policy and a completely anonymous manner of posting, and arguably paid a price for all of these. The pre-publication moderation policy clearly put some potential commenters off and hampered any spontaneous debate, especially in the peak evening hours when editors could not moderate comments; a fully multilingual approach – whereby users were encouraged to comment in their own languages below the appropriate linguistic version of an article, had the perverse effect of ghettoizing speakers of "small" languages² and precluded a broad debate across nationalities; while the anonymous posting method licensed the aggressive, abusive or plain mad to give vent to their feelings untroubled by what anyone might think of them. Nonetheless, the site was a considerable success, both for its interactive features and for its generally less formal style, and encouraged Parliament to pursue "web 2.0 tools" on the basis of a few useful lessons.

The exceeding caution adopted in 2009 found its roots in broad concerns over the issue of control, both among politicians and in the administration: how do we stop mad people posting on our site? What about offensive language? What about extremist/hostile/racist views? From the perspective of two years later, this angst about "loss of control" seems almost quaint, but reflected a very genuine concern at the time, albeit one that has faded since in the light of practical experience. Over time, two factors became apparent. First, there is the tendency for communities to self-correct when the discussion becomes over aggressive, extreme or unhinged. Very often it is fellow participants in a comment thread who call the wilder fringe to order. Second, and crucially, the very social nature of social networks operates a civilising influence. Users of Facebook, Twitter and so on, have online identities, followers, friends, fans, and so on. They have a personal brand, an online reputation, an image to defend. Their posts are seen by their contacts online and this creates a generally wholesome "social control" mechanism. This is not foolproof, of course, but it does help

1 EUtopia blog, post of 3 February 2009

2 In fact, it was noticeable that users of "smaller" languages often opted to join in the comment thread on the English page in order to enter a wider discussion.

ensure a generally far higher standard of discussion online than was found in the anonymous environment of the elections website.

The early months of 2009, prior to the election, saw the entry of the European Parliament into the better-known social networks. MySpace, still the largest network in the world at the time, and valued for its highly customisable and widget-friendly pages, was the first, followed in rapid succession by a YouTube channel (a sub-channel of EUtube), a fully fledged Flickr account, a Facebook page and finally 22 Twitter feeds.

All the platforms were judged successes, notably because they connected the Parliament with a new audience beyond the regular users of its website (young voters were explicitly targeted in the campaign), but also because of the wider buzz they created, with much media attention focusing on the mere – but then still remarkable – fact that Parliament was employing such innovative communications channels. A series of “viral videos” aimed at encouraging participation, based on filmic and sporting clichés, one of which was apparently so surprising it was shown on the main national TV news in several EU countries, helped add considerably to the attention generated for Parliament, and boosted its YouTube channel. The Facebook page, which reached 50,000 fans on election night after two months in existence, showed particular promise, with its easy post-and-comments paradigm proving particularly well suited to spontaneous debates and discussions on political issues – more so, frankly, than MySpace.

A good “fit” for a Parliament

For all the positive reception and satisfaction with how the social media had performed for Parliament in a pre-election communications campaign, some online cynics predicted that, with MEPs elected and Parliament back to business, Parliament online would also revert to type and quietly drop its bold new experiment. Although they were wrong – mistaken about the commitment of Parliament to these new media and blind to the fact that the new Parliament would be full of Members for whom social media are a normal part of political life – the cynics nevertheless perceived a genuine issue: how would these new communications tools move from campaigning mode to adapt to the day-to-day life of the institution.

In the event, it was in the next phase that the comparative advantage of the Parliament vis-à-vis other EU institutions became more evident. First, as noted, the institution was anything but conservative about new media. Real politicians living in the real world had understood the trend towards social media and many of them had adopted it. In June 2011, over two thirds of MEPs maintained a Facebook presence and collectively gathered about 1.5 million fans and friends. Over a third used Twitter, and the mobile revolution was so entrenched in the membership that the Parliament had barely convened before campaigns of Members were launched to generalise the presence of wifi networks in Parliament’s buildings. In other words, the broad environment was anything but the uncomprehending, conservative and antagonistic one some clearly expected of an EU institution.

Second, and more profoundly, the nature of Parliament itself favours a flourishing social media ecosystem. Parliaments are not ministries or administrations, but places of discussion, debate, disagreement, majorities and minorities... The open, informal, even often opinionated, ethos of social media is a natural communications “fit” for a democratically elected assembly, in which there is no single party “line”, but rather the interaction of many party lines. While the managers of Parliament’s social media platforms are of course bound by the obligations and ethics of their public service role, in reality this role is entirely compatible with acting as stimulators of debate, providing a neutral interface between citizens and their elected representatives.

On the Facebook page, with its 162,000+ fans, millions of monthly page impressions and tens of thousands of interactions¹ undoubtedly the current standard bearer of Parliament's social media success, it is largely sufficient for the managers simply to draw attention, in a suitably eye-catching manner, to the issues under discussion in Parliament and to pose the question, in one form or another: "what do you think?" Users and MEPs, who using their Facebook profiles can interact with them on Parliament's page, can take it from there.

Harnessing the energy - going "beyond just Facebook"

The main outstanding challenge facing Parliament's web team lies in this interaction between Members and public on the page, which still has considerable potential to develop. Though the team encourages this interaction, through set-piece mechanisms such as its Facebook "chats", for which it has developed its own application, or an "MEP tab" which groups together all MEPs on Facebook on Parliament's page, ways still have to be found to increase the spontaneity of the involvement of MEPs with the European Parliament's online community, which is after all the largest such community dedicated to EU politics, and leverage the potential of those 1.5 million contacts gathered by MEPs. All the democratic energy represented by the interaction with citizens via both MEPs' and the institutional social platforms deserves to be harnessed in some way.

At present, Parliament's web team is looking at ways it may be able to get "beyond just Facebook" in the context of the current renewal of its web presence, but also at broader questions of how users employ social media tools. It was, for example, noticeable during the "Arab Spring" of 2011 that Facebook users used Parliament's page as the direct channel of communication with MEPs on political issues, either by appealing for its help in a time of crisis (Bahraini students) or by trying to silence it through sustained spam attacks (supporters of the Syrian regime). In a world where a social media platform is used as a primary form of communication between interest groups and elected politicians, the calculations of Members will swiftly evolve, just as the platform itself will arguably thereby evolve from being a traditional communications tool to being an instrument of "e-democracy".

Outside the "Bubble"

Though there are clear signs that this shift is under way, signs too that for all that Facebook's and Twitter's domination of the social media may not be forever, at present it is still primarily as communications tools that these platforms must be judged. And very effective ones they are too, for very distinct audiences. Facebook has proven its worth above all in reaching out to an audience of non-specialists living outside the so-called Brussels "bubble". Of its 162,000 fans, 75% fall into the 18-34 age range, split equally between male and female, and – crucially – fully 95% of the fans live outside Belgium, spread widely across all EU countries. This confirms the clear impression one gains from reading the comments left on the page of active, interested, but decidedly non-specialist users, with no time for jargon or procedures. As the page passed the 100,000 fan mark, interactions jumped from the few dozen per post to the hundreds, posing challenges in terms of moderation, but in general revealing a positive engagement on the part of users with the Parliament. In terms of day-to-day traffic, the Facebook page comfortably surpasses the website of Parliament by a multiple of four or five, while at the same time rising from nowhere to become the fourth source of traffic to the site, thus showing the mutually reinforcing nature of substantive website content and social media platforms.

1 Figures as at June 2011

Twitter too is an important source of traffic to the site, in tenth position, though clearly through its ability to reach a more specialised in-crowd. Collectively, Parliament's 22 language feeds gather nearly 20,000 followers, a significant figure in a world of specialists, while a newer English language press service feed adds another 1,500. These figures probably only however represent the tip of a potential iceberg, as the use that is made of Twitter has so far been largely of the "broadcasting" variety. An upgrading of the service, with a more sophisticated and spontaneous use to be made of the various feeds, to enhance both their value to users and their communications impact for the Parliament, is being introduced at the time of writing. Again, this upgrading will focus on harnessing some of the energy of a lively Twitter community surrounding the EU institutions, beginning with an extremely active group of MEPs who make extensive use of the platform.

The language issue

Perhaps the question most often posed about the use of social media by the Parliament concerns language. The official work of the Institution is carried out in 23 languages, and the communications activities of Parliament, when aimed at the general public, for example through its central and information office websites, employ all these languages, and indeed more.

This principle extends to Twitter, for which Parliament's web team operates feeds in 22 languages. The main Facebook page, however, is almost entirely in English. In the first place, there are simple resource reasons for this; it would simply not be feasible for the web team to operate Facebook pages in 22 different languages. But there is also a deeper reason, linked to the very nature of the medium: namely that the Facebook page provides a common space for interaction with, and between, users all over the continent. This is at the heart of its very *raison d'être*. The conversation requires a common language and current reality dictates that this language can only practically be English. The managers of the page do not "impose" this rule, and users do frequently post comments in languages other than English, but in practice it is users themselves who encourage others to use the most common vehicular language. The effect is the same as that seen on the elections website, where users gravitated naturally to the English version for the purpose of commenting.

Though bowing to the inevitable in this respect, Parliament remains highly sensitive to questions of multilingualism and is addressing the issue in a number of ways. First, most of the Information Offices of Parliament around Europe have set up Facebook pages using the relevant language(s). Second, and within limits (as this disrupts the value of the Europe-wide community), the central web team occasionally posts targeted updates addressed to users in specified countries using the relevant language. Third, the Parliament is looking at possible technological solutions that might assist accessibility in the longer run, such as inbuilt translation tools embedded in the page, providing for example an "in my language" button for comments. However, though automatic translation tools do of course exist, formidable technological and linguistic obstacles remain to be overcome before these become a practical multilingual option for this purpose.

The importance of being human

In the meantime, the social media have a naturally higher level of tolerance of imperfection in general than is the case for other, traditional media, precisely because of their social nature, which implies a stronger human dimension. This generates an ethos which any social media manager has to learn to respect, namely to communicate like a human being operating in a human social context. The ramifications are significant in terms of how the platforms are managed - even an institutional profile has to speak with a recognisably human voice, using normal language, reacting and responding as a real person. This is perfectly compatible with the professional standards of an

EU official, but requires the adoption of an appropriate tone, active engagement with users and frankness about the nature of the role.

In the EU context, the most famous success in this respect came from the Eurocontrol air traffic organisation during the Icelandic ash cloud crisis. The manager of the Eurocontrol's Twitter feed responded in real time directly to a non-stop stream of questions about air traffic restrictions, airports being open or closed (or likely to be) and the like in straightforward language. Crucially, as she did this, she wished people luck, sympathised with their problems, freely acknowledged it when she had no answer to give, and above all focused on what they really wanted to know. The episode gave Aurélie Valtat, the official in question, a moment of local social media stardom but, more importantly, tangibly demonstrated to EU communicators generally the value of the human voice in social media communication.

This human touch not only makes for greater effectiveness in communication, in that an audience responds better to a message conveyed by people with whom they feel some connection, but also has a communications value in itself. The first lesson in journalism school is famously that "people are interested in people". One major difficulty that EU institutions suffer from, on the other hand, is a general public perception of them as distant, faceless, monolithic machines. Visitors to Parliament are therefore frequently amazed by the teeming humanity and bustle of Brussels or Strasbourg and the sheer quantity of human interaction which constitutes its work. Perhaps for the Parliament in particular, this is a vital insight and one that the social media, by their very nature, can reinforce, especially for the great majority of European citizens who cannot visit the buildings. Social media reveal a human reality behind the façade, permit direct and immediate interaction, allow a debate to be shared by those on the inside and those outside. In effect, they can metaphorically remove the walls of glass and steel separating politicians and eurocrats from the wider public. This is why, for a democratically elected institution such as the European Parliament, as well as for a growing ecosystem of Members, political groups and other stakeholders, social media represent such a self-evident communications choice.

Looking ahead

In fact the choice is self-evident for many. The take up of social media by EU institutions is visibly gathering pace. As perhaps befits an area which is still in its infancy, with nobody quite sure where this new phenomenon will lead (just as no-one could predict, in its early days, where the internet would lead), there is a pioneering and slightly anarchic feel about social media take-up. Facebook pages and twitter feeds spring up like mushrooms, sometimes apparently randomly and in not-so-obvious places. Communications campaigns now all have to have a "social media component"; sometimes this seems an afterthought, at others the use of social media is highly imaginative. The full implications in terms of resources still have to be fully absorbed and understood, with the result that continuity (critical in this field) is sometimes undermined.

But all this is quite normal in a new field of communications. While the tools and platforms may come and go, the direction is clear, the social dimension of the internet is here to stay. As for the Parliament, this fact is explicitly recognised in its "Action Plan for the implementation of Parliament's updated communication strategy 2011-2014", which explicitly commits it to the mainstreaming of social tools in its overall internet strategy and in a specific action aimed at providing an interactive platform for Members. The future, as they say, is social.



Stephen Clark is a British official of the European Parliament, who has worked for the Institution since 1991. He has done a variety of jobs in Parliament, being involved at different times in its political work and in organisational and budgetary issues. However, since 2007 he has focused on communications, holding particular responsibility for online platforms. The team he heads publishes daily editorial content on Parliament's website in 22 languages and has developed a range of new activities using new and social media. He is currently heavily involved in a major project to completely renew the overall web presence of the European Parliament.

Social media to the rescue

How public institutions are unlocking the potential of social media to respond to crisis and emergency situations

Aurélie Valtat



"Action speaks louder than words, but not nearly as often." Mark Twain

Nowadays, leaving the house or the office without your smartphone feels a bit like walking naked through the streets. In a matter of clicks, mobile devices offer the world at hand and keep us constantly connected to the ever increasing flow of online information.

In 2013, almost 40% of European citizens will access the Internet through their mobile phones, and the number of mobile Internet

connections is expected to outweigh those of PC-based connections as soon as 2014 according to the latest research¹.

This shift in the use of mobile technology, added to the growing usage of social media, has important consequences on how public institutions manage crisis and emergency communications.

By going through some best practices picked among European and international organisations, I would like to explore the conditions that allow to successfully leverage the power of social media in a crisis context.

A perfect match between social media and crisis communication needs?

A first look at the characteristics of social media and the needs of crisis communications will show a seemingly perfect match between the two. But before we take a deeper look at this, let's be clear about the terms used here.

Social media are web platforms to enable conversations, in particular through the sharing of user-generated content. In short, what has been coined as social media encompasses not only social networks such as Facebook or LinkedIn, and content sharing platforms like Youtube and Flickr, but also blogging and microblogging services, the most famous of which are probably Wordpress and Twitter.

As for crisis communications in a public context, it refers to several types of crises: reputation crisis, political or economic crisis, and any major event threatening people's lives. It's on the latter case that I will concentrate mostly in this article.

So back to our perfect match. A sound crisis or emergency communications plan usually recommends the following actions:

1. Acknowledge the problem quickly.
2. Determine the facts.
3. Tell your story.
4. Show you care.
5. Fix the problem.

In all of these steps, social media prove very valuable to both gather and push relevant information to the right audiences at the right moment.

Speed is indeed the main advantage of social media compared to other media channels. In a matter of seconds or minutes after a major event, public institutions can be informed of any major risk to the lives of people they are accountable to. The same speediness can be applied to pushing out information acknowledging that government authorities or public institutions are aware of the issue and monitoring it closely.

When the volcanic ash cloud started spreading over European skies in April 2010, EUROCONTROL, the European air traffic management body, was the first public actor to communicate on the potential impact of this event on air transport in Europe. They used their dedicated Twitter and Facebook channels to publish air traffic updates as soon as they were received from the operations room, often short-circuiting traditional media outlets.

1 Figures from Forrester Research http://blogs.forrester.com/reineke_reitsma/09-08-31-western_europe_mobile_internet_forecast_2009_2014 and Morgan Stanley <http://gigaom.com/2010/04/12/mary-meeker-mobile-internet-will-soon-overtake-fixed-internet/>

Eurocontrol twitter page during the 2010 volcanic ash crisis

Because they offer such a vast reservoir of information from various sources, social media and Twitter in particular can be a useful addition to other channels when it comes to determining the exact facts surrounding a crisis situation.

Social media can do even better in combination with

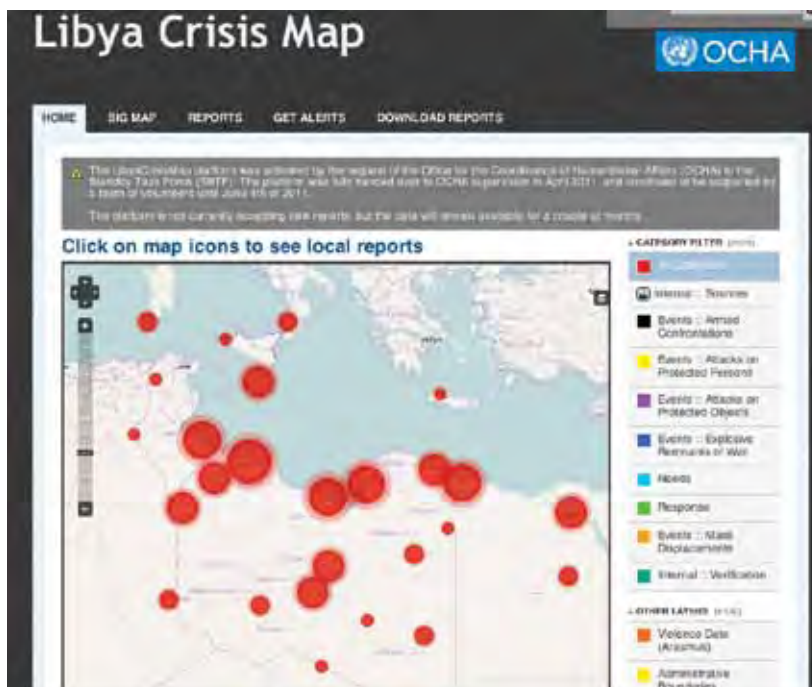
mobile devices and geolocation tools, because they allow for live crisis mapping.

Live mapping builds on information provided by trusted sources who relay information on the situation happening on the ground through social media. This possibility has been used by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Aid (OCHA) to gather high-quality, high-validity information required to coordinate humanitarian response operations in Libya in spring 2011. The result is this map, fully populated by on-site volunteers:

Live crisis mapping by UN/OCHA available at <http://libyacrisismap.net/>

What better tools to tell your version of the story and share the human side of a crisis than through social media? Public institutions have been too shy to emphasise the human dimension of their crisis responses, when it is precisely this part of their action which will attract most empathy and understanding from media and citizens at large.

During the nuclear crisis in Japan in May 2011, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs set up a Facebook page for its nationals



based in Japan to keep them informed of the situation and receive any specific instructions. This page allowed the French expat community not only to be aware of any government actions; it also strengthened ties within this community and helped to address individual needs on a case-by-case basis.

Conditions for success in an institutional environment

Social media, combined with the potential of mobile devices and geolocation features, are powerful amplifiers for crisis communications campaigns in a governmental or institutional context.

But before public institutions blindly jump onto the social media bandwagon, a number of conditions need to be met.

Social media cannot be used in isolation and as a one-off solution

It makes no sense in any major crisis situation to focus only on social media to reach out to your target audiences and to neglect mainstream media channels. EUROCONTROL's social media efforts only really started gaining momentum during the 2010 volcanic ash crisis when media outlets such as the New York Times, Le Monde and El Pais linked to EUROCONTROL's Twitter feed from their websites.

Likewise it is not realistic, nor is it credible or efficient to start your social media presence on Day 1 of a crisis. Therefore, having an established social media presence on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and any other social network relevant to your business is a must for any successful "social" crisis communications campaign.

The main element here is the size of your network; in a crisis context, institutions need to be able to reach out to the largest audience possible.

The internal organisation culture needs to be ready for social media

The reliance on social media to get across critical information in a crisis context requires to be open to a certain social media culture, differing from one platform to another.

For public service institutions, this involves in particular:

- a different approach to message validation,
- a stronger level of trust in those people manning the various social media profiles of the institution,
- an appetite for and genuine interest in open and human dialogue with citizens.

If any of these conditions cannot be met in the internal culture of the institution, social media initiatives in a crisis context are doomed to fail. Embracing social media is already a demanding task in a normal context, even more so when lives are at stake.

Government social media channels should offer tangible benefits for citizens

Fancy PR stunts are the last exercise you want to be part of in the midst of a major crisis as a communicator for government agencies or public service. Your social media outreach exercise should demonstrate clear benefits to citizens directly or indirectly affected by a crisis.

It is interesting to note that your social media efforts will reap the most benefits in mitigating the negative effects of a crisis on people when your social media presence moves from being focused

on providing information to providing service. This is key to understand how citizens consume social media in a crisis context.

A mature social media presence will either build on existing services or establish its own service during a crisis situation. The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs developed a service which lets citizens subscribe to an alert system in case of a major crisis in or outside of Italy. Thanks to geolocation features on their mobile devices, these subscribers will receive alerts as soon as they enter an area considered to be dangerous for Italian nationals.

10 tips to build a strong social media crisis response

The above provides a general framework in which to build your institution's specific social media response to a major crisis.

Here are 10 tips for immediate implementation, based on my personal experience of surviving two crises using social media:

1. Include social media in your crisis communications plan.
2. Social media people are "media" people; they should be part of your crisis "war room".
3. Plan a 24/7 response service on social media in times of crisis.
4. Social media will require more human resources in the case of a major crisis; make sure these people are adequately trained.
5. Make sure you do not concentrate all your crisis information and services on one single social media channel – diversity is key.
6. Use your Facebook wall or Twitter feed as a super FAQ to answer the most frequently asked questions about the crisis.
7. Maintain a human and simple language, do not use bureaucratic jargon.
8. Stay honest and as transparent as possible about the level of information available; if you don't know, say so.
9. Become a hub for information about the crisis: push information provided by you, but also by other trustworthy sources.
10. Offer a subscription service to receive government alerts through various channels (including social media) in case of a major crisis.

In conclusion, social media offer ideal platforms to inform and service citizens in times of crisis because of their speediness, their limited cost, their flexibility and their potential outreach. It would be illusory however to believe that this can be done without transforming the way public institutions approach social media and the specific cultures that underpin the social media experience.

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Trial and error, with no clear expectations

Ir. Milko Vlessing



“Doing a Stanislav: using social media in campaigns, devising clever combinations and moving from conventional campaigns to a permanent presence”

It is strange to think that the smart phone in my trouser pocket has a far greater computing capacity than all of the computers needed to send Apollo 11 to the moon in 1961. Information technology developments in recent years may in fact have been a bigger “giant leap” for mankind than that first step on the moon. Progress here has been rapid.

I can still remember being given my first ever e-mail address, when I began studying at Delft Technical University. I did not actually know at the time what to do with it. It was a name with a string of figures and an “a” with a squiggle, followed by the name of the

university and another string of figures, ending in “.nl”. I did not feel I was ever going to have any good use for e-mail. Who was I actually supposed to send anything to? That was in 1988, when major computer networks had long been interconnected, discussions could be conducted on bulletin boards and files could be shared by FTP all over the world. The general view then was that the Internet was to serve as a facility for research and education.

The World Wide Web, as a system of cross referring hypertext documents available over the Internet, has been around since a few years after that and is due in particular to a number of clever people such as the Director of W3C, Sir Tim Berners Lee, the man who created the first web browser and web server. The original idea behind the development of the World Wide Web was to simplify Internet use, so as to make the Internet available to all, even at home.

Who would have predicted then that the lightning fast spread of the Internet was to bring unprecedented economic growth in the western world? And the impact that the potential of the Internet would have on the everyday lives of people all over the world. As well as how important online communication would become for authorities.

Staying in the past for a moment, it is worth taking a look at the Internet archive (wayback.archive.org). There you can see just how unuser-friendly the Netherlands authorities’ first public information website, www.postbus51.nl, was looking back in 1997. At that time, the online area did not really form part of the authorities’ communication work and was mainly of interest to a small insider group of aficionados and techies.

Nowadays many authorities take the line “digital first and foremost” and all aspects of online communication have become firmly established in policy and communication work at every level. However important online communication now is and however professionally authorities’ websites are now designed, it is still quite a challenge to bridge or narrow the digital divide between us and the public.

People of all kinds have fully taken on board the new opportunities and uses opened up by the Internet, thereby radically altering media practices. Use of social media websites, by mobile Internet means or otherwise, has mushroomed. The number of active Facebook users, for instance, has risen to 750 million world wide. During the North African revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia, apart

from Twitter, Facebook provided an important means for insurgents to communicate with one another and with the outside world. The insurgents, many of them students, referred to themselves in the media as “the Facebook kids”.

In the Netherlands, too, the most commonly used websites nowadays, apart from search engines, are social media such as Facebook, Hyves or YouTube. It has become harder for the authorities to remain in view among the vast range of information being peddled and, by their communication, to exert a positive influence on public knowledge, attitudes and behaviour in important matters such as organ donation, road safety or cybercrime. The conventional, safe way of reaching the target group by means of mass media campaigns and paid media advertising will no longer work.

There are a number of recent examples in which the authorities’ conventional sender orientated communication has proved ineffectual. A public campaign in 2009, intended to encourage all girls of around 12 years of age to be vaccinated against the virus potentially causing cervical cancer, met with limited uptake; only half of them heeded the call to be vaccinated, owing to the fuss stirred up about possible side effects. Effective small scale mobilisation against the authorities’ vaccination scheme spread via the Internet, instigated mainly by just a small group of worried mothers who were very active online. The authorities were at the time unable to come up with a proper response to what was happening online and could not intervene effectively in discussions conducted mainly via social media.

In introducing a new secondary education teaching timetable, too, the authorities were surprised at the rapidity with which a pupil protest sprang up. Fearing the timetable would adversely affect the quality of tuition, pupils mobilised at lightning speed via the Netherlands’ largest social network, Hyves. The authorities were taken aback and the protest brought changes to the timetable.

There is now a general realisation that social media have an important part to play in government communication. Social media make it possible for information to be disseminated among large groups of people, or for people to be stirred to action, within a short time. However, this does not mean that there is any magic recipe for when and how the authorities should make use of social media. Initial experiments among the country’s authorities show this to be largely a question of trial and error. If social media are to be used successfully, there is a need to remain alert. While this is not to be seen as an end in itself, there are now some good examples of the social media option resulting in successful public information, in cases where social media have played an important role.

Stanislav was a smash hit here: within the space of a week, in August 2009, five million Hyves users passed on to each other a personalised short film designed to make people think twice before putting their personal details on the Internet. Broad, effective coverage meant that many more people have started using the Internet more safely. It proved such a success because everything was just right: the subject was to do with the Internet, Hyves was the major platform on which everyone readily provided personal details and the short film was gripping and personalised. The simplicity with which people could forward the film to friends on Hyves also helped make for its success. All at once, everyone wanted a Stanislav. (The components of the campaign can be reviewed on: <http://award-entry.com/stanislav>).

Two years on, we now know all about Stanislav. We do not want any more virals on Hyves. Should we join in with the hype and try something different again: Twitter, an app or something involving Foursquare, or are we going to make structural, targeted use of social media? As in the organ donation campaign, for instance, allowing itself three years to increase the number of registered donors. The campaign “JaofNee.nl” [YesorNo.nl] has a deliberate online focus. The aim is to have people register as organ donors, which they can do very easily online, via the DigiD electronic identity card. Although the campaign was deliberately not based on a social media strategy (social media being seen as just one way of reaching a large target group), the social media option



has in fact played an important part in its success over the last year. The authorities approached Hyves, asking whether it also thought organ donation important and whether it would join them in running a campaign. This culminated in an arrangement ideally suited to Hyves. Its users can show whether they are registered organ donors, in their profiles, and can easily urge friends in their network also to register. That has prompted many more people to register: another 350 000 now, after just over two years. Social media have become a structural part of the campaign. Even when the official campaign ends, this will go on and on.

For none of the campaigns were any very specific targets set in advance. We had no idea what to expect beforehand; we learned a great deal by closely monitoring web statistics, watching the response to content online and carrying out research. In that, there is no difference from any other communication. Every campaign needs to be carefully tailored. You start, of course, by establishing some strategic premises: your objectives and the role of social media within your overall approach to communication. But it is no use nailing down every detail in advance, in a world in which new online applications are constantly emerging. You need, above all, to be bold enough to experiment, but also to know what you are doing and to build up confidence by taking small steps in the right direction. It is quite important to distinguish between whether social networks are to be used as a way of conveying your message or as a means of engaging in personal dialogue with your target group.

Experience within the Netherlands is still mainly campaign based, but seeking and engaging in ongoing dialogue with the public and with professionals as part of services provided or as a way of involving the public in government policy seems an attractive prospect, which may in the longer run bring results such as commitment, co-creation and ambassadorship.

This will, in my view, be made possible only by pioneering and continually experimenting with new opportunities and uses opened up by the Internet. And above all by learning from one another with an open mind, through exchange of information and sharing of experience.

This brings me to the Venice Club, which has set itself precisely the latter aim for all aspects of government communication: to exchange information and good practice across members countries' borders, so as to learn from one another. Just what Sir Tim Berners Lee had in mind in the late 1980s, when paving the way for the present day Internet.

Tips for successful use of social media:

- take care, as an organisation, to communicate in a human way and do so as genuinely and personally as possible;
- try to make allowance for any relevant context, by showing an awareness, when engaging in dialogue, of people's position in terms of time, place or circumstances;
- follow up your communication, by responding promptly and precisely, and be attentive to people's concerns;
- go in for crowd sourcing, by looking for cooperation; the target group can assist you in your objective;
- by making astute use of web analysis and social media monitoring, you can soon find out what is going on among the target group;
- try things out and experiment, using your common sense, and keep adjusting your aims.

Ir. Milko Vlessing - Senior consultant for online media Public Information and Communication Office, Ministry of General Affairs, Netherlands.

UK Government: using web tools and services to support communication¹

David Pullinger



UK Government is taking the following actions using Digital Media, focusing on the purpose of communication:

- Improving Government Web estate for usability and cost effectiveness (Web 1.0)
- Digital engagement with citizens and businesses (social media tools Web 2.0)
- Releasing Public Sector Information for re-use (semantic web - Web 3.0)

Focus on Digital Engagement using Web 2.0 tools and services

Defining Digital Engagement

- Digital engagement 'refers to use of digital media to interact with those outside of government.'
- Digital engagement encompasses techniques and tools that complement (rather than replace) conventional methods of communication.
- Digital engagement has been marked out for special attention because it is innovative and presents new benefits and risks.
- Digital engagement is relevant to communications, delivery and policy-making functions.
- Digital engagement can be the sole channel for delivering a campaign, service or function; it can also play a supporting role in a 'mixed economy' of delivery methods.
- Digital engagement is a means rather than an end in itself.
- The key is to determine when digital engagement is an option and an opportunity.
- Digital engagement is not new to government; we have long been alive to its potential.
- However, practice has been inconsistent and small-scale.
- The aim is to optimise our use of digital engagement by making it a strategic concern across government.

Applying Digital Engagement

- Policy-making, communications and delivery go through cyclical development...
 - o Evaluate
 - o Define
 - o Develop
 - o Implement
 - o Monitor
- (UK Government Communications ENGAGE programme 2005)

¹ Intervention at a Venice Club workshop on web communication hosted in Brussels by the Belgian Federal Chancellery authorities, Directorate for External Communication, in April 2009.
Acknowledgements to Nick Jones and Ross Ferguson for their contribution to this feedback

- Digital engagement has different potential roles at the various points around the cycle, for example...
 - o Evaluate Encouraging public debate – Identifying the issues
 - o Define Gathering ideas and evidence - Assessing solutions
 - o Develop Designing solutions with end users – Building consensus
 - o Implement- Making policy statements – Promoting service take-up
 - o Monitor Collecting data – Enabling feedback
- A range of applications are available to facilitate digital engagement, for example...
 - o Webchats
 - o Forums
 - o Social networks
 - o E-mail
 - o Media-sharing sites
 - o APIs
 - o Data visualisation
 - o Feeds
 - o Bookmarking
 - o Surveys
 - o Commentable documents
- These applications can be stand-alone or integrated into sites
- Applications can be developed, bought off-the-shelf or 'leased' from third-parties
- The particular dynamics of the applications bring them into play at different points around our cycle, for example...
 - o Evaluate Webchats – Bookmarking – Micro-blogging
 - o Define E-mail – Wikis - Forums
 - o Develop Surveys – Commentable documents - Games
 - o Implement APIs – Media-sharing sites – Instant messaging
 - o Monitor Feeds and aggregators – Social networks – Data visualisation
- Some applications are appropriate at more than one point or at all points around the cycle
- To date, Government has applied the tools and techniques of digital engagement in a number of ways...
 - o Evaluate FSA "Chief Scientist" Blog – FCO "Global Conversations"
 - o Define Party Funding Reviews
 - o Develop POI Taskforce Report – Planning Portal Forum
 - o Implement Number 10 Webchats – RAF Recruitment
 - o Monitor Cabinet Office "Open Source" – CLG "Have Your Say" –
- No 10 e-petitions

EVALUATE: Food Standards Agency 'Chief Scientist' blog

Issue

- Build the profile of the newly appointed Chief Scientist.
- Improve the profile of the FSA's role and activity.
- Encourage debate about food science issues.

Approach

- Blog with posts offering regular, plain-English comment on coverage of food science in the mainstream media.
- Chief Scientist actively and regularly responds to user comments and questions.

Result

- Blog quickly established as trusted source of information.
- Traffic spikes correspond with media coverage of issues.
- In evaluation, 70% of visitors rate the blog as 'good' or 'very good'.

EVALUATE: Foreign & Commonwealth Office 'Global Conversations'

Issue

- Build public awareness of FCO activities and staff based in around the world.
- Encourage departmental awareness of issues outwith consultation periods.

Approach

- Collection of blogs written by staff in a range of junior to senior functions from around globe.
- Bloggers offer alternative and unique insights into FCO activity.
- Text-based posts supplemented with photos (Flickr), videos (YouTube) and a Twitter feed.

Result

- Blog quickly established and retained high profile amongst FCO staff, partners and stakeholders.
- In evaluation, 85% of visitors said they would visit regularly and 70% said they would recommend it to others.



DEFINE: Independent Review of the Funding of Political Parties Forum & Webchat

Issue

- Offer additional means of public participation in consultation.
- Ensure deliberation is open and constructive.

Approach

- Forum open to public and chaired by independent experts.
- Forum divided into a sequence of 8 two-week threads based on potential funding solutions.
- Forum followed up with webchat to clarify and agree conclusions with participants.

Result

- Activity pooled public, academic and media participants.
- In evaluation, 65% of participants said that this was their sole means of engaging with the consultation.
- The Review team placed a great deal of value on the input received via the forum and webchat.

DEVELOP: Power of Information Taskforce Report Consultative Review

Issue

- Offer stakeholders the opportunity to review and edit the Taskforce's final report prior to submission.

Approach

- Report was uploaded as a 'commentable document' allowing participants to suggest edits for specific sections.
- Netvibes dashboard used to aggregate 'offsite' coverage.

Result

- Several hundred comments were received.
- Such was the scale of interest that the review period was extended from 2 weeks to a month.
- The Taskforce placed a great deal of value on the input received via site and was able to address any points of clarification prior to the official submission of the report.



Live from February - March 2009,
archive site available at
<http://poit.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/poit>

DEVELOP: Planning Portal 'Local Planning Authorities' Forum

Issue

- Encourage local authorities to exchange 'good practice' over business process changes.
- Support take-up of new online service.

Approach

- Forum was set up with closed-access available only to local authority staff in England and Wales.
- Peer-to-peer exchange was facilitated by Planning portal staff.

Result

- Forum attracted participation from all 410 local authorities.
- Forum was moderated, but in evaluation users said they felt that they had control over the flow of the discussion.
- The participation rate was consistent over the course of the forum.

IMPLEMENT: Number 10 Ministerial Webchats

Issue

- Provide public with opportunity to pose questions directly to ministers (and senior civil service officials) about policies and services.
- Raise profile of ministers, policies and services.

Approach

- Webchats are open to all and operate on a realtime Q&A basis.
- Webchats usually last for an hour.
- Ministers participate directly.

Result

- Webchats attract a large number of questions and even greater number of spectators.
- Ministers get through an average of 21 questions per webchat.
- Number 10 has held upwards of 50 webchats on its site since starting in 2006.



Webchat archives available at www.number10.gov.uk/news/webchats

IMPLEMENT: Royal

Air Force Recruitment 'Gap Year' Campaign

Issue

- Broaden the catchment of RAF recruitment campaigns beyond 'friends and family' groups.
- Encourage awareness of range of career options in RAF.

Approach

- RAF established profile on social network site (Bebo) appropriate to its target audience.
- Bebo profile used to host a campaign involving 4 'heroes' from around the world competing in a series of challenges that showcase RAF talents.
- Bebo users could follow and interact with the 'heroes'.
- All campaign activity was linked to the official RAF recruitment site.

Result

- Videos received 1.3 million views.
- Bebo profile attracted over 5000 'fans'.
- Improved awareness of career options amongst Bebo users.



*Campaign ran 2008,
RAF Recruitment maintains a social
network profile
at www.bebo.com/theroyalairforce*

MONITOR: Communities and Local Government 'Have Your Say' activity

Issue

- Provide the department with the means to gather public and stakeholder on communications, delivery and policy activities.

Approach

- Department has brought together a 'suite' of social media tools to encourage monitoring at a corporate level.
- Ownership and management of the suite is shared across policy, communications and web teams.

Result

- Use of social media tools has been a departmental practice since 2005.
- In evaluation, 69% of public users rated the availability of the 'Have Your Say' activity as 'useful' and 86% would recommend using it to others.
- Experience at corporate communications level has prompted greater use of digital media in internal communications.

Public-facing 'Have Your Say' activity available at

<http://haveyoursay.communities.gov.uk>

MONITOR: Cabinet Office 'Open Source' Action Plan

Issue

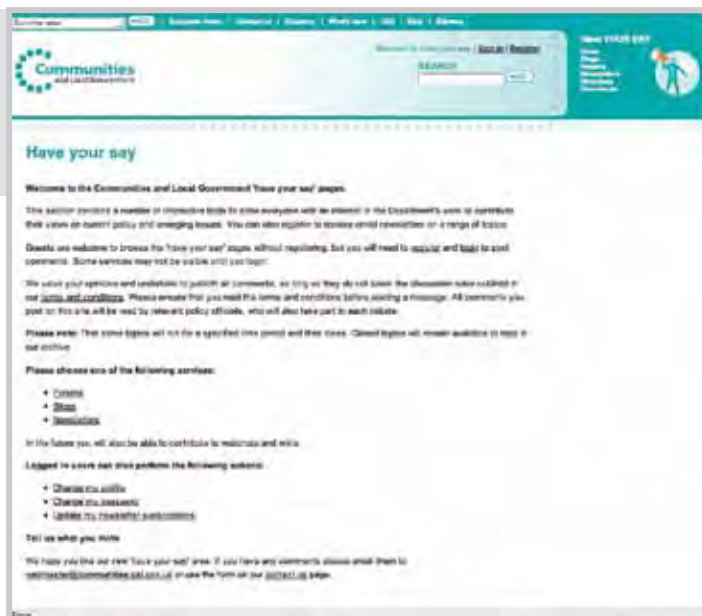
- Promote awareness and discussion of the Government's use of open source and open standards.
- Aggregate online coverage and discussion of the Action Plan.

Approach

- Use and promotion of a Netvibes dashboard to bring together feeds from search engines, blogs, micro-blogs and media sites.
- Anyone discussing the Action Plan is encouraged to use an identifying tag (#ukgovOSS).

Result

- Set up within an hour.
- Within a week the dashboard had automatically captured over 200 uses of the tag, 3000 blog references and 54 posts.



www.netvibes.com/cabinetoffice#Open_Source

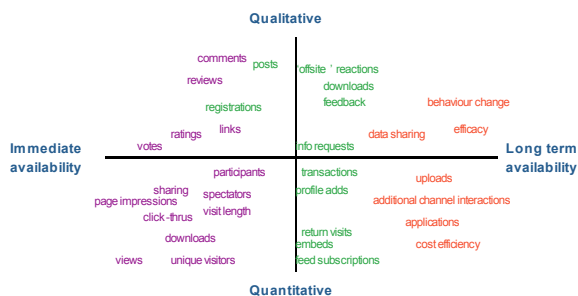
Potential Outcomes of Digital Engagement

- Examples of good digital engagement by government have tended to be based on sound planning foundations, including...
- Correspondence with overall strategy and business objectives
- Having clear project objectives

- Users are clear and the activity is design appropriately
- Suitable staff, budgetary and technical resources are in place
- Being appropriately positioned and promoted
- Having an appropriate monitoring and evaluation plan
- This suggests that any suggestion for digital engagement activity should be subject to a three-point checklist assessment:
 - Sense (does the concept hold together under rigorous testing?)
 - Value (will the activity deliver on objectives and desired outcomes?)
 - Feasibility (is the activity deliverable and sustainable in practice?)
- Good use of digital engagement by government has resulted in a range of beneficial outcomes, for example...
 - Reflecting citizens' preferred communications channels [RAF Recruitment]
 - Enhancing reputation and credibility [POI Taskforce Report]
 - Promoting transparency [Number 10 Webchats]
 - Empowering users, stakeholders and partners [CLG 'Have Your Say']
 - Reducing dependence on advertising and the media [FCO 'Global Conversations']
 - Sustaining more targeted interactions [FSA 'Chief Scientist' Blog]
 - Deepening the pool of available qualitative and quantitative data [Cabinet office 'Open Source']
 - Achieving efficiencies in transactions [Planning Portal Forum]
 - Boosting efficacy [Party Funding Review]

Measuring Digital Engagement

✂ 'Traffic' and 'conversion' metrics tend to be more quantitative, whereas 'relationship' metrics tend to be qualitative ...



✂ Chose specific metrics based on how appropriate they are both the objectives and the process.

Measuring Digital Engagement

- 'Traffic' and 'conversion' metrics tend to be more quantitative, whereas 'relationship' metrics tend to be qualitative...
- Chose specific metrics based on how appropriate they are both the objectives and the process.

David Pullinger is currently Head of Government on the Web in the UK Government's Cabinet Office. He has a PhD and background in human-computer interaction and worked for many years in the private sector where he introduced digital publishing to international publishing companies, winning many awards for his innovation and bottom line results. In his work for UK Government, he has overseen all types of communication, specializing in making best use of new technical opportunities to communicate effectively using digital media.

Excerpt from "Engaging through social media: a guide for civil servants"

— UK Central Office of Information (COI)¹

What is social media?

Social media is a term used to refer to on-line technologies and practices that are used to share opinions and information, promote discussion and build relationships. It is equally useful to communications staff and policy officials.

Social media services and tools involve a combination of technology, telecommunications and some kind of social interaction. They can use a variety of different formats, for example text, pictures, video and audio.

The term "social media" is applied to the tools in question, their application and collaboratively developed practices.

What are the benefits?

Good use of social media can help government to better understand, respond to and attract the attention of specific audiences. It enables real two-way communication with people in the places where they are already engaging with their interests.

Social media can:

- increase government's access to audiences and improve the accessibility of government communication;
- enable government to be more active in its relationships with citizens, partners and stakeholders;
- offer greater scope to adjust or refocus communications quickly, where necessary;
- improve the long-term cost effectiveness of communication;
- benefit from the credibility of non-government channels;
- increase the speed of public feedback and input;
- reach specific audiences on specific issues; and
- reduce government's dependence on traditional media channels and counter inaccurate press coverage.

Expertise within government

In 2005 the Government's Transformational Government strategy set out how the UK could harness technology in order to transform government services. Since then, digital engagement has played an increasingly vital role in changing the way in which government communicates with its audiences. COI provides departments with expert advice, support, guidance and services for operating in a digital world.

1 Authorized / Reference Crown Copyright 2009 - Publication - March 2009 - Ref. 293955/0309

There are three broad government strategies for digital communication:

1. Communicate where people are present
 - Put information in the places where people go
 - Participate where people are present, particularly through forums, wikis and blogging
 - Deliver access to on-line services where people go.
2. Create better user experiences for government services
 - Enable people to find the information and on-line services they require by having fewer communication channels and focusing them around audience needs
 - Aggregate relevant information into one place on government sites, saving users time and effort
 - Create a consistent high-quality experience through a dedicated set of standards.
3. Enable non-governmental bodies to re-use information
 - Help non-governmental bodies to build new services by structuring information so that they can combine public data with private data.
 - Avoid replicating what is already being undertaken by non-governmental bodies.

COI has an in-depth understanding of how citizens and businesses engage with digital technology. We are, therefore, uniquely placed to develop strategies, policies, standards and guidance to improve public digital engagement.

General guidance

There are some common principles shared across all forms of social media. Knowing these basic "rules of engagement" will help you whether you are running on on-line community or simply contributing.

The basic principles:

- ***Be credible.*** Be accurate, fair, thorough and transparent.
- ***Be consistent.*** Encourage constructive criticism and deliberation. Be cordial, honest and professional at all times.
- ***Be responsive.*** When you gain insight, share it where appropriate.
- ***Be integrated.*** Wherever possible, align on-line participation with other off-line communications.
- ***Be a civil servant.*** Remember that you are an ambassador for your organisation. Wherever possible, disclose your position as a representative of your Department or Agency.

Civil Service Code

As a civil servant, you must also operate within the Civil Service Code when engaging with social media (<http://beta.civilservice.gov.uk/about/work/cscodex/index.asp>). This applies to your participation on-line as a civil servant or when discussing government business. You should participate in the same way as you would with other media or public forums, such as speaking at conferences.

Disclose your position as a representative of your Department or Agency unless there are exceptional circumstances, such as a potential threat to personal security. Never give out personal details such as your home address or phone numbers.

Always remember that participation on-line results in your comments being permanently available and open to being re-published in other media. Stay within the legal framework and be aware that libel, defamation, copyright and data protection laws apply.

This means that you should not disclose information, make commitments or engage in activity on behalf of government unless you are authorised to do so. This authority may already be delegated or may be explicitly granted, depending on your organisation.

Also be aware that this may attract media interest in you as an individual, so proceed with care whether you are participating in an official or a personal capacity. If you have any doubts, you should take advice from your line manager.

Guidance for policy officials

As well as adhering to the general guidance and following the Civil Service Code, policy officials should evaluate departmental initiatives discussed on social media applications and participate in the debate about their organisation's decisions.

- Policy officials should be aware of the new and exciting ways in which social media initiatives can help them engage with and consult the public, stakeholders and peers in government.
- Effective monitoring and use of social media channels can, for example, give policy officials and delivery teams an inroad into networks of consumers, citizens and service users - vastly increasing the quality and quantity of data gathered.
- There is evidence to suggest that using on-line engagement techniques encourages participation by those who do not normally interact with government or respond to consultations.
- Policy leads should actively seek out opportunities to engage with existing stakeholders on-line and seriously consider the value of initiating involvement with other relevant communities.
- Policy officials can intervene to correct inaccuracies on social media sites, but remember to inform your press office if you do so.

PROXIMA MOBILE:

The first european mobile services portal for citizens

Bruno Denoyelle — Presented in Warsaw - plenary meeting, 26 May 2011

The Internet is undergoing considerable changes as it becomes increasingly "mobile". In France, the number of mobile Internet users tripled during 2010, from 5 to almost 15 million. With the continued rise of mobile use, the relationship between the public and the authorities could also be forced to change. In fact, one of the greatest differences between "fixed" services and "mobile" services is that the latter allow a better understanding of the context in which the public use them. These services will thus become increasingly involved in almost all of people's daily actions (in the areas of tourism, consumption, culture, health and education).

As Mrs Kroes has recalled on several occasions, EU countries must promote the emergence of a single market for Internet services throughout Europe. The creation of this eco-system fulfils an objective which is both economic in terms of the creation of value, and also social due to the leverage these service will have on all service activities. In effect, these technologies represent not just economic but also political and social challenges for all EU countries. Europe has three major advantages for becoming a key region for the development of these new services:

- It has a large mobile telecommunications market: the continent of Europe remains the leading region of the world in terms of its consumption of mobile services (with a purchasing power still considerably higher than that of its European and even American counterparts).
- EU countries have local data (cultural, geographic, tourist and environmental) which are among the most in demand in the world. As well as being one of the factors in the appeal of European countries, this information is one of the drivers for the development of mobile Internet services.
- Finally, Europe has particularly well developed brains for the development of innovative applications. They need the opportunity to forge links with their counterparts throughout the European Union in order to create new generations of services for mobile terminals (telephones, Webpads and before long connected televisions, etc.).

From eGov to mGov: increasing the transparency of public actions.

As the Internet services of public stakeholders have increased, the demands made of the authorities and the State by the public have grown. It has become essential for all developed countries to allow the public easier access to information from the public services and the authorities¹. Mobile services are the first step in a permanent link between the public and its public services. This is the case to an even greater extent than for the services of the online administration, which mainly transposes onto the Internet the "traditional" procedures which the public needs to carry out, so-called "mGov" services, and take part in new actions gathering or exchanging information. These new forms of interaction are becoming increasingly frequent for the public and thus help to establish a closer link between the public and their authorities.

Mobile services: a more accessible economic threshold than traditional internet services.

One of the advantages for the State and even more so for the authorities is the fact that the investment threshold required for the creation of these new services is considerably lower than that which was necessary to set up traditional web services. Furthermore, the creation of new services can also be based directly on initiatives by private stakeholders who may have public data for the creation of mobile services connected to transport, tourism or health.

The Proxima Mobile portal

The French government wanted to create the Proxima Mobile portal in order to simulate the ecosystem of mobile services and also to establish new links between the public and the authorities. This step fulfil a three-fold ambition:

¹ See "A mobile application for financial transparency in Washington" (25 October 2010) <http://www.proximamobile.eu/article/mobile-application-financial-transparency-washington-dc>

- establish a portal for mobile applications which are useful in all the public's daily activities.
- promote a brand (the "Proxima Mobile" label) to promote useful and innovative applications for the public.
- distinguish innovative businesses which are setting up useful, ergonomic services for the public. In this way, these SME can make contact with public services or other businesses to create services they would not have been able to undertake alone.

The Proxima Mobile portal currently groups together around a hundred services in areas as diverse as law, culture, education, employment, consumption, disability, health, senior citizens, local life, tourism, sustainable development and human services. Some of the services on the Proxima Mobile portal are already among the most successful mobile applications. Thus, the Musée du Louvre application is one of the most downloaded cultural applications in the world, with almost 4 million users, 60% of them in the United States. In the area of transport, the car-sharing application Comuto unites a community of more than one million regular users and has already been adapted for use in several European countries. Another service created on the Proxima Mobile portal, Jaccede Mobile is a location-based social network which allows people with disabilities to find accessible local locations.

In addition to mobile telephones, Proxima Mobile services will gradually become available on all mobile internet terminals, such as digital Webpads (such as the iPad), and soon on connected television sets. In the coming years, the applications offered by the portal will also allow interactions between the different electronic devices of everyday life. For example, health care staff may remotely consult the tensiometer of an elderly, house-bound person. A number of industrial players are now working to create links between mobile telephones and the various appliances involved in our daily life¹.

Towards Pan-European mobile services

Once the French portal had been set up, it was decided to create a multilingual Proxima Mobile portal, whose aim is to promote services which can be used in several European Union countries. Here too, in fact, the investments necessary to create services in the areas of tourism, sustainable development and transport are becoming accessible to small-sized businesses, which can thus experience technological innovations across several countries. The European version of the Proxima Mobile portal was also set up so that these businesses could increase the size of their market. The Proxima Mobile brand was also chosen because it could be used in several European Union languages. This label could thus become an "open" brand for all countries wishing to develop a portal of applications which would be useful for the public; it could even become the basis for cooperation outside the European Union, for example with countries in the Mediterranean region.

1 cf. "The mobile as universal remote control for domestic appliances" (18 May 2011)
<http://www.proximamobile.fr/article/le-mobile-comme-telecommande-universelle-des-equipements-domestiques>

Journalism and New Media

The impact of the new trends.

Two keys for success: observation and initiatives

György Urkuti



Some remarks on government communications as the age of mass media draws to a close

„The mass-media now looks like a relatively brief and anomalous period that is coming to an end” with the emergence of social media, claims Tom Standage in a recent special report of *The Economist*¹. He argues that media has always been social media in the history of mankind until the 19th century as there was no technology available for disseminating news fast to large numbers of people. From ancient Greek and Roman times onwards, members of the society interested in politics kept each other informed by a torrent of letters, transcriptions of speeches and copies of the official gazette that was posted in the Forum each day. News

travelled along social networks as there was no other channel. The invention of the printing press meant that many copies of a document could be produced more quickly than before but distribution still relied on personal relations.

Only the emergence of mass-market newspapers, with the appearance of the ‘penny papers’ in the US in the 1830s, heralded the advent of the era of mass media. It has meant a profound shift with both new technologies and new business models. The ‘penny papers’² were much cheaper than other newspapers of that time. Most of them, including the best known, *The Sun* of New York, cost only 1 cent, compared to the typical price of 6 cents of ‘broadsheet’ newspapers of that age. Being so cheap, their publishers were able to sell several times more copies than before. This was attractive to advertisers who could reach a large audience easily. So penny papers, as a business model, came to depend on advertisement revenue instead of relying mostly on selling copies. This made them capable to hire reporters and correspondents to seek out and write the news. The papers began to move away from sounding editorial to sounding journalistic and a new profession (that of journalists) was born. It is noted as the rise of objectivity. It was a great deal for all concerned: readers got their news cheap, advertisers got their audience fast and effectively and newspapers could employ professional journalists instead of relying on amateurs.

This model worked well for a long time. But it has been undermined with the advent of the internet. With Facebook, Twitter and millions of blogs, readers are not only readers any more but reporters and op-ed authors as well. Broadcasting companies and publishers are no more alone in controlling the news distribution channels. Objectivity, which served as a guarantee for high circulation and viewership, thus a guarantee for high advertisement revenue, is not so indispensable any more. The huge success of Fox News, Al-Jazeera or *The Economist*, not to speak of tons of bloggers,

1 Bulletins from the Future, *The Economist*, July 9th, 2011

2 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Penny_press Retrieved on 2011-07-17 at 9:50:12 CET

proves that in the information age openly partisan or opinion-driven news coverage and comment can also be financially very successful. News consumers suffer from the tremendous amount of information they are overwhelmed with and search for credible sources that are able to filter and explain background. Media is social media once again, as it has always been before the 1830s.

What are the consequences for us, as government information providers? Does this development mean that governments should start using traditional mass media less heavily and grab opportunities offered by social media instead? The answer is a profound yes. But governments should also know what are their strengths and weaknesses when indulging in social media. They should also concentrate on threats, not just on opportunities. Very briefly: a complete SWOT analysis is a must for any successful social media strategy for any government agency.

Among the strenghts, all government agencies should build on their peculiarity not to be profit-driven. This does not go without saying in the social media world. For example, the number one advise of Converseon to any company social media strategy is that „your strategy must quantify the business outcome that you expect to achieve through investing in your strategy (...) How much more revenue will you earn? (...) how will the strategy impact your cash flows?“¹ These considerations do not constrain a government agency strategy. Rather, government agency strategies should be free to concentrate the impact they made on the web community, which is difficult but not totally impossible to measure.

Government agencies should base their social media strategy on two pillars: observations and initiatives. Agencies should persistantly observe what is going on in the social media on their field of competence. If needed, direct intervention is inevitable. For example, the oven-fresh Hungarian government faced an unexpected Facebook movement last August when more than 260,000 supporters signed up to a demand to cancel costly fireworks on the state holiday of Hungary on August 20 and divert these funds to help victims of severe floods earlier that year. This was a typical grassroot initiative and the Hungarian government (which is quite often accused of turning a deaf ear to any civic demand) accepted the proposal. The State Secretariat for Government Communication invited the organizers of this Facebook movement for consultations and stroke a compromise with them: fireworks were made cheaper and the funds saved were diverted towards charities².

Initiatives are also needed. In the Club of Venice, we have recently discussed many interesting presentations about how to make use of social media in difficult communication situations, e.g. during the Toyota recall scandal or the effect of the eruption of Eyjafjallajökull on air traffic in 2010. One common element of all the stories was that an active and deliberate use of social media was a key condition to both face saving and spreading information. And last, but not least: government officials also should consider their limits. The Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union lacked both human resources and expertise in giving a boost to Presidency actions in social media. Therefore, it decided to outsource this activity to a private company. This proved to be a good decision. The Facebook accounts of the Presidency (English and Hungarian language versions added together) have enjoyed 5.8 million page views with more than 18,000 pieces of feedback (likes or comments). More than 7,100 people regularly followed these pages. I

1 When can you say „We have a social media strategy“? 6 questions to determine whether your social media strategy will make a difference. <http://converseon.com/strategy/> Retrieved on 2011-07-17 at 10:30:15 CET

2 Gergely Böszörményi-Nagy Az állam ismerősei. In: Figyelő (a Hungarian weekly newspaper) 2011. június 2-8, p.18

think these are good numbers and most probably could not have been achieved if management of the account would have stayed insourced.

Don't get me wrong, I do not want to suggest that outsourcing is the only viable solution. But sometimes it could be better than a flawed social media strategy or even than a flawless one poorly implemented. Learning the lessons from an outsourced campaign could also help a lot when drawing up the next one, perhaps with insourcing. I think the Club of Venice is the ideal framework to continue discussing these issues informally among friends who are all concerned by what is happening in Europe in terms of government communications.

György Urkuti currently prepares to become deputy head of mission at the Embassy of Hungary in Helsinki, Finland, a post he will assume in November, 2011. Beforehand, between June 2010 and July 2011, he served as head of Department for EU Presidency Communications in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary. He is a trained economist, graduating from the Budapest University of Economics (now Corvinus) in 1995. He earned his Ph.D degree in international relations at the same University in 2002. He was founding editor of EU section at Világgazdaság business daily newspaper in 1998 and served as head of this section until April 2010. In 2003, he became head of international section there, maintaining his previous position as well. He has served as speaker and moderator at several conferences and training courses for journalists and other audiences.

Crisis Communication

Outline and general principles

Mike Granatt



Introduction

Crisis is a constant feature of the modern world, and seemingly on the increase. It can be sparked by many causes including natural disaster, technological failure, economic catastrophe and social stresses.

The Club of Venice is a unique forum, allowing Europe's most senior communication practitioners to exchange their experience and lessons freely and frankly. This is a brief résumé of the concepts, mechanisms and techniques involved in crisis communication gleaned from our constant discussions. The examples quoted here focus on UK arrangements and guidance, but only because the author is most familiar with them. However, they reflect many

similar and equally effective arrangements elsewhere in the EU, and indeed in global institutions such as the World Health Organisation.

It is worth noting that variations between Member States and institutions are usually the result of local factors. These include the historical relationship between the media and government institutions, local conventions, and available resources.

The new problems of the 21st Century

The concepts of “crisis” and “emergency” are often confused. An emergency calls for immediate action to save life, remove danger, or save property. Even so, most emergencies can be planned for, and are routinely handled by the emergency services, the media and governments.

Crisis is quite different. It is about systemic disruption, and so the increasingly complex nature of modern life a fertile breeding ground for crisis.

By its nature, a major crisis can threaten the company, community, government, or nation affected. It is sequence of moments when matters can turn for better or worse. Risks and options must be assessed without delay; and decisions must be made. If this is not done, the crisis will spread, moving outwards in space and time, changing its nature as it travels.

The very nature of modern life has increased the likelihood of crisis. Social science calls it “network society”, an economy dependent on many interacting networks. These can be physical (such as transport, trade, energy); electronic (such as communication, news, finance, and data); or human (organizations, communities, transmitting mood, rumour, behaviour). Crisis travels through these networks, jumping from one to another. For example, news of a road fuel shortage may cause a huge surge in demand which overwhelms economically efficient but fragile systems, such as the just-in-time fuel delivery schemes.

And so the crisis will have jumped from an electronic network to mass behaviour, and from there to supply disruption. The crisis also jumps forward in time and will not be resolved until public confidence, delivery systems and stocks are all stable again – perhaps months ahead.

Looking more widely, if a crisis affects international perceptions of a nation’s safety or reliability, it may jump years into the future by affecting tourism and market confidence. Thus the management of public expectations and confidence calls on the ability of communication experts to look at many connections and consequences, no matter how far away geographically and in time.

But while all crises are different, their essential nature is the same. They rob us of time, move with disorienting speed, spread in unexpected ways, and cause widespread disruption. Without an effective response, crisis leads to systemic failure.

The following section briefly describes mechanisms and techniques which are now used to manage crisis communication. Diagrams 1-7 illustrate many of the key principles involved.

Trust and other considerations

Trust is the most valuable weapon in the communicators’ armoury. Universally, factors for trust include:

- Timeliness, openness, consistency, and readiness to listen
- The use of trusted sources to deliver messages.

In the UK, the public’s trust sources include:

- the news media: TV, radio, some newspapers, the emergency services, independent experts, familiar institutions, family doctors, friends, family and personal experience.

It is also universal that unusual messages cause people to seek confirmation from other sources. It is therefore essential that crisis messages are delivered and confirmed by many sources, which requires a strong co-ordination mechanism and excellent internal communication.

The way in which people judge a message is shown in Diagram 1. It highlights the fact that the content will only be believed if the source and delivery channel are trusted, and the tone of voice is appropriate. This slide also illustrates why it is important to engage the mainstream media in emergency planning and arrangements. They often represent the most important trusted sources and channels available for transmitting government information and advice.

Since 1996, the UK has had public information and warning partnerships which bring together government officials, emergency services, and the news media. These media emergency forums meet regularly to discuss arrangements which ensure a smooth flow of advice and guidance for the public in a crisis, while not interfering with the media's freedom to report the news.

Operationally, the UK government maintains a central news co-ordination centre (NCC) which is initiated during any major crisis, civil or terrorist related. It has a very small permanent staff, which is strengthened by press officers from across government whenever necessary. It becomes the focus for coordinated communication and for the creation, assessment and adjustment of the communication strategy. It reports directly to the government's ministerial crisis management committee, known as COBR, and the director of the NCC attends COBR with other senior officials.

Other key considerations for crisis communication are described in Diagrams 2-7.

Diagrams 2 and 3 describe the universal factors which arouse fear in the public; and those which trigger media stories. Both are essential tools for analyzing communication needs and plans.

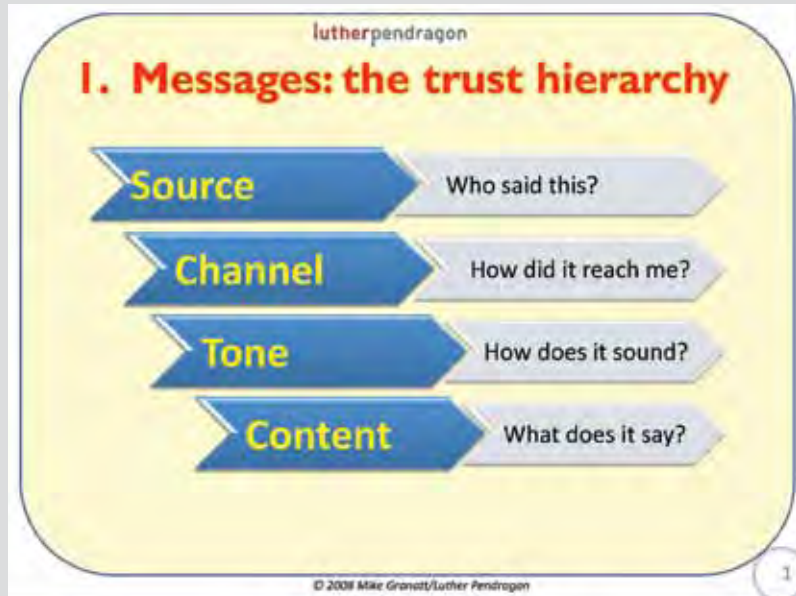
In contrast to popular belief, all research shows that panic among the public in a crisis is both rare and preventable. Risk communication is the science of sustaining confidence in the face of risk and danger, and Diagram 4 outlines the its key rules which are well proven. Diagram 5 outlines the essential learning and decision-making process which must govern the implementation of any strategy, communication or not. "Learning" is the key word. Strategies must remain competitive, particularly in the information marketplace, and a disciplined process – often cycling 2 or more times a day at national level in a major UK crisis – is essential.

Diagrams 6 and 7 outline key considerations in respect using of both the mainstream and social media. Most breaking news stories now start with reports from citizen journalists – members of the public who broadcast news via social media using their mobile phones. Indeed, about a third of young people never use mainstream media for their news – a lesson for the future of all communication, not just crises.

Finally, a few final points to remember:

- It was once said that "A lie will go round the world while the truth is pulling its boots on" and that was before e-mail.
- Trust and credibility are difficult to grow and very easy to destroy.
- Beware the credibility gap - treat people as adults, and remember that panic is rare and preventable.
- The learning cycle and effective leadership are critical in crisis management

And never forget that silence is toxic. If we do not engage, we cannot influence.



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2. Fear factors: arousing dread

Danger

- which is involuntary or unfair or inescapable
- which is strange or novel or man-made
- which causes hidden, irreversible damage

Threats

- to children, women, future generations
- of horrible death or injury
- that science does not understand well

Victims like us

Conflicting opinions from voices of authority

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2

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3. Media triggers: what makes news

Blame: who is guilty?

Secrets: cover-ups & lies

Images: vivid and dramatic

Human interest:

heroes, villains and victims, particularly if they seem familiar

Connections with famous people or issues

Conflict

between people, nations, ideas, cultures

Signal value:

"Does this mean we could be next?"

Big numbers: of victims, or money, or both

Sex and crime

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4. Risk communication guidance

Preparation

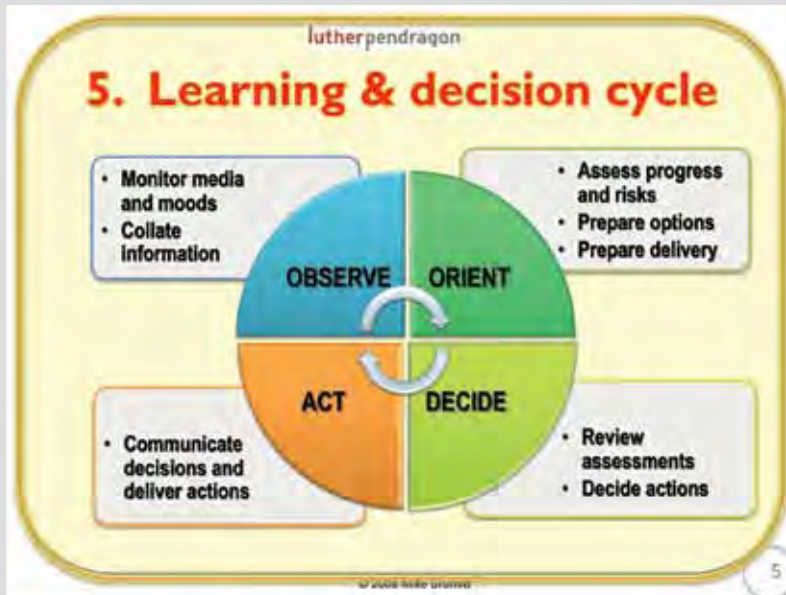
1. Invest in public and internal trust every day

When crisis strikes

2. Beat rumours: communicate early, engage frequently
3. Be truthful, candid, open, transparent. Develop realistic expectations. Explain that information may change
4. Acknowledge dangers. Frame issues with context, examples, and analogies
5. Build public dialogue; listen well, treat people's fears seriously, and answer their questions
6. Co-ordinate authoritative voices. They must use the same messages with the same tone of voice
7. Demonstrate action and progress: give the media access to the evidence
8. Give advice and information to help people help themselves

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4





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7. Using social media

- It is essential to establish authoritative and useful voices in the social media space **before** any incident, including...
- ...a forum on Facebook and familiar tags on Twitter
- ...a secure, resilient Website with prepared information and advice pages.
- Ensure that mainstream media know your social media locations and tags.

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Mike Granatt is Director, Luther Pendragon and Co-ordinator of the Club of Venice. Mike is the former Director-General of the UK Government Information and Communication Service; and former Head of the UK's national civil crisis management unit.

The case of the earthquake in Aquila

Barbara Altomonte



The quake at 3.32am on 6 April 2009 immediately set in motion the aid mechanism along with the Civil Protection Department communications activity. With a magnitude 5.9 on the Richter scale, the quake caused 308 victims. The details were clear right from the start: 57 municipalities were involved but most of the damage was concentrated in the city of L'Aquila. In the first 48 hours, the Civil Protection provided assistance for almost 28,000 people: between April and May the figure was 67,500 people evacuated, assisted and housed in 171 reception camps, hotels and private homes. The earthquake hit the historical centre of one of the most beautiful cities of art in Italy, hosting a university with numerous live-in students. The collapsed Students' Hall and dome of the church of the Anime Sante became the symbol of injury to the country's

people, art, economy and culture. It was immediately clear that a return to normality would be complex and rebuilding would necessarily take a very long time.

The communication plan for the Abruzzo emergency was drawn up during the first weeks after the earthquake directly in the onsite coordination structure (Di.coma.c- Command and Control Headquarters) where the institutions, volunteer organisations and operating units worked side by side. The plan was monitored and adjusted according to the different scenarios and reference audiences over the whole period of emergency from 6 April to 31 December 2009, eventually extended until 31 January 2010. The Government emergency Commissioner was the Head of the Civil Protection Department: on 1 February his position was taken over by a new Commissioner – the President of the Abruzzo Region – who took on coordination with the objective of a final resolution of the emergency and rebuilding. The mandate is now extended until December 2011.

Strategic communication lines for Abruzzo

Four strategic lines were followed and applied from the very beginning of the emergency by the Civil Protection Department, which immediately assumed responsibility as “spokesperson” for the situation. It gathered, sorted and forwarded content, times, tone and style of information about the nature and consequences of the phenomenon as well as decisions made and ongoing intervention, procedures and services put in place.

- **Being there**

Right from the start of the emergency, information arrived via the volunteers, operators and officers of the Civil Protection National Service, which represented the institutions, scientific community and world of voluntary associations. On 6 April, top-level Civil Protection Department officials were already at work and remained at their posts until the end of the emergency. All the Department officials and collaborators worked from 6 April 2009 to 31 January 2010, either in Abruzzo or from Rome, a total of 8,250,000 working hours.

- Keeping attention levels high

The Council of Ministers on 23 April was held in L'Aquila. Even after the initial emergency phase the world of the institutions, culture and even sport raised awareness with Italian and international audiences. Just to name a few, the Italian Prime Minister, Pope Benedict XVI, US President Obama, the Orchestra director Riccardo Muti, the Italian National Football team ...

- Listening

Citizens were immediately provided with areas and opportunities for talking and expressing requests, observations, criticisms and suggestions. In the shelter camps, meetings were organised with the institutions and helplines, e-mails, travelling information desks were set up. Finally, in the premises of the Di.coma.c. a "citizens' help desk" was set up where still today the Abruzzo regional boards collaborate with the L'Aquila local and provincial authorities and the Prefettura.



- Networking

National, regional and local institutions collaborated, each one with its own means and tools, coordinated infield by the emergency commissioner. The Vice Commissioner head of the Di.coma.c planned informative meetings and links with the Mayors of the 57 municipalities hit by the quake.

Key objectives: simplification and transparency

The emergency was also managed through a series of technical documents and laws that had to be made rapidly accessible and comprehensible to all the reference public, from operators to citizens and the media. On the Department's internet site and in the weekly magazine even the most complex texts were – if necessary before the publication in the Official Journal - published, explained and summarised in an accessible language, as well as other technical documents that could easily be distorted by those not officially involved in the work. The same texts were then used by the press points and in press releases. To achieve this result, the communication staff entered the ongoing processes,

started summary and simplification while the document was being drawn up and corroborated the information with institution top management or via a very short transmission chain, with a maximum of three links.

The phases

The communication plan was based upon each phase of the programme of intervention in response to the emergency.

First phase: first aid, 6-30 April 2009

In April communication concentrated on emergency assistance, dedicated above all to evacuees. The site www.protezionecivile.it registered 530,000 individual visitors, with a daily average of

around twenty thousand visits. The e-mails managed by the contact inbox totalled almost 3,500 (5,000 at the end of the year). During the first few days the Department managed over ten thousand telephone calls. For the first time, a “communication function” was set up, dedicated to citizens. It would flank the “mass media and information” function, traditionally used in previous emergencies for media relations. Civil Protection Department officers created especially for the emergency a series of communication products.

Second phase: assistance to evacuees, May-August 2009

Those staying in tents, hotels and private homes received continual assistance. The scenario saw an improvement in life in the shelter camps, while building inspections were carried out rapidly. Many offices found temporary premises, schools and university activities started up in the tents; public services recommenced in mobile stations and in the Di.coma.c.

From May to July 2009 the Head of Department took part in 21 meetings with citizens in the reception camps and 3 meetings with Mayors from the Municipalities. He directly received proposals and complaints and sent the information to the Department’s official sources: the new weekly Newsletter “Abruzzo e noi” (26 editions with an average circulation of 30,000 copies to January) and the site www.protezionecivile.it (1,302,677 visitors by the end of the year, 425 news articles published with photos and videos). Shows, concerts and exhibitions were organised in the Di.coma.c, shelter camps and re-opened common areas. In collaboration with an important newspaper, 40,000 copies were printed of a guide to special agreements for citizens and businesses.

In July 2009 the G8 Summit was held in L’Aquila. The Department published useful information for citizens. In August, the Department working with L’Aquila local council drew up a census of evacuees from the historical centre who would have to live at length in structures provided by the State.



To explain measures, special agreements and contributions for Abruzzo citizens and to help recovery, a campaign called “Gli strumenti per ripartire” (Tools for starting over) commenced at the end of August. The Department drew up “in-house” timescales, tools, creativity, graphics and medium-term plans. The only costs were for technical-graphic support, printing and purchase of advertising space. 45 Press notices in three local newspapers, Internet banners in local media, over 100,000 leaflets, flyers and brochures, 84 billposters, cinema adverts in 58 theatres, “Abruzzo e noi” weekly newsletter reached over 2 millions and 500 thousand people (the final target was 70 thousand people).

Third phase: closing the shelter camps and starting over, September 2009 – January 2010

The month of September saw the closure of the reception camps. It became increasingly important to spread information and meet requirements in order to return to normal life. This would mean that the people of L'Aquila could go back to their own homes and workplaces, at least to those buildings that could be quickly repaired or replaced by anti-seismic buildings constructed in very short space of time. The opening of 185 buildings of the CASE project for the citizens whose homes were in the old town centre in 19 areas around the city of Aquila was supported by on-site and online communication. A special “transparency” section on the Department’s website - which featured a report on the companies that won the tenders, on the services contracted out, and the costs - is dedicated to the CASE project and other projects involving the construction of prefabricated anti-seismic modules as homes, student centres and schools.

In October 2009, also to facilitate the local organisations’ takeover of the running of their respective listening and information services for citizens, the Department of Civil Protection launched the project “Sportello per il cittadino” (citizens’ helpdesk), in collaboration with the Linea Amica Abruzzo of FormezPA, an agency of the Department for Public Administration. The project involved the L'Aquila Regional, Provincial and city authorities, the Prefettura of L'Aquila, as well as associations working in the field of protection. To cope with the citizens’ requests, the institutions involved were accredited on a platform. Citizens could gain easily access to real time information and follow the request progress and processing times. On 31 January 2010, 95% of the request tickets had been satisfied. When the emergency phase closed, the Department would hand over the helpdesk service and the other projects to the rebuilding Commissioner, but it would remain responsible for assigning the anti-seismic apartments, completed in March, and the completion of fundraised projects. In March 2011, these projects were almost completed.

Strong and weak points

With the earthquake in Abruzzo, the need, even in emergencies, for structured communication service became clear: for the first time a “Communication function” was set up in the Di.coma.c alongside the traditional “mass media and information function”. Communication activities addressing the citizen in an emergency were also formalised for the first time. The Department experienced integrated communication campaigns for the quake-hit population: the tools – internet website, weekly newsletter, communication campaigns, citizens’ helpdesk – support and complete each other and increase the efficiency of communication.

These were the positive aspects of the Abruzzo experience, which of course had as many negative ones. First and foremost, the activity of the fledgling “function” suffered from what was a still unconsolidated network of contacts and, despite its institutional mandate and cross-coordination with the communication units of the Civil Protection National Service components, it mainly played an operating role and was not always able to contribute to strategy building. In fact, Law no.150 of 2000 – which regulates communication in public administrations in Italy – was still not completely

integrated into the codified emergency management procedures. Finally, communication was sometimes general: information on public targets could neither be complete, systematic or timely, due to the damages to the facilities and archives of the region, province and city council. Before 10 August, it was impossible to carry out a census of the assisted population, which –however- regarded only citizens of L'Aquila with seriously damaged homes, however.

Lessons learned and projects realised

On analysing the experience in Abruzzo, the department decided to obtain some basic tools both ready-to-use and customizable depending on the emergencies, to be able to provide support to local authorities in proportion to the level of aid requested.

The prime objective was to reinforce knowledge of the Italian and European civil protection mechanism, providing citizens with complete and clear information on its roles, responsibilities and organisation models. A new internet site and a new two-monthly magazine were thus been designed, created and launched in 2010-2011. The site is flexible and interactive, offers new user-friendly services. The two-monthly magazine - the official organ of the department - is distributed in 20,000 copies and is mainly aimed at the world of institutions and volunteer organisations, which are often the first to be unfamiliar with the role, responsibilities and projects managed by the department. The second objective was to improve transparency in dealing with the public and listening to citizens. Thus a contact centre was planned, open not only in emergencies, like in the case of Abruzzo, but even in normal service, equipped with a toll-free number, not only for answering calls but also, if necessary, contacting citizens by phone, sms or e-mail.

Still with a view to reinforcing emergency tools - which must be conceived in advance and be ready to use if needed - groups of questions and answers based on the most frequent risks in the area were prepared, divided by subject, and constantly updated. A guide for citizens, containing categories of essential information to be made available in the initial hours, days and weeks, was also defined. Lastly, a new layout was prepared for the signs to be installed following an emergency.

To develop these projects, it was necessary to verify and reinforce the communication network of contacts of the Department offices as well as external contacts. Names, telephone numbers and addresses of components and operating units for each Italian region and province were gathered, creating a network of approximately 500 contacts. The functioning of the network was tested during the 2010 international Tuscany Earthquake Relief Exercise, organised by Italy with the support of the European Union.

Strengthening the tools to improve knowledge and prevention awareness of citizens is another strategic objective. The seismic platform – an earthquake simulator that helps to understand the phenomenon, improve knowledge of the risk and increase awareness - has been set up in numerous national and international exhibitions and is among the most effective tools of prevention. In 2010, the Department set up the simulator also at the European Forum of Civil Protection in Brussels.

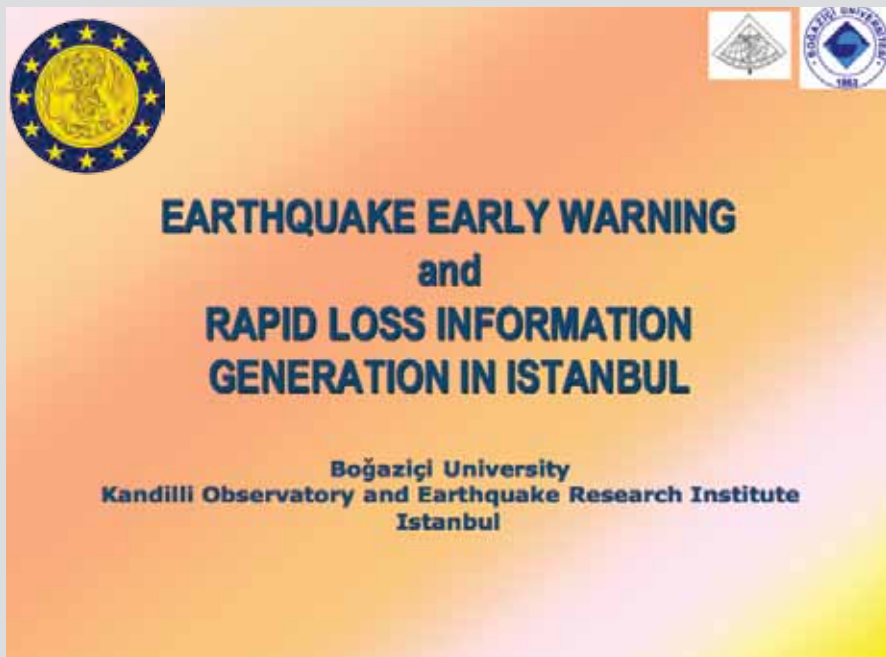
Barbara Altomonte, Italy. Manager at the Presidency of Council of Ministers. Communication Expert. Chief Coordinator of Communication Unit for the Civil Protection Dep. since Dec. 2008. Director of "Protezione Civile" Magazine. Latest projects: website and Magazine of the Civil Protection Department, Manual of visual identity for the Italian civil protection, Contact Center of the Department. Latest publication: "Comunicazione di crisi e di emergenza", in "Teorie e tecniche della comunicazione pubblica", 2011.

Earthquake early warning and rapid loss information generation in Istanbul

Nurcan Meral Özel



*Presentation at the thematic meeting
on “crisis communication”,
Istanbul, 29-30 April 2010*





TSUNAMI RISK AT TURKISH COAST

Turkey has a coastline of more than 8000 km, and has experienced many tsunamis **which may be surprising to many people even today.**

Historical records shows that, during the past 3000 years, the coastal and surrounding areas of Turkey have been affected by more than ninety tsunamis.

TSUNAMI EARLY WARNING CENTER

KOERI is also setting up a Tsunami Warning Center which is expected to act also as a regional center under the UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission in the North Eastern Atlantic, the Mediterranean and Connected Seas (ICG/NEAMTWS) . The necessary technical and administrative work has been undertaken by all national authorities under the coordinatorship of KOERI.

Recent Earthquake Losses in Turkey

Earthquake	Lives Lost	Housing Units Damaged/Collapsed	Number of Homeless	Approx. Total Damage (Billion USD)
1992 Erzincan	645	8,000/1,500	10,000	1.0
1995 Dinar	100	6,500/2,000	8,000	0.4
1998 Adana-Ceyhan	150	21,000/ 2,000	24,000	0.5
1999 Kocaeli	18,000	320,000/40,000	600,000	20.0
1999 Düzce	812	10,100/800	-	1.0

The size of the Kocaeli earthquake disaster strongly challenged the existing emergency management system in Turkey.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM 1999 KOCAELI EARTHQUAKE

Chronological order of the SAR activities during the Kocaeli earthquake

Day One

Earthquake occurs at 03:02

Prime Ministry declares a Crisis situation at 04:30

Crisis Coordination and Assessment Councils meet at 06:30

Crisis Coordination Center sends message to all related ministries and General Staff of the Army to mobilize their SAR teams.

Two SAR teams from General Directorate of Civil Defense arrive at 09:00

Full communication established at 10:00

Provincial Rescue and Aid Committees are formed at 13:00

In the first day there was no effective SAR and relief operation. Local activities were organized in an ad-hoc manner by locals, volunteers and local military personnel.

Day Two

Central Crisis Management System became effective for central command and control.

General Directorate of Civil Defense mobilized all available SAR teams.

About 10,000 army personnel were mobilized.

20 foreign SAR teams with 700 personnel arrive.

Provincial Rescue and Aid Committees became more effective.

IMPORTANT ISSUES

- Affected a Very Large Region (80 x 20km)
- Disrupted Transportation and Communication Channels
- Strongly Affected the Lives of about 2 million People
- Distribution of Damage was not Known (or Wrongly Assessed)
- Damage to Military Installations
- Damage to Local Airport
- Widespread Damage to Industry (Fires, Hazmat Leaks)
- Inadequate Crisis Management System
- SAR Demand Much Higher than the Capacity Available
- Generous International Assistance

TURKEY HAS LEARNED....

**Outdated and/or non-rehearsed disaster operation plans,
Lack of earthquake disaster loss scenarios,
Lack of rapid loss estimation system,
Communication problems,
Inter-agency coordination and cooperation problems ,
Transportation problems,
Shortage of SAR equipment and materials,
Absence of disaster response training at every level hindered organized and effective search, rescue and relief operations**

Turkey has learned many lessons from earthquakes, the 1999 earthquake in particular, and preparations for the next one is undergoing. An earthquake with a magnitude of 7 is expected to kill thousands of people in the city. Istanbul has so far experienced at least 50 strong quakes and is under preparation for a future large earthquake.

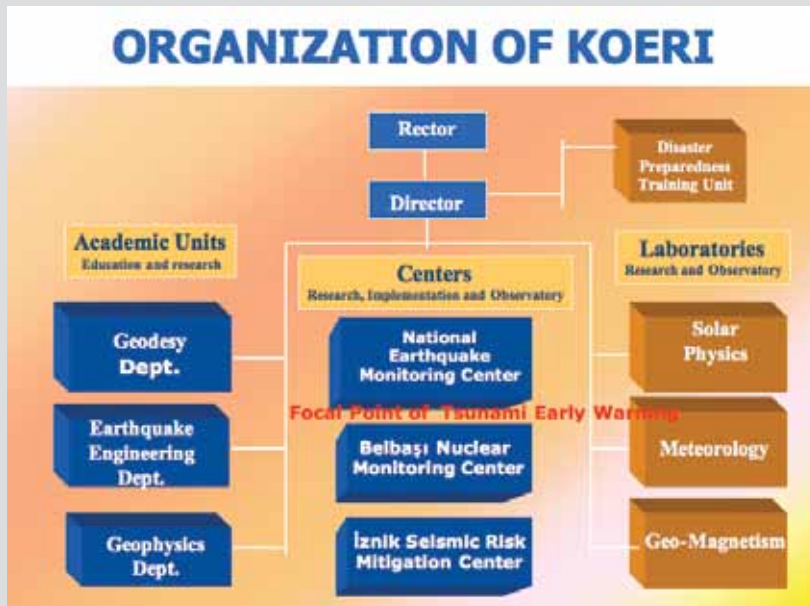
DISASTER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Government institutions concerned with disaster and emergency management issues are reorganized and centralized under the name **Disaster and Emergency Management Directorate**. The aim is the integration of bodies with similar functions in a single directorate as foreseen by a recent law passed in the parliament.

Turkish Armed Forces are represented in all of the disaster committees. The military forces develop their own disaster plans starting from central down to small units.

FROM TRAGEDY TO NEW VISIONS AND INITIATIVES:

Change of KOERI's role
-the preparations for an expected
Istanbul earthquake-

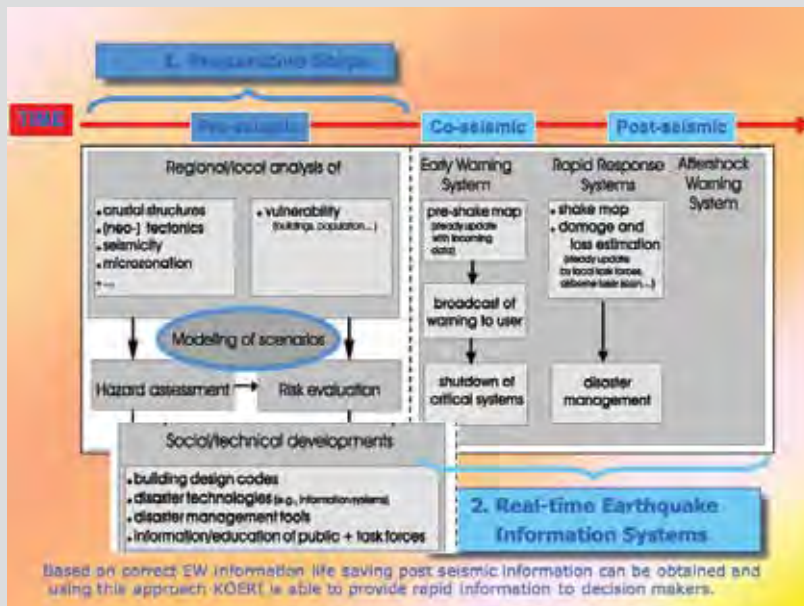


B.U. Kandilli Observatory and Earthquake Research Institute

KOERI-NATIONAL EARTHQUAKE MONITORING CENTER (NEMC)

It operates the most comprehensive network of 124 stations nationwide consisting of weak motion sensors and is the acting national seismic network.

- ✦ It continuously monitors the seismic activity all around the country, records earthquake parameters (epicenter coordinates, magnitude, depth) on a real-time basis and locates all earthquakes occurring within national borders, with a horizontal accuracy of 5 km within 10 minutes.
- ✦ It provides this information to all concerned governmental agencies for the initiation of effective emergency response, search and rescue operations.
- ✦ It works in coordination with scientific community and make raw data available to the use of research activities.



VOICE REPORTING SYSTEM

0 216 556 44 00 Earthquake Information 100 Line



- **Last earthquake information in Turkey and Surrounding Area**
- **The latest earthquake information according to the Provinces**
- **Earthquake information for Provinces of the previous day's**
- **General information about earthquake**
- **Preventions to be taken in the earthquake (before-moment-post)**
- **Press Bulletin about last earthquake information**



Damage scenario and loss estimation studies for destructive events represent a potentially powerful tool for enhancing the level of earthquake preparedness and for improving disaster prevention policies for densely populated areas in seismic regions.

Present technological advances in seismic instrumentation, in digital communication and in computer technologies enable the implementation of real-time earthquake monitoring systems. Effective early warning systems for natural hazards are now increasingly perceived as an integral component of disaster risk reduction programmes. For this view point, earthquake early warning (EEW) is becoming a practical tool to reduce the losses caused by a damaging earthquake by giving a few seconds to a few tens of seconds warning before the arrival of a damaging ground motion.

As a result of the preparations for an expected earthquake may occur around Istanbul, an earthquake early warning system has been established in 2002 by KOERI. It gives early warning of a damaging earthquake in the Marmara Region.

ISTANBUL EARTHQUAKE EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

EEW system gives a few seconds to a few tens of seconds warning before the arrival of a damaging ground motion.

The EEW 12 strong motion stations were located as close as possible to the Great Marmara Fault zone in "on-line" mode.

The continuous on-line data from these stations is used to provide real time warning for emerging potentially disastrous earthquakes. System gives early warning of a damaging earthquake in the Marmara Region.





Istanbul Earthquake Rapid Response and Early Warning System

- Designed and operated by Boğazici University KOERI with the logistical support of the Governorate of Istanbul, First Army Headquarters and Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality.
- One hundred of the strong motion recorders are stationed in the Metropolitan area Rapid Damage information.
- Ten strong motion stations are sited as close as possible to the Great Marmara Fault for Earthquake Early Warning information.
- 40 strong motion recorders are being placed on critical engineering structures.

Risk Mitigation Activities Istanbul Earthquake Rapid Response and Early Warning System

The Rapid Response part of the IRREW has the objective of providing:

- 1. Reliable information for accurate, effective characterization of the shaking and damage by rapid post-earthquake maps (Shake, Damage and Casualty maps) for rapid response;**
- 2. Recorded motion for post-earthquake performance analysis of structures;**
- 3. Empirical basis for long-term improvements in seismic microzonation, seismic provisions of building codes and construction guidelines; and**
- 4. Seismological data to improve the understanding of earthquake generation at the source and seismic wave propagation.**

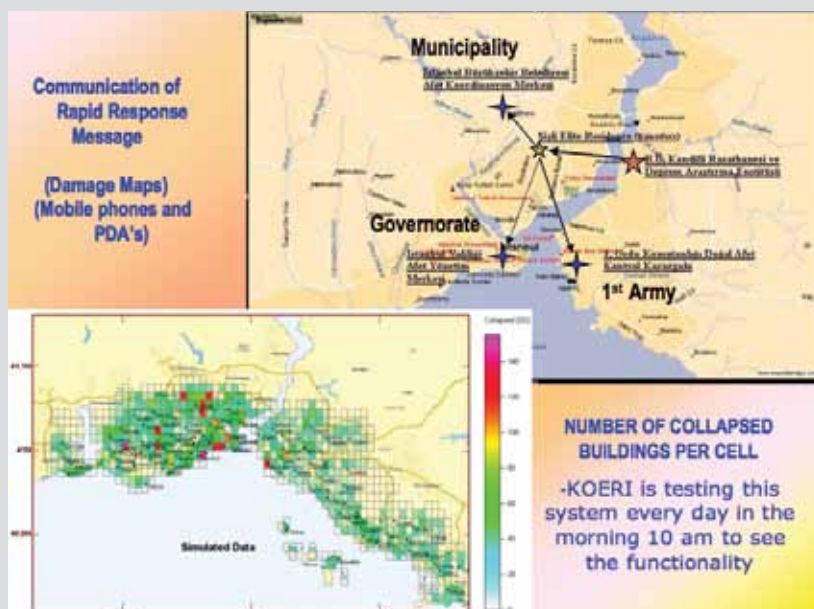
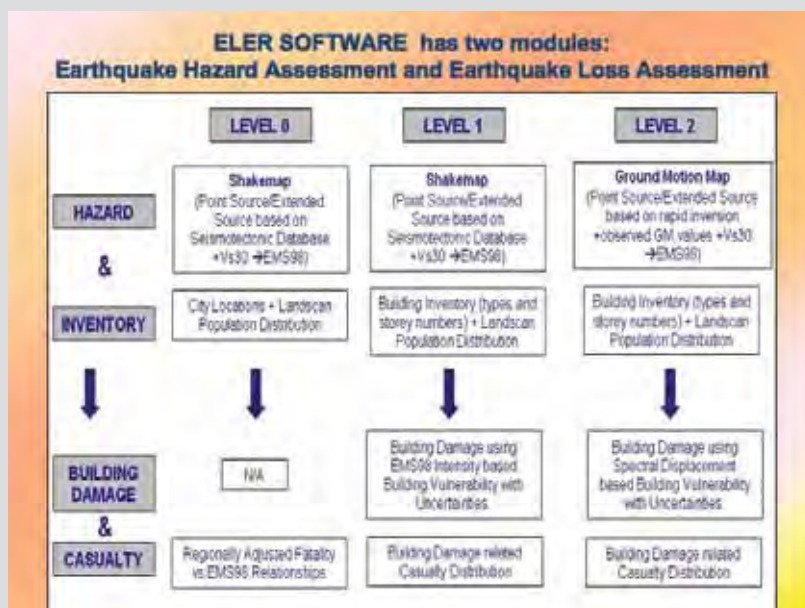
The EEW information –consisting three alarm levels- will be communicated to the appropriate servo shut-down systems of the recipient facilities, which will automatically decide proper action based on the alarm level. Depending on the location of the earthquake and the recipient facility the alarm time can be as high as about 8 s

EARTHQUAKE RAPID RESPONSE (INFORMATION) SYSTEMS: SHAKE- and LOSS-MAPS

The assessments of the distribution of strong ground motion (Shake Maps), building damage and casualties (LossMaps) can be made within a short time after an earthquake. Earthquake ground motion measurement and data processing systems designed to provide this information are called Rapid Response Systems.

Implementation of online Shake Mapping

An earthquake shaking and loss estimation routine (ELER) has been developed in connection with the EU FP6 NERIES project by KOERI





Nurcan Meral Özel is Associated Professor, Department of Geophysics of the Boğaziçi University, Istanbul. She is Assistant Director of the Kandilli Observatory and Earthquake Research Institute.

Crisis Communication as a Marketing Opportunity: *the Italian Experience and the Importance of the Club of Venice*

Nicola Minasi



That the increased movement of people across the continents is a part of globalization is a truism that everybody accepts. What is less evident is that global interaction with people abroad, as well their reaction to threats and news about emergencies, are often based on information that are not always verified or even correct, making it more difficult to help nationals in distress. Thus, the importance of realizing the opportunities and pitfalls of instant communication worldwide has grown well beyond the media circle and has entered the daily job of crisis managers, including those involved with consular crises abroad.

In such crises the solution is often dependent on two conditions: swift accounting of the nationals involved and appropriate communication with them and their relatives at home. The way this is achieved may vary greatly depending on the history and culture of the societies involved. This is why the exchange of information in the Venice Club can be of great help to develop national expertise depending on the needs of each member and to devise new ways to deal with ever changing scenarios. As far as information for and about travellers is concerned, the Italian MoFA employs two websites: "Viaggiare Sicuri" ("Safe Travel") and "Dove siamo nel mondo" ("Where we are in the world").

"Viaggiare Sicuri" (www.viaggiariesicuri.it) is a traditional travel advice website and 30 million pages from the site are visited by users every year. "Dove siamo nel mondo" (www.dovesiamonelmundo.it) is a travel registration service that allows travellers to tell the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about their movements abroad and to leave a contact number, so that if an emergency occurs the Crisis Unit can call them, or send a text message with useful information. The service is currently employed by 100.000 new users every year and keeps expanding. The website also allows users to point to the position of their own of a house or office on a map, so that the Crisis Unit can direct assistance more effectively if needed. Publishing information and offering communication channels to nationals abroad, however, is not enough to elicit the necessary cooperation from the public. These days people may be ready to publish everything about their lives on Facebook, but may still feel wary of providing information to Government bodies, even if that is meant to enhance their own security. At the same time Government messages may sound alarmingly "old style" when compared to everyday media parlance, especially with "breaking news" titles related to an emergency. Governments therefore need to become more "user friendly" and invite people to share information as much as possibile by adopting marketing techniques of the type of social media communication.

The Italian Crisis Unit went on Facebook and Twitter and in 2011 also launched an application for smart phones that allows travellers to register automatically on "Dove siamo nel mondo", while receiving updated travel advice if they so wish. Electronic contacts are also precious when ordinary phone lines collapse. Experience shows that Skype, MSN, Gmail chat and similar services are more resilient than ordinary communication channels, and keep working for some time even after

mobile networks are shut down. “Old” media, however, also plays a significant role, as they are still widely followed. Of all traditional media radio is still the easiest to carry and use, especially in the aftermath of a natural disaster. Tactical use of the media in direct contacts with nationals, however, cannot ensure a solution for wider crises by itself. Important emergencies, in fact, produce a communication dynamic of their own: the news about the crisis trigger panic in the public, the panic itself then makes the news and those news finally create more panic among the wider audience, feeding the cycle negatively. In this situation public institutions, and especially crisis management centres, need to come out in the open and face the media, to try to rebalance the information by injecting balanced news in the flow of information. From this perspective it is safe to say that more than half of crisis management is communication management: as long as media interaction is managed correctly, even the most intractable situations can offer some possibilities to spread the right message.

More than that, times of crisis are actually wonderful marketing opportunities to raise awareness about the services offered by the Government, as the media are ready for interviews and the public is very keen on hearing the news. The main point is to focus on the message to pass and to keep it constant throughout the media interaction, in order to develop a consolidated, positive effect. In medical terms this would translate into something like spreading the antidote together with the virus: as soon as worrying news come out, crisis centres can feed the news cycle with corrective measures and encourage the public to get in touch and use the existing websites or emergency numbers. In 2011 the Crisis Unit in Rome has successfully used this technique during the evacuations from Tunisia, Egypt and Lybia and the same approach turned out to be very useful also during the Fukushima earthquake in Japan.

Interestingly enough the crises of 2011 also showed a sort of adaptive attitude by the media towards the Crisis Unit: after the Revolution in Tunisia, Italian media learned about the reaction by the Crisis Unit and adopted a more and more cooperative approach through the Egyptian Revolution and the Libyan crisis, as they knew “the right questions to ask”. When the Fukushima earthquake stroke in March, all the communication channels were already active and the Crisis Unit managed to send reassuring and coordinated news through a joint strategy with the Embassy in Tokyo, which was also delivering messages through live interviews and its own website. The emergencies of 2011, in any case, also demonstrate that each crisis follows its own rules and that the requests from the public may differ according to the main problem that the public perceives associated to a specific situation: security of companies’ premises during the revolution in Tunisia, for example, or difficulties in flying back to Europe after the earthquake in Japan. Crisis managers hence need to “sift through” requests for help during an emergency, trying to understand as soon as possible which ones are more likely to become a media case and to defuse them before they are reported negatively, which may trigger even more panic.

At the same time different audiences may react in very different ways to the same emergency, depending on their access to media and on the political situation back home. Therefore, regardless of the direct response to the problem on the ground, much of the information management with the national media is often about the internal debate on the type of response, rather than the action itself (“the plane arrived late” or “we deployed rescuers as soon as we could”). The way this develops is very country-specific and even if different EU Member States solve a crisis with similar tools, they may still face completely different criticism -or praise- by their own media depending on local perceptions and grievances. The importance of the Club of Venice is precisely that it offers a single forum to compare information management styles among EU Member States, while encouraging an exchange of practices across Governments to discuss their experiences.

As the world of information changes and develops, Government communication needs to adapt, too. It is very hard to forecast what information channels will look like in 25 years from now, but I hope that the Club of Venice will still be providing useful suggestions and ideas then as it has been doing for the last quarter of a century.

Nicola Minasi is Deputy Head of the Crisis Unit at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs since September 2008. He joined the foreign service in 1999 and served as Deputy Ambassador in the UAE (2001-2005) and Afghanistan (2005-2008). At the Crisis Unit he oversees crisis response during emergencies and is in charge of contacts with families of victims of terror attacks and kidnappings. He led the consular rescue teams to Haiti (2010), Egypt and Lybia (2011) and joined the Club of Venice in 2010.

Public Diplomacy

Outline and general principles

The two discussion leaders at the Venice Club meetings on PD



Klavs Holm



Richard Morgan

The starting point for discussion in the Venice Club workshops on Public Diplomacy (PD) is a regular update on the definition of public diplomacy and its interrelation(s) with branding. The definition usually covers a spectrum of activities that seek to “inform, engage and influence targeted audiences”. This broadly matched the respective roles of the main PD vehicles, though in practice in the different national schools of thought there may be a more complex and interconnected process. The idea is always to know what outcome one is trying to achieve, and then be able to prove progress towards it.

The concept of “Influence” is the focus of all diplomacy – classic and public, where classic diplomacy addresses other state players (or formal decision makers) and public diplomacy aims to influence non-state players. This is done when acting in concrete scenarios (incidents and emergencies, international conferences, etc.) as well as on a more permanent basis through the nation-branding activities that most countries are engaged in.

The methods used in classic and public diplomacy are different. Classic diplomacy is focused on political relations and more based on the countries' military and economic power, whereas public diplomacy puts more emphasis on creating a dialogue and a real engagement between diplomats and the non state players that are relevant. The three principal elements of PD are policy promotion, reputation management and crisis management. The methods used are mainly dialogue based communication face-to-face between diplomats and target audiences and modern means of two way communication in a variety of media including social and use of live pictures.

Crisis management (political, economical, social, environmental...) is often a typical issue where the principles of good PD are tested on whether the right approach is being respected. Insufficient long-term building of credibility and relationships can be exacerbated by poor tactical media handling. The public projection of the economic and financial and sovereign debt issue are examined (despite apparently solid policy, confidence can be improved with clear and credible public handling).

Drawing lessons from Copenhagen COP-15 International Conference (a significant challenge for PD):

The UN controlled the process but the hosts somehow got the blame when things failed. Despite the lack of an overall successful agreement/treaty, intelligent use of new media achieved positive PD outcomes, reflecting well also on the profile of the hosting country. Six recommendations were drawn:

- 1) use momentum – scale up efforts gradually;
- 2) audience-rather than sender-oriented communication;
- 3) be present where the debates are;
- 4) create frameworks for others to communicate;
- 5) accept letting go of control;
- 6) using videos.

PD discussions focus also on the difficulty of trying to move general perceptions beyond the traditional stereotype, recognising the value of highlighting specific issues or angles for specific audiences or purposes.

Place branding (at EU, trans-national/macro-regional, national, regional and city level) is recognized as a crucial complement to promote objective and genuine identity in this regard.

Klavs Holm is Under-Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy, Ambassador for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark. M.A. in Political Science, he has a consolidated experience in the Danish Foreign Service in EC policies (Development, Economic matters, WTO, OECD, Security Policy, Transatlantic Relations, etc.) earned filling in diplomatic tasks in several countries and worked also in Brussels as Counsellor and Ambassador's coordinator for Press relations at the Danish Permanent Representation to the EU. From 2005 to 2007 he was Danish Ambassador to Singapore.

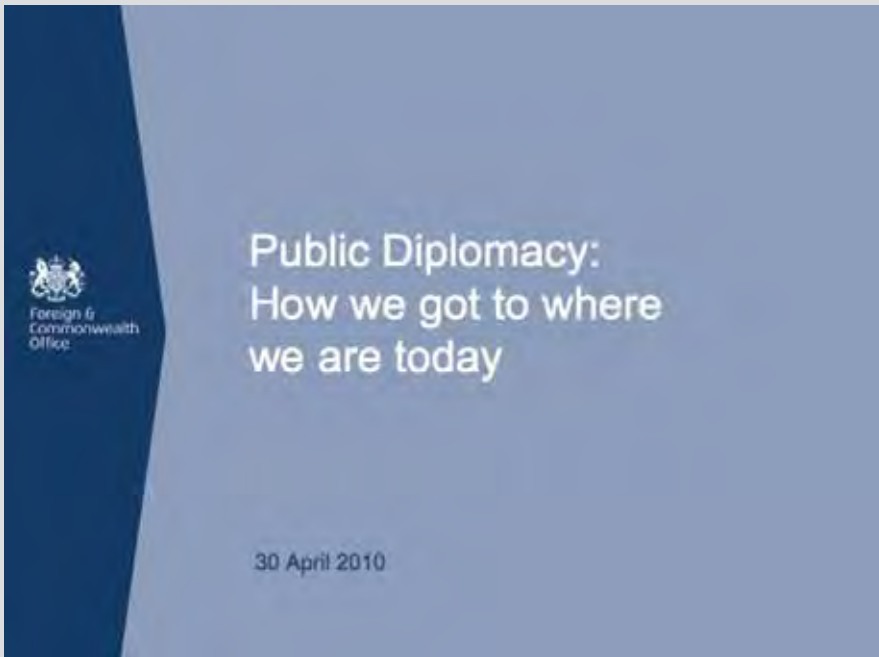
Richard Morgan was the Head of Public Diplomacy in the Communication Directorate in the UK FCO until 2010. He is now working in the private sector as International Government Relations Advisor.

Public Diplomacy:

How we got to where we are today

Richard Morgan

PD Workshop, Malta, 2 June 2010





Contents

1. Definition of Public Diplomacy
2. Why do we bother doing public diplomacy at all?
 - Internet is changing the rules
 - Spread of democracy
 - New figures of trust and credibility
 - Web 2.0 and opportunities
 - We have a lot of evidence which demonstrates that public diplomacy has an impact on our international interests
3. But we need to stay ahead of the curve
 - Competition from international comparators
 - Making smarter foreign policy – building on our comparative advantages



A reworked definition of Public Diplomacy

All diplomacy is about influencing audiences to achieve policy objectives. All diplomacy involves strategic planning – identifying audiences, building relationships with them, finding common ground, tailoring messages and finding the most effective way of delivering them. Some of the levers of influence will be conducted in **private**, some in **public** – sometimes both will be needed for the same audience and same messages. In this context, the FCO defines **Public Diplomacy** as:

'A planned series of communication, campaigning and networking activities designed to influence targeted audiences in order to deliver HMG's international objectives'

Unpacking the definition	
 Foreign & Commonwealth Office	
Planned	Assumes there is desired outcome which is meaningful i.e. for the FCO, that relates to HMG's policy goals. This also implies something is measurable – i.e. there are outputs and an end goal, regardless of the time span of activities. Planned means that we will have a compelling answer to why we are carrying out any given activity. Planned implies that, even if unforeseen events occur, there is a contingency/crisis plan with proper risk management in place to respond to them.
Communications campaigning and networking activities	Activities are not time bound: they can be short term and reactive (which form part of a wider planned series of communication activities), medium/long term strategic campaigns, or longer term initiatives to change perceptions of the UK. These activities should be designed using a strategic communications approach and tools – i.e. 'A systematic approach to delivering objectives by generating more effective understanding of audiences and more effective ways of connecting with them to develop solutions that shift attitudes and change behaviour'.
Inform, engage and influence	By harnessing the combined strengths (and wide reach) of a range of UK 'soft-power' partners and building networks of goodwill (either in person or via the internet), the UK aims to use public diplomacy to extend its influence by engaging directly or indirectly with publics and opinion formers in order to build national reputation and achieve specific foreign policy objectives. Informing and engaging with audiences are both critical to achieving influence, but for the FCO are not ends in themselves. We recognise – and respect – that the strategic aims of our Public Diplomacy partners may differ in this respect.

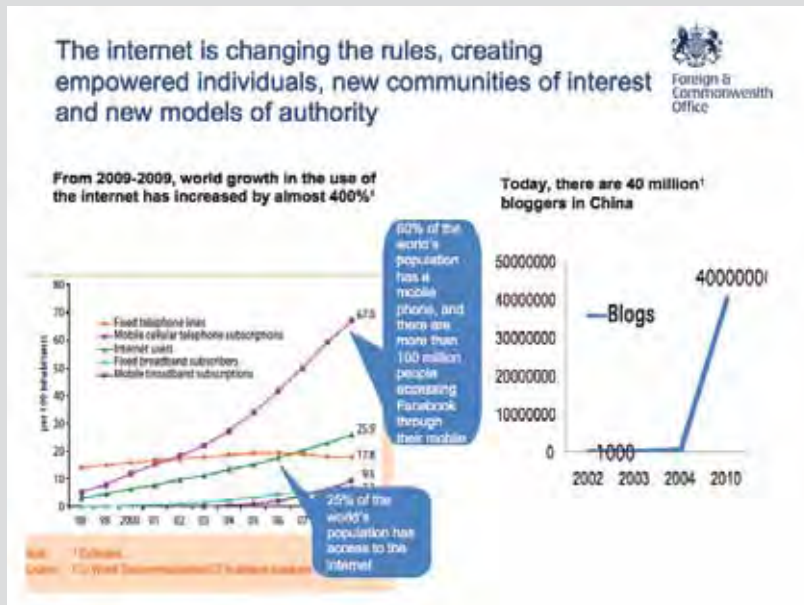
 Foreign & Commonwealth Office	
Targeted audiences	We do not have the resources – or mandate – to engage with all audiences. Decisions about priorities need to be made, which leads to the need to target our activities towards groups of audiences who will yield the greatest return on investment. Targeting enables us to segment groups into smaller, more manageable homogenous groups, to understand their socio-demography / behaviour and attitudes and levels of influence. It also enables us to create more compelling propositions and make targeted measures which leads to greater impact and increased resonance with the group concerned – and to measure the impact we achieve.
International Objectives	We're in the business of delivering for the UK on behalf of the British Taxpayer; this includes FCO's DSOs and individual country plans that lead from them as well as wider HMG objectives. All PD activities, whatever their timeframe, should ultimately relate back directly or indirectly to HMG's international interests, which are recognised to be best achieved through a mix of legislation, traditional diplomacy, policy and communications. Interests can be very widely interpreted, to cover policy diplomacy/ commercial diplomacy / service delivery.



There are strong reasons for focussing on public diplomacy and to doing it well

- Internet is changing the rules
- Spread of democracy
- New figures of trust and credibility to engage and compete with
- Threats
- Web 2.0 and opportunities
- Evidence that public diplomacy has an impact on our international interests

Foreign & Commonwealth Office



This presents a series of opportunities for how we do public diplomacy

Foreign & Commonwealth Office

New communities of interest

Via the web, communities are forming, often mobilising around single issues. Where these communities exist, it's possible to reach out to them and bring them into co-creating solutions to foreign policy challenges.

The rise of empowered individuals



Whilst institutional trust has declined, it has been replaced by confidence in independent, credible figures who align themselves to specific causes and who can communicate their opinions on the web. We need to be creative about how we engage with such individuals, especially on issues which are better addressed without an FCO fingerprint.

New models of authority

Personal advocacy has thrived on the internet with easy access to 'authentic' reports from 'real' people. Word of mouth from friends, colleagues and family is the most trusted form of communication. ***This creates an opportunity to get better at peer to peer review***

And we have already reached out successfully to many of the swarms of actors



There are many new actors who impact on our foreign policy goals, and require effective public diplomacy outreach

Our typology of non-traditional actors includes:

- Businesses and MNCs
- NGOs and civil society
- Super-empowered individuals
- Networks: Campaign coalitions, diaspora
- New state entities: e.g. sovereign wealth funds, state-owned enterprises, and cities and regions
- Schools and Children

And we have reached out successfully in some areas



the UK's Met Office Hadley Centre has produced a map outlining some of the impacts that may occur if the global average temperature rises by 4 °C (7 °F) above the pre-industrial climate average. The map represents the latest peer-reviewed science on the impacts.



Commonwealth

We worked with the Royal Commonwealth Society to run the Commonwealth Conversation campaign on the future of the Commonwealth. It was the largest ever public consultation on the future of the Commonwealth and the campaign website generated more than 1000 comments from around the world which fed straight into the Heads of Government meeting in November and informed the RCS call for reform of the Commonwealth earlier this

The internet requires us to engage more effectively using digital



We've invested heavily in a new, global web platform which operates in more than 40 languages. This has enabled "digital diplomacy" which is now central to much of our work.




John Duncan is the United Kingdom Ambassador for Multilateral Arms Control and Disarmament. He comments regularly via Twitter and his own Blog. **He has a 1036 followers** including many journalists and gives regular updates such as "North Korea demands NPT 'nuclear weapons state' status - will manufacture nukes as much as it deems necessary ? <http://ow.ly/1Rcyd> " 21st April 2010



Leigh Turner, HMA Kiev, uses a mix of public diplomacy levers, for example placing articles in national newspapers as well as writing a blog, both in English and in Russian

There are FCO 37 bloggers world wide, but blogging is on request by HMAs, resulting in a heavy blogging presence in Europe, but less in Africa or in the far East. This begs the question whether the FCO could be strategic by linking our blogs to where digital opportunity exists, and where governments are harder to influence



The spread of democracy coupled with technology advance increases the opportunities for public diplomacy



Foreign & Commonwealth Office

Masses matter: power and influence within societies has shifted from the few to the many

Global Trends in Governance, 1946-2008



1. <http://www.systemictransitions.org/NTG12.htm>

2. Engaging with the Private Sector for the Public Good: The Power of Network Diplomacy January 2010 http://www.csis.org/files/documents/publications/QDDR_Land_Jan2010_sed213_selkeybtl_0.pdf

• Even in authoritarian countries, people and institutions are increasingly able to shape the debate

There have been 40 new electoral democracies in the past two decades

Due to the spread of democracy, the wider availability of information and communications technologies that make it easier to mobilize popular support, and the growing number of foreign policy challenges that cannot be solved by any one state, foreign publics have increasing power to facilitate or block the achievement of U.S. national security interests.¹

Evaluation shows us that Public Diplomacy has helped us to achieve our policy goals



Foreign & Commonwealth Office

FCO has evaluated several recent strategic campaigns against defined objectives, which creates a stronger evidence base to understand how campaigning has an impact on policy and communications goals. Evaluation lets us know what works and where we have impact, which helps us to be more strategic in the future about where we deploy our campaigning efforts.

Raising Awareness Our Burma campaign succeeded in raising public awareness and generating large amounts of media interest. The site 54forSuu received visitors from 187 countries, with a significant number of visitors coming from South East Asia, and there was a doubling in the number of articles on her detention published in Asia.	Enhancing credibility/ supporting policy goals Act on Copenhagen established a reputation for being a credible voice at the forefront of Copenhagen policy communication, and was recognised for innovation in campaign delivery. The campaign promoted the UK government's ambition for a global deal on climate change and engaged key influencers in the UK and internationally to back an 'ambitious, effective and fair' deal.
Setting the agenda  For the London Summit through working closely with partners, we achieved a wide range in tone and level of debate to suit different target audiences. VoxEU and Harvard University, for example, invited serious academic contributions on how G20 governments should best deal with the crisis.	Supporting our policy goals The PREVENT overseas programme relies on influence and communication and evaluation of the programme for this year (2010) demonstrates the importance of communications to achieving foreign policy goals.

Public diplomacy is also absolutely cheaper than deploying hard power



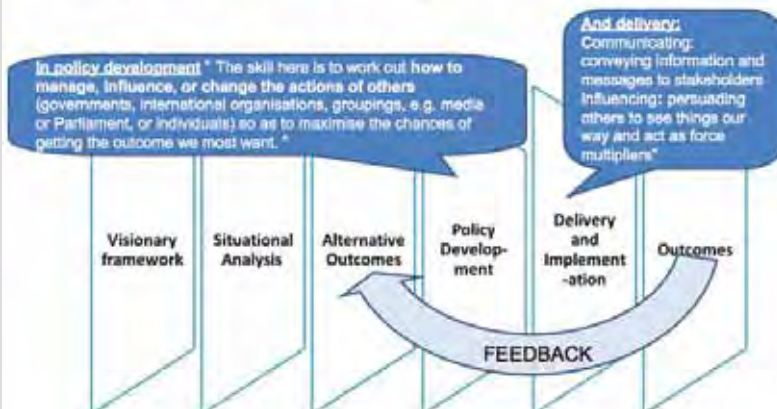
There are opportunity costs to doing no public diplomacy

•Imagining a scenario where FCO/HMG stopped investing in public diplomacy in the Middle East (e.g. education, science, BPBs), could potentially reinforce a negative perception that the UK is in the region for selfish reasons alone

And whilst no cash register rings when a mind is changed ...

What price on peace in Pakistan?

We have the building blocks in place: the International Policy Skills Framework underlines the importance of communicating and influencing



New Public Diplomacy – A Central and Eastern European Perspective

(presentation given in Warsaw at the 3rd annual workshop of the Venice Club on Public Diplomacy)

Beata Ociepka



Professor Ociepka's presentation dealt with the Central and Eastern European Countries' experience in implementing public diplomacy as an instrument of their foreign policy. Following the definition by Joseph Nye (Professor at Harvard University, author of several studies and essays on this subject, among which "Soft Power" and "Public Diplomacy in the 21st Century"), public diplomacy makes a suitable tool for positioning a country internationally while using the means of soft power. This was the case of the CEECs which joined the European Union from 2004. The paper examines mainly the cases of Poland, the Czech Republic, the Baltic States and Hungary. These countries represent a region characterized by low visibility in European politics.

The post-communist, small or medium sized countries implemented public diplomacy during the accession process before joining the EU. Their public diplomacy reflects the needs of the countries undergoing the transition to democracy and simultaneously the process of inclusion into the system of international communication after 1989. The Polish case shows how the successive governments of the country adopted public diplomacy in order to strive for middle power position within the European Union. The presentation aimed to shed light on national specifics of public diplomacy of the new EU members, reflecting the geopolitics' impact on public diplomacy in the region and explaining the focus on politics of memory as a part of it.

Neighborhood policy and promotion of democracy were presented as future priorities relevant for the public diplomacy strategies. Central and Eastern European countries as former receivers of Western public diplomacy implement now their experience and know how in democratization as one of the main tools of their soft power.

DEFINITIONS

- What is public diplomacy: dialogical form of international political communication aimed at creating mutually beneficial relations with the public abroad, in order to achieve political objectives of the country.
- Main notions: image and public opinion.
- The New Public Diplomacy responds to the development of international communication after the collapse of bipolar system; among its key features, the growing role of non state actors and the use of new technologies. It includes civic diplomacy.

SCOPE AND AIMS

- The implementation of public diplomacy was a result of opening political and media systems and took place when the main institutions of democracy started to work.
- Simultaneity of finding a new place in international communication with redefining national identity and economic and political transition.

PD AND BRANDING

- In CEE countries branding precedes the development of public diplomacy strategies
- Branding as a response to low visibility of the countries in international community and the need to re-define their image
- Hardly any products to rely on the country of origin effect.

EUROPEAN DIMENSION:

- The accession process gives the new speed to working out the concepts of public diplomacy
- EU Presidency as the next impulse
- Positioning the countries within the EU.

SPECIFICS OF THE REGION AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY:

- Post communist countries
- Transition to democracy
- Central and Eastern European Identity
- Small and medium sized countries
- Geopolitics.

WHAT'S AT STAKE - CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Credibility: capability to cooperate
- Niches: promotion of democracy eastwards
- Eastern Partnership
- International Broadcasting and/or social media
- Politics on memory as a part of CEE public diplomacy: re-defining the frame of the European debate on history
- The stage of working out national strategies of public diplomacy
- Will relational, dialogical model prevail?
- Specializations near to be defined
- Despite acceptance for public diplomacy as a tool of foreign policy, its development may be endangered by lacking domestic support or political instability.

Prof. Beata Ociepka is Professor of International Relations and International Communication at the Institute of International Studies of the University of Wrocław. Expert in public diplomacy, international communication, comparative media systems analysis and political communication. Member of European Communication Research and Education Association and Polish International Studies Association. Member of the editors' boards of "Central European Journal of Communication" and scientific magazine "Media Studies", Warsaw University. Author or editor of books, monographs and several contributions to publications in Polish, Dutch, German and Hungarian journals.



2. City branding

o Definition:

- "City branding is a method to increase the attraction of the city; the essential point is to establish city recognition" (Rainisto, 2003)

o Cities are increasingly engaging in a branding process (Eurocities, 2010)

- Most common application of city branding is making of a new logo and/or a new slogan

o City Brands Index (Anholt & GfK Roper, 2010):

- Measures perceptions of cities by combining 6 dimensions
 - Presence (international status and standing), Place (physical aspects), Potential (economical + educational), Pulse (urban lifestyle), People, Prerequisites (people's perceptions of living in a city)

(http://www.gfkamerica.com/practice_areas/roper.com/placebranding/cbi/index.en.html)

CITY BRANDS INDEX	
Overall Rankings	
1.	London
2.	Paris
3.	Sydney
4.	Rome
5.	Barcelona
6.	Amsterdam
7.	New York
8.	Los Angeles
9.	Hatfield
10.	Berlin

2. City branding

o Logos: best known examples



Source:

<http://www.e-marketing.fr/Marketing/Magazine/Articles/Logo-city-2014-2015.html>

o Different angles to brand a city:

- green spaces
- culture/history
- social/economic
- tourism

2.1. Stockholm

- o First European Green Capital in 2010
 - Initiative of European Commission
 - Evaluation on basis of several environmental indications
- o Green spaces' key role in city marketing and in green city branding in particular
 - NY Central Park best known example
- o "Green capitals" as a big attraction for tourists —→ enhancement of the city brand
 - Stockholm's green retreats enhance citizens' physical and mental health and well-being, help reduce noise, filter the air, and purify the water flowing through its wetland areas
 - stronger green brand and position in rankings
- o Worldwide impact
 - Contribution to the debate on climate adaptation reforms

2.1. Stockholm

- o The LOGO:
 - Clear, simple, forward-looking, able to
 - convey a crucial message (what do we want to achieve?)
 - *"The logo aims to give winning cities a dynamic and unique branding platform which, at one and the same time, benefits the cities and increases awareness of the award" (EC, 2010)*



Sources:
<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/europeangreencapital>
<http://international.stockholm.se/Stockholm-by-theme/European-Green-Capital/>
<http://www.lfp2010.lcsd.gov.hk/download/paper/cecl.pdf>

2.2. Istanbul

- o European Capital of Culture (ECoC) 2010
 - Awarded by the Council of the EU
 - High profile cultural event since 1985
 - Club of Venice meeting April 2010
- o Cultural values of Istanbul as natural resources waiting to create awareness
- o Culture as powerful mean for city branding
 - It can attract talented workers and lucrative tourism
- o Positive contribution to Istanbul branding and a good opportunity to fix Turkey's image abroad
- o *"A lot of medium-sized cities wants to be ECoC since they see city branding and tourism as the only opportunity for their future development"* (Nemeth, 2010)



Source: http://iust.academia.edu/AgneseMenebbi/Reports/221763/Mega-events_Their_Sustainability_and_Potential
<http://www.bjgpcr.com/blog/1109/european-capital-of-culture-concept-the-case-of-istanbul-2010-ayrupa-kultur-baskenti-istanbul-2010-ayrupa-kultur-baskenti>
http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc443_en.htm
<http://www.en.istanbul2010.org/AVRUPAKULTURBASKENTI/istbulistanbulistanbul2010.htm>

2.3. Turku



- o ECoC 2011 (together with Tallinn)
- o Slogan: "Culture does good"
- o *"Culture increases wellbeing and makes Turku into an increasingly more interesting and international city; it will bring more tourism, strengthen the creative industries and make people in Turku proud of their home town"* (Randell, Mayor of Turku, 2011)
- o According to Turku 2011 marketing planner, Katriina Saarinen:
 - Branding work started by thinking about the story of Turku and coming up with key elements which describe Turku the best
 - Turku as a port that has brought new ideas and things into Finland from Europe/ Culture and counter-culture always co-existed
 - Culture is more than just arts or theatre performance (interdisciplinary projects)
 - Programme has to be accessible in broad sense (free events)
 - Marketing material: communicate that everybody can get involved with culture → creation of visual appearance which is fun and down-to-earth

Source: http://www.turku2011.fi/en/media/press-releases/turku-ready-2011-year-of-culture_en

2.4. Liverpool: impact of ECoC 2008

o Research Liverpool University (2010):

- o Stereotypical image before: social deprivation, football, Beatles
- o During ECoC year:
 - o Tourism trends:
 - 34% rise than previous year
 - 2.6 million European and global visits were motivated by the Liverpool ECoC in 2008
 - 97% of these were first-time visits to the city
 - o Economy:
 - 5.7m visits to Liverpool were motivated by the ECoC and this generated an additional economic impact of £753.6m
- o At the end of ECoC year:
 - 77% of visitors felt the city was 'safer than I expected'
 - 99% of visitors particularly liked the 'general atmosphere' and 97% the 'feeling of welcome'
 - 86% of UK businesses believed the ECoC had a positive impact on Liverpool's image
- o Conclusion – The ECoC:
 - had a big impact on tourism and economy, helping to boost Liverpool's brand identity
 - Was a big help in transforming external perceptions and images of Liverpool



Sources: http://www.lv.ac.uk/Impacts08/Papers/Creating_an_impact_-_web.pdf
http://www.lv.ac.uk/Impacts08/Publications/Liverpool_on_the_Map_Again.pdf

3. Nation Branding



- o "The intensified competition under globalization requires communicating a nation's uniqueness, values and advantages as a memorable brand" (Master Marketers, 2010)
- o Nation Brand Index (Anholt & GfK Roper, 2010):
 - Criteria: people, governance, exports, tourism, culture & heritage and investment & immigration
 - Top 3:
 - 1) United States
 - 2) Germany
 - 3) France

Source: <http://nation-branding.info/2010/10/13/nation-brands-index-2010/>

3.1. Belgium



- o **Perception of Belgium has weakened** (GfK Roper Report):
 - Weakest of all Western European countries (after Iceland)
 - Except for cuisine, food, political freedom
 - Negative influence on current employment and welfare
 - less foreign investments & higher interest rate
- o If the brand Belgium is not seen as option for investment, the sub brands (regions, provinces, ...) won't be considered either
- o **Key Brand Benefit:** Belgium as ideal combination "business + life style"
- o "The creation of a **Brand Office** is needed to develop and improve the image of Belgium (incl. logo, slogan, campaign and positioning towards various target groups)" (Master Marketers, 2010)
 - Possible Slogan: "Business Comfort in the Heart of Europe"
- o **Belgian European Presidency in 2010:** first opportunity
 - "The rotating Presidency provides the country concerned with a high degree of visibility that it usually exploits to carry out country-branding campaigns" (Beke, 2011)

Sources:
http://www.deburen.eu/userfiles/files/2010_3/07102010_NationBranding.pdf
http://www.stichingmarketing.be/download/pers/09_05_brandingmanifest_nl.pdf
http://www.realinstitu.be/cano.org/wps/portal/melcano_eng/Content?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/melcano/melcano_in/zonas_in/ari16-2011

3.2. Cyprus



- o **Most recognised brand attributes:**
 - political problems with Turkey (Cyprus issue), birth place Aphrodite and Haloumi cheese
→ but there is a lot more to the Cyprus brand
- o **Tourism and shipping:** key pillars of contemporary Cyprus nation brand
 - but there exists other potential dimensions of the Cyprus brand
- o **Focus on distinctive attributes:**
 - unique archaeological assets, great shipping industry, at the bridge of three continents and different civilizations, a joyful change of scenery (traditional cool mountain villages and warm sandy beaches)
 - stop replicating Mediterranean stereotypes (Cyprus is sea & sun)
- o **Future branding:**
 - "the range of stakeholders involved in Cyprus' nation branding needs to be extended beyond tourism and shipping to include other stakeholders such as Chambers of Commerce, academia, cultural heritage foundations, country analysts, existing investors, and the average Cypriot" (Dinnie, 2008)

Source: http://www.centreformationbranding.com/papers/Dinnie_Branding_Cyprus.pdf

3.3 Slovenia



- o Slovenia celebrates this year 20 years of independence
- o Problems before branding strategy: not recognised abroad, confused a lot with Slovakia (similar languages, flags, history)
- o The Brand of Slovenia (2007):
 - **First branding approach** of the country, large-scale project
 - **Core message:** Slovenia is different and you can feel it with all your senses/ one has to live it, feel it through words, sounds, colours, touch, actions and experience
 - **Mission:** going forward with nature; **Slogan:** "I feel Slovenia"
 - **Slovenian Green:** dominant colour in logo, refers to Slovenian nature and the calm diligence of Slovenians
- o "Slovenia is now on the right path to building a strong country brand" (Konecnik, 2010)

Sources: <http://nation-branding.info/2009/11/04/branding-slovenia/>
http://www.majakonecnik.com/konecnik/dokumenti/FILE/brandbook_i_feelslovenia.pdf
http://www.ukom.gov.si/en/promotion_of_slovenia/country_brand_i_feel_slovenia/
http://mih22.ef.uni-lj.si/post/lanjevlj/Dokument/FILE/konecnikruzzler_dbb_its2011.pdf

3.4 Relation between nation branding and EU enlargement

- o Croatia
 - Porec, Nov 2009: Croatia hosts the 1st Workshop of the Club of Venice on communication on the EU enlargement
 - Gozo, June 2009: 2nd annual Workshop: contribution on nation branding
 - Croatia's image evolution:
 - - war, nationalism, ex-Yugoslavia
 - + tourist destination, future EU-member
 - People's perception today: a rather positive image of Croatia
 - most cited positive feature: "sea and natural beauty"
 - Upcoming referendum as a chance to deliver inside and outside the country (governmental authorities mobilising fresh energies)

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3.4 Relation between nation branding and EU enlargement

o Turkey

- Positioning dilemma for Turkey's nation brand
 - exoticism <-> alikeness (morally, socially, ethically)
- Intense dispute over national identity:
 - secular/religious, Western/Eastern, traditional/modern
 - leads to mass of stakeholders
- Negotiations path: challenges & opportunities
- Today's trends: Turkey's growth and increasing role in the geopolitical scenario
- Two-way promotion (EU—→ Turkey and Turkey—→ EU) is crucial. Nation branding depends on consistency in internal and internal communication planning and...good will

4. Region branding

o Chances for macro-regional branding:

- Baltic Sea Region (BSR)
- Danube Region
- Atlantic Arc
- Euro-Mediterranean
- Possible cross-links with EU Neighbourhood policy

4.1 Branding the Baltic Sea Region (BSR)

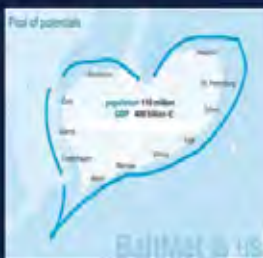


- o **What is the BSR?**
 - A macro-region incorporating 11 countries (DK, SE, NOR, FIN, LV, LT, EST, the northern parts of D, PL and RU), dazzling cities and shipping ports
 - Population: 110 million people
- o **Branding BSR is a great challenge:**
 - BSR is a very diverse, politically and culturally unwieldy region with different languages
 - No single decision-making authority
 - Little evidence that BSR has a distinguishable and visible brand image
 - Vibrant European market with a GDP of 400 billion € not well known in the global market

Sources:

http://tdforum.org/default.aspx?process=download/files/PDFContent/Branding_Report_BDF_Final.pdf
http://www.businessweek.com/globalbiz/content/jul2008/gb20080715_150523.htm?campaign_id=rse_daily

4.1 Branding the BSR



- o **BaltMet Promo:**
 - **A supra-national branding project** from the Baltic Metropolises Network and the Baltic Development Forum
 - **Aim:** joining forces in promoting the BSR on a global scale and creating a dynamic transnational/multisectoral marketing community (tourists, talents and investors)
 - **Goal:** strengthen the common BSR identity at home and abroad and establish a world leading brand
 - **Pilot phase:** still ongoing (2010-2011) - extension phase to be launched for 2012-2013
 - **Funding:** European Union, Baltic Sea Region Programme
- o **BaltMet Promo builds three concrete pilots:**
 - **Tourism pilot:** example: "Live like locals" travel package offers a new way to experience the BSR
 - **Film-making pilot:** BSR offers new possibilities for international cooperation in filmmaking
 - **Investment pilot:** to improve the competitiveness of the region and strengthen BSR's position in the international market

Source: <http://www.baltmetpromo.net>

4.1 Branding the BSR

- o **BaltMet Promo Project:**
 - coordinates horizontal activities related to regional identity building, which is a part objective of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region
- o **The collaborative working method of BaltMet Promo:**
 - multilevel governance between Commission, national players and local players; including participation of private sector and citizens
- o It can also be applied to other European co-operation cases (Danube Region and Atlantic Sea Region)

Source: <http://www.baltmetpromo.net>

5. Branding the EU

- o **Difficult:**
 - No coherent profile or image to build on
 - Heterogeneous countries with own culture and languages (they have different ideas of what being a European implies)
- o **Strategy:**
 - Find common denominators
 - Brand the EU as an entity, consistently and over long-term
- o **Is it possible?**
 - Yes! The EU has common values (democracy, sustainability, diversity, prosperity) -> so incorporate these in the brand connotations



Source: http://draee.gov.madeira.pt/html/Publicacoes/Electronicas/Europe_Today-8_08.pdf



Conclusion

- Use the macro-regional dimension to share common strategic elements in branding
- Organise thematic seminars to exchange feedback on the win-to-win approach (planning and implementation, technicalities, capacity building, procedural issues, etc.)
- Increase cooperation between Member States and institutions
- Involve youngsters and civil society components in the definition of branding, in the identification of goals and instruments and dynamics
- Get to know your stakeholders
- Evaluate

Communicating Enlargement



Club of Venice

COMMUNICATING ENLARGEMENT

A Club of Venice Guide

Introduction

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, 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 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'. The aim of these workshops 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 that 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.

The first workshop at Porec 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, with 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 and media coverage of enlargement as well as impact evaluation of Government and EU institutions communication strategies and discussed the role and added value of civil society components in enlargement communication.



Communication challenges during the different phases of the enlargement process

1. In the candidate country

a) 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 are, however, some exceptions, such as in Norway and Iceland, where the government has only a small parliamentary majority in favour of the application and where public opinion is split between supporters and opponents of 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 at any time about specific problems and the enlargement process as a whole.

Multipliers such as journalists, leading personalities representing interest groups, regional and local politicians, 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 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 on accession related topics of broad interest and should be continuously updated all along the enlargement process.

b) 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 negotiators 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 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.

c) 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, often use deliberately 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 as facilitator. 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 focussed 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 activities is necessary in order to fine-tune the campaign and to develop tailor-made products for specific groups using the media

best suited to each one. Recent referenda have shown that interactive media—and particularly 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.

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.



d) 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.

2. In the Member States

a) 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 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).

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.

A win-win strategy aimed at softening the so-called 'Enlargement fatigue' ought to involve the EU Institutions, first and foremost the Commission, which should be able to provide for a 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 future accession of Croatia is 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. 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.

b) 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 are 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

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 enlargement is not considered as a priority and that the public support for enlargement is decreasing all over the EU: Only 26% of EU citizens believe that enlargement is a good thing, an

exception being Poland with 69% of the population in favour of further EU enlargement.

Today the majority of EU citizens are “tired” of enlargement. The only candidates or potential candidates which are considered positively are Switzerland, Iceland and Croatia.

Public opinion in candidate countries is highly influenced by progress and concrete results in accession negotiations. In the case of Croatia which started negotiations in autumn 2005, a “negotiation fatigue” with negative impact on public support for EU membership can be noticed. The decline was accelerated during a period of deadlock in negotiations. Since 2010 due to significant progress in accession talks this trend has been inverted.

The slow progress in accession negotiations with Turkey and the new foreign policy of Turkey which tends to affirm itself as regional power and mediator in the Middle East have provoked an important shift in public perception of Turkish EU membership. Support for cooperation with the EU is declining whilst support for cooperation with the Middle East is rising. Today 60% of the Turkish population do not trust the EU. Only 38% believe that joining the EU is a good thing.

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 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 specialists on the internet and social networks.
- **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 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.

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. It should, however, be borne in mind that TV is 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 websites, blogs and interactive social media (such as Facebook, etc.) 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.

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.

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

1. 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.

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.

2. Specific target groups

a) 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:

- i. journalists (with special emphasis on editors/sub-editors and local media)
- ii. regional and local authorities
- iii. interest groups
- iv. civil society groups, NGOs
- v. school teachers

b) Groups particularly affected by the changes resulting from membership

- i. farmers
- ii. fishermen
- iii. entrepreneurs, business community
- iv. liberal professions
- v. students

- c) **Persons not actively seeking information, in particular women and the elderly**
- d) **Youth**
- e) **Vulnerable groups of the population (e.g. minorities)**

Success Factors

1. Broad political and government support,
2. Long-term communication efforts,
3. Sufficient human and financial resources,
4. A communication strategy which forms part of a national accession strategy,
5. Regular coordination between all communication partners,
6. The motivation, know-how and professionalism of the communication team,
7. Networking with multipliers,
8. Good cooperation and coordination with EU Delegations,
9. Coherent messages tailored to suit specific groups, to reflect progress in the negotiations and to adjust to public opinion as it evolves,
10. Open and transparent dialogue with citizens.



Communicating Europe in Croatia

Zvonimir Frka-Petešić



CLUB OF VENICE
2nd Workshop on "Communication pre- and post- enlargement"
10 February 2011
Brussels, COA/EEESC premises

Communicating Europe in Croatia

Challenges, Strategies, Initiatives

Zvonimir Frka-Petešić
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Milestones



- ★ **2001** 1st Communication Strategy
- ★ **2003** Application for membership
- ★ **2005** Launch of accession talks
- ★ **2006** 2nd Communication Strategy
- ★ **2011** End of negotiations - Referendum
- ★ **2013** Ratification of Accession Treaty
- ★ **2013** Expected membership of the EU

made 10 November 2013

Political context



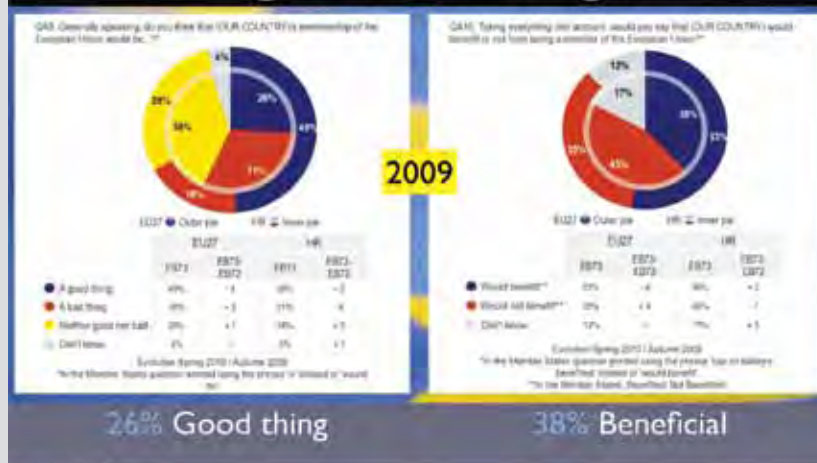
- ★ Enlargement fatigue
- ★ Go it alone, after Big Bang Enlargement
- ★ Negative impact of the economic crisis
- ★ Lessons learned from previous rounds
- ★ Tougher accession conditions
- ★ 27 Member States to negotiate with
- ★ Blockade of EU talks over bilateral issues

Enlargement fatigue

Drop of the EU citizens' support to EU Enlargement



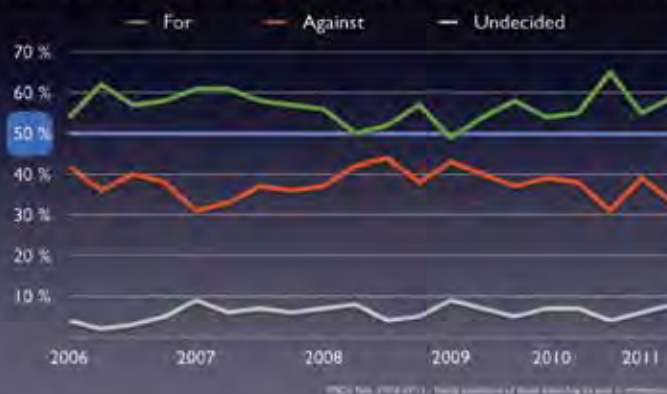
Negotiation fatigue



print 10 November 2011

Cautious support of Croats

Despite the oscillations, a majority in favour of EU membership



January 1/2 November 2011

Communication campaign



Coordination

- ★ Government
- ★ Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- ★ State Secretary for EU
- ★ Chief Negotiator
- ★ Ministries & Parliament

Partners

- ★ Media
- ★ Regions, Cities
- ★ EU Delegation, Embassies
- ★ Schools, Universities
- ★ NGOs, Civil Society

Main goals



- ★ Inform the general population
- ★ Provide objective and clear information
- ★ Facts, honesty, clarity

Informing people

EuroInfo points



Publications



Websites



Medias



Getting people involved

Concerts, Shows, Events



InfoTel, TV, Radios, Contests



School & Universities



Debates, Conferences









Challenges ahead in the referendum campaign



- ★ Euroscepticism among rural and less-educated population
- ★ Fear of losing hard-won sovereignty
- ★ Mobilizing youth
- ★ Lesser attractiveness of the EU hard hit by the recession

Main concerns



- ★ Higher prices of products and services?
- ★ Loss of jobs?
- ★ Agriculture – future of small farms?
- ★ Croatian customs and traditions – home made products?
- ★ Real estate for foreigners?
- ★ Immigration?
- ★ Crime & Corruption?

Referendum campaign

- ★ Launched once the date is known
- ★ Slogans, yet to be defined
- ★ Websites, Social Media
- ★ Billboards, brochures, leaflets
- ★ Pros & cons

Objectives



- ★ Ensure high turnout at the referendum
- ★ Win wide support for membership
- ★ Over 65% for membership of the EU

Keep your fingers crossed
and see you in 2013!



Zvonimir Frka-Petešić works in Zagreb as Head of the recently-established Directorate for Support to Croatia's EU Accession Process. He was previously based in Brussels as Head of Press and Communication in the Mission of Croatia to the EU.

Communicating Europe in schools

A joint reflection paper by Anna Maria Villa, Judit Gyárfás Fekete, Nada Serajnik Sraka, Tiziana Antonelli and Vincenzo Le Voci

A CHALLENGING INITIATIVE

The discussions on the topic Communicating Europe in Schools have given rise to various comments and proposals during the years. Member States' positions on this issue are heterogeneous and reflect the variety of the national scenarios.

One of the main issues remains the absence of the EU dimension from the majority of the national school curricula, and consequently the fact that the knowledge of the citizens' rights and duties within the EU and their education to the EU principles and values, policies, objectives and opportunities come too late and from fragmented information sources. The debate is open, as the increasing need of reaching out to the young people, raising their interest, awareness and consciousness of the EU added value is undisputable.

In its **White Paper on a European Communication Policy** adopted on 1 February 2006, the European Commission entered a chapter with a set of suggestions to reinforce the European dimension in education¹.

Based on the MS' written contributions and the thorough exchange of views within the WPI, a broad agreement emerged on the need to promote initiatives to support teachers', researchers' and students' interconnection, mutual exchange and mobility, and to foster the teaching of European integration in schools at every level. Strengthening cooperation with universities, improving and sustaining all existing projects in this field was also perceived as a priority objective for MS' communicators. A report informed Coreper on the convergence around the above mentioned themes².

EU AND EDUCATION

In its conclusions adopted on 15 February 2011 "on the role of education and training in the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy"³, the Council of the EU emphasized, among others, that

"education and training have a fundamental role to play in achieving the Europe 2020 objectives of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, notably by equipping citizens with the skills and competences which the European economy and European society need in order to remain competitive and innovative, but also by helping to promote social cohesion and inclusion. The key role of education and training should therefore be fully reflected in the Council's work during the new 'European Semester' established from the beginning of 2011. In particular, and with the support of the Commission, the Council should ensure that issues such as policy measures and reforms in the field of education and training, their contribution to the European targets and the exchange of good policy and practice are fully addressed".

1 5992/06 INF 31 (COM (2006) 35 final).

2 10226/06 INF 109.

3 OJ C 70 of 4.3.2011, p. 1-3.

Two of the proposed Europe 2020 flagship initiatives are of special relevance to education and training:

- *“Youth on the Move”*, which aims to help young people to achieve their full potential in training and education and thereby improve their employment prospects;
- the *Agenda for new skills and jobs*, which highlights the need to upgrade skills and to boost employability.

In this context, it is also worth to recall the Conclusions adopted by the Council on 19 November 2010 “on the Youth on the Move initiative - an integrated approach in response to the challenges young people face”, where it is also highlighted the need, among others, to:

- promote the full implementation of integrated lifelong learning strategies;
- encourage youth participation in democratic life;
- fully implement existing actions and develop future policy initiatives aimed at achieving the broad objectives of the Youth of the Move initiative within the broad context of the Europe 2020 Strategy”

Consciousness of the interrelation between youth, education and growth also stems from the Council’s resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018), where the Council defined its position putting the accent, inter alia, on drawing inspiration *“from mutual learning at EU level, when devising national policies in the youth field and other related policy areas”*.

Political conclusions and resolutions are adopted by the Council unanimously. This is a clear signal that, with regard to the impact of education on common growth and social improvements, there is a common awareness of what is at stake and a common will to act coherently and in synergy.

COMMUNICATING EU IN SCHOOLS

Projects in member states

Many projects and events concerning EU in schools have been developed in Member States in recent years and are still going on within different frameworks - some are held in the framework of the Partnership Management, other run independently or in cooperation with the EU institutions. Some take place even outside the EU countries.

Management Partnership Projects

Member States and the EU institutions are using Management Partnership Agreements (MPAs) as an ideal instrument to reinforce cooperation in communication. In this context, new synergetic approaches were favoured by the political declaration signed in Strasbourg on 22 October 2008 by the three main EU institutions, which recognized communicating Europe in partnership as the key strategic perspective to achieve concrete results in this field.

Through the partnerships, several Member States and the Commission co-organized a wide variety of information campaigns and different “one-shot” projects. It emerged that, among the different activities organized at national or trans-national level, an important role was played by initiatives to communicating Europe in schools¹. Their impact was considered by all the key actors as well-promising for future developments.

¹ Management Partnerships in 2009, Commission DG COMM, 05/11/2009

The informal exchanges of best practice and concrete feedback within the Club of Venice are playing an important role in this framework, which had a significant impact on the development of the MPAs.

The events and projects carried out in this field (from 2009 – 2011) can be summarized as follows (the list is being purely indicative and non exhaustive):

Austria:

- o *Organization of a “Congress for teachers”: exchange of best practice on ‘Europe informing about the EU topics and discussions’, exchange of experience and networking.*

Belgium:

- o *“Trivial pursuit-type game”: Europe for young and old starting at the age of 12 (card and electronic version)*

Czech Republic:

- o *“Back to School” (within the strategic partnership umbrella instead of MPA).*

Germany:

- o *“Information events”: for vocational school students on future of Europe.*
- o *“Online game”: targeting young people to attract their attention to the EP elections.*
- o *“Simulation games”: about financial crisis for young people and teachers.*
- o *“Sophie and Paul”: booklet for primary school children (5-9 years) (MPA with EP and EC).*
- o *“Discover Europe”: teaching materials for primary school children (5-12 years).*
- o *“Europe - The science magazine for young people”: teaching materials for secondary schools (7th - 10th grade) (MPA with EP and EC).*
- o *“Desire for Europe”: a film that presents 10 Europeans who made outstanding contributions to European integration. The film will be used in schools.*

Hungary:

- o *“Debate competition for secondary schools students” launched in two regional towns in order to raise awareness on current EU issues. University students specialised on EU affairs acted as mentors. The initiative aimed to increase knowledge of European issues, improving both teaching techniques and methods, covering the different European policies and “democratic skills”, enabling students to become well-informed on their role as European citizens.*
- o *“Multi-phased project” targeting secondary school teachers and students promoting the EU and active European citizenship. A training and special website for secondary school teachers, a series of training seminars in Budapest and in 5 regional cities on methodological guideline/ practices to teach the EU in secondary schools.*

Italy:

“Smart student”: a dedicated website for university students wishing to undertake an Erasmus experience. In this context the students will engage in training courses on European institutions, policies and programmes for young Europeans.

- o *The initiative "UE4YOU" (2nd edition), aiming to*
 - a) *increase young people awareness of EU youth policies, the future of the EU and opportunities for youngsters in Europe;*
 - b) *Join the EU information networks Eurodesk and Europe Direct in the implementation of a joint project, thus drawing the utmost benefit from the expertise of the two networks, the knowledge sharing and the successful accomplishment of the project.*
- o *The competition "Young European Journalists", for secondary schools. Creation of an editorial package/product on one of these topics: 1) European history, role and policies; 2) intercultural dialogue, 3) fight against poverty and social exclusion. (The best class wins a trip to Brussels).*

Latvia:

- o *Europe and Youth (development and publication of results of debates and analyses of history, identity and future of Europe; training and seminars for youth and measures to promote cooperation for information networks; seminars and training for teachers).*

Malta:

- o *"The Magical Adventures of Tommy & Rosy": launch of the first episode of the cartoon and comic book (in May 2010) which informed children about the history of the EU and what the Union means for its citizens in their daily lives. "Tommy & Rosy" storybook and DVD were distributed to all children aged 9 to 14 in all schools in Malta and Gozo at the beginning of the new scholastic year 2010/2011. The Maltese representatives made a thorough presentation of this initiative at the Club plenary meeting in Gozo in June 2010).*
- o *Training of teachers on EU matters ('Train the Trainer' concept, dealing with EU-specific subject areas, aiming at improving pupils' performances in related fields that go beyond traditional teaching subject boundaries, creating a life-long learning approach).*

Sweden:

- o *Training on EU Issues for Upper Secondary School Teachers - The objective is to have as many Sweden's teachers at upper secondary schools as possible participating in the training actions.*

Slovenia:

- o *"Tool-kit for teachers": the objective was to equip teachers with the necessary knowledge of EU and the methods and tools to introduce the EU in the classroom. The toolkit featured relevant information on EU as well didactic material for teachers and working sheets for pupils.*
- o *"Europe at School" initiative: the largest school competition in Slovenia concerning EU issues. Students expressed their understanding of EU events in literacy and artistic works and shared their thoughts with their peers across the EU.*

Projects implemented independently or in cooperation with EU institutions

Belgium:

- o *"Luana & Nico": pedagogic kit for kids from 4 to 6 years with educative fairy tails and games (sold out due success, new version available in 2011).*
- o *"Europe, my home": booklet (edition 2010) for kids from 4th grade in primary school, contains info on history of the European unification etc.*

Bulgaria:

- o *"Trip to Europe": a game that targeted children between 6 and 12 years, it contained useful information about the EU presented in an attractive way.*
- o *Mobilization for the "Back to School" project.*
- o *Spring Day 2010 (which closed with a youth essay competition).*

France:

- o *"Eurêkol": a pedagogic project created in 2010 consisting of six separate chapters, each of them concentrating on a particular topic: EU history, its symbols, the main institutions, the Euro, European agriculture and the continent's geography. The chapters contain detailed information on the particular topic, fun in-class exercises, pictures illustrating the topic and work sheets designed for pupils. Its aim is to provide teaching materials for primary school teachers who want to treat the topic of the European Union in a fun and original way.*

Germany:

- o *"Back to School" (see below, projects implemented in collaboration with the European Commission)*
- o *"Schekker": an online youth magazine from the government appearing every six weeks on different topics*
- o *"European competition": held annually for students of all grades and school types. In 2011 the motto is volunteering, this in the framework of the European Year of Volunteering. The Chancellor invites every year 30 pupils (the winners of the European competition) in Berlin.*
- o *Bürger Europas' activity "Mobil in Europa": The NGO organized in 2009 fifty events for high school students and vocational students in 12 states on the issue 'mobility in the workplace'. At the events the EU mobility programs were presented and in workshops the application of the programs could be learned.*
- o *Bürger Europas' activity "Mastering the crisis": The NGO organises in 2011 nationwide 50 events in schools in all provinces focusing on the financial and economic crisis. At the end of the 50 days of action for youth, students will develop as a crisis manager their own economy and savings program for their home town - according to their taste.*
- o *"Model Europaparlament (MEP)": once a year pupils and students are invited to simulate the European Parliament, they can sit in committees as country representatives and at the end they can deliver a resolution to the EU.*
- o *"Simulation European Parliament (SIMEP)": Twice a year the 'Junge Europäische Bewegung' organises a two-day simulation of the European Parliament in Berlin, for 160 students from the region Berlin-Brandenburg. The students are advised in their role as MEP, they debate and vote for resolutions on current European issues in Committees and in plenary.*
- o *"German-French discoveries": the German-French Youth Office, supported by Auswärtiges Amt, and French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, organizes a Discovery Day with young people from France and Germany.*

Ireland:

- o *"Europe on my doorstep primary schools photography competition": pupils from third, fourth, fifth and sixth class were asked to take a photograph which captured the theme of the European Union in their local area.*
- o *The fifth annual "Model Council of the European Union": a secondary school debate took place on Friday 11 March in Dublin. 27 schools represented the EU Member States.*

Netherlands:

- o *"Budget Europe": interactive budget game for secondary schools. Students can prepare the budget of Europe. For teachers there is also teaching material available.*
- o *"Europe in the newspaper": a free downloadable booklet for schools created by 'Foundation Newspaper in the Classroom'. Secondary school students are being challenged to make their own newspaper with EU related topics. By linking the lessons with the actuality, Europe becomes more accessible and clear.*
- o *"Europe Educative": a website for teachers of primary school containing all sorts of EU information and teaching material. The site offers lesson suggestions for every school type.*
- o *Free guest lectures and workshops (role playing about EU decision-making) for students in their last year of higher education.*

Projects implemented by other key players

"European Charlemagne Youth Prize": the European Parliament and the Foundation of the International Charlemagne Prize of Aachen invite since 2008 young people (16-30 years) from all the EU Member States to participate in a yearly competition on EU development, integration and European identity issues.

The Prize is awarded to projects which promote the European and international understanding, foster the development of a shared sense of European identity and integration and serve as a role model for young people living in Europe and offer practical examples of Europeans living together as one community. The projects can focus on the organisation of various youth events, youth exchanges or internet projects with a European dimension.

"CoR Secondary Schools Competition 2010": this event is organized by the Committee of the Regions for pupils aged 14 and over from, around Europe. The aim of the competition is to encourage young people to learn and understand more about the European Union, the Committee of the Regions, and other EU institutions as well as each other's regions. This initiative aims to foster the debate and boost young people interaction about Europe's future.

"EU Information Classes": organized by the European Parliament Office in Malta at local primary schools in May 2010 in the framework of Europe Day 2010. Pupils were given information on the EU, structured through briefings on Europe day, presentation of locally-produced animated video featuring information on the origins of the Union since the World Wars, written laws and the importance of communication; and Q&A sessions.

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) organized a second edition of Your Europe, Your Say, which took place from 5 to 7 May 2011. Young same aged people from secondary schools from across Europe came together in Brussels to debate, negotiate, stand up for their beliefs and

try to find a consensus in a simulated plenary session. Not only the students could learn how participatory democracy works, but they can also experienced Brussels from the inside¹.

The theme of the 10th edition of the Spring Day in 2011 was “Volunteering”. It was an ideal complementary effort for the successful implementation of the communication strategy to promote the European Year of Volunteering².

Projects implemented by non-EU Member States

“EU teach a day 2010 in Kosovo”: In the course of one month, at the end of the school year, diplomats from EU member states and EU representatives in Kosovo visited elementary, secondary and higher education schools throughout Kosovo. They shared EU integration experiences of their own countries with the students, discussed what values and rules are part of being a member of the Union and explained what Kosovo’s European perspective means to students personally.

“The EU comes to Your School” 2010 in Japan: The project started in 2007 and has been held each year around Europe Day in May. It targets senior high school students. Ambassadors and diplomats of the EU Member States’ embassies in Japan and the EU Delegation to Japan visit senior high schools all over the country, giving lectures on the Union and their respective countries (with participation of the European Commission).

The wide variety of initiatives, most of which organized by the MS’ governmental authorities in collaboration with the EU institutions are the clear signal of the determination of the key actors to pursue their efforts.

Projects coordinated by the European Commission

In September 2010, the European Commission launched the project Youth on the Move. This project is part of the EU’s Europe 2020 initiative and aims at making education and training more relevant to young people’s needs, reinvigorate education systems, promote student mobility and tackle unemployment among the young.

Youth on the Move also tries to reduce the share of early school leavers, increase the share of young people with tertiary education and help the Member States to reach the headline EU target for 75% employment over the next ten years, by helping to ensure that young people have the right skills for the jobs of tomorrow.

The Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP), lasting from 2007 to 2013, is the flagship European funding programme that helps people at all stages of their lives to take part in stimulating learning experiences, as well as helping to develop the education and training sector across Europe. Comenius, Erasmus, Leonardo Da Vinci, Grundtvig and Jean Monnet are all integral parts of the LLP.

In its first three years the LLP has financed transnational education and training activities in 31 European countries and has funded the transnational learning mobilities of 900.000 European citizens.

The number of applications received for each Comenius action continues to increase on a yearly basis, especially in the new Member States. Comenius e-twinning action appears to be providing a concrete support.

1 Your Europe, Your Say: <http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.your-europe-your-say-2011>

2 Spring Day 2011: http://webs.schule.at/website/Europa/Europa_spring_Austria2011_events_en.htm

With regard to Erasmus, the number of students going abroad to study or train has continued to increase in almost all 31 participating countries. The Commission is already studying viable options for the successor programme from 2014 onward¹.

The *Back to School* project has expanded from 9 to 11 participating EU countries in 2010 due to its success. 2011 trends are even more encouraging, with 13 MS mobilized². The EU staff return to their own secondary school and become an EU ambassador for one day. These “ambassadors” can share with the youngsters their personal experience with Europe and debate with the audiences on a variety of topics related to the European Union. This provides young people with a momentum to get to know “the” European project from close up, putting a face on Europe for young people. And EU staff will be the face of Europe for them.

The initiative was launched in 2007 by the German government to mark the start of their EU presidency. Successive presidencies of the Council of the EU have taken the relay, this year being, it Hungary and Poland's turn. (http://ec.europa.eu/news/eu_explained/110117_en.htm) In 2010 EU civil servants went back to school among others in Spain, Greece, Portugal, Bulgaria, Italy, Latvia, Ireland.

In previous years, besides the Commission, the EP, CoR and EESC have also been actively supporting their staff to join the programme. The General Secretariat of the Council has just decided to join the other institutions and body in the implementation of the project in 2011.

Another event carried out also in 2010, Spring Day, gathered together almost 10,000 teachers and more than 6,000 schools to shape the “Europe of tomorrow”. By joining the Spring Day campaign, teachers and students can take part in a wide range of activities, competitions, debates, conferences and online and face-to-face discussions. These events introduce European themes into lessons in an innovative and creative way.

Spring Day for Europe, the annual campaign open to primary and upper secondary schools across Europe, was carried out over the past years and even integrated into the School Calendar throughout Europe. The number of schools participating has grown up every year³.

In 2009 the Commission adopted the EU Youth Strategy 2010-2018 (An EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering (a renewed open method of coordination to address youth challenges and opportunities). This strategy invites both the Member States and the Commission, to cooperate in the youth field by means of a renewed open method of coordination. It emphasizes the importance of youth work and defines reinforced measures for a better implementation of youth policies at the EU level.

The two overall objectives of the new framework are: more and equal opportunities for young people in education and in the labour market and active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity of young people⁴.

1 Lifelong Learning Programme:
http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc/activity0910_en.pdf

2 Back to School:
http://ec.europa.eu/news/eu_explained/110117_en.htm

3 Spring Day for Europe 2010: <http://www.springday2010.net/ww/en/pub/spring2010/news/newsflash/evaluation.htm>

4 EU Youth Strategy 2010-2018:
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2009:0200:FIN:EN:PDF>

The Youth in Action Programme (2007 - 2013)¹ is the EU Programme for young people aged 15-28. The successor of the **YOUTH Programme** (2000-2006) aims to inspire a sense of active citizenship, solidarity and tolerance among young Europeans and to involve them in shaping the Union's future. It also promotes mobility within and beyond the EU borders, non-formal learning and intercultural dialogue, and encourages the inclusion of all young people, regardless of their educational, social and cultural background.

The Programme supports a large variety of activities through five actions: promote young people's active citizenship in general and their European citizenship in particular; develop solidarity and promote tolerance among young people, in particular in order to foster social cohesion in the European Union; foster mutual understanding between young people in different countries; contribute to developing the quality of support systems for youth activities and the capabilities of civil society organisations in the youth field; promote European cooperation in the youth field.

Finally, work in progress: with regard to 2011 and years to come, the Commission has prepared a strategy to enhance communication on EU with young people and in schools and envisages to implement it starting the next school year

Networking: other useful cooperation frameworks

The potential added-value that could be provided by European web-based networks such as "European Schoolnet", "European School Network" and "eTwinning" and powerful cross-border initiatives such as "Young Ideas For Europe" (initiative of the Robert Bosh Stiftung aiming to foster European civic education through dialogue and raising young people and students engagement at European level) should not be overlooked.

- The European Schoolnet: <http://www.eun.org/web/guest>
- The European School Network: <http://www.esnetwork.eu>
- eTwinning: <http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/index.htm>
- Young Ideas for Europe: <http://www.youngideasforeurope.eu>
- The European Youth Portal: <http://europa.eu/youth/>

The European Youth Portal offers European and national information of interest to young people who are living, learning and working in Europe. The portal gives information on 8 main themes, covers 31 countries and is available in 25 languages.

- Teachers' Corner: http://europa.eu/teachers-corner/index_en.htm

Inspiring teaching material about the European Union. The website contains a wide range of teaching material about Europe. The material has been produced by various EU institutions and other government and non-government bodies. Websites, brochures, books, maps and posters explain what the EU is and what it does. The material is tailored to different age groups.

¹ Youth in Action Programme:
http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/index_en.php
http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/youth/c11080_en.htm

The mobilisation of the Club of Venice

In a society experiencing rapid and remarkable changes in the information and communication culture, the Club made the communication of Europe among the young people one of its priorities.

In the Club's discussions on this issue, there is always a shared perception of the need to organize workshops on this theme on a regular basis in order to intensify the exchange of best practices and concrete feedback on activities carried out by Member states on this issue.

A first exchange of views on concrete projects and campaigns on EU communication for young people and in schools took place in the Club of Venice at the plenary session held in Vienna and Budapest on 25/26 April 2007.

Subsequently, a wide ranging debate on this subject, animated by Tiziana Antonelli (Italian Department of EU policies, PM Office) and Judit Gyárfás Fekete (former Hungarian Communication Director), took place at the plenary meeting in Paris (28 May 2009).

The presentations and discussion held on the mentioned workshops and plenary enabled the Club members to pinpoint the most recent achievements of different Member States' communication activities for the benefit of the young generations and the academic world.

Numerous projects – a source of many new ideas

Among the several practical examples of government communication provided by the Club members, it is worth to mention some of the projects presented by the Member States.

Belgium:

- o *Initiatives in schools, conceived in the framework of the management partnership agreement with the Commission: two themes: "Europe and Europeans" and the "Challenges of the planet and the role of Europe".*
- o *School game "NEUROdyssée" downloadable from the Internet.*

Czech Republic:

- o *Initiatives addressed in particular to the youngsters, to commemorate the fall of the Iron Curtain: "Totalitarian Circus" and a cartoon for kids on the remembrance of totalitarians.*
- o *European Union students simulation.*
- o *Educating desk game about the EU institutions.*
- o *Number of projects providing seminars for students.*

Hungary:

- o *"Europaletta": a renewed education web portal containing a rich source of background materials, forum for ideas exchange and joint projects.*
- o *"EU lessons differently": university students held 90 minutes interactive lessons in 170 secondary schools, sharing their personal experiences too. The demand exceeded offer by 3 times and the whole project was characterised by the fruitful cooperation with a Civil Foundation of university students.*
- o *"Our school Europe": another successful initiative which started in 2008. Civil servants in charge of EU-related issues were invited to visit their secondary school and speak about their*

work. This project was the Hungarian version of the "Back to school" program supported by the Commission.

- o Training courses for teachers: two 2 days trainings, for 140 teachers, excellent lectures, newest ICT pedagogical methodology opportunities explored, themes including EU communication priorities.*

Italy:

- o "EUROPE = US": teaching package for primary and middle schools, it offers two pathways for discovering the European universe (Living Book (7 to 10 years) and Open Mind (10 to 13 years)).*
- o "At school in Europe": an agenda for teachers, teaching package for early secondary school, an information booklet on the EU endowed with a CD of interactive games to stimulate discussion in class.*
- o A Master's Degree in "Expert on EU funding", set up in collaboration with Rome universities (La Sapienza, Tor Vergata, Roma Tre and LUISS).*
- o Scholarships and prizes, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to support Italian citizens selected to the College of Europe; scholarship for the best thesis on the "Protection of the financial interests of the European Union and implementation of Article 280 TEU in Italy and in other European countries".*
- o A paper and a multimedia product on "Programmes and opportunities for young people in the European Union" such as apprenticeships, internships and training opportunities.*
- o Support for Italian citizens who intend to pursue careers in the EU institutions, through informational activities relating in particular to the new EPSO competitions.*

Latvia:

- o Large scale projects such as "Back to School", "Spring Day" and Comenius.*

Lithuania:

- o An awareness-raising campaign "It's Not the Same to Me" carried out in the run-up to former national, municipal and European elections, the central aim being to promote youth participation in the public life.*
- o the project "Strengthening structural dialogue in the regions 2009-2010", aiming to encourage structural dialogue with young people about European youth policies.*

Slovenia:

- o Slovenia's mobilization of youth in the period between 1997 and 2007: publications, mobile libraries, contests, educational multimedia, euro phone, presentations in schools, teachers' training.*

United Kingdom:

- o A practical example of COL's communication on the 14-19 year school reform.*

The latest meeting of the Club tackling this issue was hosted by the Hungarian MFA authorities in Budapest in April 2011, during the semester of the Hungarian presidency of the Council.



Communication on the EU should aim to enable the individual to grow up as an active and critical European citizen, ready to engage in discussion and to learn about the European dimension in a multi-faceted and transnational perspective. The main objectives are:

- the reinforcement of complementarities,
- the adequacy of the European initiatives to the national and trans-national contexts,
- peoples' integration at different levels,
- the support to the creation of national web platforms and exhaustive official information sources,
- avoiding to create gaps between information, « descriptive » knowledge and students' interest.

The big challenge is the capacity to strike the balance between the stabilizing and mobilizing forces in the society and in the world of teaching.

Two recommendations:

- Undertake a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the written exams for the baccalaureate from 2005 to 2011 (mother language and literature, history, media, mathematics, natural sciences, modern languages, informatics),
- Build curricula for the students aged 12 to 18 (i.e. a framework programme of European studies).

Zsuzsanna Kozák (Consultant in media literacy education, President of the Visual World Foundation):
'Media literacy education as a new tool'

There are several reasons why it is important to teach about the media. Media are one of the most important agents of socialization. It is a condition of participation and it is fun and a pleasure to discover the mediated world. The media also have a great possibility to motivate young people and to get them connected.

In Hungary, media literacy is a compulsory school subject. A Media Literacy competition takes place at school on an annual basis. Media literacy as an important factor for active citizenship, the ability to access media, to understand and to critically evaluate different aspects of the media and media contents and to create communications in a variety of contexts is in line with the Commission's views on this subject. Suggestions: teach not by the media, but about the media - using European contents; use media literacy education as a tool for EU-communication and media pedagogy as a creative, effective method in this context.

Possible projects to be carried out: the collection of creative exercises in media literacy on EU topics and values in schools and an annually European Media Literacy Competition around schools; the production of a TV programme based on the best EU topics and values.

Angela Andersson (Sweden, Director):
'The International Programme Office for Education and Training'

The "International Programme Office for Education and Training" is a government agency that promotes academic exchanges and cooperation across national borders. The Programme Office is the Swedish national agency for the EU Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP). Teaching about EU affairs started with the "EU at schools" seminars in 1994. The national framework consists of the "European Schoolnet" (a Swedish initiative, ICT at school and European citizenship issues), the EU

2004 Committee (a Parliamentary committee, with communication tasks related to the Convention for the Future of Europe) and the Agency for School Improvement.

Initiatives and actions:

- o teacher training/teaching material in preparation for the EP elections 2004, a full scale national secondary school survey (2007), additional actions for raising competence for teachers (2007) and an addition to syllabus 2008.
- o achievements from 2009 till 2010 (through the Management Partnership Agreement (MPA)): teachers' trainings and guide, stakeholders seminars, conferences, a dedicated website, evaluation and various documentation.
- o in 2009, interactive teaching material, different pupils' activities in schools, interactive game (online and DVD), role-plays and workshops with secondary schools students.
- o MPA activities carried out and planned from 2010 till 2012: 25 school ambassadors during 10 days with strong requested local support (2010); 75 school leaders, House of Europe in Brussels (3 days), 50 school ambassadors and evaluation and documentation, the follow up of a full scale national school survey from 2007 and an ad hoc report.

Agnieszka Kudlińska (Poland, Director of the European Information Department, MFA):

"The Polish experience in 'Communicating Europe in schools'"

The MFA organises every year an educational programme "My school in the European Union" for young people aged 13-19 and their teachers. It also organises artistic and photographic competitions for students of secondary fine arts schools.

The programme of the previous 8 editions of "My school in the European Union" focussed on several EU themes like the history of the European integration, the common market and the monetary union and the role and communication priorities of the European institutions.



So far more than 12.000 schools have taken part in the programme. In the 8th edition, 600 secondary schools took part in the programme and 226 winners of the competition participated in a study visit to the European Institutions in Brussels.

The programme is carried out in co-operation with several institutions. The MFA launched a dedicated website, preparing information and education material to be dispatched to the participating schools and initiating information activities therein. The participating schools conduct European classes, organize discussions, conferences and exhibitions; furthermore, a European contest is carried out at school level.

Visits by high rank officials of the European institutions at schools are a valuable complement.

The purpose of the poster and photographic competitions is to express in graphic form the meaning of European integration as well as EU promotion among Polish young citizens on important occasions such as the Polish EU membership, the first European elections, the 5th anniversary of the Polish EU membership, etc. The first poster competition was initiated in 2003. In 2011 there were 239 entries for the competition and the jury awarded 46 works. The awarded posters promote the idea of the European integration in Poland, EU members states and candidate countries. They are used in publications, information and promotion materials published by the MFA.

PERSPECTIVES

Communicating Europe in schools remains a big challenge and a crucial priority to reach out to citizens and, in particular, to the young population. Understanding Europe and active citizenship and learning about their strong interconnection could contribute to raise awareness and consciousness and work together for a better future.

The Club of Venice engagement in this topic is having a positive impact on the reinforcement of the transnational cooperation. Following the usual approach, the Member States continue to exchange their best practices and concrete feedback on activities carried out on this issue, in mid- and long term future.

Efforts should continue to be made to develop trans-national training programmes, joint seminars and web interaction in cooperation. The key actors should insist on seeking convergence, for instance, around relevant questions such as the above-mentioned inclusion of EU as a subject in all education curricula (the EU institutions remain sensitive on this issue and Member States' endeavor to make progress in this regards ought to be warmly encouraged).

At this stage, the follow-up activities planned by the Club of Venice in this field can be summarized as follows:

- o The internal working group coordinated by Club members from Hungary and Italy and other volunteers will continue to handle this topic and report to the Club plenary sessions on the progress made on this issue
- o Specialists from the different countries are being invited to join, as appropriate. Teachers, academics and civil servants responsible for education will be increasingly involved as much as possible. The Club will also take into account the added value of civil society's expertise in this field
- o The Club envisages publishing in the future a guide on this issue.



Conclusions and recommendations stemming from the Club of Venice meetings

- o Teachers' involvement is impressive. Keep motivation high throughout meetings at all level.
- o Keep interacting with youngsters, using both traditional and innovative tools.
- o Set up multiannual plans to increasingly raise awareness, interest and consciousness among those youngsters who will be voting at the European elections in 2014.
- o Endeavour to harmonize strategies and working methods throughout regular exchanges of know-how and feedback.
- o Co-operation at European level, between Member States and institutions, at trans-national level, and throughout regional/national/local entities is a must and can produce a multiplier effect.
- o Management and strategic partnerships are increasingly playing a crucial role in support of communication in schools.
- o There is a need to develop evaluation strategies to verify the accuracy of training material.
- o Analyse and exchange feedback on existing cases of EU integration in national curricula.
- o Keep the Club reflection paper on "communicating Europe in schools" up to date.
- o Organize a new workshop on this issue in 2012. Thematic meetings on "communication in schools" are expected to give a boost to the ongoing activities in this field and to enhance interaction among the key players.

Communicating in schools “à la Venice Club”

Judit Gyárfás Fekete

EU communication in schools is an evergreen topic. Each country candidate to EU membership starts with a Schuman competition and regards communication in schools as a priority later on too. The founders and the further joining member countries implement a great variety of valuable projects as well. But that’s a never ending story which concerns the awareness of the EU projects: the way to draw utmost benefit from the possibilities offered by the EU membership is by contrasting the lack of knowledge. The knowledge gaps should be filled and the methodology refined. The implementation of EU communication in schools differs in each member state, as it is a national competence. As part of the curriculum



Judit with Niels Thøgersen - Bratislava, 2004

EU can be an independent or non-independent subject; while the “outside school” EU programme could represent a third version. The first, very detailed discussion on this theme took place in Paris, May 28-29, 2008 in the framework of the plenary meeting, enjoying huge interest. The session on EU communication in schools comprised nine presentations, by Philippe Caroyez (B), Lucinda Martin (UK), Lieve Fransen (Commission DG COMM), Klaus Hörr (AT), Nada Serajnik (SI), Ondrej Karas (CZ), Kristine Salme (LV), Tiziana Antonelli (I) and myself, and two written contributions by Vice President Niels Thøgersen and Laurynas Bucalis (LT). Lieve Fransen presented detailed information about the Commission’s projects, namely: the Spring Day, “Back to School”, the “Teachers’ corner”, and supported different member states’ initiatives too. The latter comprise the projects implemented during the rotating presidency, within the Management Partnership Agreement umbrella, in European Public Spaces and in Europe Direct Network.

The Hungarian experience

Thanks to the Venice Club we are informed on numerous member states’ communication projects, but - no doubt - it is about our own country’s projects that we can offer the most genuine picture.

For instance, what have we learned from teachers and students in Hungary?

What would the teachers want to bring forward? What are their expectations?

- New ICT tools (i.e. interactive blackboard), assistance in developing IT skills, for example to be able to illustrate EU decision-making procedures and global challenges.

- Much more, mostly multimedia aids, infotainment, graphic tools, maps, pictures, cartoons, statistical tables for teaching history, and also images with emotional impact-potential for nurturing European identity in students
- Teachers also need ready-made and adaptable high standard already proven ideas, for in-class and out of class activities.

What do the students want?

- Secondary school students are much more open to what young people, students have to say about the EU, based on their EU-studies, Erasmus or working experiences.
- Scholarship opportunities are of special interest to students.
- Students like to debate. Class-room assignments, activities targeted at developing debate, argumentation skills dealing with EU policy alternatives are well received.
- Proximity. Students wish to feel active part of the EU democratic process and growth; they wish to feel considered, to meet publicly with the decision-makers and test their own capacity to contribute to the debate with their own suggestions.

Based on the answers – taking advantage of the state of the art ICT pedagogical methodology -, we held two-day training sessions for teachers about the EU competence including discussions of the EU priorities. As part of the project we managed to put together a network of teachers interested and actively participating in EU training sessions. Europaletta, the education web portal has been renewed. In the form of "EU lessons differently" university students held 90 minutes lessons in 170 secondary schools, sharing their personal experiences too. The demand exceeded offer by 3 times and the whole project was characterised by the fruitful cooperation with a Civil Foundation of university students. "Our School Europe" was another successful initiative which we started in 2008, two years before the Hungarian Presidency. We invited civil servants in charge of EU-related

issues to visit their secondary school and speak about their work. This project was the Hungarian version of the rotating presidency "Back to School" program supported by the Commission.

While secondary school students like very much debating, we organized the first debate competition for them in 2010 in two regions, with discussion covering 24 topics. The young people showed self-knowledge and self-discipline in competitive situations, while cooperating in the team work. Their communication abilities and spirit of tolerance improved. The project is ongoing.



Judit with Linda Jakobson (former Director of the Latvian European Information Agency) - Bratislava, 2004"

Sharing lessons learned

Anna Maria Villa

As everybody knows, our task as European public communicators is to apply to our countries the lessons learnt in our formal and informal meetings, drawing from the exchange of best practice to tailor our strategies as needed to our local needs and unique characteristics. Bearing this in mind I decided to focus on a new communication plan geared towards youth, which consists of different strategies, some directed to youths from 6 years old up to 25 years old, and others to their teachers of the compulsory schools. Some of these plans were presented at two of the Club plenary meetings: in Paris (2009) and Malta (2010)..

The Italian experiences

At the Venice Club plenary in Paris in May 2009, the Italian delegation presented the initiative called "UE X te" ("EU for You"). This project was financed by the Management Partnership and implemented in collaboration with the Europe Direct network. It consisted of different work sessions held by high school students who simulated European Parliament model sessions, debating among themselves. At the end they presented the results of their work on the topics they considered most relevant to the two Vice-Presidents of the EP, the Vice President of the European Commission, the Italian Minister for European Affairs and the Italian Minister for Youth. Those authorities listened carefully, welcoming the proposals and arranging to meet with the students in a year to inform them on what work they had done to ensure follow-up on those priorities. Almost 10.000 high school students were involved. The initiative was a great success and we scheduled a second edition for the next year.



My colleague and I presented the second initiative “EU = US” (“EU = noi”), a workshop on education in schools, at the Venice Club plenary meeting held in Malta in May 2010. The sun, the Gozo seaside along with a wonderfully organized programme, made this meeting very stimulating and inspiring, special for everyone! The proposal was presented in multimedia and consisted of a DVD and a book (both downloadable for free from our website) to be shown during the lessons. The DVD and the book were presented in each of the 20 Italian regions with the support of Europe Direct, the regional school directors, local authorities and reporters. Each meeting was attended by about 100 teachers, each using the DVD with about 40 students.

As you can easily imagine, the promotion and diffusion of the initiative at local level were widespread and the project had a great success. The best short-term results are that we are still well connected with the teachers through our mailbox and newsletters.

The main lessons learned from these two experiences are that citizens wish to be heard. They need to feel that the European and national institutions are accessible and willing to explain what is a common vision for Europe. They need to be able to appreciate the added European value in their everyday life. They also want to meet the European and national institutions, It gives them pleasure to see the two working, acting and pursuing goals together.

It is thus obvious that organizing the institutional communication effectively and coherently is essential in order to support all the Union’s main interests: the development of the internal market’s main objectives, social cohesion, a sustainable recovery from the economic crisis, employment and mobility, the overall promotion of democracy, peace and prosperity, synergies in cultural and educational growth...but also to seek proximity with the citizens and increasingly stimulate their democratic participation in the governance of the Union.



Teaching the EU at secondary schools in Estonia

Eve Paavel



The Estonian state is of the opinion that it is best to bring the European Union closer to its citizens by investing in the youth and in their education. What young people know about the EU, what they think of it and the extent to which they want to participate in European affairs is largely determined by what they learn at school. The level of EU-related knowledge that young people possess depends above all on the way this topic is treated at schools: the importance attached to the EU in subject matter syllabi, quality and availability of teaching materials and the qualification of teachers.

Results of a study carried out in 2006 revealed that both pupils and teachers all over Estonia consider it necessary to continue teaching the EU within various subject matter courses, resources for these activities are often lacking, the way the topic of the EU is taught at schools depends to a very great extent on the enthusiasm and good will of teachers and/or external activities managers.

On the basis of the survey, the management partnership with the European Commission and the European Parliament (launched in 2010) laid a particular emphasis on the way the EU is taught at schools, further training for teachers and the youth. Attention is also paid to implementation of and support to informal education.

The Government Office acting as the Intermediary Body is closely cooperating the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, The National Examinations and Qualifications Centre and the Universities (2) teaching the European Studies as well as providing teachers education.

In 2010 three operations were started:

- Operation 1: a survey mapping the current situation in teaching EU, specifying the need for teaching material and methodological support;
- Operation 2: further training, topical seminars and teaching materials. Based on the results of the survey, a programme for EU related further training for teachers, an elective (optional curriculum) for in-depth teaching of EU at schools and relevant teaching and methodological material will be developed;
- Operation - 3: the development of a web interface for exposing teaching materials, curriculum and methodological materials.

The general aims and priorities set in the 2010 Communication Plan i.e. the main goal will remain improvement of the knowledge and raising the awareness of the EU amongst the youth either directly or intermediated by teachers and youth workers. The current Communication Plan aims to supplement and support the operations already started focusing on informal education and extra-curricular activities.

Survey: European Studies for Secondary Schools in Estonia

Upper secondary education is divided between the compulsory and elective courses in Estonia. One of the electives could be European Studies (ES) therefore the Government Office launched national tender to research the situation of teaching ES at secondary schools and as an output of the research compose the syllabus of the elective and conduct teachers' training.

Tallinn University Institute of Political Science and Governance made research at the start of this year. The goal of the research was to map the current situation of ES. The research combines different methods to get deeper look on the current situation, i.e. content analysis, statistical analysis and focus group interviews. There were content analysis of national curricula, EU regulations and also teaching materials about the ES. The fundamental principles of the national curriculum and EU regulations are the same. The current curriculum focus on ES not just EU therefore the development of ES elective improves also the quality of compulsory courses and increase the interdisciplinarity.

The teacher at school is relatively independent and can choose the teaching materials and methods. The evaluation of the teaching quality is often based by the results of the national exam therefore the teacher is concentrated on the requirements of the exam. One of the main problems is the concentration on facts and norms, not the problem-based learning with understanding of the processes and principles. All the stakeholders of the teaching process is agreed to shift from the normative teaching more to value based teaching but the implementation is very hard and requires the improved teaching materials, teachers' training and the willingness of implement the improved system. The value-based learning has to be a little bit different for Estonian and Russian language schools to get the best results.

There were two surprising findings. First it is important to shift the teaching from the EU integration period to EU member state status. The topics of EU are very rarely involved with the every-day operations and therefore the ES studies are far from the pupils and quite boring. Therefore it is important to increase the connection between ES and pupils' every-day life and also to give the background to understand the impact of EU. Secondly teachers complain the quick stagnation of the materials but it is important to divide the sustainable principles of ES and time critical changing facts, i.e. statistics and names. The workload of Estonian teachers is greater than average in Europe therefore the teacher doesn't have effort to prepare all the lessons by themselves and wants compact materials with lesson plan, teaching notes and exercises. Based on the quantitative research among the teachers and pupils there is lack of use of interactive teaching methods. It is important to prepare the exercises to support the innovation of teachers to use and create new exercises. The very intensive program doesn't give opportunity to use the time-consuming exercises therefore it is important not to create very intensive program for ES.

Based on the content analysis of national curricula and interviews with teachers the ideal situation is the cooperation between teachers at school. Owing to the lack of coordination and motivational package to increase the cooperation, different teachers teach same topics about ES from different perspective and sometimes the information is contradictive. The program of ES elective will build up on the sense to teach it as the standalone elective or the modules for compulsory courses to unify the principles of ES in different subjects.

Further steps

Further training - Based on the results of the survey, a programme for EU related further training for teachers will be developed. The aim is to achieve a sustainable model of further training that could be integrated into the credit point system used for the recognition of teachers' professional

qualifications. This should motivate teachers and ensure that trainings can be continued market based after the grant has been exhausted.

Seminars / thematic days - Training seminars will take place in parallel with the further training programme during each year of the grant period. Approximately 5 seminars should take place yearly. Seminars will be organised on a regional basis for practical reasons (reducing costs and time to be spent) and in order to support regional development. Some of the presentations will be broadcasted via Skype. The seminars / thematic days can be organised to tackle specific topics (e.g. the euro, consumer protection, climate change and biological diversity etc) and be attended by teachers of history and civic studies, geography, economy, foreign languages, etc.

Teaching materials - The main tool for teachers should be a folder to be compiled containing general information on various fields (including general information on the foundations, history and fundamental values of the EU, etc). Teachers can choose the additional modules they wish to be included in their folders. To start with, the folder will contain a basic package with information on main issues, teachers of various subjects can download from the webpage materials they deem useful for their particular topic, with specific recommendations and suggestions for a 45 minute lesson (favouring simulation games or other informal teaching methods). Different information “packages” will be numbered and can be downloaded on the web. Information will be kept up to date so that teachers can replace individual pages or different packages.

Web site - In addition to further trainings for teachers and other educational activities, relevant materials will be made available on a website that is popular among teachers/pupils and that would work as an interface for transmitting information and teaching materials to teachers. If need be, a new web platform will be developed that could be accessed from the above mentioned web pages. One further possibility would be the creation of interactive communities on such a website.

In addition to the information materials for teachers, the webpage should also provide information to pupils. The materials that students could use in classroom could be printed out by students or by teachers. In the future the web interface should function as an environment for finding up-to-date information about EU-related activities and teaching materials.

Informal education - The Informal education would also cover training courses for young people, youth leaders and youth workers since the latter two play an important role in distributing information to young people. However an innovative approach should be favoured (e.g. simulation games and other methods requiring an active participation from students which are all too rarely used in ordinary school life).

Eve Paavel has been working since 2000 as the counsellor on EU information in the Estonian Government Office. Her main tasks include coordinating regional information network (Europe Direct) and public awareness projects on EU communication in Estonia. Since 2010 she has been managing Management Partnership with the European Commission. Before joining Government Office, she has held other jobs as a teacher and journalist. She has graduated as historian and teacher of history and civics from the University of Tartu, Estonia.

CONCLUSION

THE VERY NATURE OF OUR BUSINESS

Mike Granatt



The Club of Venice is twenty-five years old. And like all twenty-five-year-olds, it feels pretty pleased with itself.

And why not? It has survived the trials of childhood. It has quietly put the turbulence of teenage years aside. And now the Club is stretching itself, making new friends, and looking forward to the next twenty-five years, working to help Europe's citizens understand their Union.

While great institutions and states were discussing expansion, we have quietly and confidently took that road, inviting new colleagues to share our forum. Where others have stalled over details and difficulties, we have managed to keep our sights on the things that bind us, rather than those which might cause division.

This is not through wishful thinking, or blissful ignorance. I think our unique fellowship has been forged by the very nature of our business. Club members all share the experience one of the most exciting, interesting and often frustrating jobs in public service. We sustain a fundamental democratic duty. We strive to help the public understand what their Government or European institution is doing for them - and in their name. At the same time, we strive to help our colleagues in Governments understand the public's reaction, and its concerns.

It has created our badge - the combination of open-mindedness, easy style, and robust humour that only comes with years of honing our three key skills.

The first is the ability to root advice and discussion very firmly in the real world, with all its complexities, turbulence and loose ends. The second is the courage and stability needed to deliver very unwelcome news. And the third is an extraordinary ability to find common ground. We habitually dismantle barriers of language, culture, and other people's prejudices to reach agreement - even if the agreement is cordially to disagree.

I have always felt greatly privileged to be a member of the Club, to have the chance to share experiences, visions and common purpose with colleagues from across this greatest of continents.

I also feel humbled and elated to share the enthusiasm and energy of our latest recruits from new member states and from colleagues pressing on the Union's door.

And finally, I am delighted to confess that I find our gatherings the perfect mixture of high endeavour, constantly refreshed fellowship - and unmitigated fun.

Long live the Club of Venice!

Appendix



Club of Venice

What is the Club of Venice?¹

Raison d'être

We are a private and informal forum for senior communication professionals from MS governments and the European institutions.

Our common interest is effective public communication, with an emphasis on Europe, using every appropriate channel.

Status and style

The Club of Venice is an independent club, not a European institution. It is subject only to the rules made by its members. Within the Club, all institutions and states are equal.

The Club's style is pragmatic, co-operative and informal. It relies entirely on the goodwill of its members for facilities and organisation.

Business process

The Club identifies topics of interest and mutual concern and examines them:

- to stimulate the exchange of ideas and people
- to share best practice
- to learn lessons.

The Club works through:

- its twice-yearly plenary meetings
- workshops which focus on specific issues and professional practices
- Venicenet, the Club's dedicated website.

The Club's agenda is guided by its Steering Committee, with the help of the animateurs who lead

¹ Text finalised at the plenary meeting of the Club of Venice in Paris on 28-29 May 2009 - session on the Club of Venice's themes, working methods and procedures.

Club activities on specific topics and issues.

Key topics and workshops

For each topic of continuing interest, the Club finds an animateur from among members.

The animateur stimulates discussion:

- through workshops
- through Venicenet.

Outcomes and proposals from the workshops are reported to plenary sessions and on Venicenet.

Plenary sessions

Plenary sessions are held twice a year, hosted by a Member State.

The Club's agenda is guided by the Steering Committee in discussion with the host state. It includes:

- reports from workshops
- new topics and issues of professional interest
- future business.

VeniceNet

The VeniceNet is the Club's private website, where members share documents, data and on-line discussions through thematic forums and databases.

The animateur for each theme is the moderator for the appropriate forum.

The Club's Steering Committee provides guidance for the Webmaster whenever required.

Access to the Venicenet is granted to members and the collaborators they nominate.



Club of Venice

Constitutional principles¹

The Club. The Club of Venice is an informal group comprising the most senior communication professionals from the governments of EU Member and Candidate States; and from the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council of the EU, the European Commission, the European Central Bank, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.

The Club's mission, process and objectives. Our mission is to promote effective government communication at national and European level for the benefit of Europe's citizens and their democratic engagement. We do this through our plenary meetings, specialised workshops, and Website.

Our objectives are:

- to strengthen professional networking, professional knowledge, and professional expertise among members; and
- to promote discussion and debate about the communication of European issues.

General membership. The Club's general members are the directors-general or equivalent of the information and communication services of governments, and of the institutions of the EU. Their single common qualification is involvement in public communication at the most senior level. The Club makes no distinction between permanent civil servants and political appointees.

Honorary membership. The honorary members – the Honorary President, Co-ordinator and Vice-Presidents are former general members who hold membership in their own right. They have a role in the Club's administration through the steering committee. To qualify, candidates must have attended the Club consistently for a number of years. Candidates are proposed at a plenary meeting, and elected by vote at a subsequent plenary meeting.

Members emeritus. The status of member emeritus is awarded by the Club at a plenary meeting to former general members to recognise the contribution they have made to the Club.

The steering committee. The steering committee comprises the general members from the host nations of the previous, pending and next plenary meetings; the honorary members; and the secretariat (currently the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union). Their role is to lead the organisation of plenary meetings, workshops and the management of other issues.

1 Text finalised at the plenary meeting of the Club of Venice in Gozo (Malta) on 4 June 2010.

Club meetings and attendance. Plenary meetings are held twice a year. Usually, one is in Venice (in the autumn) and the other in a EU Member State (in the spring). The steering committee organises the agenda. A planning meeting is usually held about two months in advance. Ad hoc workshops on specific issues are proposed at plenary meetings and organised in the same way. Their agenda are developed by one or two members specialist in the topic who lead a small animation group. At any meeting, members may be accompanied by a colleague; and they may be represented by nominees, particularly relevant specialists.

Languages. Plenary meetings usually have simultaneous translation into the host country language, French and English. Specialised workshops are usually conducted without translation services and generally use English.

The Club's Website and e-mail bulletins: **Venicenet** is the Club's Website, containing documents submitted for mutual interest, discussion forums, agenda and records of meetings, and other items considered valuable. It is hosted within the internet domain europa.eu but is independent of it. The Webmaster is currently the EU Council Webmaster, courtesy of the Council secretariat. Club members have password protected access to the site. Club members may grant access to their colleagues, but they take full responsibility for the observation of privacy and data protection. Automatic and ad hoc e-mail bulletins are used to inform members of updates to Venicenet and news items of interest from EU Institutions.

Hellenic Republic
Ministry of Press and Mass Media
Club of Venice
Loutraki, Greece: 28 February to 1 March 2003

LOUTRAKI DECLARATION

Approved by the members of the Club of Venice on the 1st of March 2003

Having examined the European Commission's recent statement on institutional information, and having seen the European Parliament's resolution on the same, the Club of Venice (a co-ordination of professionals in charge of institutional communication by Member States, candidate States and Community institutions – Parliament, Commission, Council – who, given the informal nature of this co-ordination, express their own personal point of view in this declaration), considers that the text to be approved by the Convention must include the principle of European Union citizens' right to institutional information, a right which is already a matter of civil culture in the life of the countries and of the people of Europe.

In this statement the Club of Venice puts forward the following suggestions to the members of the European Convention:

- European citizens have the right to information arising from the institutional system of their own countries and of European Union institutions. This presupposes access to information, transparency of information and communication and the fact that such activities are based on a spirit of public service.
- The activities of public institutions in the areas of information, communication and relations with citizens as users, whether carried out with the support of the media or through direct action, should be inspired by the principles of neutrality and subsidiarity and by a wish to promote the clearest understanding of rules, services and opportunities.
- In order to standardise the use of services, these activities should also take into account the differences which exist between citizens at a social, economic, cultural and linguistic level, as well as the differences in their ability to express their needs for information and knowledge.
- Particular attention should be given to the management of information and communication activities in relation to the process of European integration and to the rules, policies, functions and objectives in building a united Europe. All this through constant co-operation between European, national, regional and local institutions, being a prerequisite to successful communication.
- These activities should be subject to constant monitoring, controlled by suitable measures, to evaluate their impact and social effectiveness.



CHRONOLOGY OF THE CLUB OF VENICE MEETINGS

YEAR	DATE	VENUE	MEETING	REMARKS
1986	3-4 October	Venice	plenary	Founding of the Club of Venice
1987	16-17 October	Venice	plenary	
1988	7 June	Brussels	plenary	
1988	28-29 October	Venice	plenary	
1989	16 February	Strasbourg	plenary	survey "European Parliament and public opinion"
1989	25-28 May	Barcelona-Seville	plenary	on the occasion of the Olympic Games in Barcelona and Seville World Expo
1989	30 September - 2 October	Paris	plenary	at the occasion of the European Conference on audiovisual
1989	20-22 October	Venice	plenary	
1990	18 April	London	plenary	Presentation of the new COI statute
1990	16-18 November	Venice	plenary	
1991	25-27 October	Venice	plenary	
1992	30-31 October	Venice	plenary	
1993	13-14 May	Bonn	plenary	Discussion of the communication structure in Central and Eastern Europe
1993	5-7 November	Venice	plenary	
1994	18 March	Paris	plenary	
1994	4-5 November	Venice	plenary	
1995	26-27 April	Brussels	plenary	1st meeting with EP communicators
1995	3-5 November	Venice	plenary	10th anniversary of the Club of Venice
1997	12-14 November	Bruges	plenary	
1998	16-18 December	Bruges	plenary	

1999	10-12 October	Santorini (Greece)	plenary	
2000	4-6 October	La Rochelle	plenary	
2001	29 November - 1 December	Venice	plenary	
2002	24 April	Brussels	informal meeting on opinion polls	
2002	13-14 June	Copenhagen - Malmö	plenary	
2002	21-23 November	Venice	plenary	
2003	27 February - 2 March	Loutraki (Greece)	plenary	Loutraki declaration containing drafting suggestions to the European Convention
2003	7-10 September	Venice	plenary	
2004	13-15 April	Bratislava	plenary	
2004	18-19 November	Venice	plenary	
2005	14 January	Istanbul	plenary	Preparatory meeting and first meeting in a candidate country
2005	13-15 April	The Hague	plenary	14 April: workshops on Government communication, communicating Europe and crisis management
2005	3-4 November	Venice	plenary	20th anniversary of the Club of Venice
2006	10 February	Brussels	workshop on callcenters	
2006	27-28 April	Prague	plenary	
2006	16-17 November	Venice	plenary	
2007	25-26 April	Vienna - Budapest	plenary	
2007	15-16 November	Rome	plenary	50th anniversary Rome Treaty
2008	25 February	Brussels	workshop on audiovisual and interactive communication	
2008	5-6 June	Ljubljana/ Postojna	plenary	

2008	21-22 November	Venice	plenary	Break-out groups: a) Capacity building b) Public diplomacy c) Code of conduct, ethics and professional statute
2009	13 February	Vienna	workshop on management partnerships	
2009	17 April	Brussels	workshop on interactive Web 2.0 comm. and session on communicating on EP elections communicating on EP elections	
2009	27 May	Paris	workshop on public diplomacy	
2009	28-29 May	Paris	plenary	
2009	15 October	Brussels	workshop on capacity building	
2009	19-20 November	Venice	plenary	
2009	21 November	P o r e č (Croatia)	thematic meeting on communicating pre- and post-enlargement	
2010	19 February	Vienna	workshop on management partnerships	
2010	19 March	London	workshop on digital strategies for public communication	
2010	29-30 April	Istanbul	thematic meeting on crisis communication	
2010	2 June	Gozo (Malta)	workshop on public diplomacy	
2010	3-4 June	Gozo (Malta)	plenary	

2010	20 October	Brussels	workshop on social media & web 3.0 and on capacity building	
2010	18-19 November	Venice	plenary	Break-out groups: a) Capacity building b) Audiovisual and interactive communication c) Journalism and new media
2011	10 February	Brussels	workshop on web-communication & social media and communicating on enlargement	
2011	12-13 April	Budapest	thematic meeting on EU communication in schools	12/04: "Teaching about the EU - LIVE" : observing a lesson with English-speaking students with innovative ICT method of teaching about the EU
2011	25 May	Warszaw	workshop on public diplomacy	
2011	26-27 May	Warszaw	plenary	
2011	7 October	Brussels	workshop on social media and journalism	joint meeting with the Council's Working Party on Information
2011	10-11 November	Venice	plenary	





UPCOMING CLUB OF VENICE MEETINGS

YEAR	DATE	VENUE	MEETING
2012	February	Vienna	workshop on management and strategic partnership
2012	February	Brussels	workshop on internet/web communication
2012	Spring	Bulgaria	thematic meeting
2012	23 May	Cyprus	workshop on public diplomacy
2012	24-25 May	Cyprus	plenary
2012	October	Brussels	workshop
2012	November	Venice	plenary
2013	March	Brussels	workshop on web communication
2013	May	Estonia + Finland	plenary
2013	October	Brussels	workshop
2013	November	Venice	plenary



CLUB OF VENICE 1986-2011
25 YEARS OF
PUBLIC COMMUNICATION IN EUROPE



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Mike Granatt