

convergences

Public communication in Europe | Communication publique en Europe



• Focus

Partnership agreements evaluations and new trends

- Crisis communication
- Public diplomacy
- Social media seminar



Summary



Introduction	3
Communicating Europe in Partnership	5
The impact of the new EU Financial Regulation on the implementation of Management Partnership	8
Evaluations of the Management Partnership concluded with the European Union	
Austria	10
Belgium	14
Finland	17
France	20
Germany	28
Greece	34
Hungary	37
Italy	40
Lithuania	43
Malta	45
Portugal	48
Slovenia	54
Sweden	58
Crisis communication: it's about testing strategic needs and seeking capacity building	62
Prompt reaction with little bureaucracy: the Estonian case	65
Crisis communication	66
Public diplomacy	74
Public diplomacy in Europe: Fight fuzziness with strategy and one vision	75
Internet and Social Media - Club of Venice activities - Social media seminar	77
Public communication in the evolving media landscape: adapt or resist?	78
Persuasion and Social Transmission in online social environments	80
Plenary meeting, 6-7 June 2013, Tallinn, Estonia	82



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Bienvenue au nouveau rendez-vous de «Convergences».

Initiées au cours de la période préparatoire à l'introduction de l'euro, réinitiales dans le cadre du « plan D » de relance de la communication publique européenne par la Commissaire Wallström, des actions conjointes de communication sont élaborées au départ d'accords de collaboration entre les institutions européennes (Commission et Parlement) et les états-membres qui y adhèrent.

Ces accords, après avoir pris la forme de « memorandum of understanding », prennent désormais la forme de « partenariat(s) ».

C'est une évidence de le concevoir de la sorte et d'agir ainsi conjointement, pour faire en sorte que les actions d'information sur l'Europe et ses priorités répondent le mieux aux attentes des citoyens et soient diffusées de la manière la plus appropriée.

Les évaluations de ces partenariats, après les trois premières années d'existence, que nous reproduisons dans ces pages, ont toutes été menées par des opérateurs « neutres » (firmes ou institutions spécialisées). Elles montrent toutes les résultats satisfaisants des actions entreprises et les bénéfices qu'il y a à faire coopérer les institutions européennes avec les états-membres et leurs différents niveaux de pouvoir.

On regrettera toutefois, face à ce constat, la faiblesse des budgets communautaires qui y sont affectés et on formulera le vœu qu'ils puissent être augmentés pour servir des programmes plus larges et plus ambitieux de communication conjointe menée avec l'ensemble des états-membres, voire avec les pays candidats et adhérents.

Quoi qu'il en soit, au-delà même des actions réalisées dans ce cadre, il faut souligner la dynamique mise en place qui fait coopérer un état-membre, la représentation dans le pays de la Commission et le bureau du Parlement européen.

On relèvera aussi que dans le champ habituel des actions de communication publique, les partenariats portent à explorer et à exploiter des champs finalement peu sollicités, comme : les publics très jeunes (6+ et 12+), les activités ludo-pédagogiques, le débat public, le recours à l'histoire, l'illustration des valeurs fondamentales (fondatrices ?) et la recherche d'une adhésion.

Les membres du Club de Venise ne se sont pas trompés quand, dès le départ, ils ont soutenus l'initiative interinstitutionnelle en la matière. Leur soutien a toujours été actif, présentant leurs actions menées dans le cadre des partenariats à l'occasion des rencontres du Club, ou organisant grâce aux collègues autrichiens, un atelier périodique sur ce thème spécifique, permettant ainsi l'échange d'expériences et d'aider les pays-membres non encore impliqués à conclure des partenariats. Même les critiques formulées à l'occasion ont toujours visé à renforcer le système des partenariats, tout en les améliorant ; elles portaient – notamment – sur la durée des procédures, la nécessité de faire des évaluations après chaque action et pas après 3 ans, l'intérêt de disposer d'une plateforme d'information et d'échange sur les « best practices » des partenariats nationaux et, dans ce cadre, la volonté d'accepter le «principe d'équivalence» sur les réglementations des marchés publics et de régler les droits d'auteurs en matière telle que des coopérations puissent s'établir sur la base de la réutilisation d'éléments de communication acquis avec des fonds communautaires.

Ces propositions constructives, portées par le Club de Venise, ont été relayées au sein du Groupe de l'information du Conseil de l'Union européenne, dans le cadre des débats sur la politique interinstitutionnelle de communication. La reconduction récente des partenariats, pour un nouveau terme de quatre ans, intègre de ces propositions.

La dernière réunion de l'atelier sur les partenariats, que le Club vient d'organiser avec les collègues autrichiens à Vienne en février 2013, et dont nous faisons écho dans ces pages, montre que l'attention est constante et que des perspectives sont toujours ouvertes, comme : la nécessité des échanges sur les « bonnes pratiques » et, dans ce cadre, grâce à l'acquisition désormais obligatoire des droits, la possibilité de mener des actions de communication qui élargissent la relation de bilatérale à multilatérale, en associant plusieurs états-membres.

Au-delà de notre sujet principal, cette deuxième livraison de «Convergences» s'ouvre aussi à des thèmes et problématiques que le Club de Venise aborde régulièrement: communication de crise, diplomatie publique et médias sociaux. ■

Welcome to our new appointment with “Convergences”.

Initiated during the preparatory period to the introduction of the euro, started again within the framework of « plan D » for the recovery of the European public communication by Commissioner Wallström, joint communication actions are elaborated based on collaboration agreements between the European institutions (Commission and Parliament) and the Member States taking part.

These agreements, initially shaped as “memorandums of understanding”, have subsequently taken the form of “partnerships”.

It is obvious to conceive it this way and to act jointly to make sure that the information actions about Europe and its priorities best meet the expectations of the citizens and are disseminated in the most appropriate way.

The evaluations of these partnerships, after the first three years of existence, which are reproduced in these pages, were all carried out by « neutral » operators (specialized firms or agencies). They all show the satisfactory results of the actions undertaken and the benefits of the cooperation between the European institutions and the Member States and their different levels of authority.

4

In view of this fact, one may however regret the limited budgets allocated to it and wish that they may be increased to serve larger and more ambitious joint communication programmes with all the Member States and even with the candidate and accession countries.

However, beyond the actions implemented within this framework, it is important to emphasize the momentum generated which makes a Member State, the Commission representation in the country and the bureau of the European Parliament cooperate.

It should also be pointed out that in the normal scope of public communication actions, partnerships encourage exploring and developing fields which are eventually rarely solicited, such as: very young audiences (aged 6+ and 12+), ludo-educational activities, public debate, appeal to history, illustration of fundamental (founding?) values and search for support.

The members of the Club of Venice were right when from the start they supported the interinstitutional initiative in this field. Their support has always been very active: presentation of the actions conducted in the context of the partnerships during the Club’s meetings or organisation, thanks to the Austrian colleagues, of a periodic workshop on this specific theme, thereby enabling exchange of experiences and helping Member States not yet involved to conclude partnerships. Even the criticisms made on this occasion were always aimed at enhancing the partnership system, while at the same time improving it. Those criticisms concerned in particular the duration of procedures, the necessity of evaluations after every action and not after 3 years, the value of having an information and exchange platform on the « best practices » of national partners and in this context the willingness to accept “principle of equivalence” of rules for public procurement actions and to resolve copyright in such a way that cooperation be established based on the re-use of communication elements bought with EU funds.

These constructive suggestions, supported by the Club of Venice, were relayed within the Information Working Party of the Council of the European Union in the context of the discussions on the interinstitutional communication policy. The recent renewal of the partnerships, for a new term of four years, integrates these suggestions.

The last meeting of the workshop on partnerships, which the Club recently held with the Austrian colleagues in Vienna in February 2013 and which we echo in these pages, shows that attention is constant and that prospects are still open, such as: the need for exchange of « best practices » and in this context, through the compulsory acquisition of rights, the possibility of carrying out communication activities that broaden the bilateral relationship to multilateral, involving several Member States.

Beyond our main theme, this second edition of « Convergences » also opens up to themes and issues that are regularly discussed by the Club of Venice: crisis communication, public diplomacy and social media. ■

Communicating Europe in Partnership

Background

Communicating Europe remains a very complex and demanding task. In recent years difficulties and challenges have increased owing to social, political and also merely organizational factors:

1. Uncertainties and hesitations in seeking convergencies to tackle the economic turbulences and adopt measures immediately applicable to re-inject trust in citizens and markets;
2. MS' different sensibilities, priorities and organizational structures, sometimes revealing a fragmentation of competences with regard to European Affairs and government communication;
3. Growing nationalist feelings and euro-scepticism, accentuated by the global crisis and by the citizens' feeling of uncomfortableness when hearing about the extenuating marathons to de-cide how to help Member States recover from their economic troubles;
4. Frequent national electoral turn over, also caused by loss of public confidence, and consequent change in political objectives;
5. Absence of a reference to communication in the Treaties providing a clear legal base for financing Community programmes dedicated to communication about the EU;
6. The 'blame game' which often hits both governments and institutions; on the one hand, the political authorities who represent national interests and are also key components of the Council's authority as an institution; on the other hand, the institutions who defend their peculiar role in the European decision-making process and are also called to work in syner-gyand avoid cacophony and contradictions;
7. The lack of adequate planning, coordination, dispersion of responsibilities – in other words, the lack of "capacity building" (seeking and chosing models, proving impact, consolidating structures upon evidence of successful best practice, etc.)

Against this scenario, communication professionals have been striving to search a common road for cooperation, seeking joint strategies, agree on realistic orientations, sharing views and best practice, research and analysis, and drawing lessons to act together for the benefit of citizens.

The interinstitutional declaration on "Communicating Europe on Partnership" signed on 22 October 2013 aimed to relaunch the cooperation process among the EU institutions and between institutions and Member States, investing on:

- A so-called "pragmatic Partnership", with the three main actors (Member States, Commission and European Parliament) acting together as partners on equal footing and endeavouring to increasingly involve civil society in their communication activi-ties;
- Annual and, when possible, multi-annual plans and prioritize in order to privilege decentralised activities which can generate feelings of proximity and inclusiveness
- Flexibility and transparency: setting out interinstitutional priorities and adapting implementation to the national, regional and local features and expectations.

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 were to be taken into account.

2012-2013 joint priorities

- Financial crisis and economic recovery
- European Year of Citizens 2013
- European elections 2014



State of play

The various partnership formulae (management partnerships, strategic partnerships and one-off partnerships) have provided good results, in spite of the bureaucratic burden stemming from the administrative obligations.

The institutions are acting in line with the principles of the joint declaration – in which political commitment in this field was put “pen to paper” - communication seems to be on the right track. The declaration and its implementation are examined together at four different levels:

- within the framework of the Interinstitutional Group on Information (IGI), which remains the sole authority setting the political orientations in the field of EU communication;
- within the so-called C.E.P (Communicating Europe in Partnership) conferences convened once a year in Brussels to exchange operational feedback among all officials operating in the capitals (Heads of EP Information Offices, Heads of Commission’s representations and governmental management authorities) and with the support of the communication officers and MS’ information officers based in Brussels;
- within the Club of Venice, which has provided a strong support to this new cooperation framework. Under the inspiration and impulse of its Members from the Press and Information Department of the Austrian Federal Chancellery, the Club has organized so far four constructive workshops (2009, 2010, 2012 and 2013) which are attended by representatives from Member States’ and institutions’ (the latter represented by Brussels-based officials from the respective centralized Directorate-generals for communication as well as from representatives of the offices and delegations located in the MS’ capitals). Such constructive meetings enable all the players to clarify outstanding issues, exchange valuable feedback and focus on possible ways and means to improve the implementing measures, in a totally informal framework which facilitates open dialogue and mutual trust. Throughout these workshops, as all participants have recognized, interaction has increased and today’s operational difficulties are much easier to overcome;
- within the Council Working Party on Information, the preparatory body in charge of communication and transparency issues, where Brussels-based delegates are informed of the state of play and can share their views on how to facilitate cooperation by optimizing implementation of the interinstitutional communication priorities also by means of the existing partnership agreements.

Much still remains, though, to be done.



Recent history

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 or possibilities being explored for evolving from a Strategic Partnership into a Management Partnership (CZ, LU, RO, BG)
- 5 Strategic Partnership Agreements (BG, CY, CZ, IRL, LU) (CY and CZ could evolve into a MPA...)
- One-Off Partnership Agreements: door still open
- Several MPAs already evaluated (see all executive summaries provided in this number of “Convergences”)

Budget: limited, but with a slight gradual increase throughout the years (2009: 6.3M€; 2010: 7.3M€; 2011: 10.3M€; 2012: 10.5M€, 2013: 10.9M€)

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) are also playing a key role in the promotion of the EU’s cultural dimension, with focus on each Member State’s richness. They are currently activated in 13 capitals: Berlin, Copenhagen, Dublin, Helsinki, Lisbon, Madrid, Nicosia, Prague, Riga, Rome, Stockholm, Tallinn and Vienna

Budget (2012): 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, etc.



Events

Positively evaluated format of the discussions

„Raising the Lithuanian EU membership participation and strengthening civil society“ : 17 discussions throughout Lithuania in cooperation with the Institute of International Relations and Political Science (Vilnius University).





The way forward

The Club contribution

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, throughout its abovementioned workshops and by means of this number of “Convergences”, which provides the text of all the executive summaries of the evaluation exercises carried out so far to assess the impact of the different partnership experiences. This valuable background aims to serve as basis to draw inspiration for future planning and reinforcement of cooperation.

Horizontal evaluation

A horizontal evaluation of the Management Partnerships (MP) announced by the European Commission was initially expected to be launched in March 2013, but has been postponed till autumn 2013. The results of this thorough evaluation will be shared with all partners.

This exercise is needed for a number of reasons:

- According to the EU Financial Regulation (art. 27), all actions above 5 M € have to be evaluated (intermediate or ex-post);
- There is a need to draw key lessons and get inspired from good practices identified in such crossed-analysis;
- It is crucial to perform a true overall independent assessment of the MP as a key instrument, paying particularly attention to the impact of the Partnership as compared to its objectives (effectiveness) and to the balance between resources invested and the final output (efficiency);
- It is important to capitalize from general objective recommendations and conclusions for the future.

The Club of Venice will follow closely this upcoming horizontal evaluation and will provide updates on this project in further editions of “Convergences”. ■

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS:

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

MAIN CHALLENGES:

- Equal footing; need to improve networking and cooperation with the intermediary bodies
- Limited budget (which in the future may bear the consequences of the reduced MFF budget)
- Need to harmonize negotiating standards
- Need more flexibility to adapt priorities to the local reality
- Need to better identify the priorities from the outset – avoiding generic definitions
- Need of advance planning
- Evaluation: clarify criteria and actors
- Quid of the countries who haven't signed partnership agreements?
- How to continue to see partnership agreements? as an “intermediary” instrument? as “complementary” instruments? as part of cross-cutting plans?
- Need to share more information with Member States on the EPS' added value
- Need to increasingly conciliate national, transnational and pan-European communication priorities



The impact of the new EU Financial Regulation on the implementation of Management Partnership

4th seminar of the Club of Venice on partnership agreements - Vienna 01.02.2013
 presentation by Jean-Pierre Vandersteen and Mauno Hänninen
 (Commission DG COMM)

Financial Regulation – summary of revision process

Preparatory works on FR and RAP started in May 2009, including a public consultation with 235 contributions.

COM adopted FR proposal and staff working document for RAP in May 2010.

Council adopted FR on 25 October 2012, after 16 technical trilogues and 3 political trilogues (OJ L 298/1 of 26.10.2012).

COM adopted RAP on 29 October 2012 (OJ L 362/1 of 31.12.2012).

1 January 2013: date of application of revised FR and RAP.

Exception: financial instruments and methods of implementation, for which new rules apply as of 1 January 2014 (Art. 214), e.g. Art. 60 FR – Art. 40 RAP

Objectives of the revision

- **Simplification**
Cut red tape, speed up procedures, shift the focus from paperwork to performance.
- **Accountability**
Enhance sound financial management and protection of EU financial interests.

Implementing methods

Methods reduced from currently five to three:

- **Direct management** = COM, Executive Agencies, EU Heads of Commission's delegations
- **Indirect management** = COM entrusting (Art 60 FR – 40 RAP)
 - International Organisations
 - Third countries
 - EIB or EIF
 - Union bodies (ex-"bodies under Art. 185" FR = Art. 208 and new PPPs = Art. 209)
 - Member States' agencies
 - Private bodies with a public service mission or charged with the implementation of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs under national law)
 - CFSP missions
- **Shared management** with Member States.

Indirect management (this is the case of partnerships agreements)

- New types of entities that COM can entrust: PPPs established under national law
- New and uniform requirements for all entities:
 - 6 pillars, to be assessed with due regard to proportionality
 - Annual management declaration, accounting information, implementation report plus audit opinion to be provided to the AO by 15 February of n+1 (15 March for audit opinion) [2014]
 - Interruption and suspension of payments by COM [2013]

Procurement

Limited changes.

FR transposes EU-Procurement Directive (Directive 2004/18). The revision of this directive is ongoing.

Most important changes:

- **Guarantees:** to be based on a risk analysis; no guarantee allowed for contracts < €60 000
- Revision of the thresholds for low value contracts in order to simplify procedures [Art. 104 FR – Art 137 RAP]
- A negotiated procedure without prior publication of a contract notice with consultation of at least three candidates may be used for contracts with value < €60 000. If the contracting authority receives only one tender that is administratively and technically valid, the contract may be awarded provided that the award criteria are met.
- Contracts < €15 000 [Previously €5000] may be awarded on the basis of a single tender following a negotiated procedure without prior publication of a contract notice.
- Payments < €1 000 [Previously €500] in respect of items of expenditure may consist simply in payment against invoices, without prior acceptance of a tender.
- New procedure of a Vendors' List to further simplify contracts < €130 000 (Note: all contracts signed in 2013 must follow new FR. AO is free to apply provisions to existing contracts via amendments.

Current deadline	Required output	New deadline
45 days	No report	30 days
90 days	Report	60 days
105 days	Report + complex action	90 days

Grants

Principles guiding the revision of the provisions on grants:

- Simplification and proportionality: lighter procedures for low value grants, possibility to accept the beneficiaries' usual cost accounting practices, risk-based approach for controls and scrapping of interest on pre-financing.
- Greater focus on performance by promoting use of output-based funding, such as lump sums or prizes (now under dedicated Title VII).
- Effectiveness: no degressivity for operating grants, review of the notion of no-profit, more flexibility for financial support to third parties ('cascading grants'), clarification of cost eligibility criteria, notably regarding VAT, shorter time-to-grant.

Simplified forms of grants:

- Removal of ceiling for lump sums.
- Decision left to the AO where simplified amounts \leq € 60 000.
- Calculation method valid for the duration of the programme.
- Calculation method based on statistical data or individual data, notably possibility to accept amounts declared by the beneficiary in accordance with its usual cost accounting practices.

Controls:

- Right to suspend implementation of the grant or payments in case of suspicion of substantial errors, irregularities, fraud or breach of obligations - subject to a contradictory procedure.
- Right to extend audit findings in case of established systemic or recurrent errors, irregularities, fraud or breach of obligations - subject to a contradictory procedure.

Prizes

New dedicated provision Art. 138.

Can be used to recognize achievements ex-post (e.g. Sacharov Prize of European Parliament) or to induce future activities.

Internal control

- Definition of "control" and "check", Art. 2
- Updated definition of "internal control", i.a. to account for audited annual management declaration, Art. 28
- Concept of Tolerable Risk of Error (TRE) not adopted
- But: introduction of a management tool to ensure that control systems are cost-effective, Art. 31-33.

Payments

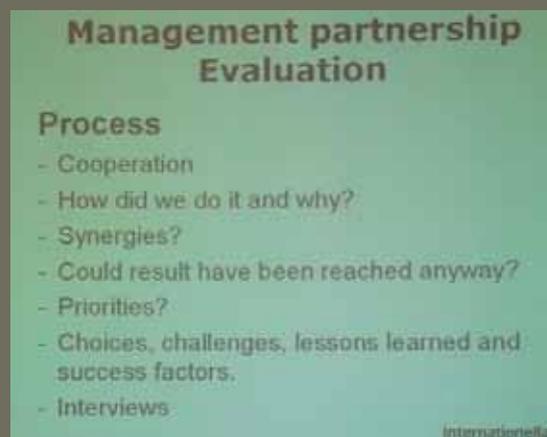
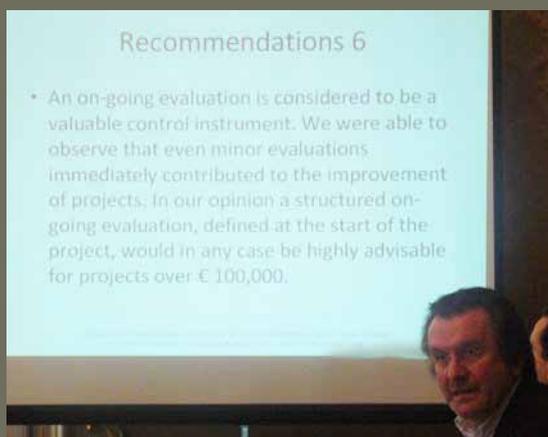
- Guarantees: forbidden for contracts and grants below €60 000; in all other cases only if based on risk analysis.
- New payment deadlines.
- New interest rates for service and supply contracts: ECB rate + 8%.
- Interest on pre-financing: as a rule, it is not due; exception only for indirect management, if specified in the delegation agreement, Art. 8(4). Guidelines will be posted on BUDG-WEB in the course of 2013.
- Clearing of pre-financing: requirement to clear regularly, Art. 90(4) FR and 184(4), in order to have information on the use of funds and to account for it on a regular basis.

Art. 92 FR

One deadline for payments, irrespective of whether a report needs to be approved or not. ■

Evaluations of the Management Partnerships concluded with the European Union

see next pages for each country



Partnership evaluation

Executive summary

Austria

Executive Summary

The Institute of Journalism and Communication of the University of Vienna was commissioned in September 2011, following an invitation to tender, to do the ex-post evaluation of the Management Partnership (European Partnership) that had been established in July 2008 by a treaty between the European Commission (EC) and the Republic of Austria. The evaluation period was set for the years 2008 to 2010. In this period a basic evaluation of eight projects was carried out. For three key projects a more detailed analysis was conducted, which also included interviews of the participants of the projects concerned. The projects were evaluated on the basis of the qualitative and quantitative data collected.

Methods and evaluation

The evaluation plan worked out provides the basis for the study and the framework for the individual study phases.

10

Evaluation Plan Management Partnership					
Groups participating	Project level	Evaluation dimensions		Assessment criteria	Methods
Sponsor / Steering Group (SG)	Project overhead	Structure (organisational set-up)	Process (communication and interaction)	Effectiveness efficiency sustainability	Discursive interviews document analysis
Intermediate Unit (IU)					Discursive interviews document analysis
Contractor / Co-operation partner	Project-specific				Discursive interviews
Participants					Quantitative online survey

Analysis of documents: To investigate the aims, results and the financial management of all eight projects, documents were analysed on the basis of the project reports received.

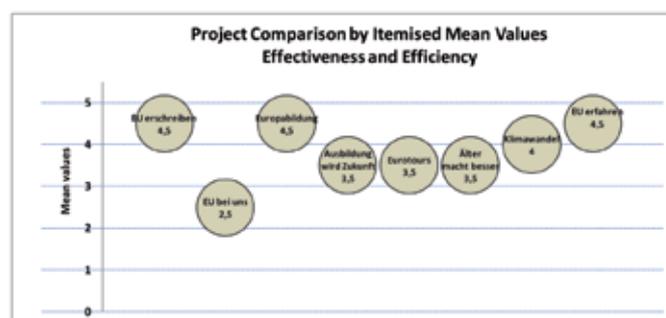
Qualitative interviews: based on the results of the document analysis a topic-related interview guide was developed. Then 9 discursive interviews were conducted, in which the persons involved were asked about their views regarding the individual topics (structure, process and output) of the Management Partnership, and processes were critically examined. These interviews were done in the period from November 2 to 23, 2011. The data collected were transcribed and analysed for content using the evaluation dimensions and assessment criteria established.

Quantitative survey: All participants of the key projects were asked to take part in an online survey. The aim was to ascertain the self-assessment of the participants regarding their satisfaction with the project and their personal benefits. The survey was done online between November 15 and 30, 2011. The response rate was very satisfactory: project "Europabildung" 2015: 43.4% (baseline 106), project "Eurotours": 73.08 % (baseline 26), project "Europa erfahren": 70.37 % (baseline 54).

Analysis: The effectiveness and efficiency of the projects were assessed qualitatively by using ten criteria developed on the basis of the project documentation and the evaluation interviews. These criteria - Relevance of the interest group, Media public, Knowledge transfer, Dialogue, Interlinking, Multiplier effect, Involvement, Sustainable, Innovative, Administrative effort - were evaluated on the basis of the qualitative and quantitative information gathered using a point scale (0 - "not reached at all" to 5 "very well reached"). The project results were discussed in qualitative terms and visualised in diagrams.

Project results

All projects were developed and implemented with the utmost care and great commitment by the Steering Group (SG) and the Intermediate Unit (IU). In the course of the project partnership administrative and content-related experiences were gathered with each project, which impacted the work of the SG. The effectiveness and efficiency of the projects were assessed on the basis of ten criteria using a point scale (0 - "not reached at all" to 5 "very well reached").



Items	Projects 1-8								MV
	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	
Effective	5	3	5	4	4	4	5	5	4,4
Efficient	4	2	4	3	3	3	3	4	3,3
Mean values	4,5	2,5	4,5	3,5	3,5	3,5	4,0	4,5	3,8

If all projects are assessed collectively for the period evaluated 2008 to 2011, it can be seen that they were implemented effectively and efficiently. In the evaluation, seven projects are found in the positive half of the six-part scale (0 to 5). Only one project ("Europa bei uns") performs more poorly. Project aims were consistently reached with the resources employed. In general, the efficiency of the projects performs somewhat less well. This means that the use of resources in relation to the aims reached could be improved in some project designs. Part of this unfavourable relation was, however, due to a lack of project implementation routine.

Results Management

Partnership

Structure - organisational set-up

The Management Partnership currently consists of the Steering Group (Co-ordinating Body), which comprises one representative each of the Federal Chancellery of the Republic of Austria, the Federal Ministry of European and International Affairs, the Information Office of the European Parliament (EP) in Austria, and of the Representative Office of the European Commission (EC) in Austria, who are all entitled to vote. This working group, of about 10 to 15 members altogether, also comprises representatives (not entitled to vote) of the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, of the Federal Ministry of Life (Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management), of the Federal Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, and lately also representatives co-opted by the Austrian Society of European Politics. The members of this body develop projects in a discursive manner and by mutual agreement for the annual communication plan. The members entitled to vote have the final say on the integration of these projects into the communication plan. The Intermediate Unit (IU) is in charge of the practical implementation and realisation and of administrative matters such as billing, reporting, and contracts. In the organisational set-up chosen by Austria, some persons are both members of the Steering Group and of the Intermediate Unit. All persons interviewed stated that they prefer this set-up pointing out that in this way ideas can be developed more efficiently and that both legal and financial considerations / concerns (European budgetary law!) can be taken into account at an early stage.

Administrative implementation

The Management Partnership is often considered to be very bureaucratic. In the Steering Group much effort and energy is being invested on the "technical implementation" of the projects. For all parties involved it was a great step that as of December 2009 Austrian procurement law could be applied. This change was seen as a positive milestone.

European budgetary law is a major stumbling block for the implementation of the projects. Thus administrative activities are not outsourced by the IU for cost reasons. This, however, restricts organisational flexibility in the organisation of events as the European budgetary law does not permit interbudgetary transfers and redeployment at constant costs.

The available budgets on the basis of the communication plans are only approved by the European Commission at the end of the year for the following year. This late budget approval has an unfavourable effect on project planning also because assessment/approval periods of 45 days need to be considered. As project time-lines, such as the opportune scheduling of a conference, need to be met, tendering periods are often very short for potential contractors in calls for bids.

Reporting: The provisions in the transfer agreement on reporting are difficult to understand according to the persons in the IU dealing with this, and result in multiple entries, e.g. the repeated listing of funds deployed.

The communication priorities have a clear thematic orientation, but do not set clear targets to achieve. It is suggested that the Steering Group rephrase these major communication targets in an operationalized manner (how an existing state should change in a desirable way) as these targets directly impact the design of projects (project management, optimal use of resources).

An on-going evaluation is considered to be a valuable control instrument. We were able to observe that even minor evaluations immediately contributed to the improvement of projects. In our opinion a structured on-going evaluation, defined at the start of the project, would in any case be highly advisable for projects over € 100,000.

Co-operation, communication and synergies of the Management Partnership

The co-operation within the Management Partnership (representatives of the EC, the EP, the Federal Chancellery, and the Federal Ministry of European and International Affairs) is going very well. All persons interviewed state that the Management Partnership with its concrete projects constitutes a communication platform that has resulted in an intensive information exchange which also involves EU projects and co-operations outside the Management Partnership. The Management Partnership is regarded as the centrepiece of the communication activities as the political multipliers can be addressed via this route. If the Management Partnership were to disappear in Austria, a major share of the communication work on Europe would simply not take place - especially as the spending on these communication activities by the Republic of Austria was dramatically cut in recent years, and little media support is to be expected from official political bodies.

Recommendations

- The combination of dialogue-oriented events with media coverage is to be continued.
Projects such as “Eurotours” and “Europa erschreiben” address only few persons directly (pupils: 88 participants, young journalists: 56 participants), but the high involvement guarantees interpersonal communication. Projects that use the mass media for the dissemination of information and for image building are to be combined with or supplemented by dialogue-oriented communication measures (in the broadest sense). Information disseminated by the mass media (advertising spots) does not have any sustainable effects when not accompanied by additional measures (no communicative feedback channel).
- Repetition of projects.
A continuous project offer must not be underestimated (e.g. “Eurotours”). Projects must be repeated in order to attract attention and become well known so that they attain a greater and more sustainable communicative value.
- Continue and intensify.
In order to raise the efficiency of projects, project partners with existing organisation structures and already interlinked in the respective target groups are to come on board. Along these lines, NGOs can be integrated as project partners into project implementation to disseminate information (invitation to events).
- Integration of projects into existing structures - additional value by follow-up care.
“Europa erfahren” has been a continuing success story due to the existing organisational structure of the so-called “Europe” local councillors in the Federal Ministry of European and International Affairs. Due to this structure, this multiplier group of local contact persons for European affairs can be used time and again. Along these lines, project design is to put emphasis on project partners who can take over the follow-up care of participants.
- Internal revision regarding the organisation of events and projects. In some cases it might make more sense to outsource administrative work to contractors (agencies) in order to free resources for other activities (media preparation of projects) and to budget more easily.
- In further negotiations with the EC on transfer agreements it would make sense to introduce a simplification of reporting in order to reduce multiple entries (e.g. budget use).
- The traditional operationalization of targets (i.e. how an existing state should change in a desirable way) is to be improved. Only if project targets are formulated even more clearly than up to now and precisely state what is to be achieved, can projects be controlled more efficiently.
- It is especially important to introduce on-going project evaluation for projects over € 100,000 in order to make direct ad-hoc improvements.

Answers to questions asked in the evaluation

- Has the Management Partnership improved /changed the communication on Europe compared to EU public relations before the Management Partnership came into existence?
The results of this study support the conclusion that the activities launched by the Management Partnership have made a substantial contribution to improve EU communication as it can now take place in a safe setting. Individual projects were able to address special interest groups and multipliers such as teachers and local councillors and in this way provide interlinking and qualified information services. This work plays an important role for EU image building with opinion leaders as there is considerable EU-critical potential in Austria. The representatives of the EC and other members of the Steering Group described the Management Partnership as the centrepiece of the communication activities as the political multipliers can be addressed via this route. If the Management Partnership were to disappear in Austria, a major share of EU communication activities would not take place: “If we lose this, I don’t really know how we should go on working effectively around here.” “The Management Partnership is the centrepiece for EU communication. Without the Management Partnership there would be no actively supported EU communication.”

The Management Partnership has existed in Austria only since 2008. For all parties involved it was a great step that as of December 2009 Austrian procurement law could be applied. This change was seen as a positive milestone, and since that time the Management Partnership has been working more efficiently than it did in the early phase. Project structures such as the Management Partnership need time and continuity so that the project partners can reach their aims together in a productive manner.

- To what extent did the Management Partnership create synergies between the players involved and strengthen the co-ordination between Austria and the EC?
We were told that the co-operation within the Management Partnership (representatives of the EC, the EP, the Federal Chancellery, the Federal Ministry of European and International Affairs) was going very well. All persons interviewed state that the Management Partnership with its concrete projects constitutes a communication platform that has resulted in an intensive information exchange which also involves EU projects and co-operations outside the Management Partnership. As meetings are held regularly, a continuous information flow is guaranteed, and important synergies are created between the representatives of the European Commission and the Austrian institutions.
- Is the organisational set-up of the Management Partnership efficient with regard to its tasks?
In the organisational set-up chosen by Austria on the basis of the transfer agreement, some persons are both members of the Steering Group and of the Intermediate Unit. This set-up was chosen as in this way projects can be developed more efficiently and both legal and financial considerations can be taken into account at an early stage.

- Was an additional value created by the Management Partnership and/or by the measures taken for EU communication?

The projects realised in the period 2008-2010 and beyond reached a large number of people and raised interest in EU topics. Without the Management Partnership these projects would never have taken place. "Especially as the spending on EU communication activities by the Republic of Austria was dramatically cut in recent years, and little media support is to be expected from official political bodies." Besides, the Management Partnership attempts to incentivise organisations and implement projects in co-operation in the hope that some activities will then be taken over by these organisations themselves. In this sense, one can speak of a clear additional value of the Management Partnership.

- Were the financial funds appropriately used in view of the project aims reached?

The results of the project evaluation show that the financial funds were used appropriately and very economically in view of the project aims reached. It is essential to define the overall aims and objectives beforehand so that it is easy to assess the appropriateness during and on completion of the projects.

- Have these measures contributed to an increase of information on the activities of the European Union in the respective target groups?

Three projects were evaluated in more detail, and for this purpose the participants of these projects were interviewed. Their feedback suggests that the respective activities (teachers' conference, visit of the local councillors to Brussels, trips of young journalists) have generated a considerable increase in knowledge. Particularly projects with a dialogue-oriented design succeeded in involving the participants and in providing an authentic image of the European Union.

- Did these measures result in sustainable practical benefits for the members of the respective target groups?

The responses in the online surveys conducted for the three key projects indicate substantial personal benefits for the project participants. In these projects, EU topics were primarily communicated via dialogue-oriented communication measures (e.g. "Europabildung 2015" - teachers' conference in Linz). In projects that used above all the mass media to communicate information and did not have a dialogue-oriented setting (e.g. "Europa bei uns" - information campaign before the EU elections in the regional media) the direct personal benefit was of course less pronounced.

- Were the members of the target groups satisfied with the project-specific measures? (project design, duration, content, participants)

Here, too, the responses in the surveys of the projects analysed in detail indicate that the measures were carefully planned and that their design was participant-oriented. The feedback in terms of a "recommendation score" amounted to over 90% in all projects surveyed. ■



Partnership evaluation

Executive summary – Belgium

IHECS has assessed the Belgian Management Partnership for the three years 2008, 2009, and 2010. This work was carried out by Esther Durin and Jean Lemaître (respectively IHECS Project Manager, and Director of IHECS' Europe and Further Education departments), who jointly undersign this report. Here is a summary of its main conclusions and recommendations.

According to Jürgen Wettig, former coordinator of all the Management Partnerships within the DG for Communication of the European Commission, Belgium - for the quality both of the projects undertaken and of its partnership - has proved to be one of the top students in the European class. The coordinator stressed in particular the Belgian Partnership's capacity to absorb additional budgets, disbursed at every year end.

As assessor, our area of investigation was limited to the Belgian Management Partnership, and did not concern its comparison with other Management Partnerships. Nevertheless we can confirm the positive particularities of Belgium, in the European context, on at least two specific points:

- **The steering capacity entrusted to the Chancellery of the Prime Minister**
Choosing a body at the top of the Belgian State with a transversal function wisely allows for a quick strategic impulse to the partnership - which then enables it to benefit from wider collaborations. This choice was all the more relevant because the Chancellery already had a positive experience (cf. Euro changeover) of European communications operations conducted in close cooperation with the European Commission Representation in Belgium (REP).
- **Belgium is the only State that has co-financed the Management Partnership.**
The Chancellery, appointed as intermediary body, brought human, administrative and financial resources to the partnership. This essential contribution enabled the whole of the European Commission funds to be directed towards actions, meaning full profit for their beneficiaries.

Moreover the Chancellery, with the agreement of the REP, successfully financially involved (through direct and indirect contributions) other major bodies: BELSPO (the Belgian Science Policy Office), the VRT and the RTBF (public service media), and the City of Brussels via its "Winter Pret" activities and New Year fireworks.

This co-financing, coupled with direct and indirect contributions, responds very directly to the "spirit" of the Management Partnerships as born under the former European Commissioner for Communication, Margot Wallström (2004-2009). The impetuses given by Margot Wallström are partly based on the fact that, in the field of European communications, States remain the weakest link. The aim of the Partnerships was not to "use" Member States as European Commission subcontractors, but to involve them in the most profound and lasting way possible, in a wide-reaching European communications strategy that is decentralised, closer to people, and in conjunction with civil society. As such, the structure of the Belgian Management Partnership (with the Member State up front), plus the Belgian financial commitment, obviously fully match with the former Commissioner's vision and pave the way for other Management Partnerships. Our recommendation: to maintain the Chancellery as the intermediary body for the next Management Partnership.

On the other hand, the weakness of this partnership was the lack of firm involvement by the European Parliament. Within the frame of this Evaluation we were not able to find out whether this lighter role is particular to Belgium, or if the situation is shared by other countries but more pronounced in Belgium.

De facto, the partnership was unbalanced. There was a close link between the Chancellery and the REP, with the European Parliament taking a back seat. Also de facto, the privileged [and thus simplified] working relationship between the REP and the Chancellery allowed for the running of the Partnership without many bureaucratic barriers.

Nevertheless, this cannot justify maintaining the Parliament at the periphery of the next Management Partnership (2012-2015). It is politically unacceptable that the European Parliament, as the European Union's democratic "lungs" - the only body directly elected by the citizens - remain on the outside.

Of course, in bringing the Parliament back to the heart of the Partnership, it should be ensured that all effects of institutional paralysis are avoided. We should fully learn from the (very expensive). It should also be avoided that the Management Partnership, since it did run smoothly from 2008 to 2010, then loses this strength. A minimum of autonomy should also be guaranteed to the European Parliament Office in Belgium with respect to its central structure.

The partnership between the REP and the Chancellery is built upon two small, motivated teams working in mutual confidence; with both parties getting to play their part, united by a common will to achieve effective results, and without an excessively institutional perspective. This good relationship was a driver of creativity and dynamism (see below: the actions). Our recommendation: above all to maintain this collaborative framework.

For its part, the Chancellery has been anxious to involve external agencies both in defining the content of the actions themselves, and in the underlying thinking process: BELSPO, RTBF, VRT... Gathering strong competencies together in a concerted manner was a recipe for successful global operations such as SOS ANTARCTICA (see below: the actions). The Chancellery was also able to select experienced technical sub-contractors to whom it allowed, when necessary, a freer hand - as was the case with BREAKING THE WALL. We also note that, thanks to a professional provider ensuring the decentralisation (and thus mobility) of the CHOICE BOX, the disastrous results of this operation have been (partly) mitigated.

The team of the "External Communications" DG of the Chancellery dedicated to the Management Partnership was comprised of two people. Already overburdened with work, they could devote to the Partnership only a part of their time, generally in a rushed atmosphere and on overtime. This firm commitment, which borders on activism, is an important asset. But it also has its limits. This team was too small in regards to the weight of its assigned political, administrative and financial tasks. Those tasks were all the more difficult to achieve because they had to combine two different lines of administrative reasoning and rule: that of Belgium and that of the European Commission. Also because they took place - during the assessed period - partly under "caretaker government", and in a context of great budgetary prudence. Our recommendation: increase human resources dedicated to European communications within the Chancellery while maintaining, along with this enlargement, the current cohesion, motivation and technical competence.

Still at the Partnership level, one of the problems that clearly came out in our study is a lack of planning in the management of the actions it undertook. We suggest overcoming this by:

- Putting in place multi-year communications plans.
- Giving the Partnership the option, based on the European Commission's commitments, of annually disposing of reserved funds without having to negotiate budgets action by action, which leads to an unnecessarily cumbersome and delayed management procedure. This implies that after annual final accounts, the partners will give back the eventual overflow money.
- Finally, when the "Communications" DG of the European Commission allots additional budgets (not used by other countries) to the REP at year end, we suggest allowing the Partnership to use this money over an extended period as well.

Concerning the actions themselves (2008-2010), we discerned strengths and weaknesses.

The strengths:

- The way the Management Partnership adapted with flexibility to European communications priorities while taking Belgian ones into account.
- The targeting of actions towards young people, especially children.



- With a limited basic annual budget (300.000 Euros), a wise choice was made not to disperse the efforts in an array of mini-actions but to concentrate on some flagship projects.
- NEURODYSSÉE functioned as a guiding principle throughout the Partnership. Our recommendation for the future: as with NEURODYSSÉE, include the actions in a broader multiannual framework.

The weaknesses:

- The Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU (2010) diverted a large part of the budget and of the available time usually dedicated to the Management Partnership.
- An insufficient reflection on projects 'upstream' in order to develop them, beyond their immediately self-evident benefit, into 'laboratory-projects' aimed at collecting useful methodological lessons that can then be widely shared downstream.
- European communications priorities have the merit of being general enough to be easily adapted to national contexts. But they are defined to such little depth, with the only direct reference being to audiences or topics. There is no central push given to actions seeking to address sensitive key issues (for example, seeking the appropriate pedagogical stance in schools; or convincing the media to "make more of Europe" without just using it instrumentally...). If this guideline is not given from the centre by the European Commission then this effort at 'clarification' has to be conducted from within the Partnership itself - before the launching of any action - in a structured way and not an intuitive one (as was the case in the Belgian Partnership, even if many of those intuitions have proved to be relevant).

The assessment of impact, action by action, gives mixed results. The most successful actions are SOS ANTARCTICA (though it has a barely European content), BREAKING THE WALL (in spite of its limited time duration) and NEURODYSSÉE (even if the game shows some signs of slowdown).

The CHOICE BOX, as we previously pointed at, but also EUROPE FOR KIDS and WEB TV, were patent failures.

Another weakness: apart from NEURODYSSEE (in part), the other actions were not directly followed up (during the assessed period). They end and then they switch off without any significant effects in terms of multiplication, amplification or durability. They had the virtue of existing but in the absence of any efforts to relay the experience onwards, progress is not made.

The budget is limited. It does not allow for everything, and it certainly does not allow for the establishment of a European communications policy for the whole of Belgium. But this is one more reason to shift the Partnership towards a more strategic (theory-practice) approach, with fewer actions and a better focus on methodological lessons, dedicated to an expanded range of European communications operators and based on a prior analysis of the key issues to explore.

Multiplier effects cannot be measured just on the quantity of publications released, or the number of clicks on a website. They correspond to a snowball effect, directed not only towards the general public but also (and above all) towards intermediary agents, mediators.

The coordination team of the Belgian Management Partnership recognizes this gap in the multiplier effect, which they explain by a lack of funding. They also fear that the search for amplifying effects, via federal or federated entities' representatives, will lead to the bureaucratisation and dismantling of the currently well-oiled machine. We do not agree. Future efforts should be oriented towards collaboration that is open to flexible arrangements with those representatives. The Chancellerie rightly keeps the steering wheel (upstream) in order to give the necessary driving force, insure against the fragmentation of financial means, and to maintain a strong cohesiveness. But it would gain from more openness downstream.

We advise the allocation of available funds to three distinct but complementary functions, necessary to attain the desired amplifying effects:

A The "evaluation" function: This must be "ex ante", "itinerare" and not only "ex post", as it is now. The setting up of "ongoing assessment" mechanisms will facilitate both a better targeting of actions on key sensitive issues, and the highlighting of methodological principles and tools. Those assessment mechanisms - put in place before the actions start - should integrate, in advance, indicators for a more accurate analysis of their efficacy, effectiveness and efficiency. Finally, the improvement of assessment devices will enable the making of necessary adjustments along the way, resulting in cost savings.

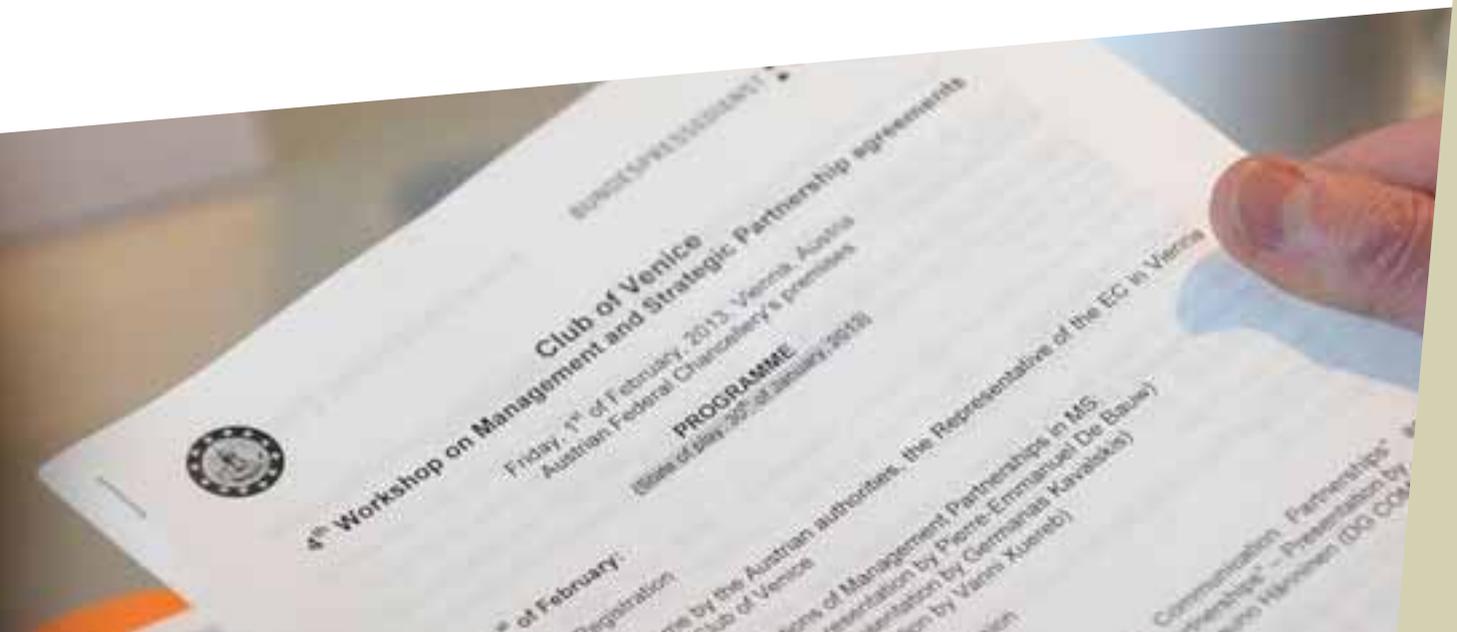
B The "projects" function: put this on a multiannual pathway that is smaller in size and based on a prior in-depth analysis of concrete European communications challenges (beyond just a copy and paste job of general guidance).

C The "development and multiplier effect" function: taking into account this essential function (we do not do actions "industrially, we improve the programme mechanisms, we search for leverage effects...") will be all the more easy once functions A and B have been completed.

Our assessment concerned the Belgian Management Partnership. However, a general gap emerged across the European context: the lack of transnational sharing of practices and ideas.

Each national partnership could be proactively encouraged to draw on best practices from other Member States. To this end, the "Communications DG" of the European Commission should set up an ad hoc Intranet. It should likewise encourage networking, including face-to-face meetings between country representatives - by theme, by target audience or by issue.

The European Commission has the merit of stimulating innovative partnerships in the Member States. But paradoxically it does not initiate enough collaborative links between countries at the European level, for the benefit of a European communications strategy that is lively, civic, and democratic. ■



Partnership evaluation

Executive summary – Finland

Ilari Hylkilä Hanna Salminen, Management Institute of Finland MIF Oy

This chapter provides a short overview of the main results and recommendations of the Koulu Euroopassa - Eurooppa koulussa ('School in Europe - Europe in School') programme evaluation.

Programme goal achievement

Most goals of the School in Europe - Europe in School programme were achieved either with good or fair success. However, since most of the goals lack clear, measurable target levels, the evaluation of the data was challenging. Furthermore, little first-hand information on the experiences and opinions of the programme's 'real' target group, i.e. the students, was available.

- One of the project goals was to give a real face to Europe by using students from other European countries residing in Finland (through the Erasmus programme) as 'ambassadors'. This goal was achieved with an outstanding success, especially through Erasmus in Schools visits.
- The goals of strengthening teachers' knowledgebase of Europe and providing them with tools for teaching European matters have been fairly successful. There are, however, substantial differences between different supplemental training schemes in achieving these goals.
- The goal of providing teachers with information on EU materials suitable for teaching and on initiatives taken by the EU has met with variable success. The production methods of the materials, their quality, as well as their marketing and presentation, are far from satisfactory.
- The goal of providing teachers with opportunities for exchanging information and good practices during supplemental training was a success.
- The programme also set out to explore pupils' and teachers' views on how European matters are addressed in schools. This goal was only a partial success, since only teachers were surveyed.
- Only some of the quantitative goals of the Erasmus in Schools visits and those set for the supplemental training were achieved, but the results are showing definite progress. The latest figures can be considered good.
- The regional coverage of both supplemental training and the Erasmus in Schools visits was

fairly well balanced. However, there are some blind spots in programme coverage, since even whole regions are excluded.

- Additionally, the programme has managed to reach teachers who originally might not be so much involved in European cooperation.
- The goal of minimising the inconvenience of Erasmus in Schools visits for teachers and schools was also successful.
- The ambitious goal of creating a lasting impact and to enhance sense of active European citizenship has been at least partially successful.

Additional value for the Commission's communication efforts in Finland

The most prominent additional value the Management Partnership has created for the Commission's communications is the ability to more effectively reach two important target groups - teachers and pupils - improving geographical coverage and the ability

to operate directly in the terms of these two target groups.

- The School in Europe - Europe in School programme has strengthened the influence of the Commission throughout the nation.
- The programme has provided the Commission with an additional instrument: supplemental training for teachers.
- Thanks to the programme, more students from other EU country have formed a direct contact to Finnish pupils and provided link to another member state's culture, society and language, in an authentic and memorable way.
- The Management Partnership has allowed the Commission, namely its Finnish representation, to expand its operations to a new area without cutting back on other activities or enrolling new personnel.
- The Centre for International Mobility, CIMO, the intermediary body for the project, has provided expertise in international matters and flexible operational capabilities for project development and implementation.
- The Management Partnership has attracted new partners for collaboration, and being a part of the European community has gained new, young advocates.

Synergy benefits

- The most substantial synergy benefit of the programme has been utilising a “reserve” of foreign Erasmus students residing in Finland in the service of the comprehensive and upper secondary schools. A great number of classes have benefited from native language speakers and people who are extremely well positioned to present their own countries and peoples. Erasmus students, in turn, have had the opportunity to acquaint themselves with the Finnish school system as ‘ well as to meet Finnish teachers and students.
- The programme has strengthened the collaboration between CIMO - which is responsible for several other EU programmes as well - and the European Commission, European Parliament, Europe Information, and The Finnish National Board of Education. One of the examples of this improved collaboration is the fact that CIMO’s promotion in schools includes only matters related to the School in Europe - Europe in School programme, but also other matters related to the Commission.
- The cross-marketing within the programme’s framework has mostly been successful, but there is a great potential for additional synergy in further collaboration.

The main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the programme

Strengths

- The programme clearly represents additional value for and is linked to the Commission’s communication goals
- The programme has a strong influence in most parts of Finland
- The programme utilises a wide range of external resources and know-how: Erasmus students; supplemental training organisations; experts from different fields; collaborative networks of the organisation European Movement in Finland; and CIMO’s international expertise
- It is easy for schools, teachers and Erasmus students to take part in the programme, and, to some extent, for supplemental training organisations as well
- The supplemental training courses are provided with no financial cost for the participants
- CIMO manages its tasks with great flexibility

Weaknesses

- The experiences and wishes of the students have been insufficiently surveyed, providing little data for project planning and follow-up
 - Some of the educational content is weakly connected to the program’s goals
 - Some of the goals are ambiguous, as no definitive target levels have been determined
 - Some of the synergy benefits have been left unexploited
- In some parts of Finland, there have been no Erasmus visits at all. In some of these areas, the number of participants in supplemental training courses has also been lower
- Some aspects of the programme are not sustainable
 - The need for partial self-financing may exclude some supplemental training organisations from participating

Opportunities

- The programme clearly represents additional value for and is linked to the Commission’s communication goals
- The programme has a strong influence in most parts of Finland
- The programme utilises a wide range of external resources and know-how: Erasmus students; supplemental training organisations; experts from different fields; collaborative networks of the organisation European Movement in Finland; and CIMO’s international expertise
- It is easy for schools, teachers and Erasmus students to take part in the programme, and, to some extent, for supplemental training organisations as well
- The supplemental training courses are provided with no financial cost for the participants
- CIMO manages its tasks with great flexibility

Threats

- Demand grows substantially, whereas resources (funding, visiting Erasmus students, etc.) will be insufficient to answer the demand
- Insufficient funds for organising substitutes: teachers would be unable to participate in supplemental training
- The increasing number of negative connotations linked to the EU may decrease overall willingness to participate in the programme
- Some of the supplemental training instructors consider the partial self financing as an obstacle
- Practical simplicity is lost by developing the programme in the wrong direction

The cost-efficiency

of the programme

The cost-efficiency of the programme cannot be calculated unequivocally based on the available data. However, the available data would indicate that most of the Erasmus in Schools visits, as well as approximately half of the supplemental training courses, have been arranged cost-efficiently and stayed within budgetary limits set by the sponsor. A part of the surveys and evaluations conducted during the programme and have been arranged cost-efficiently, while others have not been. It is too early to evaluate the cost-efficiency of the EU workshop (Elämyksellinen vierailukohde) organised at the premises of the European Commission Representation in Finland, as there is very limited data available on its effectiveness.

Main recommendations

According to the assessor, the School in Europe - Europe in School programme supplements the European Commission's communications in Finland well. Therefore, it is recommended that the programme should continue at least in its current scope.

The two main goals for programme development should be: improving the effectiveness of the supplemental training; and steering the training to correspond more closely with the programme's goals. The geographical coverage of the Erasmus in Schools activities should also be improved. Additionally, the ease of programme participation should be retained and it should be beneficial for all parties: the Commission and sponsors, the organisers, as well as the participants.

- The programme's goals should be clarified based on the results of this evaluation and the survey which was carried out among teachers, i) Standardised target levels for both quality and content should be defined for all supplemental training schemes. A set of standardised indicators should be derived from the goals of the programme to help analyse data from supplemental training feedback surveys. 2) The feedback surveys of Erasmus in Schools visits should be improved by adding 1-2 new questions derived the programme's main goals.
- In order to support the programme's development efforts, the experiences, opinions, and views of the 'real' target group - the pupils - should also be surveyed more comprehensively.
- Additional controls must be enforced to ensure that the main goals of the programme stay unchanged as they are transmitted between different parts of the collaborative network, for example, from the steering group and CIMO to the supplemental training organisation and further down to trainers or lecturers.

- A member of the Commission's Representation in Finland should be tasked with following the School in Europe - Europe in School programme more closely than before. He or she should also monitor that the goals of the Commission's communication efforts and activities are achieved, and opportunities for synergy are captured.
- The programme's strengths should not be lost by swamping collaborative partners, supplemental training organisations, for example, with heavy and inflexible management and responsibilities.
- If the number of high-quality offers for supplemental training seems to become lower, supplemental training organisations should be exempted from the partial self financing responsibility.
- Communication with teachers and pupils should also be developed to be more permanent. For example, supplemental training could be reinforced with a "School in Europe club", which would serve as a forum for official and unofficial exchange of information and creating contacts within the framework of EU's educational activities and communications.
- The Erasmus in Schools visits should be developed to be more ambassadorial in nature by providing training for some of the visitors and offering them more opportunities for making visits.
- With regard to developing the Elämyksellinen vierailukohde (the EU workshop), emphasis should be placed on participation, providing positive experiences, and steering the workshop to a more pedagogical direction. Both the quantitative and qualitative goals of the programme should be clearly defined for the next few years.
- The programme's marketing and communications should be developed further. Additional synergy benefits should be sought out, for example, by increasing the shared marketing of supplemental training, as well as by strengthening the marketing of Erasmus in Schools visits e.g. during supplemental training courses. The emphasis of the programme's communication and marketing should be on the regions that currently attract the least participants.
- The presentation and marketing of the supplemental EU materials offered for schools would also need improvement. ■



Partnership evaluation

Executive summary – France

For the period of 2008-2010 (Version 14.11.2011)

Malt : Bernard Touchagues

Objectives of the mission

1. To assess the efficiency of the management partnership. Did the use of management partnership contribute to the improvement of communication about the EU throughout the different levels of French territorial administration?
2. To assess the efficiency of the management partnership.
3. To highlight the strong and weak points of the management partnership.
4. To recommend improvement opportunities.

Methodology

General approach:

- Analysis of information:
 - Official documents and supports defining the partnership, its rules and regulation of its management.
 - Analysis of assessments and post-tests conducted on the different communication operations of the period.
 - Analysis of overall barometers of French opinion.
 - Contextual data.
- 14 “face-to-face” interviews:
 - Internal (Representation, SIG, MAEE) and external (DATAR, Touteurope.eu) representatives involved in the development of the management partnership.
 - Experts in communication.

Additional studies:

- Phone interviews with 9 people involved in the broadcasting and regional adaptation of the “I’m moving forward with Europe” campaign.

Principles of the assessment

SUMMARY OF THE TERMS IN THE DELEGATION AGREEMENT OF THE PARTNERSHIP

Two fundamental principles must govern the implementation of EU communication:

- Complementarities between EU and the institutions of member countries.
- Establishment of a dialogue with citizens.

Specific objectives of the delegation implemented within the partnership:

- Synergy between ways and means and coordination of actions.
- The indirectly centralized administration of its budgets. The delegation of authority for the budget execution to an intermediary organization.

CRITERIA OF OUR ASSESSMENT

1. Respect of the objectives assigned to the partnership in the choice of its actions.
2. Respect for the agreements’ terms in relation to procedure and complementarities of means.
3. Performance of communication actions carried out.

Communication plans 2008 - 2010

Actions	Effective Budget
Europe on line offer	300 000
Short films	428 337
TOTAL 2008	728 337
Europe on line offer	150 000
Incitation to vote campaign	573040
TOTAL 2009	723 040
Exhibition of May 9 th	231 836
Updated short films	149 999.03
TOTAL 2010	381 835.03

A total of 4 actions, with two implemented within the context of two budgets:

- “The Europe on-Line Offer”, launched in 2008 and extended until the fall of 2009, with the confirmation of an optional phase.
- The “short films” shot and broadcast in 2008 and updated and rebroadcast in 2010.

The two other actions related to factual circumstances:

- The “Get out and Vote” campaign, for European Parliamentary Elections held on June 7th, 2009.
- The “May 9th Exhibition”, organized at the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs on the occasion of the Schumann Declaration’s 60th anniversary.

Assessment per action

« THE EUROPE ON LINE OFFER »

Criteria 1: Respect for the objectives assigned to the partnership

This action targeted two priorities - 15-25 year-olds and local elected officials - through internet websites: «leseuronautes.eu» and «placedeurope.eu».

The goal of these websites was to provide their targets with information and news, as well as enable them to share their experience through blogs and receive advice for their own projects.

Given the educative and informational aspects of the chosen means (websites) and the ability to use them to establish a dialogue between citizens, this action met the goals of the partnership adequately.

Evaluation du partenariat

Résumé général – France

Pour la période de 2008-2010
(Version 14.11.2011)
Malt : Bernard Touchagues

Objectifs de la mission

1. Dresser un bilan de l'efficacité du partenariat de gestion. Le recours au partenariat de gestion a-t-il permis d'améliorer la communication sur l'Union européenne à travers divers échelons territoriaux en France ?
2. Dresser un bilan de l'efficience du partenariat de gestion.
3. En dégager les atouts et les lacunes du partenariat de gestion.
4. Recommander des pistes d'amélioration.

Methodologie

Approche générale:

- Analyse documentaire:
 - Textes officiels régissant le partenariat et documents réglementaires de sa gestion.
 - Etudes de bilan et post-tests effectués sur les différentes opérations de communication de la période.
 - Etudes et baromètres généraux portant sur l'état de l'opinion Française.
 - Données de contexte.
- 14 entretiens en face à face:
 - Interlocuteurs internes (Représentation, SIG, MAEE) ou externes (DATAR, TOUTELEUROPE.EU) impliqués dans la mise en oeuvre du partenariat de gestion.
 - Experts en communication.

Approfondissement:

- Interview téléphonique de 9 personnes impliquées dans le relai et la déclinaison de la campagne « j'avance avec l'Europe » en région.

Principe de l'évaluation

RAPPEL DES TERMES DE LA CONVENTION DE DÉLÉGATION DU PARTENARIAT

Deux principes fondamentaux doivent régir la mise en oeuvre de la communication de l'U.E.:

- La complémentarité UE – Institutions des Etats Membres.
- L'établissement d'un dialogue avec les citoyens.

Objectifs particuliers de la délégation mise en place dans le cadre du partenariat:

- La synergie des moyens et la coordination des actions.
- La gestion centralisée indirecte de ses budgets. La délégation de compétences d'exécution budgétaire à un organisme intermédiaire.

LES CRITERES DE NOTRE EVALUATION

1. Le respect des objectifs assignés au partenariat dans le choix des actions
2. Le respect des termes de la convention en matière de procédure et de complémentarité des moyens
3. Les performances des actions de communication réalisées.

Les plans de communication 2008 – 2010

Actions	Budget consommé
Offre en ligne Europe	300 000
Films courts	428 337
TOTAL 2008	728 337
Offre en ligne Europe	150 000
Campagne Incitation au vote	573040
TOTAL 2009	723 040
Exposition 9 Mai	231 836
Actualisation films courts	149 999.03
TOTAL 2010	381 835.03

En tout 4 actions, dont deux prises en compte / mises en oeuvre dans le cadre de deux budgets:

- « L'offre en ligne Europe », lancée en 2008 et prolongée jusqu'à l'automne 2009 avec l'affermissement d'une tranche optionnelle.
- Les « films courts » réalisés et diffusés en 2008 et actualisés et rediffusés en 2010.

Les deux autres actions répondant à des circonstances événementielles:

- La campagne d'« incitation au vote », pour l'élection au parlement européen le 7 juin 2009,
- L'« Exposition du 9 mai », organisée au Ministère des Affaires Etrangères et européennes à l'occasion du 60ème anniversaire de la déclaration Schumann.

Bilan par action

« L'OFFRE EN LIGNE EUROPE »

Critère 1 : Respect des objectifs assignés au partenariat

Cette action visait deux cibles prioritaires, les 15-25 ans et les élus locaux par le biais des sites internet « leseuronaut.es.eu » et « placedeurope.eu ».

Ces sites avaient pour buts de nourrir leurs cibles en informations et en actualités ainsi que de leur permettre d'échanger leurs expériences à travers des blogs ou de bénéficier de conseils pour leurs projets respectifs.

Par ses contenus informatifs / pédagogiques, par le medium choisi, et par la volonté de l'utiliser pour établir un dialogue entre les citoyens, cette action répondait parfaitement aux objectifs du partenariat.

Criteria 2: Respect for the procedure

This operation perfectly respected the procedure in the first stage as well as the implementation of the optional phase leading to the choice of an experienced partner, The Information Centre for Europe (CIE).

But contrary to the principle of uniformity, this operation was financed with the sole budget of the partnership. However, it must be noted that at the time the CIE was a GIE financed up to 50% by the French Government.

Criteria 3: Level of performance

The results of the 6 first months turned out to be quantitatively small, at less than 10% of the smallest goal targeted. Both websites suffered from a lack of repeat visits by visitors, which can be explained by a lack of content renewal and insufficient communication. It was therefore decided to extend this action and aim for 25% more visits within 6 months.

The optional phase of the 6 additional months gave quantitative results superior to the set objectives but still considerably inferior to the original goal: around 10% / 12%, leading to a prohibitive contact cost.

But these platforms were disappointing because of the very small number of subscribers and the failure of contribution to their collaborative services.

The disappointing results are probably due to 1) an over-estimation of the target population that led to inflated expectation of the potential number of visitors, and 2) pre-existing competition to the offer by several websites that, although non-dedicated to these targets, answered some of their expectations.

Hence, the closure of both websites at the end of the first optional phase was justified, though 'touteurope.eu' can still use their content to extend the length of their consultation.

THE "SHORTFILMS"

Criteria 1: Respect for the objectives assigned to the partnership

This action was set in a large communication operation on Europe to disclose and promote the actions of structural funds in France.

In 2008, the partnership funds were devoted to the broadcast of 2 films about the Erasmus and Leonardo programs, out of a total of 13 films.

In 2010, with the number of films having been reduced to 6, the partnership funds were employed for the purchase of space for the remaining films (FEDER, FSE and FEADER). The national campaign was completed with updates intended for regional use (availability of films for networks, radio programs, regional daily press format, posters...).

Therefore this action met with the highest priorities of the partnership: to aim more specifically at the young in 2008, and to be territorially updated in 2010.

Criteria 2: Respect for the procedure

From a budgetary point of view, this action came down to a purchase of space. This was assigned to the AEGIS MEDIA France Company, appointee since 2006 of a public market geared towards «media advice, purchase of space, and realization of media partnership for the governmental information and/or of general interest campaigns» for members of a space-purchase group, run by the SIG. Therefore, the chosen procedure cannot be reproached for its proceedings, nor can the competence of the selected contractor.

Criteria 3: Level of performance

2008 wave:

The films more specifically allocated to the partnership budget obtained good results in terms of advertising performance raised awareness of Erasmus and Leonardo programs of respectively 16% and 200% among the audience affected by the campaign. The contact cost for 15 year-olds and over was about 1 Euro cent and 17 Euro cents for the 15-24 year-old category.

The campaign on a whole also obtained good quantitative and qualitative results, promoting the image of an accessible and modern institution while communicating relevant and memorable slogans. The only weak point: a weak attribution to the European Union - only 36%.

The principle of grouping several communication means through this powerful action convinced French and Europeans partners of its ability to appreciably and quickly raise the perception of the EU through specific chosen image criteria.

2010 wave:

This wave also obtained good results, with a contact cost of about 2.1 Euro cents for the aimed target.

However, it did not leave a lasting impression as well as the 2008 campaign because of a smaller budget and the absence of Erasmus spots, a well-known operation that created impact and drew attention. Still, it promoted the image of Europe in the French regions for 35% of the interviewed. Like in 2008, the attribution to a European institution is small - about 22%. As for the updates of this TV campaign, the regions that carried out the most actions obtained campaign results of overall effectiveness, noticeably superior to the other regions, of about 30 to 50%, depending on the actions and selected criteria.

THE 2009 CAMPAIGN "INCITATION TO VOTE"

Criteria 1: Respect for the objectives assigned to the partnership

This TV campaign was supposed to inform and increase the French population's awareness on important constructions, values and challenges of the EU in order to encourage them to participate in the election of their European deputies. It aimed more specifically at the people "less interested" in Europeans concerns - that is to say, the young (18-34 years old), workers and employees and people with a diploma inferior or equal to an A-Level. This action, complementary to the transnational action put in place on the European Parliament initiative, matched perfectly the general and annual objectives of the partnership.



Critère 2 : Respect de la procédure

Cette opération a fait l'objet d'un parfait respect de la procédure dans sa phase initiale comme dans la mise en oeuvre de sa tranche optionnelle débouchant sur le choix d'un partenaire compétent : le Centre d'Information sur l'Europe.

Mais contrairement au principe de complémentarité, cette opération a été financée par le seul budget du partenariat. Toutefois, on doit noter que le CIE était un GIE financé à cette époque à hauteur de 50% par le Gouvernement français.

Critère 3 : Niveau de performance

Les résultats des 6 premiers mois se sont avérés quantitativement faibles, à moins de 10% de l'objectif le plus bas. Les deux sites ont souffert du manque de fidélité des visiteurs qui s'explique par un faible renouvellement de leur contenu et par une communication insuffisante. Considérant ces leviers de progression, il a été décidé de prolonger cette action en visant 25% de fréquentation additionnelle en 6 mois.

La tranche optionnelle de 6 mois supplémentaires a donné des résultats quantitatifs supérieurs aux objectifs fixés mais encore très inférieurs aux ambitions d'origine : Aux environs de 10/12%, conduisant à un coût au contact prohibitif. Mais c'est surtout par le très faible nombre d'inscrits et de contributions à leurs services collaboratifs que ces plates-formes ont déçu.

Les scores décevants enregistrés tiennent probablement à une surestimation de la population cible qui a fait imaginer un nombre de visiteurs potentiels trop élevé. Ils sont aussi la conséquence d'une concurrence préexistante à travers l'offre de plusieurs sites non dédiés à ces cibles mais répondant à une partie de leurs attentes.

La fermeture des deux sites à l'issue de la première tranche optionnelle était donc justifiée, le site touteurope.eu ayant la possibilité d'utiliser leurs contenus pour prolonger la durée de leur consultation.

LES « FILMS COURTS »

Critère 1 : Respect des objectifs assignés au partenariat

Cette action s'inscrivait dans une vaste opération de communication sur l'Europe pour faire connaître et valoriser l'action des fonds structurels en France.

En 2008, les fonds du partenariat furent consacrés à la diffusion des 2 films concernant les programmes Erasmus et Leonardo parmi 13 films en tout.

En 2010, le nombre des films ayant été réduits à 6, les fonds du partenariat furent utilisés à l'achat d'espace des films restant (FEDER, FSE et FEADER). La campagne nationale fut complétée de déclinaisons destinées à une utilisation régionale (mise à disposition des films pour les réseaux, chroniques radio, format PQR, affiches...)

Cette action était donc bien en ligne avec les objectifs prioritaires du partenariat, ajoutant la particularité de s'adresser plus particulièrement aux jeunes en 2008 et d'être déclinée territorialement en 2010.

Critère 2 : Respect de la procédure

D'un point de vue budgétaire, cette action s'est résumée à un achat d'espace. Il a été attribué à la société AEGIS MEDIA France attributaire depuis 2006 d'un marché public destiné au « conseil média, achat d'espace et montage de partenariats médias pour les campagnes d'information gouvernementales et/ou d'intérêt général » des membres d'un groupement d'achat d'espace piloté par le SIG. La procédure suivie n'appelle donc aucune question tant au niveau de son déroulement qu'à celui de la compétence du prestataire retenu.

Critère 3 : Niveau de performance

Vague de 2008:

Les films plus directement attribués au budget du partenariat ont obtenu des scores de bon niveau en termes de performance publicitaire et ont fait monter la notoriété des programmes Erasmus et Leonardo respectivement de 16% et 200% parmi les publics touchés par la campagne. Le coût au contact pour les 15 ans et plus se montant à environ 1 centime d'Euros et 17 centimes d'euro pour les 15 – 24 ans.

La campagne dans son ensemble a également obtenu de bons scores quantitatifs et qualitatifs, véhiculant l'image d'une institution proche et moderne en installant des slogans pertinents et marquants. Seul point faible, une faible attribution à l'Union européenne : 36%

Le principe d'un regroupement de nombreux moyens de communication dans cette action puissante a convaincu les partenaires Français et Européens de sa pertinence pour faire sensiblement et rapidement progresser la perception de l'Union européenne sur des points d'image choisis.

Vague de 2010:

Cette vague a également obtenu des résultats de bon niveau, avec un coût au contact d'environ 2.1 centimes d'Euros auprès de la cible visée.

Mais elle laisse moins de traces que celle de 2008 en raison d'un budget plus faible et de l'absence des spots Erasmus, dispositif connu dont la présence créait de l'impact et de la curiosité. Toutefois elle fait progresser l'image de l'Europe dans les régions françaises auprès de 35 % des interviewés. Comme en 2008, l'attribution à une institution européenne est faible, à 22%.

En ce qui concerne les déclinaisons de cette campagne TV, les régions qui ont fait les actions les plus nombreuses obtiennent des scores d'efficacité globale de la campagne très sensiblement supérieurs aux autres, de l'ordre de 30 à 50% selon les actions et les critères retenus.

LA CAMPAGNE D' « INCITATION AU VOTE » 2009

Critère 1 : Respect des objectifs assignés au partenariat

Cette campagne télévisée devait permettre d'informer et de sensibiliser les Français sur les grandes réalisations et valeurs et les grands défis de l'Union européenne afin de les inciter à participer à l'élection de leurs députés européens. Elle visait plus particulièrement les personnes "moins intéressées" par les problématiques européennes, à savoir: les jeunes (18-34 ans), les ouvriers et les employés, ainsi que les personnes dont le niveau de diplôme est inférieur ou égal au baccalauréat.

Cette action, complémentaire à l'action transnationale réalisée à l'initiative du Parlement Européen s'inscrivait parfaitement dans les objectifs généraux et annuels du partenariat.



Criteria 2: Respect for the procedure

Two contractors of the SIG have been employed, both appointees of public markets covering the concerned period: the EURO RSCG & CO agency for the conception and creation of the campaign and the AEGIS MEDIA agency for the purchase of space and the distribution of the campaign.

These two highly-regarded partners were selected in accordance with strict application of French rules, as planned in the partnership.

Criteria 3: Level of performance

The operation recorded high-level performances for a campaign of its nature, garnering strong approval.

Nevertheless, regarding the priority targets, it again delivered inferior results compared to the national average.

The purpose of the film was to motivate the citizens for the June 7th election. However the participation rate remained low, mainly due to the economic and political climate at the time. But beyond this objective, the film worked effectively in favour of the overall goal of the partnership "to promote the image of the European Union in the eyes of French citizens", since 62% of the citizenship felt that this film promoted Europe, even if they thought it came from the French Government (55%) more than Europe itself (20%).

THE EXHIBITION OF MAY 9th 2010

Criteria 1: Respect for the objectives assigned to the partnership

The aim of the event and the communication campaign associated with it was to inform residents of the Paris/Ile-de-France region of the 20th anniversary celebration of May 9th 1950.

The exhibition specifically promoted the major accomplishments of the European Union and produced an exhibition that could be used afterwards by associative structures and local communities. These goals matched perfectly the priorities of the partnership, which financed the organization of the exhibition and the purchase of space for an internet campaign.

Criteria 2: Respect for the procedure

According to the procedures, qualified subcontractors were selected to produce such a project in the frame of adjudications respectful of French rules: EURO RSCG & CO (in the context of the market already mentioned) and a subsidiary of the Carat company, the top independent agency in media advising and purchase of advertising space in Europe and in the world.

Criteria 3: Level of performance

The exhibition lasted a day and-a-half in the clock lounge of the Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs, attracting about 7000 visitors, with a cost per visitor of just over 22 Euros, which was expensive.

However, if we take into account the route of the exhibition (Fontainebleau, Bordeaux, Prades and Rennes), the per-contact cost is significantly reduced.

The campaign announcing the event, particularly aimed at the inhabitants of Paris and its suburbs, recorded very good results, with 6.6 million contacts and a click rate superior to 90% of the average recorded for the web campaigns.

However this operation required the mobilization of a significant amount of man-hours during a short period of time, since each content of the exhibition had to be checked-out, agreed upon and optimized.

Overall assessment

EFFICIENCY

The partnership for administration has indeed created synergy and coordination between the E.C. and the French Government in defining and realizing the actions and this coordination was materialized during the 3 years of our study. This synergy took on new proportions regarding the shortfilms campaign, given the number of ministries and administrations involved in the realization and financing of the operation.

The operations led were an efficient help to the communication priorities designed by the European Commission and France as for the selected communication themes and the targets aimed at.

Nevertheless, the partnership actors consider that the process of annual communication plan development and the choice of operations resulted from a strategic orientation that was not specific enough. They particularly regretted the fact that the selected communication actions were not part of a stronger global and multiannual plan. But one must keep in mind that this period suffered from frequent changes at the head of French Ministry for Foreign European Affairs.

The organizational structure of the partnership indeed involved all the actors concerned, enabled an easy communication between them and worked according to a rhythm adapted to the demands of the operational realization. However it was a little bit complex regarding the representation of the French Government but the further change of administrative organization in charge of this partnership has since given a relative simplification of the process.

The mechanisms and procedures turned out to be efficient and enabled a more effective use of European funds. Advantages had been taken of the multiplying ratio of co-financings which made possible to get strong impacts on the major campaigns. The investment of the partnership got 5 on a ratio lever compared to the funds spent.

But the mechanisms and procedures are heavy to manage on a daily basis for the French employees of the partnership. While optimizing the communication efficiency, a long-term vision would also lighten the operational burden by offering the possibility to establish multiannual agreements with chosen subcontractors according to an adjudication procedure.

EFFECTIVENESS

The context of depression in Europe on the studied period made the progression of the image of the European institution difficult. Nevertheless, this image made progress in two directions: the feeling that the French voice counts in EU and the feeling that France got benefits from its affiliation to EU.

Critère 2 : Respect de la procédure

Deux prestataires du SIG ont été utilisés, tous deux attributaires de marchés publics couvrant la période concernée : l'agence EURO RSCG & CO pour la conception et réalisation de la campagne et l'agence AEGIS MEDIA pour l'achat d'espace et la diffusion de la campagne.

Ces deux partenaires dont la compétence est reconnue ont donc bien été sélectionnés en stricte application de la réglementation française comme le prévoit le partenariat.

Critère 3 : Niveau de performance

L'action enregistra des performances quantitatives de haut niveau pour une campagne de ce type, suscitant un très fort agrément. Néanmoins, auprès des cibles prioritaires, on observe toujours des résultats en retrait par rapport à la moyenne nationale.

L'objectif de ce film était de motiver les citoyens pour le scrutin du 7 juin, ce qui ne s'est pas traduit dans le taux de participation qu'il a enregistré, pour des raisons qui dépassent bien évidemment le champ de cette action. Mais au-delà de cet objectif, le film utilisé a efficacement travaillé en faveur de l'objectif d'ensemble du partenariat, « faire progresser l'image de l'Union européenne auprès des citoyens français », puisque 62 % des citoyens ont considéré que ce film valorisait la construction européenne, même s'ils l'ont plus attribuée au gouvernement français (55%) qu'à l'Europe (20%).

L'EXPOSITION DU 9 MAI 2010

Critère 1 : Respect des objectifs assignés au partenariat

L'objectif de l'événement et de la campagne de communication qui lui était associé était d'informer les franciliens sur les célébrations du 9 mai marquant le vingtième anniversaire du 9 mai 1950.

L'exposition ayant spécifiquement pour objectif de promouvoir les réalisations majeures de l'Union européenne et de produire une exposition pouvant être accueillie ensuite par des structures associatives ou des collectivités locales. Ces objectifs étaient parfaitement en lien avec les priorités du partenariat, celui-ci finançant l'organisation de l'exposition et l'achat d'espace de la campagne Internet.

Critère 2 : Respect de la procédure

Il a été fait appel selon les procédures en vigueur à des sous-traitants compétents pour réaliser un tel projet dans le cadre d'appels d'offres respectant la réglementation française : EURO RSCG & CO (dans le cadre du marché déjà évoqué) et une filiale du groupe Carat, première agence indépendante de conseil média et d'achat d'espaces publicitaires en Europe et dans le monde.

Critère 3 : Niveau de performance

L'exposition dura un jour et demi dans le salon de l'horloge du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères et européennes, attirant environ 7000 visiteurs soit un coût au visiteur d'un peu plus de 22 euros ce qui est cher dans l'absolu. Toutefois, si l'on prend en compte l'itinérance de l'exposition (Fontainebleau v, Bordeaux, Prades et Rennes), le coût par contact est considérablement réduit.

La campagne annonçant l'événement, particulièrement ciblée sur les franciliens, a obtenu de très bons résultats, avec 6.6 millions de contacts et un taux de clic supérieur de 90% à la moyenne observée pour les campagnes web.

Cependant cette opération a nécessité la mobilisation d'importants moyens humains sur une période de temps très courte, chaque contenu de l'exposition devant faire l'objet de vérifications, de consensus et d'optimisations nombreux.

Bilan global

L'EFFICIENCE

Le partenariat de gestion a bien été créateur de synergie et de coordination entre la C.E. et le Gouvernement français dans la définition et la réalisation des actions et celle-ci s'est effectivement concrétisée durant les 3 années étudiées. Cette synergie a pris une ampleur toute particulière en ce qui concerne la campagne des films courts, compte tenu du nombre de ministères et d'administrations concernées par la réalisation et le financement de l'opération.

Les opérations menées ont bien servi les priorités de communication dégagées par la Commission européenne et la France en ce qui concerne les thématiques exploitées et les cibles visées. Néanmoins, les acteurs du partenariat considèrent que le processus d'élaboration du plan de communication annuel et du choix des opérations relevait d'orientations stratégiques à leur avis insuffisamment précises. Ils ont en particulier regretté que les actions de communication retenues ne s'intègrent pas plus fortement dans un plan global et pluriannuel. Mais il faut noter que cette période a pâti de changements fréquents à la tête du ministère des Affaires européennes français.

La structure organisationnelle du partenariat a bien impliqué bien l'ensemble des acteurs concernés, permis une communication facile entre eux, et fonctionné selon un rythme adapté aux exigences de la réalisation opérationnelle. Elle était toutefois un peu complexe en ce qui concerne la représentation du gouvernement Français mais le changement d'organisme gestionnaire ayant depuis apporté une relative simplification.

Les mécanismes et procédures se sont avérés efficaces et ont permis un usage plus efficace des fonds européens. Ils ont bénéficié du coefficient multiplicateur des cofinancements qui seuls ont permis d'obtenir de forts impacts sur les campagnes majeures. L'investissement du partenariat a bénéficié d'un levier de coefficient 5 par rapport aux sommes dépensées.

Mais les mécanismes et procédures sont d'un quotidien lourd pour les gestionnaires français du partenariat. Optimisant l'efficacité de la communication, une vision de plus long terme de l'action du partenariat permettrait aussi d'en alléger la charge opérationnelle en offrant la possibilité de nouer des accords pluriannuels avec des prestataires choisis selon une procédure d'appel d'offre.

L'EFFICACITE

Le contexte dépressif de l'Europe sur la période concerné rendait difficile une progression de l'image des institutions européennes. Toutefois, celle-ci a progressé dans deux dimensions : le sentiment que la voix de la France compte dans l'UE, et le sentiment que la France a bénéficié de son appartenance à l'UE.



The partnership enabled the European Commission to improve the impact of communication priorities in France, thanks to the push-up effect already mentioned.

The actions led reached the main targets aimed at. However, the repercussions will not last in time, as the absence of memories - even for the major campaigns - among the non-directly concerned people, as was revealed. The important role that the regional network can play in the local broadcasting of national communication campaigns must be underlined, since one of the partnership goals is to touch the different levels of French territory administration. This objective was probably the one least achieved in term of results between 2008 and 2010.

The qualitative added-value of the partnership on the communication operations of EU lies in the quality of performed services by the chosen partners as is shown, for instance, by the very good impact the film broadcasted for the 2009 elections had on how the EU was perceived.

Recommandations

In terms of direction for the partnership action:

- To tighten the goals.
- A better definition of the targets.
- Work in the long-run.
 - Repetitive campaigns (actions).
 - Stables communication codes.

In terms of operating procedure:

- Downstream partnerships: establish contracts with multiannual frames.
- Ready-made services: the technical aspect of the chosen actions must be completely managed by the subcontractor, the partnership organizers only dedicating themselves to the optimization of the contents.
- Actions with local updates:
 - To take advantage of the local networks motivation (Europe Direct, Houses of Europe, SGAR, local communities, associations...) heading towards actions that can be locally taken, updated and co-signed.
 - On every important action, to plan multi-supports customizable updates.
 - To extend the public markets regarding the purchase of advertising space to local supports like Daily Regional Press or radios.

A practical and projective tone.

To replace the co-financing by a full financing of complementary actions.

- The local and 360° updates of the national stimulating campaigns.
- Consequently, these actions would be more easily identified and attributed to the European Union.

To capitalize on a significant communication period exclusively attributable to "Europe".

- May 9th is the date which helps build up more and more the status of Europe and that in many regions turns into "Europe week", sometimes "Europe month".
- To concentrate the communication effort in shorter periods to amplify its impact and increase the consideration of the European Commission priority themes by the citizens. ■

Le partenariat a permis d'améliorer l'impact des priorités de communication de la Commission européenne en France grâce à l'effet levier déjà mentionné.

Les actions menées ont bien atteint les publics prioritairement visés. Cependant, la trace laissée dans la durée est probablement faible, comme l'absence de souvenir, même des campagnes majeures parmi les interviewés non directement concernés l'a révélé.

Il faut noter le rôle important que peuvent jouer les relais de communication locaux, probablement sous utilisés, pour toucher les différents échelons territoriaux comme le vise le partenariat, objectif probablement le moins atteint entre 2008 et 2010.

La plus valeur qualitative du partenariat sur les opérations de communication de l'U.E. réside dans la qualité des prestations réalisées par les partenaires retenus comme le montre par exemple le très bon impact sur la perception de l'U.E. du film diffusé pour l'élection de 2009.

Recommandations

En termes d'orientation de l'action du partenariat:

- Resserrer les objectifs
- Mieux définir les cibles
- Travailler dans la durée.
 - Des campagnes (actions) répétitives,
 - Des codes de communication stables.

En termes de mode d'action:

- Des partenariats en aval : conclure des contrats cadres pluriannuels
- Des prestations clés en main : l'aspect technique des actions retenues doit pouvoir être géré intégralement par les prestataires, les animateurs du partenariat se consacrant uniquement à l'optimisation du contenu.
- Des actions déclinées localement :
 - Il faut mettre à profit la motivation de tous les réseaux (Europe Direct, Maisons de l'Europe, SGAR, Collectivités locales, associations...) en s'orientant vers des actions qui puissent être reprises ou déclinées et cosignées localement.
 - Envisager sur toute action d'une certaine envergure une déclinaison multisupports personnalisable.
 - Etendre les accords cadres optimisant l'achat d'espace à des supports locaux de type PQR ou radios par exemple

Utiliser un ton concret et projectif.

Remplacer le cofinancement par le financement intégral d'actions complémentaires

- Les déclinaisons territoriales et 360 de campagnes nationales mobilisatrices.
- Des actions de ce fait plus fortement identifiables et attribuables à l'Union européenne.

Cultiver un temps fort de communication exclusivement attribuable à l'« Europe ».

- Le 9 mai est la date qui se construit de plus en plus ce statut, et qui dans plusieurs régions se prolonge en semaine, voire en mois de l'Europe.
- Concentrer l'effort de communication pour amplifier l'impact des communications et augmenter la présence des thèmes prioritaires de la Commission européenne auprès des citoyens. ■



Partnership evaluation

Executive summary

Germany

(Version 03.11.2009)

com.X - Institut für Kommunikations-Analyse & Evaluation

Introduction and themes of the evaluation

The European Commission's Communication of 2 July 2002¹ 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.

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

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?

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?

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?



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”.²

The Management Partnership in Germany largely satisfies these objectives. This assumption is founded on a meta-analysis³ 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.⁴

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 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.

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”⁵, 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”)⁶.

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

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

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

3 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.

4 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.

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.]

6 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.



“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 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.

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.

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 Information⁷ (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”.

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.

⁷ 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.

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 medial 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.

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 Partner-

ship, 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).⁸

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.

⁸ 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

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 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.



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.

Recommendations

- Maintain the basic mix of range and dialogue orientation
- Enhance web presence
- Prepare a long-term communication concept (duration: one contractual period)
- Create transparency with respect to the existing activities of the partners (internal and external of the MP)
- Systematize the evaluation of measures and reporting within the group of partners
- Simplify procedures – reduce bureaucracy (or verify accuracy of the bureaucracy reproach)



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.

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 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.

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?). ■

Partnership evaluation Executive summary Greece

For the period of 2009-2012
Dr Nikolaos Lymouris
Fellow at the London School of Economics (LSE)

Following the letter ARES(2012) / 29-05-2012 by the Head of the European Commission Representation in Greece, and the subsequent assignment of the evaluation of the European Management Partnership Program between the European Commission and Greece, for the years 2009-2012, the present evaluation report is submitted.

The conclusions that were drawn from the detailed and thorough examination of the achievements of the particular Program can be summarised in the following findings and proposals:

Efficiency

In this turning point that both Greece and the Eurozone, and hence, the European Union, go through, it is reasonable and predictable that high-level activities and events are organised, which are governed by visibility, with the ultimate aim of transmitting any European messages to the public in the optimum and most suitable way.

Therefore, it is understood that – for this central aim to be achieved – these actions must be organised by bodies that primarily have know-how in this field, and also be governed by the greatest possible administrative independence, as well as financial flexibility.

Bellow we try to depict in two graphs the structure of the Partnership between the EU and the Hellenic Republic. The first one imprints the agreed («theoretical») structure, while the second one captures the way it actually worked in practice.

34

Figure I (Agreed Structure)

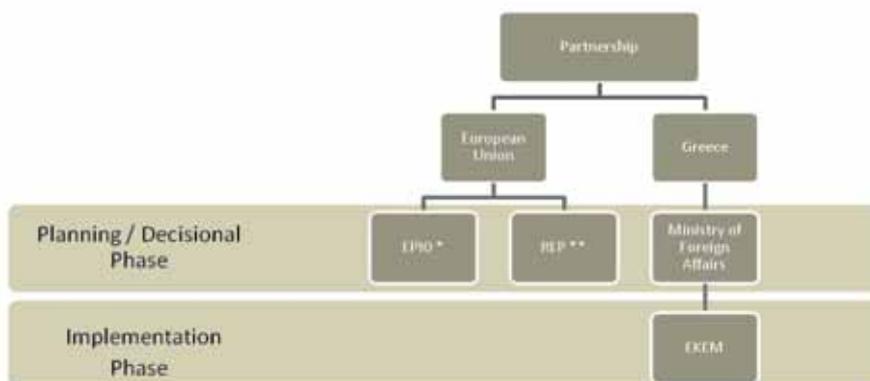
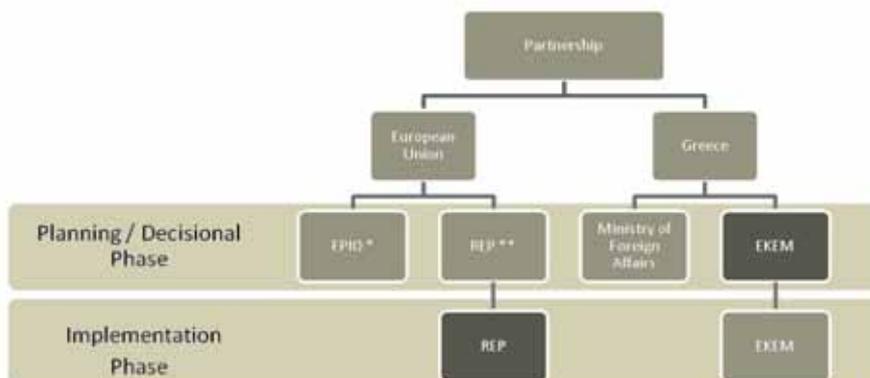


Figure II (The "Real" Structure)



* EPIO = European Parliament Information Office for Greece

** REP = Representation of the European Commission in Greece

From the above, it is quite evident that the two changes (both marked in red), ie the involvement of EKEM in the decision-making process and this of the REP in the implementation stage, were unavoidable, in terms of maximizing the realization of the project's outcomes. Both of the changes were needed in order to overcome the Foreign Ministry's failure to meet the high requirements at the decision-making level, and also EKEM's inability to coordinate the overall implementation of the planned actions.

Following the interviews with the members and the participants in the Program, as well as according to those recorded in the reports of the European Commission Delegation in Greece, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- The activation of a senior public body by Greece, at Ministry level, creates practical problems that are related to the way of operation of the senior public administration. In other words, the realisation of the Program is hindered because it must follow the particularly slow structures of the Greek administration, while it is constantly influenced by any structural reshuffles at Minister level. As a result, the whole construction of the communication field between the two parts of the Program must restart each time a new political person undertakes the position of the Minister, and thus, there is great delay both in the planning and the realisation of the Program. It is worth noting that, since 2009, the leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has changed 6 times, having as a result many problems at the decision-making level!
- As noted in the remarks and the sub-chapters 2 and 3, a lack of coherence and consistency is detected in the communication actions and events that were performed within the framework of the Program, giving the impression of incoherence and not proper implementation of the detailed planning. It is evident that the problem is mainly detected in the stage of implementation, highlighting the lack of the effective existence of a body that could act as the Program "day-to-day" manager, which will overcome potential problems at the decision-making level.
- In any case, it must be highlighted that the Greek Centre of European Studies (EKEM in its Greek acronym) tried to correspond to the high expectations of the program with honest interest, to rise to the challenging occasions, and to cope as well as possible with the realisation of the whole project. However, unfortunately, EKEM from 2010 onwards is facing a particularly difficult survival phase, especially because of the cut-off at the national budget, which does not allow it to fully utilise both its status and its long experience in the field of European policies in Greece to the benefit of the Program and the Partnership in general. Besides, the fact that people that successfully managed similar programs in the past (for example, the case of Greek Presidency in 2003) no longer belong to its workforce converges to this conclusion.

As a result of all the above, the re-definition of the Greek part of the Partnership would be proposed in any future planning of the Program. In the planning phase, it is advisable to activate a body of the Greek public administration – besides the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs – that knows the ways and methods of the presentation of messages to the general public. The General Secretariat of Information and Communication, the scope of which is to plan, develop and realise the national audio-visual policy, as well as promote the image of Greece and the Greek positions to the public opinion, could be proposed as such.

Under the same reasoning, regarding the stage of realisation and, in general, the monitoring of the Partnership achievements, it could be assigned – in a subsequent implementation of a similar project – to a body of the general Greek public administration. This body should meet a number of criteria, including experience in the effective managing development programs, particularly those funded by the European Union, covering mainly needs in know-how, systems, methods and procedures of planning and implementation.

Effectiveness

Any positive and negative points that have arisen in the Partnership were reflected in the sector of the Program realisation, and as a result, we are led to the following assessments:

- The annual communication plans appear exceptionally more ambitious compared to the final result. In a sense, this fact has dictated the need to cover this gap with additional actions and activities organised by the Representation of the European Commission in Greece.
- It should, however, be acknowledged that since late 2010, there was in Greek society an extremely negative political conjuncture, which undoubtedly affected the implementation of the planned activities of the Partnership.

That is why since 2011 there has been a qualitative shift (in contrast with the quantitative approach taken in the period 2009-2010), which has as its main objective the use of new, innovative and extremely more economical methods, aiming at maximizing the visibility of the implemented activities.

This shift, the success of which is due - among other things – to the correct design by the Representation of the European Commission in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, focused on the "image exploitation" as a means of horizontal penetration of Greek citizens. Thus, and overcoming the "traditional / old-fashioned" techniques of the past, an integrated communication strategy was designed and launched, focussing on the promotion – through nationwide TV stations – both of the testimonials of well-known personalities, and of interventions in prime time broadcast shows.

This whole approach achieved in communicating the "European message" of the Partnership to a very large part of the general public.

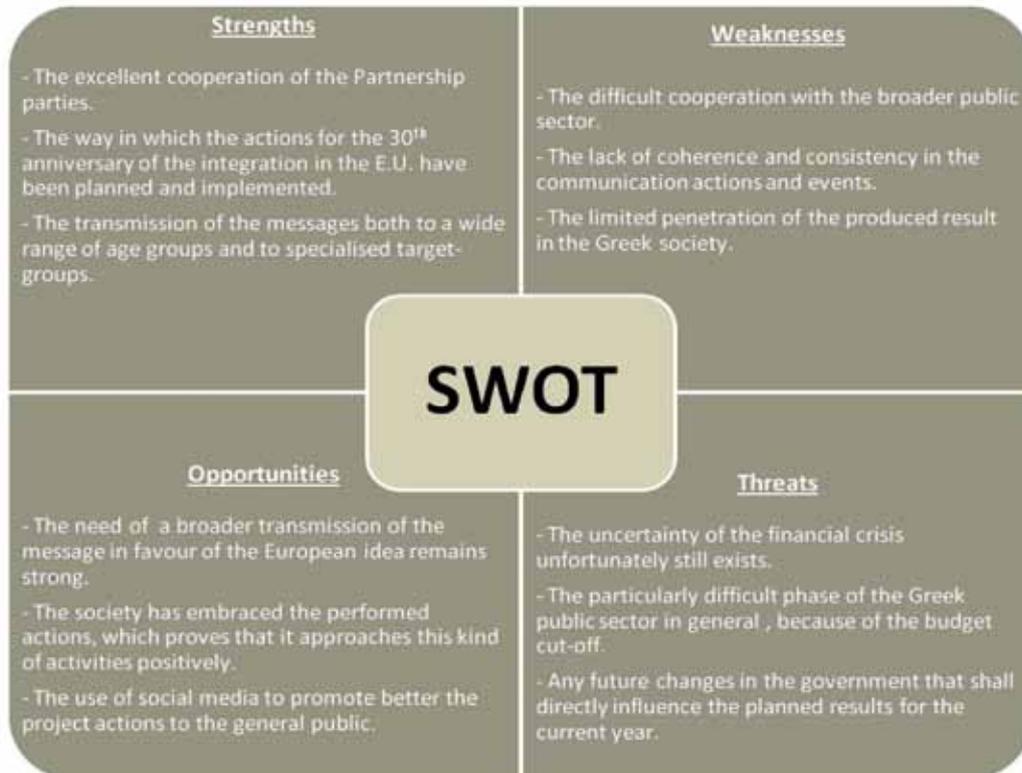
- In other words, the planning and realisation of the particular action has been binary. On the one hand, effort has been made with the use of "above-the-line" data (such as the use of television and radio spots, postings in the press etc.), so that the Greek public could create a positive image for the idea of the European Union.

On the other hand, a "below-the-line" approach was followed, focusing on activities in the district, which shows encouraging signs of responding to events with a European orientation, as well as a series of target-groups. The main goal has undoubtedly been the focus of the most events on the promotion of the positive aspects of the participation of Greece in the European Union.

Therefore, as it was understood by the parties of the Partnership in an exceptionally proper

way, in a time of crisis, opportunities that arise from symbolic anniversaries must be seized, so that an integrated and multi-levelled orchestrated attempt of “bombardment” of the public with positive messages about Europe can be planned and realised, and so that this can contribute decisively to the attempt of reversing the negative opinion of the Greeks about the European Union.

In conclusion, if we try to depict all the above using the SWOT strategic planning tool, we result in the following graph. ■



Partnership evaluation

Executive summary

Hungary

The evaluation of the Management Partnership (MPA) aims at carrying out a thorough evaluation of the activities executed under the Management Partnership between the Hungarian Government and the European Commission as well as the evaluation of the Management Partnership itself. The evaluation of the executed activities of the MPA mean the evaluation of six communication projects implemented between 2007 and 2010.

The Inception and Interim Report were focusing on the evaluation methods and their results were presented in these Reports. The structure of the Final Report is redesigned compared to the Inception and Interim Report as its main aim is to give answers to the evaluation questions formulated by the Representation in the Call for tender. The evaluation methods are briefly presented in the VII Annexes.

Structure of the final report

In the framework of the present evaluation, the efficiency and effectiveness of the Management Partnership are examined. The evaluation also covers the six communication projects of the Management Partnership, namely:

- Universal Europe - 2007-2008
- 50 years, 50 locations, 50 thousand people - 2007
- Together Against Climate Change - 2008
- Get involved - 2009
- European Elections - 2009
- Multi-phase project - 2009-2010

Unlike the Inception and the Interim Report the Final Report has been structured in accordance with the evaluation questions to be answered. During the evaluation process, each project was evaluated and presented in the reports following the structure of the evaluation methods, but the Final Report focuses on the findings and conclusions drawn.

The Final Report is made up of the following main sections:

1. Answers to the evaluation questions
2. Presentation of the multi-criteria analysis
3. Presentation of case studies of the six examined MPA projects
4. Annex presenting the outcomes of evaluation methods (most of which were carried out during the inception and the interim phases)

Case studies present the projects in the following structure:

- Objectives of the projects
- Short description of the projects
- Timeframe

- Financial data
- Indicators
- Overall evaluation - including success factors and shortcomings
- Recommendations

Evaluation questions

The evaluation questions were formulated by the EC Representation in the Invitation to tender:

Effectiveness

- To what extent has the Partnership increased the impact of the Commission's communication priorities at Member State level? To what extent has it achieved its goals in terms of reaching the intended public and yielding the desired results?
- To what extent did it contribute an added value (number and quality) to the Communication activities undertaken by the partners before the Partnership came into force?

Efficiency

- To what extent has the Partnership brought about synergies and an increased coordination between the Member State and the Commission?
- To what extent are the mechanisms and procedures created for the Partnership efficient? To what extent are they cost-effective as compared to the previous, non-partnership scenario?

To what extent has the Partnership increased the impact of the Commission's communication priorities at Member State level? To what extent has it achieved its goals in terms of reaching the intended public and yielding the desired results?

- Universal Europe has significantly raised the profile of the Erasmus programme within the 6 universities where the events took place - the conspicuously visible, multimedia tools were well chosen in order to achieve the results. It also reached thousands of university students who had not been in the focus of EU-communication activities prior to 2007.
- The 50 years, 50 locations project was able to raise the effectiveness of the EC's communication since it focused on the following issues:
 - Going local and discussing the development of the specific region in an EU- context,
 - Involvement and cooperation of different local partners building solidarity, thinking together and in partnership,
 - Active EU citizenship was encouraged by expressive presentation of EU values,
 - As for the 50th anniversary of the integration, it also served as an opportunity to deal with the EU and highlight the EU membership in Hungary.

- The project Together against Climate Change has achieved, moreover topped the required results at the level of outputs in environmental issues, however, its third objective (Highlight the role of the EU, encourage individual thinking on common European future-related issues, by informing on policy choices) was not adequately covered in this campaign.
- The five granted subprojects of the Get involved project showed that cultural differences at local level can be a benefit for the whole local community if people cooperate and interact with each other in the realisation of a common goal, for which this project contributed to the EC's communication priority "Intercultural dialogue".
- The EP Election 2009 project was conform to the objectives of the MPA (implementation of the EC's information and communication strategy) as it contributed to the presentation of the EU in a member state, it reached the target groups efficiently, it was implemented well according to the output and result indicators - the plans were even topped at online attainments. At the same time, the overall goal of the project concerning the voting turnout was not attained.
- The Debate Competition (Multi-phase project) was very carefully planned despite the relatively short time available for preparation, students went through a series of activities involving individual and cooperative learning, which helped them obtain and internalise some EU-related body of knowledge.
- The Teacher Training project's (Multi-phase project) courses reflected not only current, but rather future EU strategies and priorities, pedagogical application of the new media and the methodology update provided intended to make the teacher even more motivated to decide to exploit new, up-to-date themes of EU relevance in their own classroom work.
- The innovative methods of the Get involved project were the following: cultural database, benchmarking activity by NGOs, theatre performance.
- The EP Elections 2009 campaign did not serve as an added value in terms of communication tools but due to this project the EP Information Office started to play a more active role in the MPA.
- The specific suitcases for learning and teaching about the EU from Berlin and Holland helped adopt a European know-how in the Multi-phase project.

To what extent has the Partnership brought about synergies and an increased coordination between the Member State and the Commission?

MPA did bring about synergies and increased coordination between the member state and the Commission in a number of policy fields and in the implementation of the projects. Best practices based on which the synergies of the coordination between the Member State and the Commission are justified:

- Multi-phase project: synergy and increased cooperation between the Commission and Member State institutions. Approaching teachers and students has been a communication priority of the Commission, which could be channelled successfully towards the Hungarian authorities by the Representation.
- Thanks to the EP Elections 2009 project the European Parliament Information Office undertook a more important role in the Management Partnership which undoubtedly enforced the coordination on the MPA level.
- In 2009 there were anniversary programmes throughout the EU states and Hungary adapted the German project idea to Hungarian specifics in the 50 years, 50 locations project. It meant important additionality that members state - keeping the EU-communication principles - imported its proper aspects and values to the communication of the European Commission as added value.
- On the MPA level, it must be highlighted that the most valuable and long-term synergy of the coordination is the enforced and fruitful cooperation of the MoFA and the Representation as well as multiplier effects via exchanging their national and international know-how and relations.

To what extent are the mechanisms and procedures created for the Partnership efficient? To what extent are they cost-effective as compared to the previous, non-partnership scenario?

Owing to several reasons, comparing the cost-effectiveness of the MPA with the previous scenario is practically impossible. Based on the comparison of the procurement procedures, human resources and management costs of the MPA projects and the non-MPA communication projects of the Representation the following findings were made:

- The MPA projects' procurement procedure does not require more time than the Representation's non-MPA communication projects on an average (despite the differences between EU and Hungarian legislation).

To what extent did it contribute an added value (number and quality) to the Communication activities undertaken by the partners before the Partnership came into force?

The main added value presented by the Management Partnership in terms of communication activities is its existence. This means that the budget spent on these activities itself constitutes the added value - without these sums the communication activities focusing on EU priorities would be much weaker in terms of their depth, target groups covered, messages conveyed. Following the accession, the budget for EU communication was drastically cut. This means that the number of communication activities has undoubtedly been higher than it was before the MPA; it generates synergies between different actors and projects. Due to the financing of MPA projects, additional state financed communication projects have also developed, resulting that the multiplier effect does exist and it constitutes an added value.

Some good examples for added value in terms of communication tools, messages, approaches and cooperation:

- The innovative feature of the Universal Europe project with a conspicuously decorated, attention-grabbing vehicle stationed for periods of 10 days in 6 university campuses.
- Strategic looking into the future, partnership manner, "future depends on us" approach and stimulation of active citizenship were novel messages of the 50 years, 50 location project.
- Guerrilla actions, on-the-spot consultancy on energy saving issues of the Together Against Climate Change project.

- The cost of human resources of MPA projects is about one-quarter of the non-MPA ones.
- The management cost of MPA projects amounts to almost 30% of the handled funds, (while this ratio is 79% in case of non-MPA projects) which is meant to be rather high, yet, owing to limited possibilities in economies of scale a relatively higher proportion of management cost is justifiable.
- Compared to the non-MPA projects of the Representation, MPA projects seem to be relatively efficient also in terms of public procurement procedures and cost-efficiency of the management.
- Internal knowledge management systems are to be put in place: this means that the current practice of informal knowledge sharing between the colleagues should be continued, since it is a very good practice. Yet, it should be complemented by a simple, concise documentation system: e.g. a case study could be developed following the implementation of the communication projects.
- Methodological development on evaluation methods for MPA management via training, consultation in order to prepare CFPs emphasizing evaluation more.
- The Intermediary Body is to be screened before its selection so as to be aware of its strengths and weaknesses.
- We recommend the development a specific, tailor-made MPA portal, where all the MPA projects' short descriptions and results could be published. This would increase the visibility of the spending of EU funds and provides publicity for the MPA.
- We envisage the elaboration of an MPA document that lays down the tasks and responsibilities of each partner within the Management Partnership (Representation, EP Information Office, MoFA and the Intermediary Body), which will be based on the arrangement of each of the partners in order to assure a common understanding of overall objectives, purposes and procedures of the Management Partnership.
- Administrative burdens of all parties involved ought to be loosened.
- Communication professionals are to be made part of the Evaluation Committee.
- We recommend the development of a regular and documented monitoring system of:
 - Project implementation,
 - An annual communication plan. ■

Recommendations

Case studies and findings to the four main evaluation questions also present various recommendations at both MPA and project level. Recommendations related to the examined projects can be found in VI Case studies in chapters "Recommendations" for each project.

Below the general recommendations concerning the Management Partnership are presented:

Recommendations related to the functioning of the Management Partnership

- Result-oriented (e.g. logframe-based) planning processes ought to be implemented for MPA planning purposes to ensure the application of SMART indicators.
- Some kind of ex-post evaluation related to the projects has to be assigned as the task of the beneficiary/sub-contractor, thus ensuring a minimal input for MPA level ex-post evaluations. This task should be part of the ToR/proposal and the contract as well. This evaluation can be very simple and cost-effective, just focusing on outputs and results (impacts cannot be measured in such a short time-span). In addition, self-evaluation of the beneficiary/subcontractor might also help in order to obtain a more profound picture of the project in question¹.

¹ A usable sample for self-evaluation is that of the EQUAL projects, where each development partnership had to carry out self-evaluation activities (Guidance Note on the Self-Evaluation of Development Partnerships in Hungary).



Partnership evaluation

Executive summary

Italy

Introduction

In order to better communicate and “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 European Commission decided, with the Communication of 2 July 2002, to pave a new way in communicating to the general public. Such new approach required, as well, a new strategy and model for inter-institutional cooperation which called for the development of structured partnerships with the Member States: the “Management Partnership”.

Such collaborative model required 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 partners ensure 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.

Furthermore, in 2004 the Commission issued a further Communication (COM(2004) 196 – “Communicating in Partnership”) which established that “Member State have an essential role to play in disseminating information on EU issues at national, regional and local level in order to reach out as many citizens as possible”. This was the main purpose of the Management Partnership which in Italy started in 2008.

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 and Parliament Representation in Italy, the other members are: the Presidency of the Prime Minister Council - European Policies Department and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

The Intermediary body was entrusted with executive functions relating to the general administration of the information activities in accordance with the Information Plans and the directions given by the Coordination team. These functions included in particular: (i) the preparation, (ii) the execution, (iii) the completion of procedures for grant and contract management and the monitoring and controlling of the related expenses.

In the following pages is provided a brief summary of the most relevant elements and conclusions emerged from the evaluation.

Evaluation summary

The first three years of implementation of the Information and Communication Plans and of the Management Partnership in Italy (which covered the period between 2008, 2009 and 2010) represented, especially for the first year, a sort of “learning phase” which led, year by year, to a progressive improvement and smoothness in the Partnership’s management.

The investigations carried out, in fact, have revealed that a deep change has taken place in those years with respect to the previous situation: it’s with the launch of the Management Partnership, in fact, that was given impetus to the efforts aimed at communicating “European messages” within the framework of the directions and the guidelines of the Inter-Institutional Group on Information (IGI) in the context of broader perspective.

In the light of the above preamble and in response to the specific questions laid down in the “Guidelines for the evaluation of Management Partnerships with the member States”, the main conclusions of the evaluation are given with respect to the questions below.

- To what extent has the Management Partnership been basically able to implement the EU’s communication priorities at State level?
- Has the Management Partnership created added value to the activities so far performed in Italy to communicate European policy?
- Were the mechanisms and procedures of the Partnership efficient?
- What is the influence of the Management Partnership on the activities of the partners involved? Have activities and coordination of the partners really been improved?

To what extent has the Management Partnership been basically able to implement the EU's communication priorities at State level?

The main objectives of the Management Partnership were 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. With respect to such purpose it is possible to state that the Management Partnership has reached its overall goals since its introduction has signed a net change with respect to the past situation and the communication/information regarding European issues has become a common priority at least for the institutions composing the Coordination Team.

Furthermore, important target groups were addressed by the Management Partnership's communication activities: primarily young people (putting in place actions like seminars, public events, school meetings, etc.) and secondly the general public/citizens (implementing place actions like information and communication campaigns).

However it is important to underline that the evaluation has partially been limited from a shortage of information and data due to the absence of a structured monitoring system: such weakness affected the measurement of the concrete impact of the communication/information activities implemented. As suggested in the Final Report, the new Intermediary body and the Coordination Team will set up an effective and efficient monitoring system tailored upon the activities planned and more resources will be devoted to evaluation activities.

Has the Management Partnership created added value to the activities so far performed in Italy to communicate European policy?

A concrete added value has been achieved by means of the Management Partnership in terms of diffusion of communication priorities and themes at national level since a structured and systematic informative action wasn't previously contemplated and, furthermore, there was no coordination between the single Administrations/Institution in this field.

In fact with the activation of the Management Partnership system has started to be performed a more robust implementation of initiatives addressed to the general public and, especially, young people previously little or nothing intercepted and informed on European issues and opportunities. Indeed, previously, the communication initiatives were relegated exclusively to institutional advertising of events whose appeal and whose perception of usefulness were weak. The main contribution and added value of the Management Partnership has been that of creating a common framework on the basis of precise communication themes which could be "tailored" according to the specific characteristics of the national context and of the targets selected.



Were the mechanisms and procedures of the Partnership efficient?

In evaluating governance and managing procedures of the Partnership some weaknesses and critical points have emerged. First of all there were no written procedures (in terms of manuals, protocols, etc.) and any activity was based on “informal” procedures. Such model gave affected partially the implementation of the Management Partnership’s activities providing a not clear and stable framework.

Specific and relevant weaknesses have been encountered in analyzing the monitoring process and system. There wasn’t a structured “monitoring system” and there was no planned and systematic collection, analysis and elaboration of data regarding the implementation of the activities contemplated in the Plans. As stated before, this lack of information affected the impact evaluation with particular regard to the older actions. The absence of monitoring activities was also due to the lack of selection of specific indicators in the planning phase.

A further element and weak point that affected the execution of the evaluation consisted in the several changes and modifications of the Information and Communication Plans during their execution: such events were due, on one hand, to the real and objective difficulties encountered during implementation of the activities, on the other hand, it has to be noted that the level of detail in the description of the activities was low: in fact, the planning phase revealed a certain “detachment” between the “strategic” level of the Partnership (the Coordination Team) and the “operational” level (Intermediary body). Such distance between the two levels has affected the operational planning phase and has influenced the following implementation also in terms of monitoring activities.

In order to solve such critic points the evaluator has proposed some actions that the new Intermediary body (the Presidency of the Prime Minister Council-European Policies Department) is putting in place:

1. Defining specific and clear procedures (manual, formats, protocols);
2. Supporting the Coordination Team with a “Technical team” in charge of detailing the Information and Communication Plans for a better implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
3. Identifying verifiable indicators and setting up and effective monitoring system;
4. Giving adequate resources to the evaluation of the informative and communication activities.

What is the influence of the Management Partnership on the activities of the partners involved? Have activities and coordination of the partners really been improved?

The Partnership distinguished for its effectiveness in stimulating productive coordination (previously absent) between national and European institutions ensuring a good level of synergy between them within a context of positive collaboration between the parties forming the Coordination Team;

The Partnership has “stimulated” the institutions to act and work according to a different (from the previous one) approach and “forcing” them in setting up an overall governance, previously absent. The positive effect of this innovation was to “call” the members of the Coordination Team for the adoption of a new method and a more structured approach in designing, implementing and managing complex communication interventions. ■



Partnership evaluation

Executive summary

Lithuania

September 2012

Executive Summary

In May 23, 2012 UAB "ProBaltic Consulting" was contracted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania (contract No. 223-12-IVRD) to perform the Evaluation of the Management Partnership in Lithuania. Based on requirements of the contract, the Contractor shall provide the interim report.

The interim report describes the data collection activities (interviews, case studies, focus groups, etc) carried out so far by the evaluator. The report will expound the steps followed, the eventual findings and problems encountered as well as potential lines of research not previously identified, which could be of use for the evaluation as a whole. It also includes some elements of preliminary analysis already carried out as well as preliminary conclusions, provided that they are based on a sufficiently sound analysis.

Evaluation questions

To what extent has the Partnership increased the impact of the European Commission's communication priorities at Member State level? To what extent has it achieved its goals in terms of reaching the intended public and yielding the desired results?

Numerous campaigns have been executed during past 5 years, which significantly contributed to effective implementation of EC communication priorities, reaching foreseen objectives and wide target audiences (e.g. „Raising the Lithuanian EU membership participation and strengthening civil society, contractor UAB „Gravitas Partners“ or “EU news broadcasting on TV”, contractor UAB „Laisvas ir nepriklausomas kanalas“). Management Partnership (MP) program made significant impact on ability to communicate EU policies priorities and initiatives. Formerly implemented sporadic campaigns had been supplemented by Management Partnership raising the communication impact and effectiveness. It is important to mention that Management Partnership is very positively evaluated by contractors. Projects are executed smoothly and flexibly, while taking into account current needs. Decision making process and activities approval is fast and fluent. Project management is done with spirit of trust and goodwill. MP projects with no doubt contributed to the implementation of EU policies. However, several additional measures have to be taken in order to make Management Partnership activities more effective:

1. Defining objectives, messages and target groups. Additional attention should be devoted to more clear and exact definition of each campaign aims, messages, narrowing target audiences. The discussion how to make campaigns more sustainable and extendable would be also helpful. Larger campaigns would allow allocating available budgets more effectively, get better negotiating position with media channels and reach wider audiences with bigger impact. Overly general objectives of the campaigns and willingness to target very wide audience, resulted in inability to evaluate the results and are among aspects that should be improved in the future.
2. Measurement of results. Concrete expected results were not defined to the most contractors and this is the reason why it is difficult to measure campaigns success. The measurement of results is insufficient (e.g. campaign result has been defined as “higher percentage of target audience and inhabitants of Lithuania should identify themselves with EU”, however after the campaign ended the perception changes were not measured, and only media reach was evaluated). Moreover, not all campaigns that included media relations, had quantitative results measurement (e.g., no media monitoring was performed after distribution of press release). Finally, events projects should have possibility to track feedback from participants (e.g., by asking to fill in evaluation questionnaires).
3. Budgets allocation and media mix. Until now projects budgets are allocated using equality principle. However, the nature of the project should be taken into account (e.g. allocating bigger budget for wide media campaigns and less for events or regional campaigns). In some campaigns wider media mix should be used, (e.g. internet advertising, outdoor in some cases strengthens the message and effectiveness of the campaign).

43



Most effective campaigns:

1. „Raising the Lithuanian EU membership participation and strengthening civil society”, contractor UAB „Gravitas Partners“ (effective target audience reach, clear message, lowest cost per person)
2. “EU news broadcasting on TV”, contractor UAB „Laisvas ir nepriklausomas kanalas“ (wide audience reach, clear objectives, lowest cost per person).

To what extent did it contribute an added value (number and quality) to the Communication activities undertaken by the partners before the Partnership came into force?

Management Partnership contributed to geographical extension of EU policies communication, as well to the content and quality of communication. Campaigns became larger, number of campaigns was extended, and more topics are covered. While evaluating EU policies, communication activities of national institutions were analysed. Before MP agreement came to force, several communication activities had been undertaken. The most prominent campaign was executed back to 2004, highlighting EU membership advantages before accession referendum. Later communication activities concentrated on separate small scale communication projects, co-financing of Europe Direct network activities or maintaining of EU news portal www.euro.lt. Activities were more projectbased and small-scale in nature. Thus, Management Partnership contributed an added value (number and quality) to the communication activities undertaken by the partners.

Costs efficiency of implemented projects

The financial evaluation of the implemented projects is a complicated task, as often setting the quantitative efficiency indicators is not possible. The results of the analysis show that “EU News”, “European values and Lithuania: influence of changes” and “Volunteering promotion project” in financial terms were the most efficient. However, it is necessary to draw attention to the fact that people participating in the events cannot be treated the same way as TV or radio audience.

Active

participants are likely to be the multipliers of information.

Organizational Structure

The implementation of Management Partnership project starts from the announcement of annual priorities, set by the European Commission in cooperation with the other EU institutions. Priorities are being communicated to the Coordination Groups of Member States. In Lithuania Coordination Group consists of European Commission Representation, European Parliament Information Office (EPIO) and Intermediary Body - Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), representing the Government of Lithuania. After the priorities are announced the Coordination Group meets in order to select the ideas how to communicate the messages in Lithuania in the most suitable way. Ideas are selected through the informal discussions. European Commission is approving the Communication Plan, whereas MFA implements the Plan.

MFA prepares the Terms of Reference for candidates. European Commission Representation and the EPIO participate in the preparation of ToR's. Intermediary Body is selecting candidates, in some cases it consults with European Commission Representation and EPIO. Selected candidates implement projects and provide Intermediary Body with the reports, including financial ones. The Intermediary Body prepares the Progress Report for the European Commission.

Management Partnership has been implemented successfully so far. Members of the Coordination Group evaluate the activities of MP positively, although, some improvements could be necessary.

Human Resources

At the moment, Intermediary Body is a one-person organization. The issue of irreplaceability occurs.

Variety and complexity of projects requires a set of different competences. Additional personnel or redistribution of tasks could be necessary to reduce the risk of irreplaceability and allow employees to deepen their knowledge in a particular field. The opportunity of the participation in learning activities should be provided for the employees of Intermediary Body. The possibility of involvement of external experts could also be considered.

Synergy

The highest level of synergy has been achieved within the Coordination Group. Speaking about the cooperation with external partners, no involvement of international organizations was noticed. However, some Ministries of Lithuanian Republic were involved in the implementation of Management Partnership projects. Overall evaluation of MP activities provided by Ministries was positive. Coordination Group plans to expand the cooperation with social partners. In the year 2012 the representatives of the Ministries of Lithuanian Republic will be invited to the primary meeting of the Coordination group, where the annual priorities are being discussed and the Communication Plan is being prepared. ■



Partnership evaluation

Executive summary

Malta

23 August 2012

In March 2009, the European Commission and the Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee (MEUSAC) signed a four year Management Partnership Delegation Agreement, which includes an allocation of €800,000 to cover the implementation of communication operations. The objective of the agreement is to increase communication actions locally by creating a public dialogue on EU related matters.

The partner institutions of this Management Agreement include the European Commission Representation in Malta, the European Parliament Information Office in Malta and the Ministry of Justice, Dialogue and the Family (MJDF) representing the Maltese Government. Each of these bodies have a nominated representative that sits on a Coordination Team that oversees the governance of the Management Partnership.

One of the main objectives for the Management Partnership is to convey the European Commission's communication priorities at a local level in order to ensure that the key messages are communicated within a relevant context. The Joint Communication Plans (JCPs) define the set of operations to be implemented in a particular year.

The Coordination Team's role is to elaborate and adopt the JCP, as well as to plan, monitor and evaluate the Management Partnership and relevant information and communication activities. The JCP is then implemented and administered by MEUSAC as the Intermediary Body. MEUSAC's responsibilities in implementing the JCP are defined in the terms of the Delegation Agreement.

This evaluation covers the first three years of the Management Partnership Agreement (2009 - 2011) during which twenty communication operations were carried out. The operations for 2012, the final year of the implementation of the four-year agreement, are not within the scope of this evaluation.

This report provides the partner institutions with an independent assessment of the past performance of the Partnership's activities by focusing on the governance and organisational set-up of the Management Partnership, the cost-effectiveness of operations and the overall impact on the targeted audiences. The four key evaluation questions for this evaluation study are discussed at length within the main body of this report.

In considering the key findings and conclusions of this evaluation, one must bear in mind that this evaluation was undertaken a considerable time after the communications events were held. In the absence of documentation and feedback gathered at the time, therefore, it becomes very difficult impractical to gauge the impact on targeted users.

It is also important to bear in mind that there was no similar evaluation study conducted prior to implementing the Management Partnership Agreement in 2009. For this reason the ability to evaluate the added value quantitatively was not really possible. Instead the study has focused on the qualitative aspects.

On this basis, the findings set out within this evaluation report are based on an assessment of a total of twenty communication activities undertaken between 2009 and 2011. We have relied considerably on the documentation maintained for each project activity and also used this documentation to undertake a multi- criteria analysis. This analysis allowed for the communication operations to be assessed against measurable criteria which were chosen to reflect the performance of operations against their objectives. In addition, interviews were held with the main stakeholders from the partner institutions and MEUSAC. Detailed case studies were also carried out for three particular operations, and in this regard interviews with the respective service providers were also undertaken.

Key findings

- 1. Impact** - The Management Partnership has engaged in innovative communication activities which are relevant and effective in delivering the core messages to target audiences in Malta. On the whole, the operations which were carried out are considered effective and scored an average of 3.6 (out of a maximum 5 points) in a multi-criteria analysis exercise that was carried out to analyse the 20 operations under evaluation. Furthermore, available feedback from the beneficiaries of the operations suggests that participants found the operations to be highly relevant and informative. Service providers who were interviewed as part of the evaluation exercise also commented that generally speaking, the communication tools were effective for interacting with the target audiences. On this basis, one can consider the Management Partnership to have increased the impact of the Commission's communication objectives.
- 2. Added value** - The introduction of the Management Partnership in Malta has led to additional administrative capacity and an increased level of communication activities aimed

at different target sectors of the local population. In this regard discussions with the partner institutions indicate that the introduction of the Management Partnership has allowed a more focused promotion of the European Commission's communication priorities. Communication activities, related to EU priorities and policies are being undertaken in a manner which are relevant and recognisable within the local context, thereby maximising the effect on targeted users.

3. **Synergies** - The Management Partnership provides a structured environment for synergy and coordination between the different partner institutions, which can now channel shared communication objectives through a central organisation. The partner institutions of the Management Partnership collaborate to develop synergised events together, which reach a wider target audience and achieve a deeper level of dissemination. Furthermore, the Management Partnership operations and the partner institutions' own initiatives tend to complement each other, and together deliver more holistic information about the European Union and its impact on citizens.

4. Mechanisms and procedures

Procurement - The Management Partnership, through MEUSAC, executes its operations under the local Public Procurement regime, which is based on the relevant EU Directives and processes. However, whilst the procedure is similar, the local public procurement regime has at times resulted in lengthy and cumbersome procurement processes. The average duration of tender procedures was 97 days, covering the period from the date of tender issue until the date of contract signature. If one were to only consider those tenders that did not encounter any particular issues, the average duration was 75 days. This would still appear to be too lengthy a process. Furthermore, in 2010 the local public procurement regime was changed and a new policy was introduced specifying that tenders should be evaluated and awarded on the basis of the lowest cost of technically compliant offer rather than on the basis of the Most Economically Advantageous Tender. This change in policy has negatively impacted the Management Partnership because the choice of service providers for communication activities is no longer based on the ability to choose a service provider that can maximise the intended communication objectives. Rather the choice of least cost operators has at times led to mediocre output and delays in execution due to limited capacity of the service providers chosen.

Utilisation of Allocated Funds - The Management Partnership is efficient in the drawdown of funds made available to it. For the three years under evaluation (2009-2011), the funds made available under the Management Partnership amounted to €600,000. A review of the communication activities indicates that for the period 2009, 2010 and 2011 a total of €465,479 had been spent until the time of the evaluation study. However given that some projects initiated in 2011 were not yet fully implemented, there remains an additional €98,871 that is contracted and due to be settled. On this basis, the amount of communication activities for the three year period are estimated at €564,350, representing 94% of the allocated funds. One notes that these unutilised funds have been carried over into the budget for 2012 which has been set at €250,000.

Management resources - Resources within MEUSAC are not dedicated exclusively towards the Management Partnership. The activities of the Management Partnership rely on the support of resources across the MEUSAC organisation including the involvement of the Head of EU Policy and Legislation, the Head of Administration and Support Services, and the Media Coordinator. In addition to MEUSAC resources, there is also an element of input from resources within the European Commission Representation in Malta. It is estimated that the time spent by the resources from both entities on Management Partnership activities amounts to four Full Time Equivalent staff members, with an aggregate annual salary cost of €120,500.

On this basis, the human resource cost for the administration of the twenty communication activities between 2009 and 2011 works out at €0.64 per euro of Management Partnership funding spent. This can also be viewed as an HR cost of €18,075 per activity. A similar evaluation of the Management Partnership Agreement in Hungary (with an estimated 2.69 FTEs) yielded an average management cost of €0.30 per euro spent¹, whilst the human resource cost for the administration of six communication activities over the same three year period is estimated at €44,455 per activity.

These figures would indicate that inefficiencies begin to set in as the number of project activities undertaken increases. The nature of the operations carried out offers little potential for economies of scale, since the administrative and procurement processes need to be carried out for each operation that is planned and implemented.

5. Efficiency and Cost-Effectiveness of Operations -

In evaluating the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of operations, the multi-criteria analysis exercise undertaken in respect of all the communication operations resulted in a score of 3.7 (out of a maximum 5) for 2009, 3.2 for 2010 and 3.8 for 2011. This scoring would indicate that the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of operations are generally positive, although there is certainly room for further improvement. One notes that whilst all planned operations are being contracted for in time during the same year, quite often there are delays in the execution of such operations which extend into the successive year.

One notes, that for many communication events the targeted sectors have included children and teachers. Using such multipliers indirectly also enhances the cost-efficiency of operations as it creates potential for a wide target audience to be reached by investing in a deeper level of interactions with a small group of multipliers.

¹ Evaluation of the Management Partnership Between the European Commission and the Hungarian Government, Final Report. Ex Ante Tanacsado Iroda Consulting. 22 November 2010.

Recommendations

The key recommendations emerging from the evaluation can be summarised as follows:

1. Increase the scope of JCPs to include more supporting information on each operation, including measurable performance indicators and a clear definition of how the operation links to communication priorities.
2. Enhance procurement processes by defining tender requirements more effectively, using weighted technical and cost evaluation criteria where possible, and building in an element of flexibility to tender requirements, especially where creative products and services are required.
3. Hold more formal Coordination Team Meetings on a regular basis and keep a record of minutes.
4. Ring fence staff exclusively for the Management Partnership to improve efficiency in administering the Partnership operations.
5. Consider annual Joint Communication Plans with fewer operations. This approach will minimise the issues experienced with public procurement and at the same time allow for better management of resources.
6. Compile a more comprehensive annual Final Report to be submitted to the European Commission.
7. Further exploit opportunities for synergy and sustainability with third parties and multipliers. There are a number of potential target groups which can act as strong multipliers and independently support the Management Partnership in delivering the key messages to a much wider target audience. This enhances the effectiveness, impact and added value of the communication activities undertaken by the Management Partnership. While some such multipliers, such as teachers and children, have been targeted, other groups such as NGOs, business associations and trade unions could be targeted more effectively.
8. Introduce a document management system to address current weaknesses in the manner by which documentation is retained and shared amongst different stakeholders within the Management Partnership.
9. Collect structured feedback on events from participants. As a general rule, timely feedback should be obtained from participants and targeted users of communication operations to enable the Management Partnership gauge better the impact which the communication operation had on the participants.
10. Conduct periodic surveys of public understanding of the Communication Priority areas. For future Management Partnership Agreements, an initial survey of public awareness could be carried out to serve as a baseline assessment of the level of understanding of the European Commission's communication priorities and work carried out in the relevant areas at a European Union. ■



Partnership evaluation

Executive summary

Portugal

For the period of 2008-2010
Soprofor

Executive summary

The 2008-2010 Management Partnership reached very positive results and should be considered a "Practice of Excellence" with sufficient value to be disseminated at national and European levels.

The Actions included in the 2008-2010 Communication Plans were conducted in a very positive way. This judgement is valid for the three Communication Plans and for seven of the ten 7 of its 10 Operations.

More than 50% of the Actions (20 out of 36) sustained a very positive judgement assigned by the two external evaluation firms involved between 2008 and 2010. One Action obtained a final assessment of "Excellent". 12 Actions were evaluated with the notation "positive", one with "neutral" and two with "negative". Thus, 89% of the 36 Actions 36 (32) were assessed as positive or very positive by external evaluators (including the Action considered Excellent).

Positive and very positive assessments are predominant in each of the three Communication Plans. It is, therefore, considered that the overall objectives of the three Communication Plans were completed in a very positive level.

The initial goals of the Management Partnership as to target audiences (in quantity and diversity) have been met very positively. The number of citizens reached (directly and / or indirectly) by the Actions (around 1.8 million) is considered excellent.

The diversity of audiences reached during the term of the Management Partnership is also to be considered as very positive, although with areas for improvement with regard to the common citizen. The impact on the school community (including teachers) is considered excellent.

The expected outcomes of interventions among target audiences have been attained very positively. The average quality level of the Actions is very high, including several Good Practices. The judgements assigned by external evaluators leave no doubt as to the average quality of the results achieved in implementing the Actions.

Only a few (very few) Actions registered levels of physical execution below expectations, having been subjected to corrective actions by the Intermediate Body.

Quantitative and qualitative results of the 2008-2010 Management Partnership are considered net gains in terms of value generated in comparison with the activities undertaken by the partners before its existence, this fact being (obviously) very positive. The Management Partnership corresponded to a new reality on its creation, mechanisms were established (which proved to be effective) to coordinate the activities of the different partners involved to avoid redundancy in their performances.

Using the example of the Intermediate Body, it continued to develop European information activities already performed before the Management Partnership was created. This represented a new competence in the "portfolio" of the European Information Centre Jacques Delors, without which it would have been impossible to achieve the results reported here. This logic is valid, surely, for the remaining partners.

Thus, the approximately 1.8 million citizens reached by the Management Partnership and its very positive results must be considered as net value added.

The 2008-2010 Management Partnership proved to be very efficient in generating synergy and increased levels of coordination between the European Commission and Portugal.

This conclusion is validated by the very high levels of consistency and alignment between the perceptions of the institutions participating in the Partnership Coordination Cell. The quality of the relationship between the partners was decisive (critical success factor) to generate the net amount mentioned previously.

The coordination between partners generated Communication Plans, Operations and Actions that led up to their target-groups content/activities/initiatives of great value and quality without redundancy to the other activities of European information usually carried out by the each partner.

The absolute and relative financial efficiency of the Management Partnership Management was excellent. The cost-benefit ratio of the Management Partnership is very positive and can be measured by the average cost per reached citizens: € 0.94. As an additional factor of efficiency, it should be noted that human resources of the Intermediate Body were not reinforced with the assumption of this new responsibility and that it was solely composed of five persons.

In the absence of the Management Partnership, it would not have been possible to run most of the 36 Actions reported here. This is due to the fact that many contractors submitted proposals only because they relied on the institutional framework of the Management Partnership as a way of valuing their image, their skills, their capacity for innovation, exploring new markets and audiences, etc.

The prestige of the entities involved and access to important networks for contractors' activities contributed significantly to the attraction of many contractors who invested greatly in quality and innovation in their respective Actions.

Regarding the performance of the European Information Centre Jacques Delors as an Intermediary Body, it must be considered excellent and a critical success factor of the 2008-2010 Management Partnership. The main factor of excellence in the Intermediate Body performance was the "management model" adopted for the coordination of the Communication Plans. The following aspects of that model must be highlighted:

Supervision and monitoring of Actions

The proximity/intensity and usefulness of this process was a critical success factor of the performance of the Intermediate Body in particular and of the Management Partnership in general.

Demanding and innovation driven culture

The Intermediate Body used a strong and well asserted management culture able to simultaneously generate high levels of demand from the contractors and to stimulate innovation and creativity in their Actions.

External evaluation

The establishment of an external evaluation process since the beginning of implementation of the Communication Plans was very positive and useful. Both in its support to the supervision/monitoring of Actions, and in its assessment of outcomes and impacts, external evaluation generated significant value.

Organisational diversity of contractors

The different profiles of contractors contributed very positively to the success achieved in the Actions.

Continuous improvement

The Intermediate Body found ability to incorporate improvement and corrective actions on their own initiative and by virtue of recommendations received from the Coordination Cell and external evaluators.



Conclusions

The external evaluation findings and conclusions of the 2008-2010 Management Partnership Management will be presented according to the sequence of assessment dimensions provided in the Special Conditions of the respective specifications, namely:

- Time period under evaluation – assessment of the Actions undertaken between 2008 and 2010, under the respective Communication Plans;
- Effectiveness/Impact of the Partnership Management;
- Efficiency/Impact of the Partnership Management.

We underline that, in the case of the first dimension of evaluation, no field research was performed, since the Actions carried out between 2008 and 2010 had already been evaluated by two external evaluation firms contracted by the Intermediate Body for that purpose.

Thus, we used the reports of the external evaluators for each Operation as reference tools for the formulation of value judgments. Tables 1 to 3 (following pages) provide a summary of the ratings attributed in those reports to the Operations and Actions of the Management Partnership during the 2008-2010 period (except for the Actions not covered by the external evaluation process).

Actions undertaken between 2008 and 2010

1. Actions included in the 2008-2010 Communication Plans were conducted in a very positive way. This judgement value is valid for the three Communication Plans and for 7 of the 10 respective Operations. The remaining three Operations obtained positive results.
20 of the 36 Actions were awarded very positive value judgements by external evaluators. Another Action gathered a final evaluation of Excellent. 12 Actions were evaluated with the notation “positive,” one with “neutral” and two with “negative”. That is, 32 out of 36 actions (89%) were evaluated in a positive or very positive by external evaluators (including the Action of Excellence).
2. The overall objectives of the three Communication Plans were completed on a very positive level. Positive and very positive value judgements are predominant in all three Communication Plans.

3. The Typology of Action with a less positive results is “Conferences”. As it was highlighted in the reports of external evaluators, these Actions could not fully achieve their objectives, particularly with respect to indicators of physical implementation.

This finding was more evident in the Conferences conducted in a “traditional” format without addition of differentiation factors in relation to the existing wide range of such initiatives in many subject areas. Contractors who integrated innovation factors in this type of Actions obtained more satisfactory results.

4. There are no significant differences in results for the different types of Action (except for Conferences), hence the judgements presented in the previous conclusions can be considered independent of the Typology of Action.

Effectiveness - Impact of the partnership management

This evaluation dimension was structured according to the following aspects:

- Contributions of the partnership to enhance the impact of the communication priorities from the European Commission at national level;
- Achieving the partnership objectives in terms of audience covered and the expected results;
- Added value (number and quality) of the Management Partnership in comparison with the activities undertaken by the partners before the partnership came into place.

Impact of the communication priorities from the European Commission in Portugal

5. The contribution of the Partnership Management to increase the impact of communication priorities of the European Commission in Portugal was very positive. There is strong convergence and consistency among all stakeholders of the Partnership Management regarding the value (very positive) of this contribution.

The perception of the Representation of the Commission (REPCOM), for obvious reasons, stands out positively in this respect, being unequivocally confirmed by the other stakeholders. The operating mechanisms for the Coordination Cell leveraged this contribution allowing it to be monitored and improved during the 2008-2010 period.



Target groups and expected results

6. The initial objectives of the Management Partnership regarding reached target audiences (in quantity and diversity) have been met very positively. The number of citizens involved (directly and/or indirectly) by the Actions (around 1.8 million) should be considered excellent.

The diversity of audiences reached during the term of the Management Partnership can also be considered as very positive, but with areas for improvement with regard to the common citizen. The impact on the school community (including teachers) is considered excellent.

It is significant that the Action evaluated as "Excellent" was one with the best results in terms of "outdoor activities" and awareness raising of the common citizen to European themes.

7. The expected outcomes of the Actions among target audiences have been met very positively. The average quality level of the Actions is very high, including several with a profile of Good Practice.

The ratings given by external evaluators to the different Actions leave no doubt as to the average quality of the results achieved in their implementation. Only a few (very few, actually) Actions registered levels of physical implementation below expectations, having been subjected to corrective actions by the Intermediate Body.

Added value

8. The quantitative and qualitative results of the 2008-2010 Management Partnership should be considered net gains in terms of value generated in comparison with the activities undertaken by the partners before its entry into force. This fact is, obviously, very positive.

The validity of this conclusion relies on the fact that the Management Partnership corresponds to a new reality at the moment of its creation and that mechanisms were created (which proved to be effective) to coordinate the activities of the different partners involved to avoid redundancy in their European information work.

Using the example of the Intermediate Body, it continued to develop the same European information activities already performed before the creation of the Management Partnership.

The later represented a new competence in the "portfolio" of the European Information Centre Jacques Delors, without which it would have not been possible to achieve the results reported here. This logic is valid, surely, for the remaining partners.

Thus, we consider the approximately 1.8 million citizens covered by the Management Partnership and the very positive results obtained as its own net value added:

$$\mathbf{VAL \pm nCit + R (1)}$$

Legend:

VAL = Net added value of the 2008-2010 Management Partnership

nCit = Number of citizens involved directly and/or indirectly

R = Qualitative results of the 2008-2010 Management Partnership

That is:

$$\mathbf{VAL = \pm 1.800.000 + Very positive}$$



Efficiency - Impact of the management partnership

It was understood that the dimension "efficiency" would refer mainly to the following aspects:

- Contribution in leveraging synergies and better coordination between Portugal and the European Commission;
- Efficiency of the mechanisms and procedures established by the partnership in terms of cost (cost-benefit analysis) when compared with the expected in absence of partnership.

9. The 2008-2010 Management Partnership proved to be very efficient with regard to the production of synergy/coordination between the European Commission and Portugal.

This conclusion is validated by the strong consistency and alignment between the perceptions of the institutions participating in the Coordination Cell. The quality of the relationship between the partners was decisive (critical success factor) for the generation of the net added value gains referred in the previous conclusion.

Coordination between partners generated Communication Plans, Operations and Actions that led up to their target audiences content/activities/initiatives of great value and quality without redundancy in relation to other European information activities normally carried out by the partners.

10. The absolute and relative financial efficiency of the Management Partnership Management was excellent.

The cost-benefit ratio of the Management Partnership is very positive, as can be gauged by the average cost per citizen involved: € 0.94. As noted previously in this report, the majority of the Actions were developed with budgets below what would be the market price of the contracted services.

As an additional factor of efficiency, it should be noted that the staff of the Intermediate Body was not reinforced by the assumption of its new responsibility and that it was solely composed of five elements.

It is our opinion that in the absence of Management Partnership, it would not have been possible to run most of the 36 actions reported here. This is due to the fact that many contractors have submitted proposals because they relied on the institutional framework of the Management Partnership as a way of valuing their image, their skills, their capacity for innovation, exploring new markets and audiences, etc. .

The prestige of the entities involved and access to important networks of contractors contributed significantly to the attraction of many contractors who invested heavily in quality and innovation in their respective Actions.

Other conclusions

In addition to the findings presented above, it is important to provide an overall assessment and judgement value of the 2008-2010 Management Partnership Management 2008-2010, as well as an analysis of its strengths and weaknesses.

Global Evaluation

11. The 2008-2010 Management Partnership Management 2008-2010 attained very positive results.

12. Regarding the performance of the European Information Centre Jacques Delors as an Intermediary Body, it must be considered excellent and a critical success factor of the 2008-2010 Management Partnership. The main factor of excellence in the Intermediate Body performance was the "management model" adopted for the coordination of the Communication Plans.

The following aspects of that model must be highlighted:

Supervision and monitoring of Actions

The proximity/intensity and usefulness of this process was a critical success factor of the performance of the Intermediate Body in particular and of the Management Partnership in general.

Demanding and innovation driven culture

The Intermediate Body used a strong and well asserted management culture able to simultaneously generate high levels of demand from the contractors and to stimulate innovation and creativity in their Actions.

External evaluation

The establishment of an external evaluation process since the beginning of implementation of the Communication Plans was very positive and useful. Both in its support to the supervision/monitoring of Actions, and in its assessment of outcomes and impacts, external evaluation generated significant value.

Organisational diversity of contractors

The different profiles of contractors contributed very positively to the success achieved in the Actions.

Continuous improvement

The Intermediate Body found ability to incorporate improvement and corrective actions on their own initiative and by virtue of recommendations received from the Coordination Cell and external evaluators.



SWOT Analysis (Strengths and Weaknesses)

Table displays the Strengths and Weaknesses of the 2008-2010 Management Partnership. Taking into account the object of study in question, it does not seem appropriate or legitimate to make assumptions about “threats” and “opportunities”. Thus, methodologically, we decided to ignore them in this report. ■

Strengths

- Quality of the relationship between partners
- Performance (of excellence) of the European Information Centre as an Intermediate Body
- Results obtained in the three dimensions of analysis: quality and impact of actions, effectiveness and efficiency
- Multiplier effect exerted by the contractors of the results obtained by the Partnership Management
- Creating a network of influence of the Partnership Management (networking effect) that involves all its stakeholders
- Cost-benefit of the Partnership and Management and net added value achieved
- Overall efficiency of the Management Partnership, with the involvement of very low Human Resources (including staff of the Intermediate Body with only 5 elements)
- Impact generated in the school community

Weaknesses

- Diversity of target audiences can be improved, particularly in what concerns the common citizen
- Coordination levels with the Europe Direct Centres can be enhanced



Partnership evaluation Executive summary Slovenia

September 2009 – February 2010
Deloitte

In 4 years...

- 21 operations
- 1,15 mio €
- Drew more than 90% of funds
 - 7 projects for general public
 - 5 projects for schools and youth
 - 5 projects for civil society (NGOs, experts,...)
 - 2 projects for teachers
 - 2 international conferences

The areas of evaluation include: the organisational structure and operation of the Partnership; coordination between partners; programmes carried out within the framework of the Partnership; cost-effectiveness of the Partnership; and the impact that the programmes had on their target groups.

The findings were based on the evaluation questions which were discussed and agreed with the European Commission (herein after referred to as the client) during the initial phase of the project, and the results are presented on pages 19-59 of this report, per individual evaluation question. In carrying out the evaluation, the specifics of the Slovenian territory were taken into account, as well as the longstanding experiences of both partners in carrying out communications activities in Slovenia. Other factors affecting the success of each programme were also considered.

It should be noted that when the Partnership was first implemented, no preliminary evaluation was carried out, and no quantifiable goals were set, particularly as regards reaching the target audience. Therefore a data-supported assessment of the Partnership against pre-determined quantified goals is not possible. Although the partners loosely define the goals of annual communication activities in the annual communication plans, the absence of baseline and target quantitative target group data, the absence of an approach to the implementation of an individual activity, the absence of any ongoing appraisals of the efficacy and impact of the programmes on their target audiences, and in particular, the absence of a systematic tracking of information on human resources invested by each partner, create obstacles to the evaluation of the success and efficiency of the Partnership. This fact is specifically mentioned in the report and taken into account. Therefore, in some places, only a qualitative assessment of progress is given; and in rare instances, no conclusions can be drawn.

In accordance with the client's wishes, for each of the evaluation questions that were set, one or more recommendations are proposed. These recommendations however should not be construed as meaning that systemic problems in the implementation of the Management Partnership in Slovenia were found. Similarly, the recommendations should not be regarded as overshadowing the achievements of both partners in achieving joint communication concerning EU affairs in Slovenia.

54 Introduction

The creation of the Management Partnership on Communication ("the Partnership") between the European Commission and the Government of the Republic of Slovenia in March 2007 is of special importance to the European Commission, as it represents the first instance of organised and long-term cooperation in the field of communication in the Republic of Slovenia. It is also significant because Slovenia was only the second Member State (after Germany) to have established such a partnership, therefore Slovenia's experience of jointly managing communication activities are of great value to other member states who have since introduced such partnerships, or who intend to introduce them in the near future.

The evaluation of the Partnership, which was carried out in the absence of any pre-existing evaluations or established indicators, provides an independent assessment of the overall operation of the Partnership for the years 2007 and 2008, in some cases – in order to assess the progress achieved – activities from the 2009 Communication Programme have been evaluated. The evaluation identified the major shortcomings, and developed practical recommendations for improving the programme. It included both qualitative and quantitative data obtained from interviews (comprising 37 personal, 4 group and 13 short interviews) which were recorded with partners, key external contractors, stakeholders and target groups. The evaluation also included the results of an online questionnaire. The data was collected and analysed based on Deloitte's Project Evaluation Methodology (PEM).

Summary

A fundamental indicator of the success of this first attempt to undertake a joint management of communication activities in Slovenia¹ is the working relationship between the partners. The data and views gathered during the evaluation confirm that throughout, the partners have cooperated well in designing, coordinating and implementing the Partnership's programmes, and also in applying the experience and expert knowledge of each of the partners. The partners work hard, are keen to succeed, and are motivated by a determination to produce high quality programmes. The parties involved appreciate the quality of the programmes, which are considered to have interesting appeal, informative value and to be effective.

Effectiveness

A number of the programmes that run in Slovenia within the framework of the Partnership are examples of EU best practice. These could be transferable to other Member States, due to their good ideas (e.g. Active Participation of Citizens programme, Multimedia Device The EU for Beginners, and Europe Live Radio Broadcast programme), strong organisation (e.g. Intercultural Dialogue and Youth programme), applicable content (Information Centre Europe), multiplier effects (most programmes), and due to their financial efficiency. The reverse is also true: in seeking to disseminate information on the functioning of the European Union to a given target audience, partners constantly seek new means of communication, fresh programme content, and effective ways to reach as wide an audience as possible, and as such, including the best practices of other countries into their own communications plan can be beneficial.

The effective operation of the Partnership was significantly enhanced by the ability of the programme partners to contribute their own skills and experiences from similar programmes outside the Partnership, as well as their year on year experience of the programmes in the communication plan (e.g. teachers training for passing on the EU-related topic at school, inclusion of a motivational tool for teachers participating in Europe at School - formally recognised points to be collected for teachers' promotion, upgrading the website, introducing more specific events in Center Evropa etc). The experience of the partners and their cooperation with the appropriate external players has contributed to the introduction of several new communication tools, among others: a web portal for NGOs, DVD, online quizzes, facebook, a radio show, themed weeks, etc. There have also been improvements and upgrades to existing communications tools –e.g. the more carefully thought-out organising of events (entertainment evenings, lectures, workshops).

The target audiences' familiarity with the programmes has shown to be high (Center Evropa, European Village, Europe at School and Active Participation of Citizens are among the programmes with the highest familiarity rating). The same cannot be said for the Management Partnership itself. Audiences are not aware of the fact that the Government and the European institutions are addressing them jointly. The interviewees all agree however, that awareness of joint communication activities is of crucial importance for the sake of transparency and trust-building. The messages need to be seen to be genuine and well-intentioned.

During the first two years, the Partnership put special emphasis on addressing young people, as well as the interested general public and non-governmental organisations, among which groups the qualitative (the most obvious example is Europe Live, European Village, Active Participation of Citizens) and on some occasions quantitative-based (Intercultural Dialogue and Youth) assessments indicate a greater reach of people. The evaluation showed the need to integrate communications topics that would additionally address journalists, regional public bodies (such as municipalities, regional development agencies and representative offices), marginalised groups (socially unprivileged, disabled), as well as internal public - government ministries.

The 2007 and 2008 Communication plans contain content-related, general goals for each individual programme. The communication plan should however, be upgraded to include information on the current target audiences' reach and the target audiences' needs analysis at the time of designing the programme communication plan. The upgrade should also include clearer, more specific content goals, quantifiable goals relating to the target audiences per programme, potential contractors' analysis, programme implementation steps and the evaluation plan. The latter should include the evaluation tools and set the baseline and target evaluation indicators. The evaluation tools were not in place in 2007 and 2008, but were later included in the 2009 Communication plans.

Are we successful in communicating the EU communication priorities together?
What is the **added value**? Any **synergies** created?

How efficient are we in communicating together in comparison to what we did before the MP was concluded?
Are the **target audiences** right, did we reach them?

Are the selected **programmes and tools** efficient?

Is the **coordination, workflow and communication** between partners satisfactory?

Do we **invest more or less**?

Are the **mechanisms and procedures** put in place adequate or hindrance?
What is the **impact** of programmes?

¹ The Slovenian Government and the European Commission have worked together in the past, when they formed a so called Strategic Partnership on communicating the introduction of a new currency – the Euro.

Efficiency

The Partnership is very successful in the area of financial planning and implementation. This is shown by a 98 percent disbursement of the funds granted in 2007, and an 85 percent disbursement of funds granted in 2008. This efficiency has allowed the Partnership to be flexible and able to rapidly respond to any unforeseen changes in funding requirements, as shown in the 2007 communication plan (e.g. the redistribution of funds from the brochure *A Journey Through the EU* to the *EU for Beginners DVD*), as well as time and content flexibility requirements (e.g. the *Europe Live* programme).

Through their cooperation within the Partnership, the best practices of the individual partners have been transferred to the organisations. This has enabled better management and administration of the programmes. Among the most important of these are: awareness of and introduction of best practices in their organisations, for example the regional debates on environmental and energy packages; and the horizontal management of projects.

When designing and implementing annual communication plans, partners follow the provisions of the Partnership Agreement. They agree that the provisions are of great help to them when conducting everyday tasks. The supervisory function is consistently conducted by the Representation; the same can be said for UKOM who supervises contractors. The management styles in the Partnership depend on the internal management styles in the individual organisations.

The partners' qualitative assessment, that human resources input in 2007 and 2008 has not changed considerably, in conjunction with the constant improvements in programme quality could suggest there have been improvements in the human resources input versus Partnership programme results ratio. However, this cannot be concluded on the basis of qualitative assessments only. All partners do not systematically keep track of the time they spend on managing the Partnership activities or the programmes. In addition to this, there were no quantifiable goals set by the partners themselves at the beginning of the Partnership regarding target audiences coverage and penetration for all programmes and umbrella activities. This additionally hinders the assessment of the HR input, both per end user, and cost vs. results ratio.

Sustainability and Impact

Despite the fact that the contractors do not systematically measure the achievement of communication goals in relation to the target audiences' satisfaction with the programme, this evaluation shows a high degree of continuation of programmes after Partnership funding has ceased. The programmes continued mostly due to the target audiences' requests (e.g. the radio programme *Europe Live*, briefings and debriefings among the specific sector NGOs, coordination with the government on legislative inputs, *European Village* etc). The significant formal outputs of the Partnership programmes include: the NGO-sponsored *Ljubljana Declaration*; numerous, through the portal e-debate application, legislative proposals to the Government of the Republic of Slovenia on urgent actions required. Organised, e-debate-like coordination between the non-governmental and governmental organisations continues after the Partnership and has since 2008 led to several legislative propositions and amendments (*The Foundations Act*, *The Volunteer Act*, *The Family Law* and others). *Radio Ognjiš* continues to broadcast the *Europe Live* show. This all shows that the Partnership-supported programmes are alive and stay alive in the medium to long-term, which is one of the main Partnership goals.

The effectiveness of communicating these priorities in Slovenia has increased as a result of the Partnership, since the partners jointly communicate their messages more effectively and reach audiences more successfully than they would have done on their own. This is evidenced by the joint implementation of programmes which were formerly implemented by the individual organisations prior to the introduction of the Partnership (e.g. *Information Centre*, *Intercultural Dialogue* and *Young People* programmes), as well as by the suspension of activities in certain fields which were formerly carried out in similar parallel forms by both organisations (publication – *A Journey Through the EU*, conferences, etc.). These programmes have however, not proved to be the most effective even when run through the Partnership and were therefore discontinued in 2008.



Conclusion

On the basis of the above observations, the evaluation concludes the following:

1. The Partnership has increased the impact of the Commission's primary communication goals in Slovenia. In implementing the programmes from the Communications plan, the Partnership has more effectively reached the target groups. The qualitative assessment and (in parts) the quantitative data both support this conclusion, and also indicate that a greater number of members of these target audiences are being reached.
2. The added value of the Partnership to communication activities is significant, and primarily qualitative in nature. As a result of the ability to include the ideas and experiences of all the partners, the programmes which are carried out through the Partnership are more to the point, more interesting, and more innovative. 4-5 programmes are run annually.
3. The Partnership has significantly contributed to useful synergies from the joint implementation of communication activities. The coordination between the Republic of Slovenia and the Commission in the field of communication on EU matters has increased, and this has enabled the transfer of best practice to organisations within the Partnership.
4. Mechanisms and procedures set in place by the agreement concerning the transfer of powers, for the Partnership to function, have proved effective. In the absence of information concerning the management of resources and any clearly-set goals for individual programmes, it has not been possible to assess the cost-effectiveness of the Partnership.
5. Stakeholders and target audiences respond well to the Partnership programmes. Many programmes and tools applied have continued to live beyond the original support from the Partnership.

Key Recommendations

- Introduction of a three-year planning period in the communication plan, with a fixed, three-year and a variable annual part of the plan. If possible i.e. agreed by the partners, increased funds should be considered in the long run and more programmes included in the plan. Baseline indicators and goals at the Partnership and programme level should be set.
- The existing Communication Plan should be upgraded to include the following categories in addition to the "Description" and "Goals" categories: As-is target audiences targeting (qualitatively and quantitatively), target group needs analysis, content-related and quantitative programme goals with regard to the target audiences, potential contractors' analysis, "next steps" i.e. programme implementation strategy, evaluation plan including the baseline and the target programme indicators.
- Introduction of a project management system at Partnership and programme levels, including the planning, managing and control of resources.
- Conducting regular internal evaluations on effectiveness of the programmes and regular inspections of the contracting parties' work.
- Setting-up a joint Partnership website with open and closed access to different areas of the site: general information and a library for the target audiences, contracting parties' information exchange, documentation sharing point for the partners and others. ■



Partnership evaluation

Executive summary

Sweden



A four year long management partnership between the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Swedish Government has been in place since 2009. The purpose of this management partnership is to enhance knowledge of and commitment to European issues, to create synergies between actions undertaken by the Member States and the European Commission and to better coordinate information and communication activities. The management partnership is adapted to fit local conditions and to find connections between the Member State's policies and the EU's communication priorities. In Sweden, the management partnership has targeted the school system which plays an important role in teaching how the EU works and its importance within different areas.

58

Ernst & Young has, at the request of the International Programme Office (IPO), performed an assessment of the management partnership in Sweden. This assessment highlights the processes and the relationship between the three parties, the activities that have been carried out within the framework of the management partnership and how efficient the cooperation has been.

The strong interest in creating a management partnership, the early consensus that it should target the school system and a true commitment from key politicians have formed a strong basis for cooperation. The well established relationships between the partners were equally important. As well as knowing each other and understanding each party's different roles and agendas, they already had experience of cooperation and working together in various activities.

The European Parliament, the Commission and the Swedish Government have all enthusiastically taken part in the project. The contact channels that have been used have contributed greatly to the management partnership's flexibility and have also ensured a first-rate implementation since everyone involved has an interest in being seen as an active partner. The cooperation has been characterised by a focus on achieving results and a willingness to compromise.

Conclusions about the management partnership, from a procedural and organisational perspective, can be summarised as follows:

- The organisation in the form of a management partnership has yielded significant gains. The three active parties all have the incentive to participate, and synergy effects have had a decisive impact on the project's processes.
- The choice of the governmental agency IPO as the intermediary body meant great gains in terms of contacts, continuity and knowledge of the target groups for the activities.
- The project management has been efficient and contributed to the positive result.
- The financial administration was onerous, especially during the first year, before more efficient procedures were developed. This administrative system is required by the budget rules for indirect central management which apply to this management partnership.
- The work of the coordination group has proceeded well in accordance with the stated objectives.
- The institutional framework has aided the objective of increasing knowledge of the EU's institutions.
- The genuine commitment and expectations from high-level politicians within the management partnership's organisations both provide a good basis and act as a driving force.



Conclusions about the management partnership, from a result and goal orientated perspective, can be summarised as follows:

- All planned educational activities have been carried through.
- Fifty per cent of upper secondary schools in the country have, in one way or another, participated in the activities.
- To date, 1400 teachers, 120 school heads and 116 school ambassadors have participated in the training.
- The selection of activities and their aim and direction has been decided by the coordination group. The decision to introduce training of school ambassadors and to also target school heads are examples of successful directional decisions.
- The quantitative targets have been achieved apart from the number of participating teachers, which has been somewhat lower than anticipated.
- Only a few of those defined as school heads and decision makers have participated in the activities.
- Assessments and focus interviews show that training activities have resulted in increased knowledge of the EU among the participating teachers and school heads. It must be stated though, that the value of these assessments as basis for a judgment is limited.
- A number of teachers have changed their views and now look upon the EU and globalisation as a perspective in education rather than part of a specific course.
- The educational activities have been highly appreciated by the participants, and the professional gain has also been great.
- Participants who have also taken part in other and similar courses have graded this specific training effort significantly higher than the others.
- School ambassadors feel more committed and supported because school heads participate.
- The management partnership has also resulted in the creation of new structures which, in turn, may contribute to permanent effects even after the end of the management partnership. This has been achieved through training school ambassadors, involving school leaders and creating proper educational tools.

In our opinion, the effectiveness of the management partnership is relatively high.

The reasons for this opinion are:

- Information about the management partnership and the possibilities it brings to teachers and school heads has been actively communicated.
- Textbooks and other educational tools for continued use have been produced.
- The training activities have been highly rated by the participants.
- Teaching in general has been positively affected at a number of participating schools.
- The knowledge of IPO and the EU's educational programmes has increased.
- Structures have been established and communication channels opened for things like the continued exchange of views and experiences between schools.

The management partnership has achieved a number of positive results when compared to its objectives. So far, the operational costs and the costs for IPO's staff amount to approx. MSEK 16. It is difficult to see how these actual and perceived results could have been achieved with less money or if each of the parties involved had acted separately.

The effectiveness of the management partnership should be judged against the fact that schools and teachers are of interest to a number of stakeholders. The school system is often seen as important for the achievement of social change. During the period the management partnership has been active, major reforms have taken place within the Swedish school system with particular focus on upper secondary schools - the target group for the Swedish management partnership. The management partnership's resources have allowed schools, individual teachers and school heads to prioritise teaching about the EU in parallel with ongoing internal developments and changes.

Actions

- Educational activities
- Events for general public
- Information sessions
- Pedagogical contents
- b-Learning courses for teachers
- b-Learning training for college graduates and public administration
- Conferences
- Publications
- Communication products

62

Actions

Evaluation/monitoring
of all actions of the communication plan

The management partnership runs to the end of 2012. Our conclusion is that the management partnership in Sweden has thus far been very successful. The parties share a strongly results orientated mindset, which ensures that the desired effects are achieved in an efficient manner.

Based on the experience of the management partnership in Sweden, we would put forward the following recommendations for the future:

- Nurture previous relations and experience of projects and cooperation between the parties. Pursue an open climate in the coordination group and continue to build trust between the members of the group.
- Ensure support among key persons within the participating organisations and strive to maintain consensus about the direction and desired results for the management partnership. Utilise the parties' driving force, thus ensuring that they provide more than just legitimacy.
- Make use of an established structure for the management partnership and choose an agency/ administrative unit with knowledge of the target group for the management partnership's activities.
- Choose the project leader with care, and provide that person with a strong mandate.
- Try to simplify the financial administration.
- Plan, and implement the administrative routines at an early stage. Decide what should be carried out with own resources and what should be procured.
- Take great care when setting goals. Base the calculations on quality-assured information about the current situation. Set goals which are possible to follow up.
- Perform an analysis of the starting situation and follow-up at the end of the management partnership to measure change.
- Make sure that assessments are methodical, thereby making reliable conclusions possible. During projects that run over several years, assessments should be performed at different stages and be compared against each other over time.
- Be open to orientating the management partnership's activities towards new target groups that may contribute to achieving the desired results.
- Strive to carry out activities that will help to build structures within the target group in order to ensure that the work will continue after the end of the management partnership. Examples may include facilitating the exchange of experience between schools that have participated in management partnership activities, teaching material and communication roles. ■



Crisis communication:

It's about testing strategic needs and seeking capacity building

Nicola Minasi
Vincenzo Le Voci

Know-how and organization come first Understanding the traditional and emerging media landscape

62

Structural capacities, analytical skills, investments on prevention and readiness planning, clear distribution of tasks, training, monitoring, global interaction and impact assessment: these are the ingredients for a successful performance of public communicators and they all have to play at the unison in particular when facing with crisis scenarios.

The importance of realizing the opportunities and pitfalls of instant communication worldwide has undisputably grown well beyond the media circle and has entered the daily job of crisis managers. Ex-ante preparation, smooth coordination and promptness in reaction to threats and news about emergencies are crucially interlinked factors. And operating in a framework where information flow cannot always be verified, accentuates risks of adverse effect, misunderstandings, lack of trust and distress.

What government voice should avoid at all costs is to sound alarmingly “old style” when compared with everyday media parlance (especially with “breaking news” titles related to an emergency) and in particular with the revolutionary framework of the social networks. Therefore the governmental approach in crisis communication needs to become more integrated, competent, transparent and user-friendly, inviting people to contribute as far as possible to a prompt sharing of trustable information to enrich the service provided to the community.

It is worth, in this regard, to recall the successful experiences of the Italian MFA Crisis Unit through Facebook and Twitter and the application for smart phones allowing travellers to register automatically on the platform “Dove siamo nel mondo” (“Where are we in the world”), which also enables to receive updated travel advice if people 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.





CLUB OF VENICE THEMATIC MEETING: "CRISIS COMMUNICATION: LESSONS LEARNED, MOBILIZATION AND MANAGEMENT"

ISTANBUL, 29-30 APRIL 2010

VENEDİK KULÜBÜ
TEMATİK TOPLANTISI: "KRİZ İLETİŞİMİ:
ALINAN DERSLER, MOBİLİZASYON VE YÖNETİM"
İSTANBUL 29-30 NİSAN 2010



The traditional media, nevertheless, continue to play a significant role, as they are still widely followed and easily accessible by people of all ages. 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 - those running quickly such as the online breaking news - 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 objective news officially supported as far as possible by evidence.

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.

Crisis communication is also a unique opportunity 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 and 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 (as it was the case for the evacuations of European citizens during the socio-political turbulences in Tunisia, Egypt and Lybia and during the Fukushima earthquake in Japan).

This been said, each crisis follows its own rules and the public communicators must stand ready to handle the different scenarios and learn quickly from each experience to handle the future emergencies as efficiently as possible.

Finally, different audiences may react in very different ways to the same emergency, depending on crucial contingent factors such as their access to media and on the political situation back home. Therefore, regardless of the direct response to the problem on the ground, the information management with the national media is often depending on the internal debate on the type of crisis and on the type of response, rather than the [re]action itself. The way this develops is very country-specific and, even if different EU Member States manage to resolve a crisis with similar tools, they may still face completely different criticism -or praise- by their own media depending on local perceptions and grievances.

Crisis Communication Strategies: Political Side

Vessela Tcherneva, Spokesperson of the
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bulgaria

How the Club is proceeding in this field?

The two seminars organised by the Club of Venice in this context (Istanbul, April 2010 and Sofia, March 2012) enabled national authorities and EU officials to exchange feedback on different crisis scenarios, focusing on lessons learned from the handling of previous and ongoing emergencies and drawing inspiration from concrete management experiences of the government communication crisis units.

Crisis communication agenda is rich and multi-faceted. Presentations and case studies in the Club seminars focus on a wide variety of organizational issues and on several concrete emergency scenarios:

- How to set up integrated crisis management communication structures and how to elaborate related communication strategies, comprehensive plans, operational instructions and guidelines
 - Relations among communicators, staff from situation centers, political authorities, press and other media representatives
 - Communication in times of natural disasters and environmental risks
 - Communication management during pandemics
 - Social rescue, risk analysis and coordination
- 64
- EU crisis communication exercises and mobilisation during “real intervention”
 - Last but not the least... and among the foremost: communicating with citizens on the current economic and financial crisis and on the measures aiming to recovery from it and relaunch the economy and people's confidence

The exchange of information and best practice on crisis communication within the informal framework of the Club of Venice enables to develop and enrich national expertise and improvement and reinforce national and transnational strategies – in many circumstances, helping devise new cost-effective ways to deal with ever changing scenarios and creating new chances for partnerships. To this end, the Club avails itself of the valuable contributions provided by external specialists who attend the thematic seminars organized in this field, which continue to offer a unique forum to compare information management styles among governments and institutions.

As the world of information changes and develops, Government communication needs to adapt, too. Only a competent, coherent, integrated and coordinated approach can enable communicators to succeed in facing crisis and respond effectively to citizens' expectations. ■

Nicola Minasi is Deputy 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. From 2008 to 2013 he has been personally following the families of all Italians taken hostages abroad.

Vincenzo Le Voci is the Secretary-General of the Club of Venice. He joined the EU in 1992 and earned experiences in the Linguistic, Research, Education and Culture, Staff Training, Transparency and Communication departments of the General Secretariat of the Council. He currently works for the Public Relations Unit of the Media and Communications Directorate, dealing with Information Policy matters. Before joining the EU he worked seven years for the logistic services of the U.S. Air Force in Europe.

Prompt reaction with little bureaucracy: the Estonian case

Eleka Rougam-Rebane
Information Officer to the Government
(Crisis communication)

A couple of years ago Yahoo News published a story, which was based on data obtained from EM-DAT (the international disaster database) and stated that Estonia was one of the safest countries in the world in terms of crises or emergencies. True, Estonia is a small country with a population of 1.3 million. Estonia's geographic and climatic location can be considered safe in comparison to many other countries. Although EM-DAT noted that Estonia is a peaceful place in terms of emergencies, this does not mean that Estonian authorities do not have to prepare for emergencies or that Estonian people suffer less due to the impact and consequences of emergencies.

Estonia has been able to build a flexible crisis management and crisis communication system with little bureaucracy. This means prompt reaction to critical situations both in rescuing human lives as well as in communication. Being small also means that human resources are limited, but skilful planning of resources and training ensure that the main functions are covered in the organisation of communication.

Our most important assets are our colleagues, co-workers in governmental agencies and ministries who build up the crisis communication network both in peacetime as well as during an emergency. Since 2011 Estonian Government Communication Unit has been strongly emphasizing training and preparedness of government communication specialists. Not only crisis managers but also crisis communicators need to be updated and trained. For that purpose we have been trying to provide different working and study tools for our colleagues – first, a handbook of government communication was developed where you also can find a chapter on crisis communication.

Our aim is to refresh the handbook periodically. Second, thinking of crisis communication as a part of crisis management, we have designed the trainings so that we address both crisis management and communication issues. Estonian Government Communication Unit provides crisis communication trainings for 3 levels – beginners; advanced and expert levels. Third, we are working on an online tool meant for internal information sharing among communication specialists both in peacetime and during a crisis.

Hopefully, these means help us to boost a resource of aware, well-prepared, ready-to-go crisis communication specialists whose support and expertise we can rely upon either in dealing with some specific emergency situation or in general discussion on crisis communication planning and preparedness. ■

65



Crisis Communication

Abstract from the Estonian Government Communication Guide for government officials
<http://valitsus.ee/en/government-office/government-communication/handbook/crisis-communication>

Definitions

A crisis may be caused by a natural event (such as storm, flood, epidemic, drought) or human activity (environmental pollution, disorders, extensive infrastructure disturbances, alerts, war). If a crisis threatens a state's principal values or has endangered human lives, health and property and the situation can be described as uncertain, it is a very serious crisis or emergency situation. The unrest in April 2007 called Bronze Night is an example of such a crisis.

Pursuant to the Emergency Act, government authorities have the obligation to inform the public about the crisis or emergency situation. According to the act, an emergency is an event or a chain of events, which endangers the life or health of many people or causes significant property damage or significant environmental damage or severe and extensive disruptions in the continuous operation of vital services, which requires a prompt and coordinated response from several agencies.

Crisis communication involves more than informing the public. Crisis communication also includes risk and internal communication and information exchange between agencies, companies, non-governmental organizations and media organizations that react to the situation.

Not all situations requiring crisis communication are emergency situations. It might be that the situation has no locus in Estonia and thus the crisis commission will not convene. The smoke that disturbed the citizens of Tallinn in August 2006 is an example of such an event. It took time to ascertain the circumstances of the occasion, but communication needed to be started right away, as people perceived the situation as disturbing and potentially dangerous. The situation did not have a locus in Estonia, as the disturbing smoke came to Tallinn from the east.

A similar crisis communication situation occurred with the so-called ash-cloud crisis at the beginning of 2010. The volcanic eruption that created the ash clouds took place in Iceland, but the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had to start informing the public (as well as Estonians living abroad) as soon as it became evident that people's everyday lives were disrupted.

In other words, the public's understanding of the situation determines how the situation is handled – if people perceive the situation as a crisis, the situation must be handled as a crisis.

Risk communication

Risk communication means informing the inhabitants of the dangers threatening the state and society. It also encompasses measures the state and its inhabitants can take to manage those risks or reduce their negative influence.

Risk communication includes instructions for conduct and early warnings that the agency communicates to the public during an emergency in order to inform people about immediate danger. Risk communication also includes preventive notification that draws attention to possible threats and how to avoid them, e.g. natural disasters and fires, dangers related to using chemicals, etc.

Examples of preventive risk communication are the Rescue Board's smoke detector and water safety campaigns, which focussed on risk awareness and informing people about safe conduct.

Communication is the key element of crisis management

Well-organized crisis communication supports finding a solution to the crisis and helps the state as a whole – not only specific establishments – in ensuring reliability and solving the situation.

The decisions made to solve the crisis and their implementation are called crisis management. Crisis communication must act in compliance with crisis management – it is the key element of crisis management that lends support to solving the situation.

Well-organized crisis communication and solutions to a crisis help people save themselves, their property and the surrounding environment, understand the situation and be informed about how it is being solved.

A crisis is characterized by its uncertain nature, the resulting insecurity of the public and suddenly growing need for information. If true and precise information does not reach the people affected by the crisis (to crisis communication target groups), it might significantly hinder the crisis's solution and reduce state authorities' credibility.

Some crises, such as terrorism, may activate groups who, incited by self-profit or other reasons, send out information that intensifies the crisis and misleads the public. Therefore it is the obligation of government bodies to gather and distribute correct and precise information as soon as possible, avoid speculations and refute false information.

Authorities related to crisis management are under close public scrutiny during the crisis. The information that reaches the public during the crisis fosters an impression of the government bodies' and the whole state's preparedness to act – this will remain in the public's mind for a long time.

Principles

Key to successful crisis communication

The key to successful crisis communication is thorough preparations, clear division of responsibilities and cooperation. Therefore it is important to plan communication activities for possible crises, practice crisis communication beforehand in a normal situation and give a thorough assessment of the possible risks that cause a crisis of confidence.

“Without an effective and pre-practiced crisis communication plan you might get stuck in the middle of the events like a passenger in a car that is heading towards a cliff,” says Martin Jaško, Deputy Director of Government Communication Unit. “A crisis is not the time to design a new system.”

Crisis communication does not only include the reaction to the situation, but starts with preparations for crisis communication and ends with the analysis of what was done.

The media might raise the question about the preparedness of a state agency for crisis communication even before an emergency situation arises. After eliminating the consequences of the crisis, the interest in the conclusions drawn from the crisis and improving the preparedness for crisis management remains. Therefore, we have to be constantly prepared for organising crisis communication.

The solution to each emergency situation is managed by one state agency. Thus the Ministry of the Interior is responsible for solving emergencies where law and order must be maintained and rescue work (e.g. mass disorder, landscape and forest fires, storms, floods, marine and coastal pollution), the Ministry of Agriculture for solving emergencies related to infectious animal diseases and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications to cyber attacks.

The information aimed at the public by the authority responsible for solving the situation must contain an overview of the situation and instructions for conduct.

The information is forwarded efficiently and regularly until the situation is resolved.

Legislation and guidelines

The Emergency Act and its implementing provision, “Procedure for notification of the public of the impending risk of emergency or the emergency and resolving the emergency and the requirements for the information to be communicated”, the State of Emergency Act and the Broadcasting Act regulate crisis communication.

- The Emergency Act stipulates the general procedure and obligations for reacting to the emergency and notifying the public.
- The abovementioned implementing provision of the Emergency Act gives government authorities general instructions for notifying the public and specifies which agency is responsible for providing notification about each specific emergency.
- The State of Emergency Act concerns public communication upon declaration of a state of emergency.
- The Broadcasting Act stipulates the principles of the transmission of emergency announcements to the public by broadcasters.

In addition, the Government Office has prepared instructional materials that specify the principles of crisis communication of government authorities and give guidelines for the operation of the communication group before, during and after the emergency. The Government Office has signed a memorandum with the largest media channels on cooperation in case of emergencies.

For successful organization of crisis communication in government bodies, one should work through the Crisis Communication Handbook published by the Ministry of the Interior and ask for advice and additional materials from the government communication unit.

The following acts also concern crisis communication management indirectly:

- Personal Data Protection Act defines the concept of sensitive personal data and stipulates the conditions and procedure for processing of personal data and liability for complying with the provisions. The aim of the act is to protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of natural persons. Disclosure of personal data is proceeded from the act.
- The Public Information Act specifies the conditions of, procedure for and methods of access to public information and the bases for refusal to grant access. The act stipulates restricted public information and the procedure for granting access thereto to the extent not regulated by other Acts. Pursuant to the act, the holder of information has the obligation to disclose information as quickly as possible in danger or crisis (section 28, 30).
- The purpose of the State Secrets and Classified Information of Foreign States Act is to ensure the security and international communication of the Republic of Estonia by protecting state secrets and classified information of foreign states from disclosure or from being accessible to persons who have not been granted access to such information.

Challenges for crisis communication



What shall we achieve?

- Efficient crisis management
- High confidence in the Government



Challenges

- Speed
- Correct messages
- Endurance

Organisation of crisis communication

Pursuant to the implementing regulation of the Emergency Act, the public must be notified of the impending risk of emergency, the emergency and solving the emergency in an emergency situation.

In Estonia, crisis communication is ensured by local governments, regional rescue centres and government authorities. This means that a communications specialist (or several specialists) must have been appointed in these government bodies or a crisis communication team must have been established.

In order to coordinate the cooperation of different agencies and bodies, the crisis management committee of the Government of the Republic and the regional crisis management committee form a permanent crisis communication team in the respective crisis management committee's area of operation. This crisis communication team aids the agencies responsible for solving the situation upon notifying the public, if necessary.

The government body's communication entity has appointed one person who participates in the preparation of the risk assessment and plans of the government body and its coordinating areas.

The risk assessment describes the emergency situation and the threats causing it in the national, regional and local levels, if necessary, the probability and consequences of the emergency situation and other important information related to the situation. Risk assessment is the most important part of preparing a communication plan.

A member of communication entity responsible for crisis organization or head of communication entity should belong to the agency's crisis management team.

The person responsible for crisis communication coordinates the preparations related to crisis communication with the government communication unit of the Government Office who also organizes the development of the state crisis communication system. The Government Office also monitors the performance of the obligations and requirements of notifying the public.

Cooperation in crisis communication between authorities is coordinated by the crisis communication team of the government body responsible for solving the situation, the crisis communication team of the regional crisis management committee. The communication of emergencies that have a wider effect and require the cooperation of many government agencies is coordinated by the crisis communication team of the crisis management committee, if the crisis is solved by the crisis management team formed by the crisis management committee of the Government of the Republic.

Wide-ranging situations are, for example, cross-border radiological emergencies caused by a nuclear incident, mass disorders and ship, train or aircraft accidents with many victims.

Emergency resolution plans and notification plans

The government has approved a list of emergencies in the case of which the agency must prepare a risk analysis and emergency resolution plan. There are a total of 19 types of emergencies or major accidents that require agencies to put together a plan of action. They include storm, flood, marine or coastal pollution, an aircraft, ship or passenger train accident involving many casualties, mass unrest, radiation accident, cyber attack and epidemic.

Resolving these situations and restoring the normal situation requires good cooperation between many agencies. Emergency resolution plans consolidate information regarding the leadership and management activities, resources, agencies, individual functions and public notification necessary for resolving the event. The plan also describes how international cooperation is organized in the case of an emergency.

Preparation of notification plans

In the case of the aforementioned emergencies, the responsible agency and its cooperation partners prepare a public notification plan. When preparing the notification plan, the risk analysis for the agency's area of government should be consulted. Also observe the provisions of the government regulation entitled "Procedure for notification of the public regarding immediate danger of an emergency, an emergency and resolution of the emergency and requirements for information to be forwarded," which sets out detailed division of public notification responsibilities between agencies in the case of an emergency or major accident. In addition, the regulations in the area of government of the relevant agency pertaining to organization of internal communication should be taken into consideration.

The preparation of notification plans is coordinated and consultation provided by the government communication unit. The notification plan shall be approved by the head of the responsible agency upon preparing the emergency resolution plan. The notification plan has been discussed previously in the government crisis committee's crisis communication working group, it has been coordinated and approved by the head of the government crisis committee's crisis communication working group.



The notification plan includes:

- brief description of the emergency and characteristics;
- the objective of public notification in different phases of the situation (notification of immediate danger, notification of resolution of emergency, follow-up procedure);
- potential impact on availability of vital services;
- risks to notification activity;
- area of responsibility of the agencies that lead and are involved in the emergency;
- composition of the notification group, grounds for convening the notification group, the group's location during the emergency, equipment and communications (including in outdoor conditions);
- notification group's organization of work and division of responsibilities pursuant to the four functions of the notification group (steering the notification group; media relations; analysis and planning; coordinator and direct notification, support/logistics);
- list and description of target and related groups;
- the national and regional information and media channels used to notify target and related groups in a specific emergency;
- information channels used for gathering information from the public (social media, telephone information lines, media monitoring etc);
- organization of notification activity in the case of power and communication cuts;
- the distribution of functions with cooperation partners (technical and human resources, joint notification projects etc);
- assessment/(impact forecast as to the aspect of psychological protection;
- main messages and guidelines for conduct pursuant to the different phases of the emergency;
- selection of spokespersons and main talking points;
- organization of media service at the scene;
- organization of communication between the notification group and crisis team at the scene;
- description of the situation in the case of which auxiliary resources should be involved from the government crisis committee crisis communication working group;
- assessment with regard to the need for additional funds for notification activity or for purchasing services.

What could this mean for us?

- Guidelines and check lists provide a sense of security...
- ...but will almost never cover the exact nature or challenge of the crisis at hand.
- Calls for improvisation.
- Focus on a common understanding of the nature and challenge in the crisis.
- Focus on training, exercises, faster evaluation.

What to do to be prepared for a crisis?

Tasks have been divided

The crisis communication team must be ready for starting crisis communication at any time.

For this, tasks must have been divided in the crisis communication team in advance. Members of the crisis communication team must be able to be engaged in tasks as similar to the normal situation as possible, whether it is writing press releases, media monitoring or web management.

Crisis situation requires wide-range continuous information activity; therefore, it might be practical to involve people with communication-related training from outside the government body's communication entity in the crisis communication team. E.g. the Rescue Board will train crisis prevention specialists who could participate in the crisis communication team's work in emergency situation.

At the same time, the establishment's communication activities that must remain functioning as in the normal situation should be reviewed. Additional forces can be obtained from other structural entities and state agencies administered by the government body if they are not already significantly involved in solving the crisis and crisis communication. Members of the crisis communication team of the crisis management committee of the Government of the Republic (communication specialists of government bodies) who form the state's crisis communication network will also provide help, if necessary.

Prior cooperation agreements may be concluded with PR companies in order to cover the crisis communication area of activity (e.g. media monitoring, registration of the press).

The person responsible for crisis communication will update the list and contact details of the members of the crisis communication team. It will be noted in the contact details if someone is on long holiday, ill or on a business trip and cannot start performing his/her tasks in the crisis communication team right away. The list must be available also on paper, in case the crisis communication team needs to be launched also during blackouts or communication disruptions.

The agency's head of communication will specify the assembly of the crisis communication team and the order of the emergency situation notification and inform the agency's crisis management committee. In the crisis management team, permanent substitutes must be appointed to the head and the representative of the crisis communication team. In the crisis communication team, at least the names of persons who are responsible for replying to media inquiries, collecting and checking information, communication cooperation with other agencies and media monitoring must be specified.

Equipment is available

The equipment necessary for crisis communication must be ensured even in normal situations: it should be agreed from where the crisis communication team will receive transportation in case of emergency, how phone and data communications has been ensured from the scene of the event, that a sufficient number of computers and printers, TV sets, radios, recording equipment is available, photo and video recording, press conference rooms, catering of crisis communication team members and covering extraordinary costs is organized. Prior cooperation agreements must be concluded with other state agencies or private companies, if necessary.

Plans have been prepared

“A bad plan is much better in a crisis than no plan at all,” says Martin Jaško, deputy director of the government communications unit.

Constant collecting of information about problematic subjects and developments reduces the risk of ending up in a totally unexpected crisis. Assess the risks and make a plan for avoiding or directing undesirable developments. For example, it is advisable to prepare thematic plans for those agencies whose job is related to threats to human life and health. A plan for restraining curious people who are unintentionally inhibiting crisis management might also be necessary.

Crisis communication plans supplement the emergency resolution plans; and crisis communication organizers from other government bodies related to solving the situation must be involved in their preparation in order to specify the division of subjects and procedure for disclosing information during the crisis. For example, in case of inland environmental pollution, the agency responsible is the Ministry of Environment, which prepares the plan for notifying the public in cooperation with other authorities involved in solving the situation – the Ministry of the Interior, the Environmental Inspectorate, the Environmental Board and the Rescue Board.

Target groups and information channels are specified

With regard to planning crisis communication, it is important that the communication target groups, their needs and the channels for informing them be specified beforehand. The precedence specified by the implementing provision of the Emergency Act concerning notifying the public according to which it is most important to notify the population group directly endangered by the threat and then the family of the (possible) victims must be proceeded from. Employees of the government body or foreign journalists may be the most important target groups upon common communication, but in an emergency situation, they come after the aforementioned parties.

Compose messages to target groups according to their needs. There is a big difference whether the message is directed at the family and friends of the victims and the deceased, the persons located in the danger zone or the international public.

For example, if the people located in the danger zone are given specific instructions of conduct, the international public is given general information about the solution of the crisis event. When selecting the information channel, the location of the people being informed (e.g. small islands, low density areas), the media channels available in the location, the inhabitants' language skills, age composition, etc., should be taken into account.

In the event of blackouts and communication disruptions it is not possible to use common communication channels for distributing and receiving information. Upon planning communication, alternatives must be considered such as informing people directly by the police, the Border Guard Administration, the Rescue Board and the Defence League.

In low-density areas, it is possible to include the community (village societies and elders, non-governmental organization) in information distribution in addition to the local government.

Cooperation has been guaranteed

Partners and crisis communication target groups become evident during risk assessment and crisis organization. Most important partners are other state agencies whose tasks in launching a crisis scenario have been established in the plans of solving emergencies or prescribed by law. For example, the Rescue Board frequently participates in solving the situation, and in counties, often the Defence Forces or the Defence League are involved.

Cooperation with companies and non-governmental organizations whose help might be necessary for solving the situation is also important. For example, the government authorities' partner has been the Estonian Fund for Nature if they are dealing with environmental pollution.

Spokespersons have been specified

In a crisis it is important that spokespersons speak with one voice. Therefore, the number of spokespersons is limited during a crisis and the right to give comments about the crisis in the media is given by the crisis communication team. Groups have the right to appoint spokespersons to talk about the crisis, deliver information about solving the situation and use additional resources meant for organising communication activities.

Spokespersons are as high-ranking as possible, are responsible for crisis management and, pursuant to the procedure for crisis management, are informed of current information and the representative of the crisis communication team. In Estonia usually the head of on-site operations and senior executive of the government agency concerned are the spokespersons. Specialists in the field are also often used to deliver messages that support communication. The senior executive does not have to be used as the spokesperson if he/she does not have any important messages to deliver to the public. During the April unrest in 2007, the Minister of the Interior assessed the situation, and the President of the Republic and the prime minister issued statements.

Reflections on recent crisis and research

- A more complex society where events, actors and structures are linked together and affects each other.
- Crisis are unaware of borders between geography, function or time.
- Much uncertainty.

Some drafts have been prepared

Prepare a draft of a press release and communication and a set of possible questions and answers for the most probable crises. If target groups or the media channels they use are in foreign languages, have the press release and the basis of the questions and answers translated into the respective languages before, in a normal situation. Thus it is possible to save time if the crisis arises and it will be possible to deliver instructions of conduct faster.

Systematic training and practice

Practising crisis communication firstly enables to make better plans for crisis communication – find effective ways to organize cooperation and reach target groups and improve possible mistakes before a crisis.

Secondly, members of the crisis communication team and cooperation partners get to know one another during the practise and understand the information needs of different participants better during the crisis. When involving journalists in the practice, they will get a better understanding of the organization of crisis communication in government bodies and know how to seek information and reflect the events more professionally during the crisis. Practising crisis communication is also a good opportunity for training spokespersons for crisis in order to increase their self-confidence and ensuring better performance during crisis.

It is recommended to practise crisis communication as a part of crisis management or separately at least once a year. Then the members of the crisis communication team and other partners will remember their tasks when the crisis arises and people in state agencies and the media will know one another better.

How to act in a crisis

Take initiative in communication

In the event of emergency or impending risk of emergency, it is important to inform the target groups about it as soon as possible. People have the right to be informed and receive instructions of conduct.

In order to make sure that the public will not get unverified information, it is important that authorities be the first to deliver information about the situation. Withholding important information in the hope that the public will never know about it is bound to fail.

The first official notice about the situation must be delivered no more than an hour after learning about the event. The first notice does not have to be thorough, but must give an idea of the situation's nature and say when more specific information will be delivered.

“If you keep hoping that you will get more information that is more reliable, you will be tempted to postpone the release of the first official message infinitely,” says Beata Vessart, director of the public relations office at the Rescue Board. “The feeling that you can wait a bit longer must be overcome with force when pushing the Send button.”

Launch the crisis communication team

When a crisis hits, the crisis communication team is launched, the prepared plans are reviewed and the informants' tasks are specified. If the head of the crisis communication team and their substitute have not been specified beforehand, they must be appointed to the first activity when the crisis communication team assembles. It is important to specify a substitute, as the crisis communication team's work should not stop if the head of the crisis communication team needs to participate in the meetings of the crisis management team or coordinate cooperation with other agencies participating in crisis communication.

The crisis communication team should always be prepared to work 24 hours a day. The group must always include people who have had a rest and changing shifts must function properly in order to ensure constant communication. In order to guarantee that changing of shifts is well-organized, a work schedule of the crisis communication team is prepared. For consistency, the whole group cannot change their shift at the same time.

The head of the crisis communication team or his/her substitute must be available for a new shift within an hour after the next shift starts.

The crisis communication team immediately starts collecting information about the event by agreeing on the possibilities and need for receiving further information.

Respect privacy

If there are casualties, the crisis communication team agrees on how to communicate information to the public and the victims' family. Names of the casualties may not be disclosed before their families have been informed and given consent for publishing the information. Names of the injured and the nature of their injuries are not disclosed.

The relevant provisions of the Personal Data Protection Act concerning the principles of the processing of sensitive personal data (sections 4–6) and the disclosure of personal data (sections 11–15, 18) should be consulted when planning communication.

If journalists receive information about the dead before their or injured before the victims' families are notified, the journalists must be informed of the abovementioned principle in order to avoid additional moral damage to the injured and their families. A person's state of health is among the sensitive personal data that, pursuant to the Personal Data Protection Act, may not be disclosed without the permission of the person.

Check facts and avoid speculation

When collecting information about events you must make sure the principal facts – who, what, when, where and how – about the people involved in the event as well as people engaged in crisis management. An answer to the question “why” might be received only after a while and it will be understood. During the crisis you should not accuse people or try to find the guilty party – if an investigation has been started, journalists must be told of it. Avoid speculation.

Authorities participating in crisis communication may speak only in their area of government. The person in charge at the

scene speaks about the activities taking place at the scene and the minister about the possible lessons the whole area of government learned from this event.

Notices about solving the emergency situation should be coordinated with other agencies involved in resolving the situation, if possible. Otherwise a situation may easily arise where different agencies give factually contradicting information to the media. This in turn causes static.

The agency leading efforts to resolve the situation may speak about solving the situation in general and refer to the contributions of different cooperating agencies. Information received must be thoroughly checked before publication. The crisis communication team must cooperate closely with the crisis management team and coordinate the published information with them.

It is important to create a basis of trustworthy and efficient information sources to get new information about the situation quickly and on a regular basis. Checking facts and being critical about sources is vital in a crisis.

Ensure media service at the scene

When crisis arises, a well-prepared spokesperson or the agency's press representative must be sent to the scene and a schedule of regular briefings must be established for the press. Such way you will assure the public that your agency is dealing with finding a solution to the crisis. In the event of very dangerous situations, the head or senior executive of the government body should be present at the scene, which in turn means closer interest of the media.

Guarantee smooth internal communication

When informing the media and the public, the agency's own employees should also be informed at the same time, if possible, in order to explain the decisions made to solve the situation. If the media becomes the only information source for the employees of the organization related to crisis management, the employees might not be adequately informed and their morale might suffer.

In the event of crisis, journalists use all the employees of the organization related to crisis management as information sources and if the internal communication is weak, people may distribute misleading information or rumours. At the same time, the agency's employees must be aware of the existence of crisis communication plans and that they have the right to give information to journalists only with the crisis communication team's coordination. Make sure that your organization's employees are well informed about the situation.

Talk about solving the crisis

During the crisis you must be ready to answer difficult questions. "You must think two steps ahead and be ready to give explanations in all arising subjects," says Inga Bowden, director of the government communication. Additional assurance comes from providing as much detail as possible about impending crisis management activities. In order to do that, analyse the situation and people's need for information. Say which steps will be taken in order to solve the problem, help the victims and normalize the situation. Before doing that, be certain that what you say will also be done. Be honest and don't speculate. Be helpful and convincing.

For example, in 2006 the preparations for a possible pandemic of avian influenza included thorough press briefings where the planned activities to manage risks and ensure the safety of the inhabitants as well as working organization principles were clarified to journalists step-by-step. The preparation and provision of sufficient information ascertained people that if the problem should arise, it would be well dealt with.

What to do if access to the scene of an event is limited

Organize access to the scene of an event for journalists, if possible. For television it is vital to have the visuals, for radio the sound. When creating a media centre at the scene of an event, it should be observed that journalists are able to park their cars, use phones, that electrical connections, desks and chairs are available, etc. The head of the scene of an event should restrict the direct access of the media to the emergency area if it impairs resolving the emergency situation, damages the interests of the investigations or poses a danger to the life and health of the journalists.

In a more extensive crisis, a round-the-clock media centre must be established which collects facts, communicates news, refutes rumours and false information and gives press conferences.

The cooperation memorandum between the Government Office and the biggest media channels specifies the principles from which to proceed if access to the scene of an event is limited. In such event, the head of the crisis communication team has the right to choose mass media channels that will be given access to the scene of an event. The media channel that is granted access must be able to inform the public to as large an extent as possible and is thereby obliged to forward the recorded material to other media channels without any special conditions or delay. It is possible to establish an additional rule that no one can use the material until it has been distributed to all the parties requesting it.

Keep a media log

In a crisis, it is important to guarantee the consistency of media communication. The crisis communication team must keep a log of media communication – which journalists have submitted inquiries, what they have asked, when they should be replied to, what you have promised them and who deals with specific inquiries. Calls that go unanswered should always be returned.

Participate in decision-making and ask for help, if necessary

The communication specialist responsible for communication activities must actively participate in making the most important decisions of the crisis management team. Each decision has an effect on the public, irrespective of whether the decision-makers perceive it. The task of communication specialists is to make the executives aware of and attentive to this fact.

If plans change or it becomes evident that they will not be enough for successful communication, people with prior experience in such matters should be consulted. Problems unite peo-

ple, and communication specialists from other organizations are always willing to help in the event of a crisis.

Organise media monitoring

As a crisis creates news very fast, it is necessary to ensure constant media monitoring and immediately refute false information that has been published. Media monitoring can be performed by members of the crisis communication team whose everyday work is not media communication if they are given specific instructions on which media channels to observe at what time and what to pay attention to.

Upon a more serious emergency situation, the website www.kriis.ee will be launched in cooperation with the government communication unit and information will be provided to the public via the webpage about the current situation. All press releases, statements, fact sheets and references to other information sources will be published on the website.

Remember that openness and fast response help to reduce human suffering and property damages in a crisis, decrease the possible threats to state security and increase the organization's reliability.

What to do after the crisis

Crisis communication does not end after the consequences of the event have been eliminated. Although the activity of the crisis communication team is finished, all the promises about giving additional information must still be kept. Follow-up communication will continue until the last procedures related to solving the situation (investigation, analysis, etc.) have been finished.

In case of an important crisis, the media is always interested in what conclusions the state has drawn from the crises and what measures will be taken in order to enable smooth crisis management in the future. The results of any investigations also receive closer attention by the public. If the organization delays making conclusions or disclosing investigation results, the public will criticize the whole process of crisis management and there will be less confidence in the organization will be in subsequent crises.

The head of the crisis communication team organizes follow-up coordination and making conclusions after the crisis. For that purpose, they collect information from their partners in state agencies and the media and assemble the information team to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, possibilities and threats of the conducted activities for future knowledge.

It is important to assess the activities as well as their impact. Many activities that required a large workforce during the organization of crisis communication might have operated very smoothly, but did not help to inform target groups better or find a solution to the crisis.

Therefore, it is important to look at the activities from the point of view of the media and target groups when documenting the lessons learned

from crisis communication. On the basis of the assessment, improvements are made to crisis communication plans by specifying target groups, messages, spokespersons and organization of coordination.

Conclusion

A prerequisite of successful crisis communication is the existence of communication specialists at an agency who are well-informed and available.

Secondly, thorough preparation is a necessity: training and earlier agreements on communication management and communication plans.

Thirdly, smooth information exchange and collection of information, responsiveness and regularity must be guaranteed. Everything must remain flexible, not bureaucratic or departmental.

Crisis communication will be unsuccessful if the government body fails to give meaning to the situation, forecast its effects or launch crisis communication in proper time. Failure is also certain if crisis communication turns into partisan political communication or the authority tries to shirk responsibility in press releases. No government body, politician or party gains from unsuccessful crisis communication. ■

Ten golden rules of crisis communication

1. Be honest and open; don't give empty promises
2. React fast, but with reason
3. Assemble a team and divide roles
4. Think through the delivered message and take initiative in media relations
5. Prepare specific spokespersons
6. Organize media service at the scene of an event
7. Check the information to be communicated and distribute it regularly
8. Monitor how the event is reflected and immediately refute false information
9. Cooperate with all parties related to the event
10. Involve experts

Public diplomacy

In today's world which is experiencing a complex combination of economic, political and social difficulties, Public Diplomacy is mirroring trends of the times. This is indeed a very challenging field, where countries' central governments, as well as regions, cities, and international organizations and institutions are striving to establish their own specific dimension. Public diplomacy, "soft" diplomacy", reputation management, traditional/cultural/social diplomacy, external educational dimension and branding are, with different nuances, part of the same business.

The Club of Venice decided to take Public Diplomacy on its agenda in November 2007, when meeting in plenary in Rome (exceptionally convening in the capital on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Rome Treaties). Since then, it organised four thematic seminars, respectively in France (2009), Malta (2010), Poland (2011) and Cyprus (2012) – and is planning to develop further analysis and debate in this domain. The upcoming plenary meeting in Tallinn in June 2013 will enable participants to pursue the exchange of feedback and best practice within an ad hoc session on "reputation management" introduced by Simon Anholt (who was one of the distinguished specialists who attended the first PD seminar convened by the Club in Paris in 2009).

74



Traditional PD definitions shared by participants within the Club depict this topic as "direct or indirect communication of one state with the citizens of another state, engaging with key stakeholders such as political parties, NGOs and special interest groups, engaging through the media (by articles, interviews, "classic" internet presence and pro-active approach with "social media") to communicate policy goals". Cultural events and educational exchanges are also recognized (but not unanimously) as public diplomacy tools. Governments are eager to know, analyse and understand how their messages are perceived and interpreted by citizens in other countries.

Meanwhile technology has been providing additional "power" to communicate to other players (or professional profiles?) while action in this field was previously confined within the traditional monopoly of governments.

The strength of governments and international institutions such as the EU lies in their use of public diplomacy utilising "soft power". Soft power relies on culture, values and policies. As government communicators mentioned at the PD seminar in Cyprus last year, examples of EU's "soft" or "public diplomacy" power include themes such as the European Neighbourhood policy, development, enlargement, the whole role of the EU in the world and in particular in the social and geo-economic scenario – and perhaps time has come to move beyond using PD as a tool for merely communicating policies and decisions to the citizens. It is now the time to LISTEN as there is a strong need to use PD to re-gain citizens' confidence in public authorities and involve them more systematically in building up and consolidating democratic values. ■



Public diplomacy in Europe: Fight fuzziness with strategy and one vision

By Verena Nowotny

The Austrian Habsburg monarchy did not enjoy a high reputation for being the most successful military power in the world, rather on the contrary. However, the dynasty was admired and envied for its ability to build and enlarge its empire by expanding the family network through carefully arranged marriages. *Bella gerant alii, tu felix Austria nube* was a phrase coined in the 17th century which nicely described the “soft power” approach of the Habsburg family: “Others may be engaged in war, you fortunate Austria marry!”

Matchmaking is not the topical tool anymore to increase a country’s influence but present infatuations with countries can also reveal some whimsical traits. Currently, Denmark ascends towards a European master in becoming a cultic destination. Not long ago, the Times of London published an article titled “It’s cool to be Danish”, praising Danish fashion and lifestyle, Danish décor and - Danish sperm donation. In 2012 alone, more than 500 British women were artificially inseminated in Denmark where also the world largest sperm bank is located. An ad for one clinic actually read, “Congratulations, it’s a Viking!”

Why we want to be Danish

Denmark’s most popular and most talked about export article, however, are TV shows such as “The Killing” or “Borgen” that have kept millions of viewers around the world glued in front of their TV sets. The fact that BBC aired the episodes of detective series “The Killing” in Danish with English subtitles did not at all lessen its appeal for British viewers. The next success came with “Borgen”, a drama series about Danish coalition politics that drew prominent admirers such as David Cameron, the British Prime Minister. For those who want to visit the places where Sarah Lund tries to find out the truth behind grisly murder cases or Birgitte Nyborg fights for her political survival as Danish Prime Minister, the city of Copenhagen has quickly developed tourism packages that are highly appreciated by foreign visitors.

Jan Melissen, Director of the Clingendael Diplomatic Studies Programme at the Netherlands Institute of International Relations, states that most countries’ interest in public diplomacy was triggered by some kind of crises¹: “The rising popularity of public diplomacy was most of the time a direct response to a downturn in foreign perceptions. Most successful public diplomacy initiatives were born out of necessity. They were reactive and not the product of forward-looking foreign services caring about

relationships with foreign audiences as a new challenge in diplomatic practice.” Numerous countries have experienced such a wake-up call at some point in their recent history; and Denmark is no exception to that: when Danish newspaper cartoons depicted the Islamic prophet Mohammed in 2006, the publication led to a wave of protests in Muslim-majority countries, including violent ones. This crisis made it clear to Denmark’s government that it needed to reach out directly to citizens in other countries. Consequently, the Danish government launched a public diplomacy programme in 2007.

During informal talks with the Danish Ministry for Foreign Affairs on the subject of nation branding I conducted last winter, it becomes clear that Denmark has two important lessons to share that seem to be crucial for the current success story of Denmark’s public diplomacy efforts:

1. Clearly defined goals and target groups²
2. Government acts as facilitator and not as a gatekeeper of information

These principles are mirrored in answers to questions how the Danish public broadcaster DR could produce these highly successful shows that earned the broadcaster global recognition. DR representatives do not cite a specific recipe for success, however, they stress that there is a principle called “one vision”, which essentially means that the writer of the script has absolute control over the content. Obviously, also in the case of DR the government acts as a facilitator and has no ambition to intervene.

Another insight of one of “Borgen”’s writers is worth sharing: They make a clear distinction between the esoteric world of a show like the US series “24”, which strives for fascination, and the relatable world of their show, which aims to foster *identification*. Peter van Ham, a Dutch place branding expert, sings from the same hymn sheet when he talks about nation branding: “Branding goes beyond PR and marketing. It tries to transform products and services as well as places into something more by giving them an emotional dimension with which people can identify. Branding touches those parts of the human psyche, which rational arguments just cannot reach.”³

1 Melissen, Jan. *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*. Studies in Diplomacy and International Relations. Palgrave, 2006.

2 Denmark made the following target groups its priority: Innovation and creativity, tourism, global talents, exports and investments

3 Ham, Peter van. *Branding European Power*. Place Branding, Vol. 1. Henry Stewart Publications, 2005.

We don't want to be European (yet)

While Denmark offers an exciting example how the creative power of its citizens can be unleashed and put a country on the world stage, the European Union as such has not reached that point. In April 2013, the College d'Europe together with the Committee of the Regions organized a conference on "EU-China Soft Diplomacy" to examine the status quo of current relations. In preparation to my speech at this conference it was part of my research to map existing public diplomacy efforts between the EU, selected member states, and China. The reason for this approach was that a vast number of initiatives in the field of public diplomacy are already taking place. These activities and efforts have often developed bilaterally, and hardly any of them have been coordinated. Comprehensive knowledge, exchange and coordination of EU-China activities are missing – although they would precondition any strategic assessment. I assume that some of my observations and findings as well as conclusions not only relate to the specific relation between the EU and China but might be helpful in a broader context as well.

As Simon Anholt, internationally renowned expert on nation branding, pointed out in a speech to the Club of Venice in 2009, good public diplomacy rests on three ingredients: strategy, substance and symbolic actions. The EU's deficit seems less a lack of substance but that of strategic focus, or "one vision" as the Danes call it. Kerry Brown for instance, Team Leader of the Europe China Research and Advice Network (ECRAN) at Chatham House, points out that there already is ample talk between the EU and China – China has no less than 56 separate strategic dialogues with the EU – "but what seems to be lacking, strangely enough, is political will and focus on the side of the Europeans, who profess to be seeking a broader global voice."

Secondly, most of the activities on EU level or carried out by member-states focus on cultural diplomacy and student exchange. And even in these areas, we lack a comprehensive overview (although first studies have tried to provide reliable data), which poses severe challenges as to correctly assess the quality and effect of these efforts. Furthermore, considering the current toolbox of public diplomacy (according to the political scientist Joseph Nye) that encompasses other elements such as listening, advocacy, international broadcasting and engaging the publics, the EU and its member-states use a rather limited range of channels to reach out to non-EU citizens.

Although one might concede that practically all public diplomacy efforts imply some kind of "listening" as well, it is evident that listening in the sense of engaging people by collecting and analysing their value debate and opinion formation rarely goes beyond cultural exchange so far. The EU and its member-states need to engage more in an honest outreach and act as a facilitator to convey these findings to a domestic audience. Jan Melissen suggests that "European powers could involve their citizens more in discussions on international politics and foreign policy, transforming the ministry of foreign affairs into more of a domestic department" – an idea that is worthwhile considering.

The mapping exercise brought to light a further area of cooperation that could be considered another means of public diplomacy: a huge number of activities takes place on the basis of cooperation in science and research, involving student and scholar exchanges, educational programmes and joint research projects. These activities frequently address specific, timely, and inter-disciplinary challenges and foster collaboration on issues that reflect core aims and values of the EU (e.g. sustainability). Within these frameworks of scientific cooperation the EU and its member-states have the opportunity to promote European values and priorities, which allows qualifying them also as advocacy efforts in the sense of public diplomacy. One might classify cooperation in science as a "hidden champion" of European efforts in public diplomacy.

In order to improve effectivity of public diplomacy efforts and to strengthen Europe's soft power, the following recommendations may be suggested that not only apply to the EU's efforts towards China but also to other non-EU countries:

- first, the EU and its member-states have some homework to do in terms of coordination and cooperation;
- secondly, as long as Europe does not address the current lack of strategy and vision all activities will remain scattered, incoherent, possibly lukewarm, and surely meagre in their effect (that these two efforts will have to precede by successful public diplomacy efforts directed at Europeans to promote a common European vision among European citizens would be a topic for another article and shall not be overlooked without being elaborated here);
- thirdly, having defined some goals and respective target audiences combined with the willingness to dedicate reasonable resources to this endeavour will allow to orchestrate a coherent outreach to foreign publics.

In order to achieve these goals Europe might look at Denmark again and consider a statement of an editor at the public broadcaster DR who explained that owing to the nature of Danish politics, the show "Borgen" almost did not get made. "We are not as colourful as the US or Britain; we don't have huge sex scandals", the editor recalled the early discussions. "Our ambition was always: Can we make people watch something as boring as Danish politics?"

In Europe, the challenge might be similar. But fortunately there are Europeans who strongly believe that public diplomacy efforts can help to engage citizens in something as complicated (but tremendously exciting) as the European Union... ■



Internet and Social Media Club of Venice activities Social media seminar

Brussels, 22 March 2013

Audiovisual/interactive on line communication and the emerging new media such as the social networks are a permanent topic of the Club of Venice agenda.

The Club has so far organised eight events in this domain:

DATE AND VENUE	TOPIC
22.3.2013, Brussels, Council premises (joint Club of Venice (CoV)/Council Working Party on Information (WPI))	Public Communication in the evolving media landscape: Adapt or Resist?
4.10.2012, Brussels, Council premises (joint CoV/WPI)	Open Government in the making
16.02.2012, Brussels, Council premises (joint CoV/WPI)	The next web and its impact on government communication
7.10.2011, Brussels, Council premises (joint CoV/WPI)	The impact of social media on journalism
20.10.2010, Brussels, Residence Palace (in cooperation with the Belgian PM Chancellery)	Capacity Building + Social Media + web 3.0
19.3.2010, London, Central Office of Information (COI)	Web 2.0 - Digital strategies for public communication
17.4.2009, Brussels, International Press Centre (in cooperation with the Belgian Chancellery)	Interactive Web 2.0 communication
25.2.2008, Brussels, European Parliament premises	Audiovisual and interactive communication

These seminars are attended by Member States' government representatives (based in Brussels and in the capitals) in charge of communication, staff from EU institutions and bodies and external specialists (practitioners from the public and private sector, academics, analysts, social media reps, bloggers...) who debate on the following aspects:

- the new world of a multi-faceted communication (social media, new applications, increasing need for quick interaction, monitoring and evaluation) which increasingly requires a multi-tasking approach, new behavioural standards, training, transparency and consistency;
- the growing influence of digital and social media on citizens and organizations and on the need to engage in a dialogue towards a "citizens-centered approach", involving citizens as far as possible in policy development and sharing orientations;
- the political/conceptual aspects and organisational implications, in a scenario where communication officers are increasingly exchanging feedback and suggestions on how governments and institutions should adapt their strategies and structures to the new media landscape.

Whilst some governments are already fully engaged with e-government (carrying out a wide variety of online information campaigns, joint multi-media projects on open-policy-making and digital services, social media initiatives such as e-voting, deliberative polling, but also monitoring and analysing social networking, etc.), some others are still hesitating in using the most innovative interactive tools.

The institutions, in their turn, are increasingly making progress in the use of new interactive media, but with different rhythms and nuanced strategic approaches.

These seminars aim, through the share of best practice and lesson learning, to facilitate governments and institutions in their transition into the social media space, by understanding better the new digital reality and the instruments needed to shape their communication strategies meeting with the new challenges. At the same time, discussions are also covering the traditional on line communication activities in order to help promote and optimize also the existing interactive platforms other than the social networks.

The public character of such seminars, the added value of the external specialists involved, the wide audience and intense blogging and the positive feedback received by participants encourage the Club to pursue its activities in this domain. A new seminar is foreseen in autumn 2013 (topic to be identified).

Full account of the seminar held in Brussels on 22 March is given hereafter by Marco Incerti (CEPS), who drew the conclusions at the end of the event, and by Mischa Coster, one of the key-note speakers. ■



Public communication in the evolving media landscape: adapt or resist?

By Marco Incerti

Was the theme of the successful workshop organised on the 22nd of March by DG F of the Council of the European Union in cooperation with the Club of Venice. The meeting brought together communicators from the chancelleries and permanent representations of the member states and EU institutions, who discussed the changing landscape of information transmission in a fruitful exchange with practitioners and social media experts.

The overall consensus at the conclusion of the intense half-day programme was that in today's world, trying to resist the change brought about by new media makes little sense.

78

At the same time, one should not overestimate the impact and the possibilities offered by the new channels: most experts agree that, at least in the short term, these will not lead to an outright revolution of participatory democracy.

Modern channels of communication are indeed very important to connect with certain groups. However, it is likely that the citizens who actively engage with decision-makers will continue to be the ones that are interested in public policy, who would have participated also within the pre-existing frameworks.

Even those who advocate fully exploiting the new digital means to interact with civil society believe that it will take at least two decades before the transition to a truly internet-enabled participatory democracy is completed. Until then, we will have to work with a "buggy beta-version", and online tools can be used to tap a limited number of people in order to improve the "business of government".

Hence, for the time being the aim of these innovative communication instruments is not and cannot be to replace representative democracy, but rather to provide additional participation opportunities, for example in the periods between elections.

Given this background, the focus should be kept on human beings ("citizens-centred"), and reaching out to them, instead of on the process per se. In order to do this effectively, public communicators should not attempt to "make citizens into

what they don't want to be", but rather recognise their interlocutors for what they are, including "their right to remain uncommitted, lazy and even capricious".

Acknowledging the diversity within civil society, and therefore the different categories of audiences, also means not neglecting the citizens that are still 'offline': Especially in certain countries, they represent a sizeable chunk of the population. Indeed, figures show that internet penetration in some of the member states remains relatively low (if growing) and conventional channels such as television and radio have a much more capillary reach.

That is why the distinction between old and new forms of communication is nowadays more than meaningless, counter-productive: Public authorities should adopt an integrated approach which makes the best use possible of all the available tools, choosing the appropriate one depending on the different audiences.

The need for such an approach is corroborated by empirical evidence showing that, although social media are by now part and parcel of most political campaigns throughout Europe, their impact is highest when debates are actually picked up and re-transmitted by traditional media.

The new environment in which both content and conversation are "networked, distributed and mobile" also poses some challenges to institutional communicators, as we move from a news cycle to a constant news stream or "24-hours newsroom". Obviously, monitoring such a





continuous flow of information requires considerably more resources. Nevertheless, the rewards can be significant, as it becomes possible to capture trends while they are developing, and by entering the stream at the right time (early on) anyone can become an influencer. In the new context, communicators also have the possibility of reacting to news while it is being broken, thus being able to shape the message and contribute to a better understanding of public action.

While it is therefore indisputable that embracing social media has to be part of any well-structured communication strategy, it is important to also keep in mind the potential downsides. In particular, the public and accessible nature of the information disseminated puts the traditional principles of privacy and data protection to a test, and the algorithms used to mechanically process online data present an inherent risk of misinterpretation.

This is made more complicated by the fact that public administrations have limited control over the information, which is technically and legally resting with the private companies that have developed the new digital tools.

Furthermore, through these channels intelligence agencies have access to a much larger amount of information on any given individual, and in order to try and contextualise it, they have a tendency to collect as much as possible, and store it until the moment it may become useful.

Another trade-off which is the subject of a deontological debate concerns anonymity: The latter allows for freer criticism, but should not be interpreted as a licence to spread false information or libel. “With names, conversation may be more civilised, voices more respectful, but you’d miss a few contributions”.

Finally, the EU institutions provide a good case study of the practical challenges that public communicators are confronted with in the adoption of (and adaptation to) social media. In particular, the latter require a trial and error approach that is ill-suited for larger hierarchical organisations governed by strict rules. This applies both to the means, where certain technological tools may not be available due to security restrictions, and to the content, with a message that for the time being seems to be characterised by an excessive focus on process and self-congratulation. Due to internal procedures, individual officials may not be enabled (or they might find it difficult) to react in the swift and direct manner that is required by most of today’s digital channels. From this point of view, the only way to fully exploit the potential of social media may be to “leapfrog the bureaucratic obstacles” by seeking endorsement from the political level of the organisation. ■



Marco Incerti is the Head of Communications and a Research Fellow at the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), one of the leading European think tanks. Before joining CEPS, he worked in the International Law Department of the University of Rome “La Sapienza”. Since joining CEPS in 2002, he concentrated on the European Constitutional process, following the work of the Convention on the future of Europe and focusing in particular on institutional reform. In this context, he helped found and, between 2003 and 2006, managed the European Policy Institutes Network (EPIN), a network of think tanks from all over Europe which, through regular meetings in Brussels and a constant flow of publications, aims at fostering the European dimension of the debate on EU policies and at increasing the degree of cooperation between research organisations on the continent. Incerti is a member of the Steering Committee of the Brussels Think Tanks Dialogue, of the Young Transatlantic Network of the German Marshall Fund, and of the European Association of Communication Directors. For CEPS, he follows the developments of think tanks-related policy in Europe, and is in charge of the European Transparency Initiative dossier. During his tenure, CEPS has been ranked for six years in a row among the Top Ten Think Tanks in the world, and received the European Public Affairs Award as “Think Tank of the year” in 2008, 2010 and 2011. He tweets at @MarcoInBxl

Persuasion and Social Transmission in online social environments

By Mischa Coster

Persuasion is all around us. From the television commercial to traffic signs, from a child's request to a crowdsourcing campaign. Should we adapt or resist?

Before going into the psychological dynamics of persuasion, I'd like you to think about the following:

In the ancient art of Aikido, the principle of Circular Motion has provided many practitioners with a guide for their efforts in all areas of life. The basic idea is that by using a circular motion, you are able to absorb and direct the force that is being asserted towards you. Instead of going head-on full force, the Aikidoka becomes one with the movement of the attacker and directs that movement towards a safe outcome – for all involved.



80

Wouldn't it be great to use this ancient wisdom on current challenges? In ethics, social media, politics. When looking at the question at hand from this perspective, the clear answer would be 'adapt!'

Social by Design

When looking at the way the social media landscape evolved, we can see developments towards a 'social by design' experience from the user point-of-view. That is, an experience in which not only the content and presentation are important factors, but also the knowledge of what my personal social environment is doing with this content.

The Liking Principle

In Social Psychology, a lot of research has been done on the variables that make people like each other. It turns out there are 3 important ones: physical attractiveness, similarity and association. In other words, we like those that we find attractive, look similar to us or who have friends we like or value.

Also, as researcher dr. Robert Cialdini has shown, we are more likely to comply with requests made by those we like. And, we value their opinion over the opinion of others. So, in terms of social media, our friends have a great deal of influence over what we say, do and like. This makes the 'Social by Design' principle very powerful. Combine an (already persuasive) request with the knowledge of what my friends have done and the result will be a very quick decision shortcut (heuristic).

The website TripAdvisor has done an excellent job in incorporating my friends' activity and opinions in my personal online experience:



Commitment

So if we let our action be partly guided by what we see our friends do, how can we use that in terms of citizen compliance, co-creation, and participation etcetera? Looking again at social psychology research, we have learned that once people make a relatively small commitment for an action/request/brand/proposition, they will be far more likely to comply with any follow-up request regarding the same subject. This is called the principle of Commitment & Consistency.

In social media environments, there are various ways people give their commitment to requests and actions. By far the most obvious one is the Facebook 'like' button for Facebook Pages.



When you think of this button and the last time you used it to like a product/service/organization/brand, you will probably recognize the speedy processes that go on in your head. Milliseconds before clicking the 'like' button, you ask yourself: "Do I want to associate myself with this?" "Who is going to see this 'like'?" "It's going to be registered on my public profile, do I really want that?"

In other words, two of the three factors that 'amplify' commitment according to Dr. Cialdini – making it public and written – are being met here. Still, lots of organizations neglect to guide their fans' behavior in accordance with their public commitment. A persuasive message that activates 'Commitment' could begin with "We value that you have identified yourself as our fan in front of your friends & family!! Why not also [request]?"

Authority

As a government, there is almost a 'natural' level of authority when it comes to citizen activation. The psychological principle of 'Authority' tells us that when in doubt, people will defer to an authority to provide them with decision-supporting information. In other words, people are inclined to do what an authority says they should do, especially when in doubt.

I believe we have to acknowledge the fact that a government communication office acts as an authority communicator. Not necessarily the 'tone of voice', but the fact that the communication is 'official' is authoritative enough for most. On the ethical side, this authority position should be taken into account every time the government communication office publishes information or engages in a conversation. By looking at the level of susceptibility of the target audience, government officials can adjust the arguments in their message to reflect the affirmation needed by the target audience.



Social Transmission

But, what if we want to send out a message of, for example, caution? Preventive health communication, crisis preparation. We could use the Authority card, but the problem here is that our target audience is probably not yet doubting a decision, as the decision to be made ("should I see my doctor for a check-up", "should I buy a battery-powered radio for emergency purposes") is not yet top of mind.

So an ideal way to utilize the Liking principle is to generate Word-of-Mouth. In contrast to popular belief, Word-of-Mouth or Social Transmission is not about 'influencers'. Research shows the role of so-called influencers is relatively small, especially after the launch of a campaign. Dr. Jonah Berger has, for the past decade or so, researched what makes a message 'go viral'. By means of the acronym STEPPS he advises to investigate the following characteristics of our message:

Social Currency

Will telling my friends about this make me look good?

Trigger: Is my message logically connected to a trigger that occurs often? Top of mind, tip of tongue

Emotion: Does my message elicit an emotion? Preferably, a strong emotion accompanied with physiological 'arousal'

Public: Is my message visible to the public eye? Is there enough 'social proof' for people to start talking?

Practical Value: Is there some sort of advantage or value my target audience can gain by this piece of information? How-to's, discounts etc. provide practical value

Story: How can I present my message in a way that is nice to tell and for people to remember? Wrap your key message in an emotional, triggered story to increase chances of social transmission

81

Conclusion

Social Media are made of like-minded people sharing information and stories with each other. Try to get them to share yours. Keep the 'Word-of-Mouth' principles in mind when crafting your message. They will ensure maximum social transmission by effectuating the 'Liking' principle.

After that, turn to commitment to get people to go one step further in their engagement. Don't forget to point out the first time they publicly committed to your cause.

As a government, you should only use persuasion techniques to get citizens to do things that are in their best interest. Don't lie, cheat or otherwise misuse the faith that citizens have put in an Authority – because that's what you are. ■



Mischa Coster is a consultant and researcher in the area of media psychology and persuasion. He is the co-founder of Grey Matters and guest lecturer for various universities and business schools.

Mischa has been consulting clients as an independent mediapsychologist since 2001. His strong knowledge of psychological persuasion techniques, choice architecture, intervention mapping and social media strategy combined with a broad experience in marketing, business consulting and technical development, make him an allround international public speaker and consultant on the subject. Projects include behavior change and persuasion in local and national government, NGO, nonprofit & profit.

He tweets at: @mcoster

Plenary meeting, 6-7 June 2013, Tallinn, Estonia

Venue: Riigikogu (Estonian National Parliament), Lossi plats 1a

Thursday 6 June

The role of participatory democracy in public communication 2013 is the European Year of Citizens. One of the key questions is how to get the citizens involved; how to engage them in the European project. Estonia is well known for its efforts to promote e-solutions, thus making it easier and more attractive for citizens to engage in current affairs. What are the government communicators and EU institutions' experiences with direct consultations with the public?

The plenary is expected to facilitate the exchange of experiences and lessons learnt and trigger discussion about effectiveness of outreach.

Co-moderators:

Pierre-Emmanuel De Bauw (B) and Eleonora Gavrielides (CY)
Members of the Club of Venice Steering Group

Key-note:

Anthony Zacharzewski, Head of Democratic Society:
"Ten participatory democracy questions, and some inadequate answers"

The role of civil administration in government communication
Communicators from Government and EU institutions have a unique position to offer impartial and trustworthy information: as civil servants they are not seen as political actors and, at the same time, they are respected as experts on the various issues. By increasingly offering impartial and trustworthy information, providing concrete and objective background, explaining policies' content simply and clearly, they can certainly help citizens follow the debate(s) and form their personal opinion.

Moderator/interviewer: Rasmus Kleis Nielsen, post doctoral research fellow doing cross-national comparative research on the business of journalism and its role in democracy; specialised, among others, in media participation, civic engagement and political campaigning

Case studies (UK, FR) and interview with a number of communication directors and external specialists

Friday 7 June

- Follow-up to Thursday's session on participatory democracy
- Reputation management and Branding - Key-note: Simon Anholt, Independent Policy Advisor - <http://www.simonanholt.com/>: "Managing the Nation's Image: Good Governance or Futile Propaganda?"
- Communication and interaction as an instrument of trust and accountability; how to [re-]gain EU citizens' confidence

Optional programme:

- (poss.) "e-cabinet review" by PM Andrus Ansip (at the Stenbock House)
- Guided tour of the old town of Tallinn ■





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