**Concept Note**

2nd Euro-Mediterranean Communicators’ Workshop

**Context**

Presently, few societal issues are more contentious or polarising than migration. Debates surrounding this phenomenon are increasingly based on emotion and perception, and heavily influenced by a narrative constructed around, on one hand, the plight of desperate migrants risking their lives in search of safety or, simply, a better life or, on the other hand, potential threats to security and identity.

As noted in the European Agenda on Migration of 2015, “*Misguided and stereotyped narratives often tend to focus only on certain types of flows, overlooking the inherent complexity of this phenomenon, which impacts society in many different ways and calls for a variety of responses*”. This trend is even more apparent, although understandably enough, in the Mediterranean, whereby irregular migration, takes the centre stage in the public imagery and discourse surrounding migration, deeply influencing also public opinion at large and the political debate in several countries.

Mindful of this tendency, ICMPD aims to bring evidence back to the core of the migration narrative. This requires a critical examination of the manner in which information is received, shared, and disseminated and a thorough analysis of its impact on citizens' perception.

A more balanced perception has the potential to lay the groundwork for evidence-based migration policies. Accordingly, adequate communication strategies and efficient measures to prevent misperceptions and counter disinformation can play a key role in demonstrating that migration could be managed successfully, through coherent and comprehensive policies, rather than simply "endured".

As such, the EU-funded EUROMED Migration IV programme is placing a focus on communications as an integral element of rebalancing the narrative on migration. In doing so, it is harnessing support from relevant stakeholders, such as the Club of Venice, an invaluable partner for promoting exchanges on this key political issue for Europe, and in the organisation of the proposed event.

**Concept**

In 2018, ICMPD and Club of Venice organised the first ever workshop between communicators of European Union Member States (EU MS) and Southern Partner Countries (SPCs) under the auspices of the Government of the Republic of Tunisia in the framework of the EUROMED Migration IV programme. The workshop brought together migration experts, public communicators, academics, international organisations and journalists, facilitating dialogue among actors that have limited opportunities to discuss common challenges and present success stories.

The 2018 workshop highlighted the important role communicators’ play in relaying facts-finding-based information and stimulating the debate on migration in the public sphere, and ultimately contributing to shaping people’s objective perception of migration.

The present second workshop for communicators, organised in collaboration and under the auspices of the Ministry of Citizen Protection General Secretariat for Migration Policy, Reception and Asylum of the Hellenic Republic, would build upon the success of the first workshop and enable further consolidation of a community of practice of communicators, through further deepening of knowledge and sharing of experience. The workshop will also serve as platform of discussion to inform the development of concrete recommendations for governmental and institutional communicators based on the findings of the work conducted by ICMPD and OPAM in the framework of EMM4.

Furthermore, upon the recommendations of the first workshop, a high-level event will be organised along with the second Communicators’ Workshop. This event will provide an opportunity to recognise and highlight the role of public communicators in contributing to frame a balanced, objective narrative on migration in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

*General Objective*

To promote excellence in public communications on migration by recognising and show casing good practices that contribute to developing a balanced and evidence-based narrative on migration in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

*Specific Objectives*

* To highlight good practices and exchanges between the communicators of European Union Member States (EU MS), European institutions and agencies, their counterparts in Southern Partner Countries (SPCs), and communicators of international and regional organisations.
* To establish a common basis for the development of concrete recommendation for institutional communicators and policy makers to support the development of effective, forward looking, sustainable, and evidence-based migration policies in EU MS and SPCs. .
* To strengthen cooperation in identifying communication and information strategies addressing the key audiences through an objective and transparent narrative on migration. The high level event will also gather representatives from academia and governments/institutions to highlight the challenges and role of public communication in this field and to table orientations for future cooperation.

**Proposed Format:**

The Communicators workshop will take place over 1.5 days. The high-level event, to be held on the evening of the first day of the workshop, shall include a panel of distinguished speakers, potentially including high level representatives/public communicators from EU Member States, European agencies and institutions, their counterparts in SPCs, and representatives of academia/communication experts to highlight the role institutional communicators/communication play in the public debate on migration in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

Main stakeholders may include indicatively:

* Communicators of EU MSs, and of the EU the institutions and agencies;
* Communicators of SPCs;
* EMM4 National Focal Points
* Migration and communication professionals in EU MS and SPCs governments
* Academia
* Public communication professionals
* Think Tanks and research networks
* International and Non-Governmental Organisations
* Experts in communication, public attitudes and sociology
* Other relevant stakeholders as identified together with main partners

**Agenda for the 2nd Euro-Mediterranean Communicators’** **Communicators’ Workshop**

***Royal Olympic Hotel Athens***

***28-34 Athanasiou Diakou Street***

**Day 1 – Monday 11 November**

**9:00 Welcome and Registration of Participants**

**9:30 Opening remarks**

**Patroklos GEORGIADIS** *Secretary General for Migration Policy, Reception & Asylum, Ministry of Citizen Protection, Greece*

*Representative from the Steering Group of the Club of Venice (TBD)*

**Elisabetta LA GALA** *International Aid / Cooperation Officer EU Trust Fund, European Commission, DG Neighbourhood and Enlargement negotiations*

**Julien SIMON** *Regional Coordinator for the Mediterranean,* ICMPD

***10:00 Coffee break and Group Photo of Opening Panel***

**10:30 Session 1 – Setting the scene and objectives**

**Introduction: the Narrative on Migration as a programme focus**

Danila CHIARO *- EUROMED Migration IV (EMM4) Project Manager, ICMPD*

**Intervention: Migration as a public communication priority: what is at stake**

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

**Presentation: Analysis of recent developments and public opinion trends – General overview and main concepts**

**James DENNISON** *Observatory on Public Attitudes on Migration, Migration Policy Centre, European University Institute*

***Round table interventions from participants: objectives and expectations***

**11:30 Session 2 - Working session on recommendations for public Communicators**

**Presentation: Communicating Strategically about Immigrant Integration: Policymaker Perspectives (followed by Q&A)**

**Aliyyah AHAD -** *Migration Policy Institute*

**Presentation: Impact of Public Attitudes to migration on the political environment in the Euro-Mediterranean region - EMM4 studies developed by OPAM (followed by Q&A)**

**James DENNISON** *Observatory on Public Attitudes on Migration, Migration Policy Centre, European University Institute*

**Interactive debate with participants:**

(Indicative steering questions)

From the perspective of policy makers and experts:

* What are the main challenges encountered in communicating migration?
* How do media report on migration in your country?
* Could you describe how media reporting and public opinion on migration are correlated?

***13:00 Lunch Break***

**14:00 – 15:30 Session 3 – Good practices, experiences and complementarity**

*Moderator: Mr Vincenzo LE VOCI*

**Eleni PETRAKI** Acting Head of Public Relations & Communications Office at the Asylum Service, Ministry of Citizen Protection, Greece

**Bassim ALDAHAMSHEH** Director of the Department of Citizenship and Arab and Foreigner Affairs, Ministry of Interior, Jordan

**Henri BOHNET** Director Greece and Cyprus, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung

**Yves CHARMONT** Director, Cap'Com, France

**Rosa CAVALLARO** Senior Officer, Italian Communication Regulatory Authority

**Q&A**

***16:45 Pick up to High Level Event venue***

**Day 2 – 12 November**

**9:30 Session 4 – Communicating migration – Challenges and good practices**

***Keynote intervention***

**Dennis ABBOTT**

Author and Communication Expert

**Panel discussion**

**The role of public communication in supporting a constructive public debate on migration: what are the main challenges ahead**

**Tiziana ANTONELLI** Department of European Policies - Communication Unit, Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Italy

**Stavros PAPAGIANNEAS**Communication expert

**George PLEIOS** Director of the Laboratory for Social Research in Mass Media at the National and Kapodistrian University Athens (NKUA)

**Khaled ZOUARI**  Lecturer, Clermont Auvergne University

**Discussion (Q&A)**

**11:15 Coffee Break**

**11:45 Session 5 – Round table discussion on the outcome of the High Level Event, and conclusions for follow up**

**Recap of discussions during the workshop and High Level Event, next steps and follow up**

Vincenzo Le Voci, Club of Venice and Danila Chiaro, ICMPD

***Round table interventions from participants: feedback and identification of priorities for the next phase***

**12:45 Closing remarks (TBD)**

**Manos LOGOTHETIS** *Special Secretary for Reception, Ministry of Citizen protection, Greece*

*Representative from the Steering Group of the Club of Venice (TBD)*

*Representative from EU (TBD)*

**Ana FEDER** *Regional Portfolio Manager, ICMPD*

**13:00 Lunch**

**14:00 Departure to airport or cultural visit: Guided Tour to the Acropolis Museum**