FOCUS ON

Venice plenary, December 2025
Interaction and inter-operabilities in resilience building,
relations with the media sector, synergies in digital strategies:
scale planning, communicating the EU MFF

Warsaw stratcom seminar, October 2025
Countering FIMI, resilience building and communications security,
AI's impact on public communication, situational awareness

Athens plenary, May 2025
Anti-FIMI synergies, digital transformation and AI's intelligence influence,
public diplomacy, country branding and security reputation

Cap'Com annual forum, Angers, November 2025
AI's impact on public communication, reinforcing
going-local strategies, change management, co-creation

SEEMO annual forum, Chisinau, November 2025
Safeguarding media freedom, reinforcing ties with the academic world
and young journalists, empowering civil society

Be(A)ware stratcom seminar, Brussels, October 2025
FIMI threat, the role of media and civil society, collective resilience,
facilitating knowledge, cooperation and coordination

Agenda 2030, civic engagement, algorithmic transparency

Club of Venice | Club de Venise

SUMMARY

FEATURING:

CLUB NEWS:

In memoriam Jan Veenman

Jan Veenman

Jan was someone who believed in the power of harmony and the strength of reasonableness. He did not like pretentious behaviour. He was trained as a construction engineer, but at a certain point he ended up working in government communications. That was where his personal qualities proved particularly useful. From the mid-1990s until 2010, he helped build the Public Information and Communications Service (DPC) of the Dutch national government. In this organisation, many communication tasks were brought together to support the ministries. Thanks to Jan, DPC gained, among other things, its own Academy for Government Communication, which provided the communication profession with a wealth of innovative new impulses.

Jan did not limit his communication work to DPC; he was also chair of the Dutch Association for Government Communication. And he was a very active member of the Club of Venice, where he continuously contributed new ideas.

On 24 August 2025, Jan Veenman passed away. There is no doubt that he left a significant mark on public information both nationally and at the European level. That will not be forgotten.

Erik den Hoedt

The Club of Venice is mourning Jan Veenman, former Director for Public Relations and Communication at the Office of the Prime Minister of the Netherlands and from 1997 to 2010 one of its most distinguished members .

Deeply saddened I would like to pay tribute to my colleague and dear friend Jan, with whom I shared so many good moments in discussions during our meetings and afterwards enjoying life around a glass of beer. Jan has always been a source of inspiration for my work : He was an excellent public communicator, guided by the principle that governments and their communication have to be at the service of the citizens. The communication campaigns carried out in the Netherlands served as example for many of us and Jan and his directorate were also frontrunners in education and training of government communicators. He dedicated big part of his efforts to capacity building, being aware of the need to continuously adapt to the rapid and fundamental changes of the communication environment.

A particular highlight of Jan's contribution to the Club was the important spring plenary in The Hague in 2005 with high level political participation illustrating the recognition of the Club of Venice as essential forum of exchange among Europe's government communicators.

Dear Jan, you will always be remembered as one of the pillars of our Club and as a dear friend.

Hans Brunmayr

La communication publique c'est difficile *de près* …[1]

Libres propos

Par Philippe Caroyez et Vincenzo Le Voci

*"Ecrivez-nous de quoi vous avez besoin,
on vous expliquera comment vous en passer !"*

Michel Colucci dit "Coluche"

Au-delà de la communication publique qui reste un ensemble structuré (institutionnalisé) de services, *d'actions* et d'activités finalement (assez) limité, nous devons en venir au *communicationnel public*, plus large et permanent puisqu'inscrit de fait dans toutes relations (réciproques) entre l'autorité publique et le citoyen-administré au sens large. Comme le disait l'un de nos prédécesseurs français : quand un CRS vous arrête et se penche à la portière de votre véhicule, c'est l'état qui s'adresse à vous avec un corps de droits, de règles, de valeurs et … une communication publique qui s'exerce !

Mais ceci nous confronte d'emblée à cette forme de paradoxe, à laquelle nous devons prêter toute notre attention, que c'est pour l'autorité publique le plus diffus, alors que c'est pour le citoyen-administré le plus immédiat et le plus tangible. Le plus éloigné pour l'un, le plus rapproché pour l'autre … et donc de ce qui crée, en le fondant, un sentiment général (le plus souvent sans discernement) de confiance ou de méfiance envers les institutions publiques et leurs actions.

Même si c'est essentiel, il faut, à cet égard, être de bon compte et dire combien la communication publique c'est difficile *de près* ; mais (sans tomber dans la généralisation hâtive ou la caricature) comme citoyen-administré – par ailleurs communicateur public – interrogeons-nous sur notre *expérience client* de l'administration … puisque c'est à ce "statut" marchandisé de "client" que, durant un temps, l'autorité publique en quête d'une certaine modernité voulait nous réduire.

Des mesures légales, administratives et de *management public* prises et développées au fil du temps concourent, bien sûr, à alimenter ce *communicationnel public* : l'accueil des citoyens-administrés, la motivation des actes administratifs et les droits et devoirs en matière d'information, les recours et ombudsmans, l'accès aux documents, les cadres de valeurs et de déontologie imposés aux fonctionnaires, … Toutes mesures[2], certes, positives mais dont il serait toutefois très naïf de croire qu'elles soient suffisantes et engendrent d'office la transparence, l'accès effectif aux services et actes administratifs pour et par tous, le rejet des exclusions, le dialogue avec l'autorité, … et – pour tout dire – l'humanisation des services publics et la confiance dans l'autorité. Ce qu'une sociologie critique qualifierait d'*expérience négative de l'injustice et de l'indignité*, pointant dans les processus communicationnels et les dynamiques publiques[3] les formes de non-reconnaissance que sont le mépris et l'invisibilité sociale[4].

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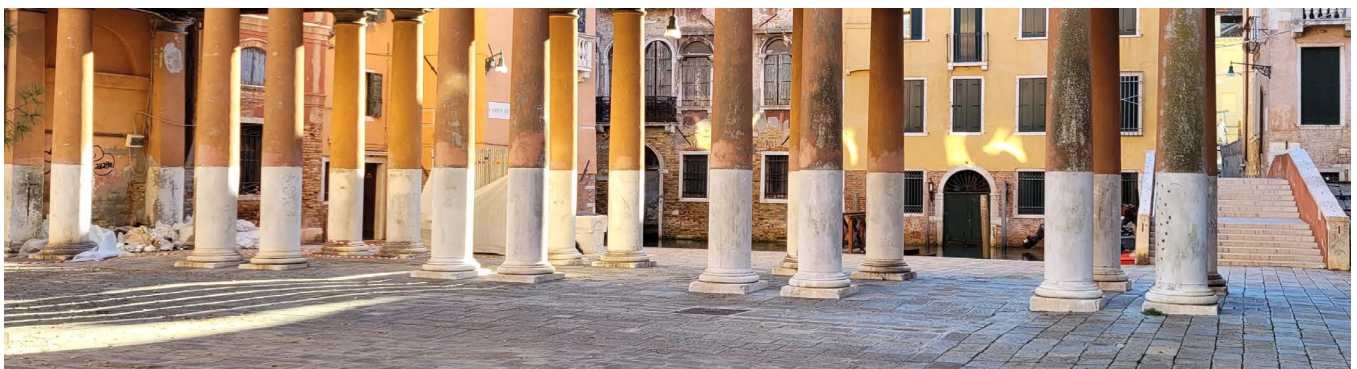
1 Pour paraphraser le philosophe Alain pour qui "La fraternité c'est difficile de près". Alain (Émile-Auguste Chartier). Minerve ou De la sagesse. Paul Hartmann Ed., Paris,1939, chapitre XXXV, page 114.

2 On y ajoutera des initiatives comme la consultation d'"experts du vécu" ou la coopération avec des associations de défense des personnes porteuses d'un handicap visuel ou auditif ou qui luttent contre la pauvreté et le surendettement, mais cela reste malgré tout marginal.

3 Espace public, participation, discussion et délibération démocratiques, communication publique, reconnaissance sociale individualisée de groupes (généralement peu privilégiés) et (in)visibilité publique de ces groupes, …

4 On lira à ce propos l'excellent article d'analyse et de synthèse d'Olivier Voirol de l'Université de Lausanne : *Une critique immanente de la communication sociale*. Publié dans la revue Réseaux, Ed. La découverte, Paris, 2015/5, n°193, pp. 43-77.
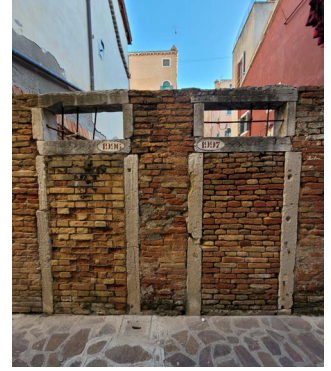
À cet égard, au-delà de réelles mesures d'inclusion qui sont indispensables, comme nous l'avons déjà développé, nous appelons de nos vœux une *communication conversante*, dans la lignée de ce que Pierre Noël qualifiait d'"information conversationnelle"[5].

Nous étions en 1982, au début de l'*histoire moderne* du développement de nos services, et il prédisait que "*l'information sur le mode d'un dialogue entre les citoyens et les institutions est sans doute appelée à se développer*"[6]. À chacun de se demander où nous en sommes effectivement aujourd'hui !

C'est peut-être pourquoi certains de nos débats et même dispositifs peuvent apparaitre comme, si pas dérisoires, au moins superficiels. Un peu comme si conscients de ne pas pouvoir nous attaquer à l'essentiel nous devions d'office nous limiter à des *mesurettes* et nous en satisfaire. Et ainsi consacrer l'essentiel de nos budgets et moyens à des actions généralistes, massives et souvent ponctuelles plutôt qu'à un travail de fond sur l'*ouverture* de nos services, l'accès à l'information, la *littératie informationnelle* et l'accueil des citoyens-administrés et de leurs demandes par une administration se voulant proche et conversante.

Avant qu'on ne nous en fasse la remarque, si pas le reproche légitime, comprenons bien que ces questions sont *fondamentalement politiques* et que la première pierre n'est pas à jeter à nos services, mais que cette réalité ne peut pas être un frein ou empêcher le nécessaire débat sociétal sur ce que nous abordons ici ... et pour lequel ils ne doivent pas rester en retrait.

Prenons l'exemple de la lutte contre la désinformation et la mésinformation qui occupe nos débats et mobilise des moyens parfois très importants.

L'OCDE, dans ses rapports, recommandations et initiatives pour renforcer la démocratie, encore récemment[7], met en avant – comme d'ailleurs beaucoup d'organisations du monde associatif – la nécessité pour les états de prendre des initiatives concrètes et fortes d'éducation aux médias, à l'information et au numérique et de les inscrire dans une politique plus large de renforcement de l'intégrité de l'information, afin de permettre aux individus de faire des choix éclairés, d'identifier ce qui est digne de confiance et de comprendre le système des plateformes et de l'intelligence artificielle et comportant des mesures de régulation et de bonne conduite de ces plateformes et un soutien à une presse informative indépendante et de qualité.

Avec ce versant que la promotion d'une "culture numérique" ne doit pas contribuer à élargir la fracture numérique, dont nous savons qu'elle et le défaut de littératie numérique renforcent les inégalités socio-économiques et l'exclusion (notamment de l'accès aux services publics et à leurs politiques).

L'Union européenne n'est pas restée inactive et a développé plusieurs plans d'actions concernant la lutte et une réponse coordonnée contre la désinformation.

Toutefois, dès le premier plan d'action de décembre 2018, la Cour des comptes européenne dans son rapport spécial[8] qui en fait l'évaluation y pointe l'absence d'une stratégie d'éducation aux médias et la fragmentation des politiques et des actions visant à renforcer la capacité d'accéder aux médias et aux communications, de les comprendre et d'interagir avec eux.

Comme l'écrit la Cour, non sans ironie : "*sous surveillance mais pas sous contrôle*" ... et de politique(s) d'éducation aux médias et à l'information il n'est aujourd'hui toujours pas question !

C'est aussi pourquoi dans ce contexte il peut sembler étonnant, et préjudiciable à notre estime, qu'il n'y ait jamais eu de réel débat public sur la communication publique et les politiques publiques en la matière.

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5   Noël Pierre. *Le tambour de ville ou comment l'Administration écoute, renseigne, informe*. Institut national de la communication audiovisuelle (INA). Ed. La documentation française, Paris, 1982, 142 pages.

6   Op. Cit., page 31.

7   OCDE. *Les faits sans le faux : Lutter contre la désinformation, renforcer l'intégrité de l'information*, Ed. OCDE, Paris, 2024,160 pages, https://doi.org/10.1787/4078bb32-fr.

8   *La désinformation concernant l'UE : un phénomène sous surveillance mais pas sous contrôle*. Rapport spécial de la Cour des comptes européenne 09/2021, présenté en vertu de l'article 287, paragraphe 4, deuxième alinéa, du TFUE. 78 pages.

D'ailleurs pas plus que la communication publique ne soit un élément du débat public, sauf peut-être dans des situations de crise… Nous l'avons bien sûr vécu lors de la pandémie de la COVID, mais où les questions soulevées portaient davantage sur les mesures annoncées que sur leurs communication et diffusion auprès du grand public et des publics ciblés. Notons encore que si on s'accorde pour identifier des changements comportementaux et sociaux (parfois à bas bruits mais, apparemment, de manière persistante, principalement chez les jeunes) à la suite de ce qui a été une crise majeure par ses conséquences et sa durée, nous ne voyons pas les conséquences qu'elle aurait pu (dû ?) avoir sur l'évolution récente de la communication publique et de ses acteurs. À certains égards, on peut même voir des formes de recul, par exemple lorsque des services, dont certains décentralisés, qui étaient librement accessibles ne le sont plus. Et gageons, en l'absence d'évaluations en la matière, que la généralisation du télétravail n'est pas forcément profitable à la relation de proximité entre l'administration et les citoyens-administrés.

Comme nous le voyons, il y a une *densité relative de la communication publique*.

On peut ainsi se représenter les actions et productions (produits et canaux) de la communication publique selon un continuum qui va de la mise à disposition générale d'informations à ce que nous nommons la conversation. De l'information brute à la communication conversante, ce qui fait la distinction (sur le continuum qui les relie) c'est le degré d'accueil, d'engagement et d'accompagnement offert par l'autorité communicante.

Nous nous plaçons ici dans le champ du *communicationnel public* dont nous avons dit qu'il concerne l'ensemble de l'autorité publique (et pas uniquement les services d'information, même s'ils y ont un rôle non négligeable à tenir et à jouer) ; ajoutons que ce que nous visons ici ne se confond pas et ne se réduit pas à ce qu'on peut qualifier de traitement individuel d'un dossier administratif… puisqu'il s'agit d'information, de communication, d'accueil, de conseil, d'orientation, de soutien, d'accompagnement, d'assistance, …

Ainsi, plus que d'autres moyens (humains, financiers et techniques), canaux, méthodes et politiques, ce qu'il faut en matière de communication publique c'est une autre culture, radicalement différente des pratiques toujours actuelles.

À l'idéal, il s'agit de lui faire épouser les formes de *comme une nouvelle esthétique* qui se fonderait sur la libre expression de la demande sociale et du besoin individuel et collectif, le soutien de cette expression et sa prise en compte. C'est tout l'enjeu de la consultation et de la participation délibérative citoyenne aux politiques et à l'action publiques[9].

Bien que sans rien abandonner des missions du service public, nous sommes là loin de la (pré)détermination des soi-disant besoins, en chambre, par les services de communication, l'autorité politique ou les agences commerciales spécialisées commanditées, ou de manière scientiste, par de quasi-sondages, pseudo enquêtes ou analyses behavioristes.

Une preuve empirique de bon sens est de souligner que d'expérience d'une administration publique (avec la médiation ou non d'un service de communication) on reçoit (ou trouve) plus facilement la réponse à une question que la réponse à un problème posé !

À méditer.

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9   Pour plus de développements sur ces questions, notamment la demande sociale et la participation citoyenne, voir Philippe Caroyez. *Comme un désir de communication publique conversante et de débat public …* in Public communication(s) in Europe. Club de Venise Ed. Bruxelles, 2021, pages 129-138.

Public communication is difficult *up close…*[1]

Free remarks

By Philippe Caroyez et Vincenzo Le Voci

Since a part of the discussion revolves around terminology, the authors would like to point out that the original text was written in French, which was the language of most of the documentary sources. The English translations of the quotes from the French-language sources are our own.

> *"Tell us what you need,
> and we'll tell you how to go without it."*
>
> *Michel Colucci
> (better known under his stage name Coluche)*

Going beyond public communication, which remains a structured – i.e. institutionalised – set of services, actions and activities that is ultimately (quite) limited, we need to take a look at *public communications* (to be understood as *the communicational dimension of every action of the public authorities and their representatives*), which is a more extensive and more permanent concept, given that it in fact forms part of all (two-way) relations between a public authority and citizens in the broadest sense. As one of our French predecessors pointed out: when a police officer stops your car and leans through the window, right there you have the State addressing you with a body of rights, rules, values – and a case of public communication in action!

But this also confronts us straight off with a type of paradox, which deserves our full attention here, namely that for the public authority in question these are the most diffuse communications, whereas for citizens they are the most direct and tangible. The most remote type of communication for the former, but the most up close and personal for the latter… meaning that what is created, by grounding such communications, is a general feeling (in most cases instinctive) of trust or mistrust towards public institutions and their actions.

Even though it is essential, we must, in this respect, be realistic and acknowledge how difficult public communication is *close up*. But – without resorting to hasty generalisations or caricatures – as citizens (and also as public communicators), let's question our *customer experience* of the administration… because it is to this commodified 'status' of 'customer' that, for a time at least, public authorities, in their quest for a level of modernity, wanted to reduce us.

Legal, administrative and *public management* measures taken and developed over time naturally contribute to fuelling such examples of *public communications*: their reception by citizens, the justification for administrative acts, and rights and duties regarding information, appeals and ombudsmen, access to documents, the ethical and values frameworks imposed on civil servants, and so on.

All these measures[2] are well and good, but it would be very naive to believe that they are sufficient and automatically result in transparency, effective access to administrative services and actions for and by all, the rejection of exclusions, dialogue with the respective authority… and – to put it simply – the humanisation of public services and trust in the respective authority. This is what a critical sociology would call the *negative experience of injustice and indignity*, pinpointing in communication processes and public dynamics[3] forms of non-recognition such as contempt and social invisibility.[4]

In this regard, beyond the essential and genuine inclusion measures we have already discussed, we strongly advocate *conversational communication*, in line with what Pierre Noël called "conversational information".[5]

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[1] To paraphrase the philosopher Alain, for whom "Brotherhood is difficult up close." Alain (Émile-Auguste Chartier). *Minerve ou De la sagesse*. Paul Hartmann, Paris, 1939, Chapter XXXV, p. 114.

[2] To this we should add initiatives such as consulting lived-experience experts or cooperation with charities or other non-profit organisation for those with visual or hearing disabilities or fighting against poverty and over-indebtedness, but these are still in the minority.

[3] We can mention here, for example, the public space, democratic participation, discussion and deliberation, public communication, individualised social recognition of (generally disadvantaged) groups and their (in)visibility.

[4] See in this regard the excellent analysis and synthesis provided by the following article by Olivier Voirol from the University of Lausanne in Switzerland: *Une critique immanente de la communication sociale*. Published in the journal *Réseaux*. La découverte, Paris, 2015/5, no. 193, pp. 43–77.

[5] Noël, Pierre. *Le tambour de ville ou comment l'Administration écoute, renseigne, informe*. Institut national de la communication audiovisuelle [French National Audiovisual Institute] (INA). La documentation française, Paris, 1982, 142 pages.

It was 1982, at the dawn of the *modern history* of the development of our services, when he predicted that "it is clear that we are going to see the development of information dissemination in the form of a dialogue between citizens and institutions".[6] It is up to each one of us to ponder where we have got to today!

This may be why some of our debates and even systems can appear at least superficial, if not ridiculous. It is almost as if, mindful of our inability to tackle the essentials, we had to automatically limit ourselves to *tinkering* and content ourselves with that. And thus, we have come to dedicate the bulk of our budgets and resources to general, large-scale and frequently one-off initiatives rather than to in-depth work on the *opening-up* of our services, access to information, *information literacy* and the reception of citizens and their requests/needs by an administration that aims to be approachable and conversational/communicative.

Before anyone points this out to us, let alone makes a legitimate criticism in this regard, we should be clear that these questions are *fundamentally political* and that the first stone should not be cast at our services, but that this reality must not curb or prevent the necessary societal debate about what we are addressing here... and for which they must not remain on the sidelines.

Let's take the example of combating disinformation and misinformation which is dominating our discourse and mobilising sometimes very substantial resources.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), in its reports, recommendations and initiatives to reinforce democracy, including just recently,[7] highlights – as do many organisations in the non-profit sector – the need for States to take strong, practical media, information and digital literacy initiatives and to consolidate them into a broader policy of strengthening information integrity in order to empower individuals to make informed choices, to identify trustworthy sources of information and to understand the system comprising online platforms and artificial intelligence (AI), providing regulation and ensuring the good conduct of these platforms, and providing support for an independent, high-quality and informative press.

In addition, promoting "digital literacy" must not do anything to expand the digital divide, given that we know that this, together with a lack of such literacy, reinforces socio-economic inequalities and exclusion (particularly from access to public services and these services' policies).

The European Union too has been working on this area and has come up with various action plans to combat disinformation and provide a coordinated response to it.

However, starting with the very first action plan of December 2018, the European Court of Auditors (ECA) in its 2021 special report,[8] which in fact gives an assessment of this, points to the absence of a media literacy strategy and the fragmentation of policy and actions to increase the capacity to access, understand and interact with media and communications.

As the title of the ECA's report, not without irony, suggests, this has been "tackled but not tamed"... and there is as yet still no talk of media and information literacy policy (or policies)!

That is also why in this context it might seem surprising, and harmful in our opinion, that there has never really been a proper public debate on public communication and public policy in this domain.

Moreover, public communication is not part of public debate, except perhaps in crisis situations... We experienced this of course first-hand during the COVID-19 pandemic, but the questions raised were more about the measures that were announced than about their communication and dissemination to the general public and targeted audiences. We should also point out that while there is agreement on identifying behavioural and social changes (sometimes subtle but apparently persistent, mainly among young people) following what was a major crisis by dint of its consequences and protracted nature, we do not see the impacts that it could (or should?) have had on the recent evolution of public communication and its stakeholders. In some respects, we can even see signs of regression, for example where services, some of them decentralised, used to be freely accessible but are not any longer. And it is a fair bet, in the absence of evaluations in this regard, that the increase in working from home is not necessarily beneficial to the close relationship between the administration and citizens.

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6 *op. cit.*, p. 31.

7 OECD. *Facts not Fakes: Tackling Disinformation, Strengthening Information Integrity*. OECD Publishing, Paris, 2024, 138 pages, https://doi.org/10.1787/d909ff7a-en.

8 *Disinformation affecting the EU: tackled but not tamed*. ECA special report (09/2021) pursuant to Article 287(4), second subparagraph, TFEU, 68 pages.

As we can see, *public communication is relatively dense*.

We can thus represent the actions and productions (products and channels) of public communication on a continuum which goes from the general provision of information to what we call conversation. From raw information to conversational communication, what makes the difference (on the continuum between them) is the level of reception/welcome, engagement and support provided by the communicating authority.

We are planting ourselves here in the field of *public communications*, relating, as we have said, to the whole of a public authority (and not just the information services, although they do have a significant role to play here). We should add that what we are referring to here is not the same as, nor is it limited to, what could be described as the individual processing of an administrative case… because it involves information, communication, reception, advice, guidance, support, assistance, and so on.

Thus, more than other resources (human, financial and technical), channels, methods and policies, what is needed in terms of public communication is another culture, radically different from what are still current practices.

Ideally, it should follow the contours of *something like a new aesthetic* which would be based on the free expression of social demand and individual and collective needs, as well as support for this and its integration. This is the whole point of consultation and deliberative citizen participation in public policy and actions.[9]

Although not abandoning any of the missions of the public service, we are far from so-called needs being determined (or pre-determined) behind closed doors by government communication services, policymakers or specialised commercial agencies commissioned for this very purpose, or indeed in a scientistic fashion via quasi-surveys, pseudo-questionnaires or behavioural analyses.

Common-sense empirical evidence of this can be found in the observation that, in the experience of a public administration (with or without the mediation of a communications team), it is easier to get (or find) the answer to a question than the answer to a problem that has been set!

Just think about it.

9   For more discussion of these issues, especially social demand and citizen participation, see Philippe Caroyez. *Comme un désir de communication publique conversante et de débat public* … in "Public communication(s) in Europe". Club of Venice, Brussels, 2021, pp. 129–138.

Club of Venice - Plenary Meeting

4-5 December 2025

Provisional Agenda *as of 15 November 2025*

Meeting languages: Italian, French and English (interpretation supported by the European Parliament)

MEETING VENUE: Palazzo Franchetti, San Marco 2847, Venezia

DAY 1 - Wednesday, 3 December 2025

Council of Europe premises, Venice Office

19:00	**Welcome reception**

DAY 2 - Thursday, December 4th 2025

Council of Europe premises, Venice Office

8:30 - 9:00	**Guest's registration**
9:00 - 9:45	**Opening Session**

introduced by Vincenzo LE VOCI, Secretary-General of the Club of Venice
- Welcome statements - representatives of the hosting Italian authorities and the European Institutions
- A representative of the Department for European Affairs, Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Italy
- EU institutions in Italy
  - **Fabrizio SPADA**, Head of the Institutional Relations Department, European Parliament Information Office in Italy
  - **Claudio CASINI**, Head of the European Commission's Representation in Italy
- representatives from the regional/local authorities (TBC)

9:45 - 10:00	**Key address**

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

10:00 - 10:20	*Coffee break*

10:20 - 12:30 | **Plenary session I - Round Table**

Public communication trends: interaction and inter-operabilities in resilience building strategies; cooperation in countering foreign influence and manipulation of the information (FIMI); reinforcing capacities in countering disinformation

- Capacity and capability building: Implementation of the Warsaw Memo for Action on 10 October 2025 on reinforcing cross-border synergies in countering Foreign Influence and Manipulation of Information (FIMI) and integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) in strategic communication
- Government infrastructures: organisational challenges, streamlining interface tools, organising proactive cooperation at cross-border level and with EU institutions and international partner organisations
- Media observatories': the added value of surveys and analyses
- Synergies with civil society, academic world and the media sector

Moderator:

- **Elena SAVOIA**, Co-Director, Emergency Preparedness Research, Evaluation, & Practice Program (EPREP), Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Boston, USA

Key Note speaker:

- **Verena RINGLER**, Director, European Commons

Panellists:

- **Andrei TARNEA**, Romania, Director for Communication and Public Diplomacy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- **Vilijus SAMUILA**, Lithuania, Deputy Director, Communication and Cultural Diplomacy Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- **Viktoriia ROMANIUK**, Ukraine, Deputy Chief Editor of StopFake; Director of the Mohila School of Journalism
- **Péter KREKÓ**, Policy Leader Fellow, Florence School of Transnational Governance; Director of Political Capital Institute and Head of HDMO–Lakmusz, Hungary
- **Rolando MARINI**, Professor of Sociology of Cultural and Communicative Processes, Vice-Rector of the University for Foreigners of Perugia, Italy
- **Sofia VERZA, Research Associate**, Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom, European University Institute, Italy
- **Oliver VUJOVIC**, Secretary-General of the South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO)

12:30 - 13:30 | *Lunch*

13:30 | *Family picture*

13:45 - 17:30 | **Plenary session II**

Navigating digital strategies: increasing AI adoption across public

service and impact on communication plans and strategies -

priorities setting and scale planning

- Adapting digital infrastructure for the public sphere
- Streamlining rules for on line protection
- Investing in digital media literacy
- Building trustworthy alliances

Moderator:

- **Virginia PADOVESE**, Newsguard, Managing Editor & Senior Vice President Partnerships, Europe, Australia and New Zealand

Key Note speaker:

- **Simon PIATEK**, Director, The New Imagination Lab

Panellists:

- **Susanne WEBER**, Austria, Deputy Director, EU Communication Strategy Department, Division for EU & International Affairs, Federal Chancellery
- **Siniša GRGIC**, Ambassador of Croatia to Sweden and Latvia, AI specialist
- **Maia MAZURKIEWICZ**, President of PZU Foundation, Co-founder of Alliance4Europe, host of Anatomy of Disinformation, Poland
- **Carlotta ALFONSI**, Policy Analyst, Open Government, Civic Space and Public Communication Unit, Open and Innovative Government Division, Public Governance Directorate, OECD Headquarters, Paris
- **Krzysztof CHOJNOWSKI**, Poland, representative from the Stowarzyszenie Mediów Lokalnych (Polish Local Media Association)
- **Paula GORI**, Secretary-General, European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO)

15:30 - 15:45	*Coffee break*

Plenary session II b

Moderator:

- **Paula REJKIEWICZ**, Poland, Head of the Strategic Communication Unit, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Key Note speaker:

- **Stefano EPIFANI**, Italy, President of the Foundation for Digital Sustainability

Panellists:

- **Aedín DONNELLY**, Ireland, Communications Manager, Department of the Taoiseach
- **Caroline JORIS**, Belgium, Head of Directorate-General External Communication, Chancellery of the Prime Minister
- **Matthew REECE**, Director, Policy Planning and Strategic Communication, European External Action Service (EEAS) (from remote) (TBC)
- **Laura MAANAVILJA**, European Commission DG for Climate Action, Deputy Head of Unit, Communication and Stakeholder Relations
- **Đorđe TRIKOŠ**, Senior Strategist, M&C Saatchi World Services
- **Alessandro LOVARI**, Associate Professor in Cultural and Communicative Processes, University of Cagliari, Department of Political and Social Sciences

15

20:30	*Official Dinner*[1] **Venue:** *Ristorante "Do Forni", San Marco 468 - Venezia*

DAY 3 - Friday, December 5th 2025

Council of Europe premises, Venice Office

8:30 - 9:00	**Guest's registration**

Plenary Session III

9:00 - 10:00	**Capacity building – an insight into European government communication infrastructures**

Joint presentation from the OECD Headquarters and the French Government Information Service (SIG)

Q&A

10:00 - 10:15	*Coffee break*

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1   Offered by the European Commission

10:15 - 12:45

Communicating Europe

Moderators:

- **Vincenzo LE VOCI**, Secretary-General of the Club of Venice
- **Giuseppe MACCA**, Adjunct Professor, University of Enna Kore; Research Fellow and Venture Building Expert, University of Palermo; Founder, Ethics4Growth

Session III A

2026-2027 and 2028-2034 Multi-Annual Financial Framework (MFF) under the spotlight: communicating the EU's new priority policies (focus on the defence budget)

Key Note speaker:

- **Philipp SCHULMEISTER**, European Parliament, Director, Directorate for Campaigns

Panellists:

- **Fiorenza BARAZZONI**, Italy, Director-General, DG Coordination of EU policies, Department for EU Affairs, Presidency of the Council of Ministers
- **Erik DEN HOEDT**, Netherlands, Senior Government Communication Expert, Vice President of the Club of Venice
- **Sophia ERIKSSON-WATERSCHOOT**, European Commission, Acting Director, Political Communication, DG Communication
- **Giuseppe ZAFFUTO**, Head of the Media Relations, Research and Analysis Division, Council of Europe Headquarters, Strasbourg

Session III B

Presentation of new EU-funded stratcom projects launched by universities and academies

- COMmunicating for Transitions in Europe – New Skills for Public Communication and Participation in the Digital Environment, Jean Monnet Chair + INTERregional ACTion for Italy & France Interactive DG REGIO project
  - **Marinella BELLUATI**, Associate Professor, University of Turin
  - **Sara PANE**, Senior Researcher, University of Turin
- Bringing Europe to STudents and back. Youth participation in EU institutional communication policies (BEST)
  - **Lucia D'AMBROSI**, Associate Professor, Sapienza University, Rome
  - **Maria Romana ALLEGRI**, Professor, Sapienza University, Rome
  - **Paola MARSOCCI**, Professor, Sapienza University, Rome
- Post-truth politics and the resilience of the public sphere in Europe
  - **Mariaeugenia PARITO**, Associate Professor, University of Messina
  - **Hans-Joerg TRENZ**, Professor, Scuola Normale Superiore, Florence

12:45 - 13:00

Closing Session

- Reflections on the main issues emerged during the plenary meeting
- Initiatives to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Club of Venice in 2026
- Planning for 2026: key-events:

  * **9th stratcom seminar** (in cooperation with the Croatian Government) - Zagreb, 12-13 March 2026
  * **Spring 2026 plenary** (May or June 2026, venue to be defined)
  * **Seminars** (Brussels and London, dates to be defined)
  * **Synergies with international partner organizations**

13:00 - 14:30

Lunch[2]

15:00 - 16:30

Social/cultural event organized by the hosting Italian authorities
Guided visit to the Exhibition of the Council of Europe

"La Democrazia attraverso il Diritto. Dalla Serenissima Repubblica alla Commissione di Venezia del Consiglio d'Europa", Palazzo Ducale

16

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2   Offered by the Council of Europe

Club of Venice - stratcom seminar

on FIMI, strategic communication and Artificial Intelligence's impact on crisis communication
Warsaw, 9-10 October 2025

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Republic of Poland

Agenda

Meeting venue: Presidential Hotel, Al. Jerozolimskie 65/79, Bałtyk I room, Warsaw, Poland

DAY 1 - Thursday, 9 October 2025

9:00 - 10:00	**Guests' arrival and registration**
10:00 – 11:30	**OPENING SESSION**

Welcome statements

- **Katarzyna SZARAN**, Director of the Department for Strategic Communications and Countering Foreign Disinformation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- **Vincenzo LE VOCI**, Secretary-General of the Club of Venice (objectives of the seminar) (including a video-message from **Stefano ROLANDO**, President of the Club of Venice)
- **Witold NATURSKI**, Head of the European Parliament Liaison Office in Poland

Welcome statement from H.E. Raimonds Jansons, Ambassador of Latvia to the Republic of Poland

11:30 – 12:30	**Introductory KEY-NOTE**

- **Konrad JAGODZINSKI**, Director, Brand Finance

(followed by Q&A)

12:30 – 13:45	*Lunch*
13:45 – 14:00	*Group picture*
14:00 – 16:00	**SESSION 1**

Countering FIMI: what is at stake (threats to societal values and geopolitical processes). State of play.

Moderator:

- **Erik DEN HOEDT**, Manager and communication expert for the Government of the Netherlands, Vice President of the Club of Venice

Key-Note speaker:

- **Maia MAZURKIEWICZ**, President of PZU Foundation, Co-founder of Alliance4Europe, host of Anatomy of Disinformation, Poland

Panellists:

- **Yuliya KAZDOBINA**, Security Studies Programme Senior Fellow, Ukrainian PRISM
- **Sascha O'TOOLE**, Ireland, Head of Digital and Multimedia, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ireland
- **Andrei TARNEA**, Romania, Director, Communication and Public Diplomacy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- **Rinor NUHIU**, Kosovo, Communications Advisor to the President of the Republic

16:00 – 16:20 | *Coffee break*

16:20 – 18:00 | **SESSION 2**

Artificial Intelligence's impact on public communication: concrete situational awareness and trends analysis. Risks and challenges (Artificial Intelligence as a FIMI tool) and opportunities (optimisation and timeliness of information provision).

Moderators:

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

- **Simon PIATEK**, Director, The New Imagination Lab, AI and Social Media Researcher, London

Panellists:

- **Sophie SACILOTTO**, Analyst, DebunkEU.org – FIMI-Disinformation Analysis Centre
- **Jakub SZYMIK**, digital legal specialist, Founder of the Digital Diplomacy Watch (CEEDDW)
- **Tarik MEZIANI**, Council of the EU, General Secretariat, DG Communication and Information, Head of the Media Operations Unit
- **Filip GRZEGORZEWSKI**, Head of Division - Information Integrity and Countering Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference, European External Action Service (EEAS)

This session will include an interactive case-study managed by a M&C SAATCHI StratCom Team (William ANDERSON – Elisa CHAMI-CASTALDI – Liam WEBBER – Charlotte RUSSEL-PARSONS)

19:30 – 21:30 | *Formal dinner, Bałtyk II room, Presidential Hotel*

DAY 2 - Friday, 10 October 2025

8:30 - 9:00 | **Registration for new guests' arrival**

9:00 - 11:00 | **SESSION 3**

Resilience building (1): work in progress. Strategic Communications from Security Perspective, Communications Security.

Moderator:

- **Simon PIATEK**, Director, The New Imagination Lab, AI and Social Media Researcher, London

Panellists:

- **Mindaugas LASAS**, Lithuania, Director of Communication and Public Diplomacy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- **Izabela JARKA**, Head of Rapid Response and Disinformation Detection Team, National Research Institute (NASK)
- **Piotr WOJTAS**, NATO-Ukraine Joint Analysis, Training and Education Centre (JATEC)
- **Nicola FRANK**, Lie Detectors Board member, expert in European and media policy
- **Táňa ABRHÁMOVÁ**, Project and Communications Director, Central European Digital Media Observatory (CEDMO), Czech Republic
- **Yves STEVENS**, Belgium, Chair of the EU Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR) Crisis Communication Network (CCN)
- **Alina KOUSHYK**, Editor in Chief, Belsat TV

11:00 – 11:20 | *Coffee break*

11:20 – 13:00	### SESSION 4

Resilience building (2): Governments plans on the run: roles and responsibilities, decision-making dynamics, measurement and evaluation. Inclusiveness and cross-border synergies.

Moderator:

- **Katarzyna SZARAN**, Poland, Director of the Department for Strategic Communications and Countering Foreign Disinformation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Panellists:

- **Krzysztof CHOJNOWSKI**, Poland, representative from the Stowarzyszenie Mediów Lokalnych (Polish Local Media Association)
- **Ana REVENCO**, Moldova, Director of the Moldovan Center for Strategic Communication and Countering Disinformation (CSCCD)
- **Susan LILLEVÄLI**, Estonia, Director General of the Communication Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- **Alessandro DE PEDYS**, Italy, Director General for Public and Cultural Diplomacy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Italy
- **Anne SJÖHOLM**, Finland, Head of Communication for EU and International Affairs, Prime Minister's Office

13:00 – 13:15   *Group picture*

13:15 – 14:15   *Lunch*

14:15 – 16:00   ### SESSION 5

Moderator:

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

a) Memo for Action

Panellists:

- **Erik DEN HOEDT**, Vice President of the Club of Venice
- **Maria BEVERS**, Netherlands, Director of Communications, Ministry of Economic Affairs
- **Paula REJKIEWICZ**, Head of the International Cooperation Unit, Department for Strategic Communications and Countering Foreign Disinformation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland
- **Col Dariusz NIEDZIELSKI**, Chief of Staff, NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence, Riga
- **Christopher COAKLEY**, European Parliament, Strategic Communications Officer

b) Meeting summing-up/Conclusion

- **Katarzyna SZARAN and Vincenzo LE VOCI**

Outcome of the Seminar of the Club of Venice on Strategic Communication
Warsaw, 9-10 October 2025

The seminar co-organised in Warsaw on 9-10 October in close co-operation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland was focused on countering foreign influence and manipulation of information (FIMI), strategic communication and Artificial Intelligence's impact on crisis communication.

85 participants from over 25 countries, also including countries candidate to the EU membership such as Moldova and Ukraine, and a voice from Belarus), EU institutions, international organisations such as NATO, crisis communication centres, external experts belonging to the strategic advisory sector, academic world, media research institutes and observatories and digital platforms convened to discuss the increasingly challenging ground for public communication, exchanging feedback on the current threats to societal democratic values and processes and on resilience building work in progress.

Rich thematic panels focused on communications from Security Perspective, Communications Security and governments plans and strategies on the run, touching upon all different key-capacity building elements of governmental mobilisation : clarity in roles and responsibilities, analytical approach to the crises, decision-making dynamics, measurement and evaluation; trust in public authorities, inclusiveness (never more crucial as nowadays) and cross-border synergies.

Moreover, as a follow-up to the discussion held in 2024 (Dublin and Venice plenaries, London 7th Stratcom seminar) and early 2025 (Athens plenary, London 8th Stratcom seminar) on what is at stake with digital challenges, the meeting in Warsaw touched upon Artificial Intelligence's impact on public communication, with high level governmental and institutional professionals fully engaged in a thorough and objective situational awareness exercise and trends' analysis, elaborating on risks and challenges (AI as a FIMI tool) and weighing them up vs. opportunities (first of all, optimisation and timeliness of information provision through generative AI).

The primary objective of the Warsaw seminar was to facilitate, through a deep reflection on today's threats in times of absolute uncertainty caused by the ongoing international conflicts and the increasingly polarised societies, the research for shaping, strengthening and expanding future synergies in strategic communication.

It was recognised that, on the one hand, public communication professionals should be addressing the AI revolution while maintaining human-centred communication, while, on the other hand, their organisations (governments, institutions) should be rethinking the future of public communication in the age of AI. This requires important investments in training the comms officials, in order to acquire new skills and competencies, and to increasingly rely on trustworthy media and dedicated independent platforms specialised in pre-bunking, fact-checking and constantly monitoring disinformation threats, with whom establish strong connections.

Such issues must be tackled urgently given the direct impact on national security, since indeed disinformation is not only a threat to democracy, but also a growing economic cost for governments which implies a reconsideration and reconfiguration of the infrastructural capacities. Hence, from the discussion at the stratcom event held by the Club of Venice in Poland it emerged the crucial need for an upper step in education and journalism, with the independence of teachers and journalists to be safeguarded not only as stronghold to efficiently and effectively counter information manipulation, but also as a crucial inclusive outreach instrument.

The feedback shared by the participants also included specific insights into concrete issues such as the lack of adequate information on instruments such as the Digital Service Act, the awareness-raising efforts often overshadowed on line by increasingly polarized debates of more political than technical and interactive nature, the insufficient proactive communication from public authorities (which creates "opportunities" for harmful actors), gaps generated by overlooking certain audiences in the public debates, and the Russian propaganda targeting not only mainstream media, but appearing also in local news websites and groups where people usually trust each other (with consequent increasing difficulties to detect the true info and to moderate interactions on the web). The need to improve quality of public debate was stressed in the majority of the panels of the seminar.

On 10 October 2025, at the end of the seminar, the participants subscribed a **Memorandum for Action of the Club of Venice for the reinforcement of cross-border synergies in countering Foreign Influence and Manipulation of Information (FIMI) and integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) in strategic communication**, which is attached to this outcome.

The new Memo for Action calls for strengthening cooperation in the following fields:

- countering FIMI campaigns carried out by state and non-state sponsored entities, reinforcing analytical capacity, digital research, media platforms and observatories and cooperation with the academic world;

- optimising strategic crisis communication capacities by integrating AI, conscious that effective countermeasures require cross-border intelligence sharing, common monitoring tools and rapid response mechanism;

- countering the increased threats to free communication and pluralism, ensuring support to the media and engaged in defending freedom of speech;

- multiplying efforts to strengthen resilience-building strategies by developing national fora thus encouraging a true participatory spirit and reducing risks for polarisation.

The Club of Venice was invited to pursue its work on such matters by organising new thematic seminars and launching new survey aiming to detect and tackle challenging areas where the creation of integrated resilience models must be promoted. In doing so, it will increasingly reinforce ties with all international actors that joined the seminar in Warsaw.

Ample follow-up discussion is envisaged at the Club's future plenary meeting foreseen in Venice on 4-5 December 2025 (in cooperation with the Department for European Affairs of the Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers, followed by its 9th Annual Strategic Conference foreseen in Zagreb on 12-13 March (in cooperation with the Public Diplomacy and Cultural Affairs of the Croatian Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs.

MEMO for ACTION

Reinforcing cross-border synergies in countering Foreign Influence and Manipulation of Information (FIMI) and integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) in strategic communication

Communication directors and senior specialists from EU Member States, institutions and candidate countries, convened to the stratcom seminar co-organised by the Club of Venice and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, discussed the urgent need to strengthen cooperation in identifying, monitoring and countering threats to free and objective communication and information.

Conscious of the need to adapt communication to counter the increasing threats to the democratic values generated by a malicious and distorted use of the digital informative landscape,

Building on previous Club of Venice work on capacity building, transparency and resilience in the digital landscape, hereby share common views and action lines on reinforcing and enhancing cooperation in:

- countering FIMI campaigns carried out by state and non-state sponsored entities, coordinated across malicious platforms and tailored to exploit national vulnerabilities. Such activities not only target governments and institutions but also threaten the democratic development of all sectors of civil society and the civic dialogue of opinion leaders and local communities, amplifying polarisation and undermining media pluralism

- optimising strategic crisis communication capacities by integrating AI. Effective countermeasures require cross-border intelligence sharing, common monitoring tools and rapid response mechanism. Readiness in such strategic intervention strictly depends on the degree of investments in digital developments: applying artificial intelligence as a lever to improve competencies, expertise and inter-service interfaces; carrying out a thorough evaluation of the economic advantages that generative AI would bring to governmental plans and strategies, hence to their capacity to deliver to their citizens more rapidly, efficiently and cost-effectively

- promoting cross-border cooperation in countering the increased threats to free communication and pluralism and contribute to managing crises: encouraging the exchange of feedback on citizens' and governments' exposure to hybrid threats, maintaining focus on countering FIMI as a common endeavour

- multiplying efforts to strengthen resilience-building strategies, promoting a culture of inclusiveness that would reinforce governmental capacities to counter disinformation and crisis management as a whole; invest in particular in national fora that would encourage a participatory spirit and facilitate the development of concrete mechanisms for wider decision-making, in response to growing apathy, nationalism, extremism and populism

- ensuring support to the media and the organisations who are engaged in the defence of freedom of speech, pluralism and transparency; promoting joint initiatives (thematic seminars, analytical studies, literacy development) focused on cooperation between public communication and digital communication observatories, media platforms, the academic world and trustworthy international organizations

- continuing to use the Club of Venice as a permanent platform for further reflection to help improve StratCom capacities, in liaison with the formal governmental and institutional agenda; inviting the Club to:

- organise new thematic seminars on capacity/capability building and on digital innovation in public communications (with focus on FIMI threats and AI impact);

- pursue its surveys in order to detect the challenging areas where there is a need to create further synergies and cross-cooperation and to identify efficient stratcom and integrated resilience building models already being implemented by governments and institutions;

- continue to reinforce cooperation with the academic world, consortia, civil society actors and international entities such as EEAS, IPCR, NATO, OECD) and independent platforms and the media sector operating in defence of democratic values and principles.

E-mail contact: info@veniceclub.eu

Website: https://veniceclub.eu/

Club of Venice - Plenary Meeting
21 - 22 May 2025, Athens

Agenda

Meeting languages: Greek, French and English[1]

DAY 1 - Tuesday 20 May 2025

19:45 - 21:45 local time | **Welcome reception and Introductory section**

(Venue: Mappemonde Restaurant, Bar & Lounge", Athens Capital Hotel: 4, Eleftheriou Venizelou, Athens)

DAY 2 - Wednedsay 21 May 2025 (9:00 - 12:45 local time)
PLENARY MEETING

VENUE: Zappeion Megaron, Leof. Vasilissis Olgas, 105 57 Athens, Greece

8:30 - 9:00 | **Guest's registration**

9:00 - 10:00 | **Opening Session**

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

- **Yiannis LOVERDOS**, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Greece
- **Maira MYROGIANNI**, Secretary-General for Greeks Abroad and Public Diplomacy, Greece
- **Vincenzo LE VOCI**, Secretary-General of the Club of Venice
- **Constantinos TSOUTSOPLIDES,** Head of the European Parliament's Liaison Office in Greece
- **Niovi RINGOU**, Head of the European Commission's Representation in Greece
- Fireside chat with **Yiannis Mastrogeorgiou**, Special Secretary for Strategic Foresight at the Presidency of the Government of the Hellenic Republic, on AI strategy and the other priority topics on the agenda

10:00 - 10:15 | **Key address – objectives of the plenary**

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

10:15 - 10:30 | *Coffee break*

10:15 - 12:45 | **Plenary session I - Round Table**

INTRODUCED BY AN ADDRESS by H.E. Dr Wojciech Ponikiewski, Head of Mission of the Republic of Poland to Greece

"Government communication challenges: reinforcing a culture of resilience, recovery and development and building alliances"

- A case study: the Polish national advisory Resilience Council
- Synergies and common parameters in countering disinformation
- Expanding the national forum approach as a model to reinforce anti-FIMI strategies and amplify outreach
- Building alliances among national fora and between governments and EU institutions: a must to guarantee shared objectives, trustworthy preventive comms expertise and readiness in handling crises

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1   Interpretation provided by the European Parliament

Moderator:

- **Aedín DONNELLY**, Ireland, Communications Manager, Department of the Taoiseach

Key Note speaker:

- **Ewelina JELENKOWSKA-LUCA'**, Deputy-Director and Head of Unit, European Commission DG CNECT

Panellists:

- **Julia ZAWISZA**, Poland, Strategic Communication and Countering Disinformation Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- **Nikos ROMANOS**, Greece, Director of Digital Communications to the Prime Minister
- A representative from France Government Information Service (S.I.G.)
- **Andrei TARNEA**, Romania, Director for Public Diplomacy and Communication, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- **Mykola BALABAN**, Ukraine, Deputy Head, Center for Strategic Communications and Information Security (TBC)
- **Maryia SADOUSKAYA-KOMLACH**, Global Engagement Strategist, Free Press Unlimited, Amsterdam
- **Christian SPAHR**, Managing Director, **Lie Detectors**

| 12:45 | *Family picture* |

| 12:55 - 14:10 | *Lunch[2]* |

| 14:15 - 17:30 | **Plenary session II** |

"Digital transformation and Artificial Intelligence influence on modern communication – societal cohesion in times of geopolitical challenges"

- State of the art: governmental and institutional capacities at stake
- Outsourcing capacities vs. development of internal know-how and expertise
- Outreaching strategies
    * Selecting sustainable models and fostering Interconnectivity
    * Navigating the evolving communication and media landscape: investing in literacy and empowering citizens

Moderator:

- **Simon PIATEK**, Director, The Imagination Lab, UK

Key Note speaker:

- **Maia MAZURKIEWICZ**, President of PZU Foundation, Co-founder of Alliance4Europe, host of Anatomy of Disinformation, Poland

Panellists:

- **Konstantinos ANAGNOSTOPOULOS**, Greece, Director of www.athenslegal.tech
- **Anna Hedin Ekström**, Sweden, consultant and researcher at the Institute for Future Studies, adviser on national security, strategies against organised crime, violent extremism and strengthening societal resilience
- **Jon Roozenbeek**, Lecturer in Psychology and Security, King's College London, UK (psychology of intergroup conflict and digital media effects) (from remote)
- **Richard Bagnall**, global leader in PR and communications measurement and evaluation; co-Founder, CommsClarity Consulting, UK (from remote)
- **Marco Ricorda**, Communication Officer at the European Centre for Algorithmic Transparency (ECAT), European Commission (from remote)
- **Elisa Chami-Castaldi** (M&C Saatchi World Services)
- **Q&A session**

| 16:00 - 16:15 | *Coffee break* |

| 17:15 - 17:30 | **First day summing-up - issues emerged** |
| | *(Club Steering Group member + Greek representative)* |

| 20:30 | *Dinner* |
| | *Venue: Restaurant of the Benaki Museum of Greek Culture, 1 Koumbari St. & Vas. Sofias Ave., 106 74 Athens* |

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2   Lunch offered by the European Commission

DAY 3 - Thursday 22 May 2023 (9:30 - 13:00 local time)
PLENARY MEETING

9:00 - 9:30 | ### Guest's registration

9:30 - 9:45 | **Address by Catherine Koika**, Director-General for Public Diplomacy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Greece

9:45 - 12:30 | ### Plenary Session III

"Public Diplomacy and country branding and reputation"
- lessons learned from growing uncertainties in the geo-political scenarios
- revamping/rebuilding relationships and seeking new commonalities and shared values among democracies"

Moderator:
- **Kristina PLAVŠAK-KRAJNC**, Slovenia, Senior Advisor on Strategic Communication, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, Minister's Private Office
- **Vincenzo LE VOCI**, Secretary-General of the Club of Venice

Key Note speaker:
- **Lara ROMANO,** Croatia, Chief of Staff to the Minister of Foreign and European Affairs

Panellists:
- **Nicholas CULL,** Professor of Public Diplomacy at the University of Southern California's Annenberg School for Communications
- **John Ó Liodáin**, Ireland, Head of Public Diplomacy and Social Media, Department of Foreign Affairs
- **Polona Prešeren**, Slovenia, Communications Officer, Government Communications Office
- **Silke Toenshoff**, Head of Unit, Directorate for Communication, European Committee of the Regions (from remote)
- **Konrad Jagodzinski**, Place Branding Director, Brand Finance
- **Andrew Davies and Tunyan Bagrat**, Senior Policy Advisors, OECD Headquarters

10:45 - 11:00 | *Coffee break*

12:30 - 12:45 | ### Closing Session

(Club of Venice + Greek representative)

- Reflections on the issues emerged during the plenary meeting
- Planning for 2nd semester 2025: key-events:
  * **Conference on migration narratives and EU enlargement** (in cooperation with the Belgian Government authorities, ICMPD, IOM, SEECOM and KAS) – Brussels, 3rd and 4th July 2025
  * **Seminar on crisis communication** (focus on countering disinformation and AI impact on governmental communication) (Warsaw, 9-10 October)
  * **Autumn 2025 plenary** (Venice, 4-5 December)
  * **2026:** publication to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Club of Venice
  * **Work in synergy with international partner organizations** (OECD, ICMPD, SEECOM, SEEMO, DEMSOC, CAP'COM, Harvard/Ca' Foscari, Council of Europe, HSS...)

12:45 - 14:00 | *Lunch*

14:30 | ### Cultural event organized by the hosting Greek authorities
Guided tour of the Acropolis Museum

Keynote Address
Objectives of the Plenary

By Stefano Rolando, president of the Club of Venice

Warm greetings to all participants, a big thank you to our Greek colleagues and friends for organizing this conference, a sincere appreciation to the translators who facilitate our work.

For years I have become accustomed to not making remark on the drafts (two or three always arrive, before the final one) of the program of our plenary sessions.

Both out of respect for the *Steering group* – which is aware of the most important issues on the agenda – and out of respect and friendship with our *secretary general* Vincenzo Le Voci who, after all, I say this to our Greek friends, is still a man of *Magna Graecia*. That is, the land that invented philosophy and math-ematics. I mean, *wisdom and precision*.

And so the themes indicated for this plenary session are fine for me: *resilience, recovery, development, reorganization. And then artificial intelligence connected to the theme of social cohesion; and finally public diplomacy and public branding (which is to say how to manage conflicts, but also how to manage peace and attractiveness).*

There is more or less the menu of the work of all those present. There is also a lot of professional approaches and the training content in our specialization schools and universities.

However, the program indicated that I should say a few words about "**the objectives of the plenary**".

And this gives me a little freedom to see with you, at the start of the conference, what links these issues, what we today consider with more concern and what with more hope.

I find the dualism between pro-Europeans and Eurosceptics a bit artificial.

I believe instead that since the global financial crises of twenty years ago and then since the transformation of globalization processes, the relationship between market, production, work and income has produced new inequalities in Europe, often higher than the acceptable threshold for civilized and demo-cratic countries that would have required a political class higher in level than any previous one.

We have mostly had the opposite. *Government criticalities* have increased, and *governance qualities* have decreased.

I don't want to be a political scientist, but I believe it was true that a part of politics preferred to blame Europe rather than expose itself even more to dissent.

Meanwhile, abstention in Europe has reached over 50% and for the most part, politics does not discuss the causes of this democratic impoverishment, saying something that is frankly unlikely for those who believe in what ancient Greece taught everyone, that is, what democracy is (today we say modern democracy, that of checks and balances). Many say: "***that's fine, democracy is ultimately who is there***". Those who cannot, those who do not want to, those who have a demand for which there is no real supply, do not count. In the sense that we do not even bother to deal with this dissent.

For the vision that public communicators have of the issue, the question has become simple.

In any organism (business, institution, association) if struc-tural dualism is imposed, the commitment on narratives (is no longer linked to explaining what is done for the quality of life and for social quality but is said every day at most what day it is or what time it is. In short, we move (with due exceptions, which are there) from value communication to trivialization. Something that then angers both the pro-Europeans (who say that Europe no longer has a narrative identity) but also the anti-Europeans (who say that Europe has become technocratic, incomprehensible, without warmth).

However, at the assemblies of the *Club of Venice* over the last few years, many have said that in the face of new and different crises (the pandemic, the climate transition, the competitive crisis, the difficulties of the labor market, the ambiguity of new digital processes, etc.) there have also been pushes to redis-cover a European narrative pride founded on those values - which are democracy and freedom - that have become a minority in the world.

And so now even the geopolitical events generated by military wars, economic wars, ethnic wars, push (or I should say better: would push) not only towards risks but also towards opportunities.

I will not delve into the complex debate of how to react and how to find new common denominators. If we do not have **a new Schumann, a new Adenauer, a new Churchill, a new De Gasperi** to illuminate this terrain, imagine if *we workers of the mobility of the word* can produce the new golden rule.

However, we can remind ourselves and in a certain sense also the institutions we loyally serve that if we do not desperately and quickly seek this common denominator (which escaped us twenty years ago for not having accepted to get to the bottom of the path to achieve a constitutional treaty) the often instrumental dualism that arises from the non-existence of the fulfillment of the prophecy of those anti-fascists confined to an island in the Mediterranean, among whom a militant Europeanist like Altiero Spinelli, that is, tending towards the *United States of Europe*, is destined to mortify by definition the strategic and social capacity of institutional communication.

The miracle will not happen now. But we can also fly at a lower level.

In the meantime, in fact, European institutional communicators can take advantage of the many crises to do some things - which are neither ideological nor a substitute for the right of politics and democratic options originated by voters - but which respect a professional duty of those who do communication. To confront reality.

For example, opening - precisely on the issues of the crisis - discussion tables between European, national and local operators to better analyze citizens' demand.

And then consolidate tables with corporate communication and social communication which are necessary tables in times of crisis that push institutions and subjects that deal with social needs and productive development to confront each other, trying to create experimental construction sites of shared messages. This is what is called "creating a system", a word often invoked, in many contexts becomes a rare commodity.

In this direction, the work of coordination and support that universities can carry out - especially those that care about public engagement (many are also at our table as observer members of the Club of Venice) is very important.

I would like to say a final word on the third session of our conference in Athens.

The very topic of public branding offers us the opportunity to better imagine and on positive and non-critical aspects the necessary exchange between institutions, businesses and social advocacy.

In fact, we are talking about the subject of tourism development, new mobility and more generally the attractiveness of our countries. And we believe - creating the basis of a new discipline - that we no longer depend only on the rules of territorial marketing by trying to introduce some paradigms that recent crises have taught us. For example, those of sustainability (environmental and identity), quality (the social added value of investments) and cognitive and cultural tourism. Therefore, it is not enough to have just communication aimed at the act of purchase (buying, leaving, traveling, etc.), but also that which confronts stereotypes and prejudices, that which works for social cohesion, that which wants to keep its feet on the roots and traditions and its eyes on a better future.

Here, I have tried to outline - briefly and in outline - that common thread that I think the Venice Club, in its relative independence generated by its clear unofficial nature, has always pursued, and today is. This could be a reminder of the method that could also make a small contribution to the institutions that we must serve not only by executing, but also by proposing.

Club of Venice Plenary meeting in Athens
21-22 May 2025

70 participants from 25 countries, also including several EU member states' ambassadors to Greece and EU institutions' representatives convened at the emblematic Zappeio Megaro in the centre of Athens, welcomed by Yiannis Loverdos, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and Maira Myrogianni, Secretary-General for Greeks Abroad and for Public Diplomacy to discuss how to strengthen cooperation in public communication, [re] gaining citizens' trust, instilling interest in proactively participating in the development and implementation of support policies and taking active part in efficient inclusive resiliencies frameworks.

The discussion on **possible synergies in countering disinformation** was introduced by the European Commission DG CNECT representative Ewelina Jelenkowska-Lucá, who provided a comprehensive picture of the EU's mobilisation throughout the latest few years.

Feedback from Poland, Greece, Italy and Romania enabled the audience to have an insight into the main organisational steps at governmental level (recent campaigns, public opinion perception monitoring, disinformation risk assessment when approaching national elections deadlines). A reflection on possible common parameters in countering FIMI was also sparked, facilitated by the ideal Chatham House framework under which the Club of Venice meetings are handled. In this context, the Club also welcomed valuable contributions from external partners (media engagement strategy and disinfo monitoring).

The Club agreed to pursue its intensive approach sharing best practice and mutual advice on how adopt concrete inclusive models to reinforce anti-FIMI strategies and amplify outreach. This will be assured by continuing to engage in all relevant national fora and expanding interaction and interoperability to trigger comprehensive cross-border cooperation and enable EU governments and institutions to communicate more effectively.

Recognizing and striving for shared objectives, building trustworthy alliances, enriching skills through AI training, wisely translating and adapting sustainability concepts to new digital communication instruments are crucial steps to ensure resilience capacities and enhance communicators' readiness and efficiency when handling crises.

Crisis management remains in the spotlight because of the intrinsic complexity of the information and communication ecosystem. Policy makers must be conscious of the risks that the lack of competencies and a persisting low level of knowledge of the digital developments may increasingly generate weaknesses and increase the gap between national and EU-institutional public communicators and their civic audiences, leaving problems unsolved. The same goes for the media landscape, which must be preserved at all costs in order to prevent dangerous drifts. Moreover, there is a need for a smart focus on digital rights, in particular for carefully studying risks and limitations of content moderation and content removal.

Against nowadays' complex scenario, the session focused on **Artificial Intelligence and digital transformation** moderated by Simon Piatek acted as a catalyst for an in-depth analysis of the impact of advance technologies into interconnectivity capacities and for a reflection on how to select sustainable models and fostering interconnectivity, while stressing the need for tangible commitments to elaborate concrete plans for the promotion of literacy.

Scientific experts (governmental, institutional and external) provided valuable examples of on-line manipulation market (Cambridge Online Trust and Safety Index) and focused on (non-exhaustive list) key issues such as mapping of the AI research community, understanding the social impact of algorithmic systems and social networks, analysing systemic risks, assessing the impact of the AI Act on the scientific and research communities, and technical alignment between AI standards and AI regulation.

The **public diplomacy** panel on the 2nd day of the plenary was introduced by Lara Romano who presented Croatia's successful journey over the past 34 years which epitomizes comprehensive resilience capacities and a sound, structured nation branding and strategic narrative-building, as key tools of the classical public diplomacy model. Against the rapidly evolving geopolitical landscape, there is a strong need for recalibrating public diplomacy strategies and modernize both planning features and implementing instruments. Recalling the annual Dubrovnik Forum as (Croatia's flagship foreign policy conference) and the third summit of Ukraine - South-eastern Europe held in Dubrovnik in 2024, Lara underlined that today's world of disinformation-driven influence wars, weakened alliances and shattered trust can only be challenged by a renewed ethical engagement, inclusiveness and coherence.

While highlighting the need for powerful branding initiatives and solidarity campaigns during these very challenging times, it was stressed that branding alone cannot substitute the traditional diplomatic tool of negotiation, reconciliation, and rebuilding trust at every level of society. The alternative to protecting and reinforcing democratic values through diplomacy would be to generate a dangerous scenario where undemocratic narratives, disinformation threats, polarization, populism, and non-transparent actors challenge state-driven narratives at every turn, dominating and exploiting a dangerous vacuum where peace efforts crumble and the very principles of democratic global order are irreversibly violated.

Contributions from Ireland and Slovenia recalled successful branding experiences in those countries that can be carried out throughout several years if the instruments for the respective campaigns are well selected from the outset and flexible enough to be easily adapted to meet new objectives set by new political priorities and the evolving information landscape. Sharing knowledge, lessons learning, reinforcing synergies and reimagining diplomacy as an inclusive and transparent force multiplier for peace, cooperation, and global stability are components of a unique comprehensive approach in the good direction.

The contributions from the distinguished external partners (Professor Nick Cull from the University of Southern California's Annenberg School for Communications, author of "Reputational Security: Refocusing Public Diplomacy for a Dangerous World"; Konrad Jagodzinski, Place Brading Director from Brand Finance; Andrew Davies and Bagrat Tunyan, senior policy advisors from the OECD Headquarters) focused on worrying branding trends such as the eroding confidence in multilateral organisations, the impact of the manipulation by autocratic leaders of the soft power on their countries and their own reputation (particularly when analysing media freedom, general state-controlled crisis handling and the public perception of policies of great impact such as environment, energy and climate). The European Committee of the Regions outlined the main topics and objectives of the imminent EuropCom 2025 conference, in close connection with TRUST.

The rich exchange of feedback and suggestions made during the brainstorming sessions will provide reflection elements to strengthen cooperation in view of the two strategic communication conferences foreseen in early October 2025 in Poland and in mid-March 2026 in Croatia, as well as in the next plenary meeting in Venice on 4-5 December 2025.

Cap'Com annual Forum

19 - 20 November 2025, Angers

Agenda

Centre de congrès d'Angers : 33 boulevard Carnot à Angers

JOUR 1 - Mardi 18 novembre 2025

14h30 > 18h | **Visites pro au choix**

- « Angers ville en mouvement » : 10 ans de transformation du territoire angevin
- Monplaisir : réinventer la place du quartier dans la ville
- Angers : le patrimoine au cœur de la culture vivante
- Festival Food'Angers : de la parcelle à la papille
- Promotion du savoir-faire local : une entreprise ambassadrice de l'Anjou
- Château du Plessis-Macé : le jeu pour animer le patrimoine
- Un territoire engagé dans la transition écologique
- « Angers supernature » : la valorisation de la nature en ville
- Marque Anjou : une stratégie touristique, et pas que

JOUR 2 - Mercredi 19 novembre 2025

10h > 11h30 | **Plénière d'ouverture du 37e Forum Cap'Com**

Mot d'ouverture

- **Florence DABIN**, présidente du département de Maine-et-Loire.

Intervenants

- **Emma CARENINI**, philosophe, ancienne conseillère au ministère de l'Éducation nationale
- **Louna WEMÆRE**, autrice du rapport sur la désinformation climatique, responsable de projets chez QuotaClimat
- **Christophe BÉCHU**, maire d'Angers, ancien ministre de la transition et de la cohésion des territoires
- **Yves CHARMONT**, délégué général de Cap'Com

12h > 13h15 | **Ateliers au choix**

- Des solutions pour diffuser son journal territorial
- Organiser la communication des 100 premiers jours du mandat
- S'adresser aux publics allophones
- Communication et participation : bâtir une culture commune
- Choisir ses assistants numériques : l'IA de service public
- Comment m'appuyer sur les atouts culturels de ma communauté pour mettre en récit ma collectivité ?
- Tous concernés par l'éthique de la com publique

13h15 > 15h15 | *Déjeuner*

15h > 16h15 | ## Conférences et ateliers au choix

- **L'IA dans sa communication : entre prudence et audace**
- **Des films pour raconter les territoires et les institutions**
- **Attirer les candidats aux métiers en tension de la santé et du soin**
- **Animer des tiers-lieux et lieux d'échanges et de débats**
- **Étude promesse employeur**
- **J'adopte les postures managériales de l'accompagnement au changement**
- **Petites collectivités et élections : écoutez, gérez, relancez**

16h15 > 17h | ## Les conseils à la coque de mercredi

- **Design et graphisme, éditorial**
  - Identité graphique et logos
  - IA et collectivité, comment utiliser les potentialités IA en création vidéo
  - Sobriété éditoriale, écoconcevoir les contenus de son site
  - IA
  - Élections et nouvelle formule éditoriale et/ou graphique des supports d'information : pourquoi, comment, quand, combien de temps ?
  - Éco-conception et accessibilité de des sites internet et outils numériques
  - Droit d'auteur, droit à l'image, les étapes essentielles pour utiliser un contenu
- **Réseau pro et RH**
  - La santé mentale des communicants
  - La coopérative Cap'Com
  - Les formations Cap'Com
  - Carine Flambard
- **Droit**
  - Droits musicaux

17h > 18h15 | ## Conférences et ateliers au choix

- **Les récits pour sublimer les transitions dans les territoires**
- **Des idées pour animer sa communication numérique**
- **Allier créativité et graphisme éco-responsable**
- **Rendre lisibles les budgets communication au service de la transparence démocratique**
- **La com interne inclut et engage**

19h00 > 23h30 | ## La soirée du Forum aux Greniers Saint Jean

JOUR 3 - Jeudi 20 novembre 2025

9h30 > 10h45 | ## Conférences et ateliers au choix

- **Fonctionnaire bashing : casser les stéréotypes de la fonction publique**
- **Des démarches créatives qui ne coûtent rien (ou presque)**
- **Des territoires plus robustes face à l'afflux touristique**
- **Faciliter la relation intergénérationnelle en interne**
- **Je deviens maître du temps et des agendas**
- **Relations presse : quel rôle adopter en période électorale ?**

10h45 > 11h30

Les conseils à la coque de jeudi

- **Design et graphisme, éditorial**
  - Identité graphique et logos
  - Vidéo et collectivité, comment préserver l'authenticité à l'ère de l'IA
  - Langage clair : accompagner l'accessibilité de son site
  - Articulation entre le papier et le web pour votre support d'information : quelle solution en fonction de ses ressources ?
  - Éco-conception et accessibilité des sites internet et outils numériques
  - Droit d'auteur, droit à l'image
- **Réseau pro et RH**
  - Gestion du temps
  - Gestion du stress, priorités et prévention de l'épuisement
  - Développement de la marque employeur au travers des réseaux sociaux par les employés
  - Éco-conception et accessibilité des sites internet et outils numériques
  - La coopérative Cap'Com
  - Les formations Cap'Com
- **Droit**
  - Droit de la communication en période électorale

11h30 > 12h45

Conférences et ateliers au choix

- **Radioscopie des communicants publics : des services com experts**
- **Sourcer des objets communicants durables**
- **Faire face à une crise de désinformation**
- **Diagnostic de territoire : créer les fondements d'un récit réel et sincère**
- **L'effet Koala ou comment rester zen dans ses pratiques professionnelles malgré les aléas**
- **Les départements coudes serrés**

13h15 > 14h15

Déjeuner

32

14h15 > 14h45

Conférence plénière de clôture : Récits pour tous

- **Lætitia HÉLOUET**, fondatrice et présidente de Lucy / présidente de l'Observatoire national de la politique de la ville - ANCTerritoires, présidente du Grand Prix Cap'Com 2025

14h45 > 16h

Cérémonie du 37e Grand Prix Cap'Com

Animé par

- **Émilie TARDIF**, directrice générale déléguée de Val-de-Loire TV

Le 37ᵉ Forum Cap'Com de la communication publique et territoriale[1]

Cet événement-clé s'est déroulé du 18 au 20 novembre 2025 au centre de congrès d'Angers.

Environ **1000 communicants**, dont 150 intervenants acteurs principaux de la communication publique en France et d'autres pays d'Europe, se sont donné rendez-vous pour se pencher et échanger sur les pratiques du métier de la communication publique, les confronter aux analyses d'experts et d'universitaires et découvrir un territoire de communication à travers une excellente série de modules et formats : conférences et grands angles, ateliers (décryptages d'initiatives pour réfléchir ensemble et élaborer des solutions, visites à travers le territoire d'accueil du Forum, chronos avec des experts pour bénéficier de conseils, échanges avec partenaires et prestataires de la compublique autour des problématiques et besoins spécifiques ressentis par les participants.

Les **métiers-cibles** de ce Forum étaient : directrice et directeur de communication, responsable et chargée ou chargé de communication, responsable marketing et attractivité, webmaster et community manager, chargée et chargé d'événementiel, attachée et attaché de presse, élue et élu local, membre de cabinet, consultante ou consultant, responsable de service en collectivité territoriale ou administration.
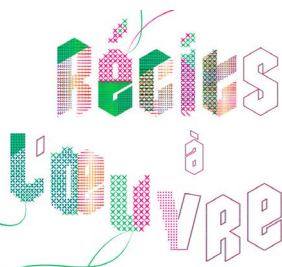
Base de départ (**pré-requis**) : connaître l'organisation des collectivités territoriales et maîtriser le cadre juridique de la communication publique.

Les **objectifs declarés**, toujours au cœur de l'œuvre pédagogique et synergétique de Cap'Com, étaient de faciliter l'évolution d'une stratégie de communication publique, savoir optimiser les supports de communication, maîtriser les nouvelles technologies de la communication, adapter les capacités organisationnelles et les actions aux transitions sociologiques, environnementales et professionnelles.

Le **programme** du Forum visait tous les éléments-clés de la communication publique et de ses enjeux :

- **Comprendre la société et les enjeux de communication – conférences et grands débats**

  Récits à l'œuvre : fédérer pour engager ; les points cardinaux de l'usage de l'intelligence artificielle ; les récits pour sublimer les transitions dans les territoires ; fonctionnaire bashing : casser les images de la fonction publique ; la cérémonie du 37ᵉ Grand Prix Cap'Com

- **Décrypter et tirer les leçons d'initiatives partagées - Des ateliers de réponses concrètes sur des outils ou des stratégies**

  Des solutions pour diffuser son journal territorial ; des films pour raconter les territoires et les institutions ; des idées pour animer sa communication numérique ; des démarches créatives nées de la contrainte (budgétaire)

- **Découvrir des solutions - Des décryptages d'initiatives pour réfléchir ensemble et élaborer nos solutions**

  Rendre lisible les budgets communication au service de la transparence démocratique ; s'adresser aux publics allophones ; la culture pour fédérer ; choisir ses IA de service public : les assistants numériques ; attirer les candidats aux métiers en tension ; animer des lieux d'échanges et de

33

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1   Extrait de :
    - https://www.cap-com.org/le-37e-forum-de-la-communication-publique-et-territoriale (programme complet du Forum).
    - https://www.cap-com.org/formations/le-37e-forum-de-la-communication-publique-et-territoriale-infos-1-jour.

débats ; saisir l'opportunité d'un graphisme éco-responsable pour développer la créativité ; organiser les 100 premiers jours du mandat ; concilier attractivité et attachement au service des territoires ; faciliter la relation intergénérationnelle en interne ; sourcer des objets promotionnels responsables et durables ; faire face à une crise de désinformation ; diagnostic de territoire : créer les fondements d'un récit réel et sincère

- **Améliorer ses qualités personnelles - Des temps de coaching collectif pour consolider ses qualités managériales individuelles**

  Être médiateur de sa propre communication ; adopter les postures managériales de l'accompagnement au changement ; devenir maître du temps et des agendas ; prendre la posture du koala pour rester zen dans la tourmente

- **Comprendre le territoire - Des visites professionnelles pour appréhender sur le terrain les projets et les enjeux de communication du territoire**

  10 visites professionnelles sur le terrain, détaillées par les porteurs des projets de communication

Thèmes-clés à signaler

La sensibilisation et l'engagement dans la transition écologique, la disinformation climatique, le "place branding", le récit et les risques de manipulation, la complémentarité dans la construction de la communication publique, l'IA générative, le "shadow IA" et l'impact sur le "capacity building", la transparence, l'évaluation des stratégies de communication et les relations intergénérationnelles.

Cap'Com est un des plus étroits partenaires du Club de Venise. Des conférences sur les thèmes prioritaires de la communication publique ont été co-organisées par ces deux réseaux à Toulouse et à Strasbourg et des professionnels appartenant au Club et à Cap'Com interviennent régulièrement dans les réunions organisées par les deux organisations.

Commonality,
l'actualité de la communication publique vue par Cap'Com

Par Yves Charmont

C'est un nouvel horizon pour le réseau français de la communication publique et territoriale : après plus de trois ans de publications d'articles en anglais, Cap'Com vient de lancer son infolettre sur LinkedIn et a trouvé un nouveau public. Échanges de bonne pratiques et découvertes de tendances, ces contenus sont faits pour partager une culture commune de la communication publique qui ne connait plus de frontières.

Au printemps 2022, au moment où le réseau national de la communication publique et territoriale Cap'Com organisait son premier séminaire en commun avec le Club de Venise, à Toulouse, sortaient, en ligne, nos premiers articles en langue anglaise. Cela partait d'un quadruple constat :

- Cap'Com collaborait depuis longtemps avec des instances internationales (OCDE, ICMPD, Club de Venise) sur des thématiques de communication publique locale et entretenait également les meilleures relations avec des réseaux frères italiens, belges, canadiens ;
- Nous utilisions l'anglais pour nombre de ces échanges, parce que c'est la forme la plus simple pour être lu et compris à l'international (bien que nous proposions systématiquement des traductions simultanées pour nos événements internationaux) ;
- Nous avions constaté des intérêts croisés pour nombre de sujets traités dans notre infolettre ou lors d'interventions et conférences ;
- De plus, notre infolettre bimensuelle « Point commun », avec ses 20 000 abonnés, proposait régulièrement des contenus éditoriaux qui pouvaient intéresser au-delà des limites de la France ou de la francophonie.

C'est pour cette raison que nous avons commencé par traduire des articles issus de notre séminaire international « Citoyenneté et participation dans les territoires » (à Toulouse les 16 et 17 février 2022), puis des articles sur des sujets internationaux déjà publiés en français, puis, enfin, à produire et

publier des contenus propres, directement en anglais. Ce qui représente plus de 60 articles aujourd'hui, toujours disponibles sur notre site dans l'actualité, à l'onglet « English reading » https://www.cap-com.org/node/231?thematique=126

Une convergence des préoccupations

Mais la démarche allait plus loin. Nous avons senti que nos préoccupations convergeaient lors de ces années marquées :

- Par la crise sanitaire de la Covid 19 et ses conséquences sociétales ;
- Par la généralisation des offensives d'infox et de manœuvres visant à provoquer l'opinion publique, par l'internationalisation des pratiques numériques ;
- Par l'attaque systématique des institutions démocratiques ;
- Mais également par un égal partage du constat d'un éloignement de certains publics de ce qui fait consensus et société, d'une volatilité et d'une lassitude des opinions publiques et de la constitution de bulles de réalité alternatives ;
- Par la prise en compte partout des problèmes d'accessibilité, de littéracie, mais aussi ceux liés à l'usage de l'intelligence artificielle...

La ferme conviction que nous avions tous, chacun dans nos territoires, une partie des solutions en termes de communication publique.

C'était pour une part une période faite d'urgences et de crises, dans un contexte de réapparition de conflits armés proches de nous, mais également face à des défis, notamment climatiques, qui ne connaissent pas de frontières. Nous avons alors acquis la ferme conviction que nous avions tous, chacun dans nos territoires, une partie des solutions en termes de communication publique. Et cette abolition des frontières ne valait pas seulement entre les cultures et les nations, mais également entre les petites communes et les grands territoires. Dans une vallée, au cœur d'une petite ville, dans un quartier, comme à l'échelle d'une région ou d'un pays, nous traitons souvent des

mêmes questions et cherchons de façon identique à gagner la confiance des publics, à garantir l'authenticité des faits, à œuvrer pour la transparence de l'action publique.

Depuis quatre ans, on peut même affirmer que les solutions de proximité, dans la franchise des échanges entre personnes, dans la quotidienneté des relations de l'espace de vie, se révèlent efficaces et permettent de reconstruire quelquefois un lien distendu entre les citoyens et les institutions. C'est notre conviction à Cap'Com, et nous mettons souvent à égalité avec les actions de communication des grandes collectivités des initiatives et des réalisations émanant de « petits poucets », comme nous appelons les petites communes.

Tous nos articles sont traduits par des interprètes

Depuis que Commonality existe, paraissant deux fois par an, nous avons forgé une méthode, notamment pour la production et la traduction de nos contenus. Nous avons missionné une agence de traduction et d'interprétation, Into-nations (https://www.intonations.com/), avec qui nous avons créé une relation durable et de confiance, développant notre lexique professionnel et travaillant la qualité d'une rédaction à la fois « métier » et humaine, avec un style, des partis pris éditoriaux, qui tranchent avec les productions de l'intelligence artificielle. Cette collaboration a même connu un épisode particulier avec la traduction et la publication l'an dernier de l'ouvrage de grande qualité de notre collègue Klimentini Diakomanoli, rencontrée lors d'un séminaire du Club de Venise à Londres et qui venait de publier en grec, aux éditions de l'université de Macédoine un excellent ouvrage sur son domaine de compétence, la lutte européenne contre les infox. Cap'Com a négocié les droits de cet ouvrage, trouvé un éditeur français (L'Harmattan) et financé la traduction du texte. Adapté et accompagné de notes, ce livre a vu le jour et a été présenté lors de notre séminaire international de Strasbourg des 23 et 24 mai 2024.

Le choix de changer de support

Pour autant, nous n'étions pas satisfaits de l'audience de notre infolettre dans sa forme initiale, ce qui venait de la manière dont il fallait s'abonner, qui dépendait encore trop de la sphère francophone et du bon vouloir de chacun, car nous ne pouvions recruter que par recommandation et prescription. Notre réflexion fut largement influencée par nos collègues belges de la communication de la délégation Wallonie-Bruxelles qui nous ont orienté vers leur nouvelle infolettre londonienne publiée sur LinkedIn. Nous avons donc, à l'été 2025, décidé de migrer vers ce réseau à vocation professionnelle, sur lequel Cap'Com a déjà plus de 44 000 abonnés et qui semblait être un bon carrefour pour propulser notre infolettre Commonality.

En quelques jours nous comptions en milliers, jusqu'à atteindre les 9 000 abonnés aujourd'hui.

À la rentrée scolaire, en septembre, nous avons donc édité le premier numéro sous cette nouvelle forme (pour le onzième numéro de notre titre). Il s'agissait à la fois de reconquérir nos anciens abonnés à Commonality et de tenter d'en trouver d'autres. Ce qui fut fait très vite puisqu'en quelques heures, nous avions déjà dépassé notre audience précédente. En quelques jours nous comptions en milliers, jusqu'à atteindre les 9 000 aujourd'hui. Quelle surprise ! Et quelle joie, compte-tenu de nos efforts constants et pour l'équipe qui s'y consacre régulièrement depuis plus de trois années. Il nous faut naturellement remercier tous nos partenaires qui nous ont soutenu et qui nous aident à trouver des sujets pertinents, le Club de Venise notamment, mais également toutes celles et ceux qui ont trouvé un intérêt à s'abonner à cette nouvelle formule.

Pour eux et pour les futurs destinataires de Commonality, nous avons imaginé une petite campagne de communication « Because baguettes are not the only thing worth sharing. Practice of local public communication too ! ». Une façon amusante de rebondir sur notre identité, notre culture de la communication publique locale française, et de montrer l'ouverture, le dialogue, la mise en commun, sur des bases solidaires et éthiques. Car nous sommes une coopérative qui travaille pour l'intérêt général, animant le réseau professionnel des administrations et des organismes qui produisent et pensent à la communication publique comme un service public. Des professionnels qui sont le public de Commonality, où qu'ils se trouvent. Et pour qui nous publierons désormais chaque trimestre cette infolettre comprenant des articles variés sur les tendances et les bonnes pratiques dans nos métiers (tous les articles sont accessibles en version anglaise et française).

Commonality est une infolettre pour les communicants publics des tous les pays, notamment européens. Elle est aussi réalisée par eux. Chaque trimestre, un comité de rédaction en définit les contenus à partir de l'actualité. Chaque communicant public a la possibilité de proposer des contributions, qui seront éventuellement publiées (contact : communication@cap-com.org). Partageons nos pratiques, mais aussi nos points de vue !

Yves Charmont est délégué général du réseau français de la communication publique « Cap'Com » depuis janvier 2021, il en assurait la direction depuis janvier 2018. Ancien dircom et consultant, il est entré au service des collectivités en 1988, après avoir exercé pendant deux ans sur les ondes régionales de Radio France. Titulaire d'un master 2 en communication des organisations, il intervient régulièrement à l'université Lyon 2 et à l'université Paris Saclay.

La boussole de l'intelligence artificielle
décryptée aux Rencontres nationales de la com numérique[1]

La boussole de l'intelligence artificielle a été imaginée par un collectif de professionnels de la communication publique. Elle vise à accompagner les communicants publics en soulignant plusieurs points de vigilance dans l'utilisation des outils d'intelligence artificielle générative. Ses préconisations pourront notamment servir aux directions de la communication pour poser leurs propres cadres de production de contenus éditoriaux, graphiques ou audiovisuels.

L'ensemble des propositions soumises dans cette boussole vise à poser un cadre de réflexion pour les communicants publics. Il ne s'agit pas d'une charte à suivre à la lettre.

En effet, nous admettons à ce jour :

- qu'il est impossible de disposer une vision globale sur l'ensemble des solutions à disposition
- que les référentiels sur la souveraineté ou la sobriété des IA sont encore incomplets ou insuffisamment reconnus
- que certains points peuvent faire l'objet d'approches différentes au vu des sensibilités multiples des communicants publics
- que certains débats vont encore se poursuivre dans les prochains mois.

La boussole de l'IA est un cadre de réflexion proposé et élaboré par Pierre Bergmiller - responsable de la communication numérique de l'Eurométropole de Strasbourg - Marc Cervennansky, responsable de la communication numérique de Bordeaux métropole - Estelle Du mout - consultante en stratégie éditoriale, communication numérique et intelligence artificielle - ainsi qu'un groupe de professionnels contribuant dans le cadre de l'Observatoire de la communication numérique publique.

Donner la priorité à l'humain, son expérience, sa capacité de jugement, et sa subjectivité

Ne pas substituer l'intelligence artificielle aux communicants publics pour faire à leur place.

L'intelligence artificielle est et doit rester un outil au service de l'humain, pas à son détriment. La décision humaine reste prépondérante et centrale. L'abus d'IA peut par ailleurs être facteur de perte de compétence. Les communicants l'utiliseront en pleine conscience en veillant à ne pas sacrifier leurs capacités cognitives. Les outils d'intelligence artificielle seront utilisés de manière mesurée pour optimiser le travail du communicant : gagner du temps sur certaines tâches, stimuler le processus créatif, etc. L'usage de documents authentiques doit être privilégié pour traiter de sujets ou événements réels.

Assurer un contrôle des contenus

Les communicants publics doivent toujours pouvoir contrôler les contenus produits avec l'aide de l'IA générative, avant leur diffusion auprès des publics, dans un souci de maîtrise et de qualité de l'information publiée. L'IA devra être utilisée sur des sujets maîtrisés par le communicant qui devra être en capacité d'analyser la pertinence et la fiabilité du résultat. Ils doivent pouvoir à tout moment intervenir sur un outil d'IA directement intégré dans certains logiciels (Canva, Adobe …) pour le désactiver. Une vigilance particulière est de mise lorsque l'intelligence artificielle est utilisée en matière de communication de crise, en situation d'urgence ou sur des sujets particulièrement sensibles : sécurité, santé, décès, tensions sociales, événements climatiques, etc.

Des inexactitudes, des formulations maladroites, des simplifications excessives ou des biais risquent d'amplifier la crise. Il convient donc d'encadrer fortement l'utilisation de l'IA dans ce type de situations.

Se former pour choisir les bons outils et diffuser une culture de l'IA adaptée au service public

Au préalable, il est nécessaire de s'assurer que l'organisation se dote d'un cadre d'usage qui porte sur les enjeux, les risques, l'usage au quotidien et la formation des agents. L'intelligence artificielle générative peut être très efficace, à condition de pouvoir et de savoir s'en servir. Le droit à une expérimentation encadrée doit être admis et encouragé. Il est recommandé d'effectuer une veille continue sur l'évolution des outils, leurs limites, les pratiques acceptées par le métier et l'évolution du cadre réglementaire. Cette mission pourrait être confiée à un référent IA désigné dans la direction de la communication. Idéalement ce référent IA devrait participer à un groupe de réflexion transversal dans l'organisation : DSI, RH, DPD, juridique, autres directions utilisatrices d'IA générative. Une offre de formation de référence pourra être proposée, en lien avec la DSI, et dans l'idéal avec l'ensemble des services concernés de la collectivité, et permettre ainsi aux communicants publics d'être en capacité de choisir les bons outils, adaptés à leurs besoins et les plus éthiques possibles.

Poser un cadre éthique à la fois dans le choix des outils et dans leur utilisation

Les communicants sont invités à privilégier des usages éthiques des outils IA, les plus respectueux possibles de la sécurité, de l'environnement et des valeurs du service public. Les communicants publics porteront une attention particulière aux biais des algorithmes, de manière à les éviter ou les rectifier pour délivrer une information de la meilleure objectivité possible. Ils veilleront à ce que les contenus générés ne renforcent pas de biais culturels ou sociaux, et tiennent compte de la diversité des publics de la collectivité. La question de la sobriété énergétique fera également l'objet d'une vigilance particulière. Il est nécessaire d'utiliser les outils IA de manière raisonnable dès lors que l'utilité a pu être avérée et l'utilisation concrète bien spécifiée. Dans l'attente d'un référentiel reconnu sur l'impact environnemental des IA, les communicants pourront utilement se tenir informés des évolutions en la matière.

Respecter la propriété intellectuelle et les créateurs

Dans la mesure du possible, les droits de la propriété intellectuelle doivent être fortement affirmés dans l'usage des outils d'intelligence artificielle. Les œuvres protégées par le droit d'auteur ne pourront faire l'objet d'une reprise ou d'une modification par un outil d'IA sans le consentement de son auteur ou de ses ayants droit. Le contenu généré par IA ne doit pas faire référence à une œuvre, à un style protégé ou à une marque sans vérifier les licences d'utilisation des contenus générés.

Respecter la confidentialité et la protection des données sensibles

Soumises au RGPD et garantes de la protection des données, les structures publiques pour lesquelles nous travaillons se doivent d'assurer le respect de la confidentialité et la protection des données, notamment sensibles : ne pas fournir à l'IA des données sensibles ou non conformes au RGPD, s'assurer qu'elles ne viennent pas entraîner l'IA sans en connaître le cadre d'usages, bien avoir accès aux CGU, savoir les décoder et les comprendre. Elles pourront se référer plus particulièrement à l'AI Act de l'Union européenne. Ces impératifs ont un impact sur le choix et l'usage des outils d'IA, qui ne doivent en aucun cas mettre ces principes en péril.

Etre transparent dans l'utilisation de l'intelligence artificielle

Dans un souci de transparence vis-à-vis de nos publics, les communicants publics sont invités à préciser lorsque le recours à l'intelligence artificielle a un impact significatif sur le contenu produit, en indiquant l'usage opéré et la partie du document ou visuel concernée. Les indications d'utilisation d'une IA seront adaptées au contexte en distinguant notamment les cas où le contenu est produit par une IA, enrichi ou uniquement corrigé. Les choix des directions de la communication dans ce domaine devront également être mis en œuvre par les prestataires et figurer dans les marchés publics.

SEEMO annual Forum

The Enemies of Media and how to tackle them
17 - 19 November 2025, Chisinau (Moldova)

Agenda

Bristol Central Park Hotel - Assembly Hall, Chișinău, Moldova

DAY 1 - Monday, 17 November 2025 (EET - UTC+2)

16:00 – 17:00	**Registration**
17:00 – 17:30	*Welcome drink*
17:30 – 18:00	**Opening speeches**

- **Christoph PLATE**, Director Media Programme South East Europe, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Sofia
- **Alexandru CODREANU**, CEI National Coordinator for Moldova, Head of Dept for Cooperation with the European Union, MFA Moldova
- **Noel CURRAN**, General Director, European Broadcasting Union (EBU), Geneva
- **Oliver VUJOVIC**, Secretary General, South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), Vienna

18:00 – 18:15   Welcome

- **Igor GROSU**, President of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, Chișinău

18:15 – 18:30   Presentation of the CEI SEEMO Award for Outstanding Merits in Investigative Journalism

- **Barbara FABRO** (CEI) **and Marina CONSTANTINOU** (SEEMO)

18:30 - 18:45   Key note:

- **Stella AVALLONE**, Ambassador of Austria to Moldova

18:45 – 20:15   Discussion: Media and Politics in Moldova

- **Cornel CIOBANU**, Deputy director, Teleradio Moldova (TRM), Chișinău
- **Liliana NICULAESCU ONOFREI**, Member of Parliament, chairwoman, media committee, Chișinău
- **Natalia ZAHARESCU**, Ziarul de Gardă (ZDG), Chișinău Cornelia Cozonac,Center for Investigative Journalism of Moldova, Chișinău
- **Pentru MACOVEI**, Independent Press Association, Chișinău

Moderator:

- **Anastasia NANI**, Deputy Director, Independent Journalism Center (IJC) , Chișinău

20:15 - 21:45   *Reception dinner*

SEEMF
South East Europe Media Forum

DAY 2 - Tuesday, 18 November 2025 (EET - UTC+2)

09:15 – 09:30 | **Registration / Welcome drink**

09:30 – 11:00 | **Panel: In search of sustainability**

- **Mihail NESTERIUC**, Mass-media and public communication expert, IDIS Viitorul, Chișinău
- **Tsvetelina SOKOLOVA**, Mediapool.bg, Sofia
- **Lutfi DERVISHI**, Albanian center for quality journalism, Tirana

Moderator:

- **Ralitsa STOYCHEVA**, Research Associate , Media Programme South East Europe · Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Sofia

11:00 – 11:15 | **German News Service by Deutsche Welle and the German news agency dpa**

11:15 – 11:45 | *Coffee break*

11:45 – 13:15 | **Panel: Promoting European Values in the Media for Fostering Democracy**

- **Flavia VOINEA**, Manager, Bucharest FM, Radio Romania Regional Network, Bucharest
- **Francesco DE FILIPPO**, ANSA news agency, Trieste
- **Lina BOTNARU**, Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova, Chișinău

Moderator:

- **Marija SLIJEPČEVIĆ**, Professor, Vern University, Zagreb

13:15 – 14:15 | *Lunch*

14:15 – 15:30 | **Panel: Investigative Journalism- Defending Democracy in Times of War**

- **Daniel KOTECKÝ**, Investigative Reporter, Deník Referendum, Brno
- **Bogdana LAZAROVA**, author and executive producer, Bulgarian National Television, Sofia
- **Edoardo ANZIANO**, Investigative Reporter, IrpiMedia, Rome
- **Yevheniia MOTOREVSKA**, Head of war crimes investigation unit, Kyiv Independent, Kyiv

Moderator:

- **Remzi LANI**, director, Albanian Media Institute (AMI), Tirana

15:30 – 16:00 | *Coffee break*

16:00 – 17:30 | **Panel: Challenges for the Media in the Context of Hybrid Warfare and Foreign Propaganda**

- **Katerina VELJANOVSKA BLAZEHVSKA**, Professor, Faculty of Security Sciences, MIT, Skopje
- **Adelheid FEILCKE**, Editor, Deutsche Welle, Bonn
- **Simon PIATEK**, Managing Director, New Imagination Lab, London

Moderator:

- **Christian Spahr**, Board member and co-founder, South East Europe Public Sector Communication Association (SEECOM)

17:30 – 17:45 | **Closing remarks**

- **Maia METAXA**, Școala de Jurnalism din Moldova, Chișinău
- **Cornelia COZONAC**, Center for Investigative Journalism of Moldova, Chișinău Iveta Tomeva, Media Programme South East Europe · Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Sofia
- **Oliver VUJOVIC**, South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), Vienna

Echoes from the South East Europe Media Forum 2025

The 19th annual Forum organised by the South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO) in Chisinau (Moldova) on 17-18 December 2025 in cooperation with the Central European Initiative (CEI) and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS) was focused on the topic "The Enemies of Media and how to tackle them".

The event was attended by seventy participants from Moldova and several neighbour countries, representing media organisations, academic world, governmental authorities (also including ambassadors) and international platforms specialised in AI and al digital technologies.

The debate was centred on society's response to disinformation in the context of hybrid warfare and foreign information manipulation. Experts from media, news agencies, academia and technology explored how anti-democratic actors aim to erode trust in democratic institutions, often in tandem with other threats such as cyber-attacks.

The discussion highlighted how sustainability is at the heart of the media's survival in an increasingly threatening geopolitical scenario. Societies are increasingly pervaded by disinformation and misinformation and both traditional and digital media are paying the consequences.

It was a very rich, intensive and interactive event. There were quite pregnant contributions focusing on how artificial intelligence both accelerates the spread of false content and offers tools to uncover it, raising future questions about labelling human-generated material as AI-produced content becomes dominant.

Speakers stressed the need for newsroom guidelines on verification and responsible AI use, the importance of public media literacy as a form of pre-bunking, and the value of collaboration between journalists, officials (public communicators and other front-line civil servants), technologists, educators, security professionals and civil society, noting that Western Europe has much to learn from the experiences of South-Eastern Europe.

The panellists provided a very rich feedback made of concrete examples on the obstacles to investigative journalism (the Forum also hosted the CEI SEEMO Award for Outstanding Merits in Investigative Journalism) and on the increasing difficulties for it to operate in countries where the political scene and the public opinion is getting more and more polarised. Transparency and freedom of expression are manifestly being under threat, while defending democracy in times of war becomes more and more challenging and risky.

Questions were raised on how to encourage young journalists to pursue their work being supported by the EU and other international partners and on how to explore possible solutions to translate into practice the strong need for building internal organisational capacities and for creating and/or reinforcing synergies.

Stratcom Seminar "Be(A)ware"

28 October 2025, Brussels

Agenda

8:30 - 9:10 | **Welcome coffee and registration**

Event moderator:
- **Mrs. Aleksandra Ketlerienė**, Deputy Editor-in-Chief, LRT.lt

9:15 - 9:20 | **Welcoming remarks:**
- **Mr. Nerijus Aleksiejūnas**, Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the EU

9:20 - 9:40 | **Current state of play:**
- **Ms. Fiona Knab-Lunny**, Head of Cabinet of Commissioner Michael McGrath

9:40 - 9:50 | **Be aware.**

Overview of Russian FIMI tactics & methods, and how they have evolved

Setting the scene:
- **Mrs. Liubov Tsybulska**, Strategic Communications Expert, Founder of Center for Strategic Communications and Information Security, Ukraine.

9:50 - 11:00 | **Panel 1.**

What is the true scale and impact of Russian interference? How can the crucial role of media support tackling FIMI? What measures are vital to make European Democracy Shield an efficient tool in strengthening our collective resilience against constantly evolving FIMI threats.

- **Mr. Matthew Reece**, Director of the Policy Planning and Strategic Communication, EEAS,
- **Ms. Oana Hriscu**, Head of Task Force for Strategic Communication and Countering Information Manipulation, European Commission,
- **Mrs. Aleksandra Ketlerienė**, Deputy Editor-in-Chief, LRT.lt media portal,
- **Mrs. Liubov Tsybulska**, Strategic Communications Expert, Founder of Center for Strategic Communications and Information Security, Ukraine.

Moderator:
- **Ms. Julie Majerczak**, Head of Brussels Office, Reporters Without Borders.

Q&A session

11:00 - 11:15 | *Coffee break*

9:50 - 10:50 | **Beware.**

Whole-of-society approach: why it is effective and how it should be scaled to the wider EU level.

Setting the scene:
- **Lithuanian Algorithm by Mr. Mindaugas Lašas**, Director of Communication and Cultural Diplomacy Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lithuania

11:30 - 12:45

Panel 2.

What tangible strategies and initiatives enable civil society to serve as the most critical front line in countering FIMI? How can we foster more robust, systematic, and results-oriented partnerships between the government, civil society, and the private sector? How can a whole-of-society approach best facilitate knowledge sharing, cooperation, and coordinated responses to widespread FIMI webs?

- **Ms. Rima Aukštuolytė**, Squad Commander, Civil Resilience Unit StratCom Foxes,
- **Mr. Pekka Kallioniemi**, EEAS Policy Expert, Ex-Vatnik Soup,
- **Mr. Mykolas Katkus**, CEO and Co-founder of Repsense,
- **Ms. Augustina Zamuškevičiūtė**, Project Manager, Civil Resilience Initiative.

Moderator:

- **Ms. Alice Stollmeyer**, Executive Director, Defend Democracy

Q&A session

12:45 - 13:45

Meet the Ecosystem

Brief presentations of activities by Repsense, StratCom Foxes, Reporters Without Borders, Defend Democracy, and others.

13:45 - 15:00

Networking lunch

Opportunity for individual B2G with representatives of participating NGOs and companies who are part of the effective counter FIMI ecosystem.

"Be(A)ware! Advancing the Fight Against Foreign Influence and Manipulation of Information"

On October 28, Lithuania's Permanent Representation to the EU in Brussels hosted the conference 'Be(A)ware! Advancing the Fight Against FIMI.' The conference gathered experts from the EU institutions, member states, and Ukraine.

The event highlighted Lithuania's approach to countering disinformation and FIMI. Ahead of its EU Council Presidency in 2027, Lithuania presented its whole-of-society approach model and featured Lithuanian professionals in the anti-disinformation ecosystem – think tanks, NGOs, data analytics start-ups, and civic initiatives.

"For 35 years, Lithuania has stood on the frontline of Russian disinformation and has been the Kremlin's testing ground for propaganda warfare. We learned early that defending ourselves takes a whole-of-society approach. We treat FIMI as a security and economic threat and therefore, civil society and government are united in fighting the continuous Russia's attempts to rewrite history, to undermine our statehood, and to sow distrust," said Ambassador Nerijus Aleksiejūnas.[1]

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1   Lithuania is member of the Steering Group of the Club of Venice and hosted a plenary meeting of this network in Vilnius in 2018, during which the participants subscribed two Charters of the Club, respectively on societal resilience to disinformation and propaganda in a digital landscape" (7 June 2018) and on "shaping professionalism in communication (Capacity Building)" (8 June 2018).

EuroPCom 2025
Beyond Words – A Story of Trust

By Silke Toenshoff

The central topic of this year's edition of the annual European Public Communication Conference (EuroPCom) – how to have citizens gain and maintain trust – successfully reached a global audience of more than 2000 participants from 62 countries. The conference was simultaneously held as a physical event in Brussels and online on **3-4 July**. Its main strands, **trust in institutions, technology and communities**, responded to the current phenomena and challenges determining the effectiveness of public communication.

The event brought together **40 renowned speakers from politics, research and business practice** from Europe as well as the United States, Brazil and Ukraine. Their contributions focused on professional practice, global communication challenges, democratic resilience and the evolving relationship between institutions and citizens.

The 2025 edition attracted a **highly diverse audience** of 2150 participants – 50% of whom were communication professionals, including from NGOs, academia and civil society networks, followed by 22% of participants representing EU institutions.

With 52% of participants belonging to the 20-35 age group, EuroPCom has become, in particular for the younger generation of communicators, a **space to promote innovative ideas** and to **develop skills** that respond to public communication challenges.

The **EuroPCom 2025** survey shows that **trust in EU sources remains solid**, especially in official EU websites (55% of respondents across all age groups). However, regarding **social media**, younger audiences are more trusting (42% of younger respondents (20-35) compared to only 30% of older age groups) and are also more likely to have their opinion shaped by them (twice as likely). At the same time, respondents were explicit about what erodes their trust: **misinformation** (95%) and **inconsistent messaging** (93%) which points to the challenge of a fragmented media landscape where maintaining consistency and credibility is more difficult yet more crucial. The message to communicators is equally clear: respondents want **public communication to be fresher** (98%) **and more engaging** (95%) and they are calling for dynamic, interactive approaches which engage the audience and keep them connected.

A defining feature of EuroPCom 2025 was its pioneering embrace of **AI-driven technology in outward communication**, which shaped both the programme content as well as the communication tools used throughout and for the conference. A scenario workshop of an AI-driven tool aimed at analysing disinformation, an AI-driven platform that makes the content of the event accessible in a personalised way, and avatar videos for promotion showed the possibilities of technology in reshaping public communication. The conference modelled **responsible use of new technologies** while addressing their societal implications.

The sessions collectively demonstrated that **building trust is a shared task** across institutions, technological innovation, media landscapes and local communities.

Key messages:

- **Institutions must trust people to gain trust in return**. Taiwan's GovZero (g0v) movement was provided as an example of a grassroots civic tech community that leverages open-source tools and participatory practices to enhance government transparency and citizen engagement in policymaking, which led to effective governance and successful outcomes.

- **A strategic communication approach based on continuous innovation is key to maintaining public trust**. This includes transparency and authentic communication, clear, consistent and tailored messaging across various platforms, and responsiveness to public concerns.

- **Personal stories are a powerful tool to strengthen engagement and shift perceptions in public communication**. Voices of citizens – when thoughtfully integrated into institutional campaigns – can build emotional resonance, enhance credibility and foster stronger connections between citizens and institutions.

- **Multi-level trust strategies are a great way to link trust in communities and in institutions**. Trust is experienced both as micro trust (rooted at local level and in the community through continuous micro interactions such as when receiving public services) and macro trust (associated with institutions, transparency and governance).

- **Effectively combating disinformation requires both innovative technologies and new ways of connecting citizens**. AI-driven tools can play a key role in detecting disinformation. At the same time, it is important to prevent the spread of disinformation by explaining EU matters in an accessible way, such as with short videos that are preferred by younger audiences.

- **Local leaders, who are the closest ones to citizens, play a key role in building trust and resilient democracies**. To support them in their task, more efforts are needed to enhance digital media literacy among young people through initiatives like the Lie Detectors initiative.

- **Using AI-driven technologies provides both opportunities and challenges**. Piloting new technologies is needed to produce more appealing content and engage with the audience. At the same time, transparency, ethical guidelines and human oversight of AI-generated content are essential to ensure AI is used in a responsible way and this requires internal training and developing know-how on the ethical, regulatory and technical limitations and possibilities in an evolving field.

- **Reskilling public communicators is essential**. The rapid development of AI and the evolving media landscape require public communicators to adopt new skills and competences. With 78% of Slido respondents at the EuroPCom workshop on AI using AI daily, training programmes such as InnovateUS are needed to promote a healthy information ecosystem.

The **Echoes of EuroPCom** initiative, which was kicked off in October 2025, will continue the conversation with the EuroPCom community and lead up to the 2026 edition. It includes a **series of activities**, such as online workshops and training, LinkedIn Live sessions and interviews, all designed to deepen connections, explore ongoing developments in the field of public communication and strengthen public communications across Europe.

The three photos from the event © European Union / Fred Guerdin

Dr. Silke Toenshoff is Head of Unit in the Communication Directorate of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR). A Phd in economics, she has experience in business consulting with Accenture, politics in Germany, and as a senior analyst with RAND Europe. At the CoR, she has been responsible for external relations, Southern and Eastern Neighbourhood, decentralized cooperation and Enlargement. In her current role she is responsible for the FutureLab in the CoR as well as flagship events such as the European Week of Regions and Cities, EuroPCom and the Young Elected Politicians Programme. She also has been piloting AI in outreach and communication and inside the CoR.

Minus 5

Agenda 2030 and communication in Europe. Environmental, social, economic and digital sustainability for citizens, businesses and institutions.

By Leda Guidi

Every year, the Italian Association of Public and Institutional Communication (Compubblica) – which is part of the Venice Club – dedicates a day of study and discussion to a topic of current interest and impact on the community, a training event for communicators, also open to the public, with dissemination and awareness-raising purposes.

This year's meeting entitled "**Meno 5: Agenda 2030 and communication in Europe. Environmental, social, economic and digital sustainability for citizens, businesses and institutions**" – organized together with the European Movement and in collaboration with Infocivica-Gruppo di Amalfi and SGI-Stati Generali dell'Innovazione - **took place the 9th of April, at the Spazio Esperienza Europa - David Sassoli, where the Representation of the European Institutions – Parliament and Commission** – hosted us with their usual availability, also for the consolidated consonance of vision and objectives that characterize the events of Compubblica, which have always been inscribed in the European cultural and value trajectory.

The event was inscribed within the conceptual perimeter **that considers public communication as a strategic lever for organizational, professional and cultural innovation of the PA**, an essential institutional function **for the construction of a participatory, sustainable and discrimination-free European community**.

Speakers, important and authoritative for institutional, academic and professional roles, accepted Compubblica's invitation to share experiences, practices, projects and valuable skills acquired in different fields of knowledge and professions. Experiences and skills, precisely because of this diversity, significant and relevant for **an approach to knowledge that seeks to overcome sylos and verticality, rewarding the ability to read and interpret transversality, also through integrated and multi-channel communication models**.

The words, or rather the **key concepts** chosen to summarize the intent of the day and that guided it, declined from time to time in different professional and disciplinary contexts were:

- communication as a public service at the base of reputation and accountability,
- professional training and development of new skills,
- the construction of relationships of trust and networks of alliance with communities,
- the protection of consolidated and new rights, such as digital ones,
- sustainability for the life and well-being of people,
- inclusion and the fight against inequalities, starting with gender gaps,
- reporting and monitoring of policies, projects, services.

Key words and concepts referring **to the complex activity of effectively implementing the objectives of the 2030 Agenda in Public Administrations**, at all levels, by putting in place transparent, communicable, comparable processes and methods in an open government perspective. Processes that the acronym ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) increasingly defines **precise choices in the communication of public and private organizations** – and in the criteria underlying them – in the diversified fields of competence and action.

In order for these activities **not to be seen as a bureaucratic duty or a new rhetoric**, we believe it is important to know the ESG criteria, and how they are intended to represent, measure and certify the ability to manage concretely the impact - in environmental, social and governance terms -, in organizations, and the related communication, **with a focus on PAs and their maturity in terms of corporate, professional, relational and civic culture**.

The 2030 Agenda - as we know - indicates the objectives for sustainable environmental, social, economic and digital development to Public Administrations, businesses, civil society organizations, objectives for which **adequate, transparent and measurable communication can be a powerful agent of awareness and mobilization**.

Five years to the deadline of evaluation of **the results achieved (or not achieved)**, we, as the Italian Association of Public and Institutional Communication, wanted to explore in depth with representatives of public administrations, universities and public and private research centers and civil society organizations, what are in the respective and multiple fields of institutional, academic activity, scientific commitment and civic activism - and according to their perception as experts - **the**

goals on which it is necessary to commit and invest in communication and involvement of people, what positive and participatory practices to implement and with what possible indicators to monitor the desired impacts on people's lives.

It is necessary - according to Compubblica - for PAs to implement transparent relational processes, **non-asymmetric interaction methods**, usable multi-channel services centered on user needs, knowable and accountable performances, based on information, data, reliable documents, dynamically updated, **representative of an accountable public action that creates trust**.

Precisely to contribute to the strengthening of these objectives, we have applied and become part of the **Open Government Forum** (https://open.gov.it/partecipa/community-ogp-italia/forumgoverno-aperto), formed by 11 NGOs and 11 PAs that work together on co-created commitments and then submitted to public consultations. The Open Government Forum is in fact the actor that implements the governance of the Open Government Partnership Italy Community (OGPIT https://open.gov.it/) - within the framework of the **Global Partnership** (https://www.open-govpartnership.org/) - bringing together open government stakeholders.

It is a stimulating, generative and useful forum for equal discussion between organized civil society and institutional actors whose mission is to implement public policies relevant to the definition, implementation and monitoring of the impact of the National Strategy for Open Government, promoted by the Italian Public Service Department (https://partecipa.gov.it/processes/SterategiaNazionleOpenGov?locale=it).

Public communication has as its priority **citizens - and their associative expressions** - and as its main statutory purpose the creation of **public value through tools, channels and practices that promote open government in all its multiple dimensions**.

Compubblica, through its competent professional community and formal and informal networks - which it has built over time and continues to develop - is committed to fertilizing the co-creation process with its own objectives and contents and to being enriched in turn by other co-protagonist stakeholders.

It is an important line of action for the work of communicators, and for the topic addressed in the meeting, because **it brings together the culture of strategic communication, intersectoral collaborations, and between public and private social sectors**, and circular methods in realizing and evaluating of public policies, in a perspective of **commitment to the common good**.

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Le piattaforme di partecipazione e l'AI come driver della comunicazione pubblica

Di Marinella Belluati

Ascolto, decisione e fiducia costituiscono i pilastri di una nuova relazione tra istituzioni e cittadini. Nell'ultimo decennio, in Europa, le piattaforme digitali dedicate alla partecipazione hanno attraversato una metamorfosi significativa da semplici sportelli informativi si sono trasformate in autentici attori della comunicazione pubblica, capaci di generare aspettative inedite e affrontare sfide complesse. Questo processo ha portato all'adozione di metodologie strutturate per l'ascolto, alla condivisione trasparente delle decisioni e alla documentazione meticolosa delle fasi deliberative, costruendo una grammatica quotidiana rivolta alla cittadinanza. In questo contesto, l'intelligenza artificiale emerge come fattore essenziale, accelerando la trasformazione attraverso strumenti avanzati che rafforzano l'ascolto, semplificano l'analisi delle opinioni e rendono più efficienti i processi decisionali.

Il **cambiamento di paradigma** è stato delineato dal lavoro dell'OCSE (2021), che ha ridefinito la funzione della comunicazione pubblica. Quando non è più orientata alla semplice promozione ma si concentra sull'interesse collettivo, la comunicazione assume il ruolo di strumento di trasparenza, integrità, responsabilità e partecipazione. Non viene più relegata a un ruolo marginale, ma diventa parte integrante dei processi attraverso cui le politiche vengono progettate, discusse, implementate e valutate. Il rapporto OCSE sottolinea la necessità di spostare l'attenzione dai messaggi alla costruzione di una relazione solida e continuativa con i diversi pubblici. Integrare la comunicazione nel ciclo delle politiche pubbliche significa favorire il coinvolgimento attivo dei cittadini, valutando l'efficacia non solo sulla base della visibilità raggiunta, ma soprattutto dei risultati concreti generati per la comunità. Questo approccio richiede che la comunicazione diventi uno strumento strategico per rafforzare il dialogo, alimentando fiducia e partecipazione.

La diffusione di misinformazione e disinformazione, amplificata durante la pandemia da Covid-19, ha reso ancora più complesso per le istituzioni emergere in un contesto caratterizzato da elevato rumore informativo. Il rafforzamento della fiducia è diventato una priorità imprescindibile. L'OCSE pone l'accento sull'importanza di ridefinire le competenze necessarie, stabilire regole chiare e dotarsi di sistemi di misurazione adeguati. La comunicazione pubblica non è più un compito accessorio, ma una funzione strutturale che richiede professionalità, strumenti e metodologie all'altezza delle sfide contemporanee.

Il secondo tassello fondamentale emerge dal report del Joint Research Centre della Commissione europea (Smillie & Scharfbillig, 2024). In un contesto informativo saturo e polarizzato, l'invito è chiaro, tornare a una **comunicazione affidabile**, capace di guadagnare la fiducia dei cittadini attraverso pratiche concrete e verificabili. La fiducia non si chiede passivamente, ma si costruisce con attenzione e perseveranza. La cura dell'informazione, la chiarezza degli impegni presi e soprattutto la loro effettiva realizzazione sono elementi imprescindibili per generare credibilità. La coerenza tra i diversi canali di comunicazione, la tempestività delle risposte, la tracciabilità delle fonti e l'accountability di chi interviene a nome delle istituzioni costituiscono gli strumenti con cui si rende concreta la promessa di affidabilità.

L'incrocio tra professionalizzazione e affidabilità segna la trasformazione delle piattaforme di partecipazione nella loro forma più matura. Questi spazi diventano vere e proprie infrastrutture civiche, dove la comunicazione istituzionale assume una dimensione quotidiana, consolidando la fiducia e rendendo la partecipazione effettiva e responsabile.

Un utilizzo efficace delle piattaforme presuppone che non si limitino a essere semplici contenitori privi di sostanza. È fondamentale fornire contesto, esplicitando le motivazioni del confronto, i vincoli esistenti e il calendario delle decisioni. Sono necessarie **regole chiare** per un dialogo costruttivo quali l'adozione di un tono rispettoso, una moderazione definita e tempistiche certe per le risposte. Infine, è essenziale garantire la rendicontazione: ogni proposta che diventa parte di un regolamento o avvia una sperimentazione deve essere chiaramente collegata al processo, documentata e resa visibile.

Quando una piattaforma intende assumere il ruolo di driver dei processi partecipativi, deve incidere profondamente sull'organizzazione che la gestisce. Non basta "aprire" una consultazione: è necessario immaginare e strutturare la piattaforma come un **prodotto editoriale complesso**, curandone ogni fase con pari attenzione. Alla base sta la presenza di un responsabile dedicato, incaricato di definire obiettivi precisi e un calendario delle attività. La progettazione comprende la stesura di testi informativi chiari, verificati e accessibili, che permettano a tutti di comprendere il contesto deliberativo.
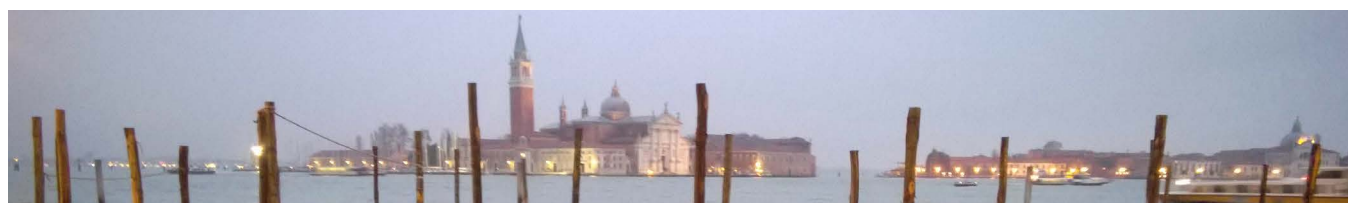
La gestione implica il **coinvolgimento attivo della comunità professionale** che presidia lo spazio: offrire risposte tempestive e pertinenti, garantire chiarezza, affidabilità e continuità. Come evidenziato dall'OCSE, la professionalizzazione si traduce nell'adozione di standard specifici, accompagnati da metriche che vadano oltre le visualizzazioni. È necessario valutare l'efficacia considerando l'impatto reale sulla partecipazione e sulla qualità del confronto, adottando una prospettiva orientata ai risultati.

Esperienze concrete dimostrano che questo approccio non è un esercizio teorico. Decidim, nata a Barcellona e adottata da molte amministrazioni europee, ha mostrato che l'open source è la superficie di un patto più profondo: ogni proposta lascia una traccia, ogni passaggio tecnico-amministrativo è documentato, ogni modifica è motivata. La trasparenza diventa un'architettura che consente a chiunque di associare dichiarazioni ed esiti, verifiche e decisioni.

La piattaforma multilingue della Conferenza sul Futuro dell'Europa ha reso visibile cosa accade quando un'istituzione decide di dare voce, memoria e direzione a un dibattito continentale. Nel primo anno sono stati raccolti e analizzati decine di migliaia di contributi, ma più dei numeri conta l'organizzazione editoriale che li ha resi leggibili e utilizzabili (Kantar Public, 2022).

Un nodo cruciale risiede nel crescente divario tra la complessità delle questioni affrontate e la **capacità di attenzione del pubblico**. Come raccontare l'incertezza e i compromessi senza scadere nella semplificazione eccessiva o nella micro-targetizzazione che frammenta la trasparenza?

I documenti europei suggeriscono un percorso paziente e adattivo: non si può comunicare allo stesso modo a tutti, ma questo non significa cadere nella trappola della personalizzazione frammentata. Si tratta di progettare una comunicazione stratificata, capace di offrire accesso immediato a chi ha poco tempo, ma anche percorsi di approfondimento progressivamente più articolati per chi desidera comprendere a fondo i temi. Questa impostazione mantiene aperto uno spazio di discussione informata e trasparente.

Nel quotidiano di un'amministrazione, tali principi si traducono in attenzione al tono, spiegare prima di chiedere, anticipare i dubbi, chiarire i limiti delle decisioni, questo perché la relazione di fiducia si deve fondare su un principio di trasparenza. Non meno importante è il rigore temporale in cui la scansione delle fasi non è un dettaglio burocratico, ma parte integrante di un patto con i cittadini. Se una consultazione dura tre mesi, seguita da altri tre di valutazione tecnica, questa tempistica deve essere rispettata e costantemente aggiornata.

All'interno dell'ecosistema digitale, si è inserito un nuovo fattore, quello dell'**intelligenza artificiale** (AI). L'AI non si limita però a offrire strumenti di sintesi o supporto decisionale, ma rappresenta un vero e proprio ambiente generativo di nuove opportunità per la partecipazione dando origine a una nuova forma di presenza all'interno delle piattaforme, abilitando modalità di coinvolgimento inedite. Questa dimensione generativa si traduce in affordances che **costruisce un nuovo ambiente** e influisce sulla capacità di orientarsi tra temi complessi. L'AI diventa così uno spazio di interazione che non sostituisce il ruolo umano, ma lo potenzia, facilitando la partecipazione responsabile e la trasparenza nelle dinamiche deliberative.

Le opportunità che l'AI offre alla comunicazione pubblica e alla partecipazione sono significative, ma richiedono una comprensione precisa del loro ambito d'azione.

Sul fronte **dell'accessibilità**, l'AI può democratizzare realmente l'accesso al dibattito pubblico, la traduzione automatica abbatte le barriere linguistiche, mentre la semplificazione linguistica rende comprensibili documenti tecnici a fasce più ampie di cittadini. Questi strumenti permettono a pubblici diversi per provenienza, formazione e competenze di partecipare attivamente, riducendo l'esclusione che spesso caratterizza i processi partecipativi. Nell'**organizzazione del dibattito**, l'AI si rivela preziosa nel collegare proposte simili, individuare duplicazioni e clusterizzare i temi ricorrenti. Chi ha letto manualmente centinaia di contributi sa quanto sia facile smarrire la visione d'insieme e la tecnologia aiuta a mantenere il filo, a distinguere ciò che emerge da ciò che si assottiglia nel confronto, a evidenziare convergenze e controversie. Questa capacità di mappatura diventa cruciale quando occorre orientarsi rapidamente tra posizioni articolate e volumi consistenti di interventi.

Nella fase di **rendicontazione**, infine, l'AI può produrre sintesi che, se correttamente progettate, citano le fonti di riferimento, distinguono tra descrizione oggettiva e interpretazione soggettiva, e segnalano con trasparenza i limiti e i margini di errore. In questo modo, l'intelligenza artificiale si avvicina al lavoro paziente e rigoroso di un redattore esperto, non per sostituirlo ma per supportarlo nell'elaborazione di materiali complessi.

Tuttavia, l'intelligenza artificiale risulta realmente funzionale solo quando si pone come **strumento di supporto al decisore umano**, mai come suo sostituto. La sua utilità si concretizza nell'imitazione del processo accurato di chi cura i contenuti, non nell'assunzione di ruoli decisionali. Questa impostazione rende indispensabile una solida cornice di responsabilità.

L'orientamento europeo, sancito dall'AI Act e dalle strutture dedicate all'implementazione, promuove un approccio fondato sulla valutazione del rischio, sulla tracciabilità dei casi d'uso e sulla supervisione umana costante. Nelle piattaforme di partecipazione, ciò si traduce in una serie di misure concrete: l'utilizzo di etichette esplicite che segnalano quando una sintesi è assistita da AI, la presenza di log di moderazione facilmente consultabili, l'attivazione di meccanismi di ricorso effettivi e l'adozione di audit proporzionati al livello di rischio. Questi strumenti sono pensati per tutelare l'integrità del processo partecipativo, garantendo trasparenza e affidabilità senza soffocare l'innovazione.

Le piattaforme di partecipazione e l'impiego dell'AI rappresentano strumenti potenti, ma sarebbe ingenuo soffermarsi unicamente sugli aspetti positivi. Questi strumenti attraversano territori complessi che richiedono attenzione e responsabilità costanti. Il **divario digitale** costituisce il primo e più rilevante ostacolo. Connessioni, dispositivi tecnologici, competenze digitali e tempo a disposizione non sono distribuiti equamente nella società. In assenza di presidi offline e di percorsi strutturati di alfabetizzazione digitale, si rischia concretamente di costruire spazi partecipativi riservati a una minoranza iperconnessa, scambiando il rumore generato da pochi per la voce rappresentativa della collettività. Questo rischio non è teorico e può minare alla radice la legittimità democratica dei processi partecipativi. I **bias algoritmici e l'opacità dei modelli** introducono una vera e propria faglia civica, l'AI può riprodurre e amplificare discriminazioni esistenti nei dati di addestramento, generando distorsioni sistematiche difficili da individuare. Per evitare che questi bias compromettano la trasparenza e l'equità del dibattito pubblico, è fondamentale prevedere regole chiare, supervisioni costanti e la piena trasparenza sui criteri adottati. Velocizzare i processi attraverso l'AI non significa necessariamente semplificarli o risolverli, ma occorre la consapevolezza che la tecnologia porta con sé problematiche che richiedono governance attenta.

La scalabilità rappresenta una **sfida critica**, ciò che funziona efficacemente in contesti ristretti, con poche decine o centinaia di partecipanti, non è automaticamente replicabile su larga scala. L'AI può certamente facilitare l'ordine e l'emersione dei temi anche in dibattiti estesi, ma la sua efficacia dipende da criteri ben definiti, da una governance trasparente e da una chiara comunicazione sui metodi utilizzati. Senza questi presidi, la scalabilità può trasformarsi in un'illusione di partecipazione anziché in un suo reale ampliamento.

Vi sono poi alcuni punti critici che attengono strettamente alla qualità democratica delle istituzioni. In primis, occorre considerare **l'affaticamento deliberativo** che emerge quando la partecipazione non viene gestita con criterio, se ogni decisione richiede un passaggio consultivo, se non viene chiarito quando e perché si apre il confronto pubblico, la saturazione dell'attenzione dei cittadini può minare la legittimazione delle istituzioni invece di rafforzarla. È necessario stabilire criteri espliciti che indichino con onestà i reali margini di modifica e distinguano tra decisioni su cui si apre il dibattito e quelle su cui si rende semplicemente conto. L'**integrità del dibattito pubblico** è anche costantemente minacciata da campagne coordinate, manipolazioni e uso strumentale delle piattaforme e la risposta non può limitarsi alla rimozione compulsiva dei contenuti problematici: occorre una moderazione equilibrata, motivata e documentata nelle sue ragioni, dotata di canali di ricorso effettivi. Solo in questo modo si tutela la libertà di espressione senza esporre lo spazio pubblico all'arbitrio, mantenendo un equilibrio delicato tra apertura e responsabilità.

Il **rischio della delega tecnologica** merita, infine, una particolare attenzione, l'AI può generare l'illusione che i processi partecipativi siano più semplici da gestire, quando invece richiedono competenze umane rafforzate. La tentazione di delegare alla tecnologia compiti che richiedono giudizio, sensibilità politica e capacità di mediazione deve essere costantemente vigilata. L'intelligenza artificiale si presenta infatti come un moltiplicatore in quanto amplifica le caratteristiche dei processi che incontra. Se però viene applicata in contesti caratterizzati da debolezze strutturali, non fa altro che rendere più evidenti e pervasive le distorsioni già presenti. Al contrario, quando opera all'interno di processi solidi e ben governati, può effettivamente accelerare la verifica delle informazioni, facilitare l'accesso ai dati e contribuire a una migliore organizzazione della memoria collettiva.

L'elemento distintivo che determina l'impatto reale dell'AI risiede dunque nella qualità della governance che la guida. Sono le decisioni umane, caratterizzate da responsabilità e trasparenza, a orientare il funzionamento di questi strumenti: la chiarezza dei metodi adottati, l'inclusività nell'ascolto delle diverse voci e il rispetto per l'autonomia dei singoli individui rappresentano i pilastri su cui si fonda una gestione virtuosa dell'intelligenza artificiale nei processi partecipativi.

La trasformazione in atto **ridefinisce il profilo della comunicazione pubblica**. Gli attori coinvolti assumono la funzione di mediatori di conoscenza: collegano competenze degli esperti ed esperienze dei cittadini, traducono linguaggi tecnici in motivazioni pubbliche comprensibili, facilitano l'emersione di preoccupazioni dal basso riportandole nei luoghi decisionali.

Per esercitare questa funzione servono competenze articolate: capacità di facilitare processi partecipativi, lettura integrata di dati quantitativi e qualitativi, comprensione delle dinamiche dei

gruppi online, alfabetizzazione sull'uso dell'AI accompagnata da sensibilità etica. Rispondere a queste esigenze implica un investimento mirato in strutture di formazione stabili e riconosciute.

Il risultato a cui si ambisce non è la scomparsa del conflitto. Una democrazia robusta non coincide con il consenso permanente, ma con la capacità di far convivere posizioni incompatibili nello stesso spazio, sotto regole condivise, rendendo il disaccordo produttivo. Le piattaforme di partecipazione, quando ben progettate e intrecciate a una comunicazione trasparente potenziata con intelligenza, offrono luoghi in cui le alternative possono essere vagliate, gli argomenti messi alla prova, le scelte motivate.

L'intelligenza artificiale si presenta come un potente moltiplicatore perché espande le caratteristiche dei processi che incontra. In contesti deboli, rende più evidenti le distorsioni; in processi solidi, accelera la verifica delle informazioni e facilita l'accesso ai dati. L'elemento distintivo risiede nella qualità della governance, sono le decisioni umane, caratterizzate da responsabilità e trasparenza, a orientare questi strumenti.

La via europea si distingue per la scelta di subordinare la tecnica ai valori democratici. Questa strada appare complessa e impegnativa, ma è proprio la sua difficoltà a renderla necessaria. Fondamentale diventa lo stile adottato dalle istituzioni nel comunicare, ascoltare e rendere conto: quando questa continuità di metodo si trasforma in prassi consolidata, le piattaforme digitali assumono il ruolo di vere infrastrutture della democrazia, all'altezza delle promesse di partecipazione, responsabilità e inclusione che portano con sé.

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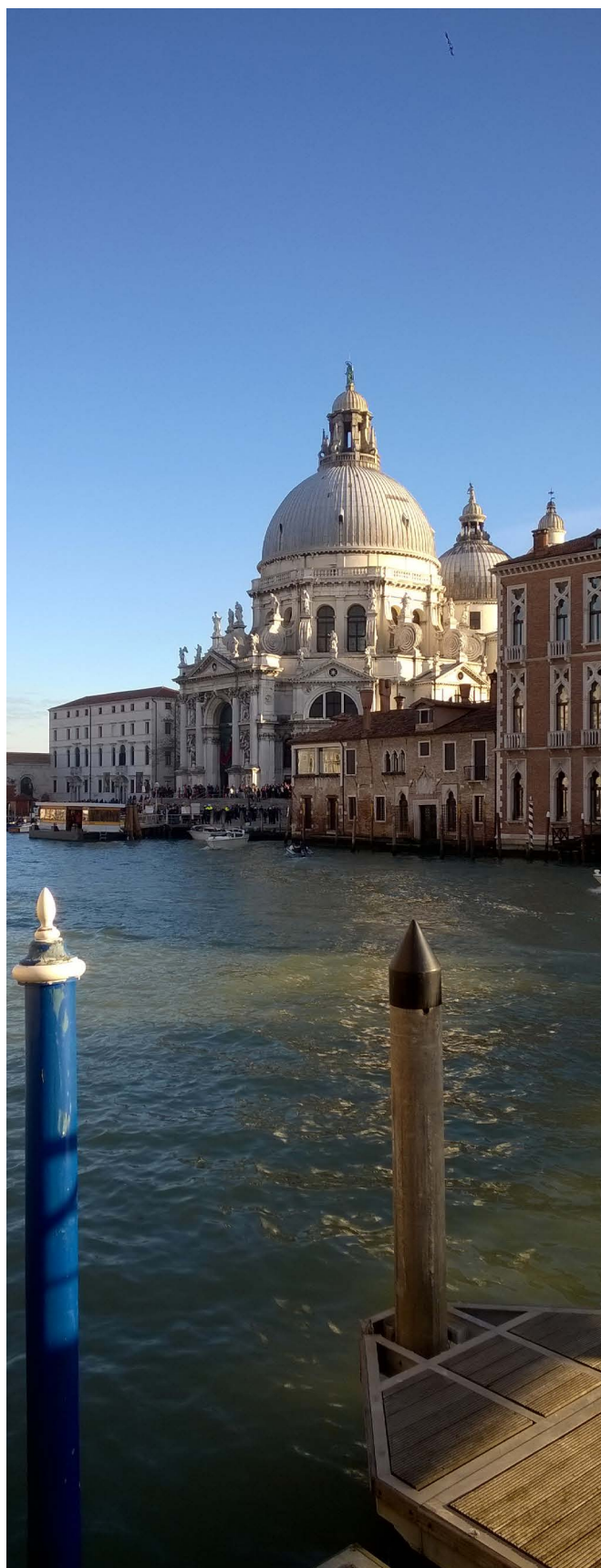
Participation platforms and AI as drivers of public communication

By Marinella Belluati

Listening, decision-making and trust are the pillars of a new relationship between institutions and citizens. Over the last decade, digital platforms dedicated to participation in Europe have seen a significant transformation, evolving from simple information hubs to genuine players in public communication, capable of generating unprecedented expectations and tackling complex challenges. This process has led to the adoption of structured methodologies for listening, transparent decision-sharing and careful documentation of deliberative phases, building new "grammar" oriented towards citizenship. In this context, artificial intelligence emerges as an essential factor, accelerating transformation through advanced tools that strengthen listening, simplify opinion analysis and make decision-making processes more efficient.

The **paradigm change** has been outlined by the work of the OECD (2021), which has redefined the function of public communication. When it is no longer oriented towards simple promotion but focuses on the collective interest, communication takes on the role of a tool for transparency, integrity, accountability and participation. It is no longer relegated to a marginal role but becomes an integral part of the processes through which policies are designed, discussed, implemented and evaluated. The OECD report emphasizes the need to change the focus from messages to building a solid and ongoing relationship with different audiences. Integrating communication into the public policy cycle means encouraging the active involvement of citizens, evaluating effectiveness not only based on visibility achieved, but above all on the concrete results generated for the community. This approach requires that communication become a strategic tool for strengthening dialogue, fostering trust and participation.

The spread of disinformation and misinformation, amplified during the Covid-19 pandemic, has made it even more difficult for institutions to stand out in a context characterised by high information noise. Strengthening trust has become an essential priority. The OECD stresses the importance of redefining the necessary skills, establishing clear rules and putting in place adequate measurement systems. Public communication is no longer an ancillary task, but a structural function that requires professionalism, tools and methodologies that are up to today's challenges.

The second crucial element emerges from the report by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (Smillie & Scharfbillig, 2024). In a saturated and polarised information environment, the call is clear: return to **reliable communication** that can earn the trust of citizens through concrete and verifiable practices. Trust is not achieved passively but is built with care and perseverance. Careful management of information, clarity of commitments and, above all, their effective implementation are essential elements in generating credibility. Consistency across different communication channels, timely responses, tracking of sources and accountability of those who act on behalf of institutions are the tools with which the promise of reliability is realised.

The intersection of professionalisation and reliability marks the transformation of participation platforms into their most mature form. These spaces become true civic infrastructures, where institutional communication takes on a daily dimension, consolidating trust and making participation effective and accountable.

Effective use of platforms requires that they not be limited to being simple boxes without substance. It is essential to provide context, clarifying the reasons for the discussion, the existing constraints, and the decision-making timeline. For constructive dialogue, **clear rules** are necessary, such as adopting a respectful tone, defined moderation and clear deadlines for responses. Finally, it is essential to ensure accountability, and any proposal that becomes part of a regulation or initiates an experiment must be clearly linked to the process, documented and made visible.

When a platform intends to take on the role of driving participatory processes, it must have a profound impact on the organisation that manages it. It is not enough to simply "open" a consultation: the platform must be designed and structured as a **complex editorial production**, with equal attention paid to each phase. At the centre of all this is a dedicated manager, responsible for defining precise objectives and a calendar of activities. The design includes the drafting of clear, verified and accessible information texts that allow everyone to understand the deliberative context.

The management involves the active involvement of the professional community that supervises the space, providing timely and relevant responses and ensuring clarity, accountability and continuity. As the OECD underlines, professionalisation translates into the adoption of specific standards, accompanied by metrics that go beyond views. Effectiveness must be assessed by considering the real impact on participation and the quality of the debate, adopting a results-oriented perspective.
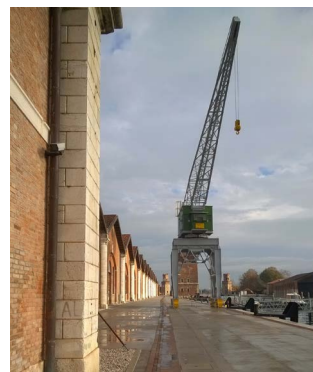
Concrete experiences show that this approach is not a theoretical exercise. DECIDIM, created in Barcelona and adopted by many European administrations, has demonstrated that open source is the surface of a deeper pact every proposal leaves a trace, every technical-administrative step is documented, every change is justified. Transparency becomes an infrastructure that allows anyone to associate statements and results, controls and decisions.

The multilingual platform of the Conference on the Future of Europe has made visible what happens when an institution decides to give voice, memory and direction to a continental debate. In the first year, tens of thousands of contributions were collected and analysed, but more important than the numbers is the editorial organisation that made them readable and usable (Kantar Public, 2022).

A crucial issue lies in the growing gap between the complexity of the issues addressed and the **audience's attention span**. How can uncertainty and trade-offs be communicated without resorting to oversimplification or micro-targeting that fragments transparency?

European documents suggest a patient and adaptive approach, which means that it is not possible to communicate with everyone in the same way, but this does not mean falling into the trap of fragmented personalisation. It is about designing multi-level communication that offers immediate access to those who have little time, but also progressively more detailed pathways for those who want to understand the issues in depth. This approach keeps the door open for informed and transparent discussion.

In the daily management of administration, these principles translate into paying attention to tone, explaining before asking, anticipating doubts and clarifying the limits of decisions, because the relationship of trust must be based on a principle of transparency. Equally as important is strict compliance with timelines, where the timing of the various stages is not a bureaucratic detail but an integral part of a pact with citizens. If a consultation lasts three months, followed by another three months of technical evaluation, this timeline must be respected and constantly updated.

A new factor has entered the digital ecosystem: **artificial intelligence** (AI). AI, however, is not limited to offering tools for synthesis or decision support but represents a truly generative environment for new opportunities for participation, giving rise to a new form of presence within platforms and enabling new modes of engagement. This generative dimension translates into affordances that **shape a new environment** and influence the ability to navigate complex issues. AI thus becomes a

space for interaction that does not replace the human role, but enhances it, facilitating responsible participation and transparency in deliberative dynamics.

The opportunities that AI offers for communication and public participation are significant, but they require a precise understanding of their domain of application.

In terms of accessibility, AI can really democratise access to public debate, with automated translation breaking down language barriers and linguistic simplification making technical documents understandable to a wider range of citizens. These tools enable audiences with different backgrounds, education and skills to participate actively, reducing the exclusion that often characterises participatory processes. In **organising the debate**, AI proves invaluable in linking similar proposals, identifying overlapping points and grouping recurring themes. Anyone who has manually read through hundreds of contributions knows how easy it is to lose sight of the big picture, and technology helps to maintain the thread, to distinguish what emerges from what fades away in comparison, to highlight convergences and controversies. This mapping capability becomes crucial when it is necessary to navigate quickly between articulated positions and large amounts of contributions. Finally, in the **reporting** phase, AI can produce summaries that, if designed correctly, cite reference sources, distinguish between objective description and subjective interpretation, and transparently report limitations and margins of error. In this way, artificial intelligence approaches the patient and rigorous work of an experienced editor, not to replace them, but to support them in processing complex materials.

However, artificial intelligence is only functional when it acts as a **support tool for human decision**-makers, never as their substitute. Its utility is to imitate the accurate process of content production, not to take on decision-making responsibilities. This approach makes a solid accountability framework essential.

Its usefulness is in imitating the careful process of content creators, not in taking on decision-making responsibilities. This approach makes a robust accountability framework essential.

The European approach, established by the AI Act and dedicated implementation structures, promotes an approach based on risk assessment, tracking of use cases, and constant human supervision. In participation platforms, this translates into a series of concrete measures: the use of explicit labels indicating when a summary is AI-assisted, the presence of easily accessible moderation logs, the activation of effective appeal mechanisms, and the adoption of audits proportionate to the level of risk. These tools are designed to protect the integrity of the participatory process, ensuring transparency and reliability without stifling innovation.

Participation platforms and the use of AI are powerful tools, but it would be misleading to focus only on the positive aspects. These tools cross over complex grounds that require constant attention and responsibility. The **digital divide** is the first and most significant obstacle. Connections, technological devices, digital skills and available time are not equally allocated within society. In the absence of offline safeguards and structured digital literacy pathways, there is a real risk of creating participatory spaces reserved for a hyper-connected minority, mistaking the noise generated by a few for the representative voice of the community. This risk is not theoretical and can undermine the democratic legitimacy of participatory processes at its root. **Algorithmic biases and the opacity of models** introduce a real civic divide. AI can reproduce and amplify existing discrimination in training data, generating systematic distortions that are difficult to detect. To prevent these biases from compromising the transparency and fairness of public debate, it is essential to establish clear rules, constant supervision and full transparency of the criteria adopted. Accelerating processes through AI does not necessarily mean simplifying or resolving them, but it is necessary to be aware that technology brings with it issues that require careful governance.

Scalability is a crucial challenge, as what works effectively in small contexts, with a few participants, is not automatically replicable on a large scale. AI can certainly facilitate the ordering and emergence of issues even in extended debates, but its effectiveness depends on well-defined criteria, transparent governance, and clear communication about the methods used. Without these safeguards, scalability can become an illusion of participation rather than its real development.

There are also some critical points closely related to the democratic quality of institutions. First, we must consider the **deliberative effort** that emerges when participation is not managed carefully, when every decision requires a consultation phase, and when it is unclear when and why public debate is opened. The saturation of citizens' attention can undermine the legitimacy of institutions rather than strengthen it. It is necessary to establish explicit criteria that honestly indicate the real scope of change and distinguish between decisions open to debate and those that are simply reported. **The integrity of public debate** is also constantly threatened by coordinated campaigns, manipulation and instrumental use of platforms, and the response cannot be limited to the compulsive removal of problematic content, but requires balanced, reasoned and documented moderation, with effective channels of appeal. Only in this way is it possible to protect freedom of expression without exposing the public space to arbitrariness, maintaining a delicate balance between openness and responsibility.

Finally, **the risk of technological delegation** deserves particular attention. AI can create the illusion that participatory processes are easier to manage, when they require enhanced human skills. The temptation to delegate to technology tasks that require judgement, political sensitivity and mediation skills must be constantly monitored. AI acts as a multiplier, amplifying the characteristics of the processes it encounters. However, when applied in contexts characterised by structural weaknesses, it only serves to make existing distortions more evident and pervasive. On the contrary, when operating within solid and well-governed processes, it can effectively accelerate the verification of information, facilitate access to data and contribute to a better organisation of collective memory.

The distinctive element that determines the real impact of AI therefore consists in the quality of the governance that guides it. It is human decisions, characterised by responsibility and transparency, that guide the functioning of these tools, and the clarity of the methods adopted, the inclusiveness in listening to different voices, and respect for the autonomy of individuals are the pillars on which the virtuous management in participatory processes AI based.

The transformation underway is redefining the profile of public communication. The actors involved take on the role of knowledge mediators: they connect the competences of experts and the experiences of citizens, translate technical language into understandable public motivations, and facilitate the emergence of grassroots concerns by reporting them back to decision-makers.

To perform this function, a range of skills is required, including the ability to facilitate participatory processes, the integrated reading of quantitative and qualitative data, an understanding of online group dynamics, and literacy in the use of AI accompanied by ethical sensitivity. To fulfil these requirements, targeted investment in stable and recognised training structures is necessary.

The expected outcome is not the disappearance of conflict. A robust democracy does not equate to permanent consensus, but rather the ability to bring incompatible positions together in the same space, according to shared rules, making disagreement productive. When well designed and interwoven with transparent communication enhanced by intelligence, participatory platforms offer places where alternatives can be evaluated, arguments verified, and choices justified.

AI is a powerful multiplier because it amplifies the characteristics of the processes it encounters. In weak contexts, it makes distortions more evident; in strong processes, it speeds up the verification of information and facilitates access to data. The distinctive element lies in the quality of governance, with human decisions, characterised by responsibility and transparency, guiding these tools.

The European approach stands out for its choice to subordinate technology to democratic values. This path appears complex and challenging, but it is precisely its difficulty that makes it necessary. The style adopted by institutions in communicating, listening and reporting becomes fundamental: when this continuity of method becomes established practice, digital platforms take on the role of true infrastructures of democracy, delivering on the promises of participation, accountability and inclusion that they bring with them.

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Marinella Belluati is an Associate Professor at the University of Turin, where she teaches Sociology of Communication and Communication of Europe. She is the President of the interdisciplinary centre To-EU (Turin-Europe) and Vice Director of the journal De Europa, and has significant expertise in key areas of European studies. She is the scientific coordinator of MagIA Magazine (www.magia.news), dedicated to artificial intelligence in public debate, and coordinates communications for AI@Unito, the University of Turin's scientific platform dedicated to artificial intelligence. Currently, she is involved in the Interactif project (INTERregional ACTion for Italy & France), funded by DgRegio.

As coordinator of the Jean Monnet Com4T.EU Chair (Communication for Transition in Europe) and previously of the Jean Monnet CoEUr modules, Professor Belluati has made substantial contributions to the study of the European public sphere, particularly regarding the roles of institutions, media, and public opinion. Her research and publications focus on the European public sphere and the communication of its institutions. Currently, she is involved in the Interactif project (INTERregional ACTion for Italy & France), funded by DgRegio. Her forthcoming publication, 'Comunicare l'Europa tra crisi e transizione' (Communicating Europe between crisis and transition), edited by Il Mulino.

Algorithmic transparency in action:
science as a public service for safer digital policy

By Alberto Pena Fernández

The digital transformation of our societies has been rapid, deep, and far-reaching. Yet the systems that govern this transformation, particularly algorithmic and AI-driven systems, remain largely opaque to the public, to regulators, and often even to their own designers. In this context, the EU has made a clear choice: to put fundamental rights, public safety, and democratic values at the heart of its digital policy. The Digital Services Act (DSA) and the Artificial Intelligence Act (AI Act) represent a significant step in this direction. But legislation alone is not enough.

What Europe needs, and now has, is the scientific capacity to support and enforce these regulatory frameworks. This is the mission of the European Centre for Algorithmic Transparency (ECAT), launched within the Joint Research Centre in 2023. ECAT exists to provide the scientific backbone of the EU's new digital regulation. Our role is to assist the European Commission in enforcing the DSA and implementing the AI Act through independent analysis, technical inspection, and long-term research into the systemic effects of algorithmic systems on society.

Over the past two years, ECAT has established itself as a reference point for science-based digital governance. With a multidisciplinary team of 37 experts operating across Seville, Ispra, and Brussels, we have worked at the intersection of law, technology, and policy to ensure that Europe's digital rules are enforceable, credible, and effective.

Supporting enforcement with scientific evidence

As part of the Commission's responsibilities under the DSA, ECAT has played an operational role in enabling investigations into Very Large Online Platforms (VLOPs) and Very Large Online Search Engines (VLOSEs). In this scientific capacity, ECAT has supported 68 requests for information and facilitated the launch of 14 formal proceedings under the DSA, including complex cases involving Meta, TikTok, Temu, AliExpress and more recently pornographic platforms operating in the EU market.

Our work has helped shape key dimensions of the DSA, including harmonised methodologies for counting users, rules for granting researchers access to platform data, and guidance on measures to protect minors online. We have contributed to the development of risk typologies across seven major systemic risk categories and more than 40 specific risk scenarios, ranging from algorithmic amplification of disinformation to violations of dignity, privacy, and democratic integrity.

This scientific work supports not only compliance checks, but also legislative clarity. In areas such as user designation thresholds, data governance, and child safety, ECAT's technical contributions have enabled the Commission to move from legal obligation to practical enforcement.

Translating complexity into policy under the AI Act

The implementation of the AI Act brings an additional layer of complexity. Here, ECAT provides methodological input on how to evaluate general-purpose AI systems, including high-impact foundation models. We contribute with scientific advice on high-risk classifications and emerging technologies such as biometric identification, automated driving, and generative AI.

Our team has worked on aligning European regulation with international standards, notably the ISO/IEC 42001 framework for AI management systems. In collaboration with the EU's AI Office, ECAT has participated in defining key technical terms, analysing risk thresholds, and supporting the establishment of scientific advisory structures.

This dual role, supporting both the DSA and the AI Act, reflects ECAT's long-term ambition: to consolidate our commitment to give technical and scientific support to a regulatory architecture that is not only principled but operationally viable, ensuring that complex systems are governed by knowledge and evidence, not assumptions.

Focusing on societal impact: platforms, minors, and mental health

Among ECAT's areas of work, the societal consequences of algorithmic systems remain a priority. One focus has been the impact of social media design on the well-being of children and adolescents. Our recent research confirms that 97% of young Europeans aged 16–29 use social media daily, with 37% spending more than three hours per day on these platforms. One in three shows behavioural patterns associated with addictive use.

In collaboration with the wider JRC scientific community, ECAT has contributed to an umbrella review of systematic studies on adolescent mental health and digital services. The evidence points to a strong correlation between platform design choices, such as infinite scroll, algorithmic curation, and interaction prompts, and negative psychosocial outcomes, particularly among young women.

These findings inform Article 28 of the DSA and shape discussions on safer-by-design principles. For government communicators and educators, they also offer a credible basis for public messaging, awareness campaigns, and youth-targeted policies grounded in science rather than speculation.

Confronting amplification and disinformation

Disinformation, misinformation, and algorithmic amplification continue to erode public trust and weaken democratic discourse. ECAT has worked to expose how platform design can inadvertently promote falsehoods and distort public perception.

Recent case studies include analysis of platform dynamics during national election campaigns in some EU Member States. ECAT's contribution in this domain includes the development of audit protocols for recommender systems, operational definitions of amplification risk, and technical frameworks to assess the transparency and controllability of content flows. These tools enable public institutions to move beyond reactive measures and towards systemic resilience.

Bridging science and communication

Beyond enforcement and research, ECAT serves as a scientific interface for institutions, regulators, and the wider public. We have facilitated high-level workshops, roundtables and conferences, including sessions at Computers, Privacy and Data Protection (CPDP), RightsCon, ACM RecSys, TED AI and the European Workshop on Algorithmic Fairness (EWAF). Our publications, more than 60 to date, have been cited by the White House, covered in international media, and acknowledged in policy speeches at the World Economic Forum.

For public communicators, ECAT offers more than data. It provides clarity in complexity, facts where narratives falter, and the confidence to speak about digital challenges with authority and nuance. As Europe leads the way in regulating and scientific knowledge of the digital space, it is through institutions like ECAT that regulation becomes not just law—but practice.

We are deeply grateful to the Club of Venice for the opportunity to showcase this work to such a brilliant and engaged audience of institutional and public communicators. Exchanges like this reaffirm the essential role of cross-disciplinary dialogue in building a digital future grounded in shared values and informed action.

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With over 35 years traversing the ICT landscape across Spain and Belgium, his career was expansively intertwined with the European Commission throughout the cabinet offices of several Presidents and currently with President Ursula von der Leyen's team.
After short academic enhancements at the London Business School and Harvard Kennedy School, he is presently at the helm of the "Algorithmic Transparency" unit (affectionately dubbed ECAT) within the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission. This team is intricately engaged in the scientific exploration and elucidation of AI and algorithm transparency, thereby underpinning EU legislation such as the Digital Services Act (DSA) and the AI Act.
Alberto have dabbled in radio during a stint in the 90's in Brussels at Radio SI, 109.1 FM. He has a fervent passion for globetrotting, music, photography, basketball, animated cartoons, and cherishing these experiences with his incredible family!

Resilience building:
AI moderating in local media

By Krzysztof Chojnowski

Information resilience is often described through the work of national institutions and major media organisations. It begins much closer to people - locally. In small communities, daily conversations about the world take shape, citizens make decisions, and trust in information is built. In Poland, more than 70% of people live in towns and villages below 100,000 inhabitants, and the average across the European Union is similar.

These are the places where local newsrooms, online portals and small publishers operate. They are the first line of contact with disinformation and hate speech. Yet their role in building information resilience remains largely underestimated.

The outbreak of the war in Ukraine in February 2022 showed how strongly local media became a target for disinformation. Russian propaganda did not focus only on national outlets - it reached regional portals, local discussion groups and comment sections under online news. Its main weapon was trust.

In small newsrooms, this problem takes on a very personal dimension. Readers often react immediately - they call or write, demanding the removal of comments they find offensive or manipulative. For them, it is not an anonymous voice from the internet but a message from someone nearby - a neighbour, a friend, a person from the same town. Such words hurt more because they come from within the community, where everyone knows each other.

In national media, no one calls the editorial office to remove a comment under an article - the distance between the reader and the newsroom is too big to trigger a personal reaction. Local journalism works differently. People rarely expect that a comment may come from outside the region, or that it could be part of a coordinated disinformation campaign.

The comments were long, linguistically correct, and appeared reasonable. Many readers believed they were written by locals. In fact, they were often created by troll farms aiming to weaken solidarity with Ukraine and reduce trust in public institutions.

This situation exposed the limits of comment moderation - especially in small editorial teams that lack the staff and tools of large national outlets.

During my presentation at the Club of Venice meeting in Warsaw in October 2025, I shared the experience of Moja Ostrołęka - a local news portal that has been operating for 22 years in north-eastern Poland, less than 150 kilometres from Belarus and the Kaliningrad region. The portal reaches around 10 million views per month and receives 7-8 thousand comments under its articles (excluding social media).

In February 2022, right after the war began, the number of comments suddenly doubled. Thousands of long, well-written but manipulative posts appeared. Manual moderation became impossible. As a response, we introduced an AI-based moderation system.

The algorithm analyses every comment in real time, assessing tone, emotions, and possible rule violations. It can identify not only hate speech and vulgarity but also disinformation and propaganda. The sensitivity of the system can be adjusted, for example during election silence or periods of increased tension. A human moderator always has the final say and can restore a comment removed by AI.

The results appeared quickly. The AI removes on average 25-30% of all comments, and even more during coordinated attacks. Discussions became calmer, with less aggression and fewer provocations. Journalists regained time for editorial work, and users noticed the change in tone and atmosphere.

The project also attracted the interest of major Polish publishers such as Gazeta.pl and Wirtualna Polska, who face similar challenges. In many large media, moderation works only during office hours, which shows the growing need for automated solutions.

The initiative received the Local Creative Award, a national competition organised in cooperation with Google, where company representatives highlighted that this tool brings a real change in the quality of online discussions taking place on local news platforms.

The project was also featured in several articles published by the Polish media industry magazine Press. In one of them - „AI in newsrooms" - Moja Ostrołęka was the only local newsroom mentioned. The article pointed out that, at that time, no other editorial team in Poland had been using AI for such an advanced and practical task.

AI, however, is never fully neutral. Its evaluations depend on cultural context. Models created in different regions interpret irony, emotion or tone in different ways. Our goal is to adapt the system to the Polish language and social reality so that it works effectively and fairly. We constantly reduce operational costs, improve automation, and adjust the system based on user feedback. Each mistake is analysed, and wrong AI decisions are corrected. It is a continuous learning process that combines technology with human editorial experience.

Building resilience takes time, cooperation and trust. No one was fully prepared for the scale of Russian propaganda, but today we know how to respond. That is what resilience building truly means - learning from crisis and turning experience into strength.

Within the Association of Local Media and the New Imagination Lab, we share knowledge and support other newsrooms testing similar tools. Our aim is to make AI moderation accessible to small publishers across Europe.

Similar initiatives are emerging elsewhere - for example elv.ai in Slovakia - showing that Europe is moving in the same direction. Information resilience does not begin in capital cities. It begins locally, where people still talk to each other and where trust is built every day.
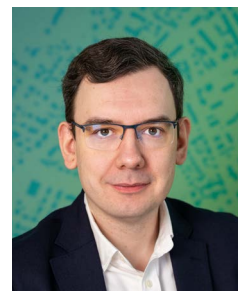
Krzysztof Chojnowski is a local media publisher and developer of AI-based tools. Editor-in-chief of Moja Ostrołęka and member of the Association of Local Media (Poland), promoting innovation and resilience in regional journalism.

Inspiré par Jean Monnet :
comment naviguer la polycrise pour réinventer la puissance européenne ?[1]

Par Michaël Malherbe

La célèbre formule de Jean Monnet, dans ses Mémoires « **L'Europe se fera dans les crises, et elle sera la somme des solutions qu'on apportera à ces crises** », a longtemps servi de boussole intellectuelle et politique à notre projet commun. Cette vision, née des décombres du XXe siècle, postulait une progression quasi-mécanique : chaque secousse, chaque épreuve, devait inéluctablement mener à un approfondissement de notre Union.

Pourtant, nous devons aujourd'hui confronter cette idée à la réalité d'une **« polycrise » systémique**. Il ne s'agit plus d'une crise singulière à laquelle succède une relance, mais d'un état de turbulence permanent. Crise financière, vague migratoire, pandémie mondiale, guerre aux portes de l'Europe, urgence climatique, inflation et crise énergétique... Ces ondes de choc ne se succèdent plus, elles se superposent et s'amplifient mutuellement.

Face à cet « empilement », le risque n'est plus seulement la stagnation, mais un « **risque sournois d'effacement** », comme le souligne Gilles Grin, directeur de la Fondation Jean Monnet pour l'Europe dans « Construction européenne : la révolution d'un continent »[2].

La question n'est donc plus de savoir si l'Europe avance *grâce* aux crises, mais si elle peut survivre *à* la polycrise. C'est dans ce paradoxe que se niche notre défi, mais aussi notre opportunité : celle de forger une résilience qui deviendra le socle d'une véritable souveraineté.

Le diagnostic : la fin de la « crise utile » ?

Le paradigme de Monnet reposait sur des crises identifiables, souvent exogènes ou sectorielles, qui forçaient les États membres à reconnaître leur interdépendance. La polycrise contemporaine est d'une nature radicalement différente, et ce pour trois raisons majeures qui paralysent notre élan traditionnel :

1. **L'usure décisionnelle et la fatigue citoyenne**. La longueur et la multiplicité des crises (plus de quinze ans de turbulences quasi ininterrompues) épuisent les mécanismes institutionnels et les opinions publiques. La gestion de l'urgence permanente empêche la vision à long terme et alimente un sentiment de dépossession démocratique, où les citoyens ne voient plus que les contraintes de l'Union, et non ses protections.

2. **La contagion de la défiance**. À la différence des crises passées, celle-ci est marquée par une crise de légitimité politique sans précédent qui prend racine au *sein des* États-membres et contamine l'échelon européen. L'UE, par sa nature hybride, reste structurellement dépendante des contingences politiques nationales. Lorsque les démocraties nationales vacillent, c'est tout l'édifice qui est fragilisé, devenant un bouc émissaire facile pour des maux internes.

3. **Un environnement international hostile**. Pour la première fois de son histoire, l'Union n'évolue plus dans un monde où la *pax americana* garantissait sa sécurité et où le multilatéralisme était la norme. Entre une Chine « rivale systémique », une Russie belliqueuse et des États-Unis dont l'engagement n'est plus inconditionnel, l'UE est devenue une cible. Les puissances extérieures ont compris que notre centre de gravité le plus faible résidait dans notre capacité à être divisés.

Le momentum paradoxal : la polycrise comme catalyseur du réveil géopolitique

C'est précisément parce que ce nouveau contexte menace son existence même que l'Union est contrainte de changer de dimension. La polycrise, en exposant crûment nos vulnérabilités, agit comme un puissant révélateur de la futilité de l'action isolée. Elle nous force à passer d'une intégration subie à une souveraineté choisie.

Les avancées les plus spectaculaires de ces dernières années n'ont pas été le fruit d'un long processus planifié, mais des réponses directes et audacieuses à des chocs existentiels :

1. **La souveraineté sanitaire et économique** : Face à la pandémie, l'achat en commun de vaccins et surtout le plan de relance **NextGenerationEU**, avec son endettement commun, constituaient des tabous absolus il y a encore quelques années. Ils sont devenus une évidence lorsque l'alternative était l'effondrement du marché unique.

2. **La souveraineté énergétique et stratégique** : L'invasion de l'Ukraine par la Russie a été un électrochoc. En quelques mois, l'Union a mis en œuvre des sanctions d'une ampleur inédite, s'est engagée sur la voie de l'autonomie énergétique (REPowerEU) et a commencé à penser sa défense de manière plus intégrée.

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1 https://www.lacomeuropeenne.fr/2025/11/03/inspirer-par-jean-monnet-comment-naviguer-la-polycrise-pour-reinventer-la-puissance-europeenne/
2 https://jean-monnet.ch/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/21-06-construction-europeenne-g--grin-cdd-n21.pdf

3. **La souveraineté normative** : Dans un monde numérique dominé par les géants américains et chinois, l'UE impose ses règles (RGPD, DSA, DMA) et se positionne comme le régulateur mondial de référence, protégeant ses citoyens et ses entreprises. C'est « **l'effet Bruxelles** » : une forme de puissance discrète mais immensément influente.

Ces exemples ne sont pas des solutions à des crises ; ils sont les premières briques d'une Union qui apprend à penser et à agir comme une puissance mondiale.

Orientations pour une nouvelle communication stratégique européenne

Pour accompagner et amplifier ce momentum, notre communication doit opérer une mutation copernicienne. Il ne s'agit plus de « justifier » l'Europe, mais d'incarner sa nouvelle ambition :

1. **Passer du narratif de la paix à celui de la protection**. La paix entre les États membres, cet acquis historique fondamental, ne suffit plus à mobiliser. Le nouveau grand récit européen doit être celui de la puissance protectrice. L'UE n'est pas une entité bureaucratique lointaine ; elle est le bouclier qui nous permet de faire face, collectivement, à des forces (climatiques, géopolitiques, économiques) qu'aucun État membre ne pourrait affronter seul. Chaque initiative, du Green Deal à la défense commune, doit être présentée sous cet angle.

2. **Incarner la résilience, pas seulement gérer la crise**. Notre communication est trop souvent réactive, piégée dans le jargon de la gestion de crise. Nous devons au contraire construire un discours proactif de la résilience stratégique. Il faut montrer comment nos investissements dans la transition verte, le numérique et nos chaînes de valeur créent une autonomie durable et un avantage compétitif pour les générations futures.

3. **Faire de la démocratie un avantage offensif**. Face à la montée des régimes autoritaires, cessons de présenter notre modèle démocratique, basé sur le droit et le compromis, comme une faiblesse ou une lenteur. C'est notre plus grand atout. Il est le garant de la stabilité à long terme, de l'innovation et de l'attractivité. Notre communication doit lier explicitement le respect de l'État de droit à notre prospérité et à notre sécurité, à l'interne comme à l'externe.

Michaël Malherbe est Deputy Practice Leader Digital chez Burson Cohn & Wolfe (groupe WPP). Depuis plus de 12 ans, il développe une activité de conseil en communication digitale (stratégies en e-campagne, e-influence et e-réputation) dans les secteurs corporate et institutionnel), précédemment en tant que Fondateur-Associé de l'agence Two4com et Directeur du pôle Digital de l'agence Cohn & Wolfe de 2011 à 2015. Formé à l'Institut d'Études politiques de Strasbourg (2001-2005) et à l'Université Paris I Panthéon Sorbonne dans le master « Communication politique et sociale », il est un spécialiste de la communication de l'Union européenne, intervenant dans les masters « Etudes européennes » de la Sorbonne-Nouvelle, Paris III et « Affaires européennes » de la SorbonneParis IV et précédemment à l'ENA et à SciencesPo Lille. Depuis 2007, il anime le blog : « Décrypter la communication européenne » et intervient régulièrement dans la presse et les médias, des débats publics et des colloques.

De la somme des solutions à l'architecte de la résilience

La polycrise a brisé le rythme confortable de l'intégration par crises successives. Elle nous place devant un choix radical : **l'effacement progressif ou un saut qualitatif** vers une union de la puissance et de la souveraineté. Ce n'est plus un « moment Monnet », c'est un « moment constituant » où notre capacité d'action collective est la seule réponse à la brutalité du monde.

L'Europe ne sera plus seulement la somme des solutions à ses crises. Elle doit devenir **l'architecte de sa propre résilience dans un monde qui ne l'attendra pas**. C'est ce projet, exigeant mais vital, que notre communication stratégique doit désormais porter avec clarté, audace et conviction.

L'Europe au pied du mur :
pour une communication de puissance et de projet[1]

Par Michaël Malherbe

L'urgence d'un débat rationnel face au choc des réalités : Le monde qui a présidé à la dernière législature européenne a volé en éclats. Entre la brutalisation des relations internationales, en commençant par notre allié transatlantique traditionnel, la guerre de l'information qui fait rage sur nos écrans et le risque patent d'un déclassement économique et technologique, l'Union européenne fait face à un « choc des réalités » d'une violence inouïe. Comme le disait Raymond Aron, « nous croyons dans la victoire des démocraties, à condition qu'elles le veuillent ». La question qui nous est posée aujourd'hui est simple : le voulons-nous vraiment ?

La communication européenne ne peut plus se contenter d'accompagner les décisions. Elle doit devenir le fer de lance d'un sursaut collectif. Elle doit forger la conscience et la volonté d'agir. Inspiré par les débats stimulants des Rencontres Économiques d'Aix, ce papier se propose de tracer une voie, en distinguant les acquis du passé, les requis du présent et les indécis de l'avenir. Notre boussole : la réfutabilité des faits chère à Karl Popper, pour sortir des incantations et affronter le réel.

Les « acquis » : un héritage à dépasser

Chaque élection européenne a marqué une étape dans la construction d'une communication politique continentale. Cet héritage est notre point de départ, mais il est aujourd'hui insuffisant.

- **2009 : l'émergence d'un espace public européen**. La communication a commencé à traiter l'UE comme un ensemble, posant les premières pierres d'un débat transnational.
- **2014 : la personnalisation d'une scène politique**. Le processus des *Spitzenkandidaten* a donné un visage à l'alternative politique européenne, transformant une abstraction institutionnelle en une compétition incarnée.
- **2019 : la mobilisation par la polarisation**. Face à la montée des populismes, la communication a adopté un ton « partial », opposant pro-Européens et europhobes. Cette stratégie a payé en termes de participation, mais a aussi contribué à fracturer le débat.
- **2024 : la prise de conscience des « communs européens »**. La campagne a mis en lumière ce que nous partageons et devons protéger ensemble : notre sécurité, notre modèle social, nos transitions climatique et numérique.

Ces acquis sont réels, mais ils correspondent à un monde révolu. L'heure n'est plus à la simple défense d'un modèle, mais à la construction active de notre survie et de notre prospérité dans un environnement hostile.

Les « requis » : forger un récit de puissance et de projet

Le mandat qui s'ouvre exige un changement radical de paradigme communicationnel. Il ne s'agit plus de convaincre de l'utilité de l'Europe, mais de mobiliser pour la rendre puissante. Il faut passer à une « Europe de faire ».

A. Communaliser les cultures publiques nationales

Notre plus grande vulnérabilité est la fragmentation de nos espaces publics, exploitée par la désinformation. La Russie, comme le souligne Tidhar Wald, obtient en Moldavie par l'influence ce qu'elle ne peut obtenir par les armes en Ukraine.

La communication européenne doit donc :

- **Créer des ponts, pas seulement des bulles** : contrer la polarisation algorithmique en créant des formats et des espaces de débats transnationaux qui ne se contentent pas de renforcer les convictions, mais qui exposent à l'altérité.
- **Armer l'esprit critique** : le combat n'est pas tant dans la fabrique de l'opinion que dans la définition de l'agenda. La communication doit éduquer aux mécanismes de la désinformation, promouvoir la vérifiabilité des faits et résister à la dictature de l'émotion et de l'accélération.
- **Incarner la confiance** : face à une science devenue « invisible », la communication doit porter la voix de la recherche collective, du *vetting* des connaissances, avec clarté et émotion, en s'appuyant sur des relais de confiance.

B. Mieux intégrer et gérer les biens communs publics européens

La souveraineté se mesure à notre capacité d'agir. La communication doit rendre tangibles les projets qui la construisent, en sortant de la « langue de coton » technocratique :

- **Raconter le projet, pas seulement la norme** : l'Europe souffre d'une approche par le droit et la norme, conséquence de sa construction (Nicolas Dufourcq). La communication doit changer de focale : parler de l'Union des marchés de capitaux non pas comme d'une directive, mais comme du moyen de financer nos futurs champions technologiques et la transition écologique.

63

1 https://www.lacomeuropeenne.fr/2025/10/27/leurope-au-pied-du-mur-pour-une-communication-de-puissance-et-de-projet/

- **Faire du marché unique une épopée quotidienne** : Enrico Letta le rappelle, nous sommes des « colons » numériques des États-Unis. La communication doit illustrer ce que signifie un marché unique réellement intégré pour les services, les données, l'énergie. C'est un combat pour notre prospérité.

- **Assumer le langage de la compétitivité** : L'Europe a été construite pour les consommateurs (Patrick Pouyanné). Il est temps de parler aux producteurs, aux innovateurs. Le rapport Draghi est un électrochoc. La communication doit en être l'amplificateur, en martelant la nécessité d'investir, de protéger nos industries et d'alléger le fardeau réglementaire qui freine l'innovation.

C. Maîtriser notre destin commun stratégique

La « fin du système atlantique » (Hubert Védrine) et l'incertitude sur l'allié américain nous obligent à penser par nous-mêmes. La communication doit traduire cette nécessité en une ambition politique.

- **Passer de la dépendance à l'alliance choisie** : Le but n'est pas de s'isoler, mais d'agir pour que l'Europe devienne un partenaire indispensable et non un vassal. Comme le dit Jean-Noël Barrot, « cessons de demander ce que les USA vont faire pour l'Europe, mais agissons pour l'Europe ». La communication doit porter ce message de responsabilité et de force tranquille.

- **Faire de l'autonomie stratégique un projet de société** : La défense ne doit plus être un sujet tabou. La communication doit expliquer pourquoi investir dans notre base industrielle et technologique de défense (Sébastien Lecornu, Florence Parly), c'est créer des emplois qualifiés, maîtriser des technologies duales et garantir notre sécurité. Il faut populariser l'idée d'une « souveraineté augmentée » (Emmanuel Chiva).

- **Construire un multilatéralisme d'action** : Face à un monde fragmenté, l'Europe peut être l'anti-dote à la brutalisation du monde. Notre communication doit promouvoir des coalitions de volontaires, sujet par sujet (climat, santé, régulation numérique), montrant que notre puissance n'est pas hégémonique mais coopérative.

Les « indécis » : naviguer entre les contraintes et les opportunités

Le succès de cette nouvelle communication dépendra de sa capacité à gérer trois variables majeures.

- **La majorité parlementaire** : Quelle que soit les évolutions partisanes dans les combinaisons parlementaires plus ouvertes, la réalité géopolitique et économique s'imposera. Une coalition des centres sera plus réceptive au discours de puissance et de compétitivité. Une coalition des droites contreviendrait à l'histoire de la construction européenne jusqu'à aujourd'hui mais pourrait être plus iconoclaste sur les transitions. La communication devra être agile, trouvant les arguments qui résonnent avec la majorité en place sans trahir la vision d'ensemble.

- **La fiction des blocs** : Le « bloc occidental » est une fiction (Jean Pisani-Ferry), tout comme le « Sud global ». Cette fragmentation est une chance. Notre communication doit cesser de raisonner en termes de blocs figés pour adopter une approche chirurgicale, s'adressant à des partenaires spécifiques sur des intérêts communs.

- **La langue (de bois, de coton, d'or)** : Le plus grand danger est de retomber dans nos travers. La *langue de bois* des non-dits, la *langue de coton* de la technocratie et la *langue d'or* des promesses sans lendemain sont les poisons de la confiance. La nouvelle communication européenne doit être une langue de fer : celle de la lucidité sur les menaces, de la volonté dans l'action et de la clarté sur les objectifs.

De la communication d'accompagnement à la communication de combat

« Soit l'Europe fait face, soit elle s'efface », prévient Florence Parly. Le temps de « Celui qui n'a pas le goût de l'absolu se contente d'une médiocrité tranquille » (une citation de Paul Cézanne, mentionné par Villeroy de Galhau) est terminé. La communication institutionnelle ne peut plus se permettre d'être un simple service après-vente des décisions bruxelloises.

Elle doit devenir une fonction stratégique de premier plan, avec une triple mission :

1. **Avertir plutôt que divertir** : protéger le réel dans un monde de post-réalité et de diversion généralisée.

2. **Rassembler plutôt que fragmenter** : construire une « fierté collective » (Philippe Wahl) autour de projets concrets qui répondent aux angoisses de nos concitoyens (climat, sécurité, emploi).

3. **Armer plutôt que subir** : donner aux citoyens, aux entreprises et aux décideurs les clés de lecture et la volonté nécessaires pour affronter un monde où le rapport de force est redevenu central.

La tâche de la communication européenne pour les cinq ans à venir n'est plus de commenter le match. C'est d'aider l'équipe à le gagner. Il ne s'agit plus de communiquer *sur* l'Europe, mais de forger, *par* la communication, la volonté politique d'une Europe-puissance.

The Transparency Trap:
Communicating Sustainability in the Age of Green Claims and CSRD

By Giuseppe Macca & Claudio Camarda

Ask a CEO how well their company is doing, and you'll get a confident answer. Ask how sustainable it is — and the story might suddenly change.

Sustainability is no longer a branding exercise or a moral choice — it has become a matter of business continuity. For large corporations and small enterprises alike, environmental and social responsibility now determine long-term competitiveness and access to markets. Investors, regulators, and customers increasingly look beyond financial results, seeking evidence that companies can operate responsibly in a world of shrinking resources, shifting regulations, and rising expectations. In this context, sustainability is not just about reputation; it is about resilience.

Understanding and managing **Environmental, Social and Governance** (ESG) risk has become a strategic imperative. ESG factors nowadays influence not only a company's reputation, but also its commercial strategy, creditworthiness, and operational stability. A growing number of crises — from supply chain disruptions to regulatory sanctions and social backlash — have revealed how unaddressed ESG risks can quickly turn into financial losses. Conversely, companies that integrate ESG analysis into their strategic planning are better equipped to anticipate market shifts, attract investors, and maintain business continuity in turbulent times.

For years, the greatest challenge in sustainability has not been commitment, but measurement. Companies have increasingly acknowledged the importance of integrating environmental, social, and governance principles into their strategies, yet struggled to quantify them in a consistent and comparable way. A multitude of international standards — such as the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) — provided useful frameworks, but each with different metrics, objectives, and levels of detail. Most focused on external impact — how a company affects the world — rather than on internal risk and financial implications. This lack of uniformity made it difficult to assess performance, anticipate vulnerabilities, or translate ESG efforts into credible strategic data.

It is precisely to close this gap that the European Union has introduced a new directive redefining how companies report, evaluate, and manage sustainability.

The **Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD)** marks a turning point in the way companies approach sustainability. Adopted by the European Parliament and the Council in **December 2022** and formally entered into force on **5 January 2023** (*Directive (EU) 2022/2464*), it updates and replaces the previous **Non-Financial Reporting Directive (NFRD)**. For the first time, European regulation places financial relevance and impact on the same level, introducing the principle of *double materiality*: how a company affects the environment and society, and how environmental and social issues, in turn, affect its financial performance.

Beyond redefining what must be measured, the CSRD also changes who must comply and how. **Reporting is no longer voluntary or reputational — it is a legal obligation**, subject to audit and external assurance. This shift transforms sustainability from a communication exercise into an integrated dimension of corporate strategy, risk management, and business continuity.

Who the CSRD originally was supposed to involve:

When first promulgated, the CSRD outlined a gradual implementation plan, extending its reach across the European corporate landscape over several years. The intention was clear: to bring sustainability reporting to the same level of rigour and comparability as financial disclosure.

Initially, the directive targeted **Large Public-Interest Entities (PIEs)** — listed companies, banks, and insurance firms already reporting under the NFRD — which would apply the new rules for financial years starting on or after **January 1, 2024**, with their first CSRD-compliant reports expected in 2025.

The scope was then set to expand to **all other large companies** meeting at least two of the following criteria:

- net turnover above €50 million,
- balance sheet total above €25 million,
- more than 250 employees on average during the year.

These companies were originally due to report from financial years beginning **January 1, 2025**.

Next in line were **listed small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)** — excluding micro-undertakings — expected to follow simplified reporting standards for financial years starting **January 1, 2026**.

Finally, **non-EU companies** with substantial business in Europe — generating over €150 million in EU turnover and operating either through a large EU subsidiary or a branch with more than €40 million turnover — would come under the directive from **January 1, 2028**.

This was the original roadmap: a stepwise extension designed to integrate sustainability reporting into Europe's economic

DNA. But with the **"stop the clock" decision**, almost everything has changed.

It was estimated that the CSRD would have increased the number of companies required to report on sustainability from around 11,000 under the NFRD to nearly 50,000.

The «Stop the Clock» Directive:

The «**stop the clock**» is a recent development, part of a broader «Omnibus Simplification Package» proposed by the European Commission. It's a directive specifically designed to **postpone the application dates of CSRD reporting requirements for certain waves of companies**.

Specifically, the «Stop the Clock» Directive, formally approved and published in the Official Journal of the EU on April 16, 2025, and entered into force on April 17, 2025, has the following key implications for CSRD:

- **Delay for «Wave 2» Companies**: Large companies and parent companies of large groups that were initially due to start reporting for financial years beginning on or after January 1, 2025, now have their reporting delayed by **two years**. They will instead report for financial years starting on or after **January 1, 2027** (reports published in 2028).

- **Delay for «Wave 3» Companies (Listed SMEs)**: Listed SMEs, small and non-complex credit institutions, and captive insurance undertakings that were originally set to report for financial years beginning on or after January 1, 2026, also see a **two-year postponement**. Their reporting will now commence for financial years starting on or after **January 1, 2028** (reports published in 2029).

- **No Change for «Wave 1» and Non-EU Companies**: The «stop the clock» **does not affect** the reporting timelines for the first wave of companies (large public-interest entities already subject to NFRD), who began reporting for the 2024 financial year (reports in 2025). Similarly, the application date for non-EU companies (from 2028 for reports in 2029) remains unchanged.
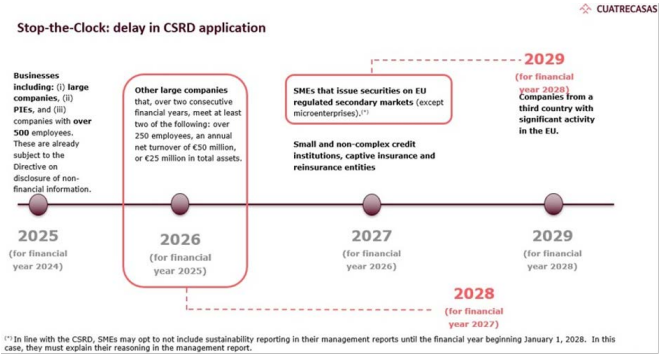
The rationale behind this «stop the clock» mechanism is to provide companies with more time to prepare for the comprehensive and detailed CSRD requirements, especially given the complexity of the European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS) that underpin the CSRD. It also allows the EU to further

review and potentially simplify the reporting standards (ESRS) as part of the ongoing Omnibus package negotiations, ensuring that the requirements are proportionate and effective without unduly burdening businesses. Member States have until December 31, 2025, to transpose this «stop the clock» directive into their national laws.

Why is CSRD so important?

One of the most powerful aspects of the CSRD lies in its subtle *nudging effect*. Even though not all companies are immediately required to report, the directive creates a cascading dynamic across supply chains. Large corporations, now obliged to disclose their sustainability data, inevitably demand similar transparency from their suppliers. This "trickle-down compliance" is pushing thousands of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to start mapping, measuring, and improving their ESG performance — often for the first time.

Beyond compliance, this process acts as a form of capacity building. Many SMEs are learning to collect and analyze sustainability data, formalize governance structures, and innovate their internal processes **because** they must measure them. In this sense, regulation becomes an unexpected driver of modernization.
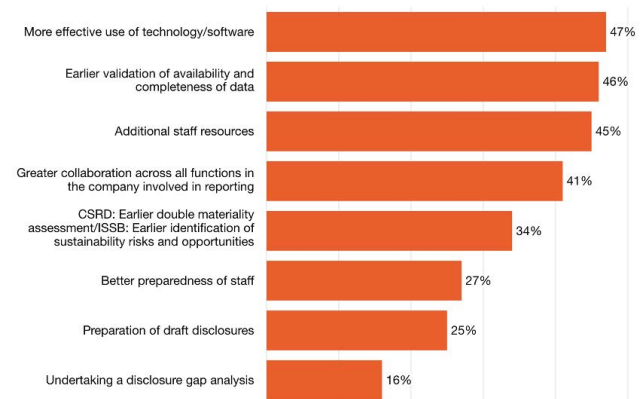
This learning curve is also reflected in how companies perceive the reporting process itself. According to PwC's *Global Sustainability Reporting Survey 2025*, nearly half of respondents believe that better use of technology (47%), earlier data validation (46%), and additional staff resources (45%) would have significantly improved their reporting outcomes. These findings underline how the CSRD is not only a compliance requirement but also a catalyst for digital transformation and organizational collaboration — encouraging firms to build more robust data systems and cross-functional teams

To guide this transformation, the EU introduced the **European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS)** — a comprehensive framework covering environmental, social, and governance topics. While detailed and ambitious, the ESRS are currently under revision to simplify requirements and improve accessibility, particularly for smaller enterprises. Complementing them, the **Voluntary Standard for SMEs (VSME)** was developed as a lighter reporting framework, offering a pragmatic path for companies that want to align with CSRD principles without facing the same level of complexity, and officially presented via a Recommendation by the EU Commission as a tool for ESG data management along supply chains involving SMEs.

Improving the process

Q: In retrospect, which of the following actions, if any, would have improved the reporting process for your company?

(Select all that apply)

Action	%
More effective use of technology/software	47%
Earlier validation of availability and completeness of data	46%
Additional staff resources	45%
Greater collaboration across all functions in the company involved in reporting	41%
CSRD: Earlier double materiality assessment/ISSB: Earlier identification of sustainability risks and opportunities	34%
Better preparedness of staff	27%
Preparation of draft disclosures	25%
Undertaking a disclosure gap analysis	16%

Note: Asked only of respondents whose company has reported in line with CSRD/ISSB. Excluding 'Other' and 'None of the above' responses.
Source: PwC's Global Sustainability Reporting Survey 2025

Mapping Europe's Sustainability Reporters

Under the previous Non-Financial Reporting Directive (NFRD), only about **11,000 to 17,000 companies** were required to disclose non-financial information. Under the original CSRD timeline, that number **would have risen** to nearly **50,000** across the European Union — more than a four-fold increase.
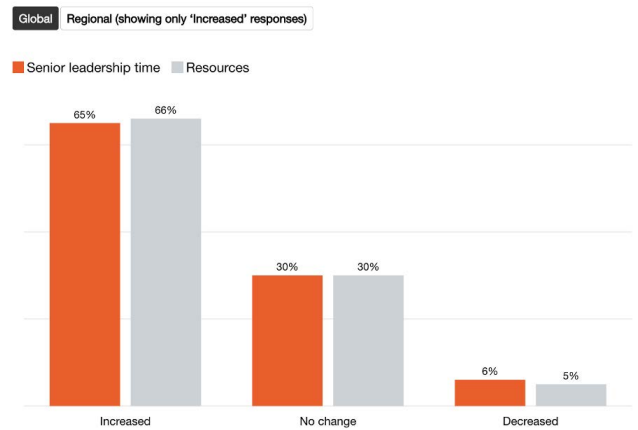
The vast majority, roughly **40,000 firms, would have been** EU-based, while around **10,000 non-EU companies would also have fallen** within scope due to their significant activity in the European market. Among them, an estimated **3,000 U.S. corporations were expected to comply** with CSRD disclosure standards. Nationally, the impact **would have varied: Germany alone was estimated to have between 13,000 and 15,000** companies subject to the new obligations.

This expanded scope **was intended to reshape** the European business landscape, turning sustainability reporting from a niche exercise into a universal corporate practice. The shift **was already beginning to show** in company behavior. According to **PwC's Global Sustainability Reporting Survey (2025), 66%** of firms reported increasing resources devoted to sustainability reporting, and **65%** said their senior leadership was dedicating more time to it. In other words, even before full enforcement, sustainability reporting **was becoming** part of the management agenda.

Producing a report, however, **would not have been** enough. Its strategic value **depends** — and **will continue to depend** — on how effectively results are communicated and understood. Data visualization, infographics, and concise metrics **are expected to become** essential tools for transforming complex ESG data into actionable business intelligence.

Increased investment in sustainability reporting

Q: Over the last year, how has the amount of resources and the time your company's senior leadership devote to sustainability reporting changed?

Global | Regional (showing only 'Increased' responses)

■ Senior leadership time   ■ Resources

	Increased	No change	Decreased
Senior leadership time	65%	30%	6%
Resources	66%	30%	5%

Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.
Source: PwC's Global Sustainability Reporting Survey 2025

These figures suggest something important: even though the "stop-the-clock" decision has formally postponed the timeline, the momentum of the CSRD continues to reshape corporate behaviour. The directive has already triggered a process of internal adaptation that companies are unlikely to reverse.

A sign of this inertia came from the business community itself. In early 2024, several major firms — including Nestlé, Mars, Unilever, Ferrero, and others — signed an open letter urging the European Commission to ensure that the omnibus approach would not reopen the agreed CSRD text or undermine legal certainty. The companies stressed that they had "already invested significant resources in preparing for and meeting the new requirements", reaffirming their commitment to apply the standards even in a changing regulatory environment (Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, 2024).

Communicating Sustainability Beyond Compliance

The success of the CSRD will depend not only on companies' ability to comply, but also on institutions' capacity to communicate. Local and regional authorities play a crucial role in translating the language of sustainability reporting into messages that resonate with businesses and citizens alike. Their task goes beyond informing companies about legal obligations: it involves spreading a culture of sustainability across the entire value chain — from raw material producers to end consumers.

When public institutions communicate effectively, they turn regulation into education. By explaining the rationale behind the CSRD — **transparency, accountability, and long-term value** — they help smaller enterprises understand why these principles matter, not just how to comply with them. At the same time, informed citizens become active participants in this transformation. A consumer who understands how sustainability data reflects real business behavior becomes a driver of change, rewarding companies that act responsibly and pressing others to follow suit.

Corporate Communication as a Strategic Asset

For companies, communicating the results of a sustainability report is not a formality — it is a strategic act. Transparency builds credibility: when businesses openly share both achievements and shortcomings, they demonstrate genuine commitment rather than greenwashing. This honesty reinforces trust among investors, employees, customers, and local communities, turning data into dialogue.

Effective communication transforms static reports into living tools for engagement. For investors, clear ESG information supports better financial decisions and access to sustainable capital. For employees, it creates purpose and pride, showing how individual actions contribute to collective goals. For customers, it strengthens brand loyalty in a marketplace increasingly shaped by values. And for policymakers, it signals compliance, reliability, and foresight.

Beyond reputation, communication drives internal change. When sustainability results are shared across departments, they foster awareness, accountability, and continuous improvement. Reporting becomes a mirror that reflects progress, highlights risks, and guides strategic alignment. In this way, communication is not an afterthought — it is the connective tissue linking sustainability, governance, and competitiveness.

In an age of information overload, how sustainability results are communicated is almost as important as the results themselves. Long, data-heavy reports risk alienating the very audiences they are meant to engage. Visual communication — through **infographics, images, and statistics** — has therefore become an essential complement to narrative reporting. This is a crucial point for the public authorities (governments, institutions, international organisations) as well as fpr transnational independent platforms, academic world, media and research/analysis centres.

Well-crafted visuals make complexity comprehensible. They distil vast datasets on emissions, resource use, or social impact into clear, accessible insights that can be understood beyond technical or linguistic boundaries. Infographics highlight what matters most — trends, results, and achievements — enabling readers to grasp key messages at a glance. At the same time, visual storytelling increases engagement and retention: people process images tens of thousands of times faster than text, and are far more likely to remember a striking chart or illustration than a paragraph of figures.

Beyond clarity and engagement, visual data also enhances **credibility**. When numbers are presented transparently and supported by visuals, they reinforce authenticity and help counter accusations of greenwashing. Charts, timelines, and performance dashboards show measurable progress rather than rhetorical ambition, making sustainability communication both verifiable and persuasive.

Finally, **visuals expand reach**. Infographics and images are easily shareable on digital platforms, allowing sustainability messages to circulate far beyond the confines of an annual report. They transform dense corporate disclosure into an accessible, memorable narrative — one that speaks not only to analysts and regulators, but also to employees, communities, and consumers.

The Risks of Miscommunication

As sustainability communication enters the mainstream, the margin for error is shrinking. Misleading, exaggerated, or poorly substantiated claims can quickly damage a company's credibility and trigger regulatory scrutiny. In Italy, for example, **Shein** was fined for deceptive advertising related to its environmental commitments — a sign that authorities are treating "green" misstatements as compliance failures, not marketing mishaps.

At the European level, the proposed **Green Claims Directive** was designed to set clear rules for environmental statements, requiring companies to back any sustainability claim with verifiable data, transparent methodology, and third-party validation. Yet the directive remains under discussion, and its future is uncertain: in June 2025, the European Commission announced its intention to withdraw the proposal, citing concerns over administrative burden, particularly for smaller firms. https://www.lw.com/en/insights/european-commission-announces-intention-to-withdraw-eu-green-claims-directive-proposal?

Even in the absence of this regulation, the direction of travel is clear. Companies are already exposed to penalties under broader consumer protection frameworks, such as the **Empowering Consumers for the Green Transition Directive**, expected to apply from 2026. In this evolving landscape, communication must mirror substance — grounded in measurable progress and credible evidence. Ultimately, the **CSRD** and the prospective green-claims legislation represent two complementary fronts of the same transformation: one ensures that companies report accurately, the other that they speak truthfully.

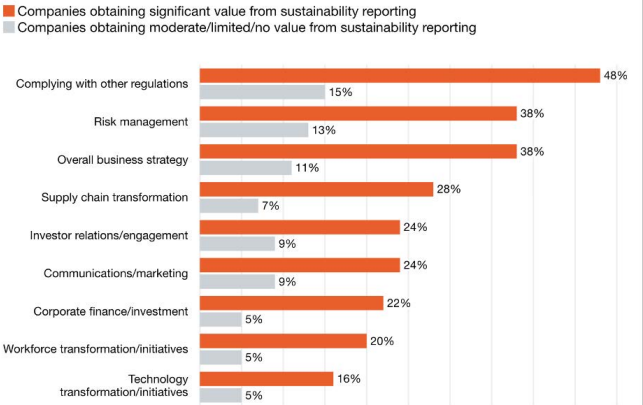## From Compliance to Competence: The Strategic Role of ESG Advisory

As the CSRD reshapes corporate and institutional practices, the ability to interpret, communicate, and strategically use sustainability data has become a decisive factor of competitiveness. The new reporting requirements are not simply a regulatory burden — they represent an opportunity to turn ESG information into actionable intelligence.

Data from **PwC's Global Sustainability Reporting Survey (2025)** confirm this shift: **48%** of companies that have already implemented CSRD or ISSB frameworks report obtaining significant strategic value from sustainability reporting — not only for regulatory compliance, but also for **risk management (38%)**, **overall business strategy (38%)**, and **supply chain transformation (28%)**. These figures clearly show that ESG data management, when integrated across departments, fuels better decisions, strengthens governance, and unlocks innovation.

Using sustainability data throughout the business unlocks more value

Q: To what extent has your company leveraged the data and insights collected for (CSRD/ISSB) reporting to inform the following business decisions or strategies?

(Showing only to 'To a very large extent' and 'To a large extent' answers)

■ Companies obtaining significant value from sustainability reporting
▨ Companies obtaining moderate/limited/no value from sustainability reporting

	Significant value	Moderate/limited/no value
Complying with other regulations	48%	15%
Risk management	38%	13%
Overall business strategy	38%	11%
Supply chain transformation	28%	7%
Investor relations/engagement	24%	9%
Communications/marketing	24%	9%
Corporate finance/investment	22%	5%
Workforce transformation/initiatives	20%	5%
Technology transformation/initiatives	16%	5%

Note: Asked of respondents whose company has reported in line with CSRD/ISSB.
Source: PwC's Global Sustainability Reporting Survey 2025

This is where **specialized advisory plays a crucial role**. Effective sustainability communication and reporting require multidisciplinary expertise — from understanding evolving EU standards to translating technical data into meaningful narratives for investors, policymakers, and the public. Institutions, too, benefit from expert support in designing communication strategies capable of spreading CSRD principles beyond compliance, fostering awareness across territories and production systems.
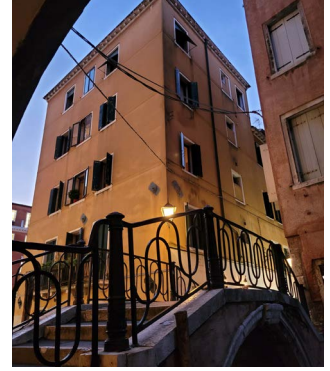
At **Ethics4Growth**, we work at this intersection of knowledge and practice. Our experience combines sustainability reporting, ESG strategy, and impact communication — helping both companies and public bodies transform regulatory obligations into strategic value, balancing the approach with the cultural background of the specific economic context of operations. Assessing biases and misperceptions is crucial to achieve effective results in such a complex and uncertain field. In a landscape where transparency is the new currency, expertise is not a luxury: it is the foundation of credibility, resilience, and long-term growth.

When private and public sector work together beyond compliance, the probability of achieving actual change and pursuing sustainability goals becomes more probable.

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Between Interference and Response:
How FIMI Defenders Safeguard Elections Against Information Manipulation and Foreign Threats

By Sophie Sacilotto & Malak Aaltaeb

Introduction

The problems of disinformation and foreign interference we face today have been around for more than 100 years. The concept of disinformation was first formalised in the 1920s by the KGB under the Soviet Union. Having gone by a variety of names since, the term Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) was introduced by the European Union's External Action Service (EEAS) in 2023 in the 1st EEAS Report on Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference Threats[1]. Since then, many other global organisations have followed suit, including NATO, which published the first version of the Allied Joint Doctrine for Strategic Communications (AJP-10) in March 2023[2]. While the term has evolved, the underlying problem has largely remained consistent, especially with the introduction of AI as a tool of FIMI perpetration and defence in the early 2020s.

As democratic countries seek ways to address the growing issue of FIMI aided by AI, Debunk.org, along with industry colleagues, has worked since 2017 to develop a range of tools, initiatives, and tactics to support this effort. Recently, in the fall of 2024, Debunk.org and other European organisations created the Information Sharing and Analysis Centre at the EEAS Conference on Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI-ISAC)[3], as a joint effort to further counter FIMI.

Starting in the Fall of 2024, the FIMI Defenders for Election Integrity project (FDEI)[4], led by Debunk.org, was launched, creating a community of FIMI defenders, including a consortium of 10 EU organisations, to create a standardised process, scalable data models, and interoperable tools to effectively monitor and respond to FIMI prior to and during elections. Debunk.org is an independent technology think tank and non-governmental organization that researches disinformation and runs educational media literacy campaigns in over 20 countries globally.

During the first year of this project and under Debunk's leadership, the FDEI community has worked collectively to monitor and respond to FIMI in four European elections - Germany's Federal Election in February, Poland's Presidential Election in May, Moldova's Parliamentary Election in September, and Czechia's Parliamentary Election in October. In the long term, the FDEI project has the capacity to contribute positively to continued developments countering FIMI, including most recently the European Democracy Shield Initiative[5].

Based on this work, this article provides a brief overview of what the FDEI has accomplished and the information it can offer on the role AI has played in amplifying the threat FIMI poses to democracies. **Using a comparative analysis structure and drawing on the four European elections monitored this year, this article will address three questions:**

1. How does FIMI challenge or undermine democratic systems and values?
2. How has AI exacerbated this threat?
3. What countermeasures have proven effective?

FIMI's Challenge to Democratic Systems

The EEAS defines Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) as "*a mostly non-illegal pattern of behavior that threatens or has the potential to negatively impact values, procedures, and political processes. Such activity is manipulative in character, conducted in an intentional and coordinated manner. Actors of such activity can be state or non-state actors, including their proxies inside and outside of their own territory.*"[6] The term was introduced to provide more clarity on disinformation, what it means, and the actions it entails, underscoring the threat it can pose beyond borders.

1   https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/1st-eeas-report-foreign-information-manipulation-and-interference-threats_en
2   https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/allied-joint-doctrine-for-strategic-communications-ajp-10
3   https://fimi-isac.org/
4   https://www.debunk.org/projects/fimi-defenders-for-election-integrity
5   https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_25_2660&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1763407170223783&usg=AOvVaw3USV-nRnA5VVoxGkAytdb7
6   https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/1st-eeas-report-foreign-information-manipulation-and-interference-threats_en

In the 2024 3rd EEAS Report on Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference Threats, elections were identified as a key target for FIMI in that year, as over half of the world participated in elections[7]. 42 Russian FIMI attempts were recorded in the June 2024 European Elections alone, with 88% of detected FIMI activity occurring on X[8]. On average, it is estimated that disinformation costs the global economy 78 billion euros annually, as it continues to comprise an integral part of security risk and military operations[9].

In 2025, there has been an increase in the perpetration of overt hybrid attacks, especially those targeting EU and NATO countries, as Russia's drone interference and sabotage campaigns continue to be paired with FIMI attacks. This increase is in addition to the large-scale FIMI operations identified by the FDEI project targeting Germany[10], Poland[11], and Moldova[12], many of which work to target Ukraine simultaneously. These operations include Operation Doppelganger[13] and Operation Storm 1516[14].

The risks posed by these FIMI operations in the short and long term are high and unlikely to diminish. **Key risks presented by these operations include:**

| Key Risks	Description	Example
Erosion of Institutional Authority	Through the weaponisation of narratives that portray governments and international institutions such as the EU and NATO as 'weak' or 'failing,' the aim is to diminish their authority and credibility as sources of information. This is particularly problematic in the context of an election, as when governments report on FIMI, electoral fraud, or illegal activities, a population conditioned to see the state as 'weak' or 'failing' is less likely to believe such reports.	During the Polish election, a Meta ad campaign targeted Polish audiences with messages discrediting the far right while appearing to support Rafał Trzaskowski[15]. The operation used two Facebook pages — Wiesz Jak Nie Jest ("You Know How It Isn't") and Stół Dorosłych ("Adult Table"). NASK flagged the campaign as a "potential foreign-funded attempt to interfere in the Polish elections," suggesting it might be a provocation designed to undermine Trzaskowski or destabilize the pre-election environment. NASK reported the activity to Meta, which rejected the findings, though the pages were later removed for reasons not officially stated. Attempts were made to discredit NASK's report at the time, and it took subsequent investigations by other organizations to validate the campaign's foreign origins and illegitimate nature.
Erosion of Public Trust	Through the weaponisation of narratives that portray governments and international institutions such as the EU and NATO as 'weak' or 'failing,' the aim is to diminish their authority and credibility as sources of information. This is particularly problematic in the context of an election, as when governments report on FIMI, electoral fraud, or illegal activities, a population conditioned to see the state as 'weak' or 'failing' is less likely to believe such reports.	A prime example of the risk comes from the September Moldova election, where the PAS Party and President Sandu are both targeted extensively over their support for the European Union and Moldova's accession to it[16]. FIMI campaigns during the election aimed to sow doubt in the value of the Union and local politicians who support it by claiming that they perpetrate the same electoral violations that Russia is accused of, including election interference, corruption, and even that they will cause war in Molvoda should it accede to the EU.
Increased Political Polarisation	Through the weaponisation of narratives that portray governments and institutions as corrupt, hypocritical, and undemocratic, FIMI campaigns work to sow doubt in the value of the Union and the reliability of those politicians who support both it and democratic values. The goal is to cultivate cynicism and disillusionment among voters, which can lead to a decline in political participation and voter turnout over time. In the long term, this can result in the disengagement of the electorate, making them more susceptible to manipulation.	Political polarisation is often inflamed by narratives that target the EU, claiming it is the cause of financial decline, especially in rural areas[17]. These narratives attempt to exacerbate a lack of local understanding of global financial trends and the EU's internal mechanisms, blaming rising prices on EU policy, including the Green policy.

This creates a permissive environment in which threats to electoral integrity can be dismissed by the public, making them more difficult to counter effectively.

7   https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/3rd-eeas-report-foreign-information-manipulation-and-interference-threats-0_en
8   https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/3rd-eeas-report-foreign-information-manipulation-and-interference-threats-0_en
9   https://www.zdnet.com/
10 https://alliance4europe.eu/storm-1516-german-elections
11 https://alliance4europe.eu/doppelganger-polish-presidential-p2
12 https://alliance4europe.eu/still-marching-online-how-r-fbi-targets-moldovas-elections
13 https://alliance4europe.eu/doppelganger-poland-elections
14 https://alliance4europe.eu/still-marching-online-how-r-fbi-targets-moldovas-elections
15 https://fimi-isac.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/FDEI-POLISH-ELECTION-COUNTRY-REPORT-2025-2.pdf
16 https://fimi-isac.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/FIMI-ISAC-Report_Moldova-Country-Election-Risk-Assessment_20251114.pdf
17 https://fimi-isac.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/FIMI-ISAC-Report_Moldova-Country-Election-Risk-Assessment_20251114.pdf
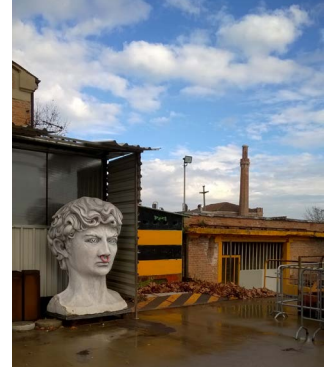
How AI Exacerbates the Issue of FIMI

AI exacerbates the problem of FIMI by serving as a force multiplier, increasing the reach and impact of FIMI campaigns by enabling the fast and efficient generation of inauthentic content.
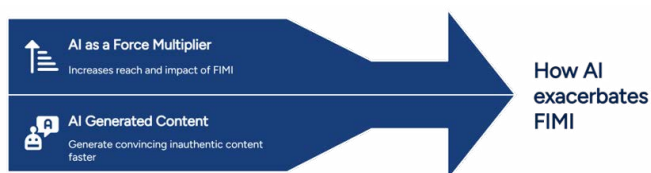
AI as a force multiplier - Moldova case study

The Storm 1516 Operation, Operation Doppelganger, and Operation Overload were identified during the German, Polish, and Moldovan elections to be using AI as a force multiplier.

The Storm 1516 campaign employed an extensive network of both websites and social media accounts, underpinned by mass-produced AI-generated content[18]. The operation has historically focused on Ukraine, working to discredit the country and undermine its supporters throughout Europe, including targeting specific politicians. This pattern specifically persisted in Moldova during the September 2025 Parliamentary elections when President Maia Sandu and her party, the PAS, were vigorously targeted[19].

Working collaboratively to track the Storm 1516 Operations' interference in the Moldovan election, FDEI researchers across several countries identified more than 555 articles and posts on X and Telegram associated with this operation[20].

This analysis formed part of a broader investigation led by colleagues at Alliance4Europe, who have been tracking Storm-1516 since January of 2025. One of the websites verifiably linked to the operation, EUFiles.com, published approximately 200 articles between July 31 and August 5, 2025[21]. When a random sample of 10 articles was tested using AI-detection tools ZeroGPT and GPTinf, both indicated that all ten were likely AI-generated. Investigation revealed that a script was employed to rewrite legitimate reporting - often from reputable outlets such as the BBC or Euronews - to create the illusion of authenticity. Of the 200 articles published during that period,

only one was deemed original. The remaining 199 followed an identical structure and tone, promoting antagonistic narratives and accompanied by text-to-speech videos. This illustrates how AI exponentially increases the capacity and efficiency of FIMI activities. The production of 200 articles in six days, for instance, would be impossible without automation. The scale and velocity of such content generation serve as key indicators of inauthentic activity and coordination.

Our report on the Storm-1516 campaign targeting the September 28 Moldovan parliamentary election was released on September 26—two days before the vote. By this time, two influential X accounts alone had accumulated nearly two million views on posts amplifying anti-LGBTIQ rhetoric aimed at discrediting Maia Sandu.

AI-generated content - Germany Case Study

AI-generated audiovisual content, also called deepfakes, has been employed with increasing regularity during elections as a technique to create images, videos, and audio that appear genuine but are, in fact, manipulated.

In the 2025 German Federal election, generative AI was a popular tool used to create inauthentic audio and video spread widely on social media to impersonate both trusted individuals and institutions and exacerbate divisive narratives, undermining institutional trust.

Prior to the 2025 election, no substantial reports were published on the use of AI as a tool of interference in German elections, with 2 reports published in 2021 and none in 2017 (the years of Germany's last 2 federal elections). In 2025, however, "discussions of AI as a tool of interference and disinformation were identified 88 times in the 100 reports analysed", with only five reports mentioning the use of AI and not specifying a platform.

AI-generated content was used in the German election to flood the information space, increase the scale of campaigns, and mimic the target audience, employing localised references. In February 2025, a DFR Lab report identified the use of AI by Operation Overload and Undercut across nine languages and four platforms, with AI-generated narrative and content masking used by hundreds of videos[22]. 637 original posts of AI-generated videos were identified by FDEI analysts on

18 https://alliance4europe.eu/still-marching-online-how-r-fbi-targets-moldovas-elections
19 https://fimi-isac.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/FIMI-ISAC-Report_Moldova-Country-Election-Risk-Assessment_20251114.pdf
20 https://alliance4europe.eu/still-marching-online-how-r-fbi-targets-moldovas-elections
21 https://alliance4europe.eu/still-marching-online-how-r-fbi-targets-moldovas-elections
22 https://dfrlab.org/2025/02/26/cross-platform-multilingual-russian-operations-promote-pro-kremlin-content/

X, reaching more than 414,000 views. These videos spread a variety of inauthentic narratives, including allegations promoted by the Storm 1516 Operation that Green Party and CDU candidates were perpetrators of abuse.

By far one of the most prominent examples of AI-generated content in the German election was the creation of the AI social media influencer Larissa Wagner, who promoted the Alternative for Germany party (AfD). According to a report by Sky News, the profile of Larissa Wagner was created within the last year, with regular posts made promoting far-right narratives[23]. The same report writes that in one video, Wagner claims to have interned "with the right-wing magazine Compact, which was banned by the German government last year."[24] As of November 13, 2025, Larissa Wagner's Instagram and X accounts remain active with 718 followers on Instagram and 5,732 on X[25].

Countermeasures to Tackle FIMI During Elections, Between

Throughout the FIMI-ISAC work, a range of potential responses and mitigation strategies to counter AI-generated FIMI content have been tested to identify the most effective approaches. It is important to emphasise that response strategies must be tailored to the specific characteristics of each case, particularly the scale and sophistication of the operation. As highlighted in the FDEI's Polish Election Country Report:

"These broader responses included collaborating with media outlets to disseminate warnings about emergent information threats and engaging with governmental bodies to exert pressure on platforms for decisive action against identified risks."[26]
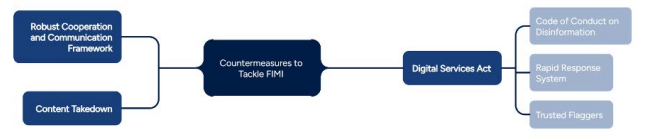
Robust Cooperation and Communication Framework

The FDEI project operates through a robust and cooperative framework, including 10 EU consortium partners, combining their expertise, resources, and strategies to best address FIMI during election periods. This collaboration methodology integrates sophisticated monitoring, analysis, and response capabilities developed by the project partners and includes a dedicated mailing list to facilitate timely communication with responders, government agencies, security services, EU institutions, journalists, and advocacy groups, providing them with concise incident alerts that summarise critical cases.

Without robust communication and cooperation between institutions, the scale and strength of this work will diminish as each organisation attempts to address this issue in its own way, employing its own methods. The European Democracy Shield Initiative, which focuses on "strengthening information integrity in Europe" has the potential to serve as a strong component in boosting cooperation and communication between organisations in this industry, making the response to FIMI stronger and more efficient[27]. Through the advocacy for action combating disinformation (number two on the initiatives list of priorities), the European Democracy Shield has the potential to build on existing defender communities, reuse counter FIMI frameworks and best practices developed by FIMI-ISAC. A strong FIMI Defenders network allows organisations to work closely together to respond to FIMI operations effectively and in real time.

To use the Polish Elections as an example, the FDEI project's FIMI Response Teams (FRTs) brought together 28 organisations, including both international and national entities, in collaboration[28]. Through the FRT collaborative infrastructure, practitioners monitored the Polish information space for threats and promptly flagged identified concerns. Together, they conducted in-depth investigations and compiled evidence into comprehensive incident alerts that were then distributed via a mailing list to responders, government agencies, security services, EU institutions, journalists, and advocacy groups, providing them with concise incident alerts that summarise critical cases during the pre- and on-site monitoring of elections under the project. Additionally, participants engaged in collaborative response actions, leveraging their collective skills as advocates, fact-checkers, and journalists to inform the
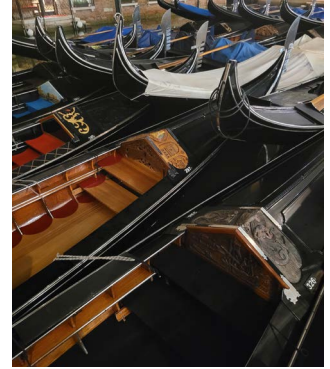
23 https://ghostarchive.org/archive/xYxzY

24 https://ghostarchive.org/archive/xYxzY

25 https://ghostarchive.org/archive/aklvy

26 https://fimi-isac.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/FDEI-POLISH-ELECTION-COUNTRY-REPORT-2025-2.pdf

27 https://epd.eu/what-we-do/policy/european-democracy-shield/

28 https://fimi-isac.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/FDEI-POLISH-ELECTION-COUNTRY-REPORT-2025-2.pdf

public of threats and press platforms to take action. Journalists from Polish media were also present, embedded within the FRT, significantly enhancing the ability to rapidly inform the public of attempts to manipulate them.

The success of this integration is shown in a quote from the Polish Election Country Report: "In total, over 55 Polish-language articles, videos, and audio (radio) were produced about the activities of the FRT, including major Polish media outlets. Furthermore, 40 articles were published in other languages, primarily in English, with the social listening tool Meltwater estimating a reach of at least 550,000 Polish citizens."[29]

Digital Services Act - Between Opportunities & Challenges

Another key tool used to counter the spread of AI generated FIMI is the utilisation of the European Commission's Digital Services Act (DSA) as a part of the project's response methodology[30]. Through the DSA's Rapid Response System (under the Code of Practice on Disinformation[31]) and Trusted Flaggers system[32], civil society is provided direct channels to Meta, TikTok, Google, and Microsoft through which major cases can be presented starting a month prior to the election. Our FIMI Response Teams (FRTs) collaborated with social media platforms to address threats and held them accountable when their actions were deemed inadequate.

Through the use of the European Commission's Code of Conduct Rapid Response System, eight cases were flagged and resulted in social media platforms taking action on four cases (no meaningful actions were taken on 2 cases, and limited, but not adequate actions, were taken on another 2 cases)[33]. While the system has been praised by the Polish Ministry of Digitalisation as a "unique multi-stakeholder format for tackling content contrary to platforms' policies and posing election integrity risks," the OECD has highlighted that citizens continue to lack a proper understanding of the system, creating a critical vulnerability in total society defence against FIMI[34].

Content Takedowns

Removal of harmful FIMI operations content from social media platforms is integral to countering both FIMI and AI-generated FIMI content, removing it from view so it cannot continue to manipulate the perception of the public at large.

While some social media platforms, such as Bluesky, have effectively addressed content flagged to them during election periods, platforms such as X remain difficult to contact and receive meaningful responses from[35]. While the Doppelganger Operation was meaningfully addressed by Bluesky during the Polish Presidential election, elements of the operation flagged to X in late April 2025, including comprehensive examples, resulted in the removal of minimal content and no meaningful action taken to address the platform's vulnerability to the use of "throw-away accounts"[36].

Platforms such as X continue to be difficult to communicate with and respond minimally when reports are provided, documenting harmful ongoing operations. Without adequate and timely responses from social media companies, the efforts of researchers to tackle these issues continue to be hindered[37]. So long as the information remains freely available online without any labeling or content restriction, FIMI can continue to spread unabated.

29 https://fimi-isac.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/FDEI-POLISH-ELECTION-COUNTRY-REPORT-2025-2.pdf

30 https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_25_505

31 https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/code-conduct-disinformation

32 https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/trusted-flaggers-under-dsa

33 https://fimi-isac.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/FDEI-POLISH-ELECTION-COUNTRY-REPORT-2025-2.pdf

34 https://fimi-isac.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/FDEI-POLISH-ELECTION-COUNTRY-REPORT-2025-2.pdf

35 https://fimi-isac.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/FDEI-POLISH-ELECTION-COUNTRY-REPORT-2025-2.pdf

36 https://fimi-isac.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/FDEI-POLISH-ELECTION-COUNTRY-REPORT-2025-2.pdf

37 https://alliance4europe.eu/flagged-and-ignored

Conclusion

FIMI operations have long targeted democratic countries and their institutions. The very nature of democracy is vulnerable to FIMI by the nature of open public dialogue and participation, something that has often been exploited by mal-actors such as Russia. While the foundations of democracy should by no means be changed to protect from these interferences, it is crucial to build a structure that safeguards democratic nations, their institutions, and citizens from interference, preserving the integrity of elections and democracy.

AI will continue to advance and become more skilled and harder to detect. It is why it is so important that a comprehensive, sophisticated infrastructure to address these methods of interference is built now, so it can be effectively used as we move forward. Threat actors move fast, AI develops even faster. As the responders, we cannot allow ourselves to fall behind their pace. The challenges are real, but we have the will, strength, and knowledge to respond to them. If we keep giving individual, scattered efforts, our results will be alike; if we join our focus, we will be much more efficient, and that is obvious in this project more than ever.

The FDEI project aims to contribute to building this framework and to trial a variety of methods to counter FIMI. Data has been gathered from these efforts and will continue to be shared going forward, along with the creation of a comprehensive handbook and training courses to instruct and support different stakeholders on how to monitor elections, as the FDEI project has done throughout 2025.

There are strong structures in place, including the European Commission's Code of Conduct Rapid Response System[38], that must be used to their full potential. In addition to new and expanding structures such as the European Democracy Shield Initiative[39] and Digital Services Act[40] that have the capabilities to make a large impact in the protection of democracy against FIMI.

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38 https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_25_505
39 https://epd.eu/what-we-do/policy/european-democracy-shield/
40 https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/safer-online

Strategic PR in the age of AI[1]

By Stavros Papagianneas

The role of public relations has always been about more than just media coverage. PR is about shaping perception, protecting reputation, and building trust across an increasingly complex stakeholder landscape.

Anno 2025. PR professionals are at the centre of a new transformation that is leading to a significant industry transition. Artificial intelligence, once viewed as a handy support tool for scheduling or drafting press releases, has now become a strategic driver.

Today, AI is a kind of redefining the PR playbook. It is not only helping teams work faster, but also empowering them to work smarter by predicting trends, detecting risks, and providing the insights necessary to advise leaders at the highest level.

Predictive PR

Traditional PR has been some times reactive. When a crisis appears suddenly, a large competitor launches a new campaign, or a journalist posts a critical article, communications teams scramble to respond.

AI is shifting that paradigm. With the ability to analyse millions of data points across news, social media, and consumer behaviour, AI tools can now forecast very quickly what is likely to trend or flare up.

Imagine spotting reputational red flags before they turn into headlines, or identifying a cultural shift in consumer sentiment weeks before competitors react.

Platforms like *Meltwater* are already leveraging predictive analytics to help brands monitor chatter and anticipate crises. What used to take weeks of research and manual scanning can now be done in minutes or even in seconds. For PR leaders, this means less time playing catch-up and more time guiding strategy.

The Storytelling

Another significant advantage AI brings to PR is in storytelling. At its core, PR has always been about connecting with audiences on a human level. Nevertheless, in the digital age, where every scroll competes with thousands of messages, intuition isn't enough.

AI helps communicators discover what stories resonate most. By tracking engagement patterns, sentiment shifts, and influencer activity, AI-powered platforms can highlight not only which messages perform best, but also why.

This allows communications teams to refine pitches, optimise timing, and personalise campaigns to target audiences more precisely than ever before.

The Ethics

However, the rise of AI in PR also raises critical questions. If used with no strategy, AI could easily flood journalists and stakeholders with generic, automated content, leading to a backlash against "robot PR." Worse, AI-generated misinformation or deepfakes could be weaponised, damaging reputations and public trust. A method used systematically by Russian and Chinese bots to attack the West and free and democratic societies. I describe those dangerous propaganda methods in my books Embracing Chaos[2] and Rebranding Europe 2024[3].

The challenge for communicators is clear. On one hand, we have interesting leverage from AI for insights, speed and efficiency. On the other hand, we need to keep the human voice at the core of storytelling.

Authenticity remains irreplaceable and is paramount. Stakeholders want to know that behind the data and algorithms, there are real people accountable for what an organisation says and does.

1   https://www.stpcommunications.com/post/strategic-pr-in-the-age-of-ai
2   https://www.amazon.de/-/en/Embracing-Chaos-Stavros-Papagianneas/dp/9464365145/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&dib_
     tag=se&dib=eyJ2IjoiMSJ9.WX8f7p-y4tTv4wkqmq90Qqqxg_S4drwfdyUFsxm7vqNFcn6kg55J7dMbJK0LWZUglc6lB07Jwo8xQ9aT7M-YSQErq6YZGXuMFAfcamJEd-
     8veybS_UFU2PsTueYCj3LtGNCqNfjS2LbJOwoW2kSPv8DwxWRBdxeC9rx9kle_0L4m9feq-2Tzt6Qk1o2j6PXyMYFjhB6zelW9dXpyPQ5sQP-FwU12uZCYE1jRuo-WBYto._q0
     6iQDUXofWwLNK7jYwGhGn57NGoOHWexQAjRjBrHM&qid=1756274533&sr=8-14
3   https://www.amazon.de/-/en/Rebranding-Europe-2024-Fundamentals-Communicating/dp/9090393919/ref=tmm_hrd_swatch_0

Ethical guidelines are rapidly becoming an essential part of modern PR. Innovative organisations are already implementing guardrails around transparency such as: (a) disclosing when AI was used, (b) bias mitigation by ensuring datasets don't reinforce harmful stereotypes, and (c) fact-checking to prevent accidental and intentional misinformation and fake news.

In this sense, PR professionals are at the same time early adopters of AI and guardians of its responsible use.

The Strategy

Perhaps the most exciting outcome of AI adoption in PR is the profession's rising strategic importance. No longer confined to press releases and event planning, communications leaders are increasingly seen as trusted advisors to the C-suite and world leaders.

Reputation is now a measurable, trackable asset. AI makes it possible to tie communication efforts directly to business outcomes. Whether it is about brand trust, customer loyalty, investor confidence, policy transition or employee engagement.

As AI-driven insights become more sophisticated, PR professionals can walk into boardrooms with stronger data-backed predictions such as :

- Which narratives are likely to gain traction in the coming quarter.
- Which potential crises need proactive mitigation.
- How communication strategies could influence policy outcomes, stock performance or talent attraction.

A clear indication that PR is transforming from a tactical function to a true strategic partner, which is its real function, as a shift that will define the next era of corporate communications.

PR is the strategic practice of managing and shaping the public perception of a brand, individual, or organization through effective communication, reputation management, and relationship building with key audiences.

The future of PR is not about replacing humans with machines. AI can inform the "what" and the "when," but humans must always define the "why" and the "how." Enhancing human creativity and judgment with more innovative tools should be central. Authentic voices, empathy, and ethical judgment cannot be outsourced.

AI gives communicators the power to see around corners, respond with foresight, and advise leaders with a clarity that was less possible just a few years ago.

And in the public relations industry, where perception and influence are crucial, those who effectively harness AI will set the standard for the future of strategic communication.

The organisations that succeed will be those that embrace AI responsibly while staying true to the timeless principles of trust, authenticity, and human connection.

The road to reputational security[1]

By Stavros Papagianneas

Public diplomacy is not just a nice addition to foreign policy - it's a necessary component of strong national defence. It advances the notion of "reputational security" as a national security component. The history of public diplomacy shows how this can be done effectively.

We are living in turbulent times, witnessing renewed international conflict, resurgent nationalism, declining multilateralism, and a torrent of hostile propaganda. How can we understand these developments and conduct diplomacy in their presence?

The world in 2025 is a time of contested narratives. Is China using economic power to coerce countries to do things that are not in their interest, or is it working towards mutual benefit? Is Russia protecting communities' rights to self-determination or flouting the fundamental laws of international order? Is the United States promoting a "free, open, secure, and prosperous world" or bullying countries into "surrendering their sovereignty"?

Chinese, Russian, and U.S. leaders each have their own preferred answers to these questions and jockey for position to ensure their story wins over the foreign leaders and public they seek to influence. They use technology to advance strategic communications and public diplomacy to promote their interests.

According to the USC Centre on Public Diplomacy (University of Southern California), Public Reputational security is a term used to describe the degree of safety accruing to a nation-state that proceeds from being known by citizens of other nations.

It is often defined as the loss to a business or organisation through reputational damage, with the term "loss" highlighting a threat primarily to finances. Many sources suggest a one-way relationship between security and reputation, with security failures resulting in reputational problems.

The concept of reputational security is particularly relevant in cases like Ukraine's experience. The "shock of 2014" – Ukraine's loss of territory with little response from the global public – is a stark reminder of what can happen when a country's national narrative is not widely known or understood.

Ukraine has since dramatically improved its image projection, positioning itself in 2022 as a champion of democracy on the front lines of freedom.

Similar examples include Taiwan's efforts to build and preserve its reputation in the face of Chinese aggression and Kazakhstan's promotion of pluralism to counter external perceptions of its social and economic inequities.

Last month, I had the privilege of attending a high-level debate in Athens, where the esteemed historian and academic Nicholas J. Cull from the University of Southern California presented his concept of "reputational security"—the idea that a nation's safety and security are strengthened by its soft power and international reputation.

In his book Reputational Security, the professor introduces a refreshing new way to understand how democracies can respond to authoritarian regimes' threat of information warfare. I warmly recommend this publication to anyone who wants to know how we can compete in the digital age while staying true to our declared values.

Building a reputation of values approach should include the following strategies :

a. **Elevating reputation to a core security goal**
Private sector executives know the importance of their company's reputation. Brands with strong positive reputations attract better people. They are perceived as providing more value, and their clients are more loyal. Governments should recognise that (national) reputation is not a superficial side dish. It is a fundamental element of state security. Countries or supranational organisations like the EU need to be understood abroad to protect against threats.

b. **Understanding the nature of the attack**
It is paramount to listen in a systematic way and use trusted tools for perception monitoring and in-field intelligence to track global monitoring. Is the attack coming from authoritarians, from tech, or a twisted compliment? Ensure insights from foreign audiences actively influence high-level policymaking.

c. **Understanding the tools**
Realign policies and values. Use culture to build trust with allies. Positive narratives must align with real reforms, while empty rhetoric erodes reputation. Invest in journalism, fact-checking, and media and social media literacy to bolster public resilience. Deploy timely, multi-pronged responses to hostile narratives before they take root. Prioritising early interventions and pre-bunking techniques is essential. Debunking is often too late.

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1   https://www.stpcommunications.com/post/public-diplomacy-the-road-to-reputational-security

d. **Understanding the values**
   Leveraging cultural diplomacy and exchanges helps. Support arts, education, and broadcasting – especially through independent institutions – to project values credibility. Cultural and educational exchanges shift perceptions over decades, delivering sustained reputational dividends. Think of EU programs such as Erasmus, Creative Europe or the successful creation of the European Houses of Culture.

Reputational security is not a luxury but necessary for national (and corporate) survival. It is paramount for protecting influence, trust, legitimacy, and competitive edge in a volatile global information environment - especially in an era where information warfare, misinformation, and cyber-enabled influence campaigns are common.

Founder of Steps4Europe - Managing Director StP Communications - Author Rebranding Europe With a background including positions such as Communication Officer at the European Commission and Press Officer and Spokesperson to diplomatic missions in Brussels, Stavros Papagianneas is currently the Managing Director of PR consultancy StP Communications & the founder of Steps4Europe. This non-profit association aims to reinforce the European Public Sphere & promote the values of the EU. He is a senior communications leader with more than 25 years' experience in corporate & public communications, public affairs, PR, digital & social media. In 2017, 2018 & 2019, Stavros was named by the pan-European news platform Euractiv as one of the TOP 40 EU INFLUENCERS and, is a public speaker & blogger. Stavros has been a member of the Working Party on Information of the Council of the European Union. He is the author of the books : Rebranding Europe; Powerful Online Communication; Saving Your reputation in the Digital Age and, many articles in EU media like Euractiv, New Europe, Euronews, Europe's World, L' Echo, De Tijd, Communication Director, Irish Tech News & Research Europe. Stavros is a graduate in Communication Sciences from the VUB University of Brussels and has given lectures in universities across Europe: University of Cantabria, University of Vilnius, University of Brussels (VUB), Institute of European Studies (IES), Thomas More University, Université Paris 1 Pantheon Sorbonne.

Calendar of Club meetings 2025-2028

2025
London, 12-13 March 2025 8th Stratcom seminar
Athens, Greece, 21-22 May 2025 Plenary meeting
Brussels, 3-4 July 2025 Seminar on communicating migration and EU enlargement (in cooperation with IOM, ICMPD and SEECOM)
Poland, 9-10 October 2025 Thematic seminar on countering FIMI
Venice, 4-5 December 2025 Plenary meeting
2026
Croatia, 12-13 March 2026 9th Stratcom seminar
Spain (dates to be defined) Plenary meetings
London, October 2026 (venue to be confirmed) Thematic seminar
Venice, November/December 2026 Plenary meeting of the 40th Anniversary of the Club of Venice

2027
Croatia, March 2027 10th Stratcom seminar
April 2027 (venue to be defined) Thematic seminar Relations between public communication and the media sector
Lithuania, June 2027 (venue to be confirmed) Plenary meeting
Venice, December 2027 Plenary meeting

2028
Croatia, March 2028 11th Stratcom seminar
Latvia, May or June 2028 (venue to be confirmed) Plenary meeting
September or October 2028 (venue to be defined) Seminar on public diplomacy and country branding developments and analysis of public opinion trends
Venice, November or December 2028 Plenary meeting

CHRONOLOGY OF
THE CLUB OF VENICE MEETINGS

No.	YEAR	DATE	VENUE	MEETING	REMARKS
1	1986	3-4 October	Venice	plenary	Founding of the Club of Venice
2	1987	16-17 October	Venice	plenary	
3	1988	7 June	Brussels	plenary	
4	1988	28-29 October	Venice	plenary	
5	1989	16 February	Strasbourg	plenary	survey "European Parliament and public opinion"
6	1989	25-28 May	Barcelona-Seville	plenary	on the occasion of the Olympic Games in Barcelona and Seville World Expo
7	1989	30 September - 2 October	Paris	plenary	at the occasion of the European Conference on audiovisual
8	1989	20-22 October	Venice	plenary	
9	1990	18 April	London	plenary	Presentation of the new COI statute
10	1990	16-18 November	Venice	plenary	
11	1991	25-27 October	Venice	plenary	
12	1992	30-31 October	Venice	plenary	
13	1993	13-14 May	Bonn	plenary	Discussion of the communication structure in Central and Eastern Europe
14	1993	5-7 November	Venice	plenary	
15	1994	18 March	Paris	plenary	
16	1994	4-5 November	Venice	plenary	
17	1995	26-27 April	Brussels	plenary	1st meeting with EP communicators
18	1995	3-5 November	Venice	plenary	10th anniversary of the Club of Venice

No.	YEAR	DATE	VENUE	MEETING	REMARKS
19	1997	12-14 November	Bruges	plenary	
20	1998	16-18 December	Bruges	plenary	
21	1999	10-12 October	Santorini (Greece)	plenary	
22	2000	4-6 October	La Rochelle	plenary	
23	2001	29 November - 1 December	Venice	plenary	
24	2002	24 April	Brussels	informal meeting on opinion polls	
25	2002	13-14 June	Copenhagen - Malmö	plenary	
26	2002	21-23 November	Venice	plenary	
27	2003	27 February - 2 March	Loutraki (Greece)	plenary	Loutraki declaration containing drafting suggestions to the European Convention
29	2004	13-15 April	Bratislava	plenary	
30	2004	18-19 November	Venice	plenary	
31	2005	14 January	Istanbul	plenary	Preparatory meeting and first meeting in a candidate country
32	2005	13-15 April	The Hague	plenary	14 April: workshops on Government communication, Communicating Europe and crisis management
33	2005	3-4 November	Venice	plenary	20th anniversary of the Club of Venice
34	2006	10 February	Brussels	workshop on call centers	
35	2006	27-28 April	Prague	plenary	
36	2006	16-17 November	Venice	plenary	
37	2007	25-26 April	Vienna - Budapest	plenary	
38	2007	15-16 November	Rome	plenary	50th anniversary of the Rome Treaties
39	2008	25 February	Brussels	workshop on audiovisual and interactive communication	
40	2008	5-6 June	Ljubljana -Postojna	plenary	

No.	YEAR	DATE	VENUE	MEETING	REMARKS
41	2008	21-22 November	Venice	plenary	Break-out groups: a) Capacity building b) Public diplomacy c) Code of conduct, ethics and professional statute
42	2009	13 February	Vienna	workshop on management and strategic partnership agreements	
43	2009	17 April	Brussels	workshop on interactive Web 2.0 comm. and session on communicating on EP elections	
44	2009	27 May	Paris	workshop on public diplomacy	
45	2009	28-29 May	Paris	plenary	
46	2009	15 October	Brussels	workshop on capacity building	
47	2009	19-20 November	Venice	plenary	
48	2009	21 November	Poreč (Croatia)	thematic meeting on communicating pre- and post- enlargement	
49	2010	19 February	Vienna	workshop on management and strategic partnership agreements	
50	2010	19 March	London	workshop on digital strategies for public communication	
51	2010	29-30 April	Istanbul	thematic meeting on crisis communication	
52	2010	2 June	Gozo (Malta)	workshop on public diplomacy	
53	2010	3-4 June	Gozo (Malta)	plenary	
54	2010	20 October	Brussels	workshop on social media & web 3.0 and on capacity building	
55	2010	18-19 November	Venice	plenary	Break-out groups: a) Capacity building b) Audiovisual and interactive communication c) Journalism and new media
56	2011	10 February	Brussels	workshop on web-communication & social media and communicating enlargement	

No.	YEAR	DATE	VENUE	MEETING	REMARKS
57	2011	12-13 April	Budapest	thematic meeting "Communicating Europe in schools"	12/04: "Teaching about the EU - LIVE" : observe a lesson with English-speaking students with innovative ICT method of teaching about the EU
58	2011	25 May	Warsaw	workshop on public diplomacy	
59	2011	26-27 May	Warsaw	plenary	
60	2011	7 October	Brussels	joint WPI/CoV seminar on the impact of social media on journalism	
61	2011	10-11 November	Venice	Plenary of the 25 years	
62	2012	27 January	Vienna	workshop on management and strategic partnership agreements	
63	2012	16 February	Brussels	joint WPI/CoV seminar on The Next Web and its Impact on Government Communication	
64	2012	29-30 March	Sofia	workshop on crisis communication	
65	2012	23 May	Protaras (Cyprus)	workshop on public diplomacy	
66	2012	24-25 May	Protaras (Cyprus)	plenary	
67	2012	4 October	Brussels	joint WPI/CoV seminar on "Open Government in the Making"	
68	2012	15/16 November	Venice	plenary	Spokespersons' seminar on 14.12.2012
69	2013	1 February	Vienna	workshop on management and strategic partnership agreements	
70	2013	22 March	Brussels	joint WPI/CoV seminar on "Public communication in the evolving media landscape: adapt or resist?"	
71	2013	6-7 June	Tallinn	plenary	
72	2013	14-15 November	Venice	plenary	
73	2014	21 February	Brussels	Seminar on Digital Communication Trends	

No.	YEAR	DATE	VENUE	MEETING	REMARKS
74	2014	27/28 March	Athens	Joint seminar (with the GR Presidency and GR Gen. Sec. of Information and Communication) "Public communication: re-gaining citizens' confidence in times of crisis"	
75	2014	5-6 June	Riga	plenary	
76	2014	13-14 November	Rome	plenary	
77	2015	26-27 March	Sofia	Joint conference (with Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Wilfred Martens Centre for European Studies and SEECOM) "Digital communication: New Challenges for Governments and EU Institutions"	
78	2015	11-12 June	Vienna	plenary	
79	2015	22-23 October	Milan	plenary	on the occasion of the Universal EXPO 2015
80	2015	9 December	Brussels	Joint workshop (with the Council Working Party on Information) on communication challenges in the field of migration	
81	2016	9 April	Lesbos	Seminar "The refugee and migration crisis: dealing with a European problem"	
82	2016	26-27 May	The Hague	Plenary	
83	2016	30 September	Brussels	Seminar on "Terrorism: Challenges for Crisis Communication"	
84	2016	10-11 November	Venice	Plenary of the 30 years	
85	2017	17 March	London	1st Seminar on "StratCom - strategic communication challenges for Europe"	Adoption of the London Charter on Strategic Communication
86	2017	18-19 May	Sliema (Malta)	Plenary	
87	2017	19 May	Sliema (Malta)	Seminar on "The refugees and migration Crisis: a crucial test for public communicators"	
88	2017	23-24 September	Athens-Thebes-Livadia-Thessaloniki	Seminar on "Mobilising communicators in the field of the refugee and migration crisis"	

No.	YEAR	DATE	VENUE	MEETING	REMARKS
89	2017	23-24 November	Venice	Plenary	
90	2018	8-9 March	Luxembourg	Seminar "Open Government and Open Data: New Horizons for Communication and Public Access to Information"	
91	2018	7-8 June	Vilnius	Plenary	Adoption of the - Vilnius Charter on Societal Resilience to Disinformation and Propaganda in a Challenging Digital Landscape - Vilnius Charter shaping professionalism in communication (Capacity Building)
92	2018	18-19 September	Tunis	1st Euro-Mediterranean workshop for communicators "Providing Clarity in Complexity: Creating an evidence-based public discussion on migration"	Joint meeting co-organized with the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) and the Government of Tunisia
93	2018	22-23 November	Venice	Plenary	
94	2018	13-14 December	London	2nd Stratcom Seminar: " Truth, Tech and Trends - The issues that European communicators need to address in 2019"	Joint meeting organised in cooperation with the UK Government Communication Service
95	2019	5-6 April	Athens	Seminar on "The Role of Communication in Crisis Management: planning, coordination, cooperation"	Joint meeting organised with the Greek Ministry for Digital Policy, Telecommunications and Media
96	2019	6-7 June	Bar (Montenegro)	Plenary	
97	2019	23 October	Brussels	Seminar on "Country Reputation - Perceptions and management"	

NO.	YEAR	DATE	VENUE	MEETING	REMARKS
98 - 99	2019	11-12 November	Athens	- 2nd Euro-Mediterranean workshop for communicators "Providing Clarity in Complexity: Creating an evidence-based public discussion on migration"	- Joint meeting co-organized with the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) and the Hellenic Government
				- High Level Event	- Round table / Meeting with the Hellenic Deputy Minister for Citizen Protection, the ICMPD Director-General, Commission DG NEAR Deputy DG, the Director of the MPI at the EUI and the President of the Club of Venice
100	2019	5-6 December	Venice	Plenary	Adoption of the Action Plan on synergies between public communication and the media sector
101	2020	6-7 February	London	3rd Stratcom Seminar: "Strategy, Science and Standards - building effective European public communication in the 20's"	
	2020	4-5 June	Dubrovnik	Plenary	Cancelled, owing to the COVID-19 crisis lockdown measures
102	2020	15 June	On line mtg coordinated by the Croatian authorities	Webinar on "Crisis Communication - Managing communication on the Covid-19 - Challenges, Analysis and Lessons Learned"	Co-organised with the Croatian government authorities
103	2020	30 September	On line meeting	1st OECD Expert Group on Public Communication	In cooperation with the OECD Headquarters and the UK GCS
104	2020	10-11 November	On line meeting	3rd EURO-Med EMM4 Workshop	In cooperation with the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)
105	2020	3-4 December	On line meeting	Plenary	Co-organised with the Italian government authorities
106	2021	25 February	On line meeting	4th Stratcom Seminar: "Key challenges and future communication strategies: crisis management, effectiveness and trust"	Co-organised with the UK Government Communications Office
107	2021	18 March	On line meeting	Workshop on "Communication and Open Governance in a Time of Crisis"	Co-organised with the OGNfE, DEMSOC, HSS, OGP and OECD

No.	YEAR	DATE	VENUE	MEETING	REMARKS
108	2021	10-11 June	On line meeting	Plenary	Co-organised with the government of the Republic of Serbia
109	2021	4 October	On line meeting	Constitutive meeting of the ad hoc working group on resilience vs. hybrid threats	Co-organised with REOC Communications
110	2021	2-3 November	Mtg held in presence (Paris) and on line	4rd EURO-Med EMM5 Workshop "Re-defining migration partnerships in the Euro-Mediterranean region: the role of communication and narratives"	Co-organised with the ICMPD and the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs
111	2021	23 November	On line meeting	2nd meeting of the ad hoc working group of comms experts in resilience vs. hybrid threats	
112	2021	2/3 December	Venice (resuming meetings in presence)	Plenary meeting of the 35 years of activity of the Club	Co-organised with the Italian government authorities
113	2022	16/17 February	Toulouse (hybrid)	Joint international seminar on citizenship and civic participation - the role of local public communication in the different EU countries	In cooperation with Cap'Com and in partnership with the Region Occitanie and the European Parliament
114	2022	18 February	On line meeting	3rd meeting of the ad hoc working group of comms experts in resilience vs. hybrid threats	
115	2022	30-31 March	London	5th Stratcom seminar "Professionalizing Strategic Communication to tackle social and technological challenges"	Co-organised with the UK GCS
116	2022	31 June - 1st July	Fiesole (Firenze), Italy	Plenary	In cooperation with the European University Institute (EUI)
117	2022	13-14 October	Prague	Seminar on Government Communication Challenges in times of crisis	In cooperation with the Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU
118	2022	21 October	Virtual event	Communication on EU funded projects	Preliminary brainstorming to prepare for a future seminar in 2023 or 2024

No.	YEAR	DATE	VENUE	MEETING	REMARKS
119	2022	10-11 November	Rabat	5th EURO-Med – EMM5 Migration Workshop "Understanding the governance of migration narratives in the Euro-Mediterranean region" + 2nd Euro-Mediterranean Migration Narrative Conference	Co-organised with the ICMPD and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Morocco
120	2022	24-25 November	Venice	Plenary	Co-organised with the Co-organised with the Department for European Policies, Presidency of the Council of Minister of the Italian Government
121	2023	9-10 March	London	6th StratCom Seminar Shared understanding and campaign work among European strategic communicators	Co-organised with the UK GCS
122	2023	1-2 June	Nicosia, Cyprus	Plenary	Co-organised with the Department of Press and Information of the government of Cyprus
123	2023	28-29 September	Dubrovnik, Croatia	Seminar on communicating EU enlargement and the EU macro-regional strategies	Co-organised with the Central Government authorities and the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of Croatia
124	2023	5-6 October	Valletta, Malta	Euro-Mediterranean Migration Narrative Conference	Co-organised with the ICMPD and the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and Trade of the Maltese government
125	2023	30 November – 1st December	Venice, Italy	Plenary meeting	Co-organised with the Department for European Affairs, Presidency of the Council of Minister of the Italian Government
126	2024	14-15 March	London	7th Stratcom Seminar Recipes to optimise strategic comm - suggested models for European governments and institutions	Co-organised with the UK Government Communication Service
127	2024	25-26 April	Brdo pri Kranju, Slovenia	Seminar on challenges in communicating EU enlargement and progress in countering disinformation	Co-organised with the Slovenian Government Communication Office
128	2024	23 May	Strasbourg, France	Seminar on synergies in the fight against disinformation and on media literacy	Co-organised with Cap'Com

No.	YEAR	DATE	VENUE	MEETING	REMARKS
129	2024	20-21 June	Dublin, Ireland	Plenary meeting	Co-organised with the Department of the Taoiseach and the Directorate of Communications of the Department of Foreign Affairs
130	2024	5-6 December	Venice, Italy	Plenary meeting	Co-organised with the Italian PM Office Department for European Affairs
131	2025	12-13 March	London	8th Stratcom Seminar "Strengthening cooperation in crisis communication, neutralising foreign influence threats and information manipulation & applying AI to communications"	Co-organised with the UK Government Communication Service
132	2025	21-22 May	Athens	Plenary meeting	Co-organised with the General Secretariat for Greeks Abroad and Public Diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece
133	2025	3-4 July	Brussels	Seminar on navigating migration narratives and communicating EU enlargement	Co-organised with ICMPD, IOM and SEECOM
134	2025	9-10 October	Warsaw	Seminar on strategic communication (countering FIMI, resilience building, AI's impact on government communication plans and investments	Co-organised with the Department of Strategic Communication of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland

Acknowledgments