

## **Draft Recommendations**

*Mass-Media Culture and Education for European Citizenship*  
November 3, 2007, Cluj-Napoca

Media Monitoring Agency (MMA) in partnership with the Department of Political Science of Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca and Ethnocultural Diversity Resource Center (EDRC) organized an international conference in Cluj-Napoca on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of November, 2007. The University hosted the event in the “Wodrow Wilson” auditorium.

The goal of the gathering was to put into discussion the extent to which the EU message is communicated in a comprehensible language to the Romanian public and possible ways of training public communicators on European themes.

First part of the conference was allocated to presentations held by foreign participants (illustrating similar experiences from France, Italy, Portugal, Cyprus, Germany, Bulgaria) as well as by Romanian professors and MMA representative. All presentations provided useful information that constituted the basis of the workshop discussions and it was taken into consideration during the elaboration of the recommendations.

In the second part of the event participants took part in a workshop aimed at identifying institutional solutions to improve university programs and continuous training of communicators on European issues.

During the brainstorming debate several needs and problems were identified, as well as recommendations for possible solutions.

“**Learn EU in School not in Crisis**” was the suggested title for a potential project in this direction as main European topics most tackled in the public sphere so far were determined by crisis situations related to post-adhesion strategy and correlation of EU legislation and procedures to the Romanian ones..

### **Workshop Conclusions and Recommendations**

It was definitely clear for all participants that *communication of EU agenda* has to occur in an accessible way to the Romanian public. The main point of the discussion was to present relevant EU information *sexier* to the public and thus to increase its visibility.

Debate also stressed the importance of communication of the EU message by drawing attention to the fact that public decision is currently taken in Brussels. As a result, Romanians need to be informed on this aspect and understand the importance of the process.

The task of the participants was to identify methods and ways of making this kind of communication happen in an efficient manner and for the public interest.

Firstly, research concerning the needs of the Romanian citizens in relation to EU is necessary. In this respect, the experience of other countries would be relevant and solutions already tested could be taken into consideration.

Secondly, participants agreed that Romania needs *expert communicators* to fill the gap in between EU institutions that make use of a highly technical discourse in their public communication and the journalists that have to report this information to the public. The role of the expert communicators would be to translate the technical administrative language into a more comprehensible one (defining terms, explaining procedures etc.).

Thirdly, journalists themselves may benefit from training on EU agenda, institutions, policies and procedures etc. to be able to understand European information related to their field of reporting.

There is surely a need of a general national policy in this direction. However, most participants agreed that until such policy is going to be issued, there is a need of operating certain aspects of the problem.

***Several recommendations on institutional solutions concerning training of such communicators/multipliers were considered:***

Training of such communicators can be implemented on two levels:

*School education.*

*Teacher education.* Teachers need to be trained to be able to translate the message about EU. Inclusion of knowledge about the European Community in teaching provision is one solution. Teachers' training on EU topics so as to insert additional information within their courses might be an alternative solution. Such training may be initiated within the frame of European programs.

Postgraduate training for teachers would be another level of communicators preparation.

One of the first steps to be taken is to search for and identify educational institutions in Romania that may have such courses.

*Integration approach* in university courses. A specific module on European themes for various public communicators like journalists for instance (How to understand and translate Eurospeak).

One aspect that such a module may solve is to help communicators manage through the enormous amount of EU information available. Learning how to channel information sources is one way to improve communicators' competences when informing about European Community. Internet represents one important source of information on EU that can be accessed only by a media literate individual.

Another important suggestion refers to *training of EU communication facilitators/mediators* to support

A) Journalists;

B) Teachers, teacher-trainers;

C) EU promoters in general or for specific target groups e.g. companies, public authorities, NGOs etc.

The participants took into consideration the necessity of determining in particular the goal of such an academic program, the skills and competences to be considered, format and content - what kind of information to be approached etc.

*Other recommendations:*

- Training modules for already existing communicators to add to their list of competences another one concerning the understanding of EU issues. Further debate should consider proficiency required and discuss the proportion between theoretical and practical competences needed.

Setting the topics

Working groups

- Starting from key competences and defining curriculum/adapting existing curricula would both define the profile of the European information communicator, and standardize his/her educational background.

- While expecting coherent public policy offering long term solutions, short term solutions could be considered: NGOs projects, "promotional centers" – intensive training, compulsory courses, short time courses.

All the above recommendations comply with the following general conclusion: designing functional mechanisms that would translate EU message into a comprehensible language for the public represents a prerequisite for an adequate education for active European citizenship.

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