



REPORT OF THE COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK MEETING 1st-2nd February, BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

SUMMARY

On 1-2 February 2018, 30 people - both Communications and Press Officers from Eurodiaconia member organisations and other professionals - gathered in Brussels to reflect on how Communications messages are received by different audiences. The meeting was hosted by Eurodiaconia, and saw the Eurodiaconia members and external speakers giving presentations on different topics. The meeting particularly aimed at developing strategies and best practice for participants to develop communications tools and strategies efficiently direct their message to different audience groups in an increasingly diverse and multicultural society.

The first day began with two sessions about the dissemination of Christian values in today's society: a speech about communication policies to support social justice among Christian organisations and a presentation on Diakonie Deutschland strategies to improve in communicating people in the margins. The following sessions focused on effective strategies to spread Christian communications by overcoming ostracism of secular media and on guidelines to tackle hate speech and online abuse. The programme was completed by a study visit to the European Commission Directorate-General European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) in Brussels.

The second day started with a conference on accessibility in communications for persons with disabilities, followed by a presentation on Diakonie ECCB's work for inclusion through social media campaigns and web tools. The following presentations highlighted Kirkens Korshaer's campaign for food collection and the Trussell Trust's campaign strategy in relation to food banks. The meeting ended with a group activity challenging participants to create a successful advocacy campaign in view of the 2019 EU Parliament elections.





MEETING NOTES

PART I: SPEAKING CHRISTIAN VALUES IN A SOCIETY WHERE RELIGION PLAYS AN INCREASINGLY PROMINENT ROLE

- **“Communication policies to support social justice among Christian organisations” by Stephen Brown from the World Association for Christian Communications**

Stephen Brown, *Regional President* of the World Association for Christian Communications - Europe Branch, presented the work of the World Association for Christian Communications. Mr Brown started his presentation by focusing on the two main areas related to the communication policies to support social justice among Christian organisations: the communication intended as an issue of justice itself and the chronological evolution – from the support to Christian broadcasting after the communication revolution in the 60s to the look on global flows in the 70s, and then to the spot on individual participation in the 90s. Mr. Brown also explained the mission of the World Association for Christian Communications, founded in 1968 in Oslo and now operating in 8 regions across the world with personal and institutional members in 120 countries. Starting from the issue of the identification as a Christian association in some parts of the world, WACC focused on how to express those values. To this extent WACC has developed 6 **“Principles of communication”**:

- *Communication as a spiritual exercise*: intended as a function of transcendence;
- *Communication builds and shapes communities* and then dismantles barriers;
- *Communication enhances participation* to an open dialogue;
- *Communication promotes freedom and demands accountability*;
- *Communication celebrates cultural diversity*;
- *Communication affirms justice and challenges injustice*: it builds connectedness in order to underline human dignity and fight injustice.

A concrete example of these principles can be seen in the daily actions of a local radio in Bolivia, a broadcast intended as a way of supporting local issues that also reflects WACC mission to affirm everyone’s right to openly and democratically communicate decisions and events that affect their lives. This leads to the **Communication Rights** that inspire WACC in its tasks of advocacy, addressing communication needs, strengthening capacities and tackling challenges such as gender-sensitive reporting, peace-building, and participatory communication for development.

To do so since 1995 WACC has developed the **Global Media Monitoring Programme**, the world’s largest and longest-running research and advocacy initiative for gender equality in and through the media news. In order to assess how far media gender equality has been achieved WACC releases a document every five years. The 2015 Report is based on data gathered by volunteer teams in 114 countries, monitoring 22.136 stories published, broadcast or tweeted by 2,030 distinct media houses and written or presented by 26.010 journalists and containing 45.402 people interviewed. The key findings in 2015 show that the rate of progress towards media gender parity almost ground to a halt over the previous five years.



Another transposition into practice of WACC guidelines is **The Refugees Reporting Project**, which focuses on the media representation of refugees and migrants that arrived on European shores in 2015 - most of them (75%) fleeing conflicts and persecution in Syria, Afghanistan or Iraq. WACC worked along with Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe, the Evangelical Church in Rhineland, the World Council of Churches, and with the support of the Conference of European Churches and the Otto Per Mille of the Waldensian Church. This partnerships enabled to reach a survey variety in seven European countries (Italy, Greece, Serbia, Spain, United Kingdom, Sweden, Norway), including countries of first entry, transit and final country granting asylum. Data were collected and analysed Following the methodology of WACC's Global Media Monitoring Project, carried out every five years on the representation of women. The report shows that migrants were mentioned in the 21% of the surveyed news stories but only one fourth of them concerned women, and that the migration flow was presented, in general, as a European problem without a global perspective.

Another goal of The Refugees Reporting Project was to engage with media professionals to highlight good practices and refugee-led networks as well as to come up with recommendations such as:

- Ensure accuracy, independence, impartiality, humanity and accountability;
- Include diverse voices and offer a contextual reporting of migration;
- Recognise refugee voices and refugee communication rights;
- Benefit from digital resources on migrants and refugees and against hate speech;
- Use research on the global situation of migrants and refugees and its reporting.

After the publishing of the report the next steps were identified in turning it into a tool for professional and to repeat the media monitoring project including more countries and bringing a wider perspective by involving Africa. In the context of a "media fatigue" perception that leads to a debate based on emotions rather than on facts and figures, the further goals are to:

- Take in deeper consideration the changing media environment and the growing interest in social and informal media;
- Examine and address proliferation of online hate speech and deliberate misinformation;
- Explore attempts to address online hate speech and cultural/political divisions, particularly in relation to migrants and migration.

- **"How do diaconal organisations communicate people in the margins? Challenges and opportunities for social services providers" by Maja Schäfer from Diakonie Deutschland**

Maja Schäfer from the Personalmarketing - Communications Centre of Eurodiaconia German member Diakonie Deutschland presented the organisation's communications strategy:



- Creating **three different websites** to replace the old single website, which had a complex structure and a traffic of users difficult to deal with. In doing so the Communications Centre drew inspiration from the business world and in particular from the multichannel solution chosen by big German companies. The granting of an exceptional budget of 400.000 euros led so to the creation of three smaller websites: the *info portal* with news and policy forms, the *help website* with info for nursing homes and other health care facilities, the *career website* for job offers and applications;
- Relaunch of the **corporate design** with a more effective logo and a professional setting to support the new thematic websites and help the navigation through related illustrations: this improved the organisation's impact on media, institutions, politicians and users;
- Development of a **Digital Culture Group on Facebook** of 33 members for quick communications, with conference calls every two weeks following a precise process of defining tasks and summing up;
- Launch of the *Sozial-O-Mat*, a **voting-advice mobile app** for 2017 elections in Germany, focusing on social problems and showing the effects of the parties' proposals on the everyday life of an average German family. The app reached more than 100.000 users also thanks to a marketing campaign with social media posts and postcards and 150 media reports. The campaign was supported by effective tweets during the whole electoral TV debate;
- Development of a **more provoking campaign** for 2018, with a double-way message - *Unerhört*, "scandalous" or "incredible" - along with the organisation of discussion events to stimulate a public debate on diversity in society and refugees;
- Organisation of a **yearly event** to raise awareness on social issues: in 2018 the International Nurses Day will stimulate recruiting to face the lack of staff by giving a prize for the centre that has received the highest number of applications.

PART II: HOW TO OVERCOME OSTRACISM AMONG SECULAR MEDIA TOWARDS RELIGION: EXAMPLES OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNICATIONS

- **Presentation by Maria-Paz Lopez from La Vanguardia**

Maria-Paz Lopez, *La Vanguardia Berlin Correspondent* and *director* of the International Association of Religion Journalists (IARJ), explained how to get the interest to portrait Christian faith-based organisations in mainstream media. To this extent she highlighted the good work of Caritas Spain that through an annual report of poverty can obtain a good outreach testifying also Christian values.

During her presentation Mrs. Lopez offered the audience a strategy for Christian press officers or communications professionals:

- Develop a **precise media strategy**, that needs to be goal-oriented;
- **Scan the media environment** by listing its main actors and identifying journalists and press officers interested in social issues and Christian social works;



- Familiarize with **journalists' rhythm of production** keeping in mind that, in general, those who care about religious topics are not fully devoted experts but general reporters that have to deal with larger fields such as national politics or social and educational issues;
- **Focus on the topic itself** - for example the launch of gardening activities with refugees - not only on the related Christian values and point out the **special features of a project** such as the origin or identity of helpers or guests as well as the funding strategy;
- Insert an **appealing subject for newsletters** in order to catch editors' attention;
- Find **connections to general culture and trends** to address the story to the right editor e.g. the story of a capuchin friar that grows biblical plants;
- Organize **press conferences** with a structing list of topics and laic professionals instead of clergymen, who in general are used to talk in front of an audience that can not interact with them: an example can be detected in the UK media project "Catholic Voices", a network of laic people available to speak in TV and radio shows;
- Launch free **workshops for journalists** - held by your organisation's representatives and generally not too expensive to organise - like the one in Barcelona before the Vatican conclave in 2013;
- Give **communication responses to communication problems** and not religious responses to religious problems: e.g. the Opus Dei decided not to sue after the release of a movie, *The Da Vinci Code*, considered discriminating but to clarify the organisation's using facts and figures;
- **Press officers need to have direct access to the head of the organisation** or the related bishop to avoid communications problems for example pope Benedict XVI and the Lefebvrians: when an autonomous choice (suppress the excommunication) was not supported by a communications strategy (verifying the bishops' statements on Holocaust) and the press office was completely unaware of it, releasing an official statement only six days later;
- **Interreligious dialogue meetings** are better reported by connecting the topic to the factual projects in which the speakers are involved.

PART III: TACKLING HATE SPEECH AND ONLINE ABUSE. STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH ONLINE AND OFFLINE DISCRIMINATION OF VULNERABLE GROUPS

- **"Council of Europe 'No Hate Speech' Movement: rights and protection in Europe against hate speech, discrimination and abuse"** by Bert Pieters from the Council of Europe

After the lunch break, the participants had the opportunity to discuss on hate speech and online abuse with Bert Pieters, *Staff Member Media Literacy* for Mediawijs and *Coordinator* of Council of Europe "No Hate Speech Campaign". Mr. Pieters started his presentation by giving a brief definition of hate speech - "*the expression of anger towards a social category by using not only words but also images*" - and displaying several examples from internet and social media.



Then Mr. Pieters listed the following guidelines on how to assess hate speech:

- Content and tone
- Intent (an intended statement or a bad joke)
- Target audience
- Context
- Impact

Mr. Pieters also offered guidelines on how to react to hate speech:

- **Target:** instead of trying to change the hater it is better to support the victim and ignore the hater. Do not leave the comments section at the haters' disposal, keeping in mind that bi-standers usually do not take part in these comments;
- **Time:** evaluate how much time you can employ for your reaction;
- **Focus:** identify if the reason could be frustration;
- **Strategy:** correct what is wrong in order to get to the bi-standers by pointing out boundaries;
- **Reporting:** when hate speech has legal relevance.

PART IV: STUDY VISIT TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION DG ECHO

In the afternoon the participants had the opportunity to visit the European Commission Directorate-General European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) in Brussels. Communications strategies were presented by Barbara Benuskova, Communications Campaign Education in Emergency and EU Emergency Response Officer for the Inter-institutional relations and Communications Unit.

After that the participants had the opportunity to visit the Emergency Response Coordination Centre, where they were explained by the directors how the center works within the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.

PART V: ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION IN COMMUNICATION: ENSURING ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATIONS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITY

- **“Ensuring accessible communications for persons with disability” by Alejandro Moledo from the European Disability Forum**

The second day started with two presentations about accessibility and inclusion in communication. The first one was held by Alejandro Moledo, *New Technologies & Innovation Officer* at the European Disability Forum. As explained by Mr. Moledo, web accessibility is essential for people with disability but offers benefits even to a broader range of users. In order to be fully web accessible a website needs to be *perceivable, understandable, operable and robust*.

Starting from these principles, features Moledo gave the audience some practical guidelines:

- Provide text equivalents;



- Organize and structure content;
- Do not depend on a single-way sense (in order to be accessibly even for people with vision disability, e.g. by specifying “the text in red color is mandatory”);
- Ensure keyboard access by using the tab, useful not only to disables but even to people with common injuries (like a broken wrist) or computer problems (a broken mouse);
- Give users enough time for filling in forms or following pictures “carousels”;
- Avoid interferences (e.g. loud music that plays automatically);
- Identify hyperlinks and content (e.g. not writing “click here”);
- Use consistent navigation interfaces;
- Help users to avoid mistakes;
- Ensure compatibility.

These principles also inspired the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, developed to determine accessibility evaluation standards from “A” to “AAA”. So far several public institutions websites have already upgraded to the rate “AA” and in addition to this in 2016 the Web Content Accessibilities Directives have been adopted by the EU in order to grant accessibility in websites by 2020 and in mobile apps by 2021. The benefits of such measures go beyond the pure accessibility and include also a faster loading time for robust websites, an improved SEO (obtained by labelling all the elements) and so the possibility to reach a broader audience.

- **“Engaging social service users with disability through online tools, website and social media” by Pavel Hanych from Diakonie ECCB**

Pavel Hanych, *Head of PR Department* at Eurodiaconia Czech member Diakonie ECCB, showcased ECCB choice to create an assistive online tool, called “Lifetool”, to overcome the limits of social media in reaching people in need. This tool provides people with disability and elderly people assisted by ECCB with online counseling. At the end of his presentation Mr. Hanych presented the case of Marek, a person with disability assisted by the organisation who, besides his tasks in the kitchen, is currently working as testimonial for ECCB and is frequently involved in campaign videos as well as in TV and radio shows.

PART VI: STRENGTHENING ADVOCACY AMONG DIACONAL ACTORS

- **“Food collection and Food banks campaign” by Hans Mayland from Kirkens Korshaer**

Hans Mayland, *Corporate Director* at Eurodiaconia Danish member Kirkens Korshaer, showcased the food donation and social aid campaign launched by Kirkens Korshaer in close cooperation with Netto, the biggest supermarket chain in Denmark. The campaign took off from Kirkens Korshaer’s need to generate more incomes from the private sector: its first step consisted in a survey on positioning in order to increase the popularity of the organisation. To message to be spread was to tackle poverty and hunger, which are increasing even in wealthy nation such as Denmark.



The semi-partnerships with Netto started with the pilot campaign for Christmas 2016, then at Easter 2017 the amount of collected wastefood immediately increased up to 4.000 kilos (with an estimated value of 70.000 euros) and it was redistributed with a lunch prepared by 12 popular chefs.

The campaign, run in Copenhagen in cooperation with Netto communication office, was also successful in terms of mediatic outreach thanks to 9 press releases, an effective joint Facebook campaign, several mentions on local TVs and newspapers as well as an update every hour on Danish national TV, increasing Kirkens Korshaer visibility more than ever.

PART VII: ADVOCACY APPROACHES TO TACKLING POVERTY IN RELATION TO FOODBANK USE BY GARRY LEMON FROM TRUSSELL TRUST

In his presentation Garry Lemon, *Head of Media and External Affairs* for Trussell Trust, presented the communication strategies of the organisation, currently the biggest foodbank in the UK. Besides providing emergency food (within the Universal Credit system for workless) and additional services such as cookery classes, Trussell Trust is also involved in campaigning for social change. This strategy - focused on gather and interpret evidence, share it on the social media (especially on Facebook) and then drive action - was recently put in place for the campaign *#talkingaboutpoverty*, based on several main steps:

- Understand what you are up against and set the right issue (poverty);
- Connect with values (compassion and justice) to shift thinking;
- The messenger matters and needs to be credible, aligned and novel;
- Provide a mental image that sticks;
- Show, don't tell: take advantage of the power of examples;
- Position benefits as a solution;
- Tell an evidence-based story.

In general, the campaign encountered the interest of UK media in food banks and was successful even on the political side, with 3 on 5 suggested measures later adopted by the British government. However, the goal of stimulating a public debate on poverty was not achieved due to the unwillingness of public opinion to deal not only personal choices but also with the systemic reasons the drive people poorer.

PART VIII: GROUP ACTIVITY - BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN IN VIEW OF THE 2019 EU PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS

The last part of the meeting consisted of a group activity on advocacy campaign, introduced from a presentation by Maja Schäfer from Diakonie Deutschland, who described the first joint social media campaign by Eurodiaconia members. Created by Eurodiaconia and Diakonie Deutschland with the claim *"Diaconia: Working for a fairer Europe"*, the campaign was launched in December 2016, and aimed to strengthen the impact of Diaconia by pointing out its relevance in Europe as a broad network. Then the participants split into three different groups to discuss the idea of a successful advocacy campaign to be developed during the 2019 EU Parliament elections in order to commit the interested candidates to stand for factual proposals on social issues. The group activity outputs will enable Eurodiaconia to work on the next joint campaign which shall run from January 2019 to May 2019.



EVALUATION OF THE MEETING AND CONCLUSION

At the end of the meeting, participants were asked to evaluate the meeting and make recommendations for the future work of Eurodiaconia on communications and campaigning. Overall, participants appreciated the meeting and the opportunity to meet new colleagues and exchange experiences. The project presentations were perceived as particularly enriching and a good inspiration to take back home. Participants were very interested in learning about the situation in other countries and enjoyed discovering the variety of projects and strategies. The study visit was also very much appreciated.



Communications Network Meeting, 1st-2nd February 2018

AGENDA

Thursday, 1 st February	
10:00-10:45	<p>Welcome, devotion and icebreaker</p> <p>Heather Roy, <i>Secretary General</i>, Eurodiaconia</p> <p>Antonio La Mantia, <i>Communications and Membership Officer</i>, Eurodiaconia</p>
10:45-12:00	<p>Speaking Christian values in a society where religion plays an increasingly prominent role.</p> <p>Communication policies to support social justice among Christian organisations</p> <p>Stephen Brown, <i>Regional President</i>, World Association for Christian Communications, Europe Branch</p> <p>How do diaconal organisations communicate people in the margins? Challenges and opportunities for social service providers.</p> <p>Maja Schäfer, <i>Personalmarketing- Communications Centre</i>, Diakonie Deutschland</p>
12:00-12:15	Coffee break
12:15-13:00	<p>How to overcome ostracism among secular media towards religion: examples of Christian communications</p> <p>Maria-Paz Lopez, <i>La Vanguardia Berlin Correspondent</i>, International Association of Religion Journalists IARJ</p>
13:00-13:45	Lunch break
13:45-14:30	<p>Tackling Hate Speech and Online abuse. Strategies for dealing with online and offline discrimination of vulnerable groups</p> <p>Council of Europe 'No Hate Speech' Movement: rights and protection in Europe against hate speech, discrimination and abuse</p> <p>Bert Pieters, <i>Staff Member Media Literacy</i>, Mediawijs and <i>Coordinator Council of Europe No Hate Speech Campaign</i> (Flanders)</p>



15-16.30	<p>Study visit European Commission Directorate-General European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (Please carry your ID or Passport with you) 79 Rue Joseph II, 1000 Brussels</p>
19:00	<p>Dinner at Greenwich Tavern 7 Rue des Chartreux, 1000 Bruxelles</p>
Friday, 2nd February	
09:00-09:15	Morning Devotion
09:15-10:00	<p>Accessibility and Inclusion in Communication Ensuring accessible communications for persons with disability Alejandro Moledo, <i>New Technologies & Innovation Officer</i>, European Disability Forum Engaging social service users with disability through online tools, website and social media Pavel Hanych, <i>Head of PR Department</i>, Diakonie ECCB</p>
10:00-10:45	<p>Strengthening advocacy among diaconal actors Food collection and Food banks campaign Hans Mayland, <i>Corporate Director</i>, Kirkens Korshaer</p>
10:45-11:00	Coffee break
11:00-12:00	<p>Advocacy approaches to tackling poverty in relation to foodbank use Garry Lemon, <i>Head of Media and External Affairs</i>, Trussell Trust</p>
12:00-12:45	Lunch break
12:45-14:00	<p>Group Activity: Building a successful advocacy campaign in view of the 2019 EU Parliament elections Maja Schäfer, <i>Personalmarketing- Communications Centre</i>, Diakonie Deutschland</p>
14:00-14:15	Wrap-up, way ahead, evaluation, end of meeting