



## 8th European Public Communication Conference

# [Re]shaping European dialogues



[Preliminary programme]

9 & 10/11/2017, Brussels

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European Committee  
of the Regions



European Parliament



Council of the  
European Union



European  
Commission



European Economic and Social Committee

## [Preliminary programme]

EuroPCom, the European Public Communication Conference, is the annual **meeting point for public communication managers and senior experts** of local, regional, national and European authorities.

The 8th edition of EuroPCom will be held on **Thursday 9** and **Friday 10 November 2017** in Brussels. Join your colleagues in sharing views on how to engage citizens in the European project and in public affairs more generally, examining the unique area of crossover between communication and engagement, and mapping the latest trends in (digital) communication.

### Information and online registration:

[www.cor.europa.eu/europcom](http://www.cor.europa.eu/europcom)



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EuroPCom

### [Venues:

European Parliament and European Committee of the Regions

### [Session formats:



workshops



key note lectures



ideas labs

## 9 November 2017

10:30-12:30	Opening session					[1]
12:45-14:15	Networking lunch					
14:30-16:00	Political campaigning - how and where is the battle won?	Employee advocacy – engaging your staff as ambassadors	The Age of Big Data: data mining and communication	How to produce videos with a smartphone	Interactive Cities: the use of social media and digital tools	[2] [3] [4] [5] [6]
	Raising emotional engagement with Europe: a love story of grassroots initiatives	Know your target: behavioural insights and audience perspectives	Where is social media headed? The biggest trends to watch out for.	Engaging citizens in a debate on Europe: local dialogues "Reflecting on Europe"	Catalogue of good practice for communicating with young people	[7] [8] [9] [10] [11]
18:00-19:30	Networking reception					

## 10 November 2017

09:15-10:45	Tackling populism and Euroscepticism at local level	Who earns the trust of citizens and why: key findings of global studies	Media literacy in the post-truth era – surviving in the world of fake news and misinformation	Ten pitfalls to avoid when moderating debates	From audience to partner: exploring innovative engagement approaches to boosting policy effectiveness	[12] [13] [14] [15] [16]
	Communicating Europe - the role and impact of public service broadcasters	Drivers of engagement: participatory – communicative projects and concepts	Review of EU institutional communication	The rise of MADCOMs	Storytelling: a tool for reaching other filter bubbles?	[17] [18] [19] [20] [21]
13:15-14:00	Closing session					[22]
14:00-15:00	Networking lunch					

## Overview of the sessions

[Thursday 9 November

- [1] Opening session** **(9 November, 10:30-12:30)**

The opening session of EuroPCom will take place in the European Parliament. High-level speakers representing each of the partner institutions will be invited to take part in an introductory debate and to share their personal experience of engaging citizens in a dialogue on European issues. This will be followed by an inspirational keynote speech (TEDx-style) on the EU and its communication challenges and opportunities. The audience will be given the opportunity to reflect further on this topic in the Q&A session. The opening session will conclude with the EuroPCom Public Communications Award ceremony.
  
- [2] Political campaigning - how and where is the battle won?** **(9 November, 14:30-16:00)**

2017 has borne witness to a series of critical elections across Europe and beyond, where conventional political wisdom that domestic political campaigns are centred almost exclusively on local rather than European or even global themes no longer applies. In these turbulent times, campaign teams have been working hard to identify the right mix of communication messages and channels, as well as capitalising on digital progress and get-out-the-vote strategies, in order to have the greatest impact on voters' choices. Many people say that democracy works best when no vote is taken for granted, but how and where is the battle won?
  
- [3] Employee advocacy – engaging your staff as ambassadors** **(9 November, 14:30-16:00)**

Is your organisation doing everything it can to harness the communication potential of employees? In today's era of declining trust, many businesses and institutions are finding that staff count amongst their most authentic and credible ambassadors. Tapping into employees' networks can considerably extend the reach of communication actions (more than tenfold, according to some estimates). In addition to the organizational benefits, employee advocacy programmes provide great opportunities for engagement, motivation and personal development. This workshop will look at several examples of successful programmes in both the online and offline worlds.
  
- [4] The Age of Big Data: data mining and communication** **(9 November, 14:30-16:00)**

As data becomes more ubiquitous and easy to collect, including via social media, we are faced with a "tsunami" of potential data points. With the explosion of Big Data, the key is to take advantage of innovative opportunities to put raw data to use in actionable ways. This is where data mining, the automated extraction of hidden predictive information from large datasets, comes to play as a powerful aid to predict trends and behaviours, allowing for knowledge-driven decisions on engaging audiences across channels. This session will explore the potential of data mining for optimizing communication and will dig deeper into the many ways data mining can have an impact.
  
- [5] How to produce videos with a smartphone** **(9 November, 14:30-16:00)**

We are experiencing a dramatic video revolution. Facebook and Snapchat have both surpassed 8 billion daily video views and experts predict that 74% of all internet traffic in 2017 will come from video. This makes video one of the most indispensable digital communication tools, in particular on social platforms. You do not need a degree in film to make an excellent video these days. With the right technique, you can produce a great-looking video quickly and without expensive equipment. Join this EuroPCom mini-training to help you create engaging video content with little more than a smartphone.
  
- [6] Interactive Cities: the use of social media and digital tools** **(9 November, 14:30-16:00)**

This Ideas Lab will be fully participatory, designed to give everyone in the room a voice in addressing the key issues of the session and producing actionable outcomes. The URBACT-funded network Interactive Cities

brings together cities from around Europe on projects where new media can help urban regeneration and economic development. This Lab will feature cities from around Europe sharing stories of their experience in using social media and digital tools to stimulate stakeholder engagement.

**[7] Raising emotional engagement with Europe: a love story of grassroots initiatives (9 November, 16:30-18:00)**

In many EU countries, pro-European grassroots initiatives have developed for different reasons at local, regional and national levels, often as a response to rising levels of Euroscepticism and populism. Protests, online discussions, local debates and media visibility have inspired debates about Europe's (democratic) identity and its future, with links to domestic discussions, both at national and regional level. In the spirit of learning from those who have succeeded in engaging citizens for Europe, this session will take a closer look at their communication approaches, techniques and experiences so far, and ask what – if anything – they expect from public institutions.

**[8] Know your target: behavioural insights and audience perspectives (9 November, 16:30-18:00)**

Understanding your audience is vital when it comes to communicating your project. More often than not, however, public institutions continue to focus on what they want to say and how they want to say it. They rarely stop to consider what the audience wants to hear or how they want the message delivered. By adding behavioural insights and audience perspectives to the communication toolkit, public communicators can gain valuable insights into more engaging and effective communications that drive change and help cut through the noise. Join this workshop to learn more about how reach across the chaos and establish effective communication with your audience.

**[9] Where is social media headed? The biggest trends to watch out for. (9 November, 16:30-18:00)**

The social media landscape moves quickly. The mobile transformation is almost complete. Along with mobile, video is the present and future king, with a sharp rise in live video content that makes users feel like they are a genuine part of the experience. Virtual reality and augmented reality are making their presence felt. The shift towards more interactive, inspirational and emotionally engaging content is evident. Meanwhile, social media, once a playground for the young, has been colonised by an older demographic. Paid amplification is becoming standard, platforms are introducing integrated bots, and users are having doubts about their privacy and security. Anticipating future trends is vital for the proper allocation of resources and the development of an integrated communications approach. So where is social media headed?

**[10] Engaging citizens in a debate on Europe: local dialogues "Reflecting on Europe" (9 November, 16:30-18:00)**

In an effort to bring the EU agenda closer to local communities, the European Committee of the Regions launched the "Reflecting on Europe" initiative as a platform for engaging citizens in their home towns and regions in the ongoing discussion on the future of the EU. To this effect, the CoR is organising 135 citizens' debates and gathering feedback via an online survey. This session will focus on sharing, reviewing and debating the experiences of local and regional organisers, local politicians and other EU institutions holding similar events. Join us in exploring effective approaches to dialogue on Europe with the public at large.

**[11] Catalogue of good practice for communicating with young people (9 November, 16:30-18:00)**

This Ideas Lab will be fully participatory, designed to give everyone in the room a voice in addressing the key issues of the session and producing actionable outcomes. Highlighting the crucial importance of young people to the future of the European project, this Lab will create a space for identifying specific measures that can be used to tailor EU communication to the needs of millennials and Generation Z. The result will be a "catalogue of good practices" that could be shared with the EuroPCom community to support them in their efforts to communicate with the future of the EU: young people.

[Friday 10 November

**[12] Tackling populism and Euroscepticism at local level (10 November, 9:15-10:45)**

More than ever, the EU of today is facing polarization, the rise of anti-establishment movements and the erosion of confidence in the Union. Accelerated by the euro-zone and migration crises, populism and Euroscepticism are gaining momentum across many countries. Amid disillusionment with and growing mistrust in the institutions, Europe needs to find a meaningful way to challenge populist voices and dilute Eurosceptic sentiments by engaging citizens in the European project. Clearly, this cannot be done in Brussels - real change is locally driven. This workshop will share concrete experiences of such local approaches.

**[13] Who earns the trust of citizens and why: key findings of global studies (10 November, 9:15-10:45)**

The latest research clearly shows that trust is in crisis in Europe and around the world. The general population's trust in government, media, business and NGOs has declined sharply, turning peoples' hopes into fears. This tendency can also be seen in the considerable gap between perceptions and reality – people tend to overestimate what they worry about. Such tensions in society mean that public communicators need to step outside their traditional top-down roles and find a new, more participatory operating model. This session will present the key findings from global studies and offer recommendations for making communication functions more future-proof.

**[14] Media literacy in the post-truth era – surviving in a world of fake news and misinformation (10 November, 9:15-10:45)**

Media literacy is the doorway to meaningful participation in our media-driven societies. When we swim in a sea of information every day, we need to be able to discriminate between relevant and obsolete information, between true and false news, advertising or just plain fiction. Against the backdrop of current political and societal developments in Europe, having the capacity to access, critically understand and interact with the media, has never been as important as it is now. So how do we survive in a world of fake news and misinformation? And what can be done to encourage better media literacy?

**[15] Ten pitfalls to avoid when moderating debates (10 November, 9:15-10:45)**

You have just been asked to moderate a debate, and after the initial thrill at being invited has passed, you may start wondering whether you have the skills it takes to do the job properly. What does a moderator actually do that makes a session stimulating? The moderator's job is to ensure that the audience's needs are met, set the tone and pace, monitor the content, and ensure contributions are relevant by remaining vigilant at all times; in other words, it is an exercise in "planned spontaneity". Stressed already? Join this EuroPCom mini-training to help you make sure the next debate you moderate is lively, engaging and worthwhile.

**[16] From audience to partner: exploring innovative engagement approaches to boosting policy effectiveness (10 November, 9:15-10:45)**

This Ideas Lab will be fully participatory, designed to give everyone in the room a voice in addressing the key issues of the session and producing actionable outcomes. The Lab will examine and discuss which communication approaches can help foster citizen engagement in achieving European and national policy objectives. Join us to explore ways of bringing about change — in people's perception, attitudes and behaviour — as the ultimate goal of policy interventions.

**[17] Communicating Europe – the role and impact of public service broadcasters (10 November, 11:15-12:45)**

European public service broadcasters operate in a rapidly changing environment, confronted by the emergence of new digital business models and platforms that are particularly attractive for younger viewers. Nevertheless, in most countries across Europe, public broadcasters are still the key source of information that people turn to for news about the European Union. The aim of this workshop is to share successful and

less-successful experiences of public broadcasters in this context, with a view to understanding how they select news about Europe, what stories are considered important to present and discuss, and what kind of feedback they receive from their audience.

**[18] Drivers of engagement: participatory – communicative projects and concepts (10 November, 11:15-12:45)**

Across Europe, administrations at all levels of governance are paying increasing attention to the need to involve citizens in shaping the plans and programmes that significantly affect their lives. Beyond supporting democracy, good governance, and accountability, the input of the general public is a valuable resource for policy making. New ways of approaching communication, collaboration and co-creation between amateurs and professionals from different disciplinary backgrounds have unlocked creative talent and brought about innovative solutions. This workshop will examine ways of creating responsive and integrative communication approaches to citizen participation, as illustrated by specific projects.

**[19] Review of EU institutional communication (10 November, 11:15-12:45)**

Over the past few years, EU institutions have invested a considerable amount of effort in improving communicating Europe. A new approach to corporate communication was launched by the Commission in 2017, communicating directly to citizens along three narratives: EU delivers, EU empowers and EU protects. The Parliament developed a new all-encompassing consistent communication strategy. Significant attention and resources have been directed at social media activity by all EU institutions, while working together on further cooperation and streamlining of communication activities. This panel will discuss the efforts made so far and invite the audience for a constructive scrutiny.

**[20] The rise of MADCOMs (10 November, 11:15-12:45)**

Machine-driven communication is already with us, and artificial intelligence-enabled tools such as chatbots will soon be omnipresent in the online information space and social media. Advances in artificial intelligence are expected to radically increase the efficacy of machine-driven communication, allowing our communication to be fully customizable and stimulate greater engagement through data-driven insights. This will certainly make our jobs easier and our methods more efficient. But when chatbots become nearly indistinguishable from a human being, this may have serious implications for how trustworthy or biased our messages are perceived to be. How will artificial intelligence transform the way we communicate?

**[21] Storytelling: a tool for reaching other filter bubbles? (10 November, 11:15-12:45)**

This Ideas Lab will be fully participatory, designed to give everyone in the room a voice in addressing the key issues of the session and producing actionable outcomes. Thanks to developments in the digital world, many of us find it easier to communicate and align with like-minded organisations and individuals. However, the same enabling technologies may trap us in so-called "information silos". How can we reach out to other "echo chambers" and ensure that our message is not only heard but understood as well?

**[22] Closing session (10 November, 13:15-14:00)**

The closing session at the end of the conference will gather together the results of the ideas labs, presented by the lab leaders. These will be discussed with the audience and ideas lab facilitators. The debate will also aim to discuss how we can identify effective ways to engage citizens in the European project and in public affairs more generally, and establish active channels for two-way communication through listening, conversation and implementation of any feedback received.



### Ideas labs

Interested in sharing and discussing your experience with colleagues?

Would you like to learn from your peers?

Looking for partners for your project?

Join one of our fully participatory Ideas Labs!

### Submit your project for the EuroPCom award!

The fifth Award will be presented at opening session of the conference. In addition, a special prize 2017 will give recognition to an innovative communication project that aims to boost citizen engagement for the EU. Entries by **1 September 2017**.

### Programme updates, information, and online registration:

[www.cor.europa.eu/europcom](http://www.cor.europa.eu/europcom)

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The annual EuroPCom conference is an initiative of the European Committee of the Regions, organised in joint partnership with the European Parliament, the Council of the EU, the European Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee.



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