



Catalogue of good practice for communicating with young people

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This Ideas Lab was 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 in the future of the European venture, this lab created a space for identifying specific measures that can be used to tailor EU communication to the needs of millennials and Generation Z. The result was 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.

The session began with participants watching videos of young people from around the EU, addressing their questions directly to the participants. Each question would form the basis of a table discussion, with topics ranging from displaying integrity and use of social media to making young people more interested in the EU's work. Participants then went to their tables which were moderated by young volunteers. As well as considering what assumptions guided their ideas on communicating with young people, participants were asked to consider what questions remained unanswered and offer practical advice for communicators.

After a lively hour of discussion, each group presented their findings. Discussing the topic of an **increased need for immediacy** among young people, the first group highlighted the importance of defining a target audience for content about the EU, in order to use the most appropriate language. One practical recommendation involved seeking out influencers as social media ambassadors to promote the EU's messages online the moment they are available, rather than going through the traditional press.

Discussing the challenge of **communicating with integrity and sincerity on the goals and values of the EU**, the second group considered that work must begin within the EU institutions. This group emphasised the importance of impartial teaching at an early age. Greater international cooperation in education was also suggested as a potential approach to tackle this difficult issue. It was also emphasised that much of the infrastructure for communicating with young people is already in place, for example through the Eurodesk Network, and the focus should be on increasing visibility.

The third table had the challenge of considering how the EU can **involve young people in the creation of its content**. This group pointed to the variety of social media platforms which the EU already uses, and the different styles of content they require. While presenting a challenge, this can also be an opportunity for participation and co-creation by young people. Their advice was that "no risk = no gain", encouraging the EU to forget political correctness in order to appeal to young people, as well as engaging them in the policy process by asking questions as well as giving answers.



Tackling the question of **giving young people a voice**, the fourth table encouraged the EU to address and listen to young Europeans more directly, as well as promoting tangible schemes and projects for them to engage in.

Whilst all groups touched on **best practices for social media use**, one table focused on this topic. They emphasised that young people's short attention spans should determine the style of content about the EU, but acknowledged the challenge of creating good quality, credible online content in a short space of time, especially given the challenge of translating it into the EU's twenty-four official languages. Their advice was to focus on emotive content, focusing on examples of where EU policies have created positive change. They also stressed that content must not look desperate in order to keep young people engaged.

The sixth table discussed **how to encourage action** through communication with young people. They acknowledged that young people face an information overload, and part of the challenge for EU communicators is standing out from calls to activism and participation from other sources. Reforming the European Citizens' Initiative, which allows citizens to participate directly in EU policy development, with a more youth-focused approach, was one tangible policy suggestion from this group.

The last group discussed **how the EU can increase young people's interest in its work**. Like other groups, they touched upon the importance of education and of the local element in bringing the EU's work closer to people's everyday lives. The positive example of the Erasmus programme was cited, and the group emphasised the importance of such programmes in placing the EU in the role of enabler. The way in which national politicians talk about the EU was seen as crucial in forging interest and opinions, and greater engagement between MEPs and their constituents was suggested, to ensure that positive EU messages reach young people.

At the end of the session, **Ms Román** invited the participants to express, in their own words, how they felt following the Ideas Lab. Answers ranged from enthusiastic and inspired to intrigued and even "old". Overall, participants were encouraged to reflect upon best practices and tangible advice to be applied in their work when communicating with young people.

The Ideas Lab concluded that communication should focus on results and their usability, should use more visual and digital content which triggers emotions, and should forget about political correctness. Participants also felt that the EU should communicate with immediacy, integrity and authenticity, but should also engage in two-way communication. More than just communicating facts, the EU should also be able to reach people directly and ask them about their expectations and thoughts.