Looking forward!
7 & 8/11/2019, Brussels
Preliminary Programme
EuroPCom 2019

Right after the arrival of the newly elected European Parliament and the new College of the European Commission, the timing could not be better for communication experts to gather and capitalise on the opportunity provided by the start of this new term of office. Those who communicate Europe at national, regional and local level as well as in the EU institutions are coming together to exchange new ideas and discuss methods and tools. Let us look forward together and think of a fresh start to communicate in and on Europe!

Three main clusters

**ELECTIONS**
- Looking back at the European elections

**CITIZENS**
- Engaging (with) citizens and foster local and regional communication

**TOOLS AND TRENDS**
- Tools and trends to communicating Europe

Formats

**Workshop**
- Bringing communicators together on a specific topic and presenting practical case studies.

**Mini Trainings**
- "Hands-on" sessions on selected practical skills lead by an experienced trainer.

**Ideas Labs**
- Open, fully participatory sessions, providing space for active interaction, co-creation and cooperation. The Ideas Labs are set up by participants based on a call for interest.

**EuroPCom Market Place**
- Interactive opportunity for participants to bring in their projects and ideas, to exchange experience and best practices with other participants and to learn from each other.

**EuroPCom Talks**
- Short inspiring keynote speeches.
### 7 November 2019

**10.30-12.00 Opening session** – Looking forward! A fresh start to communicate Europe

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**18.00-19.30 Evening reception** – Celebrating the 10th anniversary of EuroPCom

### 8 November 2019

**09.15-10.45 Social Media in the 2019 elections: what we expected, what happened, what next**

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**11.15-12.45 Exploiting the media mix**

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Thursday 7 November 2019

1 Opening session: Looking forward! A fresh start to communicating Europe
10:30-12:00

During the opening session of EuroPCom 2019, we will take the time to look back and forward on European public communication. Where do we stand after the European elections? And where do we want to go from here? What are the challenges for public communicators? (How) can better communication help shape Europe’s future? Experts from different backgrounds will come to the European Parliament’s Hemicycle to hold discussions with the EuroPCom community. Let us look forward together! …and not just to the next two days.

2 The European elections campaigns: What worked, what did not?
14:30-16:00

Last year, the EuroPCom conference was about campaigning for Europe and we came up with a practical take-away for each session. But how did we perform in practice? After the European elections, we have the opportunity to assess the effects of joint communication efforts and analyse the dynamics around the various campaigns. This session will be an opportunity for a qualitative and quantitative evaluation of what worked and what did not.

3 Out of the dark: cohesion policy to connect the EU and its citizens
14:30-16:00

Cohesion policy is the only EU policy reaching every corner of the EU, providing a unique platform to address and involve its citizens. Almost 80% of citizens believe that EU-funded projects on the development of cities or regions have been positive. However, only one third of European citizens actually know of EU co-financed projects in the area in which they live. Why is that the case? The panellists will share their views on better communication on cohesion policy and how to promote citizens’ engagement or public discussion.

4 Checking the numbers: evaluation of communication campaigns
14:30-16:00

Communication campaigns in public communication differ from those in the private sector, as their success is often not measurable in sales or monetary value. So how do you know if your communication was effective? What are your success indicators? What do you benchmark against? In this session, experienced practitioners will share their approaches to evaluating the outcomes and impact of communication campaigns and showcase benchmarks, definitions and measures of performance.

5 How to start a podcast and why you should
14:30-16:00

Podcasts are the perfect medium for political and science communication. They are cheap and easy to produce, can be recorded when convenient to you, and have the potential to reach a wide global audience. They can also raise the profile of individuals or institutions while providing a valuable resource for society. On top of that, they are fun! This session provides a crash course on podcasting. It will outline some of the key benefits of podcasting, and provide a live demonstration of the recording process from start to finish.
6  **Innovative citizen engagement to counter populism**

14:30-16:00

Establishing a close link with European citizens as well as countering and responding to populist movements remain at the heart of the EU’s communication goals. Therefore, we need new ways of engaging citizens about decisions that affect their lives. Participants in this Ideas Lab will discover and take part in a real time citizen participation simulation of the unique #HomeParliaments experience and discover ways to strengthen democracy and fight populism together with the other participants.

7  **Making the 2019 European elections a local issue: examples and experiences**

16:30-18:00

One of the key goals of the election campaign was to raise awareness among voters and increase turnout. And indeed, we saw the highest voter participation figures in twenty years, even if the numbers varied greatly across Europe and in some countries voter turnout was still alarmingly low. Speakers from the local level will share examples and experiences of how they sought to make the European Parliament elections more of a local issue this time and how it was possible to increase outreach and engagement. Is local the new global? Join this session for more insights!

8  **(Re)connecting with young Europeans**

16:30-18:00

40% of voters in the European elections were under 35, which was 13% more than in 2014. This follows a general trend towards more political and societal engagement of young people, apparent for example during the “Fridays for Future” movement. Gearing campaign efforts increasingly towards first-time and young voters also might have had an effect. Building on this promising development, what are current topics to get their attention and further spark their interest? What can be done to engage (with) young Europeans on public policy issues? Find out with our panellists!

9  **Getting information across with emotion and humour**

16:30-18:00

Social media is an open window to share information and hold dialogue with millions of people. But how can communication on social media be more attractive and engaging? One key element is personalisation and finding a way to balance facts and practical information with emotion and humour. Users want to be treated as individuals and they interact much more with content if it is relatable. Social media experts will share specific examples of how emotion and humour can improve social media use in public communication.

10  **Storytelling in political speechwriting**

16:30-18:00

Speeches play a central role in public and political communication. A good speech is something you will remember. But what makes a good speech? Our renowned expert will make you aware of the key principles for writing in a persuasive way, incorporating humour. Be part of this session for an entertaining yet practical look at political speechwriting!

11  **We are all influencers**

16:30-18:00

The European Parliament’s ground game strategy during the election campaign built on the idea of transforming the audience into actors and empowering citizens to become influencers in their communities. The experience provided the opportunity to explore the activism of citizens on social media and beyond. Is there a way to keep up the momentum and energy after the elections? How can we keep the empowerment going during times of less political intensity? Come up with ideas on innovative strategies to keep citizens engaged in the public sphere!
12 Social media in the 2019 elections: what was expected, what happened, what next

09:15-10:45

Nowadays, public debate is taking place more and more on social media, and so is campaigning. The ground game strategy was thus a major part of the European Parliament election campaign. But (how) did the institutional input affect the national debate on social media? What were the challenges faced by those managing the election campaigns? And now, how do we carry on and what are the lessons for next time? Experts will give answers to those and other questions during this session on social media in the 2019 European elections.

13 Power and perils of narratives

09:15-10:45

When replying to populists, we are in danger of following their patterns of debate. Adopting populist narratives and accepting how they frame issues, however, is harmful to an open and inclusive public debate. Is it possible to develop narratives to counter extremist populism without falling into this trap? What would those narratives look like? What data do we have to base those narratives on? Start talking with our panellists!

14 What is next for citizens’ consultations?

09:15-10:45

In recent years, institutions and governments at all levels have involved citizens more frequently in participatory processes, with the aim of engaging them in their decision making. Citizens’ consultations in particular, where ordinary people are entrusted with delivering policy recommendations on specific issues, are trending all over the world. Where is this development in participatory democracy going? Will there be a more permanent or coordinated approach to citizens’ consultations? Come and enrich the debate with your experience and ideas!

15 Cutting through the noise: how to react to a disinformation attack

09:15-10:45

It starts on fringe websites, spreads to social media, to the newsfeeds on your network and further – and it targets your organisation. How do you react to disinformation as a public communicator? In this interactive training session, our experts guide you through the main principles of becoming more aware of and resilient to disinformation. Test your ideas, share your experience and learn more!

16 EU open data: how to fill the gap between data and citizens?

09:15-10:45

The role and importance of data have been growing in every sphere from governance to education, as we are becoming a data-driven society through ever-increasing digitalisation. While data is already exploited for and by decision makers, citizens do not always seem to understand or see their utility. Participants in this Ideas Lab will explore how to better engage citizens and empower them through open data.

17 Exploiting the media mix

11:15-12:45

For some time now, one of the key channels for improving communication and increasing outreach has seemed to be social media, but opinion polls show that people perceive traditional media as the most trusted source of news. Therefore, when planning communication strategies, communicators should exploit the full media mix of traditional and new, offline and online channels. How can we go about this? Learn more in a discussion with our panellists!
18 Selling heavy topics 2.0

11:15-12:45

Last year we discussed how to communicate heavy topics, from the budget to space policies – but there is more! Therefore, we are bringing together experts on controversy as well as experts from the interface of science and communication once again to give you further insights on how to convey simple messages on complex political or technical issues and how to create a buzz around scientific discoveries. Be there and add your own perspective to the debate!

19 Inclusive communication: content for everybody

11:15-12:45

People are certainly more aware of gender and minority concerns in communication than they were a decade ago. Increased efforts and formal agreements are being made to improve the current situation. Let us discuss what we can do to make our overall public communication more inclusive. What questions should we ask ourselves for our communication to be relevant to different parts of society? In this session, we will examine how to apply an inclusive, intersectoral approach to communication and how to go about applying those insights in practice. Share your views and experiences!

20 How to organise a citizens’ consultation?

11:15-12:45

Setting up a citizens’ consultation requires sound planning, good organisation and a link to political decision making. How do you select and invite participants? How do you produce results? Which elements have to be kept in mind, what is crucial, but easily forgotten? We invited an expert to guide you through a checklist of how to organise a citizens’ consultation. Have you thought of everything for your own event? Join this training session and find out!

21 Real time strategy for communicating integration

11:15-12:45

How can we improve the perception of the integration of migrants and refugees? What messages work for different target audiences? How could municipalities and regions present a stronger narrative of solidarity and counter disinformation? Using the LEGO® Serious Play® method, we will create communication scenarios by visualising values, identities and narratives. Join this Ideas Lab and play real time strategy to better communicate on integration!

22 Closing session

13:00-14:00

The closing session will conclude EuroPCom 2019 with some inspiring thoughts and conclusions and give food for thought for public communication in and on Europe after the elections. Be part of this last session and take the opportunity to share your thoughts and main take-aways from this conference!
The EuroPCom conference is designed for public communication experts from local, regional, national and European authorities. The 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, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Investment Bank.