

Report



- Date and time: 7 December 2020, 16:00 - 17:30
- Title of the session: **Narratives for climate communication**
- Format (select one): Ideas Lab
- Facilitators: **Roberto Rinaldi** (Policy Officer, ENVE Commission, European Committee of the Regions), **Marta Mansanet** (Trainee, ENVE Commission, European Committee of the Regions), **Jean Tanti** (Assistant, ENVE Commission, European Committee of the Regions)

Main topics discussed

This Idea Lab discussed the narratives for climate communication. Specifically, the sessions were detailing the concept of political framing in the case of sensitive topics. We explored the do's and don'ts of the communication process.

The session was divided in two groups:

- 1) Wildlife management/conservation, food, agriculture and transportation.
- 2) How to promote a vegetarian/vegan diet from a communication point of view: what are the do's and don'ts? The speakers shared examples of campaigns on vegetarianism/veganism. The focus of the break-out session was on meat consumption. Do's and don'ts were discussed but in actual fact mainly do's came up.

General additions from the other break out room included: we should take into account our audience and also cultural differences between the EU Member States. The structure of communication is also important. Greenwashing is another element that we should be aware of when communicating. The importance of investing in the long term is key. This means including all relevant audiences, as all the stakeholders are essential to the debate.

Key messages from each speaker

By all accounts, convincing people to reduce meat consumption is still a struggle. In some countries, a meal without meat is still inconceivable. From an institutional point of view, it is important to take into consideration all perspectives and interests to avoid winners vs losers outcomes. We need to be careful in the way we communicate and how we engage with our target audience. The advice is to avoid taking sides and instead to remain open. For instance, we should avoid making people feel guilty about their diet and adopting a forceful approach, but rather go step by step in our communication by informing and encouraging the public to make small steps. In fact, we do not expect people to change to fast.

Solutions proposed

Do's

Be transparent and democratic (smart use of infographics, visuals, facts and figures, all with a good narrative).

Focus on economic and health benefits.

Focus on the positive, not the negative.

Displaying the carbon footprint in canteens could be one way to convince people.

Another way is sharing personal stories by athletes or famous people that change is possible.

Another solution could be to emphasise plant-based alternatives in communication.

The inclusion of facts and figures in the messaging might also make a contribution to communication (due to transparency, gaining trust, being convincing etc.), but there should not be too many.

Focus on young people, use influencers to transmit the message.

Take-away messages

Maria Mansanet: you need to take slow steps in your communication by using a progressive approach.

Gradually change past habits and educate young people (preferably) to learn more about their impact.

Roberto Rinaldi: strike a balance between a simple but not a simplistic message.