



Factsheet on the "Club of Venice"

Composition and scope

The "Club of Venice" is an informal gathering composed of the Directors-General / Directors / Heads of the information and communication services of the EU Member States and the EU Institutions (more precisely, the EP, the Council and the Commission). It was founded in 1986 under the auspices of the at that time Italian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Since 2003, it also includes the colleagues from the corresponding offices of the candidate countries which have already started negotiations with a view to further accession to the EU. Moreover, in 2008 and 2009 have joined the Club respectively the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, and the European Central Bank.

The purpose of the Club is to ensure the best possible exchange of information and experience in information and communication.

Honorary President of the Club is founder Mr Stefano Rolando, Professor of Public Communication at the University of Milano and former Head of the Italian government's information services.

Honorary Vice-Presidents are co-founder Mrs Mieke van den Berghe, former Director-General of the Belgian government information services, Mr Niels Thøgersen, former Director of the Information Services of European Commission DG COMM, Mr Hans Brunmayr, former Director-General for Press, Communication and Transparency at the Council of the EU and Judit Gyárfás Fekete, former Deputy Director-General of Communication at the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



The Venice Club steering committee comprises also the members from the host nations of the previous, pending and next plenary meetings: Ms Anna Maria Villa and Ms Tiziana Antonelli (Italy) and Ms Agnieszka Kudlińska (Poland).

Coordinators of the Club are Mr Mike Granatt, former Director-General of the UK government's information and communication services, and Mr Vincenzo Le Voci (EU Council Secretariat - Information Policy).

Meetings

The Club meets in plenary sessions twice a year: usually in Venice, in November (¹), and in the country holding the EU Presidency, or in another country willing to host the plenary on a voluntary basis, in the spring season.

The Club's plenary meetings bring the members together for presentations, discussions and a comprehensive exchange of best practice on communication topics, including communication techniques, for a couple of days.



Thematic meetings and workshops are arranged on specific issues such as opinion polls, web communication, TV and radio activities, other interactive techniques, crisis communication, public diplomacy, etc.

Counting plenary sessions, thematic meetings and workshops, in the 25 years of its history the Club met approximately sixty times.

Following the common practice, the draft agenda of the plenary sessions has two components:

- a. public institutional communication on issues having a trans-national interest;
- b. communication on EU issues.

Latest news

The most recent plenary sessions of the Club of Venice took place on 3-4 June 2010 in Gozo (Malta), on 18-19 November 2010 in Venice and in Warsaw on 26-27 May 2011.

In Gozo and Venice the Club tackled today's challenges for media and journalism, the growing interest for social networks and the development of "Living Europe" (European public platform on line). It examined new trends on public diplomacy and branding, work in progress in "Communicating Europe in Partnership" and "Communicating Europe in Schools". The November plenary in Venice hosted a debate on the role of governmental and institutional communication.



On 20 October 2010, the Club of Venice organized a workshop in Brussels on social media and interactive communication as well as on capacity building.

¹ In November 2007 the plenary meeting of the Club was hosted in Rome, since the Italian authorities decided to invite the Club members exceptionally to the capital, in the framework of the celebrative events commemorating the 50th anniversary of the signature of the Rome Treaties.



In 2011 the Club's activities resumed with a workshop on web-communication & social media and on communication on the enlargement which took place in Brussels on 10 February. A thematic meeting on communicating Europe in schools was held in Budapest on 12-13 April.

The last plenary session took place in Warsaw on 26-27 May 2011. It discussed the following issues: impact assessment on communication, development in the audiovisual and interactive communication, the impact of the Treaty of Lisbon on the role of the rolling presidencies, the role of public communicators in handling exceptional situations (crisis communication) and capacity building. It was preceded by the 3rd workshop on "public diplomacy" held also in Warsaw on 25 May 2011.

The next plenary meeting will take place in Venice on 10-11 November 2011. On this occasion the Club will celebrate its 25th Anniversary.

