



## **Communication and Open Governance in a Time of Crisis**

A Workshop of the Club of Venice

led by the Open Governance Network for Europe

In partnership with the Democratic Society, Herbert Simon Society, Open Government Partnership, and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

Online, March 18, 2021

### **Concept note**

#### **Description**

As European officials work to address the multiple crises posed by climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a crucial opportunity to create the citizen trust and societal resilience necessary to not only overcome crises but also build back better.

Open government approaches to communication - including factual, clear public communication, as well as dialogue, listening, and building common ground - can help harness civic spirit toward common solutions to the shared challenges. But what does this mean in practice, and how can open approaches to communication be harnessed to build this trust and resilience?

This one-day workshop will convene senior government communications professionals from across Europe, with experts from civil society and academia, to share, learn, and develop new understanding and skills in civic participation, transparency, and accountability through communication toward stronger government policies and services in a time of crisis.

Drawing from a broad spectrum of experience and expertise on democracy and governance – from the Democratic Society’s wealth of participatory methods to the Open Government Partnership’s action planning around [open response and recovery](#); the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development’s (OECD) ongoing surveys on open government and understanding public communication; and the Herbert Simon Society’s work on behavioural approaches to governance – the workshop sessions will explore open government approaches to communication and unpack how they can be used across relevant, priority sectors such as pandemic recovery and climate action. The workshop will be held in English and under Chatham House Rule.

Through the workshop, participants will gain a better understanding of how open government approaches to communication can help improve citizen trust in governments during crises, but also how to build those approaches into everyday practice. Participants will gain this knowledge together with their peers across the European institutions and member states, as well as with leading thinkers and actors in civil society. After, the organisers will produce a memorandum including a best practice brief as well as key findings and orientations that will lay ground for future learning and innovation guidelines and for multilateral cooperation.

## Agenda

### 9:00 – 10:00 CET      **Part 1: Political discussion - Crisis and open communication**

*A framing conversation among public officials, researchers, and practitioners on the role of communication in a time of crisis, and how open approaches to communication can make the difference in improving citizen trust and civil society support for government crisis response and recovery toward more open, resilient societies.*

Welcome and introduction

- Vincenzo Le Voci, Secretary-General, Club of Venice
- Anthony Zacharzewski, Executive Director, Democratic Society

Speakers

- Prof. Dr. Andrea Römmele, Dean of Executive Education and Professor of Communication in Politics and Civil Society, Hertie School
- Katju Holkeri, Head of Governance and Leadership Policy Unit, Ministry of Finance, Government of Finland; Chair, OECD Working Party on Open Government
- Doreen Grove, Head of Open Government, Government of Scotland
- María Pía Junquera Temprano, Director General for Citizen Participation, Government of City of Madrid, Spain
- Irene Plank, Director for Strategic Communication at Federal Foreign Office, Government of Germany

Chair

- Anthony Zacharzewski

### 10:00 - 10:15 CET      **Break**

### 10:15 - 12:45 CET      **Part 2: Workshopping solutions - how does open government enable better pandemic response and recovery?**

*This series of four short workshop-style sessions will start with an open and frank discussion to table and address shared problems – what doesn't work? Then, participants will join two back-to-back problem-solving sessions focusing on practical approaches to tackling misinformation and making governments more accessible amid crises. Finally, Vincenzo Le Voci will lead a short concluding session to wrap up the lessons and recommendations shared throughout.*

#### 10:15 - 10:55 CET      **2.1 What doesn't work?**

*A session to frame two specific problems of misinformation and disinformation and one-sided communication and how open government approaches are crucial to the solutions. Led by Vincenzo Le Voci, with contributions from government officials and civil society representatives.*

#### 10:55 - 11:45 CET      **2.2 Tackling mis- and disinformation**

*A session to showcase and discuss good practice principles for public communication responses to misinformation, based on the OECD's forthcoming International Report on Public Communication. Led by Craig Matasick, policy analyst, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, with contributions from government officials and civil society representatives.*

#### 11:45 – 11:55 CET      **Break**

#### 11:55 - 12:45 CET      **2.3 Making government more accessible**

*A session to explore modes of collaboration and participation to build civil society and citizens into pandemic response and recovery. Led by Helen Turek, regional lead, Europe, Open Government Partnership, and contributions from government officials and civil society representatives.*

12:45 - 13:00 CET      **2.4 Morning conclusions**

*A moment to wrap-up the lessons, recommendations, and future priorities laid out during the morning's sessions. Led by Vincenzo Le Voci.*

**13:00 - 14:00 CET      Lunch break**

**14:00 - 15:15 CET      Part 3: Zooming in on new perspectives - Culture of error and prudential decision-making**

*A lecture by world-renowned psychologist Gerd Gigerenzer, President of the Herbert Simon Society and Director of the Harding Center for Risk Literacy at the University of Potsdam, Faculty of Health Sciences Brandenburg, followed by a Q&A discussion among participants.*

**15:15 - 15:30 CET      Break**

**15:30 - 16:30 CET      Part 4: Zooming out on partnerships for open governance**

*A roundtable discussion on the state of play, lessons learned, and future orientations to partnerships in open governance. Showcasing examples of European cross-border and cross-sectoral cooperation, this session will explore how to make the most of partnerships toward stronger democracy and governance practice.*

Speakers

- Marco Ricorda, Communications Officer, International Centre for Migration Policy Development
- Stephanie Bluma, Chief Communications and Campaigns Officer, Open Government Partnership
- Christian Spahr, Secretary-General of the Assembly of European Regions
- Daniel Hölzgen, Director of Communications, Council of Europe
- Pier Virgilio Dastoli, President, European Movement – Italy; Coordinator, Expert Committee of Public Communicators on the Future of Europe

Chair

- Vincenzo Le Voci

**16:30 - 16:45 CET      Part 5: Drawing conclusions and mapping out next steps**

- *led by Vincenzo Le Voci and Anthony Zacharzewski*

## **ABOUT THE CLUB OF VENICE**

*The Club of Venice (CV) is the informal network of the Directors-General / Directors / Heads of the information and communication services of the EU Member States, the UK and the EU Institutions. It was founded in 1986 under the auspices of the acting Italian Presidency of the Council of the EU. Since 2003, membership has been extended to the Heads of government communication offices of the EU accession candidate countries; and since 2008, to the European Council, EESC, CoR, ECB, EEAS and EIB. The OECD, Council of Europe and ICMPD are associated members of the CV.*

*The purpose of the Club is to stimulate exchange of information and experience and reinforce cooperation in all fields of public information and communication, sharing and discussing best practice in a wide variety of challenging fields such as crisis communication, capacity/capability building, training, ethics, resilience building and countering disinformation, public diplomacy and digital developments. CV governance is assured by a Steering Group composed by eight MS communication directors and the CV Secretary-General.*

## **ABOUT THE OPEN GOVERNANCE NETWORK FOR EUROPE**

*The Open Governance Network for Europe is a joint initiative of **The Democratic Society** - a networked organisation working across Europe to connect citizens with the decisions that shape their lives - and the **Open Government Partnership** - a multilateral initiative that works with governments and civil society globally to advance reforms to make governments more inclusive, responsive and accountable - that aims to connect and drive debate, learning, and innovation in open governance to improve democratic participation, transparency, and accountability in the European Union.*

*The network aims to help improve the state of European democracy, not only by generating a European community of knowledge of open governance principles, how they're best applied in practice, and why they make for better democracy in Europe, but also by helping connect and drive actors and innovators to turn open government principles into practice.*

## **ABOUT THE ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

*The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an international organisation that works to build better policies for better lives. Our goal is to shape policies that foster prosperity, equality, opportunity and well-being for all. We draw on 60 years of experience and insights to better prepare the world of tomorrow.*

*Together with governments, policy makers and citizens, we work on establishing evidence-based international standards and finding solutions to a range of social, economic and environmental challenges. From improving economic performance and creating jobs to fostering strong education and fighting international tax evasion, we provide a unique forum and knowledge hub for data and analysis, exchange of experiences, best-practice sharing, and advice on public policies and international standard-setting.*

## **ABOUT THE HERBERT SIMON SOCIETY**

*The Herbert Simon Society (HSS) is a non-profit international Network Research Institute that brings together cognitive scientists, economists, social scientists, computer scientists and philosophers aiming to renew and apply the fundamental concepts of economic rationality and social action. Starting from the seminal work of Herbert Simon in economics, psychology, artificial intelligence, organizational theory, management and philosophy of science the HSS wishes to tackle the current debate about new cognitive models of economic rationality and social action, the alternative architectures of mind, the mind-brain relations, the simulation of creativity, the uncertainty and complexity of economic and social environment.*