FINAL REPORT

Synthesis of the Results Achieved

Evaluation of the Communication and Promotional Activities of the OP HRE and a Realization of the Communication plan

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1. MANAGERIAL SUMMARY

1.1. Communication Focus (objectives and target groups)

Communication activities of the Managing authority of the Operational Programme Human Resources and Employment (MA OP HRE) in the period 2007-2010 followed the objectives set in the Communication Plan of the OP HRE (CoP OP HRE)

- to communicate existence and possibilities to participate in the programme and a social added value of the OP HRE
- communication within the implementation structure and with the subjects which influenced the SF implementation in the CZE
- communication for potential and current recipients of subsidies

1.2. Implemented Activities

In the given period, practically all planned communication activities of the Managing authority of the OP HRE in the fields of on-line communication, media communication, direct communication, audio-visual communication and promotional items (see. Annex 1 – Summary of the realized communication activities) were realized. More than 24 mil. CZK from the OP HRE technical assistance was invested for the realization of the communication activities.

Impacts

- General awareness of general and expert public about the current support from the SF is relatively high. 80% of the Czech population knows that the EU provides the Czech Republic with a financial assistance from the structural funds. In the expert public group, this share is at 98%. With declining level of implementation (i.e. the structural funds, ESF, operational programmes, OP HRE), the awareness sinks.
- Approximately 38% of population recognized the ESF existence, and compared to the year 2007, awareness about the programme has almost doubled. This approximately corresponds to the EU average (42%). Existence of the OP HRE was recognized by circa 35% of the Czechs which, compared to the year 2007, represents growth by 11 p.p.
- Among expert public, 67% recognized the ESF existence and 83% recognized the OP HRE existence which also represents growth in comparison to the year 2007 by 18 p.p.
- Approximately a half of the Czech citizens know some project, co-financed from the EU. Around 20% of Czechs recently recognized how the EU concretely helps in the field of human resources development. A majority of the EU and the Czech citizens is convinced about a positive impact of the projects co-financed from the EU on their surroundings.
- Interest of the applicants in the subsidies from the OP HRE significantly exceeded possibilities of the programme given by the allocations for each year. In the 2007-2010 period, almost 8, 5 thousand applications in total amount of 69 thousand CZK were submitted which represents almost three times higher amount than the allocation for this period.

1.3. Evaluation of the OP HRE Communication Plan Realization

- Regarding the communication objectives and the evaluation criteria, the best proven were the tools of on-line media and direct communication. The internet and specialized web pages represent the most used information source for all target groups.
- General public drew information mostly from television and printed media. Although medialization of the programme in 2010 sank compared to 2007, contributions are of better

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quality and, excepting concrete projects, include also references about the institutions which are responsible for the ESF.

- For expert public, on the contrary, a significant source of information represents a direct communication. Promotional materials and publications are more or less supplements of the other communication tools.
- On-line communication towards general public is potentially useful. An impact could be further enhanced by completing the web pages with information focused on general public, eventually by more intense utilization of on-line campaigns or by social networks.

1.4. Recommendations

Recommendations towards the Planning of the OP HRE Communication Activities
In the field of communication planning, the evaluator formulated the following recommendations:
- To consider a revision of the objectives and completing the Communication plan in such a way it would better represent requirements on the strategic document for the OP HRE communication management in the 2011-2015 period.
- To define communication objectives in relation to existing, actual programme needs and in consensus with all MA departments.
- To boost involvement of the MA management in planning of communication objectives.
- To boost an engagement of other departments on a communication process.
- To advance systematically and methodically to a creation and a realization of annual communication plans.

Recommendations towards Monitoring and an Evaluation of the OP HRE Communication Plan
In the field of the CoP monitoring and evaluation, the evaluator formulated the following recommendations:
- To optimize the OP HRE Communication Plan indicators set in relation to defined communication objectives and a way of observing and continuous evaluation of the CoP objectives fulfilment so that it would provide a reliable and explanatory picture about a success of the communication strategy as a basis for its adjustment and management.
- To formulate indicators of impact in relation to the CoP defined objectives in such a way they would describe an extent of their fulfilment and to quantify target values so that it would be possible to continuously evaluate a success rate of communication activities.
- To realize a systematic observation and evaluation of the OP HRE communication on all levels – continuous, annual and general.

Recommendation to a Management of the OP HRE Communication Plan
In the field of a communication process management, the evaluator formulated the following basic recommendations:
- To boost perception of a communication as a strategic cross-section activity in the programme management and to boost cooperation with other MA departments, the MPSV and with the MA management.
- To boost perception of a significance of a publicity role inside the OP HRE Managing authority.
- To consistently respect the withdrawing of the communication plan budget

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- To conceptually cooperate with external suppliers

Recommendations for a Development and a Capacity Establishment of the MA in the Communication Field

In the field of the MA capacity development in the communication field, the evaluator formulated the following basic recommendation:

- To systematically support and develop competitions of personnel in the communication field – especially in the ESF Coordination and Horizontal Issues Unit; however, the personnel of this department should spread the know-how further across the MA.

Practical Recommendations

The evaluator formulated the following practical recommendations for each field of the CoP OP HRE communication mix:

- To improve quality of chosen communication tools with the aim to enhance their potential to address especially the target group general public
- To respect actual trends in planning as well as in realization of communication activities.
- To realize particular improvements in the field of communication tools execution mainly with the aim to improve addressing efficiency of the target group general public.

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2. EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

The project Evaluation of the Communication and Promotional Activities of the OP HRE was assigned with the aim to examine awareness of the Operational Programme Human Resources and Employment (further referred as the OP HRE) Communication Plan target groups about the European Social Fund (further referred as the ESF) and the OP HRE and to evaluate a real impact of the OP HRE Communication plan activities including the control of efficiency of the informational and promotional tools.

The aim of the evaluation team was to submit not only the conclusions of the evaluation, basic thesis and general recommendations. With regards to the experience from previously elaborated similar papers and with regards to the real state of the EU structural funds marketing communication in the CZE, a significant part of this paper is dedicated to methodical and practical proposals for the programme communication optimization in the second half of the programming period. The content of the paper reflects two different groups of readers:

➡ **Programme evaluators** who focus especially on the mechanism of evaluation of the communication objectives fulfilment and their contribution to the programme implementation.
➡ **Communication personnel of the OP HRE / ESF,** for whom the essential practical recommendations and concrete solutions proposals are important.

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3. REALIZATION OF THE OP HRE COMMUNICATION PLAN 2007-2010

3.1. Material Progress in the CoP OP HRE Realization

In the evaluated period 2007-2010 the Managing authority OP HRE (MPSV CZE – Department of the ESF Assistance Management) and three intermediating bodies (MPO CZE, MV CZE and MPSV CZE) realized communication activities which included the following basic categories:

➔ on-line communication
➔ medial communication
➔ direct communication
➔ audio-visual activities
➔ promotional items

In the evaluated period, **practically all planned communication activities of the OP HRE Managing authority were fulfilled**

Table: Summary of the realized communication activities of the 2007-2010 OP HRE Communication plan

Tool	Form	Indicators of outcome	2007	2008	2009	2010	2007-2010
The Internet (web pages)	Preserving of the www.esfr.cz where information about the OP HRE and its realized projects are published.	Web pages attendance	420 000	480 000	576 000	789 000	**2 265 000**
		Number of downloaded publications from the web pages	520 774			234 753	**755 527**
Printed and Film Materials	Brochures, informational leaflets and posters, instructions for applicants, instructive and promotional films or reportages on video, DVD or CD-ROM	Number of created publications	9	5	3	18	**35**
		Number of printed publication	25 700	26 300	3 054	26 900	**81 954**
The OP HRE Announcement[1]	Nationwide	Number of articles and publication in media	0	0	0	0	**0**
Annual and Final Reports	For the programme and for each project	Number of downloaded annual reports from the www pages	302	503	612	0	**1 417**
Seminars and Trainings	Nationwide, regional	Number of organized events	0	11	56	89	**156**
		Number of participants on the events	0	660	2 699	5 763	**9 122**
Informational Meetings in Regions[2]	Meeting of all target groups with subjects of the implementation structure, media participation	Number of organized events	0	0	0	0	**0**
		Number of participants on events	0	0	0	0	**0**
Conferences, Fairs	The programme and the projects presentation on	Number of organized events	2	1	5	2	**10**

[1] The articles regarding the operational programme announcement were not filed separately and are generally subsumed under the media communication in the chapter 4.1. Analysis of the Material Progress of the OP HRE Communication Plan Realization - the box: „Media communication".

[2] The communication tool was not used in the observed period.

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	thematically focused conferences and fairs (international, national, regional)	Number of participants on events	507	0	95 095	20 500	**116 102**
Media Communication (press, television, broadcast, the internet)	Nationwide, regional (press conference, articles, reportages, interviews, ads etc.)	Number of organized events	13	30	15	66	**124**
		Number of published articles	24	34	27	271	**356**
Promotional Items	Notepads, desks, pens, bags, stickers etc. according to the specialization and purpose	Number of produced pieces	3 300	4 000	96 865	31 515	**135 680**
Campaigns (the internet; billboards, citylights; TV spots; broadcast spots)	The ESF and the OP HRE awareness enhancement through focused campaigns	Number of created campaigns	0	2	0	2	**4**
		Number of published/emitted products	0	188	0	36	**224**
Database Mailing	Sending of news to the registered users of the web pages	Number of created products	0	0	1	1	**1**
		Number of addressed persons	0	0	1 831	3 048	**3 048**

3.2. Financing of the CoP 2007-2010

More than 24 mil. CZK was invested in the realization of the communication activities **by the technical assistance of the OP HRE.** Compared to the planned expanses of the individual OP HRE Annual communication plans this amount is significantly lower. Nevertheless, many activities prepared at the beginning of the programming period were financed from the resources of the OP HRD technical assistance 2004-2006.

Table: Expanses for the OP HRE (ESF) publicity from the technical assistance OP HRE

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2007–2010
Invoiced Expanses in Total (thousand CZK incl. VAT)	0	4 978	7 673	11 623	**24 275**

Table: Planned expanses for the OP HRE (ESF)

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2007–2010
Planned Expanses (thousand CZK incl. VAT)	0	45 900	21 550	28 301	**95 751**

Compared to the indicative distribution of the financial allocation for the CoP realization, **less than a half of the amount allocated for this period** was withdrawn. Although the actual expanses were lower than the originally estimated (and probably also somewhat overestimated), even with the lower budget all the crucial CoP activities were realized.

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3.3. Impacts of the OP HRE Communication Plan 2007-2010 Realization

The communication plan activities are realized in order to fulfil the set **main communication objective of the programme** – "*to enhance **awareness** of general public about the assistance provided to the Czech Republic from the structural funds, especially from the European Social Fund and from the Operational Programme Human Resources and Employment, to enhance its **transparency** and to create an unified concept of this assistance on all levels*"[3].

The ESF and the OP HRE communication is embedded in a brighter context of **the EU funds existence in the CZE** and general **attitudes** of the target groups **towards the subjects with which the programme works** (employment).
Human resources and (un)employment issues belong to the most important priorities of the Czech and the European society. Unemployment is, according to the Czechs, the most burning problem of public life. Awareness of general and expert public about the current support from the EU funds is also relatively high. However, with declining level of the EU assistance implementation (i.e. the structural funds, ESF, operational programmes, OP HRE), the awareness is significantly sinking. It can be said that **the administrative background of the funds withdrawing is for general public rather burden in the issue accessibility.** Establishment of awareness about the programme has its natural limitations. Generally speaking, expert public is better informed about the individual levels of the EU subsidies implementation than general public.

Awareness about the ESF in the Czech population (38%) **roughly corresponds to the EU average** (40%); compared to 2007 it almost **doubled.** In case of **concrete ESF operational programmes**, the **awareness** among general public **slightly rose** in 2010; however, it still can be considered minimal.

Awareness about the OP HRE considerably differs between general and expert public – only **35% of the Czech people recognized the OP HRE existence**, on the contrary **almost 83%** of expert public knew about it. During 2010, **awareness about the OP HRE** rose in both target groups (in case of general public it grew by 11 p.p., in case of expert public by18 p.p.). In awareness about the programme mission (especially employment support) and orientation of the supported activities (most frequently employment mediation and requalification) "**an understandable" name of the programme is reflected.** From all operational programmes financed from the ESF in the Czech Republic **the best-known programme is the OP HRE, followed by the OP EC. The least known is the OP Prague – Adaptability.**

In terms of qualitative aspects of perception, the OP HRE is generally perceived as **beneficial, important and interesting**, however, at the same time also **complicated** and for majority **little useful.** Awareness about the OP HRE by the public is limited to the programme name. This contributes to a high appraisal of significance and usefulness (employment or unemployment as a preferred issue) and, at the same time, to perception of the programme as "complicated" (term "human resources" evokes complexity).

Expert public perceived the programme as **administratively very demanding and with frequent conditions change.** Image of the programme is in case of expert public influenced primarily by

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[3] Global objective of the OP HRE 2007-2013 Communication plan (p. 5)

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personal experience with the programme (applying for subsidy, contact with the implementation structure) more than by the CoP OP HRE realization.

Public awareness about the EU assistance and its contributions can be expressed through the awareness about the projects co-financed from the EU (OP HRE) and a perception of this help. Approximately a half of general public knows some project co-financed from the EU from its surroundings; however, only **a fifth of the Czech population has recently recognized how the EU concretely helps in a human resources field.** Vast majority of the EU and Czech citizens is convinced about a **positive impact** of the EU co-financed projects on their surroundings.

Quality of the ESF (OP HRE) perception is influenced by the public opinion on distribution of the financial resources. Majority of general public and a half of expert public suppose that **the distribution of the financial resources from the structural funds is not transparent enough.** This can be considered as a significant fact which refers to importance of the qualitative aspects of the programme awareness – awareness enhancement itself should not represent sufficient communication objective.

A specific objective[4]of the proceeding informative measures is "*to ensure a success of the EU social and cohesion policy realization within the OP HRE with the aid of wide communication about **the existence and possibilities to participate on the programme** and about the added value which the OP HRE means for the society.*"

Awareness about possibility to get involved in the OP HRE differs significantly among general and expert public. **General public has rather no idea who** is eligible to **apply for a subsidy and cannot assess** whether **the OP HRE is useful for him or her. No communication tool of the OP HRE clearly represents a possibility to participate/directly profit from the resources withdrawing** which is reflected in numerous assessments of the programme as personally useless (65% of population). Population perceives the programme as beneficial, but more for the others which can be caused by inability to connect concrete contributions of the programme to situations in peoples' surroundings.

Expert public, on the other hand, **is better informed about the participation possibilities. Almost one half has some experience with the OP HRE financial resources withdrawing. Interest of the applicant in the OP HRE subsidies significantly exceeded the programme possibilities given by the allocation for each year.** In the period 2007-2010, **almost 8.5 thousand applications for a subsidy were submitted in total amount of 69 billion CZK** which represents almost three times higher amount than the originally allocated for the period.

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[4] Specific objective of the Communication plan for the OP HRE 2007-2013 (p. 5)

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4. EVALUATION OF THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

In order to evaluate a success rate of the communication objectives achieving, it is necessary to evaluate **a quality of a communication process management (planning, realization, evaluation)** and a **quality of implementation** of each tool used within the communication plan.

The evaluation was undertaken according to the 3E criteria (**Effectiveness, Efficiency, Economy**) evaluating „output" of the OP HRE Communication plan in the given period.

➔ **Evaluation of a management of the communication process** – evaluates the communication process management itself as a factor of success of the communication objectives accomplishment.

➔ **criteria tools evaluation –** evaluates the communication plan realization in terms of activities

Planning of the communication activities

Planning of the communication activities is managed with the aim to fulfil the communication objectives of the Framework CoP OP HRE. These objectives are, however, only **generally defined** and **are not quantified**. Too generally set communication objectives are difficult to measure and do not allow to determine if and how successfully they were realized. In other words, we may claim the objectives were fulfilled but not to what extent they were fulfilled.

Similarly, the target groups are defined only very vaguely in their communication plans which makes it difficult to measure what concrete impacts the communication activities had on them and if and how else the efficiency improvement could be achieved.

Inability to exactly determine extent and success rate of the communication objectives fulfilment further complicates the effort to objectively evaluate if the objectives were achieved in an economic manner.

The Managing authority used basically all possibilities for **the communication activities realization – mainly through their own employees.** Enhancement of the communication activities purposefulness is negatively influenced by the following factors:

➔ Internal administrative environment of the MA / Ministry (length of the internal approving process of the planned communication activities, flexibility of communication with press departments). Complicated procedures for cooperation with external suppliers, a rigid approval system within and outside the OP HRE implementation structure constrains communication management flexibility and complicates flexible reacting on changes of environment, target groups etc. Limited experience of the communicative personnel and unsystematic education restricts access and usability of the newest tools and procedures and searching for more efficient solutions for the communication objectives fulfilment.

➔ Complicated **process of public tenders** in the field of marketing and communication

➔ Changes in the ministry management and their impact on the **activities timing.**

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➡ Weak understanding of **communication as a strategic and cross-section agenda** within the programme management and a weak co-operation of other MA departments and the management which originates from it.

Evaluation of the Communication Activities

The OP HRE Managing authority **evaluates communication activities** regularly in annual reports about the OP HRE fulfilment. However, these are more **summaries of the realized activities** rather than evaluation of their impact **and do not engage in success rate assessment.**

Suitability of a defined strategy should be examined by a regular assessment of the realized communication activities which should prove whether the communication strategy requires revision. The set **indicators do not provide explanatory picture** about the procedure of the CoP objectives fulfilment, about quality of the realized activities and they have with **a weak relationship with the needs of other agendas** of the programme (i.e. formal error rate in applications etc.). Current **monitoring indicators** require optimization and adjustment in such a way they would have sufficient explanatory value and comprehensibility and they would represent a metrics for continuous and interval assessing of a success of the communication objectives achieving. At the same time, they should emphasize observing **of the qualitative aspects of** the CoP target groups **awareness.**

Among annual assessments and multiannual evaluations, **a continuous assessment of the communication activities** consisting of simple surveys, web questionnaires for expert public and continuous nationwide surveys among general public (once per year) **is missing.** In such a way, it would be possible to observe changes and trends in behaviour of the target groups, their reaction on the communication tools and subsequently to make adjustments.

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5. EVALUATION OF THE COP OP HRE TOOLS

➔ **On-line communication** is one of the best assessed communication tools especially by general public. Among the target groups, the internet belongs to the most used communication tool and these groups also draw majority of information about the ESF there. The managing authority uses especially the ESF web pages for on-line communication. These are conceived primarily for expert public – they react on actual requirements of applicants and recipients and provide them with relevant information. In order to enhance the on-line communication impact also on general public, it is, nevertheless, necessary to adapt the web pages also for users from the general public group – i.e. to use less expert terminology and to present also the content which is potentially interesting.

➔ **Audio-visual communication** is a communication tool which influences especially general public. 72% of general public considers television being a suitable informational tool about the OP HRE. For expert public, on the other hand, television represents a suitable communication channel only in 13%. The ESF audio-visual campaign took place in form of TV spots and reportages about the projects in the TV programmes which were thematically connected with the ESF. That was assessed very positively and in the future, it is suitable to continue in such cooperation. The ESF TV spots created in 2008 which fulfil requirements on this form of marketing communication are also positively assessed. Their big advantage is a strong audio-visual style which, when sufficiently applied in television, quite unambiguously helps to identify the subject who ordered the advertisement. On the contrary, the other assessed spots (reportages about projects, advertisement campaign Gender Studies) miss a story which would drag the audience into a storyline, they are oversaturated with information and lack insight of the audience.

➔ **Redaction cooperation** is another communication tool which has a significant impact on general public. Daily press is the second most frequent source of information about the OP HRE and 75% of general public considers printed media suitable for informing about the structural funds. One of the most important elements of the redaction cooperation is a press release. In order to enhance its impact, it would be good to reduce expert terminology and to focus more on remarks about concrete projects and quotations of implementers.

➔ **Direct communication** belongs among the tools which **are preferred mainly by expert public –** for this target group, it means the fourth most used informational source whereas general public does not consider it a suitable communication channel at all. Expert public is offered qualitative and structured information in form of seminars, courses and workshops and personal and phone consultations. However valued is this way of communication, it interferes with the limits which result i.e. from the limited capacity possibilities. With regards to the decomposition of authority and competences among subjects of the implementation structure, the answers to the applicants/recipients can be interpreted differently, whereas possibilities of managing the direct communication are restricted. The solution can rest for instance in extended use of discussing platforms (the ESF forum) and their adequate technical improvement (introducing some form of online consultations).

➔ **Printed materials** (publications, leaflets etc.) are considered a substitute activity to the other communication activities. Majority of publications is focused "instructionally"– they refer to the structural funds withdrawing issue. Publications with concrete examples of the projects are less frequent. This communication activity thus has an impact on the whole target group expert public. In order to boost its impact, it would be good to obtain a feedback from the readers by for example placing the publication on the web with the possibility to comment.

➔ **Promotional items** serve mainly as a tool for fastening relationship of an applicant and a recipient to the Managing authority. Expert public assesses the promotional items positively especially for

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their practicality (office equipment, PC supplements etc.). Appreciated are also the items which are thematically connected with the ESF – for instance products from sheltered workshops or the Fair Trade products.

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6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A REALIZATION OF THE COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES 2011-2015

Recommendations of the evaluator are formulated within the structure in which the evaluation was undertaken, and result from a presumption that communication as a strategic part of management which supports the programme objectives fulfilment must be **based on:**

➜ High quality **planning process** which is anchored in the programme management and connected with programme needs and which sets concrete measurable and reachable objectives.

➜ Continuous **evaluation** of progress in fulfilling the set communication objectives which is based on observing of predicative „indicators of communication performance[5]" and allows to react on changes from external environment and changing needs of the programme.

➜ High quality **process of communication management** which manages to implement the activities according to a defined plan and realize them in the quality which ensures impact on the target groups and fulfilment of the communication objectives

➜ Expert **capacities** in marketing communication observing and assessing a rush development of internal and external environment of the programme implementation and accommodating the communication activities realization to it.

Based on the finished evaluation, the evaluator formulated the following **basic recommendations** for the OP HRE Communication plan realization in the period 2011-2015.

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1. RECOMMENDATIONS TOTHE PLANNING OF THE OP HRE AND ESF COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

2. RECOMMENDATIONS TO A MONITORING AND AN EVALUATION OF A COMMUNICATION PLAN

3. RECOMMENDATIONS TO AMANAGEMENT OF COMMUNICATION PLAN ACTIVITIES

4. RECOMMENDATIONS TO A DEVELOPMENT AND AN ESTABLISHMENT OFTHE MA CAPACITIES IN THE FIELD OF COMMUNICATION

5. PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES REALIZATION

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[5]In the KPI sense - key performance indicators

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6.1. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE PLANNING OF THE OP HRE AND ESF COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

To consider a revision of the objectives and to complete the Communication plan in such a way it would better fulfil the requirements on a strategic document for the OP HRE communication management in the period 2011-2015

6.1.1. To Define Communication Objectives in Relation with the Real, Actual Programme Needs and in Consensus with all MA Departments

The current communication objectives expressed by indicators and their fulfilment are significantly quantitative oriented – towards enhancement of target groups awareness about the programme or towards increasing the number of submitted applications. The evaluator recommends emphasizing a quantitative aspect in the communication objectives – the quality of awareness and real understanding of the target groups of the programme and its activities. Such conceived objectives will better reflect the MA needs in an actual phase of the programme implementation.

A communication environment around general public changes very quickly, and the current negative campaign around the EU funds withdrawing confirms it. Relatively dynamical change of the communication priorities and objectives are connected with it – for instance "change of perception from a well withdrawing subject to a transparently working subject."

6.1.2. To Boost Involvement of the MA Management in the Communication Objectives Planning

The Managing authority management should clearly define the main communication objectives according to the priorities as an overall image of the MA originates from it. The management must be involved in a creation of the next framework CoP but also in preparations of annual CoPs (especially by approving objectives and indicators).

6.1.3. To Boost Engagement of Other Departments on the Communication Process

Employees of the department could prepare and initiate a series of several creative meetings with the department management with the aim to gather and to organize topics of other departments and, on contrary, to get a support for their topics. Such engagement will again lead to an incremental active involvement of other employees in the mechanism of the OP HRE publicity.

6.1.4. To Approach Systematically and Methodically to Creation and Realization of Annual Communication Plans

Form and content of **the CoP OP HRE does not correspond to the actual strategic document.** It determines neither way nor possible scenarios how to achieve the objectives, it does not define certain milestones which are necessary to achieve in order to successfully fulfil overall objectives and which determine a content of communication and suitable communication tools. Therefore, it is necessary **to extend each annual CoP with a strategic background** which means to evaluate a progress in a CoP objectives fulfilling, to make a comprehensive insight in the key tasks in a long-term context and subsequently to decide about priorities for a given year. **First after these priorities are clear, operational and tactical tasks can be defined**, i.e. we can start planning concrete activities for a given year.

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An annual communication plan should be created and realized with regard to the fact it creates a functional **unit which will be efficient if all its parts are functional** i.e. if it is realized as a unit. This is especially true for a communication mix – i.e. a set of tools which we intend to fulfil primary objectives for a given year with. It should be created in accordance with this goal. It should include tools which can efficiently affect each segment of target groups and which can help to express a primary message for a given year. If some of the planned tool is not implemented, be it for lack of time or administrative or financial obstructions, it can weaken the impact of the rest of implemented tools of a communication mix. It is, therefore, necessary **to carefully consider a feasibility of a realization and to set competences for realization of an annual CoP.** To some extent, it is of course possible - sometimes even desirable - to leave some flexibility to concrete activities realization.

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Picture 11: Annual CoP as a functional unit

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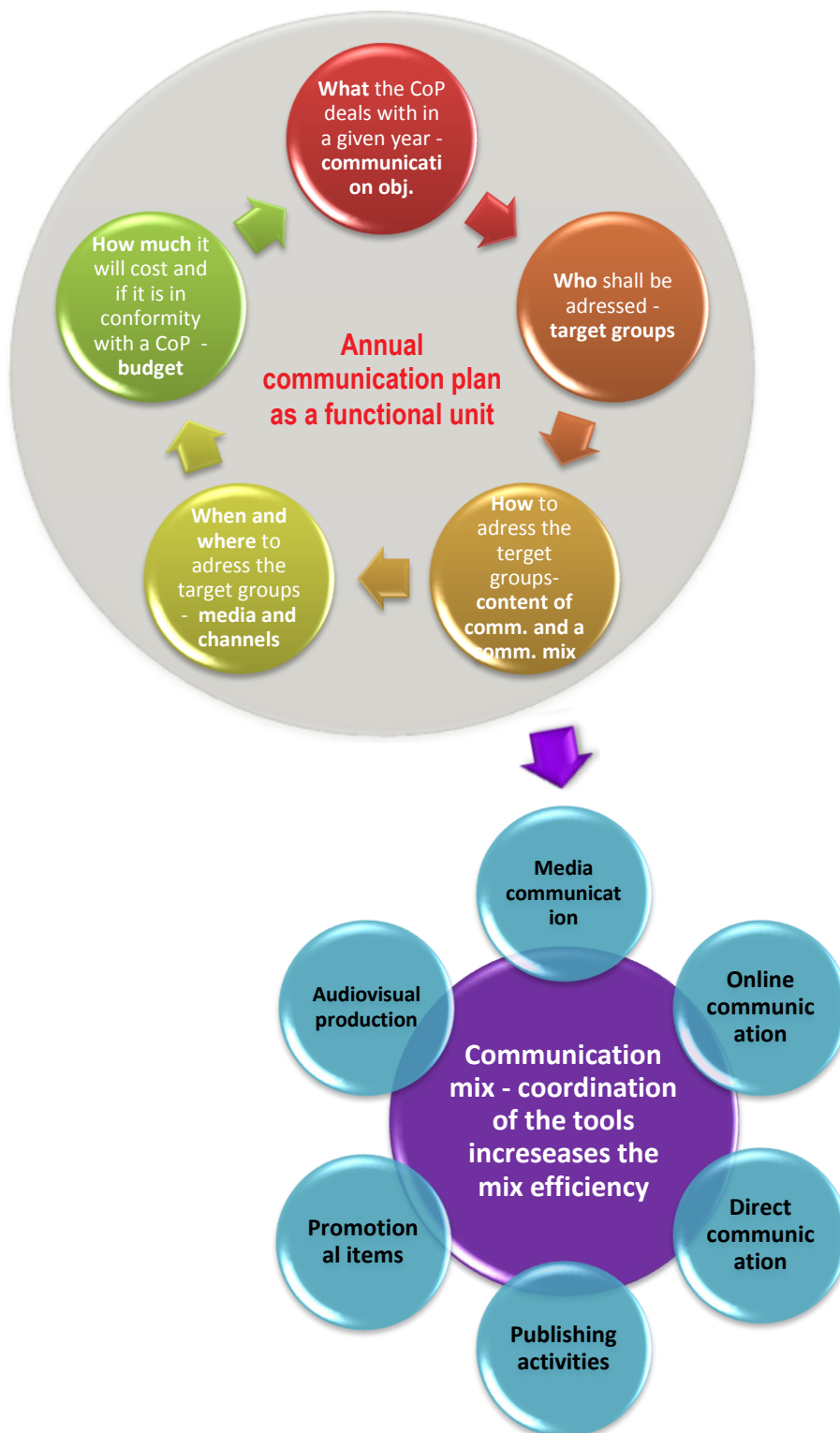
Structure of an Annual Communication Plan

What is the **optimal structure** of an annual communication plan? The basic presumptions are:

➜ *it answers the following most important questions:* why do we have to make certain steps, what are we pursue with it, who do we influence, how do we get the right messages to a right target group, when shall we make the planned steps and how much does it cost;

➜ *does it conform to the team* responsible for its realization;

➜ *is it comprehensible* even for potential new team members and for cooperating external suppliers (agencies).

Contrary to the OP HRE Communication plan for the whole programming period 2007-2013, an annual **communication plan should be very practical.**

As an introduction of annual CoP, **an initial situation** should be analysed. The analysis of the initial situation should be based above all on the evaluation of a previous annual CoP and in ideal case on results of a survey of target groups' awareness. Unless the survey is realized, public accessible surveys concerning target groups opinions towards the EU funds and the employment issue should be analysed. It is also possible to rely upon the continuous survey realized by the CVVM, which the (UN) employment issue regularly observes and upon the Eurobarometr which is evaluated annually in spring and in autumn also in form of national reports. The initial analysis serves as a certain strategic background for an annual plan creation itself. Summary of this initial part forms usually a SWOT analysis which foresees the crucial challenges a communication plan shall solve. Thereby, it helps to define objectives, target groups, content or communication topics, tools, channels and also an adequate extent which will influence necessary budget for an annual CoP.

Furthermore, **communication objectives for a given year** should be clarified. Primary objectives depend on a state of awareness learnt in the initial analysis. When clarifying the objectives for a given year, also communication phases or certain milestones of the overall CoP should be regarded. Is it still necessary to improve awareness about the programme? Shouldn't we focus more on improving the awareness about results and contributions of the programme? Is it necessary to assist to applicants? Isn't it more convenient to offer applicants a regular assistance when the project goes administratively well?

The objectives should be set and in ideal case also quantified in relation to the impact indicators defined at the end of a programming period. Enumerated shift of impact indicators which can be determined by an awareness survey within the evaluation of a previous annual CoP can help this quantification. For instance, from a rise of awareness in a previous year in relation to the resources invested into communication in the same year, an increase in a planned year can be estimated, and a change of consciousness can be influenced by a character and especially by the extent of communication for a given year.

In an annual plan, **crucial groups for a given year should be identified**. Within the CoP OP HRE realization, no significant change in the CS segmentation is anticipated. Knowledge and attitudes of people will change as a result of previous activities. Therefore, within the awareness survey it is important to determine not only the state of consciousness but also concrete sources of awareness and

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concrete knowledge and attitudes of target groups. If the overall CoP OP HRE does not include characteristics of target groups, it is suitable to elaborate brief characteristics into a framework of an annual CoP preparation. The better we know our target groups and the more actual information we have about them, the better we will be able to locate and interest them. Thus, we have a bigger chance to achieve our communication objectives.

The above described information about target groups then simplifies a **specification of information and publicity tools and their concrete form.** The best way how to achieve the impact indicators is continual and above all conceptual communication. Followed should be especially those activities which are well assessed by target groups and suitably completed with other activities specifically appointed for an actual communication phase. External suppliers should also participate on activities concretization.

Each measure/activity should be supplemented with a suitable **timing proposal** and a **presumed budget.** It is suitable to mention not only the most suitable time of activities realization but also how much time is needed for a preparation of these activities.

Concerning an overall budget for a given annual CoP, this should be in conformity with indicative distribution of the CoP OP HRE 2007-2013 financial allocation. Eventually, it should be justified why an actually proposed budget for a given year differs. A budget should be realistic and, if possible, it should also be withdrawn. In the period 2007-2010, this effort was only partially successful.

For the annual plan elaborated in the above described way, it is not a problem to summarize **the indicators of output, outcome and impact for a given year.**

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6.2. RECOMMENDATIONS TOA MONITORING AND AN EVALUATION OF A COMMUNICATION PLAN

To optimize the OP HRE Communication plan indicators in relation with the set communication objectives and with a way of observing and continuous evaluation of the CoP objectives so that it would provide reliable and explanatory picture about the communication strategy success rate as a base for its adjustments and management.

6.2.1. To formulate indicators of impact in relation to the objectives defined in the CoP in such a way they would prove the extent of their fulfilling and to quantify the target values so that it would be possible to continuously assess a success rate of the communication activities.

Assessment of a communication activities success rate is explanatory only in a case that **the communication objectives are quantified.** Within annual CoPs, the communication objectives should be specified and enumerated. Only then is it possible to assess an extent of fulfilling of these objectives in each year. The extent of fulfilment of a framework CoP can be evaluated in relation to defined target values of indicators of impact. In case of the CoP OP HRE, those were not defined or later specified.

In order to enhance validity and reliability of indicators of success rate of communication and promotional activities and in compliance with the answer to the evaluation question 3.6., the author of this paper suggests **organizing and optimizing the monitoring indicators:**

➔ **Indicator of output** - measures a number of organized activities, events and measures related to the planned number of activities, events and measures. The outputs describe an extent of the CoP fulfilment especially in quantitative terms.

➔ **Indicator of outcome** - evaluates a direct and an immediate impact of a target group activity - CS member involvement, number of mouse clicks on a banner, number of seminar participants etc. Indicators of outcome show evaluation of a CoP also in qualitative terms.

➔ The author of this paper proposes **to enumerate the CoP OP HRE impact indicators** which have not been enumerated yet. **Indicator of impact** - follows changes in informedness, awareness, knowledge, perception and attitudes. Even the managing authorities which have the indicators of impact defined since the beginning of the programming period now reassess the final values - they assess them more realistically with regards to the values reached in the half of the programming period.

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Indicators of Output and Outcome

Communication Tools	Indicator of Output	Indicator of Outcome
Media Communication - ads	➜ Number of advertising campaigns	Post-buy analysis: ➜ Net Reach (net impact) – Number of a target group members who saw at least one spot, ad; ➜ GRP – total number of perceptions (number of spot watching); ➜ Frequency - average number of watchings by a target group member; ➜ CPT - number of invested financial resources for addressing one thousand members of a target group
Media Communication - Redaction Cooperation	➜ Number of press releases ➜ Number of organized events (press conferences, press trips, events)	Medialization: ➜ Number of published articles (articles, reportages, interviews, etc.)
On-line Communication - Web Pages	➜ Number of Webs	➜ Number of visitors; ➜ Number of downloaded documents
On-line Communication (ads)	➜ Number of realized on-line campaigns	➜ Number of addressed users; ➜ Number of mouse clicks; ➜ Average price for a mouse click
Direct Communication	➜ Number of organized seminars and trainings; ➜ Number of organized conferences; ➜ Number of conferences participants; ➜ Number of participations on fairs; ➜ Number of events organized for public; ➜ Number of databases e-	➜ Number of participants on seminars and trainings; ➜ Number of addressed users by database e-mails.

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	mails	
Publication Activities	➜ Number of created publications, manuals, methodical guides, newsletters and annual and final reports	➜ Number of print-outs; ➜ Number of distributed print-outs; ➜ Number of downloaded annual and final reports
Other Tools	➜ Number of promotional items types; ➜ Number of educative and instructional and promotional films on DVD, CD-ROM; ➜ Number of elaborated other materials on a digital medium	➜ Number of distributed digital media

Indicators of Impact

The author of this paper proposes to observe the indicators of impact introduced in the table.
Their target values are defined as following:

Indicators of Impact	Target Values in 2015
Spontaneous knowledge of the ESF ➜ **expert** public (applicants and recipients); ➜ **general** public *"Do you know some of the EU funds which provides the Czech Republic with financial support? Please, name all the funds you can recall"*	**50 %** **10 %**
Asked knowledge of the ESF ➜ **expert** public (applicants and recipients); ➜ **general** public *„I am going to read abbreviations of some concrete structural funds. Please express for each one of them, how much you are familiar with it. "*	**90 %** **45 %**
Knowledge of the main ESF mission ➜ **expert** public (applicants and recipients); ➜ **general** public *„Do you know what the main mission of the European Social Fund is? "*	**60 %** **30 %**
Spontaneous knowledge of the OP HRE ➜ **expert** public (applicants and recipients);	**35 %** **12 %**

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➔ **general** public *„Do you know any operational programme used for distributing financial support from the structural funds?"*	
Asked knowledge of the OP HRE ➔ **expert** public (applicants and recipients); ➔ **general** public *„I am going to read you abbreviations of some concrete subsidies titles (operational programmes). Please express for each one of them, how much you are familiar with it. "*	**90 %** **45 %**
Knowledge of the main OP HRE mission ➔ **expert** public (applicants and recipients); ➔ **general** public *„ Do you know what the main mission of the OP HRE is? "*	**95 %** **60 %**
Informedness on results and contributions of the OP HRE ➔ **expert** public (applicants and recipients); ➔ **general** public *„Can you recall any concrete projects financed from the OP HRE? Name all of them. "*	**50 %** **10 %**

6.2.2. To realize a systematic observance and evaluation of the OP HRE communication on all levels - continuous, annual and general.

Evaluation of communication activities of a programme is **most beneficial when realized on all levels - **continuous, annual and general (annual 2010 and 2015).

Evaluation of communication activities does not have to be timely, personally and financially demanding if carried out continuously. Important is to ensure a feedback to all realized communication activities - towards all target groups. The MA thus gets an immediate response on a concrete activity and it can adjust it accordingly.

Continuous Evaluation

A continuous evaluation or a monitoring of outputs, outcomes and impacts is basically assuring of a **feedback on realized communication activities** from target groups. It relates especially to expert public - applicants, recipients, media representatives and also internal CS, i.e. the implementation structure personnel.

The objective of a continuous evaluation is to get an immediate feedback on concrete activities, to assess this feedback and to implement the finding into other realized activities. Evaluation **provides quantitative as well as qualitative indicators** which enables to enhance effectiveness, efficiency and economy of the communication activities. It is the **most flexible form of evaluation** enabling quick adjustment in a plan implementation - naturally under the circumstance the CoP realization management is flexible as mentioned in the previous chapter.

*A continuous form of evaluation is for example **a questionnaire survey specialized on an applicant within a concrete call.** We recommend, immediately after termination and evaluation of the call, to ask*

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all the applicant of the given call to evaluate cooperation with the MA in the process of applying and evaluation of the projects. A suitable form is an on-line or e-mail survey of maximum 10 questions. Primary fields of questions should be: accessibility and comprehensibility of information, expertness and helpfulness of the MA employees at information provision, evaluation transparency. The evaluation should be anonymous. The questionnaire should include closed questions i.e. with specified answer possibilities. This enhances questionnaires payback and facilitates the subsequent evaluation. In at least one question, a respondent should be able to answer freely with the aim to find out spontaneous suggestions for improvement. Such form of continuous evaluation gives a response on communication activities towards applicants and at the same time it assesses "the MA office organization" as important parts of the OP HRE image creation. In a following call the recommendations originating from this survey should be included.

In the following table, the author of this paper proposes **basic forms of obtaining a feedback during continuous evaluation** of each type of communication activity. Furthermore, we recommend supplementing these forms with others and within an internal documentation to set rules for continuous evaluation by these forms through the whole implementation structure. If possible, it is necessary to unify an appearance of the used questionnaires - i.e. when obtaining a feedback from the seminars and conferences participants.

Communication Tools	Form of feedback obtaining during continuous evaluation - monitoring
Media Communication - Ads	➔ In case of cooperation with a media agency - to require a post-buy campaign analysis. Immediately after the campaign termination, media parameters are available.
Media Communication - Redaction Cooperation	➔ In case of press trips or events organization - a brief phone survey realized on a sample of all invited media representatives. To focus on evaluation of the event itself, on comprehensibility and relevancy of the topic for readers, listeners and viewers; on organisational and technical quality of the event - timing suitability, place, snacks etc. ➔ Similarly also invited journalists can be inquired after the TK.
On - line Communication	➔ Short inquiries - on a front page - focused on general public (i.e. it is currently possible to find out if the web visitors like the on-going TV campaign or if it is comprehensible for them) ➔ On-line questionnaires - specialized on new sections or on the parts of the web which we want to improve
On - line Communication (Ads)	➔ To observe continuous values (mouse clicks) within a monitoring of a concrete campaign also in relation to each section of a web.
Direct Communication	➔ Evaluation questionnaire of a seminar, training, conference - each participant should be asked to express an opinion. In such a case the questionnaire should be printed-out with plenty of closed questions. The questionnaire should cover the fields of quality assessment, content assessment in terms of relevancy,

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	comprehensibility, added value compared to other sources, evaluation of the form of the training - presenters, technical equipment, timing and place suitability, etc.
Publication Activities	➜ To allow a brief assessment of the publications available on the internet. To give a space to the CS for their own ideas, especially those related to applicants handbooks etc.
Other Tools	➜ Assessment of audio-visual spots on the internet, observing of assessment on YouTube and on social networks (in case they are presented there). ➜ Ad hoc oral assessment of promotional tools in seminars and conferences.

Annual Evaluations

An annual evaluation of realization of communication activities shall **describe an extent of an annual CoP fulfilment.** It should be carried out in a **quantitative as well as qualitative** way. In order to increase a contribution of an annual evaluation, the author of this paper recommends **to include the CS informedness survey** - it does not have to be an extensive research project; for observing the objectives fulfilment development, a simple survey in form of tracking on a representative sample of the CZE population and on a sample of expert public will do. Observed should be at least the values of spontaneous and supported knowledge of the ESF and the OP HRE, sources of information and knowledge of the main message and contribution of the OP HRE. An annual evaluation should assess a management and a financing of activities, it should quantitatively and qualitatively assess outcomes of communication activities, results and impact on the CS in a given year and also impacts on a fulfilment of overall objectives of a framework CoP. In the year when an overall evaluation (annual) (2010 and 2015) is carried out, it makes no sense to separately elaborate an annual evaluation.

Main findings of annual evaluations are included further into an (overall) annual evaluation and enable to observe a development and trends in effectiveness, efficiency and economy of the realized communication activities. **The main contribution of an annual evaluation rests mainly in a provision of basis and strategic guidelines for an annual CoP preparation.**

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6.3. RECOMMENDATIONS TO A MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNICATION PLAN ACTIVITIES

To boost perception of a communication as a strategic cross-section activity of a programme management, to boost cooperation with other MA departments and the MPSV and MA management.

6.3.1. To boost perception of a publicity role significance within the OP HRE Managing authority

The image of operational programmes is not created only by several communication officials, but by whole MA which, apart from defining of communication objectives, should clearly define how it wants to be perceived by the Czech society and what this society should think of it. Therefore, it is necessary to boost internal communication in sense of monitoring and identification of interesting communication occasions (means of the "projects" and the "stories" connected with it) and to motivate other relevant workers to share this information.

The way the target groups perceive us is a result of not only the communication activities; it is a picture of how we really are. How our processes are set, how we are opened towards applicants, how we take care of recipients and, after all, how the MA and the implementation structure personnel is convinced about the meaning of the OP HRE. In other words, **the whole image of the OP HRE is created on all levels of implementation.** The ESF Coordination and Horizontal Issues Unit is not able to enforce this understanding of publicity within the Managing authority on its own. It is clear from the findings that this will require a **managerial approach.** New understanding of a publicity role should be in a first place accepted by the management of the Managing authority and at the same time it should be a part of introduction of this understanding of publicity into praxis. The goal of an internal and external communication management should become a **creation of a unified positive image of the OP HRE.**

Efficient tools for involving others into a CoP realization and at the same time to boost perception of publicity importance are:

➔ regular status meetings of the employees of the ESF Coordination and Horizontal Issues Unit with senior personnel including managers of the Managing authority - the goal is to monitor an annual CoP fulfilment. It shouldn't be mere formal meetings but creative gatherings where shifts in realization of concrete tools and each activity are assessed, where participants discuss on newest findings and look for solutions of the problems with instant support of senior personnel.

➔ **creative workshops with representatives of relevant departments** - it is a regular and systematic form of involving other workers into a communication plan realization. After introducing communication objectives, project managers, methodists etc. should get involved in a planning of communication activities and their ideas on realization of communication activities itself should be noted, especially those concerning applicants and recipients. The goal is to obtain other relevant information as these workers are familiar with applicants and recipients and they know which projects and recipients can be used for promoting the OP HRE contributions etc. In this way we inform the people inside the MA and we motivate them directly and indirectly to get involved and to create a positive image of the whole operational programme.

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6.3.2. To strictly respect a communication plan budget

Regular status meetings and creative workshops should contribute to a successful withdrawing of a communication plan budget since better justification for realization of the chosen communication activities can be achieved through such mutual informing. In order to achieve a synergic effect of an integrated communication mix, it is **necessary to finish realization of all tools.** Through regular progress evaluation with superior workers, many administrative burdens can be eliminated; eventually a timely approval for an alternative solution can be obtained if, for some reason, the originally planned activity cannot be realized.

6.3.3. To conceptually cooperate with external suppliers

Expert approach, conceptuality and at the end also economy are definitely the reasons for the MA cooperating with agency/ies. From the author of this paper's point of view, the most suitable way is to agree upon a framework multi-year agreement with one supplier of over-link activities and with one supplier of under-link activities. In many cases cooperation with one full-service supplier works well. In case of conceptual cooperation with one or more suppliers, **it is necessary to boost the methodical and the managing role of the ESF Coordination and Horizontal Issues Unit.** After the personnel of this department is freed from timely challenging executive tasks, their main role rests in an **efficient coordination of the tasks ordered from supplier/s and to provide them with meaningful basis for improving a communication quality** (topics, successful projects, opinions of the others etc.) and to manage a realization of a communication plan.

To start cooperation with a supplier of communication activities at the end of a programming period only in order to invest remaining resources is definitely not a good idea. **If administrative processes do not allow facilitating the choice of suppliers, it is better to reassess the way of realization.** In such a case, the author of this paper sees two possibilities of managing a realization. The first is to hire externs within the under-limited orders regime. A conceptual and flexible approach of the ESF Coordination and Horizontal Issues Unit is necessary to make this approach work. Flexibility increase is possible either by delegating of all competences on the ESF Coordination and Horizontal Issues Unit or by introduction of the above mentioned regular practical status meetings with the Managing authority management. To make this approach really work, qualitative changes in the field of planning have to be done in the way the previous chapter describes it. The second option is a realization with self-help. This option is not recommended by the author of this paper because it is not really possible to make changes in competences, expert background and equipment of the ESF Coordination and Horizontal Issues Unit to make this approach work.

6.3.4. In the field of media communication, to systematize communication with the MPSV press department in form of cooperation development with chosen specialists of the press department

This specialist than represents a point of contacts between the press department and the Department of the ESF Assistance Management, coordinates cooperation with media and meets regularly with the Department representatives. Understanding of the structural funds and public service as well as experience with media communication would especially simplify a creation of press releases and a choice of topics for promotion. Nevertheless, this model does not solve the absence of personal meetings of journalists and the MA personnel that are necessary within a framework of well-established media communication (see material evaluations). The MA management should get involved in negotiating cooperation with the press department of the ministry.

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6.4. RECOMMENDATIONS TO A DEVELOPMENT AND AN ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MA CAPACITIESIN THE FIELD OF COMMUNICATION

To continuously keep and boost expert capacities of the MA in the field of marketing communication.

A marketing communication is a dynamical field in which success is often conditioned by the ability to flexibly react and to work with new trends and tools. Especially in the IT field and in so called new media is this fact striking; nevertheless, in the "classical advertisement" and a strategic planning of a communication the environment and hence expectations of target groups also quickly evolve.

The MA OP HRE should therefore systematically develop competences of employees in the field of communication - especially in the ESF Coordination and Horizontal Issues Unit. The personnel of this department should spread the know-how further across the MA.

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6.5. PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES REALIZATION

To improve a quality of a realization of chosen communication tools with the aim to enhance their capacity to address especially the target group general public

6.5.1. In planning and realization of communication activities to respect the actual trends in the field of communication

It is necessary to adapt content and form of published information about the OP for general public to the current trend based on a fragmented and quick absorption of information. In terms of content, it is suitable to use short sentences/paragraphs/messages with very simple information without specialized expressions and with emotional charge ("stories"). Such elaborated information can better satisfy various popular bearers of information (i.e. reading of the web on cell phones).

For example: public is oversaturated with advertisement. The OP HRE communication should focus more on events - direct and personally tuned events for general public (such as competitions, children's days, expositions...)

6.5.2. To realize particular improvements in the field of communication tools execution, especially with the aim to enhance efficiency of the target group general public addressing

6.5.2.1. Media Communication

The author of this paper recommends adjusting articles and press news to the target group general public. That means to try avoiding specialized expressions usage, to use catchy headlines, to include concrete projects and quotations of recipients into press releases, to write short, concise sentences. Regarding the fact that the significance of the internet as a communication tool in society grows, it is possible to increase an impact on the target group general public also through a specific web presentation focused on this target group. Therefore, it would be good to focus on the on-line form of the press releases. Those should, apart from the previous recommendations, include also pro-links on other articles within the web or on the other multimedia (such as YouTube, where the ESF presentation already exists).

How to create a press release

Distribution of press releases is a basic part of publicity. They usually include actual information which should inspire journalists to an article creation. They can deal with various issues ranging from information about recent actions, events to concrete stories.

Press releases serve, however, not only to journalists but also to **publishing on web pages.** Such press releases can be significantly longer than news distributed to media and **do not have to refer only to announcements and closings of the calls.** Useful are also general topics (unemployment, economic crisis) which general public often search on the internet. This grants that the press releases will be read more often than the news concerning only the OP HRE. The OP HRE issue should be included as well (the way the OP HRE struggles with unemployment etc.).

The press releases which are conceived especially for the internet users should utilize the pro-links to other web pages and social media (YouTube, blogs etc.) to much higher extent.

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This relates also to creation of the **"Media room"** i.e. the space where the TZs are situated. This part of a web server, apart from press releases includes also a photo gallery, videos promoting the given issue and links to other information channels. For journalists it will be thus easier to search information and to contact applicants. Although the ESF web pages include all the named items, elaboration of articles and press releases for public should conform to certain rules so that the results would be as attractive as possible.

The following ten rules will give you an advice on what to focus on when writing a press release, what to avoid and what should not be forgotten.

1.   Think about the Headline

➔ The headline of a press release must attract attention at first glance, as well as titles in newspapers must catch interest of a reader. It has been proven that eight from ten readers read headlines but only two readers from ten continue reading the whole article. A headline can thus become the first and at the same time the last perceived information from the article.

➔ Nowadays, it is usual to publish press releases on the internet web pages. Therefore, the headlines have to be catchy also for an usual reader, not only for press representatives

➔ If a press release is published on the internet, it is very important to choose right key words according to which the information can be found.

➔ Headlines do not have to be directly tabloid; however, there is no need to be afraid of non-formal or surprising sentences.

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Headlines Examples

Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs Approved 455 Requalification Projects

An example of neutral headline which is suitable for specialized magazines, economical or socially focused papers etc. All relevant information is included so a journalist can get a picture before reading the article. If you use this kind of headline, you can be sure that this topic is really in the competence of the journalist whom you send the article to. Otherwise, he or she may not be interested in reading the article at all.

People Have Jobs Thanks to 600 Million from the European Funds

This is an example of a headline which is supposed to attract attention of the reader and to stimulate him into further reading. It is intended to general public or journalists who do not have to be directly oriented on the social field. If he or she considers the issue interesting, he or she usually passes it on to the colleague who is a specialist in the field.

The New Chance Supports Single Mothers

This headline focuses on women and lifestyle magazines. It is not very tabloid and includes sufficient load of information (name of the project and which field it is focused on) so that readers get a picture about the content. It is again good to find out which periodicals are (can be) interested in this topic.

Lonely Mothers Are Getting a New Chance!

The headline is suitable for instance for web pages. Its purpose is to catch immediate attention and it focuses especially on general public. It is not quite clear what kind of text will follow which attracts a natural attention of a reader. If a press release is focused directly on journalists, it is better to form a headline more neutrally (see the previous example). It is also necessary to consider using the exclamation mark which on one hand can support desire to read the article, on the other hand can be perceived as aggressive or tabloid. Therefore, it is again important to determine whom is the article intended to.

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2. Facilitate Journalists' Job

➜ Do not forget that journalists are generally very busy people and they do not like to search for additional information. If you provide them with press releases, which will require only minimal adjustments and subsequent inquiries, a chance to be published rises.

➜ The style of a press release should be similar to a newspaper article. Editors then publish press releases with minimal changes.

3. Be Brief and Precise

➜ Press releases distributed to journalists should definitely not exceed the A4 length. Journalists usually pay attention to a headline and first ten rows. Therefore, it is not necessary to be too prolix; basic information is usually sufficient.

➜ Do not use long and incomprehensible sentences where a reader can get lost easily. Short simple sentences with clear message are enough.

➜ If you find out that predicates and attributes cumulate in your sentences, do shorten and divide them.

➜ If a press release should be published on the official web pages, the text can have a random length.

➜ Regarding the fact, that internet readers only seldom finish reading of a text until the end or are not concentrated in the same way as on the printed texts, it is good to put important information at the beginning of the text, eventually to highlight them within the article.

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Example

Supported are the activities connected with vocational education of employees and employers focused especially on intensification, widening, enhancing, renewing or keeping a qualifiaction and with crucial skills which enhance tenability of an employment and employability on the labour market (information technologies, communication abilities, language preparation etc.)

Supported are the activities connected with vocational education of employees and employers. Furthermore, emphasised will be the crucial skills which allows employees to better assert on the labour market. This includes education in the information technologies field, communicational abilities, language preparation etc

Complicated sentence divided among several sentences.

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4. Use Limited Number of Special Terms

➜ Special terms usually distract attention of an average reader and it complicates the text understanding. You have to be aware of whom a press release is intended to.

➜ Do not use too special terms even in quotations. The quotations should evoke a direct speech and if they include complicated and unnatural sentences, people usually have troubles to imagine a concrete person behind them.

➜ To determine which terms are too special and which are not, can be tricky. It depends on how informed or specialized the journalists are. Use rather those terms which readers and journalists understand.

➜ If for instance your target group are experts on the structural funds issue, it is possible to use more specialized terminology.

Allocation on a call is 600 million CZK

⬇

Sucessful projects share 600 million CZK

⬇

„We decided to enhance efficiency of the resources invested in the active employment policy by evaluating and eliminating the risk fields of withdrawning.“

⬇

„Significant financial resources are invested into the employment improvement and we want to be sure that we invest well. Therefore, assessment of risk fields of withdrawning which will be subsequently removed is currently in progress.“

Simplification of complicated terms, avoiding foreign words

5. Put the most Important Information into a Lead Paragraph

➜ A lead paragraph of a press release if after headline the most important element. Sometimes a busy journalist reads only a headline and first ten rows and immediately decides if he or she is interested in the topic or not.

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➜ Therefore, the lead paragraph should include answers to the basic question: WHAT HAPPENED, WHEN, WHERE, WHY and WHY SHOULD A READER BE INTERESTED IN IT.

➜ Other paragraphs elaborate the story and clarify its background

➜ It is also worth mentioning directly at the beginning some actual topic which the press release is directly or indirectly related to. This is usually one of the main reasons why journalists publish a press release.

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Example

> Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs terminated acceptance of project applications within the second call of the Operational Programme Human Resources and Employmenton on Friday 10th January. From the total number of 763 enrolled applications, the best will be chosen to enable disadvantaged persons to succeed in employment and allow private companies to struggle with the economic crisis through employees educating. The projects will share 400 million CZK in total.

6. Quote

➔ Quotations always revive articles and give them a personal form – readers can assign a concrete person to the abstract term „the structural funds". In case of the structural funds, it is suitable to quote the minister or an employee of the ministry.

➔ Quotations should not be too long, three to four sentences are usually sufficient. Fulfilling a whole article with quotations does not appear trustworthy – it could be assumed that there is a personal PR in there.

➔ If you work on a press release about the project approval, it should include quotations of its implementer.

➔ In the press releases about the state of withdrawing, it is good to include the facts into quotations such as the number of approved projects. There is also a great probability that an editor would cut it out in the process of shortening the article.

➔ If a press release focuses on concrete projects, it is suitable to include personal experience of a speaker with the given issue

Example

> „We supported for instance a project which supports education of parents on a maternity leave," says ... from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs "I am very grateful for these activities. I know how hard it is to combine child education with a demanding job."

The quotation with personal experience

> "The interest in the European resources was again great. From more than a thousand applications we chose projects for more than ten billion Crowns. This exceeds the limit of the call multiple times," says the minister of labour and social affairs ...."Which projects will divide 700 million from the European Union will be clear in spring of this year."

The quotation includes facts

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7. Make References

➜ If you have space and the given topic allows it, it is good to use also concrete research in a press release which supports your proposition or the mentioned issue.

➜ Refer to proven, guaranteed and direct sources.

➜ It is not suitable to use the researches which fit into a press release but originate in a secondary source (other articles etc.).

➜ In press releases, which should be published on the web pages, it is practical to refer to a source directly by hypertext – readers can thus find the referred information through clicking.

Example

> According to the Czech Statistical Office, every third inhabitant of the Czech Republic is interested in further education and improving of his or her qualification. A half of these people hasn't got sufficient financial resources. Therefore, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs decided to announce an additional call in which companies may apply for financial resources for education of their employees.

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8. Time Press Releases Well

➜ Good timing is a guarantee of success not only in the process of a press releases creation.

➜ Try to assure that a press release is always actual and related to some general topic which is often mentioned in media.

➜ For instance at the time of economic crisis, it is good to promote the projects which somehow struggles with or help to mitigate its impacts.

➜ A press release about a project approval or a call announcement should always be distributed at the same day the event occurs.

➜ If you know that creation and approval of a press release takes more time, start with its preparations as soon as possible even though the exact numbers will be unknown (i.e. number of approved projects). These data can be later added into the release.

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6.5.2.2. On-line Communication

The result of the material evaluations proves that the web pages of the ESF programme are on a very high level. In order to enhance an impact on general public, we recommend considering using modern communication tools such as social media. Nowadays, the internet users prefer **interaction** and the social media format is utilized also by **news servers** (from possibility to leave comments under articles to presentations on social networks). Web pages of various institutions themselves are considered social media as well, when they include the possibility to leave a comment and a discussion forum. Social media, therefore, cannot be narrowed only on the popular Facebook. Each form of social medium **is also differently time consuming**, for example blogs can be actualized once per month, whereas, social networks demand a constant control and activity by administrators. In case of social media, it is necessary to **gain experience** and to learn to use them.

Therefore, we recommend **starting with interactive form within the web pages** – for example to allow users to **leave comments** under published articles and clips and to ask applicants and recipients to express opinions on clips and videos. A good strategy is to save videos and pictures of the ESF projects **on the shared multimedia** (Flickr and YouTube) which requires no interaction. On YouTube for example, the comments can be forbidden (although they could serve to the Managing Authority as a valuable source of users' opinions).

If the interactive communication within the web pages is successful, it is possible to accept also other forms of presentation – in cooperation with non-profit agencies or specialists on social issues to establish a micro blog which would produce short messages.

How to Write on the Web

Between 2005 and 2009the number of the internet users in the 16-74 years age category nearly doubled (32% in 2005, 60% in 2009) and similar growth was registered among the people who uses the internet for communication (from 27% in 2005 to 55% in 2009)[6]. Increasing importance of the internet presentations for promotion and marketing corresponds with this development. With technological progress, also the number of tools which can be used for communication with users increases (see chapter 2.2.2.).[7]

Well elaborated content of a web presentation is a crucial prerequisite of successful internet marketing. Content is important not only for the web but also for other internet environments connected with it – blogs, news, social networks, encyclopaedias and discussion forums. Without superior text on a target page, even perfectly elaborated banner advertisement is useless.[8]

1.   Adjust Texts to the Internet Readers

➔ The Internet readers behave differently than the readers of printed materials.

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[6] Source: Eurostat – Community survey on ICT usage in households and by individuals (2010) in: ČSÚ – Internet a komunikace. http://www.czso.cz/csu/redakce.nsf/i/internet_a_komunikace. Downloaded on: 20. 1. 2011.

[7]Ten thousand dollars per month has been spent for media relations activities which are trying to convince a bunch of journalists in couple of papers, magazines and TV stations to write about us. Thus, we are losing active bloggers, publicist portals and journals, on-line critics, opinion-makers, analytics, consultants and others who can aim directly the target group we have something to offer to. There is no rational reason for not communicating with our clients directly, not through media and press releases. David MeermanScott, The New Rulesof Marketing and PR, Wiley 2009, p. 24

[8]Janouch, Viktor, Internetový marketing, Computerpress, Brno, 2010

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➔ In average, a visitor of a web page read 28% of text; therefore, it is necessary to get rid of all redundant information and immediately share the core information which should be addressed to a reader.

2. Use the „Upside Pyramid" Method

➔ This way of text creation originates from the journalistic praxis. A reader is allowed to leave a text (i.e. an article) anytime during reading without losing the most important message and a context.

➔ On the first place, a reader learns about conclusions, a point, and a summary. These parts of a text answer the questions (WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE).

➔ First then additional information and context are communicated (HOW, WHY).

➔ Details are to be put at the end of a text.

3. Highlight Keywords

➔ Highlighted keywords attract readers' attention and allow them to better orientate in a text.

4. Use Comprehensive Headings

➔ Use headings which describe a content of an article.

➔ If you publish press releases on the web, do not hesitate to use even little more expressive heading which attracts readers' attention (see chapter Media Communication)

5. Use Short and Comprehensive Sentences

➔ Avoid using long sentences where a reader gets lost.

➔ Short and brief information will do.

➔ If the web texts are intended for general public, do not use too many special terms or provide users with a dictionary

➔ The better a reader understands your articles, the greater influence they have

6. Use References

➔ In articles, do refer on other sources (other articles within the web, on external information related to the topic, social media etc.)

Social Media

Social media have been expanding greatly in recent time. Interest of people is shifting from an ordinary information search towards their sharing. When deciding to use this form of promotion, it is important to realize that social media, in the first place, serve for gathering information and obtaining a feedback.

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The task of public service on social media is not only to introduce the structural funds and the projects to public, but also to discover opinions of the users on various issues and to influence opinions on public service in a positive direction. The activities on social media should be continuously monitored and evaluated.

Advantages of Social Media

➔ Direct communication with users.
➔ Possibility of immediate connection – it is possible to learn immediately what other users like and dislike.
➔ If interaction with users of social media is successful, their opinions (positive and negative) serve as a tool for various strategies or evaluation creation.

Overview of Useful Communication Tools

1. Blogs

Blogs consist of personal texts or notes which express author's opinions and attitudes. At the time, blogs are not only a common part of web pages of private companies and some public institutions but also a part of news servers. They serve to provide expert information or expert opinions which a reader otherwise would not get.

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Proposed activities: Articles on a blog within web pages can describe a given issue from a different point of view than other official materials. It is usually recommended to write expert articles which describe some topic which is related to the OP HRE. Articles can be elaborated also as a series for applicants and recipients about the withdrawing process. The expected reaction is reading an article and leaving a comment.

Risks and limitations: Some users' comments can be very critical even aggressive. However, a blog has to have some clearly given rules of discussion and it is possible to delete such comments. It is not suitable to enter discussions under articles. It is more about opinions research.

2. Micro blogs

Micro blogs differs from classical blogs by its length – they can consist of only a sentence, video or an mp3 file. On social networks, this form is utilized within so called status which can have various forms – from general message ("how I am") to specific issues (sport, film, art etc.). A typical micro blog (with highest number of users) which serves also as a social network is the Twitter.

Proposed activities: Short information on the OP HRE and also on related subjects. Anything - even marginally, related to the OP HRE issue can be interesting for the Twitter subscribers. Suitable are also the retweets of interesting information. The goal is to reach as many subscribers and as many retweets as possible.

Risks and limitations: Short messages have to be very catchy so that people would react on them. This way, it is possible to notify through links on actual articles on a blog or on other information from

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webs of third parties. It is not suitable to argue with applicants and, therefore, articles should not arouse polemics but rather inform.

3. Discussion Forums

Discussion forums are based on a similar principle as social networks. Their functioning is based on community principle. That means that users are connected through a mutual interest which is subsequently discussed with other users. It can be an interest in a concrete activity or a product (horse-riding, fishing, Hollywood movies, bicycles etc.) but also a political interest or a membership to a minority group.

Proposed activities: A discussion forum is usually built in web pages with the aim to solve problems. In such case it can be interesting for a public service to directly discover opinions which can be obtained by a choice of certain topics (i.e. how the users are satisfied with the withdrawing process).

Risks and limitations: Administration of a discussion forum is demanding in terms of expert level of workers. Reactions do not have to be immediate; however, longer delays are also unsuitable.

4. Podcasting

Podcasting is based on the audio-visual files (usually in MP3 format or mpeg) which are downloaded on the internet. A widely used type of podcasting is so called **vodcasting**. It is based on downloading of video files which can be shared within various servers of shared multimedia (such as YouTube). These videos can have many forms from funny sketches to expert advices and showcases of research attempts. Within a promotion of services or products is this form of social media used especially to commercial notices, i.e. advertisement.

Proposed activities: A video represents the way how to introduce concrete projects to users and to the people whom the OP HRE subsidies helped. The aim is to inform, persuade, and prompt to action in a different way.

Risks and limitations: Users' reactions can be allowed in case of employing the services of shared multimedia (YouTube). The best way is to establish a special channel where it is possible to set rules for reactions and if needed to express to the comments. Videos can also be gradually published on web pages or blogs.

5. Social Networks

Social networks consist of people virtually interconnected through one or more mutual interests (establishing a friendship or a relationship, mutual hobbies, same religion, shared hostility towards some person etc.). Social networks are usually connected with discussion forums and shared multimedia (YouTube, Flickr etc.); it is therefore suitable to promote the programme through all these channels.

Proposed activities: Establishing of the OP HRE profile/account will allow active communication with fans/friends/random subscribers. For a promotion, it is good not to choose too specialized topics and rather focus on an interesting content – news, actual information, comments.

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Risks and limitations: Communication is two-way and it is necessary to control it. Regular actualization is crucial as well as quick responses on questions, proposals or remarks – there is a danger of delay. Communication must not be polemic. Even though people are not right, institution/company may not tell them on social media.

6. Article Portals

Together with various forms of social media, so called article portals or linking (bookmarks) servers have been in use. In such systems, it is possible to publish short summaries from content of various articles with attached link. Users of systems have thus possibility to rate and to mark. Based on this rating, the links are ordered in charts – the better marks a link gets, the more readers read it. An example of an article portal is Linkuj.cz.

Proposed activities: Writing of popular articles on a given topic. The goal is to get links; the number of readers is minimal.

Risks and limitations: Reactions on articles are not expected and with regards to a little number of read articles, it is not necessary to further deal with them.

How to proceed when we decide to promote in social media: Significance of social media as a supplement to classical marketing activities such as PR growths. With expanding technologies also number of types of social media (a future is predicted to the social networks using the GPS technology such as FourSquare) grows. On the other hand, this type of promotion bears also many risks. Therefore, when planning promotion of a public sector on social media, it is suitable to make the following steps.

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7. Mapping Suitability of Social Media

➡ One of the first step which is necessary to make when planning a promotion in social media, is to map discussion forums and the blogosphere which deal with the structural funds issue or where this topic is mentioned.

➡ This can help to choose a proper promotional tool and a promotion form and also to catch the critical issues.

➡ Monitoring of discussions and the blogosphere must proceed continuously and react thus on a potential critique from a public sphere – either by direct entrance into discussion or by concrete deeds (facilitating of application process etc.).

➡ In order to choose a proper communication tool and proper communication topics, it is also important to evaluate which target groups use what kind of media (for example general public will more likely use social networks, NGO will be active in discussion forums etc.)

8. Assessing Human Resources

➡ Although promotion in social media cost reasonable financial resources, communication with the internet users and monitoring of social media requires especially time investment.

➡ It is therefore crucial to decide if there are capacities for this activity or to employ externs or a PR agency

➔ A PR agency should in such a case have rather consultative role; in charge for texts creation and for a communication with the structural funds users should be an internal employee who is familiar not only with the structural funds but also with working in public sector. He or she can than immediately react but also adjust his or her style of communication.

➔ With regards to personal possibilities, it is also necessary to choose the most suitable promotional tool. For instance keeping a profile on social networks takes more time than writing a blog.

9. Propose a Strategy

➔ In order to choose the most suitable communication tool, it is also important to set goals we want to reach. For each goal a different medium (communication tool) suits and each medium is used by a different target group. To concrete image, monitoring of discussions and blogosphere can help.

➔ Furthermore, it is necessary to assess the costs which will be invested in promotion in social networks. As mentioned before, this kind of promotion is especially time consuming but for instance creation of quality videos demands also considerable finance investments.

➔ Based on the above described steps, the most suitable social media are chosen – in order to maximize the promotion impact, it is suitable to connect social media among each other (for example to refer on the blog texts through Twitter, add references on web pages to YouTube videos etc.)

➔ In order to save time, it is also good to plan in advance, which information should be shared with users (if it is possible). For instance a content of specialized texts on a blog can be planned several weeks in advance; on social networks especially actualities should be published.

10. Start a Campaign

➔ Planning and proceeding of the described steps will lead to campaign beginning in social media.

11. Evaluating, Analysing and Measures Accepting

➔ Measuring of a success rate is in case of social media problematic. On one hand, some results are immediately visible – number of community members, number of inquiries, number of comments, articles attendance etc.

➔ Connection of social media with web pages allows observing how the promotion in social media enhanced the web attendance.

➔ It is important to realize that in case of social media, a quantity of contributions is sometimes not as important as their quality. That means that feedback from users should be obtained and five constructive comments (even negative ones) are better than twenty general comments.

➔ Generally important is also observing how target groups awareness improved since a campaign beginning

➔ According to monitoring outcomes and an evaluation of promotion in social media, it is necessary to adjust tactics and communication objectives.

Examples of Best Practice

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Foreign internet portals of a public service understand a web presentation as a place where various groups of users meet. They are focused on expert but also on general public. A content of social media is usually derived from web page content.

For instance the pages of the European Parliament spread information through social media –on Facebook, there are news from the web pages which are regularly commented by the fans of the page. On YouTube, there is audio-visual news section supplemented with pictures on the Flickr server. Shortened actualities (tweets) are sent to subscribers through the Twitter network.

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Picture 13: The European Parliament web presentation

Source: European parliament. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/public/default_en.htm

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Picture 14: The European Parliament profile on Facebook and YouTube

Sources: Facebook. http://www.facebook.com/#!/europeanparliament;
YouTube. http://www.youtube.com/user/EuropeanParliament

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Picture 15: Profile on the server of shared media Flickr and social network Twitter
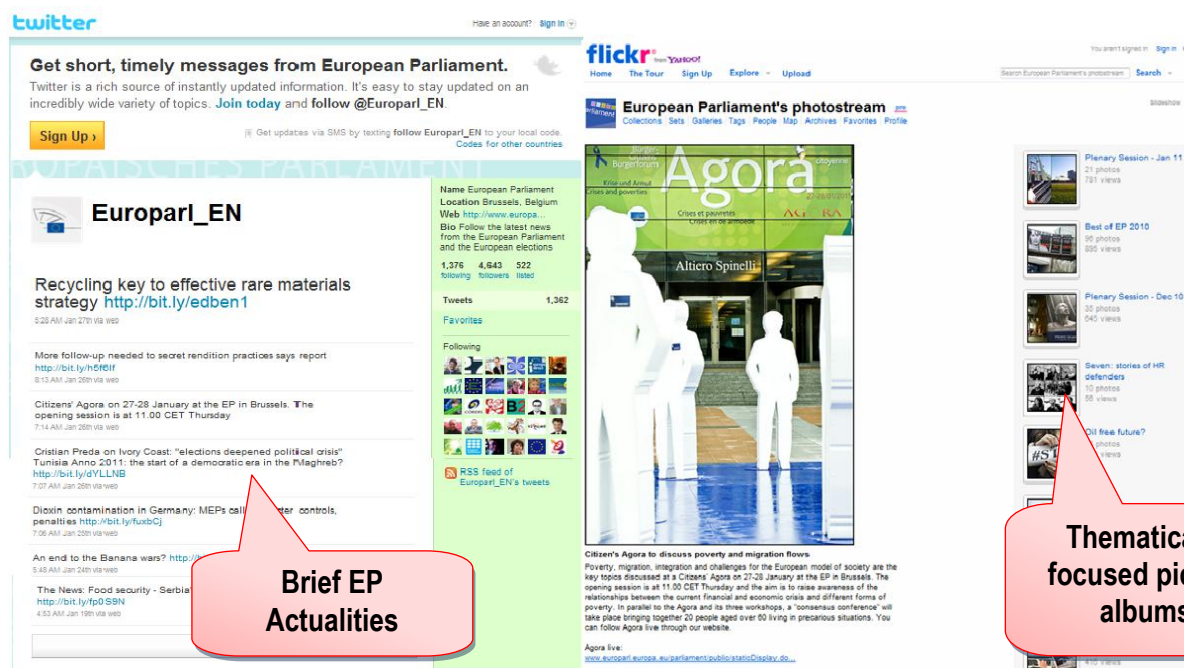
Sources: Twitter. http://twitter.com/Europarl_EN;

Flickr. http://www.flickr.com/photos/european_parliament/

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Direct Communication

Direct communication should focus especially on the target group general public. It is efficient to organize events which would introduce concrete contributions of the OP HRE (visit of a sheltered workshop, organizing of a market where creations from workshops would be sold). Another possibility is to promote the programme through competitions for elementary and high schools – young people could thus creatively elaborate various projects such as how to struggle with discrimination, bullying etc.

The author of this paper also recommends arranging at least one non-formal meeting with journalists per year. These meetings would introduce concrete projects reacting on some affair (such as growth of unemployment, economic crisis) and the actual state of programme withdraw and at the same time they would serve as a tool for boosting relationship between media and the Managing authority.

Events and Competitions

Organization of events and competitions is a very popular way of promotion involving participants and drawing their attention towards the programme existence in discreet and entertaining way. Events can be conceived in several ways:

➜ Thematically focused events and competitions for public

Events introducing concrete contributions of the OP HRE (for instance by visiting a sheltered workshop or organising a market where these products are sold). It is also possible to organize competitions for elementary or high schools. Young people could for instance creatively elaborate various proposals such as how to struggle with discrimination, bullying etc.

These events have to be connected with medial communication or to inform journalists by press releases or by ads or negotiated PR articles.

It also proved efficient to interconnect public events with social media. That means to allow the participants to discuss their experience on web pages to send them messages through social networks or to create an action profile on the shared multimedia servers YouTube and Flickr.

➜ Workshops with journalists

The workshops do not have to be limited only to the target group general public. It is also possible to organize workshops with media representatives for instance in the place of a project realization. Even here, it is possible to organize a discussion with experts on a certain topic/issue (women discrimination on workplace, connection of family and working life etc.).

Non-formal Meetings with Journalists

Non-formal meetings with journalists serve not only as an introduction of concrete projects or the actual state of the programme withdrawing, but also as a tool for boosting relationships between media representatives and the Managing authority.

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The author of this paper can recommend organizing non-formal meeting (so called brunches) where projects and the programme itself are introduced to the journalists. Events are usually organized with regards to an actual social situation or actualities related to the programme (such as approving new projects, subsidies for the companies which struggle with economic crisis, education of parents on maternity leave etc.)

Brunches are organized for a narrow circle of journalists (5-10) who are specialized on the European Union or social issues.

Example

Non-formal meeting with journalists on the topic "The European funds deal with lack of money for research and development"

Organizer: Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport

In March 2010 the Ministry of Education organized a meeting with journalists regarding the international evaluation of the projects from the Operational Programme Research and Development for Innovation.

The issue was complicated and technically focused on the projects approval which should be assigned 28 billion Crowns. Journalists are usually not familiar with technical aspects of projects evaluation and it was necessary to explain this topic in a comprehensive form.

The whole event took place in a tense mood of discussions about the way Czech science had been financed and about pressures of academic public and regional politicians on the direction of the European money.

Immediately after this meeting, the general director of the OP VaVpI Jan Vitula and the expert on applied research Jan Bunček visited the Studio 6 TV show, where the issue of distributing the finance on science and research was further discussed.

Goal of the Event

➔ To introduce journalists the European money on science and research and with the role of the MSMT in the process of resources distribution.
➔ To comprehensively explain the whole process of science and research projects evaluation.
➔ To introduce a successful project to journalists so that they can make a picture about the impacts of the operational programme.
➔ To clarify a concrete impact of the European money in science and research on the economic development in the crisis.

Form of the Event

➔ Non-formal brunch in a Prague hotel (5-10 journalists from thematically relevant media).

Timing of the Event

➜ Before the international panel (March 2010).

Participants on the Event

➜ General director of the department Jan Vitula
➜ Experts: Prof. RNDr. Blanka Říhová, DrSc. (expert on immunology lecturing in the Salt Lake City University), RNDr. Martin Bunček, Ph.D. (leader of research GENERI BIOTECH s.r.o., participated on numerous patents and publications).
➜ Economical expert – Pavel Kohout (the Czech economist and publicist)
➜ The project implementer – representatives of the Veterinary Research Institute
➜ Journalists

Picture no. 16: Invitation for journalists

RENOMOVANI ZAHRANICNI VEDCI HODNOTI CESKE PROJEKTY ZA MILIARDY KORUN

Do české vědy a výzkumu Evropská unie investuje 60 miliard korun. Ministerstvo školství mládeže a tělovýchovy podpořilo již 7 projektů za 4,5 miliard korun. V současné době se rozhoduje o tom, komu připadne 28 miliard. Na hodnocení zahraničními odborníky čeká 47 projektů.

Mohou však finance z EU skutečně zabránit krizi v české vědě? Do jaké míry je proces schvalování objektivní? Je ministerstvo schopno odolat tlaku na výběr projektů?

Srdečně Vás zveme na neformální setkání se zástupci Ministerstva školství, předními českými vědci a ekonomy, kde Vám tyto a další otázky zodpovíme.

Termín: 17. 3. 2010 od 10.30
Místo: Hotel Alwyn, Vítkova 26/151, Praha 8 - Karlín (5 min pěšky od metra Florenc)

Program:

- prezentace aktuálních možností financování vědy a výzkumu z evropských peněz
- jak se projekty vybírají a podle jakých kritérií se hodnotí
- je česká věda z pohledu vědeckých a ekonomických kapacit v krizi?
- co již bylo z Operačního programu výzkum a vývoj pro inovace podpořeno (představení vybraného projektu)

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Printed Communication

Printed communication is perceived as a supplement to other communication activities. For further enhancement of the service quality for applicants and recipients, the author of this paper proposes sending a regular Newsletter which would include especially news regarding the programme, current calls and concrete advices and tips for applicants and recipients of subsidies. Should the Newsletter be distributed electronically, it would be possible to create links on interesting articles and information on the web pages. This would not only improve the attendance but also the users would exactly know where to seek the information.

A Newsletter is one of the most efficient ways of communication especially towards expert public. It should include the information the target group is interested in. That includes especially news regarding the programme, actual calls and concrete advices and tips for applicants and recipients.

A Newsletter can be of course distributed in a printed version; however, an electronic newsletter sent by email to the clients of the Managing authority (applicants, recipients, co-workers, externs) has been preferred in recent time.

The electronic version also allows using links on web pages. Sometimes, it is not even necessary to write whole articles but to use only a reduced version of already existing text with a reference to the whole article. This is useful especially within tips and tricks for the employees of institutions which can be placed directly on web pages and the newsletter would only refer to them.

Connection of the newsletter with other on-line tools increases a number of readers of each article and the web attendance. It thus also improves awareness about the OP HRE and the ESF. A special edition of a newsletter can be dedicated to competitions or events organized by the MA.

Newsletter Rules

12. Set the Main Topic

- ➔ Each newsletter should refer to an actual issue connected with the OP HRE – usually it is an on-going or prepared call, approved projects etc.
- ➔ The main issue should be chosen with regards to the most important fields which are financed from the programme (such as a support of disadvantaged persons, employees' requalification, modernization of public service etc.)

13. Alternate Specialized and Practical Information

- ➔ Even though newsletters are generally focused on the target group expert public, it is not necessary to overload readers with solely specialized information.
- ➔ It is beneficial to provide also practical examples of the OP HRE successes.
- ➔ Specialized and practical information should regularly alternate so that a newsletter would look diverse.

14. Highlight your Employees

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- A newsletter should highlight not only the structural funds department activity but also its employees.
- Therefore, it is good to include a "Tips and Tricks" section where a concrete employee of the department gives advices.
- Applicants and recipients will thus have feeling that the anonymous institution is represented by real people.
- Therefore, a newsletter should also include a short column of the department employees or an interview with them where the biggest problems of the applicants, recommendations regarding applications and a project realization, comments on actualities etc. would be mentioned.
- In this part of a newsletter, it is also possible to refer on other web pages (for instance in the FAQ section etc.)

15. Mention Concrete Examples of Projects

- A newsletter should definitely include an example of a project which was supported from the OP HRE.
- Experience of applicants can serve as an inspiration for the others; moreover, the projects implementers can share the experience
- Recipients also appreciate when the Managing authority is interested in their work and offers them a possibility to promote.

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16. Anticipate Needs and Problems of your Clients

- A newsletter should include the best possible service for applicants and recipients which the Managing authority provides them with.
- Therefore, it is necessary to publish or to refer to invitations on seminars, events and also a list of current or prepared calls which can be interesting for clients.
- Consult with your clients - for instance in form of questions and answers or by interview with a Managing authority employee.

17. Show Advantages of the Programme and of your Department

- In each article, do stress out (in interviews and in the topic) which advantages the structural funds and subsidies provide and what is done by the Managing authority.
- Put hypertext links anywhere the programme is mentioned. It should link a reader to the information on the programme. Example: „Within the ESF, 2500 projects were supported in the field of disadvantaged persons support." It is better to name several projects and describe them in one sentence. For a reader, these concrete contributions are always the most interesting information and they allow making a clearer picture about the programme.
- Introduce your employees as experts with whom clients can consult anytime.

18. Ask your Clients

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➔ It is recommended to insert contact info into a newsletter so that clients know with whom to consult.

➔ A newsletter should be definitely inserted electronically on the web pages and supplemented with a possibility to comment.

➔ In order to foster a discussion, it is also good to ask readers a direct question such as what they miss in a newsletter and which issues they are interested in etc.

19. Mind the Design

➔ Pay special attention to the graphic. The graphic is the first thing which will be spotted by a reader and make him read.

➔ Supplement articles with pictures of projects and employees of the Managing authority.

Practical Examples

Picture no 17: Newsletter of a public sector

IIAS is an international association which focuses on studying the public service. It offers a forum where papers, practical experience and theoretical analysis of experts have been compared. The institute is interested in a public service on national and international level.

Director's Introduction

Actualities

Meeting the personnel

News regarding the organization

Picture no 18: Newsletter from private sector

Introduction of a newsletter focused on recommendation how to spend free time. Introduction includes a volume summary.

The Lonely Planet Newsletter is regularly included among the best rated Newsletters. It uses a modern graphic and articles separated by color which is very attractive for readers.

Invitation on an event with a concrete recommendation and with links to web pages

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