

POLITICAL COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES IN SOUTH EAST AND WESTERN EUROPE

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CRISIS COMMUNICATION AND TRUST

- Trust is the currency of democracy (Thomas Jefferson)
- Democracy = convincing people
- Democracy \neq deceiving or forcing people
- Focus: how to convince people and gain trust



PROFESSIONAL INFORMATION IN TIMES OF CRISIS

- Safeguarding democracy
- Democracy: Not only steps forward in Europe
- Populists gain influence
- Foreign policy of the EU not strong and homogenous enough

CONVINCING PEOPLE OF THE DEMOCRATIC MODEL

- Value-based political communication
- Transparency and openness
- Inclusiveness and participation of citizens
- Integrity, impartiality and public interest
- The Budva Declaration:
First Government Communication Ethical Code
in Europe, presented at SEECOM conference
2012 in Budva (KAS amongst others)
www.gov.me/en/seecom/Budva_Declaration



MODERN POLITICAL PR STILL EMERGING

- Post-communist countries in South East Europe: Many heads of government and ministers without press spokesperson
- Often: Head of PM office = PR advisor
- More traditional media, less Internet
- Majority of PM's without FB profile
- Agenda setting underdeveloped



CHANGE OF POLITICAL CULTURE

- Government information: not just for elites – for the public
- Political leaders: not omniscient – open for advice
- Political power: not without limits – subject to public scrutiny
- Development of political systems and communication:
two sides of the same coin

INVESTMENT IN PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

- New EU members and candidates need to be seen as professional partners
- So far too many negative headlines in Western media
- Governments in transition countries need to explain themselves to citizens
- Especially in times of crisis, good inward and outward communication is crucial



INFORMATION DEFICIT IN THE WEST

- Democracy perceived as an established fact
- Not enough public knowledge about institutions and participation
- Younger generation without personal experience of war and lack of freedom
- Advantages of open society and citizens' participation must be explained time and again

PROFESSIONAL COOPERATION WITH MEDIA

- Misuse of media
- “Deals” with media owners
- Secret payments to media
- Citizens don't believe in media independence
- Political messages lose value
- Disillusionment with politics growing
- Politicians should not only improve own PR, also media framework conditions
- Aiming at a consensus of politicians, journalists and media owners



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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