**ENTRi**
EUROPE'S NEW TRAINING INITIATIVE FOR CIVILIAN CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Course Concept*
for the
SPECIALISATION COURSE ON:

# PRESS & PUBLIC INFORMATION

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## REFERENCE MATERIAL

# I. INTRODUCTION

In field missions there are often gaps between the mandate of an organisation and what the concerned population expects from the organisation. International media coverage can contribute to the success or failure of a mission. Therefore the relation to national and international media as well as to the population must be handled in a way that a satisfying transparency of the mission activities is guaranteed.

In this sense, public relations are a vital precondition in the quest for success. And appearance, image, presentation and packaging are just as important as content. If an organisation's image is not "right" for some reason, the public will reject what it's offering. Organisations which fail to plan their communication strategies are often destined to be positioned on the margins of society and of influence. In effect, they become part of the obstacles to social change in wider society.

Therefore Information Dissemination and PR are primary activities for promotion of peace in general and promotion of the own organisation specifically and therefore need to be carried out professionally by specifically trained experts.

# II. OVERALL OBJECTIVES OF THE TRAINING

The overall objective of the specialisation course on "Press and Public Information" is to provide participants with specialised information as well as practical tools and skills for:

- Fulfilling their tasks in the field of press and public information. The aim is the implementation of successful communication strategies with local as well as international media in order to guarantee clear information dissemination concerning the EU involvement, measures and actions taken, so that transparency is guaranteed.
- Becoming confident in their respective job as e.g. spokesperson, press officer etc. in dealing with the very practical challenges they will face when fulfilling their tasks, i.e. how to handle difficult interview partners and interviews, how to set up a press conference, how to write press releases or official statements etc.
- Reaching and influencing populations in conflict-prone conditions and for playing a crucial role in the promotion of dialogue in divided societies.

Participants should have professional working experience in relevant fields in their home countries and/or missions (journalists, PR specialists, editors, managers of press and radio-television enterprises, employers of broadcasting co-operations etc.).

# III. GENERAL BACKGROUND

Press and public information concentrates on communication within and from a mission. There are several aims to be approached: the transparency of the EU-involvement needs to be established and the population in the host country needs to be informed of the mandate as well as measures and actions taken in a permanent process. An EU-led or supported mission needs to position itself within the local culture as well as to disseminate the information to international media. In addition, press and public information can reach and influence populations in conflict-prone conditions and can play a crucial role in the promotion of dialogue in divided societies. In its social education role, unbiased coverage by

press and public information staff can address many social issues of concern to the target audience, and in the process it can help to reduce tensions and build trust across society.

For all these tasks, professional experience gathered in the home countries of future mission staff is not enough. In order to successfully fulfil the professional requirements, the professional expertise has to be linked to the conflict setting of a mission.

## IV. MODULES

### Module I: The Role of the Media with Regard to Crisis Management

#### Subject 1: The Impact of Mass Media on Conflicts

A. Context

Mass media is omnipresent in public as well as in our private life. The opinions, which impact mass media has in public life, differ from "omnipotence" to "powerlessness". With regard to media coverage of crisis situations, one has to reflect, how much media can influence the public opinion and political decision makers. Conflicting parties often try to use media as tool for propaganda. Therefore the awareness level of recipients about the influence of media has to be raised. The argument, that media coverage influences politics is called "CNN effect". Does it really exist?

B. Learning Objectives

1. Be acquainted with the different theories of impact of mass media (Agenda setting theory including theory of cognitive dissonance, Knowledge gap hypothesis, theory of High / Low Involvement, Two-step-flow of communication) with regard to crisis coverage and/or how media can stimulate violence (catharsis theory, stimulation theory, social-cognitive learning theory, agitation theory, habitualisation theory)in order to:
2. Be able to analyse the relationship between media and politics in general and media and conflict specifically;.
3. Have a solid theoretical basis for the following modules;
4. Have an overview in which ways mass media can influence the public opinion;
5. Be aware of the impact of the "CNN effects";
6. Learn about the "state of arts" of the use of internet and ICT in crisis management.

#### Subject 2: Media Analysis

A.  Context

News coverage of conflict by governmental media as well as private media focuses mainly on violent exchanges. Often conflicts are exaggerated, stories are insufficiently investigated and/or sometimes even intentionally misrepresented, stereotypes are created, linguistic violence is used, and governments interfere through censorship. In recent years the trend in journalism evolved to portray wars as the inevitable product of incomprehensible "ethnic hatred". Thus, not only the importance of independent media has to be stressed, but also

alternative ways how to present news. Therefore, media analyses is an important task for missions in order to be up to date on the visible and hidden situation in a conflict area.

B.  Learning Objectives

1.  Analyse the role of the media in reporting war and conflict;
2.  Analyse the factors which explain the negative media coverage of conflicts;
3.  Analyse news coverage of war and conflict including identifying stereotypes, linguistic violence;
4.  Differ between the different problematic issues with regard to governmental and private media.
5.  Design ways of dealing with / reacting to those media phenomena as a mission member.


## Module II:    Information Dissemination and Public Relations

### Subject 1:    Information Dissemination in Field Operations

A. Context

In field missions there is often a gap between the mandate of an organisation and what the concerned population expects from the organisation. International media coverage can contribute to the success or failure of a mission. Therefore the relation to national and international media as well as to the population must be handled in a way that a satisfying transparency of the mission activities is guaranteed.

In this sense, Information Dissemination and PR are vital preconditions in the quest for success. And appearance, image, presentation and packaging are just as important as content. If an organisation's image is not "right" for some reason, the public will reject what it's offering. Organisations, which fail to plan their communication strategies are often destined to be positioned on the margins of society and of influence. In effect, they become part of the obstacles to social change in wider society.

Therefore Information Dissemination and PR are primary activities for promotion of peace in general and promotion of the own organisation, i.e. the EU mission, and need to be carried out professionally.


B. Learning Objectives

1. Be aware how international media coverage can contribute to the success or failure of a field mission;
2. Be aware about the importance of a clear mandate;
3. Get acquainted with EU specific policies, strategies and methods for information dissemination in field operations
4. Know how to guarantee transparency within the own work;
5. Know when, how and whom to inform about what;
6. Know how to manage relationship with suppliers and distributors
7. Know how to build relationships with various actors by acting "inclusive"

*Subject 2:     Public Relations*

A. Context

PR in essence is about managing reputation and perception and establishing good relationships with e.g. key stakeholders. As such, it can be considered as key when it comes to corporate communication and reputation management.

A major strength of PR is that it plays a key role in educating audiences and further converting awareness into understanding and acceptance. From the viewpoint of many organizations, its principal advantage comes from its third party credibility, when obtained through positive editorial coverage in major news media. Good PR is invisible. Given it's ability to influence with subtly, PR is one of the most important elements in creating both the right environment for information to be spread, but also for the right messages to be received at the right time to the relevant audiences. Once a clear EU mission identity (mandate etc.) has been conceived, it is the primary role of public relations to communicate its values to the public.

A.   Learning Objectives

1. Learn about the Key PR Functions (internal versus external PR)
2. Know about the means for PR;
3. Know which means should be used under which circumstances;
4. Know how to create the EU mission's image (Corporate identity and image management; Corporate social responsibility, corporate reporting, Corporation reputation management)
5. Know how to position the organisation within popular culture;
6. Learn about the Key Tools for PR Practitioners (e.g. E-mail: press release; Press briefings/ conferences; Site, press and VIP visits; Hospitality events; Interviews; Surveys and results of field research; Case studies; Corporate publications, Newsletters; Mandate publishing; Web sites and portals etc.)

## Module III: Practical Challenges

*Subject 1:     Actors and Means of Media Work in a Mission*

A.  Context

In field missions professional duties have to be fulfilled often by too few people within a short period of time. Professional skills and efforts have to be related to the severe mission conditions, and their results are usually very visible to the public. This creates practical challenges for which future EU press and public relation staff has to be prepared for.

B.  Learning Objectives

1.   Learn about actors and means of media work in an EU-lead or EU-supported mission;
2.   Know about the structure of press offices;
3.   Get acquainted with best practices and lessons learned on how to set up a press office;
4.   Know about the rights and duties of press officers, and their status in a mission;
5.   Know about the rights and duties of spokes persons, and their status in a mission;

## Subject 2:    Practical Tools

A. Context

The work in the field is very practical. Although the philosophy of ethical media work is important, it is considered as basics. What is crucial for media people in missions is to know what to do when and how, whom to include, whom to exclude etc. For being able to handle the often difficult situations in a professional way at short time mission media personnel needs to be confident in their actions. Since no one is born as expert, practice in using the most important tools is a requirement.

B. Learning Objectives

1. Know how to handle difficult people and interviews;
2. Know how to write a press statement, press release;
3. Know how to set up  a press conference;
4. Know how to appear in front of the media;
5. Know how to guarantee transparency within the own work;
6. Know what tools to use to turn public opinion around (best practices and lessons learned) – e.g. from destructive to constructive


## Module IV:   Simulation

## Subject 1:    Practical Exercises (simulations) of Media Work in Missions

A. Context

*Learning by doing* – this philosophy describes the content of the interactive course subject. Although real life can never be simulated, real case scenarios of e.g. organising and holding a press conference, giving press statements, interacting with journalists etc. in a safe environment could have the effect of a more effective and efficient media work once people are in real mission life, having to handle difficult situations in a hostile environment.

C.  Learning Objectives

1. Practice how to organise and hold a press conference;
2. Practice how to give press statement;
3. Practice how speak in front of cameras;
4. Practice how to handle hostile situations in a professional way;
5. Practice how to conduct / give an interview;
6. Practice how to respond to tough questions;
7. Practice how to communicate difficult content to the public;
8. Practice how to communicate a mission statement to a hostile public.

## PRELIMINARY REFERENCE MATERIAL

**The Role of the Media with Regard to Crisis Management:**

- MENDEL, T.: International Mechanisms for Freedom of Expression.
- PUTZEL J. and VAN DER ZWAN J.: Why Templates for Media Development do not work in Crisis States.
- Joint Declaration by UN, OSCE and OAS: International Mechanisms for Promoting Freedom of Expression: Challenges to Freedom of Expression in the New Century.
  http://www.osce.org/fom/66176
- GOWING, N.: Media Coverage: Help or Hindrance in Conflict Prevention? IN: BADSEY, S. (ed.): The Media and International Security. London 2000.
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- KEMPF, W.: Conflict Coverage and Conflict Escalation. In: KEMPF, W. / LUOSTARINEN, H. (eds): Journalism and the New World Order. Studying War and the Media, Vol 2, Göteborg 2002.
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- LYNCH, J. and MCGOLDRICK, A.: Peace Journalisam. Gloucestershire/UK 2005
- NOHRSTEDT and OTTOSEN: War Journalism in the Threat Society: Peace journalism as a strategy for challenging the mediated culture of fear?
  http://www.cco.regener-online.de/2008_2/pdf/nohrstedt_ottosen.pdf

**Media Monitoring:**

- Practical Guide to Media Monitoring, ARTICLE XIX.
  http://www.soros.org.mn/res_mat/Guide%20to%20Media%20Monitoring.pdf

**Public Relation and Information Dissemination:**

- LEHMANN, Ingrid A.: Peacekeeping and public information: Caught in the crossfire - 1999. - London: Frank Cass, 1999.
- BADSEY, S.: The Media and UN "Peacekeeping" Since the Gulf War. IN:
  http://www.lib.unb.ca/Texts/JCS/SPR97/articles/badsey.html
- IVANKO, A.: Hate Speech: To Prosecute or not to Prosecute, that is the Question. IN: Freedom and Responsibility, Yearbook 2002/2003, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Vienna, 2003
  http://www.osce.org/fom/13886
- UN Department for Public Information and DPA UN Peacemaker Project: Operational Guidance on Addressing the Media in Peace Processes and Agreements
  http://peacemaker.unlb.org
- UN Department for Public Information and DPA UN Peacemaker Project: Operational Guidance on Public Information in Peace Processes and Agreements
  http://peacemaker.unlb.org

**Practical Tools**

✎ LYNCH, J.: A Course in Peace Journalism. 2007. In:
http://www.cco.regener-online.de/2007_1/abstr_engl/lynch_abstr_engl.htm

There are numerous declarations, documents, reports, etc. on EU media policy as well as specific country and regional situations of media structures and development, which might be useful for case studies.