

EFFECTIVE MESSAGING AND COMMUNICATION

**Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum,
Working Group 1**

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Jeff Lovitt

Chair, New Diplomacy

jefflovitt@newdiplomacy.net

MESSAGES. Today we are going to work very hands-on on the messages you have been preparing yesterday. But let's start by looking at messaging from some different perspectives.

Yesterday was the anniversary of 9/11.

Today is Wednesday 12 September. What is the world's media going to be talking about today - even if they should be talking about the Assad government's preparations for an assault on Idlib in northern Syria, which could see millions of refugees heading for Turkey?

Smart and memorable

Think different

(Apple Mac computer, 1997)

Apple reinvents the phone

The original iPhone, 2007

Say Hello to the Future

iPhone X in 2017



More of the Best/

The Best Just Got Better ????????

iphone XS Plus, XR, XC (probably not iphone 11), 12 September 2018

That type of messaging, along with imagery to back it up, is of course on the axis of marketing/advertising, but you may want your message also to be short, snappy, even cute (apparently kittens do well on social media for instance), and amenable to headline writers in newspapers and even TV.

That is not our main aim today, but it is worth remembering that busy decision-makers have little time, may have short attention spans due to a packed schedule, so you should aim for short and snappy messages that go straight to the heart of the matter – backed up by concrete texts that are concise and in the form of language the targeted actor can use – it should be “ready to use”.

Mixing Formats/Channels

- Statements ahead of face-to-face meetings, when well timed, can be very effective, in setting the agenda for the meeting.

Civil Society Forum 2012-2013 Engagement with European Commissioner Štefan Füle :

- Creation of Eastern Partnership Civil Society Facility
- First grant for funding of CSF Secretariat
- CSF participation in platform meetings

Back in 2012-13, the second and third years of the Forum, we not only drew up the first strategy, and the statutes, even before that we lobbied (before there was a Secretariat), so that the Steering Committee would have regular meetings with the European Commissioner, we would send short, clear statements to the Commissioner, followed up by face-to-face meetings, and here are three of the achievements where we were successful (triggered by IPA policy paper in the case of the civil society facility).

NGO Messaging

For a journalist, one of the set of questions you apply when writing a story is:

- What happened?
- When?
- Where?
- How?
- To and by whom?

And, if you have time and column space:

- Why?
- Who cares? Who should care?
- Who will be affected by this?

NGO Messaging

The same applied to writing a press release. My main objective when writing a press release was to convey a message for governments to act upon, and to maximise the chance that journalists and editors would use the press release word for word. They shouldn't do so, but many did.

That was when I was TI Communications Director. I would be amazed when I would write a press release, and see not only the text of the press release, but the headline appear as drafted in newspapers across the world – in French, Russian, German, English, and translated literally into many more languages.

How To Lose Respect And Influence Nobody

- **ARRIVING TOO LATE** - presenting policy recommendations after a policy review process has just been completed
- **LOSING THE MESSAGE** - visiting a member of the Cabinet of an EU Commissioner, armed with long policy papers or, even worse, a volume of research studies, where the policy recommendations are hidden inside dense text that they will never find,
- **MISSING THE TARGET** - skipping research on whom to target, and instead targeting the wrong stakeholders, annoying them and failing to even address the correct decision-makers.
- **MAKING NOISE WITHOUT SUBSTANCE** - organising an event with loud protests, using a megaphone to communicate what you are against, but presenting no clear policy recommendations for a constructive alternative policy.
- **NOT KNOWING YOUR COMPETITORS** - going into a meeting or writing a statement or recommendations without conducting in advance a situation analysis, knowing what other research and analysis has been conducted, or having submitted your own

That is about messaging and advocacy. Today we have a session on advocacy and a session on messaging, but of course the two go hand in hand. You cannot work on messages without considering where the message will go ...

Timeliness, Good Contacts, Entry Points

- 2019 is a transition year in the EU
- Not only is it important to make an intervention at the right time in the policy process, it is also important to set and communicate clear objectives, and a well-formulated policy recommendation with a precise understanding of when and how the recommendation can be introduced.
- It is important to correctly identifying and then targeting those who are actually drafting a policy, or who are well-placed to introduce amendments to a policy draft, and to address them at a time when a decision or policy is about to be formulated or addressed.
- Be constructive and proactive, and very concrete (for example, not merely saying that the EU should spend more money, but rather explaining how and where the EU should spend more, on a given issue, the added value and impact, etc.).

Timing: Change of Commission/Parliament in 2019

Contacts/entry points (persons/positions and timing)

EU officials are very busy, as are other actors you are likely to target, and it is essential to make recommendations at the right point in the decision-making process.

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It is important to correctly identifying and then targeting those who are actually drafting a policy, or who are well-placed to introduce amendments to a policy draft, and to address them at a time when a decision or policy is about to be formulated or addressed.

Show an understanding of existing research and analysis, and the policy context (competing political priorities that might conflict with your initiative)

Be constructive and proactive, and very concrete (for example, not merely saying

the EU should spend more money, but rather explaining how and where the EU should spend more, on a given issue, the added value and impact, etc.).

Consider delivering your message with third-party endorsements for a policy (opened/speech by supportive politician, analysis in FT by influential opinion-shaper, key Foreign Minister's speech)

Also consider effective co-ordination with own country's government where your positions align.

Message development

When we develop messages, we need to be very clear:

- What is the problem we are trying to address, decision we are trying to influence, or the opportunity/scenario we want to make happen/happen differently?
- What are objectives, and intended outcomes/indicators of success?
- How are we going to do this (who needs to provide input to the message - eg. only WG1 or also NPs? third parties)
- When is the right entry point in the process to present our message?
- Who are the actors/stakeholders we want to influence - our target audience? (for us, if the EU is one of the targets, is there a 2020 deliverable that the message would promote/strengthen?)
- What format of message fits the audience?
- Do we need to consult with other stakeholders (NPs/other

Day One Messaging

- Enabling Environment for Civil Society
- Security
- Open Government Partnership
- Media and Propaganda
- Justice Reform, Rule of Law, Corruption
- Gender

We all worked on messages yesterday, but how many do we have here who worked on each of the following?

Group Exercise

- What is the problem we are trying to address, decision we are trying to influence, or the opportunity/scenario we want to make happen/happen differently?
- What are objectives, and intended outcomes/indicators of success?
- How are we going to do this (who needs to provide input to the message - eg. only WG1 or also NPs? third parties)
- When is the right entry point in the process to present our message?
- Who are the actors/stakeholders we want to influence - our target audience? (for us, if the EU is one of the targets, is there a 2020 deliverable that the message would promote/strengthen?)
- What format of message fits the audience?

Let's split into two, or if enough, three groups.

Take messages from day one, and work with them to answer these points:

Message content

- Target audience
- Headline Message
- Formal policy to influence or initiative to propose
- Timing/Entry points into decision-making
- Reasons/Evidence to back your arguments

To: OGP Steering Committee

The CSF plans to write to the OGP Steering Committee, expressing our determination to contribute to, and strengthen, OGP in the Eastern Partnership countries. The National Platforms of the CSF are among the largest (often the largest), most broad-based civil society coalitions in the respective EaP countries, with a wealth of expertise on many issues pertinent to OGP. The National Platforms in the five countries that are OGP members are now making a commitment to engage with their governments in strengthening the multistakeholder forums and civil society engagement in the development of Action Plan commitments in their respective countries. They are also ready to raise awareness about OGP in their countries among civil society and the wider public.

We would like to work in partnership with the OGP Steering Committee and the country support team in the OGP Support Unit and to join our efforts in strengthening civic engagement in the Eastern Partnership countries. We believe we can achieve this through a focus on improving the functioning and knowledge base of the multistakeholder forums in the respective countries, not least through sharing of best practice in terms of the co-creation of Action Plan commitments and through sharing of experiences among Eastern Partnership countries and from other countries in the design and implementation of commitments. This could take the form of:

- identification and prioritisation of commitments that could be adopted in more than one Eastern Partnership country through co-ordinated engagement at the level of the thematic working groups of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum,
- through trainings in respectively sharing of best practice and Action Plan co-creation, bringing together government officials and civil society organisations engaged in the OGP in Eastern Partnership countries to ensure a more participatory Action Plan design process.

We would also be ready to support the OGP and OGP member countries in increasing the representation of expert civil society organisations on panels and sessions in various formats at

Tailoring the Messages

- Clarity?
- Timeliness?
- Entry points into decision-making identified?
- Stakeholders and Target Audience clearly specified?
- Are we there? Is it clear what we want to do with the message – is it intended for inclusion in an EC draft decision? Is it for the European Parliament to pass a resolution opening a new funding line?
- Does the language fit the purpose?

Let's have another round working on the messages to ensure we have clarity on the objectives, target audience, how the message should be used, and who are the targeted audiences and other stakeholders engaged on this issue?

Face-to-face meetings/roundtables

Participants:

- Civil Society Forum representatives
- Target audience(s), one of whom will manage the meeting (usually, that is how it works in practice)
- Other stakeholders

When we have the messages ready, let's do a role-play with each group (your group provides one person who will communicate the message, from the other groups we will have the target audience plus one other stakeholder).

In each case, who are the stakeholders? Who are the target audiences?

Let's set up a small roundtable discussion, where we have:

Civil Society Forum

Target audience(s), one of whom will manage the meeting (usually, that is how it works in practice)

Other stakeholders

Group Work

- What adjustments do we need to make to the messages?
- How much is tone (winning over your contacts, being constructive)?
- How much is content (adding evidence-driven new data, adding value with powerful, clearly stated arguments)?
- How much is soundbite/media-savvy (e.g. such that it could be used by your target audience, e.g. influential politicians/European Commissioners in a keynote, agenda-setting speech)?
- How much is context-sensitive (where you are meeting, and in what context – face-to-face or roundtable with lots of stakeholders)?

After the three role-plays, let's work in the groups again and address the following:

What adjustments do we need to make to the messages?

How much is tone (winning over your contacts, being constructive)?

How much is content (adding evidence-driven new data, adding value with powerful, clearly stated arguments)?

How much is soundbite/media-savvy (e.g. such that it could be used by your target audience, e.g. influential politicians/European Commissioners in a keynote, agenda-setting speech)?

How much is context-sensitive (where you are meeting, and in what context – face-to-face or roundtable with lots of stakeholders)?

Final Messages

- Presentation by groups of final messages
- Are the objectives clear?
- What still needs to be done to improve the messages (data gathering, stakeholder consultations, clarifying entry points, decision-making processes) ?
- What formats will be used for communicating the messages?
- Is the target audience now clearly defined, who will set up meetings, and who will