



Mastering media relations

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Agenda

1. Our strategy
2. Crafting messages that resonate
3. Building and managing media relationships
4. Preparing for press briefings and interviews
5. Evaluating success



Our strategy

Three main lines of actions:

Political communications: contributing to corporate delivery on the Commission's top priorities and equipping the Commissioners for Cohesion with best-suited information resources, to increase awareness and appreciation of cohesion policy results.

Proximity communications towards local audiences: translating political priorities into region-specific narratives and place-based actions that can best resonate with local population segments.

Stakeholders' communications: raising the profile of regional and urban policy in partnership with stakeholders and cohesion family members.

. How our work fits into corporate communication



Media engagement

- Brussels-based press corps vs National/Regional journalists
- Keeping the media list up-to-date
- Tools/Actions: daily press conference, daily news, technical briefings, interviews, replied to journalists' questions, Lines-To-Takes, narrative framing

Crafting messages that resonate

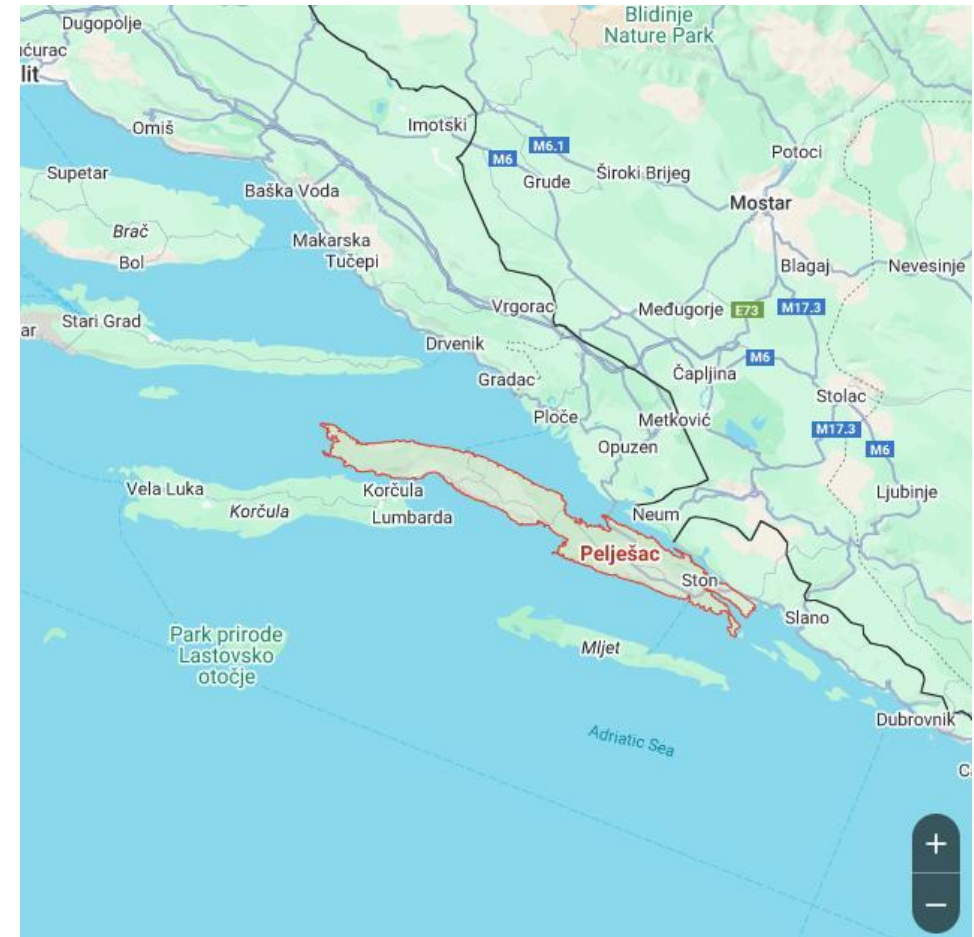
Compelling messaging

5 reasons why Cohesion Policy is strategic for Europe

Green and digital public investment program in which no place or person is left behind.

<https://www.politico.eu/sponsored-content/5-reasons-why-cohesion-policy-is-strategic-for-europe/>

Narrative shaping



Crisis communication



Building and managing media relationships

"Building": What do you want?

Define media objectives:

- Are you seeking visibility, trust-building or myth-busting? All of them?
- Tailor the media relationship strategy to each of these goals.

Segment your media engagement:

- National vs regional vs local
- Generalist vs. specialised (e.g. transport, energy, social policy)
- Traditional (TV, radio, print) vs. digital

"Building": How to find local media contacts?

Sources (if they are GDPR compliant):

- Online research (e.g. Google, social media such as LinkedIn, ChatGPT to help narrow down media organisations – learn how to use prompts)
- Institutional (e.g. Commission Representations and Europe Direct centres)
- Databases (e.g. CISION, Twitter/X lists)

Calls for applications:

- Invitations to join mailing lists (e.g. REGIO Flash)
- Calls to apply for trainings (e.g. EUinMyRegion Media Trips)

Networking:

- Creating a networking event or
- 13 • Joining a local event (e.g. press clubs)



"Managing": How to keep engaged with your contacts?

Maintaining relationships:

- Personal touches matter: remember birthdays, share off-the-record insights, invite to informal chats (coffees)
- Speak on background when possible
- Offer exclusivity or embargoes to trusted media partners
- Do a press review once in a while and follow-up with journalists about their interests that match with your organisation's
- If you can: support your local media

Organisation:

- Be like Santa Claus – create lists and check them twice
(e.g. REGIO Media Network)



"Managing": Useful tips

Understanding journalists:

- Understand journalistic constraints: pressure for clicks or unique angles
- Be aware of journalists' daily/weekly production cycles
- Align with editorial calendars, public holidays, or big news events (e.g. elections)

Creating and sharing compelling content

- Pitch worthy info directly (considering leading with human stories - beneficiaries, youth, local impact)
- Use social media and mailing lists (e.g. Cohesion Policy Media Network, Youth4Regions Alumni group, LinkedIn newsletter – Fridays for Funds)

Preparing for press briefings and interviews

"Preparing": The Commission example

The story of a briefing:

- The Spokesperson's Service receives an interview request for the Commissioner
- The Commissioner's Cabinet sends a briefing request to the services (DGs)
- The services draft the briefing, which is checked by multiple colleagues
- The briefing reaches the Cabinet and the interview takes place

What to know ahead?

With the journalist:

- Format: on the record / off the record / on background
- Questions / topics (if the journalist agrees to share them)

With the team:

- Clarify what can and what cannot be discussed with the journalist
- Agree on speaking points and Q&A lines
- Draft lines to take
- Prepare background notes (non-paper, factsheets, etc.)
- Anticipate likely questions (i.e. defensives)

During the briefing or interview

- Monitor and manage difficult exchanges, keep track of time
- Note misquotes, misunderstandings, or hostile spins that might need clarification later

If you are speaking on the record:

- Stick to facts and key messages
- You are allowed to say “I’ll check and come back to you”
- Avoid being cornered into saying more than needed

What to do after?

- Clarify any misunderstandings
- Follow up for missed questions
- Share materials with the journalist

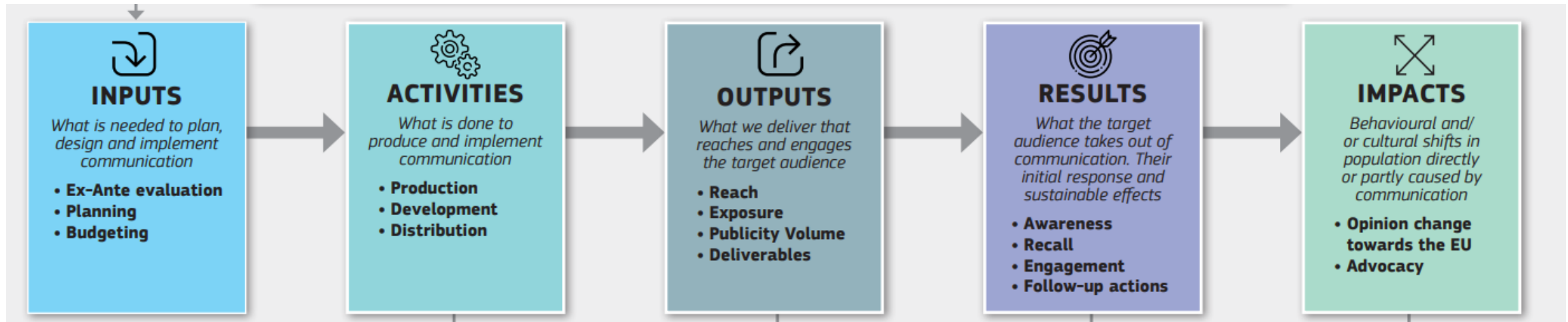



Useful tips


- Avoid jargon and technical detail
- Think about what the journalist wants, guess potential follow-up questions
- Know what other colleagues / speakers from your organisation have said before and avoid conflicting messages

Evaluating success

Evaluate our activities



INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGNS 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Reach: Number of contacts made during the campaign [audited circulation and audience analytics] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If applicable, percentage of target audience [desk analysis] 2 Cost per contact [desk analysis] 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Recall: Number of people who can recall a campaign message [survey] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost per person recalling the campaign [desk analysis] 2 Percentage of people reached who sought more information or engaged in follow-up actions as a result of the campaign [survey] 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Change of opinion: Percentage of people having a more positive opinion of the EU as a result of the campaign [Eurobarometer, survey] 2 Advocacy: Likelihood to advocate or speak positively about the EU as a result of the campaign [survey]
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MEDIA RELATIONS 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Number of online views of media releases [EC website and/or third party platforms if data is available] 2 Time spent on the webpage 3 Number of journalists in media events organised by the EC [physical, online and hybrid] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of Member States coverage 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Percentage of media items published in tier(s) 1-6 in a sample of EC related media coverage 2 Number of media items mentioning a Member of the College or a specific initiative in the analysed sample of EC related articles 3 Tone of publications / sentiment analysis [percentage positive, negative, neutral and mix] 4 Percentage of press release content taken-up by the media 5 Number of pickups in social media of media items published by the Commission 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Percentage of citizens having a more positive opinion on a specific topic as a result of the media activities 2 Percentage of citizens having a more positive opinion of the EU as a result of the media activities 3 Percentage of citizens having the perception that they are well informed about the political priorities of the EU
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Evaluate media activities

Activities	Output	Baseline (2024)	Target (2025)	Results	Baseline (2024)	Target (2025)
Media relations	Number of journalists participating to media events + overall satisfaction	xxx	yyy	Report published/journalist participating	1.3 reports/journalist	1.5
Media call	Number of applications	xxx	yyy	Total reach of the activities	20m	25m
Media training	Number of journalists trained	xxx	yyy	Increased coverage and awareness of cohesion policy		
Media clipping	Number of clipping in the media review	5000	6300	Tone of reporting for some events		

Before we go: initiatives where you can get involved

- **Smart Regions:** short 3-minute episodes on EU funded projects on Euronews every two weeks; submit proposals of projects for potential episodes!
- **Youth4Regions – the programme for aspiring journalists:** deadline 08 July – www.youth4regions.eu
- **Youth4Regions Train Trip:** from 14 until 29 June; NL, DE, DK and SE
- **EUinMyRegion Media Trips:** application period open for journalists in July; media trips to Brussels in October 2025 – January 2026
- **EUinMyRegion Local Trips:** local journalists invited directly; June – December 2025; BE, BiH, HR, FR, DE, GR, HU, IT, MD, PL and RO.

Thank you



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