

NEW EUROPEAN SURVEY

The results of the new European Communication Monitor, published by the European Public Relations Education and Research Association (EUPRERA) in partnership with the EACD, will be revealed at the European Communication Summit 2010.

Prof. Ansgar Zerfass has been involved with the project as the EUPRERA research leader since its inception, and is currently making preparations for the European Communication Monitor 2010.



You have worked on the European Communication Monitor (ECM) for three years now. What were the biggest surprises for you in the data you have collected over this time?

A most interesting fact is that communications professionals are still struggling to link their activities to business strategies. This has been identified as the most important issue in European PR each year since 2007, so there have been no significant advancements. The surveys tell us why: only six out of ten communication managers feel responsible for helping to define corporate strategies, and measurement practice is often focused on media output, not on value creation.

What are the goals you have set for the ECM 2010?

The survey will focus on communication strategy and identify factors for communications excellence. In addition, we will take a critical look at social media. Many respondents said that they will switch their activities to those platforms in previous years. We will check the reality of 2010: are PR departments responsible for those budgets? Who takes the lead? And so on. Last but not least, job satisfaction will be an issue. Many professionals started to think about benefits, threats and career opportunities again during the crisis. We'll take a closer look into this.

The monitor is run by professors from 11 countries. Can you explain who is involved and how the collaboration works?

It's quite complicated to run an intercultural research project in the academic world, so we have implemented

a clear structure. The research group, led by me, and involving colleagues Angeles Moreno from Madrid, Piet Verhoeven from Amsterdam, Ralph Tench from Leeds and Dejan Vercic from Ljubljana, defines the questionnaire, evaluates the data and interprets the results. An advisory board formed by professors from the universities of Bordeaux, Milan, Oslo, Mälardalen, Lugano and Poznan helps with ideas, pre-tests and national dissemination. This is a non-profit project, so we

collaborate online and involve student assistants for dealing with the statistical information.

What impulses do you think a study like the ECM can give to communications practitioners in their daily work?

Identifying trends and future developments helps to reflect one's own concepts and worldviews. It's challenging to see the visions and realities of colleagues throughout Europe, and identify new ways to compete in the future. I myself worked in communication practice for a long time, and some of the best ideas were inspired by these kinds of studies. |

The results of the European Communication Monitor 2010 will be announced at the summit, with participants each receiving their own personal copy. To help make this an even more representative survey of the state of the industry, we would ask all members to devote a little of their time to providing answers when the survey reaches them in March.

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