

European Network of Public Employment Services

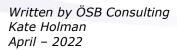
Working Group on supporting **PES** visibility and branding

Outcomes and lessons learned

Social Europe









EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion Directorate E - Labour Mobility and International Affairs Unit E1 - Labour mobility, Public Employment Services, ELA

Contact: Yasmin Salem

E-mail: EMPL-PES-SECRETARIAT@ec.europa.eu

European Commission B-1049 Brussels The European Network of Public Employment Services was created following a Decision of the European Parliament and Council in June 2014, amended in 2020. Its objective is to reinforce PES capacity, effectiveness and efficiency. This activity has been developed within the work programme of the European PES Network. For further information: http://ec.europa.eu/social/PESNetwork.

This activity has received financial support from the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation "EaSI" (2014-2020). For further information please consult: http://ec.europa.eu/social/easi.

LEGAL NOTICE

The information and views set out in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Union. Neither the European Union institutions and bodies nor any person acting on their behalf may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained therein. More information on the European Union is available on the Internet (http://www.europa.eu).

Manuscript completed in April 2022.

The European Commission is not liable for any consequence stemming from the reuse of this publication.

© European Union, 2022



The reuse policy of European Commission documents is implemented by the Commission Decision 2011/833/EU of 12 December 2011 on the reuse of Commission documents (OJ L 330, 14.12.2011, p. 39). Except otherwise noted, the reuse of this document is authorised under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC-BY 4.0) licence (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). This means that reuse is allowed provided appropriate credit is given and any changes are indicated.

For any use or reproduction of elements that are not owned by the European Union, permission may need to be sought directly from the respective rightholders.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION: SETTING THE SCENE	4
1. IMPROVING INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS WITHIN ORGANISATIONS	4
1.1 Good practices	5
1.1.1 Belgium: Le Forem - Finding the right channels and involving employees in communications	
1.1.2 Lithuania: Communication in the time of pandemic	5
1.1.3 Estonia: How to inform employees and have them come along with large activities	
1.2 Lessons learned	6
2. HOW TO BUILD A POSITIVE AND MODERN IMAGE OF PES AS LABOUR MARKET SERVICE PROVIDERS AND EMPLOYERS	
2.1 Good practices	7
2.1.1 Estonia: The Employer Branding project	7
2.1.2 The Netherlands: 'Zinhoud' labour market campaign to attract new employees	
2.1.3 Lithuania: How the PES was reshaped	9
2.1.4 Belgium: Le Forem - Corporate Influencers strategy	9
2.2 Lessons learned	10
3. EVALUATION AND MEASUREMENT OF COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGNS	10
3.1 Good practices	11
3.1.1 Austria: all jobs – the new job-search engine	11
3.1.2 Belgium: Le Forem - Communication campaign towards young people	11
3.1.3 Italy: Awareness raising among NEETs of entrepreneurship possibilities	12
3.1.4 The Netherlands: 'What works for you' campaign	
3.2 Lessons learned	
3.3 Recommendations and conclusions for evaluating and measuring communication campaigns	
4 MAIN OUTCOMES AND MESSAGES FROM THE WORKING GROUP	14

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Communication channels in Le Forem	. 5
Figure 2: Employer branding in Estonia - results	. 8
Figure 3: What does Zinhoud mean to you?	. 8
Figure 4: Rebranding the Lithuanian PES	. 9
Figure 5: Lessons learned from Italy's 'Yes I start up'-communication campaign	12

INTRODUCTION: SETTING THE SCENE

The European Network of Public Employment Services was established in 2014, with the aim of strengthening the role and performance of Public Employment Services (PES) in Europe's labour market. The Network comprises all EU Member States, Norway, Iceland and the European Commission.

The Network enables national PES to compare, evaluate and improve their activities through benchmarking, identifying good practices and fostering mutual learning. It also prepares inputs to the <u>European Employment Strategy</u> and national labour market policies.

The Network agreed to launch a Working Group (WG) on supporting PES visibility and branding in December 2019, when it became clear that PES had a lot to gain from modernising their image, sharing good practices in communication – both internal and external – and exploring new opportunities for reaching clients, stakeholders and the general public through social media and other experimental and innovative technologies.

However, when the first meeting took place in May 2020 the Covid pandemic was already underway and PES were having to adapt to the new challenges it presented. The first cycle of three meetings took place virtually between May 2020 and March 2021. Members overwhelmingly appreciated the way the WG allowed for an honest exchange of views not only on good practices, but also on challenges and the lessons learned. They shared information through questionnaires and adopted a Practice Casebook, containing examples of good practice in communication and identifying shared challenges. The Casebook also drew on theoretical good practice to highlight what PES could do to improve their communications in future. Discussions revealed that since 2016, many PES had launched new image, branding or social media initiatives, although few had assessed the impact of the campaigns. Whilst there were many indications that positive work was being done, there were also areas in need of development to ensure successful visibility for PES.

To develop these topics, a new, enlarged WG was launched in 2021. The group, hosted by the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund, included PES representatives from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, and the Netherlands. The members selected three topics to address in 2021-2022:

- Improving internal communications within organisations;
- How to build a positive and modern image of PES as labour market service providers and employers;
- Evaluation and measurement of communication campaigns.

The Working Group held three virtual meetings, in June and October 2021 and March 2022. This report describes and shares examples of good practice, as well as the lessons learned and recommendations designed to support members of the PES Network to improve their visibility and branding in these three areas.

1. IMPROVING INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS WITHIN ORGANISATIONS

Cooperation between communications and other PES departments varies to a great degree, meaning that sometimes staff do not know about each other's activities. Information is directed towards outside media and stakeholders but enlisting the involvement of employees within the PES tends to take second place. At the same time, communicators are not always fully consulted about the results expected from communication campaigns or are not given a free hand to act, even though they have the expert knowledge required to carry them out.

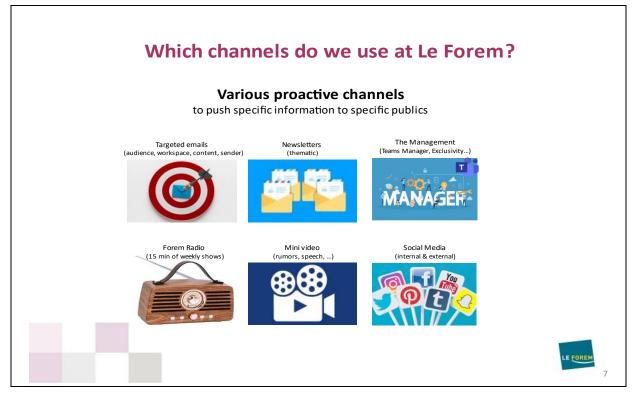
WG participants wanted to share information, learning points (including failures) and good practices in internal communications, and this was the focus of the meeting on 16 June 2021.

1.1 Good practices

1.1.1 Belgium: Le Forem - Finding the right channels and involving employees in communications

Le Forem, the PES of the Belgian Walloon region, shared experience showing that good internal communications are crucial for brand success and should interact with external communications – both handled within a single department if possible. Employees need to learn important information affecting them through internal, not outside sources.

Figure 1: Communication channels in Le Forem



Source: Presentation at the first WG meeting, 16 June 2021

Le Forem uses a range of proactive tools. They comprise targeted emails, themed newsletters, a new Teams channel on which some 15% of managers are active, Forem radio (developed during the pandemic to reach teleworkers), mini videos and social media. Staff are encouraged to distribute information via their personal accounts on Facebook, Instagram etc. Some colleagues have also joined the 'Ambassadors' programme, to receive and share PES messages through their own social media networks. Le Forem's intranet, comprising a library of information, is available 24/7 on demand. The PES aims to design and launch a Smartphone app that would reach people who use phones more often than computers.

1.1.2 Lithuania: Communication in the time of pandemic

Lithuania's PES was reformed in 2018 and 2020 with the aim of offering new levels of service. During the pandemic, spending increased due to government assistance to companies and unemployed people. Previously, internal communications were carried out mainly by the HR department, with thousands of messages exchanged internally.

In 2020 the PES recruited an expert to concentrate solely on internal communications and, after consultations, a new intranet was developed in-house and launched in August 2020, via SharePoint. The home page is divided into two sections, with two-thirds dedicated to news. It includes a knowledge bank, IT support and a 'social partners map' giving access to local psychological and medical assistance. Staff can submit feedback by completing an

anonymous form. During the pandemic, online meetings with management allowed for problems and ideas to be discussed. Internal communications have become a two-way street.

1.1.3 Estonia: How to inform employees and have them come along with larger activities

Until 2020, the job fairs organised by the Estonian PES were mainly face-to-face events, but in 2020 two virtual fairs were held and in spring 2021 the PES organised a fully virtual 4-day job fair. Interest has grown, with more and more job-seekers wanting information.

Preparations started at the beginning of February 2021 for the event in April. The communications department was involved throughout. All employees received their first notification in mid-March via the intranet, and around half the staff were involved in the project in one way or another.

Early preparation was key: identifying target groups among managers and staff so as to transmit the right amount of information and keeping up a steady supply of reminders as the event approached rather than sending everything at once. Encouraging staff to engage in seminars and meetings, including a Facebook event, made them better prepared to inform clients. Maintaining a consistent format for messages helped people to find relevant information. Communication took place through emails, the intranet and online project teams meetings.

1.2 Lessons learned

Pointers to better internal communications

- The WG recognised the need to boost internal oral and video communications and that keeping target groups informed is more important than waiting for final details to be confirmed. Written texts may be necessary for clear understanding of complex issues. It was seen as best to define one simple message and spread it though several channels.
- Consulting staff, e.g. through webinars and chats, helps to build active support.
 However, to avoid information overload a balance must be found between too little and too much.
- Internal communications come from different sources within different PES. It may
 be necessary to find a compromise between speed on the one hand, and
 procedures for checking and approval on the other.
- Some messages, affecting PES policies or organisation, need to come directly from management rather than through communicators, and managers and consultants must be made aware of the need to pass on information. Managers should be talking to employees more often, creating highly motivated, productive, self-managing teams rather than 'top-down' hierarchies. Good leadership and communication are key in this respect.
- Involving employees democratically, for example by inviting interested staff to join project management teams and pass on information to colleagues, shows that they are being listened to, while management benefits from the feedback. Encouraging staff to communicate as 'ambassadors' through their own social networks helps to build motivation.
- Timing is important. Staff should be informed of events before the media and public, even if arrangements are not finalised, as they may get questions from clients. But not everyone requires the same amount of detail at the same time, so communicators ought to distinguish between 'need-to-know' and 'nice-to-

know' groups and target their messages accordingly, with reminders when necessary.

Distance working will continue after the pandemic and digital services are increasing because more people want them. This makes good internal communications even more important. People have become accustomed to using digital platforms which enable managers to inform staff and answer questions. A broad mixture of communication channels – both reactive and proactive – is desirable, but messages need to be targeted, to-the-point and couched in accessible language.

2. HOW TO BUILD A POSITIVE AND MODERN IMAGE OF PES AS LABOUR MARKET SERVICE PROVIDERS AND EMPLOYERS

PES were eager to learn from their peers about ideas and initiatives aimed at rebranding and modernising the image of employment services, to attract well-qualified staff as well as new clients. Several PES had information and good practices to share, and this was the focus of the meeting on 13-14 October 2021.

2.1 Good practices

2.1.1 Estonia: The Employer Branding project

The project, which started in 2018, set out to change public perceptions of the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund as an employer. Employee satisfaction and engagement levels were high, offering a good base to improve branding. However, the quality of candidates for vacant posts did not meet expectations, and outside awareness was quite low.

The PES set a timeline for action, starting with the selection of target groups for recruitment. It produced an Employer Value Proposition (EVP) and a new slogan: **Together we change the world of work.** The EVP seeks to answer the question: 'Why should I work there?' and is based on four pillars: 'We are experts in our field'; 'We have a strong team'; 'We are a developing organisation'; 'Our work has a meaning'. Ninety employees have volunteered as PES ambassadors, spreading information about the organisation on their own social media networks.

All departments benefitted. Awareness of the PES as an employer increased and job candidates have a good impression of the organisation, with a larger number of suitable applicants per post. Getting management support for the project was vital.

Figure 2: Employer branding in Estonia - results

What has changed? 2018 vs 2021



2018

Awareness of us as an employer was very low

- Average number of candidates ~20
- Failed recruitments over 10
- LinkedIn followers 0 no account

2021

Awareness of us as an employer has increased

- Average number of candidates ~50
- Failed recruitments 3
- LinkedIn followers almost 1000!

Source: Presentation at the second WG meeting, 13-14 October 2022

2.1.2 The Netherlands: 'Zinhoud' labour market campaign to attract new employees

UWV in the Netherlands – the Dutch PES – launched the Zinhoud campaign in 2019 to boost the organisation's employer brand and encourage recruitment. 'Zinhoud' is an invented name, combining two Dutch words, in this context translating to 'meaning' and 'fulfilment': reflecting the nature of PES work.

The employer branding campaign aimed to boost UWV's external image, offering staff an opportunity to express their pride in their work. The campaign adopted a cross-media approach using a wide range of internal channels, including a printed magazine sent to all staff, digital articles and interviews. External channels exploited the 'Touch – Tell – Sell' model, creating an emotional connection followed by personal stories in which individuals talked about their work. Testimonies were published via UWV's website (UWV.nl), Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. UWV analysed traffic on social networks in order to assess the most successful channels, finding, for example, that Facebook had become less effective in reaching the intended target groups. Interviews appeared on YouTube, and media posts led to the campaign page.

The success of the campaign in gaining public interest boosted support internally. Outside events had a big impact and demonstrated the need to be constantly active and to reinforce key messages.

Figure 3: What does Zinhoud mean to you?







Source: © UWV. Translation: Floor, work consultant: 'Working at UWV is more than a job'. Marijke, team leader payment of unemployment benefits: 'Work that is meaningful and challenging'. Naomi, client advisor: 'Looking at vacancies from a perspective of meaning and fulfillment'.

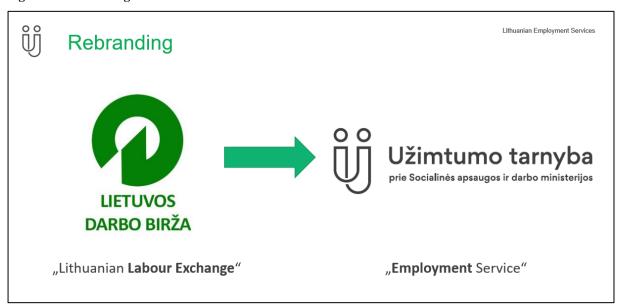
2.1.3 Lithuania: How the PES was reshaped

The Lithuanian PES is 30 years old but underwent major restructuring in 2018 and 2020. To highlight its expanded services, it launched a rebranding campaign.

The old logo, in place for 28 years, identified the PES as a 'Labour Exchange'. This was no longer suitable for a modern PES, so staff were invited to vote on a replacement. The final choice depicts two people shaking hands, embodying partnership. A 'brand book' governs the style of publications, posters etc.

Four core messages about the changes and their benefits were disseminated as part of the strategy. Communication through a wide range of channels, including press conferences and advertising, radio, TV and social networks, led to significant media interest. The PES now rates favourably against other public institutions and is more popular with the public. It receives daily media requests for expert opinion and finds that this offers adequate exposure without having to purchase additional advertising space.

Figure 4: Rebranding the Lithuanian PES



Source: Presentation at the second WG meeting, 13-14 October 2022

2.1.4 Belgium: Le Forem - Corporate Influencers strategy

At Le Forem, the corporate influencers strategy was launched in December 2020, to reach institutional targets. The PES has a good relationship with media but wanted to contact organisations that cover similar domains, informing them about Le Forem activities and inviting them to tell their own clients, thus amplifying the PES' visibility and status as an expert body and creating a network of partners.

The strategy started from scratch and followed three steps:

- Contacting institutions and identifying the right person to communicate with personally;
- Capitalising on their interest;
- Action.

The PES filtered job opportunities on its website and forwarded local vacancies to municipalities, updated every month, offering added value that local authorities would not have time to create themselves. When the scheme started the message open rate was very high (49.5%) and has stayed around 30%. The network database has expanded from 107 to 961 local authorities. The PES is exploring new contact formats through social media such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

2.2 Lessons learned

What is the key to creating a positive image?

- Strong employer branding means making clear what PES do and why: employment services are there to help people have a better life. Clients and employers must be at the centre of activities.
- PES should aim for maximum accessibility and communication through good IT solutions and being able to act fast in response to clients' questions or complaints.
 Campaigns need to be bold and honest. High visibility can be achieved through presence at outside events such as jobs fairs.
- It is important to undertake the broadest possible **networking**, using good communication tools. This includes identifying appropriate organisations for benchmarking and improving regional communications where appropriate.
- PES should reach out more widely to attract different categories of clients, for example workers wanting to switch jobs as well as job-seekers. They should be trustworthy partners for all during different phases of life, not only in situations of unemployment, and identify individuals who need specific support services.
- PES must have a **strong and up-to-date visual identity**. Communications should demonstrate authenticity. Publishing good stories and interesting research data help to establish the PES as a source of expert information and labour market forecasting for media.
- PES should be more active on **social media**, using targeted messages and choosing the right platforms to suit specific requirements. Facebook is still essential but becoming less effective for reaching younger age groups. YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn (and occasionally also TikTok), etc. are all widely used.
- Getting management support for communications is vital, as is cooperation between different departments. Employer-rating platforms can help to identify weak and strong human resources policies.
- Rebranding is a **long process** and may demand more time and money than originally planned.

3. EVALUATION AND MEASUREMENT OF COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGNS

Assessing the success or challenges of campaigns and activities is a preoccupation for all PES and formed the topic of the third WG meeting on 29 March 2022. Many PES measure the outputs of their activities but are not sure whether they are counting the right outcomes. How to set measurable and meaningful goals for communication activities was a key question for the Working Group.

Evaluation and measurement (E&M) help organisations to learn from experience and improve their performance, making them more professional and accountable and boosting their reputation among employees. E&M is key to understanding the value of an action, on the principle that if you cannot measure it you cannot manage it. Whereas measurement refers to collecting data, evaluation goes a step further to assess results against preestablished goals. However, organisations face barriers to effective evaluation, including lack of time and money, lack of interest or support among managers, lack of knowledge and the complexity of the evaluation models available.

The **external thematic expert Sophia Volk from the University of Zurich**, who has carried out extensive research into measuring and evaluation, spoke of a growing interest in E&M, nationally and internationally, due to factors such as the demand for more transparency and accountability, and more complex organisational strategies. There are now a growing number of different evaluation models, methods, key performance

indicators (KPIs), tools and service providers. It is vital to select the right strategy and to promote a holistic approach to E&M. No one-size-fits-all solution exists.

Advance planning is essential for accurate evaluation, which can also be carried out through pre-implementation testing or in real time.

With regard to evaluation models, Sophia Volk recommended the AMEC Integrated Evaluation Framework, which exists in 20 languages and distinguishes input, activities and outputs. The <u>AMEC website</u> offers an overview of evaluation methods and metrics and is a great resource for practitioners, as are some examples of industry guidelines, discussions and podcasts for up-to-date information. 'Rather than collecting lots of data, the trick is to distinguish what is crucial for your own organisation and its communications.' (Betteke Van Ruler and Frank Körver, 2019).

3.1 Good practices

3.1.1 Austria: all jobs – the new job-search engine

The Austrian PES carried out a campaign in April-May 2021 to publicise the launch of a new online job-search engine. The aim was to exceed the performance values of previous campaigns and of comparable efforts by other organisations, and to raise awareness among at least 30% of the target group.

The PES used a range of indicators to analyse performance, including delivery of planned values, click-through rate (CTR), visibility of online placements, view/completion rate of videos, search engine marketing (SEM) for best-performing keywords and cost per click (CPC), and social media reach and clicks. An external agency carried out sample interviews.

During the campaign, the PES reached the highest number of users in 21 years. Most people remembered the service's name and logo, more than 40% noticed promotions in newspapers and online, and more than 25% on radio and digital out-of-home screens. Interactive and animated online banners were well received. Overall, the campaign had a positive impact on the PES's image. The Austrian PES carries out measuring when it makes major changes or launches new services, roughly every five years.

3.1.2 Belgium: Le Forem - Communication campaign towards young people

Le Forem runs an ongoing campaign aimed at young people. Last year there was a drop in spontaneous registrations (down 12%) so the PES focused its message on registering jobseekers. The target audience was some 30,000 young people finishing education, with the aim of 'demystifying' the work of the PES and encouraging them to register and use its services.

The campaign was innovative and 100% digital, with concrete tips for job-seeking. The PES gained press and media interest by releasing a new market study on handling personal reputation online.

Le Forem monitored its own YouTube, Facebook and Instagram channels. From June to September it successfully organised five university webinars. It had adverts on TikTok and, for the first time, used external influencers through an agency which selected appropriate individuals and analysed their impact. They comprised 11 influencers on Instagram, including two major ones, and six on TikTok.

The campaign achieved a 30% increase in registered young job-seekers compared with the same period in 2020 (from 10,150 to 13,421) and 35% of young registered created online profiles (4,713).

3.1.3 Italy: Awareness raising among NEETs of entrepreneurship possibilities

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many people wanted to leave their old jobs and take up self-employment. The 'Yes I Start Up' (YesISU) national project of the Italian PES (ANPAL), launched in 2019, aimed at increasing brand awareness, reaching and attracting NEETs (young people not in education, employment or training), and encouraging them to train as entrepreneurs and launch start-ups. The campaign used social media and employed an external organisation to calculate the 'value' of results.

Between 2019 and 2021, the reach totalled 20,000 each day, with 1 million post views and 18,000 interactions. The results were satisfactory: before the campaign, only a few NEETs were in training, compared with 3,000 by the end, and 1,000 start-up SMEs launched.

Assessment of the value of the Opportunity To See (OTS) and Advertising Value Equivalent (AVE) of the press and media coverage was estimated to have reached a total equivalent to €300,000 in advertising value over three years.

Experience showed that relying on social media could limit advertising opportunities, and autonomous tools were needed, so ANPAL launched its own project website.

Figure 5: Lessons learned from Italy's 'Yes I start up'-communication campaign

What are the **lessons learned** NIONE EUROPEA for the **future** Use social media properly and define a strategy of communication tools (content, video, copy) • Profile the target through autonomous tools (e.g., we created the website www.diventaimprenditore.eu) Apply social adv to geographical targets • Use different tone of voices for different targets • A team composed by different professionals generate elastic and **varied content** • Don't leave your target without a **quick answer** to their requests or critics (online chat) • Train your stakeholders: teachers, communicators, managers have to be aligned on strategies and targets Use all available amplification tools (e.g. social pages owned by

Source: Presentation at the third WG meeting, 29 March 2022

partners or set-up local live or digital events)

3.1.4 The Netherlands: 'What works for you' campaign

UWV's campaign entitled 'What works for you' featured videos of real-life testimonies from employment-service users. The target group was people over the age of 30, either in employment but seeking to move, or on unemployment or other benefits. The objective was to increase awareness of the PES's services and improve its reputation.

Information was disseminated through a campaign website, the PES's own channels, paid external channels and sponsored content and advertising, including in The Netherland's largest-circulation newspaper. An internal media campaign also aimed to inform and involve colleagues.

Perceptions and attitudes among the target group were measured before, during and after the campaign, using outside agencies, followed by a quantitative study of the campaign's impact. Results showed that the campaign reached a wider audience and had an overall positive impact on perceptions. According to the post-campaign assessments, more than half the target group regarded UWV as a more service-oriented organisation. However, the campaign was more successful in reaching employed people than those on benefits.

3.2 Lessons learned

How can PES better evaluate the success of communication activities?

- Social media are an ever-more important tool for reaching PES target audiences, and also offer means of measuring views, interactions, responses and advertising 'value'. However, different networks suit different national circumstances, and so each PES needs to identify what is most effective. Some WG members reported that young people are becoming less likely to use Facebook, but other groups continue to find it a vital channel. YouTube was generally regarded as necessary for video presentations, and other platforms such as Instagram and TikTok could be used.
- As illustrated by the Belgian good practice, influencers can also spread messages in an appealing way, especially to young people. The WG members found the use of influencers innovative and potentially relevant to their future communication campaigns. However, it is vital to work through an agency to identify suitable influencers and monitor the content they disseminate and its impact.
- Before embarking on a campaign, a clear strategy for social media and communication tools, as well as E&M, should be defined. Geographical targeting of localised data makes information more relevant, especially in countries where services are devolved regionally, such as Italy.
- PES should adopt language familiar to young people and provide quick answers to users' questions, for example through an online chat, offering information that is easily understood. Involving professionals with a range of skills in the project team helps to expand and diversify the content of campaigns. PES should also collaborate with other stakeholders, such as teachers and employers, to make them aware of a campaign's strategy and its targets.
- More is not always better: in the experience of the Netherlands UWV, the number of video interviews broadcast should be limited to six or seven per campaign. Social media posts should be short, because too much text limits the click-through rate (CTR).
- Data from different departments need to be compatible and readily available to communicators who may face questions from clients or media. Reusing and recycling communication materials for new campaigns if they remain up-to-date saves time and money.
- Most importantly, effective E&M involves more than counting clicks or likes and should include mechanisms for assessing indirect outcomes and impacts.

3.3 Recommendations and conclusions for evaluating and measuring communication campaigns

Sophia Volk found that all PES measured reach and coverage (outputs), many measure direct outcomes, but few examine indirect outcomes and impact. She provided a number of recommendations. In the short term, it is important to carry out a 'sentiment' analysis of social media comments in order to judge attitudes and behavioural changes. She stressed that communication goals must be aligned to overall PES goals. More long term, a holistic E&M culture requires a commitment from management, as well as an open and

transparent work culture where colleagues do not fear evaluation. Sophisticated E&M structures often require external support and PES should look for expert partners in evaluation. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) must be tailored to specific PES objectives. Finally, patience and perseverance are keys to success. She recommended that 10% of any communication project budget should be set aside for E&M.

Sophia Volk also formulated a number of questions each PES could ask itself for potential improvement¹:

- Are we formulating the **right communication goals**? The 'Communication Value Circle' can be used to analyse goals and identify gaps.
- Are we formulating the **communication goals correctly**? The SMART formula helps to make goals Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-framed.
- Are we using the **right methods and measures for evaluating** our campaigns? Budget analysis is useful. Is internal work-flow efficient? More diverse methods such as surveys and opinion polls can help to assess impact.
- Are we using the right channels and activities to reach the right target groups?
 A media portfolio analysis can assess the suitability and mix of channels and activities. How effective are certain channels in reaching target groups? A Touchpoint analysis can help to assess the typical 'customer' journey from the perspective of different target groups. Results help to identify what does not work.
- Are we presenting and **using the results** from evaluations **adequately**? This is a very important question. Busy leaders do not have time to read long reports. Dashboard solutions offer clear insights that should feed into future campaigns.
- Do we have the right competencies and resources in our team for evaluations, including adequate budgets? Responsibilities should be clearly defined. Besides outsourcing to agencies, it makes sense to build up in-house skills using free or low-budget software.

The WG discussions led to the following **conclusions:**

- There is no single evaluation method that is right for all organisations.
- Quick and simple solutions are not always the best you cannot measure everything with the same tool.
- An ideal **evaluation toolbox** should measure effects at the inputs, outcomes and impact stages.
- Managers must offer active support.
- PES should be aware of the **four major evaluation trends** that are underway: big-data analytics; use of AI and machine learning; automation as a facilitator (translation, voice-to-text etc.); and the new buzz-word CommTech (communication and technology).

4. MAIN OUTCOMES AND MESSAGES FROM THE WORKING GROUP

PES around Europe are not uniform in either their structures or the employment conditions they face. Consequently, there is no magic bullet or 'one-size-fits-all' solution to improving visibility and branding. However, the PES Network Working Group has enabled participants to share and analyse some of the most innovative and forward-looking practices in communications, building a positive image and measuring and evaluating communication campaigns, thus equipping them better to meet the challenges of a post-COVID-19 labour market.

¹ For more information see: <u>'How to play the game. Strategic tools for managing corporate communications.'</u> (2017).

This learning process would not have been possible without the frank, honest and open exchange of information and opinions, which was one aspect that the participants most appreciated. At the same time, the WG has established a network of contacts offering ongoing support and inspiration as PES adapt to rapidly evolving national circumstances. **The main lessons can be briefly summarised:**

- Good internal communications are vital to gaining the commitment of staff throughout the organisation. But messages must be timely, clear and well targeted, avoiding an overload of information.
- Managers should take care to consult employees and seek to create highly motivated, self-managing teams.
- PES need an attractive, modern visual identity that expresses their primary purpose of helping people to fulfil their potential.
- Carrying out original research and establishing the role of the PES as a source of expertise for media professionals reinforces public confidence.
- Social media are crucial to reaching PES target groups, but organisations need to identify which networks work best for them.
- To judge the success of a campaign or learn from any setbacks, comprehensive measurement and evaluation systems are required.

