

What did you say? An Assessment of the EC Spokesperson's Service Performances at Midday Briefings

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ABSTRACT

The paper is the result of the evaluation of the Spokesperson's performances at the Midday Press Briefing at the European Commission. The research was conducted between January and October 2016. The event has a strong impact on the perception of the EU among the public and is an expression of the aim of the European institutions to improve communication with the media, the public and to enhance transparency. The performances of the speakers often show the contradiction of the verbal and the non-verbal messages. The unclear messages have a negative effect on the public communication. The main reason is the lack of the use of the public speaking principles in their performances and the marketing strategies used in the European communication policy. However, recent trends indicate that the elite have the power to "pull themselves together" and reverse the trend in the field of Public Communication.

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KEY WORDS: European Commission, Spokespersons Service, performances, the Method, European communication policy, public speaking.

POVZETEK

Pričujoče delo je rezultat ovrednotenja nastopov uradnih govorcev na tiskovnih konferencah na Evropski komisij, med januarjem in oktobrom 2016. Servis uradnih govorcev je ena najbolj vidnih in izpostavljenih služb, najbolj opazna pa je vsakodnevna opoldanska tiskovna konferenca. Uradni govorniki se soočajo z vprašanji novinarjev iz držav EU in tudi širše. Dogodek ima močan vpliv na percepcijo o EU med javnostmi in je izraz želje evropskih institucij po izboljšanju komunikacije z javnostmi in večji transparentnosti. Žal pa so verbalna in neverbalna sporočila govorcev pogosto neverodostojna, nimajo prave teže in imajo celo negativne učinke. Temu je vzrok nepoznavanje principov javnega nastopanja pa tudi strategije komuniciranja z javnostmi v EU.

V obdobju različnih kriz je pomembno, da se EU sooči s temi pomanjkljivostmi in jih poiskuje odpraviti. Nekateri trendi kažejo, da ima elita vendarle moč, da se zbere in obrne tok dogodkov v korist EU in mednarodnim javnostim.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: Evropska komisija, uradni govorniki, nastopi, Metoda, evropska komunikacijska politika, javno nastopanje.

INTRODUCTION

Watching the spokespersons from the European institutions and particularly the European Commission giving announcements and answering questions, I set the following research questions:

- Is it efficient to have a spokesperson's service in the EC?
- Why have they chosen these speakers?
- What are the spokespersons at the EC midday press conference really conveying?