

# **Matra Training for European Cooperation**

**(MTEC)**

## **COMMUNICATING WITH THE PUBLIC**

October 8<sup>th</sup> –26<sup>th</sup>, 2007



Academy of Government Information and Communication  
(part of the Netherlands Government Information Service of  
the Ministry of General Affairs)



## Introduction

Central and East European countries face structural changes in the social, economic and monetary sphere of government and society after applying to join the European Union. Compliance with EU-legislation and EU-regulation will not only have an effect on government policy but also on government communication. Communication between the government and the public deserves careful attention.

Bearing this in mind, the Academy of Government Information and Communication organises the course 'Communication with the Public'. During this course senior policy officials and senior communication professionals from seven countries (the Candidate Countries and the Potential Candidate Countries: Bulgaria, Croatia, Turkey, Serbia, Montenegro, Romania and Macedonia) prepare themselves in the field of government communication on how to communicate with the public.

The course is organised under the MTEC programme of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This programme, part of the Matra Programme for European Cooperation, is executed by EVD/CROSS. CROSS is part of EVD, the Agency for International Business and Cooperation.

## Objectives

The course aims to improve the participants' experience with and understanding of the relationship between government policy and communication and the tasks and functions of government communication in a democratic society.

The subjects to be dealt with cover the principles of modern government communication management, the tailoring of messages to internal and external target groups and communication specialisms relevant to the participants, and the organisation of communication. The participants will be trained in the practical application of specific subjects and in a number of oft-needed practical skills. Moreover, the course programme offers participants the opportunity to share knowledge and experiences.

The course also aims to promote professional contacts among the participants, between them and their counterparts in the European Union and between the participants and the international joint bodies concerned with government communication in the European Union.

## Course programme

The course consists of formal training and knowledge sharing. The course's structure will be concentric, zooming in from the general context of European public administration and government communication to the course's central theme: communicating with the public. The course programme aims at an appropriate balance between theory and practice. In weekly peer consultation sessions participants apply the acquired knowledge on their daily practice and exchange experiences.

### **Theme 1: The European Union and communication with the public**

- Public administration, policy, and communication in transition: government communication in a European setting;
- The new government: communication in interactive policymaking processes;
- The EU in public opinion; opinion monitors and media analysis;
- Branding your country: the do's and don'ts of building a country image;
- Professional presentations (theory and training);
- Communication Game: development of creative skills.

## **Theme II: Government communication in practice: communication strategy and management**

- History of government communication: from spokesperson and press officer to public relations officer, communications advisor and web editor;
- Public information and communication in the Netherlands, with i.e. visits to the Netherlands Government Information Service, the Government Public Information Centre;
- Media management and press relations: with a.o. a visit to the Parliament of the Netherlands and the International Press Centre;
- Communication management: strategy, planning and methods (a.o. formulating core messages);
- Communication specialisms: strategic media planning and (mass) media campaigns, speech writing, media performance and crisis communication.

## **Theme III: government communication and policy in practice II: personal skills**

- Organisation of the communication: visit to Dutch ministries;
- Communication specialism: crisis communication;
- Dealing with the media: theory and personal skills training;
- Case study on a relevant communication related theme from one of the countries.

### Social programme

A social programme, consisting of various events, will be included.

### Evaluation

Participants will evaluate the course at the end of each week and at the end of the course. Participants are expected to actively participate in the whole course. The project team will evaluate each participant's performance during the course programme and the proceeding of the presentations and trainings.

### Certification

At the end of the course certificates will be granted to participants, when attendance and participation criteria are met.

### Organisation

The course will be organised by the Academy of Government Information and Communication, part of the Netherlands Government Information Service of the Ministry of General Affairs.

The Academy works on a regular basis with:

- The Hague annexe of the University of Leiden (politics and public administration) and the lecturer in Government Communication at the Hogeschool van Utrecht, Faculty of Communication and Journalism (institution of higher professional education);
- A wide network of trainers from the Academy and from several Dutch policy departments and information and communication departments;
- Professionals working in the field of government communication in ministries;
- Professionals in the field via the regular ties that the Academy maintains with the Association for Government Communication and the Association of Professional Communicators.

## Dates

The course will take place from October 8<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup>, 2007. A welcome party will be held on October 7<sup>th</sup>. Due to flight schedules participants may arrive a day earlier and leave a day later.

## Accommodation

Participants will stay at a hotel in The Hague. Most of the educational part of the course will take place at the hotel. Other locations (e.g. departments and organisations and institutions outside The Hague) will also be used.

## Expenses

The Dutch government reimburses the following costs for the participants during the course/stay in the Netherlands: flight to the Netherlands and back, travel within the Netherlands (e.g. transport for course related excursions and public transport in The Hague during the course programme), visa, travel and health insurance with own risk, hotel (including breakfast and dinner), lunch, course and study material, and an allowance for the weekends.

## Travel arrangements

Participants are expected to make their own travel arrangements to the Netherlands. Travelling expenses will be reimbursed by the Dutch government. Reimbursement of travel costs will be made by means of a bank transfer after the course; the original bill of purchase of the plane ticket should be accompanied by photo copies of all travel documents. Details on the conditions of reimbursement of travelling expenses will be included in the letter of confirmation.

## Admission

The course is intended for government officials working in public communication: senior communication advisors and senior policy officials concerned with subjects with a high public profile. Applicants are invited from Bulgaria, Croatia, Turkey, Serbia, Montenegro, Romania and Macedonia. A balance between the numbers of participants from the different countries will be taken into account during the selection procedure.

## Selection criteria

- A brief essay on government communication in your country;
- Good fit between personal goals and course objectives;
- Motivation and enthusiasm;
- Relevant professional and educational background;
- Fluent in written en spoken English.

## Application

Applications should be made through the Netherlands Embassy in the applicant's country. Application forms should be downloaded from the website: [www.cross-agency.nl](http://www.cross-agency.nl).

Go to Downloads, click on application form for the relevant course, click on your country; you can then download the application form.

Applications (duly signed by the applicant and his or her employer) should be submitted before **the 24<sup>th</sup> of August 2007**, through the Royal Dutch Embassy in the applicants' country.

By this date, all forms, including the signed employer statement, must be received by the Royal Netherlands Embassy. Please note that the application instructions on the website need to be followed carefully.

Only fully documented applications will be considered. The total number of applicants will be limited to a maximum of 50. Admission will be on a competitive basis.

**Applicants who have been accepted for the course are expected to attend. Please be informed that the course programme does not leave any room for working activities. In case of no-shows or cancellations within 3 weeks before the start of the course, the organisers reserve the right to claim any costs incurred (e.g. pre-paid flight tickets) from the applicant's employer.**

Information and Course Secretariat

**Academy of Government Communication and Information**

P.O. Box 20006  
2500 EA The Hague  
The Netherlands

Tel: +31 70 356 4242  
Fax: +31 70 364 17 43  
E-mail: [academie@minaz.nl](mailto:academie@minaz.nl)  
Contact persons: Mrs. Melanie Verheijden (Course organisation)  
Mr. Jan Willem Schouw (Course organisation)  
Mrs. Manling Chung (Course Organisation)

More information on the courses developed under the MTEC programme

For further information, you can contact either the Royal Netherlands Embassy or EVD/CROSS:

**EVD/CROSS**

P.O. Box 20105  
2500 EC The Hague  
The Netherlands

Telephone: +31 70 778 81 39  
Website: [www.cross-agency.nl](http://www.cross-agency.nl)  
E-mail: [crossonline@info.evd.nl](mailto:crossonline@info.evd.nl)  
Contact person: Mr. Diederik ter Haar