

## ECREA's Political Communication Section Interim Conference

March 26<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Bucharest, Romania

“Communicating crisis: Political communication in the age of uncertainty”

### Call for Papers

The Political Communication Section of ECREA invites abstracts of papers for the next Interim Conference to be held in Bucharest, March 26<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>, 2021. For self-explanatory reasons, the theme of the conference is “*Communicating crisis: Political communication in the age of uncertainty*”. The organizers call for proposals in all sub-fields of political communication research, but particularly invite conceptual, empirical, and methodological proposals reflecting on the ‘plague year’ we are living in, or comparable crisis events, and the role of media and/or communication therein. The conference will reflect both empirically, and conceptually and methodologically focused work.

This is a timely and rich topic, and not only due to the tragic circumstances around Covid 19. The last 20 years have brought or aggravated several challenges to humanity: rapid population increase, climate change, war and conflict, humanitarian catastrophes, economic crises, growing inequalities, population ageing, and the uncertain future of work among them. These ongoing crises are now the background of a pandemic of proportions unseen in at least a century. In such turbulent times, communication in general and political communication in particular play a significant role in helping the public at large as well as volatile groups in society in particular to understand unfolding events, and in developing constructive attitudes and resilient behaviors regarding the crisis. Perspectives can even be adjusted or corrected, e.g. in reorienting audiences to reliable information outlets and away from possibly “polluted information” from untrustworthy sources.

The digital information ecosystem comes with further challenges to effective communication in times of crisis. Among them, the large variety of sources of information, the partisan bias of media organizations and outlets, the relatively high incidence of “polluted information” (i.e., dis-, mis-, and mal-information), the potential of each message to go viral due to the constant use of social networking sites and instant messaging platforms, the rapid circulation of conspiracy theories, the high potential of exposure to contradictory information, the almost instant access to interpersonal communication which might fuel various rumors, and so on. All these trends contribute to making people more vulnerable to accept and to disseminate various pieces of ideologically-driven, highly polarized information. Against this backdrop, communication is no longer used as a strategy to keep

people well informed, but as an engine responsible for generalized skepticism and emotionally-driven attitudes. Addressing (political) communication changes and challenges during crises is of high relevance not only for scholars, policy-makers, and journalists, but also for citizens, as co-creators of content within the communication flow.

#### Keynote speaker

Prof. **Darren G. Lilleker**, Bournemouth University

Dr Darren G. Lilleker is Professor of Political Communication in The Faculty of Media & Communication, Bournemouth University and Convenor of the Centre for Comparative Politics & Media Research. He has published widely on election campaigning and voter engagement, including *Political Communication and Cognition* (Palgrave, 2014).

#### Papers & panels

The conference will feature both presentations of individual research papers, and thematic panels. Paper submissions will be grouped in sessions of 4-5 papers by the conference program chair. A limited number of slots will be available for coherent panels where one topic is addressed in four to five presentations, followed by responses. Preference will be given to panels with presenters from diverse backgrounds and affiliations.

#### Submission

- Paper submissions: Please send an MS Word (.doc, .docx) file including (a) the title of your paper and an abstract of no more than 400 words, and (b), on a separate page, the names and affiliations of the authors.
- Panel submissions: Please send an MS Word (doc., docx) file including (a) a rationale of no more than 300 word; (b) summaries for all the presentations in the panel (no more than 150 words for each summary); and (c) the names and affiliations of the chair, presenters, and respondents.
- Please note that all submission will undergo peer-review, and will be accepted or declined accordingly.
- Only one proposal per first author can be accepted.
- All submissions should be sent via email at: [contact\[at\]comunicare\[dot\]ro](mailto:contact[at]comunicare[dot]ro).

#### Deadlines

- Please e-mail your abstract or panel proposal by **September 30th 2020**.
- Notifications of acceptance will be sent to authors by **November 15<sup>th</sup> 2020**.

#### A possible virtual conference

Due to the global pandemic circumstances, the Organizers are preparing two other options for the conference as a precaution:

- There will be an option of online participation for those presenters who are unable to travel.
- In the worst case scenario, the entirety of the conference will be done online, but the Organizers would do their best to run the conference at the planned and scheduled dates.

We will be in contact as the situation evolves.

#### Local host

Nicoleta Corbu (National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Bucharest, Romania)

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#### Section Management Team

Andreas Schuck (University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands; Chair)

Melanie Magin (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway; Vice Chair)

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