



The CLUB OF VENICE

Constitutional principles ¹

10 December 2012

The Club. The Club of Venice is an informal group comprising the most senior communication professionals from the governments of EU Member and Candidate States; and from the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council of the EU, the European Commission, the European Central Bank, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.

The Club's mission, process and objectives. Our mission is to promote effective government communication at national and European level for the benefit of Europe's citizens and their democratic engagement. We do this through our plenary meetings, specialised workshops, and Website.

Our objectives are:

- to strengthen professional networking, professional knowledge, and professional expertise among members; and
- to promote discussion and debate about the communication of European issues.

General membership. The Club's *general members* are the directors-general or equivalent of the information and communication services of governments, and of the institutions of the EU. Their single common qualification is involvement in public communication at the most senior level. The Club makes no distinction between permanent civil servants and political appointees.

Honorary membership. The *honorary members* – the Honorary President, Co-ordinator and Vice-Presidents are former general members who hold membership in their own right. They have a role in the Club's administration through an *advisory committee which formulates proposals inspiring the Club in its future activities and contributes to the preparation of its meetings*. To qualify, candidates must have attended the Club consistently for a number of years. Candidates are proposed at a plenary meeting, and elected by vote at a *subsequent* plenary meeting.

Members emeritus. The status of *member emeritus* is awarded by the Club at a plenary meeting to former general members to recognise the contribution they have made to the Club.

¹ Agreement at the plenary meeting of the Club of Venice on 15-16 November 2012. Supersedes the text agreed at the plenary meeting of the Club of Venice in Gozo (Malta) on 4 June 2010.

The steering committee is composed of a limited number of Member States' active communication directors and the Secretary-General of the Club who are instrumental in defining the activities of the Club. Its role is to establish the Club agenda, to organise plenary meetings, workshops and the management of other relevant communication activities carried out by the Club alone or in association with other peer organisations (joint communication seminars, conferences such as EuroPCom, SEECOM, media seminars, etc.). The steering committee plays a role of catalyzer on the basis of regular peer-to-peer contacts, prioritizing discussion needs and stimulating members' pro-active role in the programme and, in cooperation with the advisory committee, identifying high level governmental and external speakers.

Club Agenda. Focus on strategic challenges for government communication (at national, trans-national and pan-European level) and core business of the government communication directors (concrete organisational matters such as structural developments, strategies and capacity building, public diplomacy and branding, interactive dialogue with citizens, ethics and education dimension in communication).

Club meetings and attendance. *Plenary* meetings are held twice a year. Usually, one is in Venice (in the autumn) and the other in a EU Member State (in the spring). The steering committee organises the agenda. A planning meeting is usually held about two months in advance. Ad hoc *workshops* on specific issues are proposed at plenary meetings and organised in the same way. Their agenda are developed by one or two members specialist in the topic who lead a small animation group. At any meeting, members may be accompanied by a colleague; and they may be represented by nominees, particularly relevant specialists.

Languages. Plenary meetings usually have simultaneous translation into the host country language, French and English. Specialised workshops are usually conducted without translation services and generally use English.

The Club's Website and e-mail bulletins: **Venicenet** is the Club's Website, containing documents submitted for mutual interest, discussion forums, agenda and records of meetings, and other items considered valuable. It is hosted within the internet domain europa.eu but is independent of it. The Webmaster is currently the EU Council Webmaster, courtesy of the Council secretariat. Club members have password protected access to the site. Club members may grant access to their colleagues, but they take full responsibility for the observation of privacy and data protection. Automatic and ad hoc e-mail bulletins are used to inform members of updates to Venicenet and news of common interest from Member States and EU Institutions and bodies.