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Strategies and specific techniques to mass-media relations activities in a public institution

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Abstract. In a democratic society like ours, the role of the press is to gather, to structure and to disseminate accurate and comprehensive information concerning matters of public interest, information that the audience needs. Any coercion or obstruction of these activities, violates the public's right to information. Freedom of the press also derives from the fundamental freedoms of thought, speech, expression and opinion, enshrined in various national and international laws and normative acts. The concept of the public interest is constantly evolving, which makes it difficult to define it, but, nevertheless, it can be said that it is information of public interest that allows citizens to participate fully in social and political activities. In order to determine what is in the interest of the public, the media and individual journalists will carry out research independently, without any constraints, respecting the job description and the legislation in force.

Keywords. strategies, techniques, mass-media, public institution

1. The importance of relations with the media

The public relations represents "the theoretical element based on non-verbal and non-personal communication with the aim of evaluating the public's attitude as development and execution of programs that attract the public interest. Success in public relations depends primarily on winning, but also on maintaining a good reputation of the institutions, through direct contracts carried out constantly and systematically with different categories of public, institutions in the country or abroad, but also opinion leaders" (Cantor, Rus, Tasente, 2021, p. 195). A good relationship with the media often boils down to providing the right information to the right journalist, at the right time, in the right way. If this is taken into account, the relationship will certainly be a good one.

Communication between the institutions and the informational media concerned by their action shall relate to developments within or in relation to the institution. Communication can be initiated by either side, but it is preferable to come from the institution.

"The mass-media has a great importance throughout the world, representing a huge force today, which not only informs, but also shapes attitudes and behaviors" (Sandu, Tasente, Ciacu, 2013, p. 134). The mass-media reacts when the situation becomes special, and the institution

reacts to different events, but in order for the public relations department to be effective, it must react planned, in relation to the objectives of the organization.

Public relations must be understood as a necessity for the organization, because through them information, understanding, sympathy, trust and support from customers, partners, the public and the mass-media are obtained. "Thus, public institutions and the media have a common objective, that of creating and disseminating news for mass consumption" (Tasente, 2014, p. 19).

Mass-media relations and public relations fulfil quite different functions. Public relations are the management of communication and they aim for organizations to be as transparent and responsive as possible. Many years ago, organizations dealt with legal and moral obligations to balance success with social, environmental and ethical responsibility. These relations ensure a three-step process, firstly, organizations listen to and support the public's expectations for reasonable behavior, secondly, the behavior of those organizations matches these expectations and, ultimately, they are publicly recognized as trustworthy.

Media relations, on the other hand, are a specialized sub-branch of public relations that deals in principle with the third stage of the process - recognition. The mass-media relations specialist increases the awareness and understanding of the public, and the organizations act by sending information to the mass-media, inviting them to participate in all operations directly.

The main challenge of the specialist in relations with the mass-media today, is not to get attention, but to gain the trust of the public. The journalist is the secret weapon of the use of the media, because he has more credibility in front of the public than the communication represented by the advertising. Direct and personalized communication that allows organizations to receive *feedback* and create dialogue with employees, communities, governments, shareholders, members, customers, trading, partners or other stakeholders, is gaining more and more ground. The mass-media, however, remains too strong for any institution to ignore.

Some mass-media specialists suggest that the power of the mass-media can range from discrediting political leaders, removing governments, to starting or stopping a possible war. For institutions, negative media coverage can reduce sales, therefore destabilizing the financial situation and the relationship with the public. At the same time, the mass-media has the power to quickly disseminate information of great importance, when institutions need to have cheap and rapid growth. Therefore, the public relations specialist deals both proactively and reactively with the risks and opportunities of the media power. Thus, it will build a positive reputation by highlighting exemplary behavior.

The public relations specialist has typical tasks, including organizing events and collecting media information, along with creating a media policy and a risk management plan. Policies determine who is authorized to talk to the press and make sure they have the training required to hold the position of a spokesperson. Risk plans assess the likelihood and prepare for negative scenarios or crises in the mass-media.

The reactive public relations specialist, transmits the evidence that the institution has an appropriate behavior and can be effective only if this evidence is correct. Therefore, he must have a strategic vision that advertising is not necessarily positive. Even positive exposure to the mass-media is a wasted effort if it does not reach the institution's target audience.

The key consideration of the public relations specialist is the nature and number of audience members reached, not the nature and number of stories in the press. However, when the media coverage reaches the target audience, it can have a significant impact on their

opinions and decision-making. How and how much the press can influence these audiences is developed in the agenda setting.

2. The importance of public relations specialists

According to Daniel Șerbănică's opinion "public relations specialists create and manage the public image of institutions, companies, parties and political parties, non-governmental organizations, mediate conflicts and advise negotiations, manage the organization's relations with the media as a spokesperson or official of the press office, formulate written and audiovisual messages, organize media events" (Serbanica, 2003, p. 57).

The public relations specialist carries out a series of activities aimed at developing specialized programs that begin with the analysis of problems and opportunities, the presentation of the program's objectives, recommendations and planning activities and, implicitly, the measurement of the results of the activities carried out within the program. The public relations specialist maintains a permanent contact with the management of the organization or with the client for which he works.

As for the work of the public relations specialist, it consists in drafting and publishing materials for various categories of public relations, with the mass-media, which means maintaining good relations in cooperation with the mass-media; forms the corporate identity with the means of corporate advertising or emphasizes the presentation of the identification elements of the company and less on the presentation of its services or products; effectiveness and oral communication with individuals and groups in meetings or other types of events; the organization of special events, such as exhibitions, contests and prize programs for special events, press conferences, all to attract the attention of the public. The two most important activities of the public relations specialist are analysis and evaluation.

One of the objectives is to obtain data and information on a specific topic, which form the basis of the programme's strategy, and the evaluation of the programme is the work carried out in order to establish the future strategy within the projected public relations programme. Among the duties and responsibilities of public relations specialists are: (1) research, collection, processing, analysis and synthesis of information; (2) the development, creation or selection of video, photo, written or audio materials for the organisation; (3) the dissemination of information to journalists, investors, shareholders, government institutions and all other types of public that are part of the sphere of interest of the organisation or client for which they work; (4) effective collaboration with both the team and other collaborators who contribute to the implementation of a campaign or programme; (5) the organisation and contribution to events for the benefit of the organisation; (6) maintaining a permanent link with the management team.

3. The relations of institutions with the mass-media. Specific strategies and techniques.

New technology and inventions have changed the behavior of media consumers, increasingly directing them towards the online environment and selective content consumption. As a side effect of this communication revolution, the traditional media concept began to lose its consistency. Thus, "the traditional media, mainly the written press, tends to lose the meaning that we know today. Some specialists say that the traditional media will lose in history, while others believe that the press will only change the way it transmits information to the public, but the essence of the message will remain the same" (Tasente, Ciacu, 2011).

The relationship of public institutions with the mass-media is closely related, like the public administration-citizen relationship, therefore, it must be one based on trust. Among the

reasons for this collaboration with the representatives of the press bodies are determined by the need to make the activity of the administration transparent for the public opinion, to optimize the relationship with the citizens and beneficiaries of the administration's services and, finally, to build a favorable image. In principle, the administration uses the media as a channel of communication between public organizations and the population. In this chapter I will present a series of strategies and techniques specific to media relations as follows:

3.1. The basic principles of a good relationship with the mass-media

According to professor Daniel Șerbănică, "in order to maintain a good relation with the press we must take into account a series of fundamental principals:

- Act with patience;
- Be willing to make yourself useful;
- Do not beg or criticise;
- Do not ask journalists not to use a news story" (Tasente, Ciacu, 2011, p. 44)

Act with patience – honesty is the most important quality of the specialist in relations with the press. Journalists are intelligent people, with a developed capacity to predict possible fake news, even though they can put it in practice successfully. They appreciate and understand the attitude of the person responsible for presenting the things in a positive way, when the circumstances allow it and, if they are honest, they will not lose their credibility. If the person responsible for relation with the press intends to eliminate news that the press consider of public interest, the consequence will be losing her trustworthiness.

Be willing to make yourself useful – the fastest way to become friends with journalists is to provide news and interesting photos in a timely manner and in a format that can be used immediately. News are a perishable commodity, they are born and die in a day. The Public Relations Officer must be prepared to provide journalists with all the necessary information 24 hours a day, in full compliance with the set deadline.

Do not beg or criticize – a public relations specialist who highlights the flaws of others or prays on his knees for benefits, is the person who annoys the reporters he works with. If the news cannot earn a seat on the radio or in the newspaper on their own, they will not arouse the interest of the public. Many of those who have relations with the press, television and radio try to replace the director of the press, assuming that they know better than him what the news is and how it should be written. Most tend to communicate the news in the format they would like to see published or broadcast, and they no longer take into account the fact that this is the responsibility of journalists.

Do not ask journalists not to use a news story – the public relations specialist has no right to ask any newspaper, magazine, radio or television station not to use a news story. If a reporter receives such a request, is regarded as an insult or betrayal of the work it carries out. Such a request rarely receives a favourable response and its consequence is the cooling of the relationship between the two parties. The only way not to publish unfavorable news is to avoid unfavorable situations, which could produce such news. Respect for these principles is essential for establishing a good relationship with the press. A good relationship with the press begins when the public relations specialist admits that the public needs to be informed.

3.2. Media relationship tools

Press relations are an essential element in the work of the public relations manager. Although this is often underestimated, the confidence it inspires is very important.

3.2.1. Press release

The press release is a means of transmitting information in writing which, unlike the press release, is not specifically intended for publication, but rather for media information. Like news, the press release is a proactive form of information dissemination, in which the initiative belongs to its owner, in comparison to the interview, in which the owner of the information behaves reactively, in response to the initiative of others. In order to draft and broadcast a press release, we must bear in mind that, for those in the media, press releases are sources of official information. There is also a special clarification on how to write the press release, which must be designed to win the competition with the other messages that bombard the mass-media and the public on a daily basis.

In order to stand out, the press release must have an interesting title and introduction, otherwise there is a chance that it will go unnoticed. The press release should not completely cover the event it presents, its role is not to present all the details about the event, but to arouse the interest of publishers in the evolution of a particular institution. This is also why naming a contact person for further information is a mandatory form in the body of the press release.

According to Mircea Dan, "the comunique is made following the same rules as when writing the press news, using the technique of the inverted pyramid. This is necessary, because the well-written press releases are often collected by the mass-media without modifications" (Dan, 2002, p. 30).

Normally, "the press release is written and sent by e-mail, fax, mail or courier. There are companies specialised in developing and disseminating of press releases at national and international level, which, in addition to the effective transmission, they can define mmore easily the target audience of interest, translate press releases or reformulate alternative variants. It is essential that it is sent only to those interested in its content, otherwise, if there is no segmentation of the contact lists in the press world and every press release is sent to all those on the agenda, the organization risks losing the credibility and attractiveness of the media, and its communications risk reaching the basket" (David, 2016, pp. 40-45).

3.2.2. Press interview

Interviewing is not a purely verbal technique, it is used to a greater or lesser extent by all types of media. Therefore, journalists in the written press use the technique of the interview in the stage of journalistic documentation to gather all the necessary information from different sources, but they can also request that the interviews be published as such. For the audiovisual press, interviewing is a journalistic genre used quite frequently in radio and television programs.

If the news and the press release are proactive techniques for disseminating information, in which the initiative belongs to those who put it into practice, the interview can be considered a reactive technique, in which the interviewee answers the journalist's questions. However, the interest of reporters can be aroused in requesting an interview, so press releases and news reports, for example, often lead to reporters requesting interviews to deepen the initial information. For journalists, the interview is seen both as a model of presenting information and as a way of reading. For the interviewee, the interview is a way to explain the peculiarities of the institution, to support his opinion about it, to convince and, of course, to increase his public visibility.

Depending on the specifics of the mass-media for which it is issued, the interview can be for the written press, for the radio or for television. Establishing the basic rules when dealing with journalists is an essential requirement for a professional public relations activity. These basic rules represent the rules of the game, that is, the rights and obligations of each of the

participants in the interview, established from the beginning and which, once established, each party undertakes to observe.

When it comes to an interview for the journalist's documentation or for the written press, that is, in cases where the interview is not live, these rules can be established by a simple preliminary verbal agreement between the journalist and the interviewee or between the journalist and the public relations specialist, details negotiated before the interview. In the case of live television or radio interviews, and especially in the case of talk shows or shows with several guests, it is advisable to include these basic rules in a written protocol concluded with the director.

3.2.3. Press conference and press briefing.

The press conference is one of the most complex activities carried out in relations with the media. It is organised on the occasion of major large-scale actions that arouse a high degree of public interest, such as recent political developments, major business acquisitions, mergers or acquisitions of companies, promotion or resignation of public figures, the launch of a new product that can cause very important changes in people's lives, the launch or completion of a project important to the public, launching a new strategy, concept or campaign.

There are usually two important parts in the algorithm of holding a press conference, namely: the opening statement, followed by their questions and answers. In its characteristic form, the press conference must be a dialogue between representatives of an institution and journalists. Depending on the circumstances, this structure can change, so that press conferences can be held in which the speaker will not make any opening statement, but will answer questions directly about an event or organization. Sometimes only the opening statement will be presented, without questions and answers, in which case it is a press release, and if it is about photo opportunities, there will be no opening statement, no question and answer. In the political environment, press opportunities are also practiced, such as signing agreements or legislative projects, decorating people in the presence of journalists; Press receptions organized when the event does not fully justify the convening of a press conference, but it is an opportunity for an informal meeting with journalists.

The press conference is similar to the press conference, the only differences are that a briefing refers to a discussion based on a single topic, which has a smaller size than the conference and the fact that the duration of the briefing is shorter. Regarding the limits of the subject addressed during the briefing, specifying and respecting the limits from the beginning, is a fundamental rule. Therefore, questions outside these limits will not be answered, but only an answer like this: 'As I said from the beginning, the subject of today's briefing is different, and your question is different. is outside it' (Bulican, 2019, p. 12).

According to George David, "the briefing can be organized when it comes to less pleasant events of the institution, in order to avoid the risk of them being misinterpreted or distorted by the press. In the conduct of events of great complexity, the preparation of briefings with the press at short intervals, as soon as the development of events requires it, is something common and indicated as well. It is precisely for this reason that briefings are organised especially in the event of ongoing media crises, in order to update the information provided to journalists based on the evolution of the crisis. However, the topic of a briefing can also be a pleasant event, if the organizers believe that it will be of interest to the press.

The public relations specialist must carefully consider this proposal, since press briefings are not always approved by journalists due to their uniformity, resulting from the limitation to a single, well-defined topic.

The press briefing consists, like the press conference, of two parts, the initial statement and the formulation of questions and answers. The initial statement is presented by the person giving the briefing, the journalists participating in the briefing receive a copy of the text of the minutes and other useful materials. The presentation of the initial declaration should not exceed 5 minutes.

The part reserved for the Q&A session is limited, the maximum duration is 15 minutes, at the same time, as mentioned above, the person responsible for the briefing may kindly refuse to answer questions that are not related to the subject specified in the initial statement" (David, 2016, pp. 94-102).

4. Practical research on the strategies and techniques specific to the relations with the mass-media in Constanța City Hall

4.1. Research objectives

The general objective of the research is to analyze how the activities of Constanța City Hall are reflected in the media.

Specific objectives:

01. Identification of the main communication channels in which the Constanța City Hall is mentioned
02. Analyzing the geographical data of media appearances
03. Analyzing the evolution of the viewership indicator during the monitored period
04. Analyzing press topics that have generated high viewership rate

4.2. Research tools

In order to achieve the research objectives, we analyzed a series of appearances in the media that had as main topic the Constanța City Hall, appearances considered generating possible crisis situations or the actual presentation of the existing crises.

The monitoring was carried out over a period of one month, namely the period 03 November – 03 December 2020, and the tool used to centralize and analyze the data is Zelist Monitor¹, a platform for monitoring and analyzing media and social media. The performance indicators analyzed in the study were: (1) the number of media occurrences in which the Constanța City Hall is mentioned; (2) analysis of geographical data of media appearances; (3) the typology of the mass information channels where the information transmitted has been taken over; (4) the geographical regions of Romania where the information was disseminated and the percentage by region; (5) the communication channels that have generated the largest number of readers.

4.3. Centralization and data analysis

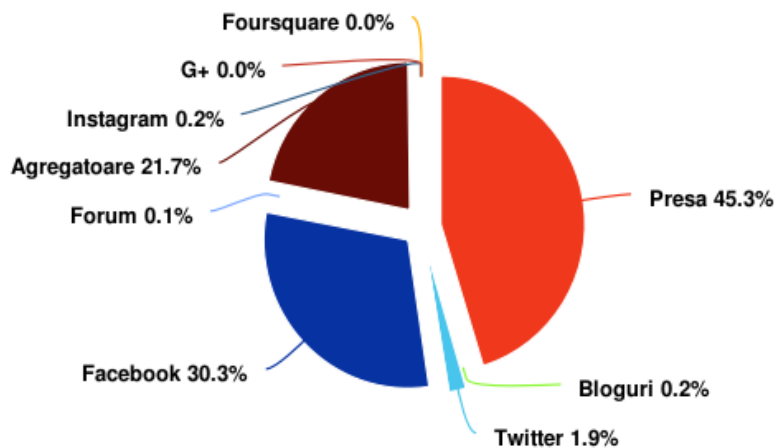
4.3.1. Identification of the main communication channels in which the Constanța City Hall is mentioned

Between November 3 and December 3, 2020, the monitored expression "Constanța City Hall" appeared 1496 times in the monitored sources as follows:

- 677 appearances in the online press (45.3%)
- 454 Facebook appearances (30.3%)

¹ <https://www.zelist.ro/>, accessed on 03.05.2021;

- 324 appearances in Aggregators
- 29 appearances on Twitter (1.9%)
- 3 appearances in blog posts (0.2%)
- 3 appearances in press comments
- 3 appearances on Instagram
- 2 appearances on forums
- 1 appearance in blog comments



4.3.2. Analysis of geographic data of media occurrences

Constanța City Hall was most often mentioned in the online newspapers of Dobrogea (87.5%), but we can find that some press topics were extrapolated at national level (Bucharest – 3%) or in the press in other regions (Transylvania – 2.2%, Muntenia – 2.2%, Moldova – 1.9%, Oltenia – 1.4%, Banat – 0.6%, Crișana – 0.6%, Bucovina – 0.3%, Maramures – 0.3%).

4.3.2. Analysis of the evolution of the viewership indicator in the monitored period

data	Pr	Blog	Tw	CoP	CoBl	Fb	For	Li	Agg	In	4SQ	G+	Ask	Pi
3 nov	21K	0	0	0	0	79K	0	0	80	216	0	0	0	0
4 nov	10K	0	0	0	0	12K	0	0	65	0	0	0	0	0
5 nov	2K	0	0	0	15	21K	0	0	105	0	0	0	0	0
6 nov	9K	0	0	0	0	11K	0	0	40	0	0	0	0	0
7 nov	5K	0	0	0	0	50K	0	0	85	0	0	0	0	0
8 nov	18K	0	0	0	0	21K	0	0	70	0	0	0	0	0
9 nov	14K	0	3K	0	0	36K	5	0	45	0	0	0	0	0
10 nov	45K	23	0	789	0	33K	0	0	145	0	0	0	0	0
11 nov	7K	0	0	0	0	26K	0	0	40	0	0	0	0	0
12 nov	23K	0	0	0	0	22K	0	0	125	0	0	0	0	0
13 nov	15K	0	69	0	0	13K	0	0	160	0	0	0	0	0
14 nov	11K	0	0	0	0	23K	0	0	30	0	0	0	0	0
15 nov	43K	0	0	0	0	35K	0	0	145	0	0	0	0	0
16 nov	40K	0	3K	0	0	15K	0	0	160	0	0	0	0	0

17 nov	29K	75	0	0	0	8K	0	0	195	0	0	0	0	0
18 nov	15K	0	73	0	0	10K	0	0	35	0	0	0	0	0
19 nov	1K	0	0	0	0	4K	0	0	115	0	0	0	0	0
20 nov	9K	0	73	0	0	17K	0	0	55	0	0	0	0	0
21 nov	90	0	0	0	0	8K	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
22 nov	14K	0	0	0	0	13K	0	0	40	0	0	0	0	0
23 nov	16K	0	73	0	0	12K	0	0	195	217	0	0	0	0
24 nov	49K	0	3K	571	0	15K	0	0	395	0	0	0	0	0
25 nov	18K	0	0	0	0	39K	0	0	180	678	0	0	0	0
26 nov	36K	0	280	0	0	16K	5	0	190	0	0	0	0	0
27 nov	7K	0	73	0	0	46K	0	0	180	0	0	0	0	0
28 nov	8K	0	73	0	0	28K	0	0	170	0	0	0	0	0
29 nov	1K	0	41	1K	0	1K	0	0	150	0	0	0	0	0
30 nov	5K	0	7K	0	0	16K	0	0	100	0	0	0	0	0
1 dec	13K	0	0	0	0	14K	0	0	25	0	0	0	0	0
2 dec	39K	23	181	0	0	10K	0	0	160	0	0	0	0	0
3 dec	28K	0	146	0	0	10K	0	0	90	0	0	0	0	0

According to the table above (centralization of data on the evolution of the number of views) and the graph below, we can see that on certain days the number of readers regarding the activities of Constanța City Hall increased considerably compared to other days, as follows: November 10, 2020 (45,000 views), November 15, 2020 (43,000 views), November 16, 2020 (40,000 views), November 24, 2020 (49,000 views), November 26, 2020 (36,000 views), and December 2, 2020 (39,000 views).

Therefore, the high traffic in the days mentioned above caused by the following press topics:

- November 10, 2020: (1) an article published on the website of the Dobrogealive.ro headlines "Constanța City Hall promises two underground parking lots and one above-ground one in the old city center", (2) in another article published in several newspapers, including in EvenimentulZilei.ro, it is mentioned: "A company whose employees threw construction waste on a land in the industrial area of Constanța was sanctioned with 40,000 lei, informed, on Tuesday, the representatives of the municipality, who also urged the citizens to notify the Local Police regarding the throwing of garbage in impermissible places"², (3) an article published on the website of the Ziariștii.com headlines: "Scandalous: Vergil Chițac brings to the Constanța City Hall the PSD-ist who mocked the #Rezist movement. The nephew of the Bolshevik Miron Constantinescu, the godfather of Adrian Nastase's son, the comrade of Liviu Dragnea and of the "Pea clan", the chosen viorica Dăncilă.

- November 15, 2020 – (1) The main news of the day was about the general cleanliness of the city, the website Order headlines: "Mayor Chițac starts cleaning: No area will be overlooked, we have requested reports with the fines granted"³, this news has also been published on sites such as: Focuspress.ro, Tomisnews.ro, Cugetliber.ro, Info-sud-est.ro and

² <https://evz.ro/atentie-amenzi-colosale-pentru-un-simplu-gest-politia-e-necrutatoare.html>, accessed on 03.05.2021;

³ <https://www.ordinea.ro/primarul-chitac-se-apuca-de-curatenie-nicio-zona-nu-va-fi-trecuta-cu-vederea-am-solicitat-rapoarte-cu-amenzile-acordate/>, accessed on 03.05.2021;

CitypressConstanța.ro, (2) although this general cleaning of the city is necessary, on the Constanța.Info website was published a news story stating: "The data collected by the authorities, regarding the number of people infected with CoronaVirus, places the municipality of Constanța in the red zone, with an incidence of 7 per thousand. Under these conditions, in order to reduce the number of infections in a vertiginous increase, the authorities are obliged to take measures to minimize the mobility of people. Basically, the citizens of Constanța must stay as long as possible in the house, work must be carried out more online, trips are limited to a minimum, children's school by computer. You know all these details, they have been presented to us in detail over and over again. One person seems to understand nothing of all these measures. We are referring to the mayor of Constanța, Vergil Chițac. In the midst of the pandemic, he announces that he is bringing everyone to general cleaning. It's a miserable city, we're not disputing this reality, but do you really need to take all the employees out into the streets to clean up, for the sake of the image? Because under these conditions we can only speak of a desperate flight from image and notoriety."⁴, (3) an article published by the ZiuConstanța.ro mentions "The former mp of UDTTMR, current president of the Turkish-Muslim Tatars, Gelil Eserghep was co-opted in the team of councilors of the President of the Constanța County Council, Mihai Lupu. According to an order of the head of the CJ, Eserghep became Honorary Advisor on minority issues. In fact, in the electoral campaign for the local elections, PNL concluded a protocol with UDTTMR at the county level."⁵.

- November 16, 2020 – (1) a news story published on several websites, including Info-sud-est.ro headlines: "Constanța City Hall has closed playgrounds, and the streets will be disinfected daily after the incidence has reached 7.8 per thousand. The municipality was not quarantined, and the DSP proposes to monitor the evolution of COVID-19"⁶, (2) another article published by the ȘtireaZilei.ro has as subject the approval of the first large-scale project of the new mayor, where it is mentioned: "On this occasion, the draft decision was voted to approve the project Endowment of the state pre-university education units in Constanța municipality with IT equipment, in the context of COVID-19 and related expenses. Last week I met with all school principals and asked them to tell us what electronic devices they need for online learning. We gave them a list of what materials we can purchase through this project, in order to be eligible (laptops, tablets, routers, video projectors, smart boards, etc.), and they sent us the necessary, explained mayor Vergil Chițac about this project with non-reimbursable funds. The value of the project will be 50,255,311 lei, and the co-financing provided by the Constanța City Hall, of 1,004,439 lei"⁷.

- November 24, 2020 – (1) an article published on the website of the Ordinea.ro headlines "Constanța City Hall announces the first results of the cleaning campaign: 104 tons of waste collected"⁸, (2) remaining in the same discussion area, an article published by

⁴ <https://www.constanta.info/2020/11/15/in-timp-ce-municipiul-constanta-e-aproape-de-inchidere-primarul-vergil-chitac-scoate-oamenii-in-strada-pentru-curatenie>, accessed on 03.05.2021;

⁵ <https://www.ziuconstanta.ro/diverse/stiri-calde/gelil-eserghep-consilierul-onorific-al-presedintelui-cj-constanta-pe-probleme-de-minoritati-733368.html>, accessed on 03.05.2021;

⁶ <https://www.info-sud-est.ro/primaria-constanta-a-inchis-locurile-de-joaca-iar-strazile-vor-fi-dezinfectate-zilnic-dupa-ce-incidenta-a-ajuns-la-78-municipiul-nu-a-fost-carantinat-iar-dsp-propune-monitorizarea-evolutiei-covid-19/>, accessed on 03.05.2021;

⁷ <https://stirilezilei.ro/primul-proiect-de-amploare-al-noului-primar-al-constantei-vergil-chitac-a-fost-votat/>, accessed on 03.05.2021;

⁸ <https://www.ordinea.ro/primaria-constanta-anunta-primele-rezultate-ale-campaniei-de-curatenie-104-tone-de-deseuri-colectate/>, accessed on 03.05.2021;

Constanța100%.ro, headlines "Constanța City Hall wants to make order in an outbreak of misery in Tomis Port", (3) another article published on several sites, including on Focuspress.ro mentions: "Constanța City Hall invites economic agents and real estate developers to adorn 12 areas of the city's parks. Economic operators can choose their favorite area and register until November 27, 2020, at the following email address: evenimente@primaria-Constanța.ro. The citizens of Constanța will choose the most beautiful decor. For this they must enter the Facebook page of Constanța City Hall and the www.primaria-Constanța.ro website and vote for their favorite area! The winner will be constantly promoted on the website of the Constanța City Hall, as well as on its social networks."⁹

- November 26, 2020 – (1) in an article on the RealitateaConstanța.ro website it is mentioned: "**Constanța City Hall has announced that from November 26, no dog in the municipality will be captured because the shelter is full, following that measures will be taken to extend and modernize it**"¹⁰, (2) another article, published by ReplicaOnline.ro mentions: "Constanța City Hall takes care of vulnerable people. Based on the order of the mayor of Constanța, Vergil Chițac, Constanța City Hall, through the General Directorate of Social Assistance, announces that vulnerable people will be supported by the local administration by purchasing and distributing basic food packages. The persons who have no income, who do not benefit from meals at the Constanța Social Aid Canteen, respectively the Palazu Mare Social Aid Canteen and the vouchers through the respect social program and who request this from the City Hall will benefit from these packages"¹¹, (3) the article published on the Ordinea.ro website headlines: "Constanța City Hall will raise new abandoned cars"¹².

- December 2, 2020 – (1) according to the article published on the Ordinea.ro website, it is mentioned: "Depending on the weather conditions, the Constanța City Hall continues the works of refurbishing the road and pedestrian infrastructure. On Mamaia Boulevard, the section bounded by Mircea cel Bătrân Street and Bucovinei Street, the access alleys are modernized by redeveloping the pedestrian surface. This week, the teams of SC Confort Urban SRL intervene on the sidewalks on Avram Iancu Street, between I.C. Brătianu Boulevard and Atelierelor Street and on Dumitru Marinescu Street, the portion between Ion Roată Street and Dreptății Street. In order to optimize the road traffic conditions, information signs are installed in several locations in the city and the traffic light equipment is re-located. Also, road markings are drawn at the pedestrian crossings, in the arranged parking lots and at the roundabouts in the city"¹³, (2) also related to the rehabilitation of the infrastructure of Constanța Municipality, in an article published on the website of the DobrogeaTV.ro it is mentioned: "The City Hall of Constanța municipality announced on Wednesday, December 2nd, that the rehabilitation works of the pedestrian areas in several districts of the city will begin. Avram Iancu, Dumitru Marinescu and Mamaia Boulevard are on the city hall's list. Constanța City Hall, through SC Confort Urban SRL, continues the modernization program of the pedestrian infrastructure in the residential areas. The municipal works are aimed at the

⁹ <https://focuspress.ro/primaria-constanta-invita-agentii-economici-sa-impodobeasca-orasul-de-craciun/>, accessed on 03.05.2021;

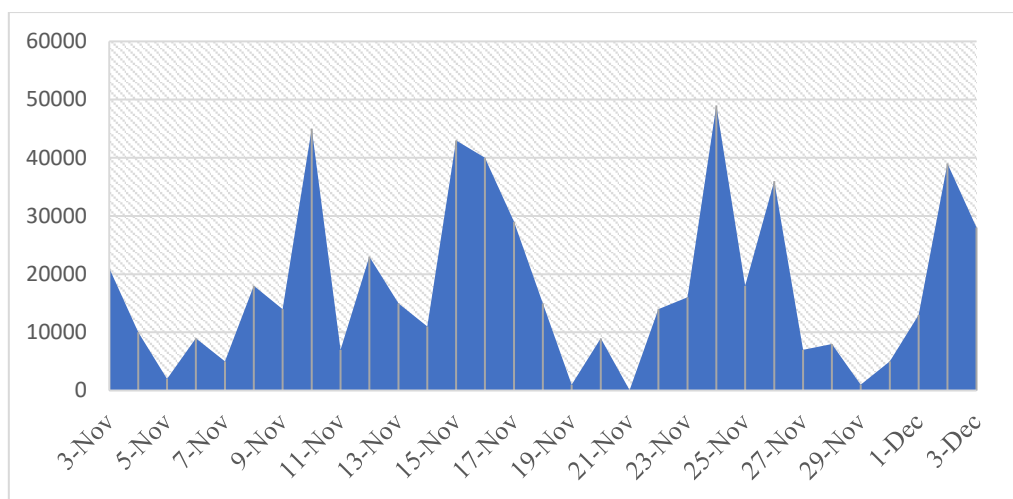
¹⁰ <https://realitateadeconstanta.net/primaria-constanta-din-26-noiembrie-nu-se-mai-captureaza-niciun-caine/>, accessed on 05.05.2021;

¹¹ <https://www.replicaonline.ro/primaria-constanta-se-ingrijeste-de-persoanele-vulnerabile-453486/>, accessed on 05.05.2021;

¹² <https://www.ordinea.ro/primaria-constanta-va-ridica-noi-masini-abandonate/>, accessed on 05.05.2021;

¹³ <https://www.ordinea.ro/primaria-constanta-reabilitarea-tramei-stradale-se-desfasoara-conform-planificari/>, accessed on 06.05.2021;

construction of pedestrian alleys in the space surrounding the playground and the placement of modern pavers. Also, the area for car parking will be extended, the number of parking spaces being increased. We again call on drivers not to park cars in the areas where work is carried out, so as not to make it difficult for machines to access, transmits the City Hall of Constanța"¹⁴; (3) an article published by the Ordinea.ro mentions: "Constanța City Hall announces that the economic agents who want to bring the magic of Christmas in the seaside city have chosen the areas they will adorn and in the shortest time they will take the plunge. We, the people of Constanța, only have to choose the most beautiful décor. We just have to go on the Facebook page of Constanța City Hall and on the www.primaria-Constanța.ro website and vote for the favorite area! The winner will be constantly promoted on the website of Constanța city hall, as well as on its social networks., shows the City Hall".¹⁵



4.3.2. Analyzing the press topics that generated the high viewership rate

In an article published on November 10, 2020, on the website of the EvenimentulZilei.ro we are made aware that colossal fines will be given for non-compliance with the restrictions imposed by the authorities, one of the most harshly sanctioned irregularities was the throwing of garbage in impermissible places. "A company whose employees threw construction waste on a plot of land in the industrial area of Constanța was sanctioned with 40,000 lei, the representatives of the municipality informed on Tuesday, while urging citizens to notify the Local Police about throwing garbage in impermissible places. A Constanța man who renovated his building hired a commercial company from Agiea specialized in the transport of construction waste to get rid of the garbage left over from the works. But instead of taking the waste to the space arranged inside Constanța Port – Gate 9 area, the employees of that company threw the entire load on a plot of land in the Industrial area of Constanța. Among the garbage thrown, there were also several documents of the respective society, which quickly led to the identification of the perpetrators"¹⁶, reads a press release sent by Constanța City Hall.

¹⁴ <https://www.dobrogea.tv/stire/Actualitate/15145/constanta-incep-lucrarile-de-reabilitare-a-zonelor-pietonale-in-mai-multe-cartiere-din-oras.html>, accessed on 06.05.2021;

¹⁵ <https://www.ordinea.ro/primaria-s-a-scos-mai-multe-firme-vor-impodobi-gratuit-parcurile-din-constanta/>, accessed on 06.05.2021;

¹⁶ <https://evz.ro/atentie-amenzi-colosale-pentru-un-simplu-gest-politia-e-necrutatoare.html>, accessed on 07.05.2021;

In an article published on the Focuspress.ro website, on November 15, 2020, Constanța City Hall announces that the general cleaning in Constanța begins, and the social assistants of the municipality will contribute to the cleaning, in the 7 intervention areas. The first area is delimited by Lăpușneanu, Tomis, Mamaia boulevards and Mihai Eminescu, Bucovinei and Swan streets including Tomis Port and Ovidiu Square. This activity will be attended by the Constanța City Hall, through the Public Services Management Directorate and the General Directorate of the Local Police, the sanitation operator, the companies that have a contract for the maintenance of green spaces, as well as the people who benefit from the guaranteed minimum income. "In addition to street cleaning, sweeping, washing and disinfecting sidewalks and roadway, vacuuming leaves, sanitizing agri-food markets and waste platforms, teams will also clean urban furniture. Also, works of grooming and correction of trees will be carried out where the situation requires it. Sanitized will also be all the playgrounds and parks in the city"¹⁷, reads the article on the Focuspress.ro website.



Figure 1 – Capture of the article on Focuspress.ro (15 November 2020)

On November 16, 2020, an article published on the Capital.ro website, informs us that the incidence of COVID-19 cases has reached 7.83 per thousand inhabitants, that's why Constanța Municipality will take drastical measures to limit the spread of the virus.

"In order to prevent the infection and spread of the new coronavirus, the mayor of Constanța, Mr. Vergil Chițac, convened today the Local Committee for Emergency Situations. The sitting ordered the following measures: daily disinfection of agro-food markets in Constanța municipality; informing the citizens about the measures to have to be respected in order to avoid contamination with the SARS-CoV-2 virus by displaying posters at the entrance

¹⁷ <https://focuspress.ro/de-maine-incepe-curatenia-general-la-constanta-asistatii-sociali-scosi-pe-strada-la-munca/>, accessed on 08.05.2021.

to the public institutions, economic units and staircases of residential blocks, but also by sending messages through the acoustic stations; daily disinfection of streets, boulevards and sidewalks in Constanța Municipality"¹⁸, according to a press release of Constanța City Hall.

At the same time, according to the cited source, the playgrounds in Constanța are closed, and the registrations in the *Social Respect* program will be made online or by mail.

According to the article published on the Româniatv.net website, on November 17, 2020, the first project on European funds of the new primal, Vergil Chițac, was approved, which was also voted by the local council, following the extraordinary meeting organized on the same date. The meeting was attended online by four local elected officials, and the other 23 were physically present in the Remus Opreanu Hall of the Administrative Palace.

Constanța's Local Council met and approved the project *Endowment of state pre-university education units in Constanța with IT equipment, in the context of COVID-19 and related expenses*.

"Within the Competitiveness Operational Programme, Priority Axis Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for a competitive digital economy, Action 2.3.3 Improving digital content and systemic ICT infrastructure in the field of e-education, e-inclusion, e-health and e-culture, funds of EUR 100 million are available, which can be accessed and obtained on a first-come, first-served basis. That is why we have convened another extraordinary meeting, so that we can submit this project, for the endowment of the educational units in the municipality. Last week I met with all the school principals and asked them to tell us what electronic devices they still need for online education. We gave him a list of what materials we can purchase through this project, in order to be eligible (laptops, tablets, routers, video projectors, smart boards, etc.), and they sent us the necessary"¹⁹, said mayor Vergil Chițac about this project. The total value of the project is 50,255,311 lei, and the co-financing provided by the Constanța City Hall will be worth 1,004,439 lei.

Proiectul lui Vergil Chițac, privind achiziționarea de dispozitive electronice pentru elevi, a fost aprobat. Cât valorează

Consiliul Local Constanța a fost convocat luni, într-o ședință extraordinară, iar pe ordinea de zi a fost inclus proiectul lui Vergil Chițac, primarul din Constanța, "Dotarea unităților de învățământ preuniversitar de stat din municipiul Constanța cu echipamente IT, în contextul COVID-19".

Filip Stan | 17 nov. 2020, 11:57



Ultimele Stiri

- EXTERN**
Tragedie la un spital din Austria. Unul pacient a fost amputat ...
- SOCIETATE**
A murit preotul Vasile Radu de la Parohia „Sfântul Gheorghe” ...
- 23:16**
Horoscop 21 mai 2021. Relații complicate cu colegii, dar vești ...
- 23:16**
Galerie foto cu actorul Ion Dichiseanu, publicată de studourile ...
- 23:15**
Alin Brăncuși, martorul protejat care și-a retras declarațiile ...
- 23:07**
Testele PCR făcute în pandemii, puse sub semnul ...

Figure 2 – Capture of the article on Româniatv.net (17 November 2020)

¹⁸ <https://www.capital.ro/noi-restrictii-pentru-sute-de-mii-de-romani-se-aplica-de-azi-ce-au-decis-autoritatile.html>, accessed on 12.05.2021;

¹⁹ https://www.romaniatv.net/proiectul-lui-vergil-chitac-pe-fonduri-europene-a-fost-aprobat_5025328.html, accessed on 12.05.2021;

An article published on November 24, 2020, on the Focuspress.ro website, Constanța's City Hall informs us that this year we will not have festive lighting due to insufficient funds. The city of Constanța will not have festive lighting on the main boulevards, as has become customary in recent years. Constanța City Hall had to rent festive lighting for winter holidays worth 5,600,000 lei this year, according to the annual public procurement program issued in August 2020, of which 1,422,689 lei from the local budget.

This thing did not happen, and in September the representatives of the city hall said that the auction will be postponed. The purchase had ornaments, garlands for the Christmas prome, wiring works and electrical connections. But, according to new local administrations, in Constanța municipality, in 2020, there is no money for this acquisition, but five illuminated fir trees will be placed in five areas of the city.

"This year in the city there will be no lights like in other years, on the boulevards there will be no lights, there are no funds. Five areas of the city will be adorned. In front of the Oleg Danovski National Opera and Ballet Theatre, in the Archaeological Park at the City Hall, in the Square at the Lighthouse, at the Children's World and in the Park at the Railway Station. There will be some fir trees of 10-12 meters decorated, illuminated and that's about it. It is for now a project, but it will be done,"²⁰ Doru Iordache, councilor of the mayor of Constanța municipality, told Focus Press.

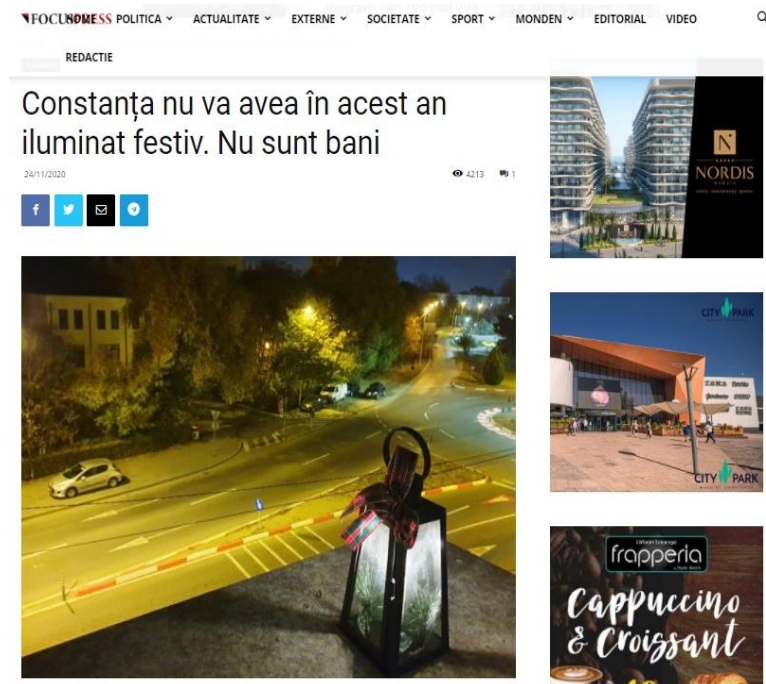


Figure 3 – Capture of the article on Focuspress.ro (24 November 2020)

In another article, published on November 26, 2020, on the Adevărul.ro website, the mayor of Constanța municipality announced that stray dogs will no longer be caught, the mayor also assures us that no animal will be killed. "On my order, the capture of stray dogs in the city was stopped. It was intervened in specific cases at the request of citizens. I understand that there

²⁰ <https://focuspress.ro/constanta-nu-va-avea-in-acest-an-iluminat-festiv-nu-sunt-bani/>, accessed on 12.05.2021;

are animal-loving NGOs dissatisfied with the way the current company captures dogs, which is why I will not extend their contract for the next year,"²¹ declared Vergil Chițac.

The mayor invites all animal lovers, dedicated ONG`s and the citizens of Constanța to a broad consultation on how the service for the management of stray animals will be managed.

"I'm telling you what we're doing right now. We are working on the regulation, on the project of modernization of the paddocks, we will purchase straw and pallets to put on the ground for the winter, food we have plenty. One thing we don't do. We don't euthanize dogs,"²² says Vergil Chițac.

Constanța City Hall also said that dogs will no longer be captured, starting thursday, November 26th. The public shelter is full, and the teams of the Abandoned Animal Management Service will only act in emergency situations.

On December 2, 2020, an article was published on the Capital.ro website, according to which the authorities decided to extend the quarantine period due to the incidence rate that remained high. Moreover, the restrictive measures were not respected, as evidenced by the sanctions given by the police. It was supposed to be lifted on Friday, December 4, but the authorities decided to keep people in the house for another 14 days and be able to go out only on the basis of the affidavit, otherwise they will bear the sanctions provided by law.

"The City Hall of Kaohsiung (the largest port city in Taiwan and also the most important city in the southern area, with developed industry and population of about 2.7 million inhabitants) donates to the Constanța City Hall 200,000 disposable protective face masks to protect the citizens of Constanța municipality during the pandemic of the new coronavirus – they will arrive in the next period in Constanța city"²³, according to a press release sent by Constanța City Hall.

The article also states that the Constanța City Hall will create the logistics chain, so that all donations received and processed can reach the beneficiaries urgently. "It is envisaged to create a distribution mechanism that will facilitate the transfer of these materials as a priority to the most disadvantaged categories of population and the public institutions actively involved in the fight to limit the spread of the virus"²⁴, the local administration added.

Intră în vigoare de mâine, 4 decembrie.

Carantină prelungită. Vor ieși afară doar cu declarație



Figure 4 - Capture of the article on Capital.ro (03 December 2020)

²¹ https://adevarul.ro/locale/constanta/vergil-chitac-primarul-constantei-din-ordinul-s-a-oprit-capturarea-cainilor-stapan-1_5fbf504c5163ec4271410b5d/index.html, accessed on 12.05.2021;

²² https://adevarul.ro/locale/constanta/vergil-chitac-primarul-constantei-din-ordinul-s-a-oprit-capturarea-cainilor-stapan-1_5fbf504c5163ec4271410b5d/index.html, accessed on 12.05.2021;

²³ <https://www.capital.ro/intra-in-vigoare-de-maine-4-decembrie-carantina-prelungita-vor-iesi-afara-doar-cu-declaratie.html>, accessed on 12.04.2021;

²⁴ <https://www.capital.ro/intra-in-vigoare-de-maine-4-decembrie-carantina-prelungita-vor-iesi-afara-doar-cu-declaratie.html>, accessed on 12.04.2021;

Conclusions

Communication with the media is an essential activity of any public institution, because the power it holds is closely linked to the degree of credibility among the public opinion. The more transparent a public institution is and has a positive image among citizens, the more power and attention that public institution will enjoy a citizen's or civil society's power and attention.

Therefore, any public institution must professionalize its media communication strategy, by organizing a press office, which will coordinate – through the spokesperson and through the specialists in public relations – the activities of networking with the media: press release, press conference, press briefing, press interview, press monitoring, etc.

According to the centralized data and interpreted in the study of the present work, we noticed that Constanța city hall centers its communication strategy mainly on the following communication channels: online news sites, Facebook and news aggregators. At the same time, the activity of Constanța City Hall is disseminated through articles from the Dobrogea press, very few articles mentioning the city hall in other regions of the country.

Analyzing the evolution of the viewership indicator during the monitored period and of the press topics that generated the high viewership rate, we noticed that:

- the topics related to the prevention of infection and spread of the new coronavirus predominate, taking the necessary measures, informing the citizens about these measures and the possibility of quarantine, in order to decrease the cases of Covid-19;
- another topic of great local interest is represented by the carrying out of the works of reconditioning the road and pedestrian infrastructure within the municipality of Constanța and the construction of two underground and one above-ground parking lots in the old city center;
- also, the focus is on topics such as: the approval of the first project on European funds, of the mayor Vergil Chițac, regarding the purchase of electronic devices for students; Constanța City Hall announces that there is the possibility of not having festive lighting because of insufficient funds, but the economic agents who want to bring the magic of Christmas in the seaside city can choose the areas they want to adorn, and as a reward they will benefit from constant promotion from the City Hall; another piece of news with an increased rate of vizinoare is the fine of people who throw waste in unforeseen places;
- the news with the highest viewing rate was published on November 24, 2020 and is related to the collection of 104 tons of waste from Constanța Municipality;
- another controversial topic was published on November 26, 2020 and is looking for solutions to house stray animals, as the shelters are already full and need modernization. Euthanasia is not an option, according to the mayor.

Thus, we can state that the news published in the local press during the monitored period, addresses general topics of public interest, informing the population of all changes that will take place in the Municipality of Constanța.

In conclusion, the communication highlights the mission of an institution, the main purpose being its relationship with citizens, these aspects complementing its identity, ie its public image. Therefore, the communication strategy and the relations with the press can influence the perception and credibility of the public institution in the vision of the citizens.

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