

DECISION 21/2016/GB
OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF THE EUROPEAN POLICE COLLEGE
**ADOPTING CEPOL's COMMUNICATIONS SUB-STRATEGY FOR THE YEARS
2016 - 2020**

Adopted by the Governing Board
by written procedure
on 12 July 2016

THE GOVERNING BOARD,

Having regard to Council Decision 2005/681/JHA of 20 September 2005 establishing the European Police College (CEPOL), and in particular Article 8 thereof;

Having regard to Regulation (EU) 2015/2219 of the European Parliament and the Council on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL), and in particular Articles 4 point 6 and 9 (1) (g) thereof;

Having regard to the proposal of the Director;

Whereas:

CEPOL should have a Communications Sub-Strategy for the years 2016-2020;

HAS ADOPTED the CEPOL Communications Sub-Strategy for the period 2016 - 2020 as presented in the Annex to this Decision.

Done at The Hague, 12 July 2016

For the Governing Board

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*Mrs. Frederike Everts MPA
Chair of the Governing Board*

Annex I

CEPOL's Communications Sub-Strategy 2016 – 2020

Communications challenges for CEPOL

As in most organisations, the main communication challenge for CEPOL is the in-house information flow. Since effective internal communication forms the basis both of staff motivation and of CEPOL's efficient and smooth operation, it needs to occupy a prominent place in the management of CEPOL. It is crucial that information can be found easily and that it is carefully targeted. More specific challenges in this area are:

- creating and maintaining allegiance to CEPOL, a corporate sense of belonging, mutual trust and understanding, and building bridges across hierarchical lines;
- combating communication "silos" and compartmentalisation.

Within the EU institutions and EU agencies, CEPOL's services and products need to be made better known and the dialogue between CEPOL and its "clients" to understand on each other's needs and constraints should be intensified.

When communicating with the outside world, some limitations need to be borne in mind such as:

- CEPOL has only limited resources to reach its audiences, they do not allow for large-scale operations such as wider communication campaigns.
- Training is sometimes not perceived as a political priority and public opinion often perceives training as a luxury rather than an opportunity.
- Training rarely "makes the front page".

CEPOL will have to reach a broader audience, encompassing all EU law enforcement officers (not only police officers, but also customs, border guards, prosecutors, etc.). To market its services successfully, CEPOL shall communicate the added value of its training for the new niche, how it will benefit the need of new audiences. Besides, CEPOL must know where to reach these new audiences. Aside from mapping the most used communications tools by them, CEPOL may organise roadshows, participate to trade fairs and go meet these new audiences in their territories to pitch its work and services.

CEPOL need to generate awareness on its work and products through the various channels available (identify the right platforms – the right ones are the one where the audience is) and drive traffic to its website and online products. CEPOL shall use these tools to spread awareness on its activities.

Then, CEPOL shall use analytics to determine which channels are performing best. This part is very important in order to identify the most efficient tools and optimise CEPOL's communications resources.

Challenges with regards to the extended target audience are as follows:

- 1) build image and reputation for CEPOL;
- 2) successfully plan and communicate its "market entry";
- 3) promote its products to encourage participation of its extended audience.

Part I: Communication objectives

Multiannual objective 1: CEPOL shall facilitate internal information flows.

The following action lines are proposed to achieve the objective (the primary target group is the CEPOL staff):

- Make staff aware of the necessary changes in order to adapt to new political priorities of the European Union, e.g. the European Agenda on Security.
- Inform staff of what is happening not only in their respective units but also in the whole organisation to create more engagement.
- Create an Intranet tool to facilitate internal exchange of information within CEPOL staff.

Strategic area of intervention: Enhancing internal information channels.

Performance Indicators:

- 1.1. Production of weekly newsletters.
- 1.2. Intranet up and running.

Risks:

- 1.3. Lack of budget and/or technical expertise to implement and maintain an intranet
- 1.4. Lack of coherence in spreading CEPOL's messages internally.

Multiannual objective 2: CEPOL shall facilitate information flows, better inform and strengthen communications with its network, the EU institutions and EU agencies.

The following action lines are proposed to achieve the objective (the primary target group is CEPOL network):

- Promote e-Net among CEPOL's stakeholders.
- Provide Communications Guidelines for use by CEPOL National Units
- Provide up-to-date presentations and other promotional material the National Units can use to enhance awareness of CEPOL and its services at national level (to law enforcement audiences and policy makers).
- Create and keep updated a centralised list of contact information for CEPOL National Units and network, available on CEPOL e-Net.
- Communicate the medium and long-term benefits of activities such as residential courses, e-learning, the European Joint Master Programme and the European Police Exchange Programme to the network and Management Board members in order to advocate for more funding for the activities.

This objective will be pursued along the following action lines (the target group is EU institutions and EU agencies):

- Inform relevant EU staff about the services and products offered by CEPOL (e.g. via e-Net, mailing, news releases, presentations and roadshows to EU institutions and agencies).
- Use the results of customer surveys, public conferences with CEPOL stakeholders or client contacts to promote CEPOL's services. Encourage and analyse client feedback.

- Pursue and promote cooperation with the EU institutions and agencies on law enforcement training matters (promote the use of the JHA Training Matrix).

Strategic area of intervention: Enhancing external information channels.

Performance Indicators:

- 2.1. Increased awareness of CEPOL and its services among relevant EU staff
- 2.2. CEPOL participates to EU communicators’ networks.
- 2.3. Increased use of e-Net within the CEPOL network.
- 2.4. All agencies contribute and utilise the JHA Training Matrix.
- 2.5. Communications Guidelines disseminated to CEPOL National Units

Risks:

- 2.6. Loss of political support due to lack of awareness of CEPOL within the EU.
- 2.7. Limited promotion of CEPOL’s activities at national and EU level.
- 2.8. Lack of use of e-Net.
- 2.9. Lack of use of the JHA Training Matrix.

Multiannual objective 3: CEPOL shall promote the role of training to enhance cooperation amongst law enforcement officials.

The following action lines will be implemented (the target group is law enforcement officials, general public, academia, stakeholders and media):

- Engage CEPOL’s stakeholders online by developing CEPOL’s presence on Social media and improving its public website.
- Make CEPOL’s activities more available to law enforcement officials by developing a mobile application allowing direct access and facilitate the subscription process to the activities.
- Develop a media plan to promote CEPOL in specialised and EU media (i.e. law enforcement magazines, newspapers disseminated in EU institutions and agencies, etc.).
- Advertise CEPOL’s activities via the NCUs to the law enforcement communities at national level.
- Use CEPOL’s network to stimulate debate between civil society, academics and law enforcement officials and to boost the image of the law enforcement professions.
- Disseminate the CEPOL’s work in the field of research and science as widely as possible.
- Engage in common communication projects with EU Institutions and other JHA agencies in order to enhance the visibility of law enforcement training.
- Make CEPOL’s role in law enforcement training better known to its stakeholders, the general public and media, including at local level through the organisation of and presence at events.

Strategic area of intervention: Enhancing internal and external communications tools and channels.

Performance Indicators:

- 3.1. Website optimised for all kinds of platforms.
- 3.2. Online content is up to date, relevant and engaging.
- 3.3. CEPOL mobile application up and running.
- 3.4. Increased use of multimedia material and infographics.
- 3.5. Key publications and quarterly newsletters are issued.
- 3.6. Impact of CEPOL communications is monitored and reported upon.

- 3.7. **Risks:** Lack of awareness of law enforcement training offer and impact due to limited presence in the media.
- 3.8. Limited interest in training as an important policy issue
- 3.9. Lack of budget

Multiannual objective 4: CEPOL shall be prepared to handle crises.

The following action lines will be implemented (the target group is general public, academia, stakeholders and media):

- Create a crisis communications response team and appoint a dedicated spokesperson.
- Conduct an analysis to identify the risk areas and to identify the stakeholders to communicate should these cases arise. Risks for CEPOL might entail – but not be restricted to – the following: 1) Fraud¹ (misuse of public funds), 2) Misconduct of CEPOL staff, 3) Sudden death (of staff or on CEPOL’s premises), etc.
- Create a Crisis Response Plan.
- Test the Crisis Response Plan once drafted to ensure that all staff and designated spokespersons know what to do in a crisis.
- Continuously update the plan to ensure all details and information for staff are current.

Strategic area of intervention: Protecting from reputational damages.

Performance Indicators:

- 4.1. Crisis Response Plan set up.
- 4.2. 24-hours Crisis response time ensured.

Risks:

- 4.3. Lack of budget to implement crisis communications training.

Part II: Target audiences and Resources

Target audiences

Internal stakeholders	External stakeholders	External actors
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¹ Please refer to the Fraud Response Plan (adopted on 12 November 2014) for specific actions in case of fraud.

CEPOL staff	Law enforcement officials, CEPOL Network, Policy makers, EU institutions and agencies.	Media, General lay audience
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Resources (human and financial)

Communications, considered in its complexity, is multifaceted and requires a wide array of tools and skills regardless of the size of an EU agency. The increased workload observed so far and anticipated in light of the enlarged target group of CEPOL requires some re-thinking in terms of resources. Failing to address this aspect may lead to excessive of tasks which in turn may have a negative impact on the quality of CEPOL's communications. In a first hand, CEPOL shall address the needs for resources on a yearly basis, but, in order to ensure consistency in its communications, CEPOL should adopt a multiannual financial strategy when it comes to communications.

Depending on the resources available, CEPOL will undertake actions to provide the National Contact Units with necessary promotion materials, including the materials of multimedia character. As far as further deliberations are concerned, CEPOL shall also elaborate the tasks performed by the NCU, leading to clear distinction between the scope of tasks of the NCU and the CEPOL Secretariat with regard to promotion of the Agency and its training offer. It should be also noted that the tasks correlated with promotion of CEPOL on the level of European Institutions, agencies, networks etc. shall fall within the sole remits of the CEPOL Secretariat.

The communications material produced by CEPOL Secretariat shall be in English only. Indeed, English is the working language of the Agency and CEPOL does not have sufficient resources to produce content in all EU official languages.

Part III: The Way Forward

- Develop yearly communications action plan with specific, measurable and realistic goals.
- Create strong messages and frame them to specific audiences. Make sure the messages are memorable.
- Further the use of storytelling as a technique to inspire and involve audiences and to personalise CEPOL's message.
- Decrease mismatch between resources allocated to communications and needs.
- Develop partnerships on communications projects with other JHA agencies. Such collaboration can build widespread support for our common objectives. This would maximise the effectiveness of CEPOL's communications and expand its reach.