Premises and recommendations for communication strategies on environmental policies in Romania

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Abstract. The article traces directions for public communication strategies in case of environmental and energy policies in Romania. In introduction some social variables placed as a ground for forming specific attitudes to publics, with observations on social capital of trust in Romania and on social priorities, are identified. By using secondary analysis, statistical data from public polls, connected with the results in an international ERA-NET research project on public acceptance of the new technologies for reducing global warming are set as premises for communication strategies in the environmental field. The results of analysis showed the paradoxical attitude of the Romanian publics: on one hand, the public is enthusiastic and open to changes and modern views, being confident in experts and in interactive information, on the other hand proves a low level of trust in institutions and in traditional sources of authority. Basing on the results of data analysis, the last part of the paper formulates principles and recommendations for building public communication strategies on environmental issues.

Keywords: trust; communication; public acceptance; environment; Romania.

Introduction

The introduction of an industrial innovation or of a problem on the public agenda is easier or harder, depending on the capital of social trust in a society and on the level of public acceptance. The sociological research in the last ten years in the Romanian space demonstrated the erosion of the capital of trust, which makes more and more difficult the construction of valid communication strategies. The accentuated erosion of the social capital of trust could be explained as a consequence of the paradox of "high level of trust from the start of the relationship" (McKnight, Cummings & Chervany, 2006, pp. 116-117). In this view, the relationship built by

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Romanian people with the first governments and political groups after 1989 Revolution has been marked by a high level of expectations and positive attributions, but the repeated disappointments which came after built the opposite of this state, the generalized suspicion.

The objective of the paper is to trace the characteristics of the social background in Romania in order to build public communication strategies. The preliminary research and data suggested that the Romanian publics have contrary features which should be taken into account by policy makers. The present paper aims to emphasize these features as a basis for public communication strategies, especially in the matter of implementation of environmental policies.

The research method was the secondary analysis, by using data either from statistical polls or data from an international research project implemented in six European countries (in which the author was a scientific coordinator for Romania). The data were used as a basis for comparison between Romania and other European states with respect to public communication strategies' principles and recommendations.

Theoretical background

The Romanian social background for public communication strategies

Trust is indispensable for the development of a social life, as the society could not function without the credit awarded by individuals to each other: "without the trust that individuals generally invest in each other, society would disintegrate, because very few relationships are built on what's known for certain about other people" (Simmel, 1978, cited in Meyerson, Weick & Kramer, 2006, p. 429). In the organizational sociology (Rotter, 1967, cited in Mayer, Davis & Shoorman, 2006, p. 87) social trust is defined as "the expectance of an individual or of a group that the promise, verbal or written declaration of another individual or group will be fulfilled". Tied to the social trust are, for the trusted pole of relationship, the *credibility* (or the characteristics that enables trust from other people) and, back to the other pole, the *orientation to trust* of individuals or groups (the availability to have trust). Groups and societies could have different level of these parameters, depending of their stage of

development, psychological attributes and cultural background. National culture (Hofstede, 1998), especially, could be an intermediate factor with a strong influence on the manifestation of these variables.

The barometers in the last years (RISE poll, 2010) revealed an accentuated decrease of trust in institutions, but also in other traditional actors of democracy. Only Emergency Services, Romanian Postal Services, Church and Army have a high level of trust (over 70%). On the opposite side of the scale are institutions from public administration (the Parliament, the Government and the governmental agencies have the lowest level of trust, under 18%, and the highest level of negative evaluation). For the rest, with the exception of schools and public universities (56%-60% level of trust), the other collective entities are placed under the level of 50% on positive evaluation. NGOs had only 25% level of trust and 46% negative evaluation in the general public (RISE poll, 2010, pp. 57-78). As it concerns trust in media institutions, news are not perceived as objective. Media institutions had a low level of trust, though they still are considered major sources of information. The level of trust in public television and radio (half of the respondents) is almost double compared to private television channels and radio channels (RISE poll, 2010, pp. 61-69).

The levels of trust registered in 2011 indicate even a lower tendency. Other polls of the same research institute (RISE poll, February 2011, pp. 17-19) indicate a lower level of trust (10-15%) when important public institutions are named, without giving details to the respondents (Presidency, Parliament, Government).

Also, suspicion is a general feature of the climate, about 60% from Romanians think that people in their community look for profit in relationships, and have confidence only in people they know personally. Neighbors, other religion adherents and unknown people have to be avoided, think a half/ three quarter of the Romanians.

The data from above suggest the difficulties of fulfilling public communication objectives and obtaining public acceptance on almost every topic. Further, the recent history of Romania in transition determined an unclear image of the organizations, especially those in the former public sector. The area of environmental issues is considered as the domain of

NGOs, but NGOs are considered to some extent as being partisan and not effective, having a low level of trust for a part of the public. On the other hand, the public is not interested in public policies, perceiving them as being abstract and with little impact in the real life. The lack of education determines difficulties in research and collection of data: there is a confusion of practices used in the collection of data and of channels of public communication. These features determine supplementary cautions in applying research tools and recommendations based on findings in public communication policies.

As a first glance, the availability to understand industrial innovation and "secondary issues" as the environmental issues is low when considering the social characteristics and the level of social trust.

Social priorities and social agenda in Romania

In the last years, economic crises or political conflicts succeeded, and the focus of social attention moved on poverty, reforms and conflicts from public space. As sociological research reports show, Romania could be considered a "modern-feudal" state, with a modest economic development, high level of poverty and accentuated differences between rich and poor people (the report was of 7 in 2008) (Zamfir, 2012, pp. 25-29). The proportions for absolute and relative poverty vary between reports, but the subjective evaluation of poverty is relevant: 67% of the respondents of a representative poll in 2011 considered that their monthly incomes are insufficient or barely enough to survive (RISE poll, December 2011, p. 10).

Returning to the Romanian society, the country is split into developed areas and poorly developed areas (Moldavia, Oltenia – with poor people and high rate of unemployment), and the European funds invested for the delayed areas have not erased that gap. Moreover, there are poor areas which are in need for an environmental policy, as Oltenia. But still, the differentiation between regions is not only economic, but one of mentality. People from developed regions (Transilvania, Banat, Muntenia) have not only a different lifestyle, but also different political orientation (right views, in favor of private initiative and less social protection). People from poor areas (which have also a high level of temporary emigration in Europe

in search of a workplace, especially in Italy, Spain and England) expect an increase in the social protection policies in the next years, because they have few options to find a workplace or to start a business.

The financial and social crisis changed the reality and the public priorities in Romania. As in 2007-2008 Romanians were still optimistic as a majority and considered that in the future their situation will improve, in the next year the situation is reversed: in 2009, 69% of Romanians perceived the country as going in a wrong direction. Ever since, the percentage remained higher: either increased to 80-85% of people perceive the country as going in the wrong direction (RISE poll, February 2011, p. 3) or decreased a little, in present being around 73% (RISE poll, March 2014, p. 4).

This pessimistic evolution of the Romanian's views determined a change in the public perception of problems considered as important. In 2011, the first places on the social agenda were material and economic problems as: corruption, salaries, health system, level of salaries and social gaps, unemployment. Still, the environmental issues are placed on a fine place, the 6th place (pollution) and 8th place (protection of environment), after the most important problems mentioned above (RISE poll, September 2011, p. 43). In 2014, the priorities on the social agenda were two major concerns: unemployment (26%), salaries' level (22%) and corruption (10%). The other problems were far behind situated on this agenda, with less than 7% (RISE poll, June 2014, p. 33). This concentration in the public agenda shows the intensification of the chronic social and economic crisis, the public perception focusing on the most important causes perceived by publics and considering the other public discussion topics as being less important.

Research results

Research results in FENCO-ERA program as premises for public communication on environmental issues

The FENCO-ERA research project "Scrutinizing the impact of CCS public communication on general and local publics" (2009-2010)[2] was a beginning in Romania, building a field for the implementation of environmental policies. The CCS (carbon capture and storage) technologies are designed to decrease the level of industrial CO_2 emissions, having an important diminishing effect on global warming. The research project (Schumann, 2010) compared several countries in Europe in the matter of communication of CCS technologies to local and general public. Some of the countries were advanced in the development of the new technologies at the beginning of the research project, while others were just beginning the development and communication of these environmental protection technologies.

The first part of the research project used the focus group method to test the forming of collective opinion, the strength of opinion and also the type of information better received by publics. Using a similar methodology in each case (ter Mors et al., 2013), three focus groups were organized in each country, with the information presented by an expert. Three alternative groups (ICQ groups, abbreviation from "information-choice questionnaire groups"), with an equivalent composition of participants, received the same information in a written form, without discussing the information. The purpose of this part was to see which presentation form is more effective, and which generates the most solid opinion. After receiving information, participants from both groups answered to a detailed questionnaire in order to verify the recalling of information. The only difference in the content that participants received in each country referred to the technologies (in each country, due to economic conditions, carbon capture and storage technologies to be implemented are different).

The results of the information-choice questionnaires and focus groups phase for Romania (Cismaru et al., 2010, pp. 59-60) showed a fine

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2. The data from this section are gathered from the FENCO-ERA project „Scrutinizing the impact of CCS communication on the general and local public (2009-2010)", an international project implemented in six countries, which was funded by the national funding agencies of the project partners. The author of this paper was the scientific coordinator for Romania.

reception of the information: both focus groups participants and information-choice questionnaire participants considered the information about carbon capture and storage and the two selected technology options to be comprehensible, valid and useful. Further, both focus group and information-choice questionnaire participants recalled a considerable amount of the information provided, even there was new information and with technical details. When comparing the effectiveness of the two methods of communication, oral presentation of an expert followed by group debate was in advantage for Romanians (see Table 1). The collective opinion towards the innovations was more positive if the information was presented by an expert, and could receive feed-back.

Table 1. Mean (and SD) for opinions on technology 1 and technology 2

	Overall on T1	Vote for T1	Overall on T 2	Vote for T2
FGD	5,43 (1,59)	5,30 (1,80)	5,43 (1,52)	5,60 (1,83)
ICQ	4,87 (1,79)	6,00 (2,01)	4,60 (1,90)	4,83 (2,23)

Note. Overall opinion was measured on a scale ranging from 1 = very bad, to 7 = very good. Higher scores indicate a positive evaluation. FGD= Focus –group discussions: presentation made by an expert followed by group discussion; ICQ – information provided to participants only in written form.

The second part of the project had as main activity the organization of representative polls at a national level, in order to identify: the place of environmental issues on the public agenda, the level of information on carbon and capture storage technologies, the level of potential acceptance of the general public for the implementation of these technologies, and the influence of the source on the public acceptance. The poll tested the influence of the source in changing attitude: information was presented in four ways to respondents (negative presentation with a source, negative presentation without a source, positive presentation with a source and positive presentation without a source - for Romania, the source for "negative information" was Greenpeace, and the source for "positive information" was Shell).

In the first part of the survey, one of the questions tested the trust in different types of sources: local, national or international, from the

institutional or private sector. The results confirmed the previous polls in this matter (the polls that have been cited above): institutions have a low level of trust, in comparison with other organizational actors (Figure 1).
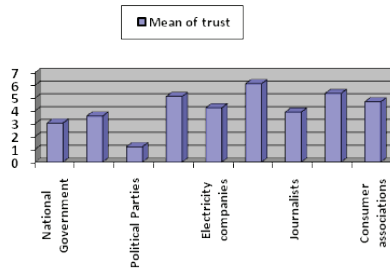

Figure 1. Level of trust for different public actors in Romania

Note: The scale of answers was from 1 – very low level of trust to 7 – very high level of trust

The poll at the national level showed a fine level of information about pollution and global warming effect, but almost no information on capture carbon and storage technologies or other environmental protection technologies at a majority of the Romanians (75% never heard about carbon capture and storage, only 2,9% had more information).

Other important finding is that the level of acceptance is very high, even considering that information was new, or considering the "negative" alternative of presentation (which was introduced in the poll for testing the strength of public opinion). Almost three quarters of the Romanians would be in favor of testing the carbon capture and storage technology in the country and only 12,8% would be against. The active attitude (vote or sign a petition in favor of implementation) would be stronger than the opposite attitude (vote or sign a petition against implementation of technologies). The high level of public acceptance has a small variation (only 3%) between negative and positive presentation even if it comes from well-known actors as Greenpeace) (Cismaru & Ivan, 2010, pp. 14-16). An explanation of this small variation could be the low level of trust in some sources, particularly from the private or non-profit sector, and the preference to process the information by filtering it through the personal network.

For respondents, environmental issues were placed on the third place on the public agenda, after medical system problems and economic problems, but before criminality. The poll revealed that Romanians understand the importance of the maintenance of the environment, and would like modern options of producing energy, as solar and wind energy. The level of public acceptance is rather enthusiastic about any new technology of protection for the environment. Because of the lack of information, carbon capture and storage technologies were associated with even more positive effects, but in reality positive effects were only on global warming. For example, toxic waste or water pollution were considered positive effects of CCS technologies, which was not true, by 70% of the respondents (almost the same amount of association with the correct effect) (Cismaru & Ivan, 2010, pp. 10-14). But, even with the unrealistic expectations from an industrial innovation, the public acceptance would not be totally guaranteed; still, a quarter of respondents do not accept the testing of the new technology on a pilot plot in Romania. When asked what technology would introduce for reducing global warming, respondents preferred the new forms of energy (solar and wind energy) and low-consuming machines instead of carbon capture and storage technologies (Cismaru & Ivan, 2010, p. 16).
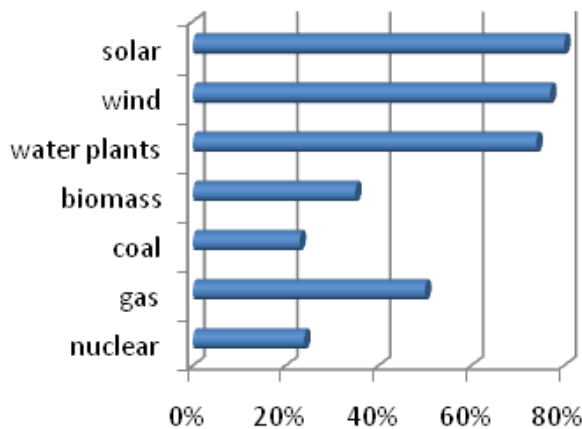

Figure 2. Alternative forms of energy preferred instead of CCS technologies

A secondary objective of research in the FENCO project was which factors determine more public acceptance of an innovation. The four scenarios used

in the poll inventory (positive presentation with/without a source, negative presentation with/without a source) revealed that, in environmental issues and promoting industrial innovation, the most important factor in creating public acceptance is not the positive/negative aspect of information, but the accessibility and the structure of the information presented (see Figure 3 and 4). Another additional explanation in this matter could be that the quality of source is determinant: if the source has a negative reputation (like in this case Shell), than it will not be considered trustful.

As we can see in Figure 3 (under) the variation in acceptance determined by a source in general, and in particular by presenting positive information generally, is very slight. This proves a certain degree of skepticism in Romanian publics (not interested on who and how presents the information) and, on the other hand, the availability to accept new technologies in general, regardless of how are they presented.
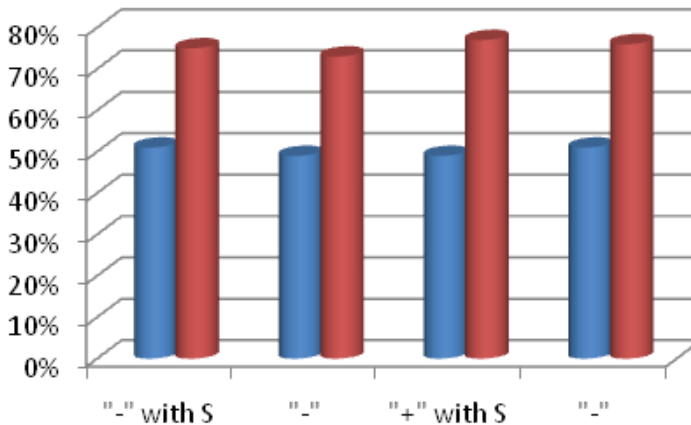

Figure 3. The change in acceptance while changing positive/negative (+/-) information with/without a source (S)

Note. Red-the total options of agreement; blue – the intense options ("totally agree")

The lowest percentage in voting for technology (Figure 4) and, respectively, in voting against technology (Figure 5) was characteristic to the third situation (positive information with a negative reputation source

- Shell). The low level of support in this case shows that the opinion/ reputation of a negative source influences negatively the decision to vote (or the unconditioned support). As a consequence for the communication strategies built in the Romanian public space, this aspect emphasizes the necessity of having neutral sources, or sources perceived as having a positive reputation.
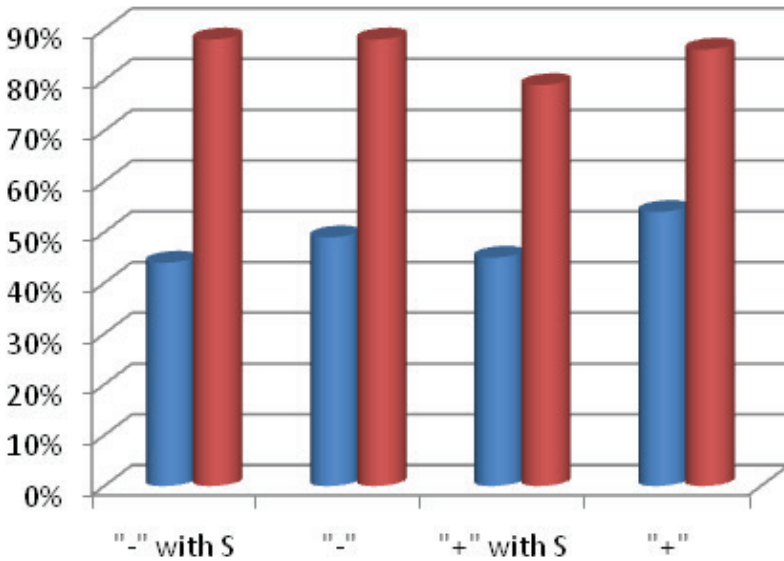

Figure 4. The percentage of people who would vote for introducing the CCS technology

Note. Red-the total options of agreement; blue – the intense options ("totally agree"). Case 1: negative information with a positive source, case 2: negative information without a source, case 3: positive situation with a negative source, and case 4: negative information without a source.

When changing the topic of question from "voting for" to "voting against" technology, the negative information managed to win more partisans to vote against technology; also, the correlation of negative information with a positive reputation source showed that, possibly, the credibility of

the source plays an important role not only in spreading information in general, but in the formation of negative attitudes against an innovation (Figure 5). Thus, when a source (individual or collective) with positive reputation provides a negative information, will contribute more intensely to build negative attitudes (in comparison with the situation when it provides positive information and forms positive attitudes).
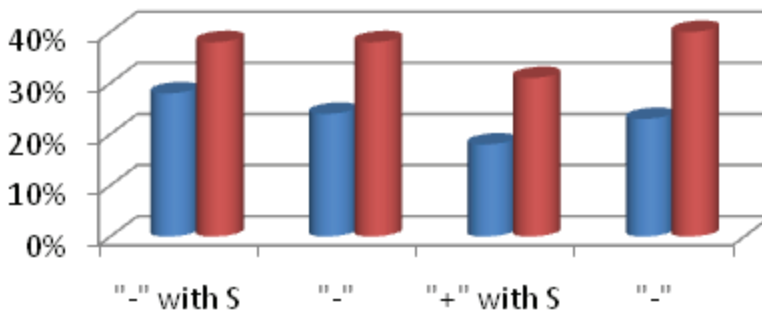

Figure 5. The percentage of people voting against the introduction of CCS technology

Note. Red-the total options of agreement; blue – the intense options ("totally agree"). Case 1: negative information with a positive source, case 2: negative information without a source, case 3: positive situation with a negative source, and case 4: negative information without a source.

When comparing the Romanian sample with the other countries participants in the project, some characteristics come into evidence. The level of information of Romanian respondents is high if taking into account that environmental technologies are very new in Romania and no prior effort to inform the general public was done. The level of information on environmental statements in the poll was on the average (lower than Netherlands and Norway, but higher then Greece and comparable to United Kingdom). The main difficult statement for respondents from all countries was if the greenhouse effect is caused by a hole in the atmosphere, with an average of only a half of correct answers (Pietzner et al., 2010, pp. 26-28).

A visible difference can be seen when comparing Romania with the other countries in the project at the level of trust in several public actors (Figure

6): in Romania, there is a high level of trust in the European Union, but a low level of trust in national Government or in Political Parties. From the other countries, only Greece shows the same tendency (Pietzner et al., 2010, p. 25).
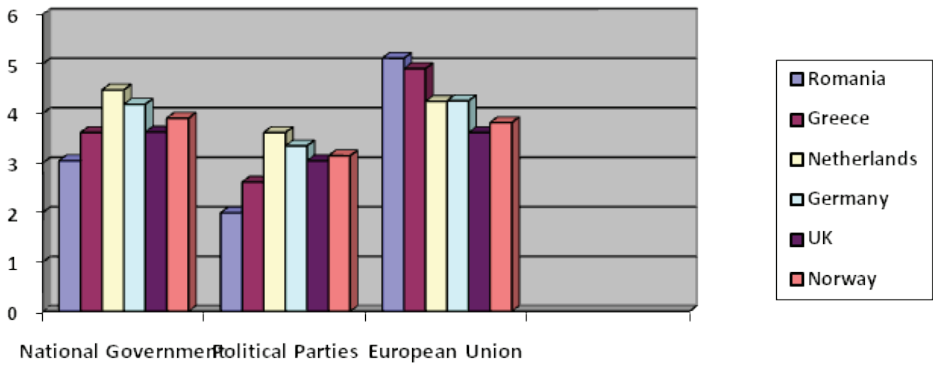

Figure 6. Level of trust in three from the nine actors considered, in the six European countries

Note. The means range between 1 – very low level of trust to 7 –very high level of trust.

A difference between Romania and the other countries was the low level of self-reported awareness on carbon capture and storage technologies (the highest for Romanians, 71%) (Pietzner et al., 2010, p. 36). Another difference was in the acceptance to introduce the technology. The Netherlands, the UK, Norway and Germany are essentially neutral on average regarding the use of carbon capture and storage technologies, although the Germans are the most sceptical of all respondents. Greece and Romania have the highest level of supporting the introduction of new technologies (around a half of respondents would be strongly in favour of introducing the CCS technologies)(Pietzner et al., 2010, pp. 40-42). Also, almost a half of Greek and Romanian respondents would strongly involve and they would probably make an active effort (such as signing petitions) in favour of CCS facilities (Pietzner et al., 2010, p. 43).

Also, a difference between Romania and the other countries was in the percentage of respondents who changed their attitude after receiving information about the CCS technologies. The Romanian respondents changed their attitudes to a less extent that the respondents from other

countries: their attitudes were more positive from the beginning (Figure 7 – data from Pietzner et al., 2010, p. 48).
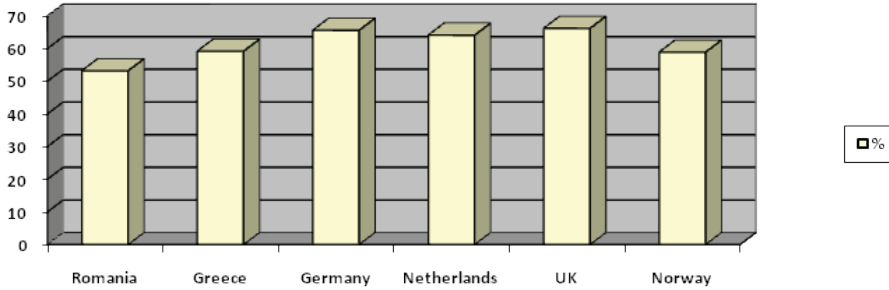

Figure 7. Comparison of Romania and Greece with other countries in the change of attitude after receiving information

When comparing Romania with the other countries in the experiment with the four options of presenting the information, a distinct characteristic occurs. Even in the case of negative presentation (with or without a source), the attitude towards carbon capture and storage technology changes in a positive way for the Romanian respondents (Figure 8 and Figure 9 – data from Pietzner et al., 2010, pp. 51-53).
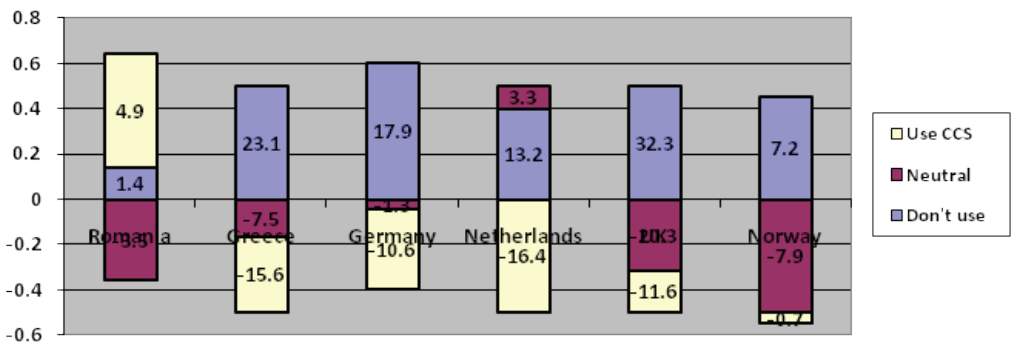

Figure 8. Change in attitude when a negative information about CCS without a source was provided
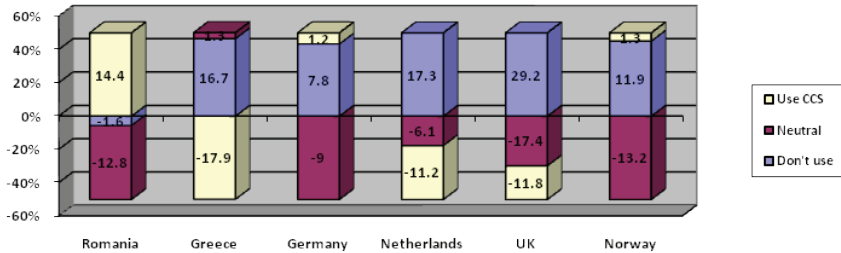
Figure 9. Change in attitude when a negative information with a source (Greenpeace) was provided

This change was registered only for Romanian respondents, while the respondents from other countries reacted "normally" to the change in the content of presentation and to the presence of a well-known source, with a negative change after negative presentation and positive change after positive presentation (strongly in case of positive presentation with a source). This result suggests that for a change of attitude of the Romanian public on a new issue is enough to present a large amount of information and to create a frame of free, collective debate.

Recommendations for communication strategies on environmental policies in Romania

As general observations, the participants in Romanian focus groups preferred the information that could receive feed-back and also the information delivered by a competent source. Also, the Romanian respondents to the nationally representative survey showed a positive disposition in receiving new information, even on new procedures or on areas that are at a beginning. Moreover, environmental issues were always considered positive and tended to be positively appreciated, as a neglected area. Further, both statistical and research project data analysis suggested contradictory features of Romanian publics: on one hand, availability to accept new technologies and information, on the other hand, a low level of trust in many institutional and organizational actors.

With this background for forming attitudes in the environmental field, the accent should be placed not on information details, but on the awareness of

the problem. The channels and the adaptation of messages to target publics play an important role in all strategies of communication (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 2005, pp. 372-382), but for the efficiency of a communication strategy they could play the central role. Further, recommendations in this article follow the structure of a communication plan, as adapted in the recent Romanian literature in the field of public relations (Iacob, Cismaru & Pricopie, 2011, pp. 200-202).

a.   First of all, there must be done a careful reflection on the *sources* of public communication. The expert sources should be experts and research institutes, but not only. The high level of public suspicion suggests that private companies or NGOs from outside of the environmental field should not be the sources of the messages. The best formula would be a partnership of research institutes with local administration. The partnership should be made with local administration (and not with central public administration), because local administration has a higher level of public trust. Also, local leaders could be used as "image factor", with a secondary effect of increasing the level of positive attitude towards environmental issues.

b.   The *segmentation for the target publics* should be based more on the age and urban/rural area as criteria of selection, and not so much on gender or level of instruction. The final target public segments should be chosen after a qualitative analysis, but the current data indicate with priority the interval 25-33 years in the urban area, with high level of instruction, politically neutral but socially active, as first target. Environmental issues are more important for urban area (that is over a certain level of living) and for young people, who are more active and responsible. Also, a special category of target public should be the opinion leaders in the civil society, who could be a very useful link to the local communities, having a role of representation and of explanation of the debated issues. Also, international NGOs and environmental NGOs are secondary agents (secondary public) who could help to the implementation of energy innovation and environmental policies.

c. The *objectives of communication* must be oriented not only on public acceptance (which reaches quickly a majority, as research data showed) but

to awareness and explanation about the goals and effects of environmental technologies and policies. Discussing the type of communication objectives, not only the qualitative objectives are important (as "how accurate is the recalling of the information") because the findings showed that, in Romania, information on a new field is fine recalled. Quantitative objectives are important as well (penetrating in all geographic areas and all public categories, for obtaining the best level of public acceptance).

d. The *public communication strategy* should have some compulsory features, as practice showed previously. Intense and short campaigns have no success in Romania, new information touches very difficult the public and are rapidly forgotten (even if it was positively appreciated). The communication strategy should be not "loud", with a high amount and intensity of messages, but should be persistent, disseminated on a long time range, and through the most adequate channels of communication.

The strategy should be differentiated on regions. Oltenia (South-East) and Galati (East Region) should receive a special attention, because they are the most polluted and will be the main areas involved in the implementation of environment protection technologies in the future. The level of industrial damages is high enough here, so publics will pay attention for environment protection messages as a good starting background.

e. *The tactics* refer to actions, channels of communication and messages. The need of feed-back was identified in research and should be fulfilled by the presentation of public messages. Oral presentations (such as video presentation) should be primarily considered, because they offer a great possibility to associate the message with an expert source and, secondly, TV as a channel has a great deal of penetration in all areas, even in the rural ones.

The *channels of communication* must cover the two sides of public life in Romania: the "face-to-face" public space and the online public space. Separate kits of information should be conceived for mainstream and, respectively, online channels. (a) In the "face-to-face" space, the public TV channels are recommended, for having the greatest level of trust. Also, in case of restricted budgets, public radio channels could be preferred as being

less expensive and appreciated by several segments of publics. (b) In the online space, the online social networks (as Facebook and Twitter) should be preferred instead of other social media. The reason for choosing the online social networks are multiple: the economy in budgets, the facility to reach young target publics, the possibility to associate specific messages to specific publics, and so on. As a supplementary reason, the online social networks are used by opinion leaders, which can be transformed in active promoters of information. Also, young and informed people are the main public with a positive orientation and interest toward environmental policies and energy innovations.

Facebook is the most popular online social network in Romania and registered 6, 6 million users at the end of 2013 (data from Facebrands. ro, December 2013). In the online social networks, there are two types of users: producers of content and interpretation, and those who only transfer or consume information. In time, age and users' profile expanded on all age levels, but the dominant segments remain the young ones (18-33 years, and 33-40 years). The attractiveness of the network comes from the variety of instruments used in spreading, selection and interpretation of information, both for producers and for consumers of information. In the particular topic of environment protection, some important actors in this field have built their social trust capital using Facebook, therefore the network should have a privileged position in the implementation of communication strategies on environmental issues.

For Twitter, the number of users in Romania is limited to around 68.000 (data from monitoring site Zelist, December 2013). The main feature of this network is the concision (the network which sets the greatest limit to the length of message – 140 characters on a status) and the orientation to two aspects: the novelty value of information, and the audience. Twitter is a network of opinion leaders, and the information competency is the primary factor that determines the presence and the behavior inside the network. In case of implementation of energy and environmental innovations, this network is of a particular interest, because "green" NGOs are respected inside the network and win audience, while mass media from Romania ignores niche issues as the environmental topics.

The characteristics of *messages* should be derived from the two branches of communication strategy. (a) For the mainstream channels, messages must be conceived in an accessible manner, especially for rural area, where subjects have a lower level of instruction. In this area, the translation of message in accessible formulas plays a great deal in reception and evaluation of the content. Also, narrative content could have a central role, so, for example, videos with local leaders showing interest for environmental aspects would be a fine idea of promotion. (b) For the online channels, a rich and detailed content is allowed, but messages should be adapted to social media, concentrated in the best form to be repeated and shared in networks. Also, the video part of the content should be consistent, for attracting and maintaining users' attention.

f. The *calendars and budgets* should be adapted to the particular programs executed, but all actions should be included in the main strategy, and thus obtaining a chain effect. The calendars should be constructed on longer periods, even if they include shorter campaigns. Mainly, the preference should be for programs and not for isolated events and initiatives. The budgets could be reduced by the effective use of tools of social media; the main focus in previous phases of the plan should be on obtaining more and more "free ambassadors" to promote the environmental conservation activities and principles, and thus diminishing the resources spent in communication strategies.

g. The *evaluation* is connected to the correctness and to the realism of the objectives. If the objectives avoid unclear formulas and the coincidence with implementation objectives (frequent in communication strategies which go parallel with activities of implementation of a project) (Iacob, Cismaru & Pricopie, 2011) evaluation should be simple. Also, in the online space, evaluation is easier than in the real space, because of the variety of available instruments.

Conclusion

Using secondary analysis, the paper aimed to depict the Romanian social background as premise for building recommendations for public communication strategies in order to implement environmental policies

in Romania. The paper reviewed data from an international research project implemented in six European countries. As results of data analysis and of comparison, the Romanian publics proved to have paradoxical characteristics in attitude: on one hand, they are less mature and more enthusiastic in comparison with other European publics (manifesting a high level of acceptance of new technologies about they never heard before), but in the same time manifest a low level of trust of institutions and in authority factors. These features suggested, as principles for building public communication strategies: the preference for education instead of boosting communication campaigns, the emphasis on urban and young publics in segmentation, and differentiation between regions. With respect to the most adequate communication channels, the orientation for public television and private radio channels, and (for young publics and opinion leaders) the emphasis on the online communication in social networks. In the same time, from all the actors who could be involved, NGOs and local administrations should be preferred, as a consequence of the low level of trust in public institutions and, to some extent, in private companies.

Every beginning allows initiative and imagination, and so does the public communication in the implementation of environmental policies. As from Romania, the research revealed positive attitudes towards new environmental and energy technologies, and these attitudes may be used as a ground in building a consistent level of information.

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