

THE EDITOR

Dear readers of *Communication Directory*,

The new issue of *Communication Director* magazine is about to be printed, its theme the complicated relationship between the worlds of journalism and public relations, a relationship which can be as strained as it is co-dependant. So many talented people switch from one side to the other that a degree of cross-fertilization is inevitable, and questions of trust and reliability are never far from the debate. The new issue of the magazine is our contribution to that debate. In the meantime, we present this month's newsletter, with the usual news and updates. With best wishes



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COMMENTARY

The Burmese Political Storm

After Cyclone Nargis hit Southeast Asia at the beginning of this month, the world media turned to Myanmar, only to be turned away by the presiding military government. Without coverage, the extent to which the cyclone had destroyed both life and land was difficult to gauge from the start, and the few images or video footage which have made their way out of the country make for harrowing viewing. With little resources, dead bodies remain scattered throughout flooded towns and water sources have become contaminated due to the extended clear-up. Estimates of the death toll range from 80,000 upwards, and politicians such as George W. Bush used the incident to question the ruling junta's authority. Refusing to endorse US or other western aid caused delays and put the Burmese government on the defensive when the Sichuan Earthquake struck only ten days later and reverberated through to Myanmar. Relatively positive media coverage of



the PRC's response to this natural disaster threw an even worse light on to their neighbours in Southeast Asia, and though aid and money are now making their way to where they are needed most, the delays in getting them there may continue to be the cause of political strife for the Burmese and for Myanmar.

By Daniel F. Le Ray

STAYING CLEAR OF TURBULENCE

Reinforced with new regulatory powers, the European Aviation Safety Agency is taking a fresh look at crisis communication.

by Daniel Höltgen

Air transport has become widely accessible to millions of citizens. Over 750 million passengers travelled by air in the European Union last year. Aviation is also the fastest-growing transport mode, increasing at an annual rate of 5 per cent per year, and over 30 per cent in some of the new EU member states. New developments in aviation regularly draw huge public and media audiences. The maiden flight of the Airbus A380 in April 2005 and subsequent appearances of the world's largest airliner were mass attractions. More recently, production delays on both the A380 and the Boeing 787 "Dreamliner" have hit the business headlines, highlighting the economic significance of a multi-billion dollar industry.

Flying in Europe is not only popular, it is also safe. Over the last decade, the average annual fatality rate in commercial air transport was below 100, in contrast to 40,000 fatalities in road accidents. In 2007, there were only 22 air passenger fatalities resulting from two accidents. The airline business is governed by thousands of safety rules and regulations, comparable in complexity only to the nuclear sector. Despite the good safety record, public perception is rarely rational. Catastrophic crashes remain vivid in collective memory. Such images, globally disseminated through the mass media, are stronger than facts and figures. But even less consequential accidents can stay in the news for several days or weeks. In January this year, a British Airways Boeing 777 carrying 136 passengers was evacu-

ated after landing short of the runway at Heathrow airport. The accident immediately prompted media questions about the reliability of the aircraft-type in question, which has been in service without notable problems since 1995. The challenge for spokespersons of airlines, airports and aviation authorities is to deal with a sudden media onslaught demanding easy answers to complex questions. Since accident investigations often take weeks or months to conclude, rumours and speculation abound. Within minutes of the first reports, competing news channels feature self-declared "experts", ready to discuss the likely causes and culprits. Getting prepared for instant media reaction is important in most lines of business. It is a matter of "make or break" in the aviation sector. A single statement – or the lack of one – can suffice to undermine consumer confidence – and public credibility in the case of a safety regulator.

EASA – THE EU'S CENTRAL AVIATION SAFETY REGULATOR The European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) is the centrepiece of the EU's strategy to improve aviation safety in the face of continuous market growth. Its mission is to promote the highest common standards of safety and environmental protection in civil aviation. The Agency became operational in 2003 on the basis of a European Parliament and Council Regulation (1592/2002). As an independent EU body, it is accountable to the member states and the EU institutions. Based in Cologne, Germany, EASA employs some 350 professionals from all member states. The Agency expects to double its workforce by 2012.

EXPANDING POWERS EASA's rules for aircraft safety and environmental performance are legally binding throughout the EU. The aviation industry benefits from common standards and a single point-of-contact. The Agency approves all new aircraft and modifications to existing models in a process called type-certification. It monitors the implementation of rules through inspections in the member states and provides technical advice, research and training. EASA also approves maintenance organisations outside Europe, which ensures that planes registered in the EU are maintained at a common worldwide standard. EASA's budget of 86 million euros in 2008 is financed equally by the EU and through fees charged to businesses for certification services. National aviation authorities retain operational tasks, such as the registration of aircraft and the licensing of individual pilots. EASA will soon be responsible for regulating all types of civil aviation operations and flight crew licensing. The EU has put the Agency in charge of the safety assessment of foreign operators. The EU "black list" of airlines banned on safety grounds is currently drawn up by the European Commission and the member states, albeit using EASA safety data as a key indicator. As early as 2009, it will be the Agency's job to determine which foreign airlines are denied access to EU airports. The task is both technically demanding and politically sensitive.

"YOUR SAFETY IS OUR MISSION" EASA communicates with a wide range of corporate and institutional stakeholders. The Agency's communication team has identified four main target groups. Specialised information campaigns are tailored to address each group.

- *European citizens and the general media*
- *The aviation industry and specialised media*
- *EU institutions and policy-makers*
- *National and international aviation organisations*

Explaining the Agency's technical responsibilities to a general audience remains a challenging task. The communications team members frequently act as "translators" between the Agency's ex-

perts and the media. EASA's motto – "Your Safety is Our Mission" – encapsulates the Agency's public service role, working to protect citizens "in the air and on the ground". Its policy of transparency and openness includes a commitment to reply to all types of citizens' inquiries. To achieve wide coverage across the EU, many of the Agency's campaigns are multilingual. Basic information is provided in all 23 EU languages on the Agency's website.

FROM GLIDERS TO GIANT JETS The Agency's clients range from small-scale manufacturers of balloons and gliders to multinationals like Airbus and Rolls Royce. EASA is legally required to provide all aviation businesses with instant access to regulatory changes and new maintenance instructions. The only realistic, real-time option for fulfilling this obligation was to designate the EASA website as the Agency's official publication and document register. Updates are automatically posted to client-users through an online notification system. The website also features satellite applications, including an online tool designed to carry out public consultations. While large businesses have fully embraced the EASA system, small-scale enterprises have had problems adapting to the new regulatory environment. Workshops preparing businesses for the Agency's new responsibilities and briefings to the aviation press are therefore a priority.

OCCURRENCES "OUT OF THE BLUE" As with any safety authority, procedures for 24/7 media monitoring, standby duty and

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Inherent risks in aviation communications

- ▶ Aviation is the fastest growing mode of transport within the EU and has the highest potential for damaging crisis situations.
- ▶ Public perception focuses on the negative. Be prepared for clear communications when a crisis hits.
- ▶ EASA is prepared to communicate with all target groups - European citizens, media, aviation industry, EU institutions.
- ▶ The regulatory process must remain transparent and accessible.

emergency media response are an integral part of EASA's communication plan. A key objective is to be ready for rapid and accurate statements after major aircraft accidents. During its first years in operation, however, EASA encountered "crises" of a very different nature. Two occurrences struck the communications team "out of the blue":

In late 2005, an ex-employee of an Airbus subcontractor made headlines when he accused EASA of overseeing a fatal design flaw in the Airbus A380. The false allegations focused on a supposedly faulty microprocessor controlling the aircraft's cabin pressure. Fuelled by the trade war between Boeing and Airbus, the story first appeared in the Seattle Times and quickly spread across to Europe. EASA caught its first flavour of "investigative journalism", with TV teams virtually banging at its doors. The Agency reacted by providing full insight into its certification procedures, accompanied by dozens of interviews and briefings. The "whistle-blower" was forgotten by the time EASA issued the A380 type-certificate in December 2006. Later that year, EASA experienced a near-political "crisis". A UK parliamentary committee had concluded its report on the work of Britain's Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). While the report dealt primarily with the CAA, a euro-sceptic press was quick to seize on a particular sentence stating "lamentable" resource problems at EASA. Surprisingly, even the Financial Times headlined "Britain attacks 'lamentable' European air safety body", causing turbulence in press rooms in London, Brussels and Cologne. In reply, EASA launched a dedicated information campaign in the UK and provided full details of its budget. To pre-empt similar scenarios, EASA has established a close communication partnership with its counterpart in the UK.

THINKING THE UNTHINKABLE It is already clear that EASA's extended regulatory powers will increase its media exposure exponentially. The Agency's communication strategy will soon have to cater for all kinds of issues, from 'human factors' in flight operations to unsafe foreign airlines. EASA has therefore initiated a full review of its tools and procedures for crisis communication, which involves all departments.

Initial findings reveal that some of the Agency's internal procedures can have a potentially significant impact on its external relations. During the start-up phase of the Agency, individual departments effectively established their own "crisis communications" channels with external partners, such as national accident investigators and EU institutions. These separate channels now have to be fully interlinked to enable the Agency to speak with one voice. As part of the review, the Agency's managers took part in an "issues mining" exercise to identify possible crisis scenarios in their respective areas of responsibility. Nearly all scenarios turned out to have a potentially huge media impact. The "worst case" scenario was the fatal crash of a large aircraft certified by EASA and caused by a design fault – the implication being a total loss of credibility on behalf of the Agency.

EXPANSION As a consequence, the communications team has now been given overall responsibility for the Agency's crisis management. It will draw together previously unconnected activities, such as the Agency's business risk register and procedures for business continuity. The team will coordinate all internal and external emergency measures and, when necessary, set up a crisis centre. Once the integrated crisis management and communications plan is ready, the Agency will run a test case so that deficiencies in the system can be recorded and corrected. In a few years time, EASA's responsibilities are likely to extend to airports, air traffic management and Galileo, the EU's satellite navigation system. The precise functions of EASA have yet to be determined, but one thing has become evident: the unexpected is sure to happen. |

STORYTELLER



This article was published in Communication Director's previous issue "Weather the storm! The crucial methods of crisis communication." Daniel Höltingen has been Head of Communications at the European Aviation Safety Agency, Cologne, since 2004. He previously worked as head of PR in the German federal interior ministry, Berlin, and as spokesperson for the federal interior ministry. He holds a PhD in economic geography from Cambridge University, and has trained as a journalist.

Recent Appointments from the World of Communications / May 2008



Jenny Scott
(Director of Communications)
Institution: Bank of England
Start: July 1



UK: Scott goes from the BBC to the Bank of England

JENNY SCOTT has been appointed Director of Communications at the Bank of England, where she will succeed Peter Rodgers when he retires at the end of June. Scott began her career at the Bank as an economist, and in her new role will report to the Governor of the Bank, Mervyn King. Scott studied economics at Cambridge, and is the author of *The Living Economy* (2000). She has also worked as a reporter for Reuters and the BBC. Peter Rodgers, also a former journalist, has been with the Bank since 1997, when he joined as Secretary and Head of Public Relations.



Hans Obermeier
(Director of Communications)
Institution: Hypo Real Estate AG
Start: June 1



Germany: Obermeier to head communications at Hypo Real Estate

Hypo Real Estate Holding AG, the commercial real estate financier, develops its corporate communications operations with the appointment of HANS OBERMEIER, former speaker of the West Landesbank, as Head of Corporate Communications from June. The former editor-in-chief of the press agency Reuters had been responsible for communication at the Landesbank from April 2004 to June 2007. Since then, Obermeier had advised Greenpeace's global communications.



Halvor Molland
(Head of Media Relations)
Institution: Norske Hydro
Start: May 1



Norway: Hydro hires Halvor

Hydro, the Norwegian-based supplier of aluminium and aluminium products, has appointed HALVOR MOLLAND as their new Head of Media Relations. He will be responsible for driving and coordinating Hydro's relations with national and international media. Molland succeeds Inger Sethov, who was appointed Chief Communication Officer in December, and to whom Molland reports to in his new position. Molland joined Hydro in 2006, following his position as Head of Communication for ABB in Norway.

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Recent Appointments from the World of Communications / May 2008



Dick Kors
(Director of Communications)
Institution: Nuon
Start: May 1



Netherlands: New Communications appointment at Nuon

As of May 1, DICK KORS has been the new Director of Communications for both the production and supply company and the holding company of Nuon, the energy company based in the Netherlands. Prior to this he was Director of corporate communications & Investor Relations at Stork. Kors reports to Øystein Løseth, Chairman of the Management Board and head of the new production and supply company.



Ben Roome
(Global Head Media Relations)
Institution: Nokia Siemens
Start: April 2



UK: Roome at the top for media relations at Nokia Siemens

BEN ROOME has been appointed Global Head of Media Relations at Nokia Siemens Networks, effective April 2. Roome's previous role was Leader of Corporate Communications at Nortel EMEA. In his new position, he reports to executive board member and Head of Corporate Communications, Barry French. Roome is responsible for Nokia Siemens Networks global media relations planning, messaging and strategy.



Nathalie Errard
(Director Investor Relations & Financial Communications)
Institution: EADS France
Start: April 23



France: Come and have a go if you think you're Errard enough

NATHALIE ERRARD has been the new Director of Investor Relations and Financial Communications at EADS, the French aerospace, defence and related services provider, since April 23. She is under the direct responsibility of Hans-peter Ring, deputy general manager in charge of finances of EADS. Errard has been in charge of the investor relations for the UK, France and Southern Europe at EADS since 2005. She began her career in 1995 at PriceWaterhouse, before moving on three years later to the Mergers and Acquisitions team at Aerospace.



Eva Gruberová
(Head of Public Relations)
Institution: Raiffeisen & Hypo
Start: April 14



Czech Republic: Two building societies, one PR head

EVA GRUBEROVÁ has taken over responsibility for the Public Relations activities of the merging Czech building societies Raiffeisen and Hypo, who will become the third largest player on the market. She had worked at Hypo, where she was in charge of public relations and image, and prior to that worked for the PR agency AMI Communications, organizing PR activities for clients dealing in fast-moving consumer goods, and in the agency Pulford, where she led events and PR.



Guto Harri
(Communications Advisor)
Institution: London Mayor
Start: May 12



UK: Ex-BBC journalist advises new Mayor of London

London's newly-elected mayor, Boris Johnson, has announced the appointment of former BBC journalist GUTO HARRI as his Communications Advisor, beginning May 12. Harris' previous position was Senior Policy Advisor at London-based Public Relations agency Fleishman-Hillard, where he spent four weeks advising Zimbabwean opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai. Prior to that, he was based in New York as North American Business Correspondent to the BBC.

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EVENTS



15.05.2008 - 25.05.2008

Cannes Film Festival

Founded in 1939, le Festival de Cannes is considered one of the world's most important - and glamorous - film festivals. "The Festival is an apolitical no-man's-land, a microcosm of what the world would be like if people could contact each other directly and speak the same language." The most prestigious award given out at Cannes is the Palme d'Or ('Golden Palm') for the best film. The festival jury, made of a small international selection of movie professionals including Natalie Portman and Sean Penn, grants other awards, including the Grand Prix ('Grand Prize'), the second most prestigious award.

Cannes,
South of France

[➔ More](#)

29.05.2008 - 30.05.2008

Combating Racism and Xenophobia



This meeting, entitled The Role of National Institutions against Discrimination in Combating Racism and Xenophobia with Special Focus on Persons belonging to National Minorities and Migrants, will look at ways

to overcome challenges at the national and international level.
Hofburg, Vienna

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27.05.2008

Internal Communications, Services & Software



The EACD hosts its first Regional Debate in Finland, hosted by Nokia at their HQ in Helsinki. The debate will address and discuss the communications profession in both a pan-European and a regionally-specific context.

Helsinki, Finland

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29.05.2008 - 30.05.2008

Media4[ME]: Media in a changing society



The conference focuses on the further structuring and implementation of media literacy in The Netherlands and internationally in relation to the promotion of social cohesion, intercultural dialogue and citizenship.

Museum of Communication,
The Hague, Netherlands

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23.05.2008 - 24.05.2008

Celebrations for the 60th anniversary of the Congress of Europe

Come take part in the celebrations of 60 years since the 1948 Congress of Europe at the Hague, with a series of events coordinated by the European Movement to take place all across Europe. Events will bring together the EU Institutions and Civil Society by allowing European citizens to directly address key EU politicians with their concerns and recommendations about Europe's future. The Presidents of the EU institutions and main European political parties will be present.

The Hague,
Netherlands

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02.06.2008 - 04.06.2008

Deutsche Welle Global Media Forum



This conference addresses the role of the media in peace-building and conflict prevention. The event brings together international representatives from the fields of media and politics, culture and economics, development work and science.

World Conference Center,
Bonn, Germany

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10.06.2008 - 11.06.2008

Informa Telecoms & Media



This is a networking event for the MVNO industry and attendees at this year's event will benefit from a new, more interactive conference format incorporating panel discussions, round-table forums and interviews, as well as traditional conference sessions.

Hotel Fira Palace,
Barcelona

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10.06.2008 - 11.06.2008

TV Evolution Summit



Now in its third year, the TV Evolution Summit is for industry leaders from broadcast, telecom, cable and satellite operators, content providers, network infrastructure, middleware, platform and component providers. Building on last year's summit, Informa Telecoms & Media promises a comprehensively updated event for 2008.

Marriott Hotel,
Lisbon

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CONFERENCE

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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BRUSSELS, SILKEN BERLAYMONT

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* Prices excluding VAT. Included in the participants fee is access to all parts of the conference programme as well as to the dinner on Thursday, 12th June, 2008.