



CLUB OF VENICE

Club of Venice (CoV) Plenary Meeting 10-12 June 2026

AGENDA

Meeting languages: Spanish[, French] and English (interpretation provided)

MEETING VENUE:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Calle General Pardiñas n.55, Madrid



Wednesday, 10th June 2026 - 20:30-22:00

Informal welcome gathering Introductory session in presence of political authorities and/or Ambassadors of EU MS to Spain

Venue: Bienmesabe Marqués de Salamanca, C/ Príncipe de Vergara, 43

PLENARY MEETING:

Thursday, June 11th 2026 (9:00 - 12:45)

8:30 – 9:00

Guests' registration

9:00 – 9:30

Welcome statements - representatives of the hosting Spanish authorities and the European Institutions

- Antonio Asencio Guillén, Director-General for Communications, Public Diplomacy and Social Media, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Affairs and Cooperation of Spain
- Vincenzo Le Voci, Secretary-General of the Club of Venice
- María Andrés Marín, Director of the European Parliament Liaison Office in Spain
- Daniel Calleja Crespo, Head of the European Commission Representation in Spain (TBC)

9:30 - 9:45

Key address – objectives of the plenary

- Stefano Rolando, President of the Club of Venice

9:45 – 13:00

PLENARY SESSION I – ROUND TABLE

"Government communication challenges: strengthening democratic Resilience to Disinformation and Misinformation"

- Anti-FIMI strategies in progress: detecting malicious sources, monitoring societal risks and coordinating prebunking and debunking activities
- Identifying vulnerabilities, reinforcing capacity building strategies and resilience comms interoperability
- Ibero-American summit 2026: Disinformation campaigns in Spanish language
- Building alliances and optimising existing synergies at national and cross-border level vs FIMI

Moderator:

Mario Scharfbillig, European Commission, Joint Research Centre

Key Note speaker:

Marc Marginedas, journalist at *El Periódico*

Panellists:

9:45: 11:00

- Mónica Colomer, Spain, Director-General for the Promotion of Spanish in the World, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Affairs and Cooperation
- Cristina Manzano, Ibero-American Secretariat (SEGIB)
- Yevhen Fedchenko, Ukraine, Co-Founder and Chief Editor, Stopfake.org
- Mykolas Katkus, Lithuania, CEO and Co-Founder of [Repsence](#)

11:00 – 11:15

Coffee break

11:30 – Address by José Manuel Albares, Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation

11:50 - 13:00

- Alessandra De Marco, Italy, Director-General, Department of Press and Publishing, Presidency of the Council of Ministers
- Carlos Rullan, Community manager and expert of disinformation and misinformation dynamics, European Parliament Liaison Office in Spain
- Inga Höglund, European Commission, Deputy Head of Unit, Task Force for Strategic Communication and Countering Information Manipulation
- Saman Nazari, Counter Disinformation Network Coordinator & Influence Operations Researcher, Alliance4Europe

13:00 – 14:15

Lunch and family picture

14:15 - 17:00

PLENARY SESSION II

"Digital transformation, Artificial Intelligence influence on modern communication – governance and societal cohesion challenges in times of increasing geopolitical uncertainties"

- **State of the art :**
 - Developing internal know-how and expertise and investing in literacy to extend global digital inclusion
 - Analysing ongoing technological processes and potential risks and opportunities from AI's use for digital outreach strategies
- **Outreaching strategies**
 - Managing AI impact on public communication: Identifying/Building sustainable digital models and preserving ethics when building AI infrastructures
 - Developing Interconnectivity and inclusiveness and cooperation with trustworthy digital platforms

Moderator:

Sophie Sacilotto, Research and Data Analyst at Debunk.org and Lead Analyst for the FIMI Defenders of Election Integrity project

Key-Note speaker:

Aibek Iliasov, Senior Research Director, [M&C Saatchi World Services](#)

Panellists:

- Alejandro González, Directorate for National Security (DSN), President of the Government Office
- Virginia Padovese, Newsguard, Managing Editor and VP Partnerships, Europe, Australia and New Zealand (from remote)
- Janis Sarts, Director of the NATO Strategic Communication Center of Excellence, Riga
- Clara Jiménez Cruz, CEO and Cofounder of [Maldita](#) (fact checker agency)
- Guillermo Infantes, [NEWTRAL](#) media group, specialized in disinformation
- Augustine McMahon, Digitalis, Associate in the Digital Risk team, OSINT specialist
- Anthony Zacharzewski, Founder and Director of The Democratic Society

Q&A session

15:45 - 16:00 coffee break

17:00 - 17:15

First day summing-up - issues emerged
(Club Steering Group member + Spanish representative)

17:30 : 19:30

Extraordinary session – round table format meeting

"Good Information For A Strong Democracy: challenges of today and tomorrow around epistemic security, information regulation and the need for citizen participation"

organized by THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY and INDIGO TRUST
in cooperation with the Club of Venice

The two panels of this session will elaborate on good information for a strong democracy, with particular attention to the role of government communications in today's evolving information environment, especially the challenges around epistemic security, information regulation, and the need for meaningful citizen participation.

The aim of the session is to raise the importance of government communications in ensuring epistemic security and safeguarding quality of information for democracy, and to identify pathways for future collaboration.

17:30 – 17:35: Opening & Framing

Anthony Zacharzewski (Chair): Why epistemic security matters now (politically and institutionally), set within the context of 50 years of Spanish democracy.

Panels' focus:

- **17:35-18:30 Panel 1 – The challenge**

Strong democracy needs good information, but information alone is not enough if we cannot work from a common base that truth exists and should be sought out through debate and inquiry. FIMI builds on a desire to undermine the existence of agreed truth, not only by presenting alternative truths. What are the steps that government communicators and civil society take to ensure that we preserve the foundations of democracy at every level, and in every space?

- **Chair:**

Anthony Zacharzewski (Demsoc)

Contributions:

- **William Perrin** (Indigo Trust): an overview on the role of philanthropy, civil society, and epistemic security at the European level
- **Tom Lillywhite** (Brickworks, digital strategist and communications expert): challenges for government communicators
- **Carmen Gustran** (Spain, Undersecretary, Ministry for Política Territorial y Memoria Democrática, Commissioner for the celebration of 50 years of Spain): Spanish democracy and contemporary information challenges
- **Inga Rosinska** (General Secretariat of the Council of the EU, Director of Information and Outreach, DG Communication and Information): liaising with young people and investing in co-creation
- **Erik den Hoedt** (Netherlands, Manager and Communication Expert, Ministry of General Affairs, Vice President of the Club of Venice): trust, inclusiveness, advance planning

20' Q&A

- **18:30-19:20 Panel 2 – Solutions**

How can governments and civil society work together to rebuild shared narratives, protect democratic discourse and build citizen engagement in a fragmented information environment? Looking at the four solution areas - better regulation, better public information, better hyperlocal information, stranger networks for democracy. How can governments and civil society can strengthen synergies and collaborate more concretely (focus on possible developments within the Club/DemSoc framework and relations with international partners and scientific communities).

- **Chair:**
Anthony Zacharzewski (DemSoc)
- Contributions:**
 - **Salomé Herce** (Spain, State Secretariat for Communication): Government communication against hate speech and disinformation.
 - **Karin Christensen** (411/Connected by Data/Campaign Lab): modern approaches to government communication
 - **María González** (Futuro en Común): the role of civil society, AI and Human Rights, transparency and accountability: towards a fairer and more sustainable development model
 - **Sophie Sacilotto** (Debunk.org OSINT research and FIMI analysis): Information integrity, democratic resilience, tracking and responding to online manipulation and foreign interferences in European elections

15' Q&A

- **19:20 – 19:30: Closing Remarks**
 - **Anthony Zacharzewski**: Synthesis and pathways for future collaboration.
 - **Vincenzo Le Voci**: Reflections from the Club of Venice side

19:45 Dinner

Venue: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Calle General Pardiñas n.55, Madrid

PLENARY MEETING – SESSION III **Friday, June 12th 2026 (9:15-13:00)**

08:45 – 09:15 Guests' registration

09:15 – 09:45 Joint interventions from
 - representatives from the governments of Spain and Portugal
 - representatives from the European Parliament Liaison Offices and European Commission representations in Spain and Portugal (TBC)
 celebrating the 40th anniversary of the two countries' EU membership

09:45 - 12:45 "Crisis Communication and crisis management (round table based on case studies) :

- **Lessons learned from recent crises in Europe and overseas: roles, responsibilities and accountability (information sharing and strategic communication)**
- **The three "T" formula: timeliness, transparency and trust**
- **The crucial impact of independent reports and cooperation with scientific communities**
- **Growing geo-political challenges and risks of communication failures**

Moderator:

Vincenzo Le Voci, Secretary-General of the Club of Venice

Key-Notes:

- **Rolando Marini, Vice-Rector of the University for Foreigners of Perugia, Italy**
- **Nicholas Cull, Professor of Public Diplomacy at the University of Southern California's Annenberg School for Communications (from remote)**

Panellists:

- **Antón Leis, Director-General of the Spanish Agency of Cooperation and Development (AECID)**
- **Nicolás López Torres, Spain, Deputy Director-General for Communications at the Ministry for Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenge**
- **Lara Romano, Croatia, Chief of Staff, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs**
- **Viktoriia Romaniuk, Ukraine, Director at Mohyla School of Journalism NaUKMA, Deputy Chief Editor of Stopfake.org**
- **James Dennison, Social and Political Scientist, European University Institute and Harvard University**
- **Dr Lucia Anne Mullen, Associate Scholar, Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security; Lead Integrator, GP Counter WMD Disinformation Initiative (from remote)**
- **Yves Stevens, Belgium, Head of Communication at the National Crisis Centre, Chairman of the EU IPCR CCN**

10:45 - 11:15 coffee break + new family picture

12:45 – 13:00

Closing Session

- **Antonio Asencio Guillén, Director-General for Communications, Public Diplomacy and Social Media, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Affairs and Cooperation of Spain**
- **Javier Torres, Secretary-General of the Spanish Agency for the Supervision of Artificial Intelligence**
- **Erik den Hoedt, Netherlands, Manager and Communication Expert, Ministry of General Affairs, Vice President of the Club of Venice**
- **Reflections on the issues emerged during the plenary meeting**
- **Planning for 2nd semester 2026: key-events:**
 - **8-9 October 2026, London, M&C Saatchi headquarters: stratcom seminar** (focus on crisis communication)
 - **20-21 October 2026, Montenegro (dates to be confirmed): seminar** on communicating Western Balkans agenda and relations between public communicators and the media sector
 - **10-11 December 2026, Venice: plenary meeting** - celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the Club of Venice and presentation of the new publication (compendium on public communication and public diplomacy trends in Europe)
 - **Work in synergy with international partner organizations** (OECD, Council of Europe, NATO, ICMPD, SEECOM, SEEMO, DEMSOC, CAP'COM, DEBUNK.ORG, university pools...)

13:00 - 14:15

Lunch

14:30

**Social/Cultural event organized by the hosting Spanish authorities:
Visit to Reina Sofia Museum**