

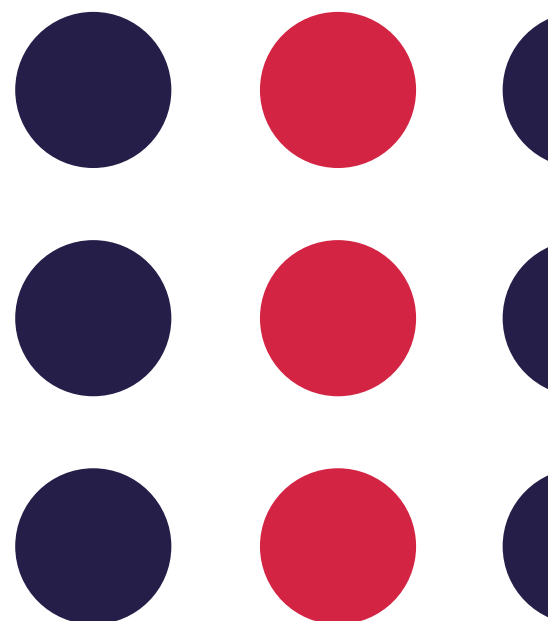
**EUPRERA**

# **24 TH ANNUAL CONGRESS**

**20 – 23 SEPTEMBER 2023**

**CHARLES UNIVERSITY, PRAGUE**

**RESPONSIBLE COMMUNICATION OR  
COMMUNICATING RESPONSIBILITY?**



**FACULTY  
OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
Charles University



# EUPRERA 24TH ANNUAL CONGRESS

- **DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS, FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, CHARLES UNIVERSITY, PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC**

## ABOUT EUPRERA ANNUAL CONGRESS

The European Public Relations Education and Research Association (EUPRERA) is an autonomous organization with nearly 500 members across 40 countries, all with a shared interest in advancing academic research and knowledge in strategic communication. In order to explore new methods and disseminate the most up-to-date research, EUPRERA organizes a highly regarded Annual Congress each autumn in collaboration with a selected university or college in Europe.

The 24th Annual Congress will be hosted by the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Charles University in Prague.

## ABOUT THE HOST

Charles University belongs among the oldest and largest universities in the world. It was founded in 1348 by the Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV as the first studium generale north of the Alps and east of Paris. Seven centuries later Charles University consists of 17 faculties and aware of its mission, it continues to nurture academic cooperation and plays an active role in a broad spectrum of European and global programmes. With almost 50 000 students, Charles University is one of the world's top universities, a fact that has been confirmed repeatedly by the international university rankings.

The Faculty of Social Sciences is an institution that contributes through its pedagogical and scientific activities to the understanding of society in cultural, historical, and territorial contexts. The 24th EUPRERA Annual Congress is hosted by the Department of Marketing Communication and Public Relations. The department specializes in research in the field of strategic communication, marketing, public relations, in the commercial, public, and non-profit sectors.

## LOCAL ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Assoc. Prof. Denisa Hejlová, Ph.D.

Petra Koudelková, Ph.D.

Hana Moravcová, Ph.D.



# CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

- **ACADEMICS, PHD STUDENTS AND PRACTITIONERS ARE INVITED TO SUBMIT PAPERS AND PANEL PROPOSALS RELATED TO THE CONGRESS THEME: RESPONSIBLE COMMUNICATION — OR COMMUNICATING RESPONSIBILITY?**

## THE CONGRESS THEME

Since corporate social responsibility became a theme in the late twentieth century, various forms of “responsibility” have come to play an important role within organizations and companies. The sub-theme of DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) has steadily grown in importance in communication studies (European Communication Monitor, 2022, in progress). The need for a dialogue about the societal and environmental impact of communications has begun to increase along with the concern of the European and American publics about the side effects of global economic and population growth and their impact on the planet.

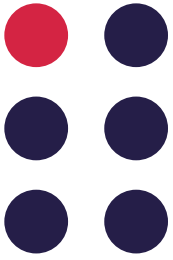
In the past two decades, self-imposed measures for contributing to societal good, or corporate social responsibility (CSR), have been institutionalized in so-called ESG (environmental, social, and governance) reporting and external evaluations of companies’ demonstrated regard for social and environmental factors. Corporate ESG evaluations are data-driven and often AI-supported. Today, concern for ESG is an important movement in investing, which is reflected in the “responsible investing” concept by BlackRock and a United Nations initiative to encourage investors to respect ESG principles.

However, as many critics point out, “the road to hell is paved with good intentions.” Such critics accuse both CSR and ESG of being nothing more than labels or even worse, facilitating the green- or pink-washing of corporate activities. They argue there are only “small sinners and big saints” (i.e., large corporations come away with better evaluations than small ones, such as

McDonalds having a great CSR rating), and that investment funds feel no need to do any more than exclude obvious “sin stocks,” such as those of the producers of tobacco, alcohol, and weapons.

The whole concept of responsibility (and/or sustainability) is closely connected with communication. First, people need to understand why a company is taking the steps it is, and what that means for various stakeholders (employees, investors, the public, etc.). Second, communication departments are often closely involved in developing company ratings and evaluations (through CSR, environmental, and other non-financial reporting). Lastly, communication departments are often made responsible for monitoring social conditions and public demands upon a company's behavior.

The big questions are about honesty and hypocrisy: to what extent are companies honest (transparent and truthful) with the public when it comes to their “greater good” actions? How much can they be? Drawing from Milton Friedman's classic argument, is the sole responsibility of joint-stock company CEOs to their shareholders for improving financial results, or should they take the lead on societal issues as well (Edelman Trust Barometer, 2021)? What is the role of communication professionals in this complex environment, where they are often walking on eggshells?

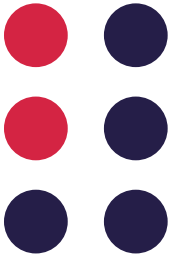


## TRACK 1

# SUSTAINABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITY: COMMUNICATING ABOUT COMPANY PERFORMANCE TO STAKEHOLDERS

Corporate social responsibility; diversity, equity, and inclusion; sustainability; ESG; and environmental issues have come to be of utmost importance in the field of strategic communication and public relations. Communication about these concepts is important to many different stakeholders (Reilly, Larya, 2018), whether in internal communications or external communications. How are these factors being managed, communicated, and visualized in contemporary communications practice? ESG reporting is one of the biggest and most controversial issues in the world of corporate communications and investing. Where is the fine line between good and bad, and how should companies communicate their performance? What is the role of communication professionals in this respect?

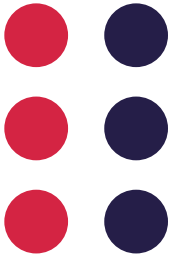




## TRACK 2

# CRITICAL THEORY IN CORPORATE COMMUNICATION: A PALETTE OF COLORS OF CORPORATE -WASHINGS (WHITE-WASHING, GREEN-WASHING, PINK-WASHING, HEALTH-WASHING, ETC.)

Communication has been historically often linked with “covering up” issues which were not favourable for its speaker, be it propaganda in political communication, white-washing of corporate history, green-washing with regard to environmental issues, etc. Critical theory and critical thinking about promoting the “greater good” must therefore be employed. This track focuses on discussing the importance of avoiding or correcting these “washings.” How to communicate safely? How do customers react to this kind of communication? Can they distinguish reality from the results of “washing” techniques?

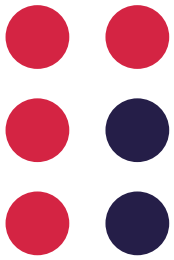


## TRACK 3

# SUSTAINABILITY OF COMMUNICATION: CHANGES AND CHALLENGES OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Communication managers are steadily playing a more important role, especially in the field of strategic communication. Public relations professionals have often been criticized for not participating in the corporate decision loop, despite James Gruning's important warning that without decision-making power, public relations will always be in just "a service role." Today, with the growing importance of digital communication, more and more leaders of organizations acknowledge the need for giving decision-making power to communication professionals (and thus a "strategic communication" role). However, what is the reality of the professional practice of communication? What does the decision-making process look like and what impact do communication professionals have on it? What are the challenges faced by communication professionals, departments, and agencies as concepts such as sustainability and responsibility, the circular economy, digital CSR, and B corporation status grow in importance? What other changes, for example, artificial intelligence, influence the PR and communication business?

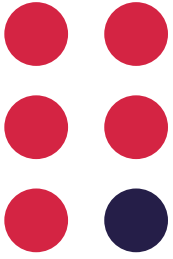




## TRACK 4

# STAKEHOLDER MONITORING AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS: FOSTERING THE “PUBLIC RELATIONS” WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND EVALUATING RESPONSIBLE COMMUNICATION

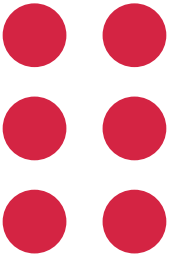
This track focuses on evaluating the impact of communication. This includes both internal communication processes, such as change management and internal communication, and external communication, measuring the impact of communication, brand image and corporate values and actions. Communication with certification agencies is also very important. The question is how do companies provide information about their activities and is their communication sufficient? Can the companies themselves sufficiently promote the importance of the certificates they have earned? We welcome research papers evaluating communication outputs about corporate social responsibility and the sustainability of corporate actions and activities, their importance to stakeholders, communities and customers, and their impacts on public relations and strategic communication in other emerging areas.



## TRACK 5

# RESPONSIBILITY TO THE PUBLIC: GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION AND RELATIONS, POLITICAL CSR, AND THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR DURING A CRISIS

Crisis communication has an important role in government communications generally, especially when it deals with external shocks that affect citizens and may have a transnational dimension. The government's response to such shocks and its actions should in the first place be socially responsible and demonstrate solidarity with the citizenry. Of course, the electoral side of things cannot be overlooked. The global COVID-19 pandemic, the conflict in Ukraine, and various types of disinformation and fake news are examples of the topics that governments must address in their communications. Are government CSR activities merely part of an electoral campaign or do they reflect real social responsibility? How can the general public be satisfied? How do governments prioritize activities outside of crisis periods and how do they communicate those priorities?



## TRACK 6

# OPEN TRACK: CURRENT RESEARCH IN STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

This track is focused on new findings in the field of strategic communication, public relations, and related disciplines. Studies based on empirical evidence, case studies, and even theoretical essays are welcome.



# SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

For the EUPRERA Annual Congress both conceptual, theoretical, and empirical works and different methodological approaches advancing public relations/ strategic communication discipline and profession are accepted.

## THREE TYPES OF SUBMISSIONS ARE POSSIBLE:

1. Short-length paper (double-blind review),
2. Full-length research paper (double-blind review),
3. Panel proposal.

Short-length papers and full-length research papers are competitive and will be selected based on a double-blind review process.

Authors of papers accepted for presentation in the conference are expected to submit the final, clean version of their work before the conference, latest by 31 August 2023. **Please note submitters of both short-length and full-length research papers are eligible for the Paper Development Workshop (PDW)**, if they opt for it. Full-length research papers are however given higher consideration as the PDW is meant to support the publication of completed works.

**Panel proposals are not blind reviewed;** the review process will be carried out by a separate committee who will evaluate the proposals based on a) the topic fit with the conference theme, b) contribution to debate on public relations/strategic communication issues, c) coherence and clarity of structure and thought of the panel as a whole, d) originality and innovativeness of ideas, and e) institutional and/or national diversity of the panel composition.

All submissions must be prepared in MS Word or PDF file format, 12-point font size, double spacing with a 1-inch (25mm) margin on A4 page size.

**Please carefully read the following instructions: failing to follow them may result in an automatic disqualification.**

## 1. SHORT-LENGTH PAPERS

Short-length papers are intended for work in progress, offering the opportunity to present on-going research that has not yet reached completion at the time of the submission deadline.

Short-length papers must allow reviewers to understand what the scientific contribution is and must comply with the submission criteria defined in the call for papers. This means, they should clearly present **the purpose of the research, main theoretical framework/ assumptions and if applicable research methods and preliminary and/or expected results. A clear statement of the contribution of the study for public relations/strategic communication theory and practice** should be included too.

Short-length papers have a **scope of 2,500–3,000 words** in length, inclusive of everything (abstract, keywords, references, tables, figure legends etc.), and are **stripped of all authors' identifiers. Short-length papers submitted with author(s)' name(s) and/or other identifiers will not be reviewed.**

### A SHORT-LENGTH PAPER SHOULD CONTAIN:

- A concise title
- Structured abstract (max. 250 words)
- Up to 6 key words
- Introduction
- Central elements of the literature review/theoretical approach (the study's major theoretical assumptions, concepts and questions must be clearly stated)
- Central elements of design/methodology/approach (it must be clear how the study is planned to be carried on, what sample/view, how data is collected and analyzed)

- Preliminary and/or expected findings/results (if data collection is not yet completed, please provide some overview of how far in the process you are and the next steps),
- Preliminary reflections/considerations on the main results and expected contribution
- List of cited references

## 2. FULL-LENGTH RESEARCH PAPERS

Full-length research papers are considered finished research work, ready for publication.

Please note that **for in-program and awards considerations**, submitted full-length research papers **must NOT have been previously presented, scheduled for presentation, published, accepted for publication**, and if under review, must NOT appear in print before the conference.

Full-length papers have a **scope of 6,000–8,000 words** in length, inclusive of everything (abstract, keywords, references, tables, figure legends etc.) and are **stripped of all authors' identifiers. Papers with author(s)' name(s) and/or other identifiers will not be reviewed.**



## A FULL-LENGTH RESEARCH PAPER SHOULD CONTAIN:

- A concise title
- Structured abstract (max. 250 words)
- Up to 6 key words
- Introduction
- Literature review/theoretical approach
- Design/methodology/approach
- Findings/results
- Discussion and conclusions
- Complete reference list

For specific formatting, please follow the author guidelines of the Journal of Communication Management ([emeraldgrouppublishing.com/journal/jcom](http://emeraldgrouppublishing.com/journal/jcom)).

## 3. PANEL PROPOSALS

Panel proposals should focus on current issues and debates in the public relations/strategic communication field. **Proposals with clear discussion statements that contribute to advance our understanding of important professional and disciplinary questions and issues are preferred.**

A panel should consist of **1 chairperson, 4-5 presentations (maximum), and (mandatory) 1 respondent**. Nobody should take two roles. Authors of presentations ideally represent various organizations and countries/cultures.

## A PANEL PROPOSAL SHOULD CONTAIN:

- A concise title
- Up to 6 keywords
- 800-word rationale including a clear statement of the relevance to public relations/strategic communication discipline/profession
- Clear presentation of the panel key questions/issues, and how **each presentation contributes to address the panel key questions.**
- Method of delivery, e.g., the modality of panel discussion and eventual audience interaction
- List of panelists with names, affiliations, and bios
- Panelists' presentation titles and max. 200 word-abstracts
- Overall statement of participation from the organizer declaring: "I have received signed statements from all intended participants agreeing to register for EUPRERA Annual Congress and participate in the panel."

Failing to follow the panel proposal guidelines and formatting instructions requirements will automatically disqualify the proposal.

## BEST PAPER AWARDS AND PUBLICATIONS

Original, not yet published full-length research papers are eligible to compete to one of EUPRERA Annual Best Paper Awards. However, the Scientific Committee will retain the right to consider the most innovative and solidly conceptualized structured **short-length paper** that show strong research potential and clear indications to be completed by the time of the conference for the Best Paper Awards.

## **AFTER THE CONGRESS, AUTHORS OF SELECTED CONTRIBUTIONS WILL BE INVITED TO SUBMIT THEIR WORK TO:**

- a special issue of the Journal of Communication Management (publication conditional upon the double-blind peer review process of the journal)
- a book (edited collection), part of the Advances in Public Relations and Communication Management series, published by Emerald (publication conditional upon a peer-review process by the editors)

## **AWARDS**

- EUPRERA Best Paper
- Emerald Literati Award
- EUPRERA Best Reviewer
- EUPRERA Master Thesis Award for Excellence – deadline for applications: 27 February, 2023. For more information and how to apply, please visit [euprera.org](http://euprera.org).
- EUPRERA PhD Award for Excellent Doctoral Thesis – deadline for applications: 15 March 2023. For more information and how to apply, please visit [euprera.org](http://euprera.org).

## OUTLINE OF PROGRAMME

### SUNDAY 17 SEPTEMBER - WEDNESDAY 20 SEPTEMBER

#### ● PHD SEMINAR

PhD seminar will be held before the congress formally begins. The aim of the seminar is to provide an international setting where doctoral students in the fields of public relations and strategic communication can present their ongoing work, get feedback from experts and peers, and establish a valuable network for the future. More information on the seminar and on how to apply can be found on the congress website.

#### 20TH SEPTEMBER

##### WEDNESDAY

- Paper development workshop
- Congress starts late afternoon
- Keynote speaker
- Evening reception

#### 21ST SEPTEMBER

##### THURSDAY

- Keynote speaker
- Paper presentations
- Poster session
- EUPRERA General Assembly
- Gala dinner

#### 22ND SEPTEMBER

##### FRIDAY

- Paper presentation
- EUPRERA Hour (awards)
- EUPRERA 2024 Congress presentation
- Congress ends late afternoon

#### 23RD SEPTEMBER

##### SATURDAY

- Social programme

- We will again offer the **PAPER DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP** (PDW) as an engaged environment to discuss and develop research papers. The PDW is structured as a workshop with a highly interactive format, focused on developing papers towards publication in top academic journals. Selected papers will be discussed with peers as well as with especially invited senior discussants (advanced scholars with very strong expertise in the focus area of the respective papers) who provide feedback based on their experience and with a particular emphasis towards publishing in highly competitive journals. All scholars can apply. In case of high demand, preference is given to full-paper submissions from main authors who are currently aiming for promotion to tenured faculty positions (esp. mid-career researchers).

## IMPORTANT DATES

### DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION:

31 March 2023 (The submission platform will open in March 2023)

### FEEDBACK/DECISION ON ACCEPTANCE OF PAPERS:

28 May 2023

### FULL PROGRAMME RELEASE:

June 2023

### EARLY-BIRD REGISTRATION DEADLINE:

7 August 2023

### SUBMISSION OF FINAL FULL PAPER:

31 August 2023

### REGISTRATION DEADLINE:

15 September 2023



## CONTACT

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[www.euprera.org/congress2023](http://www.euprera.org/congress2023)



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