

POLITICAL COMMUNICATION SECTION of ECREA

Business meeting 21th October 2011, 12.15 – 13.15
Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain

Present:

Katrin Voltmer, Chair (KV)

Jesper Strömbäck, Vice Chair (JS)

Maria Jose Canel, Vice Chair (MJC)

About 40 members of the ECREA Political Communication Section

1. Welcome (KV)

The business meeting was opened by KV, who welcomed all participants to the business meeting.

2. Report on activities of the Section since Hamburg 2010 (KV)

KV described the activities of the Section since the business meeting in Hamburg 2010. The work has focused on four main areas:

- A better system for internal communication. To this end, since the last business meeting a website/blog has been launched, where members and those interested can subscribe to news and updates. The website is run by JS (see also #6 below).
- An update of the Section's Modus Operandi, which has been approved through an internal, e-mail-based process of consultation and by the ECREA Board.
- KV and MJC described the continued work and discussions about the launch of a new journal, tentatively titled "European Journal of Political Communication". At the business meeting in Hamburg a task force was appointed, and this group has convened twice since that business meeting and had several online discussions. Another meeting will be held on October 22, immediately after the conference. No final decisions have been made yet, but KV and MJC reported progress in the discussions.
- One of the main activities has been the planning for and organizing of the mid-term conference at which this business meeting was also held (see #3).

3. Report on the Madrid Conference (MJC)

MJC described the planning for and work with organizing the mid-term conference Comparing Political Communication Across Time and Space. Altogether 93 abstracts were submitted. All went through a process of double blind peer-review. In this review process, four criteria were applied: fit with conference theme, quality of theoretical contribution, quality of empirical contribution and overall quality. Given the large number of submissions, only abstracts that focused on comparative political communication across either space or time were considered.

After the peer review process, 45 abstracts were accepted, yielding an acceptance rate of 48 percent. MJC described great satisfaction on behalf of the leadership of the section for this

great interest in comparative political communication, and how the interest actually was greater than anticipated.

In terms of costs, MJC reported that the costs were mainly covered by conference fees and by administrative help from ACOP (Asociación de Comunicación Política). A special thanks was directed to Mario G Gurrionero at ACOP for all his help and work with organizing the conference, as well as to the several student assistants helping out during the conference. KV also extended a great appreciation from the section to MJC for all her work with organizing the conference.

Overall, the conference was perceived and described as a major success for the section.

4. Future Events (KV)

The main future event discussed was the next general ECREA conference, which will be held in Istanbul on October 24-27, 2012. The call for abstracts will be open between December 1, 2011 and February 28, 2012. The Political Communication Section will have 9 time slots x 90 minutes, providing that at least 75 abstracts are submitted. KV will function as the program chair.

5. Revised Introduction and Mission Statement of the PC Section (KV)

KV described the need for an update and facelift of the Introduction to the Section on the ECREA webpage as well as of the Mission Statement of the Section (<http://www.ecrea.eu/divisions/section/id/12>). Proposals for the revised versions were distributed, and participants were given the opportunity to read through them. A lively and productive discussion followed and resulted in some changes of the draft documents. After KV reminded the audience that only members of the Section are entitled to vote, final versions of both the Introduction and the Mission Statement were approved and will be forwarded to the ECREA Board for final approval.

6. Section Website (JS)

One recurrent issue on previous business meeting has been a lack of a good system for internal communication. During the year since the business meeting in Hamburg, the section thus decided to launch a website/blog. This has been the responsibility of JS, who built and manages the website/blog. JS described the intention to include more topical information, e.g. calls for papers and chapters, new publications, and other news that might be of interest to the membership, on the website/blog. He also reminded section members that it is possible to subscribe to news and updates on the website, which will then function as a newsletter.

At present, JS described two challenges. The first challenge is to get more members to discover and subscribe to updates and news on the website. The second challenge is to get more members to submit information whenever there is a new call for paper, or new publications, or other new information that might be of interest to the membership. Thus far all information that has been provided by members has been published at the website/blog.

The business meeting concluded by encouraging more members to visit and subscribe to the website, and to submit information about upcoming conferences, new publications, etc. The possibilities of cross-linking with Political Communication Sections of ICA and APSA will also be explored.

7. What's Next: Open Discussion

KV and MJC raised the question as to whether it might be an idea to publish a book coming out of the conference, focusing on comparing political communication across time and space. This issue was widely discussed, and many expressed support for the idea. The main conclusion was however that it may be premature to decide this issue at the business meeting.

Thus, it was decided that a questionnaire should be sent out to all participants at the conference, asking them whether they already have publication plans for their papers or whether they would be interested in participating in an edited volume coming out of the conference. Once the interest for contributing to an edited volume has been explored, a decision on how to proceed will be taken by the Section leadership.

8. AOB

KV thanked all participants at the business meeting, and again thanked MJC, Mario G Gurrionero, and all others involved in organizing the conference for their great work.