

THE CEECOM 2021 CONFERENCE

The 13th Central and Eastern European Communication and Media Conference was held on the 22nd–23rd of October 2021. The Institute of Journalism, Media and Social Communication of the Jagiellonian University, one of the leading institutions in Poland dedicated to media and communication research, was the main organizer of this two day event. The Jagiellonian University due to COVID-19 pandemic conditions, instead of hosting the event locally, provided the necessary infrastructure to discuss the most important topics in the sphere of communication and media with scholars from around the world. The online format also enabled researchers from continents other than Europe to participate in an event focusing on the CEE region. The conference would not have been possible without the engagement of many important institutions: together with the Jagiellonian University, the Polish Communication Association as well as the Central and Eastern European Network of the European Communication Research and Education Association (ECEA) co-organized the event. The conference took place under the auspices of the Rector of the Jagiellonian University, the Austrian Consulate General in Kraków, the Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany in Kraków, and the Consulate General of the Slovak Republic in Kraków. It was opened by the dean of the Faculty of Management and Social Communication of the Jagiellonian University, Prof. Ewa Bogacz-Wojtanowska, the representative of the Polish Communication Association's authorities, Prof. Michał Drożdż and the member of the diplomatic corps – diplomatic missions of Central and Eastern European countries based in Krakow: Consul of the Slovak Republic in Krakow Mr. Slavomir Nagy. The opening part was followed by a presentation of the theme of the conference which was the New Communication Revolution and a presentation of a short movie about the history of CEECOM. The making of this film would not have been possible without cooperation with distinguished academics closely related to CEECOM and its previous events and projects: Prof. Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska, Prof. Epp Lauk, Prof. Zrinjka Perusko, Prof. Irena Reifova and Prof. Lilia Raycheva, to whom the organizers of CEECOM 2021 would especially like to thank.

In the first part of the conference the keynote speakers presented their research. The key lectures were given by four esteemed professors in media and communication studies. Prof. Alina Bârgăoanu (National University of Political Studies and Public Administration in Bucharest), a Romanian communication scholar with a strong interest in digital transformation, strategic communication and

fighting disinformation, talked about global narratives and their local adaptations presenting the case of pandemic conspiracy narratives crossing the public spaces in Central and Eastern Europe. The next keynote speaker was Michael Brüggemann, Professor of Communication Research, Climate and Science Communication at the University of Hamburg and Principal Investigator at the interdisciplinary cluster of excellence Climate, Climatic Change, and Society. His presentation was on discursive polarization in the debate on climate change. The third keynote speaker was Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska, Professor of communication and chair of the Department of Communication and Journalism at the University of Wrocław. She elaborated on media systems in Central and Eastern Europe (Three Decades After Communism: Closer or Further to Democracy?). Zrinjka Peruško, Professor of media sociology and mass communication at the University of Zagreb and a comparative communication scholar, engaged in the analysis of media systems, with a historical perspective and a focus on the CEE, offered a lecture on the Communication Critical Juncture: The Shape of “Hybrid” Media Systems in CEE.

The second plenary part of the conference was dedicated to the CEE Network. This special panel titled “CEE Network – its origin, development and future” and chaired by Prof. Lenka Vochocova (Vice-chair of the CEE Network) gathered scholars who have been engaged with the CEE Network for many years. The panel offered perspectives of a founding member of the network, a view of a western scholar focusing on the region and experiences and reflections of young members of the academia in the CEE region. The ECREA President, Prof. John Downey and ECREA Vice-President, Prof. Irena Reifova gave interesting presentations and contributed to the panel discussion. Within this panel a special survey about the professional identity of young scholars of media and communication from Central and Eastern Europe was presented by Young Scholars Representative Prof. Dina Vozab. The aim of this survey was to analyze the opportunities and obstacles of young CEE scholars in developing their careers. Another aim of the survey was to provide information to the ECREA CEE Network about the type of support it should provide to scholars from the region.

The special panel of the Polish Communication Association (“Social communication and media studies in Poland – heritage and future”) was devoted to the presentation of Polish achievements in the field of social communication and media. The panel gathered initiators and co-founders of the Polish Communication Association (PCA), of university journalism studies, and of new discipline of social communication and media studies, as well as a representative of the young generation of media researchers. It presented the genesis of these initiatives and scientific and didactic undertakings, the achievements of the past, as well as the perspective of the development of media and new communication technologies as a research challenge. It featured presentations of Prof. Iwona Hofman (President of the PCA) who chaired this panel, Prof. Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska (University of Wrocław), Prof. Teresa Sasińska-Klas (Jagiellonian University), Prof. Jadwiga Woźniak-Kasperek (University of Warsaw), Prof. Stanisław Jędrzejewski (Kozminski University) and Dr. habil. Katarzyna Kopecka-Piech (Maria Curie-Skłodowska University).

The third part of the first day of the conference was intended for discussions related to the scientific journals in the CEE region. The *Central European Journal of Communication* (CEJC)'s panel chaired by Prof. Michał Głowacki (Editor-in-chief of the CEJC) was titled "Scholarly Journals in Central and Eastern Europe: Collaborative Practices to Support Knowledge Exchange". The goal of this panel was to discuss the critical role of advanced and collaboration-oriented editorial practices, to support adapting to new advanced media industries (high technologies, creative clusters, digital culture, and so on) alongside more agile and informal forms of the knowledge exchange (pitching sessions, summer camps, the Living Labs, after-work culture). The panelists – CEE journals editors (Viktorija Car / *Medijske Studije*, Croatia; Márton Demeter / *KOME – An International Journal of Pure Communication Inquiry*, Hungary; Anna Gladkova / *The World of Media*, Russia; Rafał Kuś / *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze*, Poland; Elena Negrea-Busuic / *The Romanian Journal of Communication and Public Relations*, Romania; Sergei Samoilenko / Communication Association of Eurasian Researchers, CAER; and Agnieszka Stępińska / *Central European Journal of Communication*) reflected on the effects of the pandemic and understanding of scholarly collaboration, as opposed to competition. The discussion ended with practical recommendations to strengthen CEE research communities. This part was also supplemented by a panel entitled "Scientific journals for young scholars in Central and Eastern Europe: experience and challenges" organized by the *Com.press* journal. *Com.press* editors under the leadership of Dominika Popielec (Kazimierz Wielki University) presented the journal's history and the journal's online conferences, which were among the first to be held in this format during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the first *Com.press* monograph on social communication during the pandemic. Another journal which was introduced was the *Media and Language* journal. This first Bulgarian journal dedicated to the field of media linguistics was presented by Dr. Yordan Karapenchev from the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

The second day of the conference was also full of fascinating presentations and great discussions. The first session began with a roundtable discussion with representatives of Polish media. The panel entitled "Broad-, narrow – and egocasting. How does mediamorphosis affect the work of journalists?" was chaired by Sławomir Doległo. In the discussion took part: Beata Biel – News Digital Premium Development Unit Director in TVN24 – a 24-hour commercial news channel; Adam Czerwiński – Music Director in the largest Polish commercial radio station RMF FM; Patryk Stanik – Communication and Social Media Manger in *Tygodnik Powszechny* – a weekly magazine published in Cracow since 1945; Daniel Rząsa – Editor in Chief in *Gospodarka300* – a news service dedicated to economics; and Kamil Turecki – International Affairs Journalist in the largest Polish web portal Onet.pl. The invited journalist shared both technical and personal views on the new circumstances of their professional activities. They emphasized the role of institutional media coverage in the contemporary public sphere facing post-truth, disinformation, and various unethical communication practices. They indicated current challenges for quality journalism presenting actual cases from their newsrooms. They considered

the position of journalist autonomy, new ways of gathering and interpreting data, providing attractive and convincing solutions which may sustain the loyalty of viewers and readers. Last but not least, they presented how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the functioning of editorial office. Interpreting the theme of CEECOM conference they claimed to call the changes in the media landscape rather by the word “evolution” and highlighted how important media literacy is for the development of civil society.

The academic reflection on the new communication revolution was deepened within the many different panels on the second day. They were divided into four parallel thematic sessions focusing on international relations and global communication, political communication in CEE, cultural issues, and COVID-19 conditions. The topics included contemporary trends in media and communication, challenges for democracy, media regulation, misinformation and disinformation, communication technologies and the condition of today’s journalism. They were mainly devoted to the Central and Eastern European region. The conference debates accentuated the changes in the public sphere, international relations, political and cultural expression, as well as dynamic development of interactive media, convergency, participatory culture, and related new practices of media users. The conference was closed by Małgorzata Winiarska-Brodowska, Chair of the ECREA’s Central and Eastern European Network and Chair of the CEECOM 2021 Organizing Committee, with the announcement of the next CEECOM, the 14th Central and Eastern European Communication and Media Conference, which will take place in 2023 and will be organized by the Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic.

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