

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF DENMARK



COMMUNICATION POLICY 2007-2009



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1. MISSION AND GLOBALISATION

"In a changing world, the mission of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is to work for Denmark's interests and values in relation to the surrounding world in a manner that furthers the freedom, security and welfare of Danes in a more peaceful and just world, with development and economic growth for all."

MISSION OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

"In the age of globalisation, it is the objective of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to contribute decisively to furthering Danish interests on the international scene and to enabling Denmark to pursue a policy internationally that will help foster broad and committing international cooperation regarding the challenges presented by globalisation."

GLOBALISATION ANALYSIS OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Both internal and external communication are key and strategic instruments in the effort to fulfil our mission.

Communication is at the same time an important means at a time when globalisation is changing the conditions for interaction between Denmark and other countries and cultures. When the nature of our international relations changes, especially public diplomacy becomes an increasingly important work method. Through public diplomacy we can enter into dialogue with the general public in other countries. We can disseminate, refute or put a different complexion on information about Denmark, which is of great significance in the pursuit of Danish interests.

It is only through proactive communication that we can effectively perform as the Foreign Service of all Denmark.

Whenever we perform a task, we in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs must consider the communications aspects of the matter. Therefore, the following principle is altogether crucial to us:

Communication is an integral part
of our performance of tasks.

The communications policy for the years 2007–2009 is based on our mission and the globalisation analysis, and it provides the framework for our communication effort. Every year, a communication plan is drawn up, which describes the most important communication activities of the year.



2. SIX RULES OF CONDUCT

Our communication activity is based on six rules of conduct:

We are proactive

When we have messages and information that we wish to call attention to, we must be proactive and capable of setting an agenda.

We are open and transparent

The surrounding world rightly expects our communication to be open, transparent and service-minded. We will endeavour, to maximum extent, to fulfil our aim of being open and transparent when people want to know what we know, what we are working on, and what will be the outcome of it.

In some situations there are limits to how open and transparent we can and are allowed to be. The reason is, especially, regard for international, national and individual security, for privacy and for commercial interests.

We are swift

Speed and timing are altogether decisive for our communication. This applies when we respond to external enquiries, when we wish to set the agenda, and when we provide knowledge and information.

We are trustworthy

When we communicate, a high degree of credibility means everything. We can communicate swiftly and we can communicate clearly, but we do not compromise on credibility.

We engage in dialogue

When we communicate, we must be able to speak as well as listen. We learn more and become better at getting our message across when we engage in dialogue with our various target groups.

We are easy to understand

When we communicate we must make sure that the recipient understands the message. As senders, it is our responsibility that the message is understandable even if it may be a question of complicated matters.

3. FOCUS ON PROACTIVE COMMUNICATION

In the period 2007–2009, we are to prioritise in particular our first rule of conduct "We are proactive". This applies to both internal and external communication.

Through more proactive communication, we will be able to relate to challenges before – or as soon as – they arise.

Through more proactive communication, we will be able to set agendas that are important and relevant to Denmark.

We do not have the resources to be at the cutting edge everywhere and all the time. Therefore, we have to prioritise on an ongoing basis where we are to make a special effort.

Proactive effort through public diplomacy

Traditional diplomacy is a matter of pursuing Danish interests vis-à-vis another state. Public diplomacy, by contrast, is a matter of our communication and dialogue with the general public and with non-state actors in other countries.

In some situations, the general public and non-state actors will be the direct target groups of our communication. In other situations, they will function as a communication channel for us to reach state actors.

Through proactive public diplomacy, we are to broaden knowledge of Denmark, and we are to promote Danish interests by transmitting, refuting or putting a different complexion on information about Denmark.

4. EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION INTERNATIONALLY

Challenges

Globalisation challenges nation states' traditional role as primary international actors. In the new world, we have to act much more rapidly, and we have to take into consideration that we will often meet our partners and opponents in other places than at the negotiating table.

In connection with the challenges presented by globalisation, communication and public diplomacy must contribute to promoting Danish interests.

Network-based communication is an important element when we are to communicate with informal and non-state groups and organisations throughout the world.

Strategic goals

Four strategic goals have been established for external communication internationally:

1. We are to promote Danish interests and views through communication.
2. We are to increase international knowledge about Denmark and our values.
3. We are to engage in constructive dialogue with key actors and bring knowledge back to Denmark.
4. We are to actively provide service and information in connection with international crises.

Target groups

We must always communicate our message to the recipient in a targeted manner, irrespective of whether communication takes place on the recipient's or our initiative. The main target groups for external communication internationally are:

- » The media
- » Politicians and opinion leaders
- » Cooperators
- » Enterprises and investors
- » Citizens

Means

In the specific situation, we must be able to think strategically regarding the choice of target group, messages and channels in order to achieve optimum results. The following initiatives are particularly important when we communicate internationally, and when our ambition is proactive communication:

Prioritised regions and themes

We cannot and we are not to communicate the same amount of information to everybody and the same amount about everything. Therefore, we must select regions and themes that we wish to focus on in particular when communicating, and we have to provide information on these for rather long periods as it takes time if communication is to make a difference.

Close interaction with international media

Both Missions and the home service are in need of closer interaction with international media. This is to be achieved, among other things, by developing the Embassies' media contact, media coaching, and by improving the way in which international journalists are serviced in Copenhagen through International Press Centre.

Network relations

Part of public diplomacy is a matter of establishing networks with organisations, the media, enterprises, religious communities, etc. Dialogue, network relations and network communication must be strengthened in particular in the years ahead. Networks can be established by holding more meetings and maintaining closer contact with persons from organisations, the business community and religious communities. We can organise seminars, invite people to come and visit us, give lectures, set up discussion fora and establish networks – including electronic networks.

Web communication

Web communication is an important medium – especially the individual Missions' websites play a key role. For international target groups we must provide, among other things, targeted news services and video press releases.





Promoting Denmark

Through information and cultural activities we must contribute to presenting Denmark as an attractive destination for investment, labour, researchers, students, tourists and conferences.

Emergency communication

Critical situations may arise from one second to another or over a period of time. They may be caused by wars and conflicts, natural disasters, terrorist attacks, political changes or large-scale media matters. Many of these situations will resemble crises, which means that communication efforts will be altogether crucial. Therefore, our ability to handle emergency communication must be further developed and strengthened.



5. EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION IN DENMARK

Challenges

Today, Danish citizens and enterprises are living in a world that is characterised by an increasing number of international relations. Some find it difficult to handle, and they feel uncertain about it; others see it as exciting and challenging. But everybody is confronted with demands for knowledge and insight.

We must render assistance to Denmark and Danes in the globalisation process. We must tell about opportunities and threats and about the conditions for political, economic and cultural globalisation. We must communicate how we in Denmark approach these areas in an international context. And we must do it in such a way that the communication is relevant and of current interest.

Strategic goals

Four strategic goals have been established for external communication in Denmark:

1. We are to proactively communicate knowledge about international matters in selected areas.
2. We are to make knowledge about international matters available to those who request it.
3. We are to communicate knowledge about our effort abroad and about Danish foreign and development policy.
4. We are to actively provide service and information in connection with international crises.

Target groups

We must always communicate our message to the recipient in a targeted manner, irrespective of whether communication takes place on the recipient's or our initiative. The main target groups for our external communication in Denmark are:

- » The media
- » Politicians and opinion leaders
- » Cooperators
- » The education sector
- » Enterprises
- » Citizens

Means

In the specific situation, we must be able to think strategically regarding the choice of target group, messages and channels in order to achieve optimum results. The following initiatives are particularly important when we communicate nationally, and when our ambition is proactive communication:

Prioritised themes

We cannot and we are not to communicate the same amount of information about everything. Therefore, we must select themes that we wish to focus on in particular when communicating, and we have to provide information on these for rather long periods as it takes time and persistence if communication is to make a difference.

Close interaction with the media

The media, especially TV, are a key channel for communicating our messages. We must, among other things, establish close interaction with the media by establishing and maintaining contact with journalists and editors through informal meetings and technical briefings. We must bear in mind all the time that we have much knowledge that may be of great value to the media. Relevant staff members are to provide instruction in media relations.

Targeted communication with selected stakeholders.

We have many stakeholders with special needs and interests. We are to communicate directly and in a targeted manner with these stakeholders through networks, newsletters, information meetings, special websites, etc.





Networks – constructive dialogue with cooperators

We need a close dialogue with our immediate cooperators in other ministries, organisations, enterprises and in the research world.

Communication for children and young people

Through teaching aids and materials, we are to impart important knowledge about Danish efforts abroad and Danish foreign and development policy.

Web communication and new media

Key information is to be made available through the website. We must also, among other things, provide targeted news services, blogs, chat rooms, video press releases, podcast from press conferences, and SMS services.

Active use of the Ministry's experts

In this Ministry, we have a great many experts in international relations – especially in the service abroad.

Very often, they have a unique knowledge of a country or of a problem of interest in the current situation.

These experts must be mobilised to a greater extent, so that many more may benefit from our knowledge.

Emergency communication

Communication is a key tool in the handling of a crisis.

In emergency situations it is crucial that we are visible and strongly present – especially in the media – in order to inform, explain, clarify and advise. Therefore, our ability to handle emergency communication must be further developed and strengthened.



6. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Challenges

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is a large and complex organisation, and our Missions throughout the world employ staff members with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Internal communication is meant to ensure that everybody is aware of key priorities and important common decisions. Internal communication is to support the development of staff competencies. Through targeted communication, we are to ensure dialogue, a high degree of knowledge sharing and high professional standards.

We must all be able to adjust swiftly and on an ongoing basis to new demands and conditions, be they internal administrative and organisational matters or new tasks in the wake of globalisation. Internal communication is, therefore, to contribute to facilitating the changes that will naturally come.

Strategic goals

Five strategic goals have been established for internal communication:

1. We are to bring the home service and the service abroad more closely together.
2. We are to foster a common sense of identity and corporate thinking.
3. We are to enhance professional standards through knowledge sharing.
4. We are to facilitate processes of change.
5. We are to communicate the administrative and policy framework for the work of the Ministry.

Target groups

Internally, we must always communicate our message to the recipient in a targeted manner, and we must always adjust the communication to the target group. With regard to internal communication, there is a difference between whether the message is targeted at all groups or special groups. The targets groups may be:

- » All staff members in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- » Special personnel groups
- » Special units – departments or Missions
- » Groups that speak Danish or groups that speak other languages
- » The individual member of staff

Means

Like the external communication effort, internal communication activities are based on assessments of which strategies and channels we are to apply in a given situation for the purpose of sharing knowledge and linking together the organisation. The following initiatives are particularly important when our ambition is proactive, internal communication based on dialogue:

Management communication

Senior management is a key actor with regard to internal communication. It is in particular the responsibility of senior management to communicate why we act as we do and where we are headed.

Similarly, the group of heads of unit is an important internal communication channel. It is in particular the responsibility of the heads of unit to translate what the implications of new messages are for the individual and for the unit. This group also plays an important role in presenting knowledge and views to senior management. The heads of unit are to have tools that enable them to shoulder the communication tasks in a constructive manner.

Dialogue

Communication is to ensure good internal dialogue regarding the Ministry's work methods, tasks, etc.





Intranet and Internet

The Intranet is the key channel for communicating and sharing all types of professional knowledge. Therefore, the Intranet must be developed on an ongoing basis, among other things by increased use of streaming of meetings and virtual working groups as well as targeted information through enhanced personalisation. Similarly, the Internet is an important tool in terms of knowledge sharing with external actors and cooperators. It is, consequently, also of great importance to internal knowledge sharing.

E-mail

E-mails are a swift means of internal communication and knowledge sharing. However, there is a risk that people send too much e-mail, and it is therefore important that everybody follows good e-mail practice.

Clear communication

In this Ministry, we have access to large volumes of information. Good internal communication implies that the information is processed and prioritised, and that key messages are communicated briefly and rapidly.

Meetings

Neither electronic nor printed media can replace the communication and dialogue that can be achieved at informal as well as formal meetings. Therefore, it is important to insist on relevant meetings as an active mode of communication.

Change communication

In connection with changes in the Ministry, we are to make proactive and systematic use of the methods and experience that exist within change communication. This means in particular focus on the communication tasks of the group of heads of unit in connection with changes.

Staff on the lookout for knowledge and information

A good communication culture implies that all members of staff feel personally responsible for seeking knowledge and information.

Internal communication in emergency situations

In connection with external crises, internal communication must be able to rapidly clarify the situation and provide an overview of who is doing what. Some staff members will need that knowledge in order to perform their emergency tasks in the best possible way. Others may not be directly involved, but need to know how the Ministry is handling the crisis.

7. PRIORITISED THEMES AND METHODS

Prioritised themes

We are living in a world of rapid change, and we must therefore always be capable of adjusting our effort to new situations and new demands.

Usually, it takes a long time to impact strategically and consciously on knowledge, attitudes and behaviour. It is, therefore, crucial that we are able to prioritise themes which we in particular wish to focus on and which we in particular wish to use resources to communicate.

Consequently, we must endeavour to maintain focus on the same themes for rather long periods of time. Even if we think that we have provided information on a theme several times, it rarely means that the messages have been noticed and taken on board by the target group.

In the annual communication plan, we will therefore indicate some themes that are to be highly prioritised in the communication activities.

Knowledge sharing

It is an important rule of communication that we, to the greatest extent possible, should draw on staff members involved at home and abroad.

It means that all resources and interests will be involved, and it means that internal communication and knowledge sharing will play a decisive role regarding the results of external communication.

Three important methods

Our communication must always be adjusted to the specific situation in which the choice of communication method will depend on the strategy, the target group, the financial situation and other important factors.

Looking at our challenges in the forthcoming years, there are three methods we should prioritise in particular and which we must become particularly good at mastering. The first two methods relate to external communication. The third is a matter of internal communication.

1. Media relations

We will give high priority to proactive communication in the period 2007-2009, which requires major prioritisation of the work on national and international media contact. With strengthened media contact, the Ministry will become more proactive and better able to set the media agenda.

2. Network communication and network relations

In the period 2007-2009, we are to strengthen network communication and network relations in particular. We will do that, among other things, in relation to actors in civil society in the countries where we are represented.

3. Change communication

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is dynamic and must adjust to a number of changes on an ongoing basis. It is of great importance to our effectiveness and change capacity that we internally use communication to support changes. The nature of change may vary; it may for example be a matter of new organisational forms, new strategies or new conditions. In every situation, communication must lend strategic support to change.

Competence development

In the period 2007-2009, we will ensure competence development to a considerable extent within the three prioritised areas. At the same time, we will ensure the development of general communication competencies.



8. RESPONSIBILITY AND ORGANISATION

The roles of management and the heads of unit

It is primarily the responsibility of senior management and the heads of unit that the organisation focuses on external and internal communication. They must ensure that we implement the communication policy, and that the planned communication activities are carried out. The ability to work on communication in a practical and strategic manner is a competence that is expected of all managers.

The roles of staff members

In their day-to-day case handling, individual staff members are to assess the communication potential of the individual case – both reactively and proactively.

In every unit, a staff member has been appointed as particularly responsible for communication. The person in charge of communication will insist on the unit's obligation to assess the communication potential of each case. He or she is also the expert who knows our strategies, guidelines and demands in the area of communication.

The roles of staff functions

Day-to-day external communication is coordinated in close cooperation between the Ministerial and Executive Secretariats, the Communication Unit and relevant units.

Overall responsibility for the coordination of internal communication rests with the Communication Unit.

Furthermore, the Communication Unit has an advisory and sparring partner function in the daily communication work, like the Ministerial Secretariats in matters that involve or may involve the political level.

With regard to both internal and external communication, it is the responsibility of the Communication Unit to draw up the three-year communication policy, the annual communication plan, the annual reviews and the three-year evaluation.

Press contact

Deadlines are altogether crucial to news communication. All press enquiries must, therefore, be given high priority and must be answered as soon as possible. In important matters, we set up expert press contact points that are able to respond to enquiries made by Danish and international journalists.

Meetings about communication

Communication is an integral part of the performance of tasks in the Ministry, and we will therefore consider and discuss communication in many contexts. We wish in particular to draw attention to the following:

- » At management meetings, communication is part of the discussions.
- » All units – at home and abroad – discuss the communication challenges on a regular basis.
- » All staff members in charge of communication in the home service meet on a regular basis to discuss the activities of the year as well as current challenges. Senior management is involved and briefed when relevant.

Policy, activity plan, target and performance management and strategies

Communication policy

Every third year, a new communication policy for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is drawn up. Next time will be in the autumn of 2009.

Communication activity plan

All units draw up an annual communication activity plan, which comprises the unit's activities within communication, public diplomacy, measures to raise the profile of Denmark and cultural exchange.

Target and performance management

The MRS (target and performance management) announcement will comprise guidelines for the way in which the units are to document their communication activities. Against the background of the communication activity plan for the following year, all units are required to incorporate their most important communication activities into the MRS contract.

Communication strategies

Communication strategies for special units, fields or events are drawn up when relevant.



9. RECOGNITION

Communication is at times a difficult discipline, and everything does not always turn out the way it was planned, not for managers and not for staff members.

We accept that!

Active and well-organised communication activities are noticed and recognised, and communication performance is included in the ongoing appraisal of staff and heads and, consequently, in the award of allowances.

10. EVALUATION

The communication performance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is monitored and evaluated at the following levels – cf. the evaluation concept for communication in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

- » The units report on target attainment in connection with the annual MRS reporting.
- » Every year, a review is drawn up on the internal and external communication performance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- » When it is relevant and feasible, an evaluation is carried out of the effect of a specific communication initiative or the effect of and satisfaction with an important communication channel.
- » Every third year, an evaluation is carried out of how we implement our rules of conduct and the strategic goals set up for external and internal communication. The evaluation will focus on selected target groups.

11. MORE KNOWLEDGE

The communication policy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs must be seen in the context of the following documents:

- » The annual communication plan
- » The annual activity plans of the units
- » Manual on public diplomacy
- » Guidelines for press contact
- » Guidelines for emergency communication
- » Guidelines for reviews and evaluation