CONCISE

Communication role on perception and beliefs of EU Citizens about Science

Hurdles and incentives to engage in public science communication

Carolina Llorente and Gema Revuelta

upf. Universitat Pompeu Fabra Barcelona

SCS Science, Communication and Society Studies Centre

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Objectives

Obj 2. To review the existing structural obstacles that scientists and other R&I stakeholders, including policymakers, currently face when attempting to communicate science successfully.

- To identify the barriers and incentives:
  - For scientists communicating science
  - For professional science communicators

Methodology

26 semi-structured interviews

Science communication Researchers

15 countries

1 workshop

18 science communication practitioners (journalists, communicatrion officers etc.)

15 countries

INCENTIVES for Scientists communicating science

- As a **social commitment**
  - To return knowledge to society by financing science
  - To improve democracy and produce more responsible science
  - To create awareness, improve scientific culture and promote scientific vocations
- As a strategy to obtain **personal or professional benefits**
  - To attract funding and collaboration
  - To persuade stakeholders
  - To enjoy themselves
- As **part of the research work**

BARRIERS for Scientists communicating science

- A lack of (formal and informal) **recognition**.
- A lack of **time** due to the excessive red tape and the competitiveness of science itself.
- A lack of **specialised training** in science communication.
- A fear of being **misunderstood** by the public or by journalists.
- A fear of being **discredited by peers**.

DERIVED RECOMMENDATIONS for policy makers

- Including the requirement of **science communication activities in the calls for proposals** of scientific programmes.
- Launching **dedicated calls for funding** science communication activities.
- Promoting science communication as **part of scientists' jobs**.
- Including formally science communication activities as a **criterion of value** in the evaluation of scientists' careers (i.e., in Tenure Track).
- Providing **'rewards'** for researchers participating in science communication activities.

DERIVED RECOMMENDATIONS for practitioners

- Offering adequate **science communication training** to scientists, including specific workshops for PhD students, postdocs or senior researchers.
- Including **science communication subjects** in undergraduate science degree programmes as part of the necessary skillset.
- Considering participation in science communication activities as **an additional indicator of scientific productivity and excellence** during the recruitment and career of research staff at universities, research centres, etc.
- Offering scientists **institutional support** (financial, technical and human resources) for carrying out their science communication activities.

INCENTIVES for professional communicators

- New **specialized jobs**
- **Alternative career** for people with scientific training
- **Personal motivation**
- In response to a **social responsibility**:
  - Fight hoaxes and misinformation
  - Increase public awareness
  - Help people make informed decisions
  - Facilitate science-society dialogues

BARRIERS for professional communicators

- Lack of **resources** (mainly economical)
- Need for **specialized knowledge**
  - Scientific knowledge
  - Social relevance of science
  - Evaluation of scientific communication activities
- Lack of **support** from scientific institutions, the media and governments
- **Temporary jobs** and disconnected from the institutional strategy

DERIVED RECOMMENDATIONS for policy makers

- Earmarking **specific resources** for promoting specialisation in science communication.
- Establishing **awards or recognitions** to reward science communication actions and professional science communicators.
- Promoting the **stability** of these new science communication jobs in public science institutions.
- Promoting science communication as an **alternative career path** for people with scientific training, with a proper structure and rewards (in terms of wages and evaluation) system.

DERIVED RECOMMENDATIONS for practitioners

- Offering communicators **specialised training** in science, like, for example, subjects included in undergraduate or postgraduate degree programmes.
- Including science communication in **institutional strategies**.
- Creating **institutional positions** relating to science communication in research institutions.
- Promoting **specialised science communication** among legacy and digital mass media organisations.

Thank you for your attention

Carolina Llorente and Gema Revuelta

GA No 824537

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