

# MUSEUM NEWS

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-  CIDEM  
University of Rome - it
-  EUROINNOVANET - it
-  Regional History Museum  
"Academician Jordan Ivanov",  
town of Kjustendil - bg
-  Provincia di Ragusa - it
-  Museo Internazionale  
delle Ceramiche in Faenza - it
-  University Lucian Blaga  
Sibiu - ro
-  National Brukenthal Museum  
- ro
-  Oake Associates - uk



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## MUSEUM COMMUNICATION IN EUROPE: A TRANSNATIONAL OVERVIEW FROM THE "MUSEUM COMMUNICATOR" PROJECT

### The research carried by the "museum communicator" project

In the frame of the "Museum Communicator" project (Mu.Com.), a desk analysis has been carried out recently; it has been focused on the state of the art of museum communication throughout Europe and, in particular, in the countries directly involved in the Mu.Com. project. All the researches, available in the section "products" of the project website <http://www.museumcommunicator.eu/en/products.asp>, have been focused also on the current regulation about the professional standards for figures similar to the "Museum Communicator" as well as on the related training offer available in Italy, Bulgaria, Romania and United Kingdom. The transnational overview shows, as expected, several differences but also some analogies among the countries taken into consideration. Such differences act inside a general situation being different in history, dynamics and rhythms of evolution of the museums role in comparison to the cultural offer in each country; therefore, they can be regarded as a solid basis for the introduction of the new professional profile of the "Museum Communicator" and for the application of the related training path.



***Peer review meeting in Bulgaria, at the "Jordan Ivanov" Museum in Kyustendil. During the meeting, that took place in all the countries involved in the project, the outcomes of the national and international researches devoted to "Museum Communication" in Europe have been introduced.***

Inside the four countries taken into consideration, both the public and the private museums, especially those of medium and middle dimensions, seem to suffer from the impact of the unfavorable economic conjuncture in the same moment in which -also in a problematic way- a new function of the museum is being pointed out: close to traditional roles such as the guardianship, the maintenance and the exposure of the objects, more and more important is becoming the concept of the museum as a public space, a place for the expression of the identity and for the cultural fruition, an attractive pole for a large audience. In synthesis, a process is taking place to overcome the dichotomy among maintenance on one hand, and exploitation of the patrimonies on the other hand. This is a crucial passage: if the new paradigm aims at a general development of the resources, including the cultural ones so as to create virtuous circuits among different actors, all the cultural institutions are facing today new chances and new challenges. As anticipated in the introduction, museums can also take part (somehow, they have to) not only in the dynamics of the local development, but also in order to answer to the new meanings of their own mission. This implicates a strategic communication and relational abilities as well as connections to the interests and the potentials of the territory with the aim of a common project of socio-cultural and economic development. It has to do with sparking a gradual and correct process in which the museums can practice new competences and cover new roles. But for doing that, it needs that strategies and competences are made available.

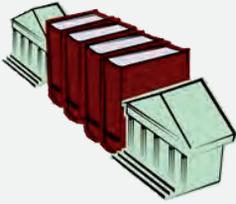
The transnational survey has highlighted that there is an agreement and a great interest on the new mission of museums, but also there is still a difficulty in realising it practically. Even if there are some differences among the countries involved in the project, it is possible to state that this is a shared perception. Even if it is possible to find, sometimes, good practices and relevant intuitions.

The didactics-educational key-action is, for instance, a tool that can enrich the mission of the institution, widen the offer to a diversified public, constitute a window for the same institution. Available in all the countries taken into consideration in particular as didactics for the schools and the students, it shows more innovative tendencies in Italy (where it is available a stable activity of "laboratories" with informal education for everybody) as well as in the United Kingdom, where similar experiences are taking place since 10-15 years. With analogous finalities of attraction and dialogue with the outside there are, then, the initiative-events (exhibitions, particular appointments such as recurrences, parties, promotional days etc. that are mentioned in the reports from Bulgaria, Italy and Romania):

they can be regarded as attractive moments for the public and as a huge exploitation of the external communication – with media of any type -, for contacts with the sponsors and for the fundraising in general. Nevertheless, they don't seem to be enough, by themselves, to affirm a major role of the museum inside the socio-economic and cultural dynamics neither they seem to succeed in guaranteeing stability in the increasing of the visitors number.

Concerning the relationship with the territory and with other actors, two tendency experiences are interesting. The first one, realised in the United Kingdom, crosses the activity of cultural promotion and the one devoted to the enlargement of the museum users with the educational activity: it consists of creating networks with the communities, the administrators and not for profit subjects to facilitate the social knowledge of the territorial cultural goods by disadvantaged groups (ethnic minorities, elderly people, young people in difficulty etc.) that usually do not use to visit museums. The second experience, realised recently in Italy, concerns the connection between the cultural and the landscape patrimonies with the tourist industry.

The Region Tuscany and, particularly, the Region Puglia are pushing for the creation of networks with the purpose to protect and to sustain the exploitation of local goods, the local cultural identity, and the qualification of a cultural and aware tourism. These two experiences are characterised by taking direct contact with the needs and the expectations of the territory, by the construction of stable and continuous relationships with the other interested subjects. This is aimed at the communities' well-being and the development.



## The regulation about the profile concerned and the related professional figures

The comparative analysis of the laws and regulations and the professional standards related to the professional profiles operating inside the museums of the countries involved in the project has shown some analogies concerning the lack of a figure like the “Museum Communicator” is.

Generally speaking, it is possible to state that the museum professions are rich and multi-faceted in the concerned countries, nevertheless they are also very “traditional”: it has been confirmed the absence of such a figure, gathering and assuming on itself the assignments for the promotion and the exploitation of tourist-cultural products that of course exist, but that are differently available in many profiles similar to our figure.

This chapter will describe the profiles of the museum professionals pointed out in the countries involved in the Mu.Com. project. Some of them have duties being relevant for the “Museum Communicator”.

In **Italy** it is confirmed the primacy of traditional professions, nevertheless a vast range of parallel and similar figures exists, with duties and skills similar to the ones that a “Museum Communicator” should have.

These “border professions”, useful for the construction of the “Museum Communicator” professional standard, are:

- The *Technician for the organisation of touristic-cultural events*, figure in charge for the planning and the development of the events, according to the target groups and to the kind of event to be organised, assuring the right location and the efficacy of the working plan;
- The *Territorial Communicator*, in charge for: taking care of the ideation and the realisation of strategies, tools, materials as well as information and promotional events for the tourist sector; collaborating to the commercial promotion of the touristic product, interacting with the person responsible for the tourist marketing, with the tourist activities planners or with the agents of touristic development, with the representatives of the public and private local bodies, and finally with the press and the media;
- The *Communication Expert for the Cultural Goods*, that belongs to the area of the cultural patrimony fruition. As written in the profession describer, s/he “works as a mediator between the cultural patrimony and the community of the users. The popularisation of the artistic patrimony, meant as educational resource at the service of the society and its development, is a task that asks for the ability to get in touch, in harmonic relationship, the scientific culture with its specialist language and the plurality and difference of the public demand”;
- The *Responsible for the management, the maintenance, the exploitation and the promotion of museums*, that is responsible for the museum management towards the titular administration, the citizens and the organism devoted to the heritage protection;
- The *Technician for the museum educational services*, a profile able to elaborate educational interventions addressed to different kind of beneficiaries, to take care of its contents and to divulge them through specific communicational tools.

Other relevant professionals concerned are the *Museum Educational Responsible*, *The Public Relation Expert*, *the Analyst of the communicational strategy and the texts*.

In **Bulgaria**, it has been pointed out only a figure useful to define the standard of the "Museum Communicator": the *Public Relation Expert*.

This professional takes care of:

- Planning and organising public campaigns and communication strategies;
- Advising managers on the public presentation of their policies, developing programs and good practices and monitoring issues related to press releases;
- Assigning and implementing surveys on public opinion, analysing the outcomes and planning promotional campaigns and public relations campaigns;
- Organising special events, seminars, entertainments, competitions and public activities to publicly promote the favorable image of the organisation;
- Representing the organisation and organising interviews with public media;
- Participating in different social events aiming at promoting museums;
- Evaluating and selecting materials provided by writers, photographers, illustrators and others to achieve publicity for their presentation.

In **Romania**, there are two important regulations related to the museum professions: the COR and the CNFPA.

The "COR" (*Code of occupations in Romania*) has been created on the basis of the International Standard Classification of Occupations – ISCO of the European Union.

It includes the figures of the Museographer, who has the same duties of the Curator, and the Public Relation Expert. The latter is in charge for the planning and the coordination of programmes for the promotion and the valorisation of museum image near the public.

Other profiles included are: *the Marketing Specialist; the Protocol and Ceremonial Specialist; the Spokesman; the Brand Manager*.

The CNFPA (*the National Council for Professional Training of Adults*) is in charge for the elaboration of professional standards at the national level; however, up to now for the museum sector only a few professions have gained professional standards; these are: the *Museographer; the Conservator; the Restorer*.

In the case of the Public Relation Expert, the Marketing specialists, the Spokesmen and the Brand Manager, no occupational standard is currently available.

It has to be stressed that the *Romanian Museographer* has some tasks relevant for the "Museum Communicator" profession, such as offering services to the public; establishing the objectives of the promotion campaigns; establishing the budget of the promotion campaigns; choosing the promotional strategy and techniques; organising promotional campaigns.

Also in the **United Kingdom** some traditional profiles are available. Nothing similar to the "Museum Communicator" seems to exist.

In particular, the professionals available on the national scene are: the *Curator, the Conservator, the Education Worker, the Outreach Worker, the Collections Manager, the Visitor Services, the Registrar, the Documentation Officer, the Exhibitions Officer, the Museum/gallery Assistant, the Photographer, the Fundraiser*.

Of great importance are the duties of the Outreach Worker, who works just with the outside, with the purpose of creating relationships and networks with special groups and local communities, included the ethnic minority groups, older people, disaffected young people and other social groups that do not often visit museums. Among the tasks of that figure there is the setting up of community exhibitions or designing and developing learning materials.

## The training offer available for the “museum communicator” and similar professional figures at a european level



The compared analysis carried out by the partners of the Mu.Com. Project (Italia, Bulgaria, Romania, United Kingdom) on the training offer currently available for the “Museum Communicator” highlighted the lack of specific and high-level training paths, able to provide the necessary competences.

In **Italy** seven Regions have been taken into consideration; inside them, the courses including, in the last year, subjects close to Museum Communication have been selected.

The analysis shows that in the Lazio Region it is available a *Master in Aesthetic and Museum Communication* (CEM) at the University Tor Vergata and at the Iad School as well as a *Master in Exhibition and Museum Events* organised by the I.R.I.S.FOR.M. (Institute of Social Researches and Training Management).

Also the Region Emilia Romagna is offering two Masters, one taking place in Bologna, *Master Museum: creating-planning-communicating exhibition spaces*, and the other one in Ferrara, *Planning and managing Events and Cultural Paths*, organised by the Faculty of Literature and Philosophy of the University.

Tuscany appears to be the most active Region in this field, with a wide training offer distributed on all its territory: the University of Florence is organising a *Master in Communication of the Cultural Patrimony*; the Siena University, with the aid of the Foundation for the Museums of Siena, has organised a training course in *Museum Communication and marketing Promotion* as well as a first level *Master in Protection and Management of Museums and Collections of Naturalistic, and Historical-Scientific Goods*. In Pisa the Normale School, with the contribution of the Pisa Province and the City of Volterra, has activated for the year 2010 a course, *Projecting the Museum*. An international perspective, in cooperation with the European Museum Academy; finally, the Artedata School in Florence has organised a miniMaster in *Museum Setting and Exhibition* and one in *Communication and Marketing for Cultural Goods*, both in e-learning.

Also in Sicily it is available a varied offer: the University of Palermo has activated - for the third year - a first-level *Master in Communication of Museum Cultural Goods and of the Territory*; the Institute for the Archaeological and Monumental Goods of the Catania CNR (National Centre for Research), with the support of the Region Sicily, has activated a high-level professional training in *Museum Didactics and Cultural Communication for Museums while Server*, a certified training centre, has organised in 2011 two courses in Palermo, one for *Museum Didactics Expert* and one devoted to the *Museum Technician*.

In the contrary, Puglia and Campania are the Regions with a less rich offer: the first one is offering a Master in Bari, *New Technologies for the Exploitation of Cultural and Museum Patrimony* organised by the Universus-Csei, a University consortium for the training and the innovation, while the University Federico the 2nd (Faculty of Literature and Philosophy) of Naples has activated a first-level *Master in Multimedia Environments for Cultural Goods*.

In Abruzzo the telematic University Leonardo da Vinci in Chieti is organising a first-level *Master for Technician of Museum fruition* articulated into four professional sectors, a professional training course for *Auxiliary for Museum Fruition*, conceived just with the aim of answering to the demands of museums, but in which it is missing any specific subject on Museum Communication.

In conclusion, the Emilia-Romagna Region is proposing a distance *Master in Projection and Management of Events and Cultural Paths*, promoted by the Faculty of Literature and Philosophy of the Ferrara University, and in Bologna by the Pole Michelangelo – Art and Design, the *Master Museum: creating-projecting-communicating exhibition spaces* whose objectives are putting together the competences of the planner and curator of Museum events with the ones of the graphic and the designer.

In **Bulgaria** seven of the 33 Universities available in the country propose the study of some disciplines similar to the Museum Communication; 19 are the professional training courses available for the figure of the “Museum Communicator”: some of these include subjects such as Public Communication, Mass Media and Journalism, Cultural Management, Museum Sciences. The most popular course, however, is the “Public Relations” one, through which it is possible to get a Bachelor and a Master. The courses proposed by the University of Library Science and Information Technology are focused on diverse sectors: *Printing Communications, Information Funds of Cultures Historical Heritage* and *Tourist Information Resources* for what concerns the Bachelor degree and *Library and Information Communication, Media Information and Advertisement* for the Master degree.

The oldest and the biggest state university in Bulgaria – the Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, offers Master Degree educational programmes in *Museum Science and Public Communication*, and Bachelor one in *Public Relations*. Its Faculty of Pre-School and Primary School Education offers a lecture course *Mediating of Cultural and Historical Heritage* in the frame of the *Pedagogy of Mass and Artistic Communication* bachelor's degree programme. This course educates knowledge in the field of the media's connections with the cultural and historical heritage.

The subjects of Media and Society for 21st Century as a high-level professional training are offered by the New Bulgarian University in Sofia, which is the most popular among the private universities in the country. One also can get a Bachelor degree in *Mass Communication – Public Relations* by graduating it.

Also in **Romania**, the training offer is rather heterogeneous: in fact, some subjects related to the “Museum Communicator” are placed inside professional courses devoted, above all, to the Public Relations and to the Marketing. In particular, six courses have been pointed out: two at the Lucian Blaga University in Sibiu, for the semester devoted to Museology (in that frame, a Master in *Protecting the valuing of Cultural Heritage* is available) and in *Social Communication*. At the Bucarest University it is possible to find an e-learning course in *Public Relation*, in the frame of a Master in *Artefact Management Cultural and Tourism*. Out of the Universities, two courses, one in *Public Relation inside the Cultural Organisations* and one in *Communication in Cultural Organisations*, are offered by an institutional body dependent on the Ministry for Cultural and National Patrimony, the Professional Training Centre in Cultures (CPPC), in which the personnel of many museums is usually trained.

Finally, an e-learning course in *Culture, Communication and European Integration* has been organised in the frame of a Leonardo da Vinci project by the National School for Political and Administrative Studies in Bucarest.

In the **United Kingdom**, in order to work inside museums it is necessary to have a degree or a post-graduate diploma, to gain access to graduate programmes at University academic qualifications obtained whilst at school or Further education colleges are required. This equates to those studying at ages 16-18 (GCSEs at 16 and "A" levels at 18 years of age). It also seems to be very important to get a specific professional qualification in Belle Arti or Social History.

The course in *Arts Policy and Management*, for example, is available just inside a module devoted to who is interested to *Arts Marketing Communications* in Birbeck, at the University in London; therefore, this is meant for people wanting to undertake a career in the Arts management and that already has a solid training basis in these subjects.