Combining external and internal communication at Eurostat

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Abstract

External and internal communication working side by side in one department – does it make any sense? Have many of us tried it in our statistical organisations? And, if so, what lessons can be learned from this experience? Historically, there has always been a clear distinction between external and internal communication, with internal communication mostly seen as a distant, and often forgotten, cousin. However, with time employers have realised that a modern internal communication function not only aligns employees behind common goals and helps create a better work environment, but is also key for change and crisis management.

In addition, parallel and disconnected external and internal communication efforts often lead to negative and even counterproductive effects. As a result, in recent years, the two functions have been merging, reflecting the need for consistency across communications platforms. In other words, externally and internally, general messages should be the same.

At Eurostat, both functions have been peacefully and successfully co-existing in one unit since July 1, 2018. This ‘one team’ philosophy has resulted in a strong and forward-thinking communications entity, which seems to be well positioned to deal with future challenges, including tackling the spread of disinformation. We have now gathered enough experience to be able to share it with you, and the good news is that it is overwhelmingly positive.