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Communicating Climate Change in the EAEU: Strategy and Communication Campaign

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Climate change is a complex global problem with wide-range impacts, and its messages need to be clearly communicated. Climate change policy, decision-making, and communication take place on a wide variety of levels, from local governments [3,6,7] to international negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change[2].

The Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) as one of the largest regional multilateral states associations in the Eurasian space could become the main platform that contributes to the speedy and effective resolution of the Eurasian region's sustainable development and environmental problems[4,10]. Thereby, it is essential for the EAEU to find the best way to communicate these problems, as well as to communicate the Union's actions taken to address them.

Today the environmental problems are not a priority of the Union's agenda. The EAEU countries still lack common understanding, policies, and legal regulations related to climate change. This significantly reduces the Union's role and effectiveness in combating the global environmental crisis. Moreover, even though the Union's institutional framework has a huge potential for communicating global environmental problems, there are no common communication mechanisms at the EAEU[5]. The contradictory development of the national media markets, the differences in the common mass information models slow down the integration of the EAEU countries' media systems.

We suggest that the climate change issue could be most optimally enhanced by the development of climate change strategies. Developing and adopting the common EAEU Strategy on climate change as well as carrying out strategic communication activities on this problem are seen as crucial. The Strategy could provide a framework for delivering key messages on climate change to target audiences, ensure consistency between messages, and will guide how to communicate climate change - both the mitigation and adaptation agendas. As a result, the Strategy will lead to the creation of a community that is well informed about climate change and thus able to make globally responsible choices.

The content of the EAEU climate change strategy should consist of basic definitions and principles, targets and actions towards combating climate change, as well as the actions recommended to raise awareness of climate change and its impacts, and the communication of these actions. The Union's governance based on the Strategy could coordinate and stimulate the activity of national media structures in the whole region. Consequently, such coordination could serve as an impetus towards further integration of the EAEU countries' national media systems[9]. For this, the EAEU policymakers should consider the following possibilities when developing the document: creating interstate media structures, developing a common approach to public media, identifying forms and methods of interaction between the media, and using online media potential.

In addition to developing the common climate strategy, practical action is also needed. We state that there is a need to conduct the EAEU campaign to promote practical, innovative, and cost-efficient solutions to climate change, which could provide national guidance for communicating climate change, and, in particular, set out principles that all climate change communication

plans can follow. Thus, as a follow-up of the Strategy, the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) should launch a Eurasian-wide public awareness campaign to promote climate action.

The EAEU campaign should be consistent in terms of language and explanation of climate change. It should be held under a recognizable slogan and aimed to change the narrative of climate change from melting glaciers to climate solutions and the benefits of a low-carbon society. The campaign should be conducted based on a variety of online and offline channels, so it could engage with many different stakeholders. High-level politicians and celebrities should participate to attract support. Social media could play an important role here.

Besides, as a part of the campaign, it could be effective to organize interactive activities, including low-carbon challenges to encourage creative minds from across the EAEU to put their innovative climate solutions to the test. Another part of the campaign could be “good practices” sharing. So the campaign could showcase a range of best practices developed by the EAEU citizens, businesses, and organizations (the European Union’s experience could be considered here)[1,8]. Events across Eurasia could provide opportunities for sharing knowledge and ideas, and the dialogue should continue the campaign’s interactive website and on social media.

Thus, an optimal mechanism of information exchange on climate change within the EAEU is proposed. The author identifies the current shortcomings and makes two overarching recommendations for improving the EAEU’s environmental policy and its role in combating the global environmental crisis, including: 1) the development of the Union’s climate change strategy, of which the communications strategy should form a part, and 2) conducting of the EAEU climate change communication campaign. These actions will enable the EAEU policy to become relevant, given the emerging sustainability and climate change issues.

References

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