DIAGNOSTICS OF MEDIA IMAGE OF CENTRAL STATE ADMINISTRATION BODY

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Abstract

Media communication has become an indispensable part of society. However, citizens are increasingly 'lost' in the confusion of information and variety of issues. This is particularly true amongst public administration scholars and officials who study and seek communication best practices. To this end, clear answers to questions are sought. Information is sought from the media whom share plans, decisions and arguments for policy-makers in different areas. Within public administration each office has its own means and rules of media communication. Some have set up press departments that specialize in information others have a professional staff to communicate with the media and public. The aim of this paper is to clarify the media communication hierarchy of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic as a state administration body and a public policy actor. It is crucial that their decisions in educational policy are sufficiently communicated with the public and the media. A SWOT analysis is used

to diagnose media communication to find what strategy the Ministry of Education should take in relation to the media and the public. Specific reports are highlighted to show both the managed and unmanaged communications of the ministry. On the basis of the facts and the experience of journalistic practice, proposals for improving communication for the communication department of the ministry, that in turn will lead to a more effective building of a media image with the journalists can be predicted.

Key words: *media, media communication, public administration, citizen, information*

INTRODUCTION

Since January 1st, 1993, the Slovak Republic has been an independent state where citizens are represented by their fellow elected citizens; a parliamentary, representative democracy. This means that representatives are elected to the National Council of the Slovak Republic, who are to promote the interests of their voters. The winner of democratic parliamentary elections is commissioned by the President to form the government, which is the highest executive body. On the Slovak citizen's behalf, the ministers manage public affairs, and are responsible for the efficient handling of funds to meet the needs of citizens, to provide services and to ensure a high standard of living. They are active decision-makers, influencing the lives of citizens, forming the results of public policy. Still, often public policy is 'lost' or its information is confusing for the common citizen. Therefore, clear answers to questions about how the government is involved is necessary. However, what are the decisions and specific measures for issues that are in the public interest? The media is the mediator of information. The media enters the policy-making process in different tasks. They communicate plans, decisions and arguments for policies in individual areas (Kupec, 2018). Furthermore, each state or local government has its own way and rules of media communication. Some have set up press departments that specialize in informing, communicating with the media and the public. As such, the media has an indispensable roles in the public policy making process.

1. THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN PUBLIC POLICY

The media has an irreplaceable role in public policy. The spread of information, mediation the arguments of individual actors, allowance for mutual discussion, publication of their suggestions and comments. It is the only way citizens can get information about policies, and the government can explain their program but also mistakes (Briška, 2010).
There is no doubt about the media being a public policy actor. According to Klus (2008), there is a link between voters and their representatives, who they choose. They provide information about the events that happen, but at the same time communicate the values of the individual actors. Especially at the time of the election campaign when they inform about candidates or political parties. The media industry, also called the mass media, or mass-communication raises issues from which to identify social problems (Kupec, 2018a). That is, they define, according to Klus (200, a group of problems that the government should deal with. He points out that the role of the media can also be understood as a tool of education, which can be misused by various ideologies. In the past, the media were

mainly owned by political parties, and this also implies the further role of the media, which has been preserved to date - to attract supporters of political parties and voters, especially before the elections. Klus (2008) also writes about the media as a force that can be used by the citizen. This means that the voter receives compacted information and does not have to search for and evaluate them. Nevertheless, the media cannot avoid criticism since the 19th century of bias and impact on the nature of the news and information. Klus (2008) divided his analysis of the media and interaction with citizens into two points - concentration of mass media and media content. The problem is that the content of some media is adapted to a particular group of citizens. Often, this group is understood as not well-educated and has low qualitative demands on programs chosen. This can be reflected in the behavior of this group, but also in the decision-making of individuals in public affairs (Klus, 2008). Media expert Brečka (2008) views the media as an object, and subject of politics. The media, according to him, play the role of mediator between politicians and citizens, and is a tool for promoting the goals of the program of political parties. Therefore, they are constantly attacked by politicians in an effort to control them. Whoever has power over the media has a tool to push his interests. At the same time, Brečka notes that in Slovakia the media must try to maintain independence from political power. In particular, commercial media needs to achieve the highest audience and readability. This is necessary, according to Brečka, for the credit of an independent media, media that is not influenced by politicians (Brečka, 2008). Both Potůček and Pavlík (2015) see the media as intermediaries between actors, in their opinion among citizens, officials and politicians. They serve as a source of information not only for people but also for politicians. They find out what the needs or moods of the population are and watch competition on the political scene (Schulz, 2004). However, the media are no longer just an intermediary, but increasingly become an active player in public policy. Potůček and Pavlík (2015) draw attention to the designation "Seventh Empire" used by Otto von Bismarck. In the 1870s he declared that the press was offset by its influence in the then six Great Powers, namely the UK, Austria, Russia, France, Germany and Italy (Hvížďala, 2003).

The authors agree that the media have a large impact from multiple angles. According to sociologist Čukan and Šrámek (2013), they form public opinion of citizens, bring research results and act as so-called "Watchdog" or guard dog that controls politicians and their actions. Among the tasks of the media are also agenda setting McCombs (2009) describes this as an instrument by which the media can manipulate the minds of citizens, raise topics that become community-based or, on the contrary, not to be informed in the interests of politicians. An important role is played by the news media at the time of the pre-election struggle. According to McCombs (2009), the public responds to what the media is broadcasting. The opinion of a particular policy will be considered relevant or important, depending on the space it delivers on the media, or by placement in the news block (McCombs, 2009).

From media standpoint, the media is divided into printed, electronic and multimedia, new media (Tušer, 2010). Print media are newspapers, printed weeks, or other periodicals that occur at regular and irregular intervals depending on what kind of information is presented. Publication is based on deadlines responding flexibly to current events and themes that move society but are time-dependent. Only what happens within an hour, may appear in a journal. Meanwhile, for the

week, for example, analytical materials that deal more closely with a specific policy or action in government and social life. The popularity of print media is gradually declining, and publishers are reducing the cost. The reason is that the information market has moved to electronic media and, in particular, to the new media sector (internet, social networks). Whether print media or the Internet is dependent depends on what its target group is. The internet is attractive for the youth, linguistically active in information technology. On the contrary, older readers are accustomed to printed papers. Therefore, the media are adapted to their target group not only with carriers, but also with content. This can fundamentally affect public policy. They communicate topics close to the target group. This means that some topics have more scope and this can create imbalances in the public policy process in promoting the interests of individual actors.

In addition to the media, there is electronic media. According to Tušer (2010) they compete with them but also complement them. Electronic media is radio and television: radio transmits sound, the television transmits sound and video (Tušer, 2010). It broadcasts the prepared news reports, but it can also broadcast live broadcasts from a specific event and briefly inform citizens of the event. In the field of electronic media, there is the so-called dual system described by Mistríková and Žitný (2014) of Transparency International. It should guarantee the citizen two independent sources of information, one through public radio and television stations and the other private media.

Public media have an irreplaceable role in disseminating information. Their job is to provide information to all citizens of the Slovak Republic, to national minorities, to address minority genres and to provide objective information on all topics of social action regardless of audience or interference. Public service media are represented in Slovakia by the Radio and Television of Slovakia (RTVS). RTVS is a public policy actor which informs about the actors' plans for making, deciding on public policy. It provides scope for arguments and arguments in promoting the interests of political parties or other public policy actors. It provides information on the plans of ministries, other public authorities and Mistríková and Žitný (2014) point out that political power always tends to influence RTVS, for example, he does not want to waive the right to vote and recall the Central Director of RTVS. It will become only a person whose name the parliamentary majority agrees, that is, political parties in power. The more we mentioned that the more power politics in the media, the greater the scope for promoting interests. Public policy is not formed at that time according to objective rules, citizens can get distorted information, or just some arguments why the government wants to implement a specific plan (Mistríková, Žitný, 2014).

Private media are fundamentally different from public funding and how they originate. While public law was established (Act No. 532/2010 Coll., On Radio and Television of Slovakia) and financed from public sources, private media are private equity companies operating under the license of a broadcaster (Act No. 308 / 2000 Coll. on broadcasting and retransmission and amending Act No. 195/2000 Coll. On Telecommunications). By doing so, they generate profits and resources for broadcasting and creating programs. This nature of private media also affects the fact of what they broadcast or what the newspaper and magazine page fills; the program and content structure. The goal of private media is to implement a business plan, to get as many audience as possible, listeners and readers. This will provide space for client and advertiser advertising. The greater the power of private

media, the more expensive the advertising space, and therefore the profit grows. Practice shows that private media do everything to offer audiences and listeners what they want. For example, information on events, government steps, or the public policy process also draws on this. Private media reporting is specific. Themes must meet commercial criteria, which may be in direct contradiction with what politicians or states want to communicate with citizens. Topics that the government is setting up may not be considered attractive by the media. In addition, simplified event reporting can, according to Briška (2010), support the passive approach of broadcasters, that is to say, the downsizing of critical attitudes towards society.

In both public and private media, it is true that they are not just messengers which tell citizens about political affairs. They themselves become a factor that enters public policy in three ways. What the media poses directly affects the public about political issues and individual actors. According to some theorists, the fact that the media can affect citizens appeals to politicians to try to get influence in the media. And the third effect, people working in the media can themselves be considered strong in politics and can try to intervene in political decisions themselves on the order of their advertisers or publishers. Here media lobbying or media activism is seen (Briška, 2010). Authors Jirák and Köpplová (2009) ask what the risk is that private media will not observe a commitment to citizens, will be an institution of freedom of expression in matters that may affect their profit or are not in the interests of an advertiser or a politician. If such doubts arise, this is particularly the case with the news. Briška (2010) notes that some authors are convinced that traditional journalism can no longer be done. More than ever, the value of quality information is vital. In the flood of conspiracy sites on the Internet, hoaxes on social networks there is pressure on reliable information in the media. The state asks the media to be objective and professional. Media is controlled by law, e.g. according to Act 211/2000 on free access to information and control bodies, the Council for Broadcasting and Retransmission (Act No. 308/2000), however, within private portals or social networks that belong to private media. This media space is experiencing growth, as the information released by this channel has a major impact on different population groups in a short time. Also, public policy actors increasingly use the virtual environment to communicate their interests. In public policy, government institutions are increasingly focusing on websites to make information available online. Profiles on social networks also are used. And this flexible and up-to-date information about events, for example, has increasingly been used in individual ministries. The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic is no exception.

2. PUBLIC POLICY ACTOR: THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND SPORTS OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter "the Ministry of Education") is a public policy actor. As a central government body, it is the policy maker, decides and implements policies in the field of education, performs state administration for mothers, primary, secondary and higher education institutions. The Ministry of Education elaborates the concept of how and where the education and training of pupils in Slovakia will develop. It creates a legislative framework in the field of education in the form of generally binding legal regulations and decrees (Mihálik - Klimovský, 2014). It is responsible

for the content of education at all levels of education, publishes state education programs that define exactly what a pupil should learn and what knowledge and skills he / she should have after completing primary or secondary school. The Ministry of Education is also responsible for approving textbooks and methodological materials, regulating the system of study departments, maintaining the central register of children and educational and professional staff. Furthermore, according to the Ministry's statute, it provides funding through a standard contribution to the pupil, decides on targeted subsidies. It performs the evaluation of the level of education but also the financial and administrative control of organizations belonging to the Ministry of Education. Its role is also the role and the realization of higher education goals, including lifelong learning. The Ministry of Education is responsible for science and technology, sport, talent development as well as youth care.

The Ministry, as a public policy actor, carries out its activities in the public interest. This means that it plans, implements and evaluates education policy, sports policy, and youth care policy for public benefit. First of all, to ensure education from the earliest age to vocational training in line with the needs of the labor market. The Ministry of Education is also responsible for creating conditions for sport, providing financial resources as well as for effective support for sports organizations.

The Ministry of Education is organized into sections, the trade unions and unions are divided into departments. The Ministry of Education also establishes organizations that are linked to the state budget through the chapter of the department but also partly contributing to its operation. This means eleven directly managed organizations and six contributory organizations of the Ministry of Education (Organization of the Department ..., 2017). This very fact, for example, according to Beblavý (2002) causes a great deal of problems and competencies, leading to inefficient management of state administration in the field of education.

The Ministry analyzes and monitors the activities of directly managed organizations (hereinafter referred to as "PRO"). PROs are legal entities that carry out on their own behalf activities which the central state administration has ordered with the organization. The organization is in charge of, and is responsible for, the statutory body appointed and recalled by the minister. Directly managed organizations of the Ministry of Education include the Research and Development Agency, the Research Agency, the International Laser Center, the Methodological and Pedagogical Center, the National Sports Center, the National Institute of Certified Measurements of Education, the Slovak Pedagogical Library, the Slovak Historical Institute in Rome, the State School Inspection, State Institute for Vocational Education, State Educational Institute.

The Ministry of Education also establishes contributory organizations, there are six organizations: the Anti-Doping Agency of the Slovak Republic, the Center of Scientific and Technical Information of the Slovak Republic, the Home of the Speaking Corps of Slovak Teachers, IUVENTA, the National Institute of Lifelong Learning, the Research Institute of Child Psychology and Pathopsychology.

Since the ministry has a large number of organizations in its founding field, it is difficult for the general and uninterested public to identify the fulfillment of the tasks and the sense of the individual institutions. From an organizational and financial point of view, it is common practice for each organization to have a communication department or a dedicated worker to cover information to the

public and the journalist community. In the education sector, therefore, communication is handled at the highest level. Responsible for it is the Communication Department of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Slovak Republic.

2.1. Basic communication dynamics of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic

Part of the organizational structure of the Ministry is the Communication Department. It is the most important communication channel through which information on the implementation of education policy flows to citizens as recipients. It creates an image of the Ministry of Education according to the level of communication and the topics for which it proactively delivers information. If a citizen receives information about schooling from various media they may feel that the Ministry of Education is active and tackles educational and training issues. Thus, the communication department plays an important role in public policy.

The Communication Department answers questions of journalists and the public on the basis of Act no. 211/2000 on free access to information. It organizes press conferences, publishes press releases for print and electronic media and, last but not least, covers communication with directly managed organizations of the Ministry and contributory organizations. One of the key tasks is also the mediation of opinions of representatives of the Ministry on various topics and developments within society. The communication department uses several ways to do this. The website of the Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education 2017) concentrates all information on the central state administration body and its activities. The page is clear and can be viewed by a common citizen. On the home page you can find press releases from the events in the resort, as well as in individual directly managed organizations. At the same time, we can choose from where we need information.

The communication of the Ministry of Education also affects non-traditional media, for example, on the social network, Facebook, with a profile that is tracked by just over 4,000 Facebook social network users. Admittedly, this is a very low number with regard to the interference of this social network. Therefore, the Ministry of Education should work on expanding the number of followers to disseminate information about its activities among a larger number of people. Facebook is the platform of the younger generation in particular, and it is up to the Ministry of Education to address them and to communicate the importance of education.

An important function of the Communication Department is the organization of press conferences and briefings of the Minister of Education. This is an example of proactive communication. The Communication Department does not wait and proactively provides information on topics that it identifies as priorities for the public. In the case of press conferences, if broadcast live, the education sector has the opportunity to present the tasks of education policy. A wide range of media, press agencies, print and electronic media are presented at press conferences. The media output has wide public reach, and information from it in various forms may take a few more days. So, from this point of view, it is an effective proactive

communication. On the other hand, if media has the opportunity, they also ask questions about other topics that may not only be positive.

Another task of the communication department is to respond to journalistic questions in writing or opinion through a spokesperson. Communication with the media first takes place by phone and mail. It is always important to send a question by mail so that it is recorded on both sides that the question has been asked and accepted. The communication department will send the replies back to the individual journalists and the response will be recorded on a sound or audiovisual record.

The Communication Department is the mediator of the public policy and decision-making process of the public policy actor, both professional and layman. Citizens can learn through the media what the Minister of Education's work program is. Scheduled events are posted in the state-run press agency TASR. At the same time, representatives of the communication department are present at the Government's deliberations. These are always on Wednesdays, and for journalists, this is another opportunity to ask the Minister of Education about issues related to education in the education sector. The communication department of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic has defined principles and procedures, based on media communication, whether in relation to journalists or public events that are monitored by the media. The communication strategy of the current management is generally proactive. The main task is that the media and citizens receive information about the activities in the department but also about the activities of the Minister of Education and other representatives of the ministry, thus, state secretaries, section directors, or directors of directly-managed organizations. Part of the communication department focuses on preparing answers to journalistic questions, hence dealing with reactive communication. In many cases, the media come up with themes on their own initiative. Journalists, who systematically and in the long-term follow education actively look for themes.

If there is a topic the Ministry of Education wants to proactively inform the public through the media, it can organize a press conference. In the main topics, the Minister of Education is present at the press conference if it is assumed that the media will be interested. At the same time, if the education sector wants to communicate with the public in a fundamental position and with full respect, represented by the High Representative of the Ministry of Education. From experience, the contribution of news reporters, it also follows that the press conferences with the participation of the Ministry of Education are organized also for the purpose of promoting the Ministry of Education in a positive way, for example in the drafting of specific laws or the way of solving certain problems. The Ministry of Education organizes press conferences directly at the headquarters of the Ministry of Education or during working meetings or the travels of the Minister of Education.

Before the minister and speaker sit down before journalists, they must prepare. It is hard for the ministry officials to expect their media to ask questions that the ministry's leadership would be. In many cases, journalists quickly identify the weaknesses of the topic presented by the department. There is also the possibility of asking the Minister of Education at press conferences. However, there are cases where the Communication Department only posts a number of questions. In this

case, there are limited possibilities for journalists to ask and find out the answer to the question.

If the Ministry of Education wants to report on specific events, it also proactively uses the press release. In this form of communication, it publishes what it considers important. Press releases are a written source of information, mostly published or referenced by print media. They can quote the statement of the Minister of Education. Electronic media are based on a press release, but they are asked for an audio or audiovisual record. If the Director of the Press Department or spokesperson cannot provide a record, an opinion from the press release may be used in an electronic media report.

The Communication Department also answers journalists' questions under Act no. 211/2000 Coll. Though, according to information from the Ministry of Education, journalists are doing so only rarely. For example, in April 2017, the Ministry of Education addressed 61 requests and only one was from the journalist. For the past three months, the Ministry of Education has not registered any demand from the media in terms of information. Looking closer to this number, this may indicate a favorable situation for journalists to get answers to questions. Thus, the School Communication Department responds to questions such that it is obviously not necessary for journalists to use the Institute for Information Request. This may sound like a positive for the communication department. The media therefore receive what they need to inform the public about the activities of the Ministry of Education.

The Ministry of Education provides media communication also for directly managed organizations. The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport created the so-called Basic communication material and from 2015, new rules for PRO communication apply. Management of directly managed organizations is not directly responsible for providing answers to the media. There is a clear media hierarchy of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic.

2.2. Hierarchy of Media Communication of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic

Directly managed organizations are accountable to the Ministry of Education in fulfilling the tasks and drawing public resources on the activities for which they are responsible. It is natural that, just as everything in relation to their scope is under control, media communication towards the public is also under control. This means all media outputs of a directly managed organization. Press releases, answers to journalistic questions, or the promotion of national projects that are being implemented by PRO. The Media Communication Policy is determined by the "Basic Communication Manual" already mentioned. If the journalist turns to a PRO and sends a question, the PRO sends it to the Department of Communication Department of Education. If the PRO worker is contacted for the interview, the same procedure is followed. The Director of the Department of Communication of the Ministry of Education decides whether the interviewer can provide an interview. If the directly managed organizations want to publish information on the national project in the form of PR articles, interviews or a written article in the media, the responsible person will send it to the Ministry of Education Communication Department for approval. This department grants exceptions to presentation in the

media. There are cases when the PRO worker can answer the questions but only after agreeing with the communication department. But this process is more complicated for journalists. Often, it is not possible for an expert from the organization to explain the matter, even though it is responsible for the action. Directly responsible workers thus largely remain anonymous to the public and cannot be asked to make decisions, even though they directly do so. However, there are organizations where communication with high-level media does occur.

And they get frequent exceptions from the communication manual. For example, the State Institute for Vocational Education, as an output of the national project "Dual Education" and the National Institute of Certified Measurements of Education, as a Performer of Testing 5 and Testing 9, or Maturity. In this case, it is a highly professional matter, and the results of measuring education need to be well explained to avoid misinterpretation. The organization that acts independently in media communication is also the State School Inspectorate. The main school inspector, Viera Kalmárová, often provides interviews on the current impact on education.

Directly managed organizations (PRO) can also prepare a press release for specific activity and events. In this case, Ms. Kalmárová must first send it to the Communication Department at least 3 working days in advance. The Director of the Communication Department decides on the publication of the press release on the website of the organization, the Ministry of Education, as well as in the media. He may grant an exception to this procedure. However, directly managed organizations do not issue press releases regularly, except for the aforementioned media active organizations. In any case, however, the PRO must consult each media output with the Department of Communication of the Ministry of Education. The Ministerial Communication Hierarchy and directly managed organizations are clearly shown in the following diagram.

Diagram 1: Communications Hierarchy of MŠVVaŠ SR and directly managed organizations.
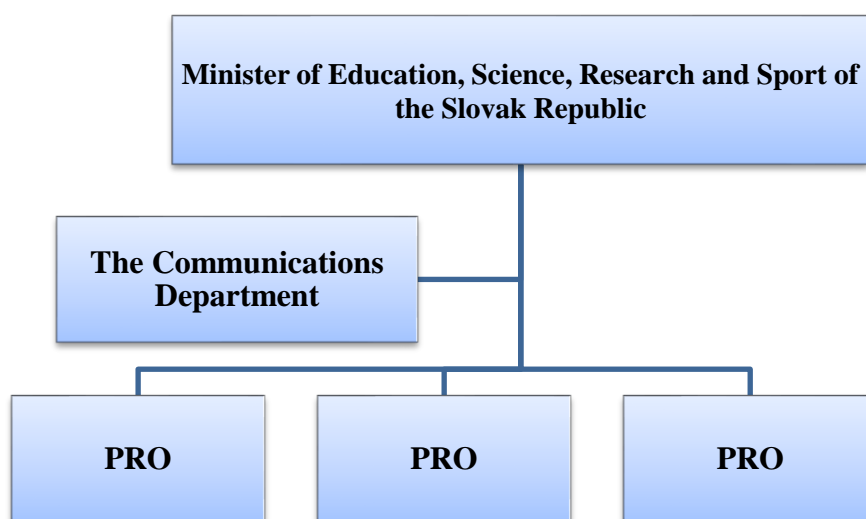
Source: own processing, 2018

PRO media communication is covered by the Ministry of Education, and without its knowledge, nothing could be gained in the media. Of course, the effort of journalists is to get information as efficiently as possible, so it may happen that the PRO worker does not follow the Basic Communication Manual. However, this may be considered a violation of internal communication rules.

We also see a certain hierarchy of media communication at the Ministry of Education. Specifically, who answers a question or delivers information. Such decisions are at the discretion of the Director of the Communication Department, but also of the Minister of Education. For the speaker, he is a journalist. You can contact the minister by phone or personally from Monday to Friday at the headquarters of the Ministry of Education at Stromova Street in Bratislava. The speaker provides service to the media to get answers to questions and opinions even if the minister is temporarily or otherwise busy. It is the job of the Minister of Education to be one of the important factors that affects who will answer the questions. For the media, the minister is mostly available before the government, but here too, journalists have to contact the head of the press or spokesman. However, there is a very limited amount of time. It is possible to interview the Minister during other public events organized by the Ministry of Education. The opinion of the Minister of Education is considered to be fundamental and addresses issues that are political, strategic, or at a given moment heavily mediated. Often, after the opinion of the Minister of Education, which is essential, provides details of a spokesman for the Ministry of Education. Moreover, the fact that the minister is the political representative of the education sector, and it is not possible to master all the professional connections in the education and education of pupils is relevant. Therefore, it is understandable that without preparation the minister cannot answer the questions of journalists.

Feed information from journalistic Q&A

The media communications of the Ministry of Education are governed by principles based on the internal configuration of the department. In particular, we will show how the path looks from the journalistic question to the answer. Starting out from the practice and experience of the co-author of the paper.

If the journalist considers that the Ministry of Education needs an opinion on the objectivity and information completeness of the report, the questions will be sent to the mail address tlacove@minedu.sk. To this address, all members of the communication department have access to this address. This minimizes the possibility of not viewing or losing the question. Journalists can submit questions outside the working hours, because a spokesman for the Ministry of Education is available by phone. When the question arises by mail, the employees who are in charge of preparing the answer will first check the database, no matter if the question has been answered. There are many up-to-date topics on the media's own initiative. But there are cases when it is the same day, for example, if they want an opinion, for example, on raising teachers' salaries after a press conference of the Slovak Chamber of Teachers. If the employees of the communications department find a response to a journalist's question, they will send it back to him after consulting the department head. If the processed answer is not in the database, the relevant department of the Ministry of Education is contacted by the staff with the request for information.

They will receive a response from experts at a specified time, which will be adjusted in the form requested by the journalist. If it happens that for some time period or other reasons, the communications department is not able to respond to a journalist's question at a set time. He then consults with him on the phone if the response time can be shifted to the next business day. If the communications department employees are able to process the response, the spokesperson checks it. Subsequently, the spokesperson or authorized person sends a reply to the journalist directly under the heading of the Ministry of Education. This is a simple way for a journalistic question to answer. However, if it is a topic that requires more attention, of a political or strategic nature, the speaker contacts the Director of the Communication Department. The Director of the Department shall consult the Minister of Education if necessary. The final answer must still be passed through the control of the communications department. Only then will the answer get to the journalist. The answer to the question comes to the journalist by mail. If it's a print media, it's enough. However, the electronic media needs sound for broadcasting. In this case, the phone is used, and a sound or audiovisual recording is uploaded.

2.2.1. Examples of the media communication hierarchy of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic

The Communication Department of the Ministry of Education receives daily dozens of questions from journalists. Despite the fact that it has a clear communication strategy and communication procedures, the final outcome of communication depends on several factors. In a few examples, media hierarchy of the Ministry of Education in practice is explored, beginning with TV Markíza's coverage.

a) An example of a proactive communication from the Ministry of Education
The Ministry of Education uses the media space to promote the ministry, but ultimately also promotes a minister nominated by a political party. It is natural that the minister does not miss the opportunity to report positive information to journalists. In this case, the Ministry proactively comes up with a school bus pilot project from the state budget. It cooperates with the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Transport. The resorts organized the first minibus transfer for pupils in Dobrohošť. In the morning before classes, journalists and ministers met. They are briefed about the project. It is positive publicity because the project's aim is public interest - a safe and free transfer of pupils to school. In this case, the Minister of Education answers questions. It is a situation in which the minister did not expect the risk or critical questions from journalists, because the journalists needed only information on the pilot project.

b) An example of crisis communication by the Ministry of Education
Critical communication is very important. How to disable negative public and critical information? It is effective to publish information about the problem before journalists discard it with its own investigative activity. Here is an example from a directly managed organization Methodological -pedagogical centre from 2015. An official of the organization sent more than 455-thousand euros to a new bank account of the company, which should provide services for a directly managed organization. Money was sent via e-mail to change the company's account, but it

turned out that it was a fictitious announcement of a bank account change. So money came into the hands of an unauthorized person. The Methodological and Pedagogical Center filed a criminal notification of an unknown fraud agent. In order for the Ministry of Education, as a superior authority, to avoid criticism and mass media pressure, it organized a press briefing directly in front of the building of the Regional Directorate of the CA in Bratislava, where then-Director Kapucianová, made a criminal complaint. She explained the situation to the journalist, and at the same time announced the efforts of the Methodological and Pedagogical Center to find out who is responsible for this mission. The questions of journalists were answered by the Director of the Methodological and Pedagogical Center. Therefore, avoidance of the initial scandal occurred. The final impression was that it was initially recognized and immediately sought solutions.

c) An example of media communication with a directly managed organization
PRO generally do not communicate with the media. All outputs must be consulted with the Ministry of Education's Communication Department. However, there are cases where the communication of a directly managed organization is at a high level, and a particular PRO is staffed to handle it. An example is the National Institute of Certified Measurements of Education (NUCEM). The director is Romana Kanovská. The organization performs highly professional activity measuring the quality of education through projects such as Testing 9 or Maturita . Therefore, it communicates all questions related to the preparation of national tests, their course and results. The NUCEM also responds to the negative questions about the questions in the tests that they ultimately had to cancel. An example of this report shows that it is important for a directly managed the organization to justify exactly what happened and did not misconduct. From our point of view, this strengthens the image of a professional organization that is responsible for its agenda.

d) An example of delegating a response from the Minister of Education to a spokesperson
It depends on the topic of giving the journalist an opinion, either by the minister of education or a spokesman. According to information from the Communication Department, the Minister is expressing his or her concerns. From our point of view, the primary issue is also the legislative change prepared by the Ministry of Education. Former Minister Peter Plavčan announced at the press conference a change in the law on universities. However, many remarks from the Slovak Rector's Conference, which did not agree with the change of law, appeared in the commentary. The unresolved contradiction also remained with Petr Kažimir, the finance minister. The journalists requested the then minister Peter Plavčan, to speak before the meeting. But he did not meet the journalists. He did not deliver the opinion even after the hearing. He delegated this role to the district's spokesman. This example can be understood as the Secretary of State's efforts to avoid unpleasant questions about why he wanted to enforce a law that many do not agree with.

e) An example of media communication hierarchy between the Ministry and the PRO
On a specific example, it can be seen that directly managed organizations should communicate separately. But, it's not a common practice at all. According to the

communication manual, all media outputs must be consulted with the Ministry of Education, and the Head of the Communications Department decides whether a PRO representative or a district spokesperson will be speaking. The reporter communicated in the following report. It was the competence of the State Educational Institute (hereinafter referred to as the SPS). The Subject Committee for Slovak Language and Literature added to the obligatory reading for high schools the book by Dušan Tarageľa and Petra Pišťánek - Sekera and the Knifewhat triggered a wave of criticism from educators. There are vulgarisms in the short stories, and teachers of the Slovak language refused to work with the book. However, the SPO did not explain the situation directly. The reasons why the work appeared in the compulsory literature were communicated by the then spokeswoman of the Ministry of Education. Ultimately, the impression that the ministry made the mistake is observed. The State Educational Institute is a directly managed organization of the department but with its own responsibility for the activities it performs from public sources and in this case, therefore, the answer to questions should have been from the SPO.

All the above examples confirm that the Ministry of Education has established communication rules but has to respond flexibly to each situation. The final media outlet is also influenced by other factors - the mood in society in relation to schooling, the business of the minister, what is the topic being communicated, and, last but not least, the tactics of the Minister of Education as a political nominee. All this should fit into the communication strategy of the MŠVVaŠ SR. The Minister can only create it if they know perfectly the environment in which inner strengths and weaknesses also work. To do so, using SWOT analysis is recommended.

2.2.2. SWOT analysis of the communication of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic

Each organization should know its weaknesses, its strengths, but also its impact on the environment. In the positive or negative sense. These are important factors for creating a strategy. SWOT analysis is one of the methods that can reveal the stability or strength of the Ministry of Education's communication. We can say that SWOT analysis is a simple diagnosis, which can also identify the weaknesses or risks from the external environment that influence the way of communication of the Ministry of Education. This SWOT analysis is based on experience as a news editor. The principle of the SWOT analysis is to define the exact factors that influence the communication of the Ministry of Education and at the same time their strength. They are evaluated on a scale of 1 - 10, 1 is for the weakest factor affecting communication and 10 for the strongest. We divide the factors into four groups:

S - strengths = strengths of the internal environment
W- weaknesses = weaknesses of the internal environment
O - opportunities = opportunities from the outside environment
T - threats = threats, risks from the external environment

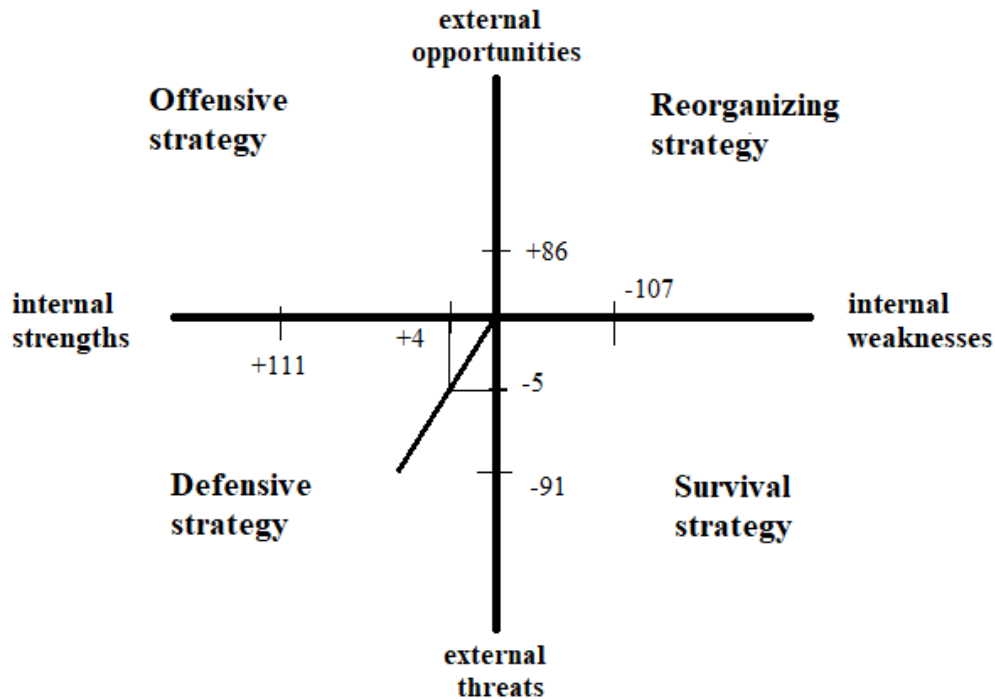**Table 1: SWOT Analysis of Communications of the Ministry of Education and Research of the Slovak Republic**

STRENGTHS +	points	WEAKNESSES -	points
Qualified workers	10	Frequent change of the Minister of Education	10
High expertise of communications	10	Frequent change of the district spokesman and the communications	10
Department directors	10	Department director	10
Former journalists at the post of the speaker	9	There was no communication strategy	8
Voice record of the position for radio broadcasting	7 / 9	Professional communication on social network Facebook	9
Press news	10	There is no account on Twitter and Instagram	8 / 7
Press conferences	8	Press releases in the vestibule	8
Profile on social network Facebook	10 / 9	Short space for talks before the government	10
A quick answer to a journalistic question	10	Official answers	9
Speakerphone out of office hours	9	High PRO count	10
		Communication through the Ministry of Education	8
TOTAL	**111**	**TOTAL**	**107**

OPPORTUNITIES +	points	THREATS -	points
The document "Learning Slovakia"	10	I do not blame the public for scientific and professional themes	9
Increasing government spending on education	7	Statements by the Minister of Finance	8
Statement by the government	8	Statements by the Prime Minister	10
Employer Investments in Dual Education	8	Impact of employers on education	8
Parental interest in education in regional education	7	Problematic involvement of marginalized Romani communities in education	8
Demand for the company after the reform	7	Graduate unemployment	9
Revision of expenditure Value for money	10	Choice of topics by journalists	10
Slovakia's membership in the EU	10	Tracking and listening to the media	10
Funds from Eurofunds	10	Teacher discontent	10
Amendment to the Higher Education Act	9	Reducing the number of children in schools	9
TOTAL	**86**	**TOTAL**	**91**

Source : own processing, 2018

As calculated, the assessment of the factors in the four groups the strengths of the internal environment have a value of 111, the weaknesses of the internal environment 107, Opportunities are serious in numeric terms 86, and the risk after the factor counting is 91. The results thus calculated give us an idea of what strategy the Ministry of Education should choose in media communication.

However, to accurately determine the strategy, it is necessary to transfer the results to the axes of the table.

Graph 1. SWOT analysis matrix of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic

external
opportunities

Offensive
strategy

Reorganizing
strategy

+86

-107

internal
strengths

internal
weaknesses

+4

+111

-5

Defensive
strategy

-91

Survival
strategy

external
threats

Source: own processing, 2018

According to the SWOT analysis, defensive strategy - ST (strengths-threats) is chosen for the Communication Department of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Slovak Republic. This strategy focuses on strengths and uses them to the maximum extent in communicating with the media and the public. The strengths of the communications department may respond appropriately to the risks from the external environment, which the Ministry of Education cannot directly influence. The Ministry, as the central government administration body in the field of education, needs to maintain its firm position in an unattractive state administration environment. They have public resources to serve the public interest in the field of education. That is why it should concentrate on its strengths in media communication and, on the contrary, eliminate or mitigate its weaknesses. This means taking advantage of the potential of skilled workers, among whom are also former journalists. This has a practical point of view since they know how the editorial staff operate, which the ministry can use to its benefit. More to the point, the focus should be on strengthening social communication on Facebook. The Ministry should therefore more closely orient its communication towards parents and pupils for key addresses on education.

3. CORRECTIONS TO IMPROVE THE COMMUNICATION OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND SPORT OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports has the human potential to communicate effectively. They showed concrete examples of the news broadcasts that are documented, for example, by a media communications hierarchy, but also by avoiding the Minister of Education on journalistic issues. All this appears to be a brake on the effectiveness of communication, however. The SWOT analysis highlighted reserves, defined the weaknesses of the internal environment as well as the risks from the external environment. Additionally, the strengths of the Ministry of Education have been defined, but the situation in practice shows that the ministry does not fully use its strengths to present the fulfillment of the tasks in the educational policy. There are skilled workers in the communications industry. The communication department can communicate in particular topics that they know to be of interest to the media. At the same time on negative topics, the Ministry should persuade the public to explain why it made a concrete decision. As one of the strongest channels of communication, it should make more use of the existing profile on the Facebook social network and communicate not only to the professional public but to address the younger generation. In such a way, the ministry can show that education is important to them and to society, while at the same time it can be interesting and playful. The Ministry of Education publishes press releases, but it is not enough from the point of view of the wider public. There are no videos from the Minister of Education's working visits, short video positions where the management of the ministry comments on the current events. It is more out of the backstage of the education sector. All this could popularize the area of education. This can be especially attractive to the younger generation, so that it is interested in the work of the Ministry of Education. Strong aspects of the internal environment also include proactive communication tools such as press releases and press conferences. From our point of view, press conferences should take place more frequently, even on a regular basis. The Ministry of Education could evaluate its activity every three months, fulfilling the tasks of the government's program statement, or answer the current questions that resonate in the public. Citizens would regularly register that the Ministry of Education is not closed, but it does deduct its steps and decisions. As a public policy actor, the public might be more likely to strengthen the impression that the department is working systematically to meet the public interest of quality education. The Ministry of Education could also regularly organize "Media Breakfast". A meetings with journalists to explain facts, laws and strategies in education in a less formal atmosphere, with the interviews usually take place at the end of the meeting.

The Ministry of Education's strengths can be the work outings of the Minister of Education. The minister can use them more to communicate with the public. Not only in the schools which they visit, but also towards the general public. Newsrooms are currently not receiving a program of ministers on a daily basis. Only invitations to larger or more important events. The Ministry of Education should, however, think that the less the journalists take part in the visit, the less readers and the audience will learn about it. This means that the intervention of such a communication is less than it could be if journalists were given a program by the Minister of Education.

A more effective communication by the Ministry of Education would also contribute to the refinement of the official language in response to journalists. In written statements from the Communications Department, it is often perceptible and visible that the answers come from individual sections. Often they are written in an official language that a normal citizen does not understand correctly. It is important for the journalist to be able to give information briefly, clearly and comprehensively. However, this is not always the case if it is a very expert topic. This can also discourage editorial staff to inform more about educational activities. One of the weaknesses of the internal environment of the Ministry of Education is directly managed organizations. As we have already mentioned, all outcomes must go through scrutiny and consultation with the Ministry of Education. As a result, these organizations are often perceived as unnecessary, and the official and ordinary citizen is hardly in their business. The Ministry of Education should consider whether the PRO should not communicate more effectively, while interacting proactively with journalists on specialist topics.

As we have seen in the SWOT analysis, the risks from the external environment are also affected by communication. The Ministry of Education does not know how to influence them, but the role of its communications department should be to confidently respond to the risks due to its strengths (Butoracova Sindleryova, Ferencova, 2009). If the Ministry of Education knows that the public is not interested in scientific and professional themes, it should make more effort to popularize these themes and bring them to the widest possible group of people. A press release or a brief press conference is not enough in this case.

From the risks we have defined in the SWOT analysis, we are discussing the still decreasing number of pupils. In recent years, it has declined sharply, but the Department of Education has only very limited communication from our point of view. It should explain more to the public what it means to school if it has fewer pupils. What this means for the quality of student learning. Education is an area where there is a lot of interesting analytical data. But they remain hidden from view of the public. Recently, analysts from the Institute of Educational Policy have written several publications. The Ministry of Education has published them on the website, despite not working with the Institute anymore. Their statements should be publicly documented by numbers, data, so that it is understandable to the ordinary citizen. A relevant example would be if the Ministry of Education states that in Slovakia there are many schools and by reference states the fact that in 2014/2015 there were 415 schools with less than 50 pupils, while another school in the neighbouring community is within 5 km. There are several ways to improve the media communication of one of the public policy actors.

There are many factors in the work of the communications department, demonstrated in the SWOT analysis, but in the subchapter as well in more effective communication engagement. Possible solutions to improve the communication of the Ministry of Education have been defined. They are summarized in a clear list below.

- Reflect the power and audience of the media.
- Communicate proactive topics that are of interest to the media.
- Proactively draw attention to new statistics and numbers.
- Proactive communication should be in balance with reactive communication.
- Prevent the scandal of the resort by confronting the problem before the media find it.

- Use crisis communication.
- Regularly organize press conferences with less labor.
- Journalist at the informal meetings to explain the context in education.
- Allow journalists to consult professional topics with heads of individual sections of the Ministry of Education.
- Increasingly and creatively use the profile of the Ministry of Education on the Facebook social network.
- Publish short videos from the work outings of the Minister of Education.
- Publish short video views on the events that move the company.
- Publish the daily program of the Minister of Education.
- Refinement of the official language where it is not necessary.
- Information to target parent and pupil as a key element in education.
- Communicate more strongly support for the reform of education.

Measures should also be taken by direct organizations to change their current media image. At present, when fully responsive in the communication to the Ministry of Education, they appear non-existent. In doing so, they often perform irreplaceable activities in the field of education. Through the SWOT analysis, defined measures and proposals to improve media communication for the PRO have been shown.

- Regularly issue press releases about organizational tasks.
- Publish them on their website at the Ministry of Education.
- Regularly update website data.
- Publish short videos and PRO statements.
- Be more active in communicating with the media through the Communications Department of the Ministry of Education.
- Notify proactive journalists about the performance of the organization.
- Enable journalists to communicate with experts in the organization.
- Create a database of journalists with whom a directly managed organization communicates and sends press releases.
- Clearly explain the principles of national projects and the use of Eurofunds.
- More communicate to the public why we need individual directly managed organizations.
- Verify the communication model that the communications department will issue a PRO statement according to the set rules and refer it to an employee of a directly managed organization that explains the details.

CONCLUSION

The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic is a public policy actor which carries out activity in the public interest and through public funds. Therefore, they must inform citizens about their activities, make deductions from the Government Program Statement and explain the educational policy they are promoting. The Department of Communication has developed its own communication system, but contains shortcomings as highlighted in SWOT analysis. It does not use communication effectively. All journalist issues, not just the minister, focus on the communications industry. All outputs must be consulted by the communication department, since directly managed ministry organizations do not have their own authority to express themselves to the media. The very large number of directly managed organizations communicating through the Ministry of

Education and the frequent change in the staffing of the communication department are a brake of the effective communication of the Ministry of Education in relation to the public and the media. These weaknesses should be eliminated as quickly as possible. In doing so, an increase in the efficiency and interference of the Ministry of Education's communication as a public policy actor as well as directly managed organizations may occur. The underlined, summarized, individual proposals could lead to a partial correction of the negative media image of the education sector.

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