

GETTING READY FOR TROUBLE

Symposium & workshop on communication for evidence-informed policy-making in crisis management

Thursday 27 November 2025 : Stakeholder workshop

10:30 - Registration

11:00 - Welcome

Niel Hens, Professor of Biostatistics, Hasselt University (Belgium), and coordinator of the BE-PIN project

11:30 - Keynote: Communicating science during COVID-19: comparing insider and outsider strategies

Paul Cairney, Professor of Political Science, University of Stirling (Scotland)

This talk draws on insights from interest group studies to compare two strategies for communicating science advice. One involves an insider strategy: following informal 'rules of the game' to remain included and respected by policymakers. The other is an outsider strategy, emphasising critical distance from government policy, and an appeal to like-minded outsiders.

12:00 - Lunch

12:45 - Simulation exercise of communication processes for decision-making

Speaking Up—or Staying Silent? What to Say During a Pandemic

Jeannette de Boer and Femke Overbosch, Pandemic and Disaster Preparedness Center (Netherlands)

Outbreaks of infectious diseases are nothing new. However, the frequency with which major international outbreaks or pandemics occur is increasing. The threat of another pandemic is real. The prolonged COVID-19 pandemic has taught us that each phase of a pandemic requires different approaches. These approaches extend beyond the biomedical field to the economic and socio-cultural fields as well. This includes communication. In our presentation, we will walk you through a fictional yet realistic scenario of an avian flu outbreak. At various points in the scenario, we will pause and challenge you with the strategic question: "What (not) to say in a pandemic?"

13:45 - Lessons learned on science communication from the COVID-19 pandemic in Belgium

Ingrid van Marion and David Domingo, BE-PIN project, ReSIC-ULB (Belgium)

14:15 - Challenges and best practices: experiences of Belgian stakeholders

Contributions from stakeholders as proposed in registration process

15:15 – Coffee break

15:45 - International experiences

- Communication during the COVID-19 pandemic in Germany. *Simone Rödder (Leibniz Institute for the Analysis of Biodiversity)*
- Music, medicine, and meaning: indigenous knowledge and health messaging in the time of COVID-19. *Rodrigo Ong (University of the Philippines)*
- Communicating science in health crises in Malawi. *Wezi Nungu Ngaiyaye (Malawi Liverpool Wellcome Research Programme)*
- Science sparring for science-policy dialogue in Finland. *Tommi Kärkkäinen and Jaakko Kuosmanen (Finnish Academy of Science)*
- Integrated science advice for policy in the Netherlands and beyond. *Tomris Cesuroglu (Pandemic and Disaster Preparedness Center)*

16:45 - Closing remarks

17:00 - 18:00 Networking drinks

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Friday 28 November 2025 : Scientific symposium

8:00 - Registration

8:30 - Welcome

Marius Gilbert, vice-rector of research, valorisation, culture and science mediation at ULB

9:00 - Keynote: Expertise in crisis

Simone Rödder, Head of the Centre for Knowledge Exchange, Leibniz Institute for the Analysis of Biodiversity

The talk will explore the complicated position of science in the current political environment, as an expertise to which a society turns to solve public health crises, while expertise is facing a crisis itself.

9:45 - Session 1: From (scientific) evidence to decisions: the communication processes of EIPM related to crisis preparedness and response

Moderator: Ingrid van Marion, ReSIC-ULB

- I Know Someone: How Personal Relationships Influence Evidence-Informed Policy-Making.
Tiago Durães (University of Porto, Portugal)
- Unpacking Policy Learning of Subnational Governments in Authoritarian Contexts.
Hao Zha (University of Oxford, UK)
- “Subservient to experts”: examining the claims of evidence-informed policymaking in Austria during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Clemence Bouchat (KU Leuven, Belgium)
- Institutionalizing Science Communication: Lessons from the Global South and North for Evidence-Informed Crisis Response.
Famida Khan (Indian National Science Academy, India)
- Science for policy communication processes for pandemic management in Belgium.
Ingrid van Marion (ReSIC-ULB, Belgium)

11:00 – Coffee break

11:30 - Session 2: Governance of EIPM in crisis times

Moderators: Miriam Saso and Eveline Cleynen, Sciensano

- Crisis Advice during COVID-19: Lessons from Seven European Countries.
Tomris Cesuroglu, Charlotte Waltz, Ferrán Castaño Rosario, Danique ten Bokkel Huinink and Anja Schreijer (Pandemic and Disaster Preparedness Center, Netherlands)
- Ethics Advice in Times of Crisis: Epistemic Failures and the Role of Polycentric Knowledge.
Holger Straßheim, Bielefeld University, Germany
- Societal intelligence: a knowledge approach to crisis governance.
Chiara Russo and Wouter Van Dooren (University of Antwerp, Belgium), Peter Triantafyllou (Roskilde University, Denmark), Steven Nömmik (Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia), Jaime García Rayado (University of Zaragoza, Spain)
- Beyond linearity and co-production in science-policy interaction – understanding the model of hypothesis testing and its role in the future of science-for-policy ecosystems.
Tommi Kärkkäinen and Jaakko Kuosmanen (Finnish Academy of Science and Letters, Finland)
- Pandemic governance in Belgium: lessons from the COVID-19 crisis.
Miriam Saso, Shona Cosgrove and Eveline Cleynen (Sciensano, Belgium)

12:45 - Lunch

13:30 - Session 3: Citizen perspectives on and expectations of public policy communication during crises

Moderator: Annelies Mondelaers, University of Antwerp

- RISCOM: Citizen Risk Perception, Disinformation, and Community Resilience in the Context of Flood Emergencies. *Ángela Castrechini (Universitat de Barcelona, Catalonia), with I. Pellicer, M. Vancea, I. Salazar, O. Hakam, S. Valera, A. Forés and T. Sauras – to be confirmed*
- What do citizens understand by pandemic preparedness? A comparative study in four European countries. *Mart van Dijk, Catarina Filipe Santos Ribeiro, Anne Wester, Pauline Dirven, Floor Kroese, Saskia Euser and Jet Sanders (RIVM, Netherlands), Clare Delargy and Aaron Deegan (Dept of Health, Ireland), Andreja Belcak (National Institute of Public Health, Slovenia), Maria Falcon Romero (University of Murcia, Spain), and the international consortium on Pandemic Preparedness and Behaviour.*
- Public engagement and citizen perspectives on communication during health crises. *Marlies Saelaert, Chloé Mayeur and Wannes Van Hoof (Sciensano, Belgium), Annelies Mondelaers and Erika Vlieghe (University of Antwerp, Belgium)*

14:15 - Session 4: Public communication of (evidence-informed) policy during a crisis

Moderator: David Domingo, ReSIC-ULB

- Cross-Country Infodemic Evidence from Bangladesh, India and the United Kingdom: Policy Implications For Disaster Risk and Crisis Communication. *Jyoti Mishra (University of Leeds, UK), Shabana Khan (Indian Research Academy, India) and Nova Ahmed, (North-South University, Bangladesh)*
- Managing Risks through Mundane Governance: Crisis Communication and the Making of Non-Incidents. *Michiel Oudheusden and Keje Boersma (VU Amsterdam, Netherlands)*
- Metaphors in Public Health Crisis Communication: Lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic. *Gudrun Reijnierse (VU Amsterdam, Netherlands)*

15:00 – Coffee break

15:30 - Session 4: Public communication of (evidence-informed) policy during a crisis (continued)

- Autonomy at risk: COVID-19, the WHO and the ethics of science communication during uncertain times. *Seppe van Bladel, Matthias Bogaert, Bram Jansens, Veerle Provoost (Ghent University, Belgium)*
- From COVID-19 to chronic disease: How public health institutes can lead communication in the 'silent pandemic' of NCDs. *Stefan Schaub and Anke Spura (Bundesinstitut für Öffentliche Gesundheit, Germany), Federica Rossetti (Sciensano, Belgium), Charlott Elise Gyllenhammar Nordstrøm (Directorate of Health, Norway)*
- Communicating science through evidence in the media. *Pernille Almlund (Roskilde University, Denmark)*
- Scientific experts in Belgian newspapers during the COVID-19 crisis. *David Domingo, Ingrid van Marion and Sébastien De Valeriola (ReSIC-ULB, Belgium)*

16:30 - Session 5: Professional knowledge and competences for an efficient EIPM ecosystem

Moderator: Hilde Stevens, I3health-ULB

- Evaluating the Quality of Public Science Dissemination: An Evaluation Framework for Creative, Interactive, and Evidence-Based Crisis Communication. *Priscilla Van Even (KU Leuven, Belgium)*
- Integrating ethics expertise during the times of crisis: development of capabilities-enhancing tools for policymakers. *Marija Antanavičiūtė (University of Birmingham, UK)*
- The need for knowledge brokers to receive training in communicating risk and uncertainty effectively. *David Schley (Sense about Science, UK)*
- Training for pandemic preparedness in Belgium. *Caroline Van Swieten (I3h-ULB, Belgium)*

17:30 - Closing remarks

18:00 - 19:00 Networking drinks