



## Science Communication Workshop – Summary

# Science Communication in Political and Geopolitical Contexts

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**Participants:** Anna M. Doze (University of Groningen, NL) - chairperson; Federico Dattila (Polytechnic of Turin, IT); Abigail Jiang (Harvard University, US), Hao Nick Zhang (Johns Hopkins University, US); Nancy Wainaina (journalist, NG).

**MOTIVATION AND PAST EXPERIENCE.** Initially, we discussed our initial motivation to join the discussion. We all felt that politics fails in giving the right importance to science and that the long-standing connection between science and society is currently broken.

Nancy shared story about her own country, where very tiny funding is allocated to science, forcing scientists to emigrate abroad. Hao Nick and Abigail shared their experience in USA and the increasing anti-immigration wave in the country. Federico described his current involvement in politics in addition to science. Besides, out of his experience he stated that very often politicians do not have any technical background, and they simply do not understand science.

**CHALLENGES.** One crucial challenge arose during the discussion, *i.e.* the broken link between science and society. In fact, while during the past century society did recognize the contribution of science to improving their welfare (e.g. household appliance), nowadays science is not able anymore to solve people's problems, or at least people are unable to see this link. Since society does not find science any longer valuable to face ongoing threads, here follows defunding and mistrust. To regain confidence of peers is increasingly difficult for scientists, as much of society sees them as intellectual outsiders and will not even listen to them any longer.

**POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS.** To regain confidence and reestablish a strong link between society and science, equal exchange is required, perhaps mediated by a third stakeholder, which may be mass media and journalists. This way, the common perception in society of excessive elitism among scientists will be avoided.

Such exchange could be easily carried out by recording short video pills of non-scientists presenting their cases and needs together with short video pills of scientists describing their research. Rather than a typical Q&A approach (where the scientist provides knowledge from its ivory tower), this will be a natural match between problems and solutions.

To open such communication activity also to non-digital audience, physical open exchanges between citizens and scientists could be organized in public places, with a journalist as the moderator.

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