

# **Strategic Communication of the Greek Public Administration for the handling of the Refugee Crisis:**

## **A critical review on the Greek Institutional Speech**

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The Refugee Crisis has dominated the news in Greece and Europe throughout the winter 2015 and spring of 2016. As a matter of fact, it has managed to change for a period of time the image of Greece, spinning the financial crisis agenda. However, that did not change the fact that the great flows of immigrants and refugees constituted a crisis within a crisis for Greece. The Greek Government had to act swiftly to manage the flows and prepare the necessary infrastructure to accommodate and identify the incoming populations.

Quickly the positive image of the “hospitable” and “humane” Greece gave their place to the image of “unorganized” Greece that was not able to handle the crisis. In crisis situations, it is important to manage and maintain the control of the information environment. One important aspect in crisis management is the communicational level. In crisis situations it is of vital importance to reframe the narrative and the construction of a strong alternative perception that will keep positive attitudes towards the crisis manager and at the same time maintain his ethos as a capable manager of the situation.

In this case, the Greek government together with the regional authorities needed to keep control of the information flow and build on strategic communication messaging that would help manage effectively not only the image crisis but also subjective issues of the overall crisis.

This paper examines the Strategic Communication used by the Greek authorities and the Public Administration during the crisis. Three main questions are being discussed: What was the main strategic communication narrative in order to handle the crisis by the Greek Public Administration? How were strategically the messages constructed and how this strategy helped the strategic communication messaging. How effective were the strategic messages and narratives of the institutions and authorities in terms of crisis communication and management?

The research uses the qualitative content analysis and the crisis management and communication literature in order to examine the three main research questions. The item of the study is the Press Releases of the public administration Institutions involved in the crisis and a selective corpus of public speeches of government members and local authorities involved. The purpose is to gain an overall picture and critically examine the crisis management efforts of the Greek government and the Greek public administration at that time, concluding with lessons learned and proposing best practices for future situations.