

PROFESSIONAL-ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS: CREATING AUTHENTIC LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR FUTURE ORGANIZATIONAL SPOKESPERSONS

M. Netreba¹, M. Puntí-Brun², S. Espinosa-Mirabet², H. Gurkan³, G. Lappas⁴, J. Meirinhos⁵

¹*Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University (UKRAINE)*

²*University of Girona (SPAIN)*

³*İstinye Üniversitesi İstanbul (TURKEY)*

⁴*University of Western Macedonia (GREECE)*

⁵*Universidade do Porto (PORTUGAL)*

Abstract

This research addresses the gap between academic training and professional demands for organizational spokespersons across multiple countries, including Spain, Turkey, Ukraine, the United States, and EU institutions. The study's general objective is to examine this gap and propose an integrated competency framework for communication programs. Using semi-structured interviews with practicing spokespersons and communication directors, the research identifies essential competencies lacking in current higher education curricula.

The research highlights significant disparities between academic preparation and workplace requirements. It clarifies the distinction between communication director and spokesperson roles, with the former focusing on strategic direction and the latter on operational implementation of communication strategies. Based on these findings, an integrated competency framework is proposed for communication programs to better prepare graduates for spokesperson positions. These competencies are categorized into basic, occupational, and professional characteristics within the integrated competency framework. Essential competencies identified include analytical thinking, stress resistance, emotional intelligence, initiative, risk-taking ability, crisis management, communication skills, and strategic planning ability, among others.

The study's cross-cultural analysis provides valuable insights for curriculum development in communication programs worldwide, aiming to bridge the identified competency gaps and enhance graduates' preparedness for professional demands. This research aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 4, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Keywords: Spokesperson training, Communication programs, Specialized skills, Professional demands, Higher Education.

1 INTRODUCTION

The 21st century has witnessed unprecedented shifts in organizational communication dynamics, with spokespersons increasingly positioned at the critical intersection of institutional representation and public discourse. This evolution has created a complex professional landscape where traditional academic preparation often fails to align with emerging workplace demands. The rhetorical agility required of today's spokespersons transcends conventional skill sets typically emphasized in communication programs, creating what Moreno *et al.* [1] identify as a "competency paradox"—where theoretical understanding remains divorced from practical application in high-pressure communicative environments.

This research emerges from a troubling disparity identified in contemporary higher education: despite the growing sophistication of organizational communication needs, spokesperson training remains largely peripheral in communication curricula worldwide. Serra Simón *et al.* [2] revealed that among the top 100 universities offering communication programs according to the Times Higher Education ranking, merely 19 incorporate elements of spokesperson preparation—an inadequacy that reflects broader pedagogical challenges in developing authentic learning experiences for future communication professionals.

Our investigation traverses multiple national and institutional contexts (Spain, Turkey, Portugal, Ukraine, United States, and EU institutions) to interrogate the epistemological foundations of spokesperson preparation. Through a phenomenological lens, we examine how practicing professionals navigate the

gap between academic training and workplace demands, focusing on three interconnected dimensions: organizational knowledge matrices, media relations frameworks, and embodied communication competencies.

1.1 Theoretical Background

The theoretical underpinnings of spokesperson effectiveness have evolved significantly since the early work of Thous [3], who conceptualized the corporate spokesperson as a "mediatic emitter" functioning within increasingly complex information ecosystems. Subsequent research by De Waele *et al.* [4] [5] has expanded this foundation to include nonverbal communication dimensions, establishing that spokesperson credibility depends on an intricate interplay of verbal and visual cues during crisis situations—elements rarely addressed comprehensively in communication curricula.

The pedagogical challenge in spokesperson training connects to broader debates about praxis-oriented education in communication disciplines. As Rodríguez-Fernández and Vázquez-Sande [6] argue, communication programs often privilege theoretical frameworks over experiential learning, creating graduates who possess conceptual understanding but lack the situational intelligence necessary for effective organizational representation. This gap becomes particularly pronounced during crisis communication scenarios, where Capurro *et al.* [7] demonstrate that spokesperson effectiveness correlates strongly with adaptability and emotional intelligence rather than mere technical knowledge.

Constantin and Petrucă's [8] influential model of spokesperson competency development provides a tripartite framework that informs our research approach: basic competencies (foundational attributes including analytical thinking and emotional resilience), occupational characteristics (contextual skills such as crisis management and media literacy), and professional characteristics (advanced capabilities including strategic messaging and public discourse management). This model allows us to systematically analyze the misalignment between academic preparation and professional requirements across diverse cultural and institutional settings.

Our research extends these theoretical perspectives by proposing an integrated competency framework that communication programs can implement to create authentic learning experiences. By examining the lived experiences of practicing spokespersons across multiple countries, we identify critical pedagogical interventions that can bridge the theory-practice divide, ultimately enhancing graduates' preparedness for the multifaceted demands of contemporary organizational communication.

2 METHODOLOGY

As previously mentioned, this research's general objective (GO) is to examine the critical gap between academic training and professional demands for organizational spokespersons across multiple countries. As for the specific objectives of the research, they are to identify essential competencies lacking in current higher education curricula for spokespersons (SO1), clarify the distinction between communication director and spokesperson roles (SO2), and propose an integrated competency framework for communication programs (SO3).

We used a qualitative methodology using semi-structured questionnaires with current spokespersons in different countries and institutions. The information that would be obtained is about the four main areas of knowledge of their profession: their opinion of the current professional spokespersons about the training obtained by their Academia season, the main qualities of an organization spokesperson, and the real differences between a communication director and a spokesperson.

The questions were as open as those who asked wanted to answer. It can be a valuable methodological tool to gather insights and perspectives directly from professionals in the field. This qualitative research approach allows for a deeper understanding of the spokesperson role, their experiences, challenges, and best practices. The methodology for conducting the semi-structured questionnaires usually includes the following steps:

Firstly, the selection of participants. We have selected representatives of various industries, organizations, and levels of experience from different countries. Representatives of corporate companies, government agencies, non-profit organizations, and other sectors.

Secondly, the semi-structured interviews were conducted by personal communication or in person through open-ended questions. The structure was the same list of questions that were repeated in the same order [9]. The questions were related to the main points we need to achieve regarding the professional skills of their jobs:

- 1 What do you think should be the qualities/competencies that a spokesperson for an institution/organization should have?
- 2 What should be the difference between a communication director and a spokesperson?
- 3 Should it be the same person or not in an institution/organization? why?
- 4 How do you think the universities in your country approach this field of study?

Participants belong to public or private organizations in which they act as spokespersons. In some cases, in addition to being spokespersons, they are also communication directors. The interview participants are the following professionals (Table 1):

Table 1. Spokespersons and Experts who have participated in the study

Spokesperson / expert name	Current position
Çağdaş Albek	Spokesperson of Ayhanlar Holding (Turkey)
Çise Ayhan	Spokesperson of işinolacak (Turkey)
Jaume Duch Guillot	Minister of European Union and Foreign Action of the Government of the Generalitat de Catalunya (Spain) since 2024. Former spokesperson of the European Parliament and Director-General of Communication of the institution from 2017 to 2024
Iryna Karmelyuk	Head of the Non-Governmental Organization "Youth Labor Exchange - Perspektiva", deputy head of the board of the "Our Future" Foundation, and Honored Journalist (Ukraine)
Kathy Matilla	General Director of Strategy Consultants in Management and Communication (Spain)
Sílvia Paneque	Minister of Territory, Housing, Ecological Transition, and Spokesperson for the Government of the Generalitat de Catalunya (Spain) since August 2024
Stylianos Petsas	Ex-Deputy Minister to the Prime Minister of Greece Kyriakos Mitsotakis, from July 9th, 2019 to January 4th, 2021. Currently a Member of the Parliament (Greece)
Patricia Plaja Perez	Former Spokesperson for the Government of the Generalitat de Catalunya (Spain) from 2021 to 2024
Maria Luisa Rossel	Press Secretary for communications in Spanish and national campaigns of the National Wildlife Federation in English (United States)
Yusuf Sağlam	Spokesperson of Paranolacak (Turkey)
Omiros Tsapalos	Ministry of Finance Spokesperson, Hellenic Republic (Greece)
Heorhii Tykhyi	Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Ukraine)
Natalia Vishnevskaya	Head of the Press Office of the Department of Health Protection of the Kyiv City State Administration (Ukraine)

Source: Own elaboration.

Finally, the transcription and the analysis were done. Qualitative data analysis techniques such as thematic analysis, coding, and categorization can be used to identify patterns, themes, and key takeaways from interviews. Concerning the qualities or competencies that a spokesperson for an organization or institution should have, the results of the analysis of the interviews have been classified in three categories: knowledge about the organization or institution, knowledge of the journalists and media, and skills of the spokesperson. In addition to that, this information has been cross-referenced with the information obtained from the referents of the revised literature.

By including semi-structured interviews with currently practicing speakers, the research methodology can capture real-world experience and provide practical insight into the issues, strategies, and skills required to be effective in this job. This methodology adds depth and richness to the overall understanding of the role of a spokesperson beyond just curricula analysis.

3 RESULTS

According to the interviews carried out for this research, in universities, there is usually little specific content on spokesperson training. In the interviews, the question 'How do you think the universities in your country approach this field of study?' was asked, followed by the results obtained from each of the studied countries (the United States, Spain, Ukraine, Turkey, and Greece). Responses from European Union institutions were not included, as it was a political matter that spokesperson communication services were not responsible for addressing.

In the United States, there are two main areas of study, according to Maria Luisa Rossel, the National Wildlife Federation Press Secretary for Spanish Communications and National Campaigns: strategic communication and political communication. In both areas, according to Rossel (2023), topics such as crisis situations, digital communications, and the use of social networks are discussed. In addition, the interviewee adds that "there is still room to develop the role of the spokesperson and its professionalization".

This feeling that there is still much to be improved in university education given to spokespersons in communication careers is shared by other professionals in the sector. In Spain, there are few universities in where there is a good presence of Public Relations subjects in their curriculum, as explained by Kathy Matilla, the Director General of Management and Communication Strategies Consultants (2023). Spokesperson training content is usually integrated into crisis communication subjects, adds Matilla, and more sporadically into a specific subject. Although there is an abundant academic bibliography, the training of spokespersons is not integrated into the rest of the Spanish universities. Matilla summarizes the situation of the Public Relations studies as follows:

"The Spanish degrees are mostly called Advertising and Public Relations (inherited from the old degrees before the EHEA) and in them it is common for the PR's to have less teaching content - quantitatively-, more tactical than strategic and even purely instrumental -qualitatively-, and be taught by specialists in other disciplines (journalism, advertising, marketing...)"

"There are no educational programs for the training of spokesmen in universities [in Ukraine]", affirms Iryna Karmelyuk, Head of Non-Governmental organization Youth Labor Exchange Perspektiva and Deputy of the board of the Our Future Foundation (2023). In addition, Karmelyuk explained that the majority of the universities in Ukraine prepare students for journalism and public relations. This statement is also maintained by Natalia Vishnevskaya, Head of the press office of the Department of Health Protection of the Kyiv City State Administration from the year 2014 (2023). Only a few disciplines are related to the work of a spokesperson, added Karmelyuk, such as "Organization of the work of press offices", "Public communications", or "Speech Writing". Recently, according to Vishnevskaya, private professional schools and training centers specialized in press secretaries' training and communication specialists have opened.

The research on spokesperson training at universities in Turkey reveals a predominantly theoretical approach, highlighting a growing need for practical programs, with consensus among the interviewees. There is also consensus about the need for stronger industry connections. Yusuf Sağlam, Spokesperson of Paranolacak (2025), suggested incorporating case studies and simulations. Specialized programs focusing on institutional spokespersons are lacking, according to Çise Ayhan, Spokesperson of İşin Olacak (2025). Updating programs to include more English courses and real-world projects is recommended by Çağdas Albez, Spokesperson of Ayhanlar Holding (2025), to address the current gap.

"In Greece, studies around Communication are not as mature as abroad and they are often linked to another field of study, acting as a 'supplement'", explained Omiros Tsapalos, Ministry of Finance Spokesperson in the Hellenic Republic (2025). Tsapalos adds that digital communication is not emphasized, with private studies being very expensive. According to Stylianos Petsas, Former Spokesperson of the Hellenic Republic (2025), the approach tends to be academic and theoretical, lacking connection to daily professional practice. Enriching curricula with case studies and insights from experienced professionals is recommended to bridge this gap and provide practical, real-life experiences, said Petsas.

Having identified a gap between the content offered by universities regarding spokesperson training and the needs of the industry and organizations, the first interview question, 'What do you think should be the qualities/competences that a spokesperson for an institution/organization should have?' will be analyzed. In Table 2, there are the key competencies of spokespersons mentioned by the interviewees, classified by country. The competencies are ordered from most to least mentioned.

Table 2. Key Spokesperson Competences by Country

	Greece	Spain	Ukraine	USA	Turkey
Analytic and strategic thinking	X	X	X		X
Knowledge about organization	X	X		X	X
Media literacy / Media relations	X	X		X	X
Calm and non-impulsive character / Avoid controversies	X	X		X	
Communication skills (verbal and non verbal)		X	X		X
Crisis management skills	X			X	X
Clear and precise communication with the audience	X		X		
Emotional intelligence			X		X
Public speaking skills		X	X		
Stress resistance	X		X		
Ability to ask the right questions			X		
Awareness and resourcefulness			X		
Clear and effective promotion	X				
Credibility					X
Discretion and good manners		X			
Empathy					X
Ethical conduct / Legal awareness					X
Foreign language					X
Global perspective					X
Initiative and independence			X		
Interest in life and people / Socialability			X		
Literacy (writing, speaking, thinking)			X		
Political capacity		X			
Quick decision making / Adaptability to technologies			X		
Risk-taking and responsibility			X		

Source: Own elaboration based on qualitative interview data from national spokespersons.

Based on the responses from the interviewees, the classification of spokesperson skills and competencies has been divided into three main categories: Basic Competences, Occupational Characteristics, and Professional Characteristics. Basic Competences encompass fundamental abilities and traits that are essential for any spokesperson, such as analytical thinking, stress resistance, and effective communication. These skills form the foundation for a spokesperson's ability to interact with the public and convey messages clearly and accurately. Occupational Characteristics focus on the practical and situational aspects of the role, including initiative, risk-taking, and the ability to respond swiftly to new developments. These traits enable a spokesperson to handle the dynamic and often unpredictable nature of their work. Finally, Professional Characteristics emphasize the advanced skills and behaviors necessary for maintaining credibility and authority, such as discretion, strategic communication planning, and public speaking proficiency. Together, these categories provide a comprehensive framework for evaluating and developing the competencies required for effective spokespersonship (See Table 3).

Table 3. Professional Profile of Spokesperson.

Basic Competences	Occupational Characteristics	Professional Characteristics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analytical and strategic thinking • Calm character and stress resistance • Sociability and good manners • Literacy (writing, speaking, thinking) • Interest in life and people • Awareness and resourcefulness • Clear and precise communication with the audience • Correct and neutral language • Credibility and ethical conduct • Knowledge of the field or issue (entity, organization, policies, products, services) • Emotional intelligence and empathy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiative and independence • Risk-taking and responsibility • Quick decision-making and adaptability to new technologies • Crisis management skills • Ability to ask the right questions • Mastery of crisis situation manual • Political capacity • Legal awareness • Media literacy and media relations • Familiarity with internal company dynamics • Clear and effective promotion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restraint and discretion • Good verbal and non-verbal communication • Effective communication strategy planning and implementation • Communication skills (oral and written) • Public speaking skills • Foreign language proficiency • Global perspective

Source: Own elaboration according to the answers of the interviews.

Tsapalos (2025) summarizes some of the qualities and competencies that a spokesperson of an institution or organization should have as follows:

“The ‘professional profile’ of a spokesperson should combine the knowledge, skills, and behaviors that allow them to: (a) contribute constructively to the development of the communication strategy, (b) deliver the chosen message with clarity and simplicity to the target audience [...], (c) remain calm and concise, projecting confidence and control in handling issues, (d) possess a broad intellectual background to address a wide range of topics without appearing to improvise.”

Regarding the organization or institution, the interviewees mentioned that it was necessary to know the organization or institution in depth and know its strongest and weakest areas. “The first quality of a spokesperson is to know the institution for which they work very well, to really know it beyond its rules”, explained Jaume Duch, Former Spokesperson and General Director of Communication of the European Parliament (2023). Moreover, according to Duch, the spokesperson should feel a true identification with this institution; this is not a job that has to be done automatically. As Sağlam (2015) points out, a spokesperson serves as the public relations face of an institution, which is why they are an important figure in companies and organizations and carry significant responsibility. Ayhan (2025) defines the spokesperson as “a key figure who communicates official statements on behalf of the entity, manages strategic communication during crises, and upholds the reputation of the brand or institution”.

Regarding journalists and media, according to the interviews, it was necessary to know the journalists who work on the correspondent topics of the organization or institution, have a close and permanent relationship with journalists, preferably have experience as a journalist, and know the dynamics of operation and needs of the media. In addition, not only knowing the topics you are going to talk about but also the needs of the people you are going to talk to, be they journalists, professors, or representatives of European civil society organizations, explained Duch (2023).

There is a certain consensus among those interviewed on the difference between a communication director and a spokesperson, and in the fact that they represent two different roles. For the majority of those interviewed, the communication director is the person who designs and directs the communication strategy of a public or private organization. He/she is also the person who coordinates the organization's communication services. On the other hand, the spokesperson is a professional who communicates the messages of this strategy to journalists and the media. The communication director, according to Vishnevskaya (2023), is more focused on “strategic communication management, brand development, and long-term communication goals of the organization”, while the spokesperson is on a more operational level, providing interaction with the media and responding to inquiries. According to the data from the interviews, these two roles do not necessarily have to be assumed by the same person; it depends on each situation.

“It is recommended that the director of communication can also perform the functions of spokesperson, although we must be certain that he/she has all the necessary characteristics,” said Patricia Plaja,

Former Spokesperson for the Government of the Generalitat de Catalunya (2023). This is the case of Jaume Duch, who acted as Spokesperson and General Director of Communication of the European Parliament. According to him, the main advantage of being the same person is that they do not have to be coordinated, since “the same person who heads the house's communication services is the one who later represents the house abroad on issues that are not clearly politicians”.

Sílvia Paneque, the current Spokesperson for the Government of the Generalitat de Catalunya (2025), highlighted the supportive role of the communication director in helping the spokesperson of the Government articulate messages more effectively, while emphasizing that the core content must come from the Government itself. Additionally, the interviewee stressed the importance of the spokesperson having a strong connection with the institution, as this relationship is crucial for ensuring the communication is as effective as possible.

According to the interviewees from Turkey, there is a clear distinction between the roles of a communication director and a spokesperson. The communication director is responsible for the institution's overall communication strategy, focusing on strategic long-term planning, according to Sağlam (2025), and managing the corporate communication team, according to Ayhan (2025). In contrast, Sağlam explained that the spokesperson directly engages with the media, delivering public statements and handling real-time communication and crisis management. While the communication director is the strategist, the spokesperson is the executor of that strategy, according to Ayhan. The interviewees from Turkey make a clear distinction between the two roles, which can also be seen in how Albek (2025) expresses himself:

“The communication director focuses on managing the company's overall communication strategy [...] A spokesperson, on the other hand, is the public-facing representative who delivers the company's messages directly to the media, stakeholders, and other relevant groups.”

It is generally more efficient to separate these roles, according to the consensus of the interviewees from Turkey, although in smaller organizations, they might be combined, as explained by Ayhan and Albek. “If one person assumes both roles, they may struggle to balance the strategic oversight required for long-term planning with the immediate demands of daily media relations”, argues Sağlam. The effectiveness of this separation depends on the size, industry, and organizational structure, as managing both roles simultaneously can be challenging, especially in crises, concluded Albek.

The interviewees from Greece also emphasize the same as Turkey. The communication director is responsible for organizing, coordinating, and running the Press Office, focusing on strategy and staying within the office, explained Tsapalos (2025). In contrast, Tsapalos added that “the spokesperson also acts as a ‘salesperson’ of the news, services, products produced by an entity”, engaging directly with the public and media, and often working outside the office. The interviewees emphasized that it is challenging to manage both roles simultaneously due to the time and execution demands. Petsas (2025) also noted that the communication director should not assume the role of spokesperson; instead, both roles should have strong chemistry and work closely together. The spokesperson, added Petsas, should focus on shaping and endorsing content that supports the broader communication strategy, rather than getting bogged down in daily routines.

The figure of the spokesperson is sometimes connected with communication in crisis situations. In some organizations, the communication director acts as spokesperson for the organization on a regular basis; but, in crisis situations, according to Matilla (2023), there is another person who acts as spokesperson. If the communication director is also the organization's spokesperson, said Plaja (2023), it may be necessary in specific situations to be accompanied by a technical profile to give explanations in the clearest possible way.

Therefore, according to Matilla, whether the two roles coincide in the same person depends not only on communication skills, but also on the nature of the content of the ideas to be communicated and the strategic objective that is intended to be achieved: “In communication, in general, there are no fixed or universally applicable formulas”.

The landscape of spokesperson preparation is further complicated by rapid technological advancements, particularly in artificial intelligence. As articulated by Tykhyi (2025) in our primary research, Ukraine's implementation of “Victoria AI”—the first virtual spokesperson developed for a government ministry—represents a paradigm shift in how we conceptualize the spokesperson role. This AI-powered digital persona, modelled after singer Rozalie Nombro, operates across the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' communication channels and incorporates innovative authenticity markers through QR code verification systems.

This integration of AI into governmental communications illustrates three critical dimensions of spokesperson evolution: organizational readiness to deploy advanced technologies, enhanced message consistency and accuracy through human-AI collaboration, and the transformation of spokesperson functions under technological influence. Victoria AI's engagement metrics demonstrate the potential of digital spokespersons to maintain substantive influence within contemporary communication ecosystems, suggesting new competency requirements for future professionals in this field.

Tykhyi's (2025) observations point toward emerging recommendations for spokesperson preparation that include AI integration capabilities, personalization strategies, interactive communication design, and multilingual proficiency—elements largely absent from current communication curricula. This technological dimension adds another layer to the competency framework needed for effective spokesperson training in higher education institutions.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the conversations held and the results obtained in the research presented here, we can conclude that the academic training of spokespersons across the studied countries—namely, the United States, Spain, Ukraine, Turkey, and Greece—presents significant gaps concerning the practical and strategic demands of the profession (OG). There is a shared perception among interviewees that current university programs tend to offer theoretical knowledge with limited practical application, insufficient emphasis on crisis communication, and weak connections to industry realities.

In countries like Ukraine and Greece, the absence or underdevelopment of specific university programs for spokesperson training is particularly pronounced, with professional training often relegated to private institutions. In Turkey, the need for applied learning and real-case simulations is a recurring concern, and in Spain, while there is a solid academic bibliography, the integration of Public Relations and spokesperson content remains marginal and uneven. In contrast, the United States shows a more structured division between strategic and political communication, yet professionals still identify room for enhancing the specialization of the spokesperson role.

The research also reveals a consensus on the importance of distinguishing between the roles of communication directors and spokespersons, emphasizing the need for complementary competencies and close collaboration, especially in contexts of high visibility or crisis (SO2). Interviewees highlight the necessity for spokespersons to embody deep knowledge of their institution, exhibit high levels of emotional intelligence, and develop trusted relationships with media professionals (SO1). A comprehensive competency framework is outlined, categorizing essential traits into basic, occupational, and professional characteristics, and underscoring qualities such as clarity, credibility, discretion, media literacy, and crisis communication skills.

By incorporating this framework into communication programs, educational institutions can equip students with the comprehensive skill set required for successful spokespersonship, bridging the gap between academic preparation and professional demands (SO3). Future research will focus on improving spokesperson roles through new technologies such as artificial intelligence, with ongoing studies analysing these innovative experiences. This aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 4, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Finally, the study points to emerging transformations in the profession driven by technological advancements, exemplified by the development of AI spokespersons such as Ukraine's "Victoria AI". These innovations signal a paradigmatic shift in institutional communication, requiring the inclusion of digital literacy, AI integration, and multilingual communication in future training programs. The results collectively highlight the urgency for universities to revise and modernize their curricula in line with the evolving functions and expectations of spokespersons in contemporary public and institutional spheres.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research represents one of the first collaborative actions among the different Consortium partners of an Erasmus Mundus Master's programme on spokesperson, which we hope will soon receive approval from the European Union.

REFERENCES

- [1] Á. Moreno, R. Tench, and P. Verhoeven, "Trust in Public Relations in the Age of Mistrusted Media: A European Perspective," *Publications*, vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 7, 2021.
- [2] J. Serra Simón, M. Puntí Brun, S. Espinosa Mirabet, and M. Netreba, "Spokespersons to explain the world: analysis of their relevance, competencies, and instruction," in *10th International Conference on Higher Education Advances (HEAd'24)*, pp. 1-8, 2024.
- [3] M. del C. Thous, "El portavoz corporativo, un emisor mediático," *Doctoral Thesis*, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2011.
- [4] A. De Waele, A. S. Claeys, V. Cauberghe, and G. Fannes, "Spokespersons' nonverbal behavior in times of crisis: The relative importance of visual and vocal cues," *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*, vol. 42, no. 4, pp. 441-460, 2018.
- [5] A. De Waele, A. S. Claeys, and M. Opgenhaffen, "Preparing to face the media in times of crisis: Training spokespersons' verbal and nonverbal cues," *Public Relations Review*, vol. 46, no. 2, 2020.
- [6] L. Rodríguez-Fernández and P. Vázquez-Sande, "Retos y perspectivas en la comunicación organizacional," *El profesional de la información*, vol. 28, no. 5, 2019.
- [7] G. Capurro, R. Maier, J. Tustin, C.G. Jardine, and M.S. Driedger, "The spokesperson matters: evaluating the crisis communication styles of primary spokespersons when presenting COVID-19 modeling data across three jurisdictions in Canada," *Journal of Risk Research*, vol. 25, no. 11-12, pp. 1395-1412, 2022.
- [8] A. Constantin and I. Petrucă, "The Role of the Spokesperson in the Process of Public Relations," *International Journal of Communication Research*, vol. 9, no. 3, pp. 261-265, 2019.
- [9] S.J. Tracy, *Qualitative research methods: Collecting evidence, crafting analysis, communicating impact*, John Wiley & Sons, 2020.