



Local, Regional and National level lobbying – a global approach to local needs

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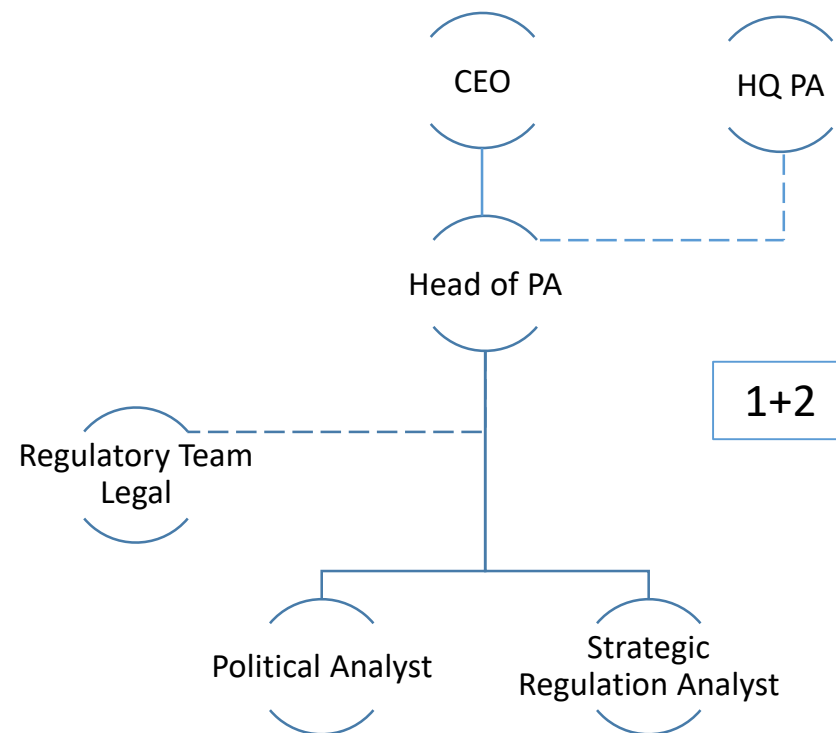
11 million customers nationwide
Revenue of 1,5 billion Euros (2018)
Staff: 4500 employees
Subsidiary of Deutsche Telekom

DT is present in more than 50 countries, but main focus is on Europe and USA. It has 200 million customers, revenue of 75,7 billion Euros (2018) and the staff of 216 000 employees. Deutsche Telekom is the largest telco in Europe and the sixth telco in the World.



YOUR PUBLIC AFFAIRS TEAM CHART

Main stakeholders: Ministry of Digital Affairs, National Regulatory Authorities: Office of Electronic Communications, Office of Competition and Customer Protection, National Institute of Telecommunications, Parliamentary Commission for Digitalization and Innovation, Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Technology, branch organizations, chambers and NGOs.



THREE PUBLIC AFFAIRS CHALLENGES YOU HAVE IDENTIFIED DUE TO RADICAL CHANGES IN 2019

- The myth of EU as a puppet in the hands of large corporations.
- Overwhelming pessimism paralyzing many initiatives.
- The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.

(Georg Bernard Shaw)

„Trust me, I’m from the European Union”

- For many years in Poland, the reference to European practice has been a proven method of argumentation on relations at the local, regional and national levels. The emulation of the Western model of the state and society was the dominant political narrative. For a long time, integration was seen only as "catching up with Western Europe" story. Almost every white paper has been topped off by EU wisdom as “smoking gun evidence”.



“The outsiders gotta leave us alone”

- Recently the landscape changed dramatically. In Poland, but not only, we can witness the process described by European Council on Foreign Relations as “de-Europeanisation”. The Polish government has openly embarked on a process of “de-Europeanisation” to give the country a greater sense of sovereignty and to push back against the socio-cultural model that it feels is imposed by Western Europe.



Tips & Tricks: stop taking things for granted

- The national and regional government is predominantly “Eurosceptic”, while at the local level pro-European opposition is quite strong. The spectrum of attitudes at the municipal level is very wide: from Euro-enthusiastic and openly gay mayor of the medium sized Northern town to catholic traditionalist from the Eastern South organizing protests against “EU driven forced secularization”. It's more important than ever to be aware of who you are talking to.

“No, you listen to me now”

- Hungarian and Polish leaders recently stressed that "we want to have a strong say, as these countries (in Central Europe) have a vision about the future of Europe". For instance governments, which have clashed with Brussels by resisting national quotas for asylum seekers, are now claiming that they were right from the very beginning. "Europe is gradually adopting our view on migration" the Czech Prime Minister said after meeting his Polish counterpart. There are plenty of such statements.



“Blood is thicker than water”

- In their advice on effective lobbying in Brussels, Burson-Marsteller used the term "Europeanisation of the message" and gave some tips on how to do it. Now reverse engineering is needed more and more often, because the concept of supranational power or transnational connections makes some recipients immediately suspicious. For those for whom the nation state in the nineteenth century model is the optimal standard, the wider perspective is not convincing at all.



Tips & Tricks: be very local

- Arguments of local knowledge and experience on national and regional forums gain great strength. There are many historical clues, examples and visions from the pre-war reality, such as the national re-industrialization concept or attachment to the coal based economy as the country's ultimate security guarantee. If you want to discuss anything with Polish politicians nowadays, it is better to go through history books than digital economy trends. They just love historical examples.

„Sovereignty reflex”

- At the central and regional level integration become almost a forbidden word. There is high distrust towards subnational activities like local governments engagement with EU. The only tolerated activity is the disbursement of funds. Even MEPs are accused of betrayal if they join the Commission criticism. “Accession (...) gives, unfortunately, an alibi and a EU justification for betrayal. The immunity of MEPs allows them to destroy their own countries of origin” according to government MP Prof. Pawłowicz.



„Spot the difference”

- EU flags have disappeared from Polish government press briefings. The official media message about Europe is mostly pessimistic: a migration crisis, Brexit, terrorism, German domination. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has changed the motto of its diplomatic service. The initial wording, “To serve Poland – to build Europe – to understand the world” was replaced with: “Faithful to my Homeland, the Republic of Poland”. Tone and the “look and feel” are changing fast at central and regional level.



Tips & Tricks: do not overdo it with blue

- The traditional emphasis on international or European character of the businesses can be counterproductive. Too much of Euro-optimism can be tricky at the central level. Even soft corporate diplomacy measures like events or sponsorship projects have changed recently. The same sponsors who financed the Schuman Parade are now shifting their focus to Polish Heroes of the War campaigns. So rather avoid „closer integration” as the central subject.

The case of Ringier Axel Springer CEO letter

- A leaked copy of a letter sent by the CEO of the Polish division of Ringier Axel Springer Group was probably the most discussed weekly internal letter to the employees in history. The news bureau of Poland's public television network made it the headlines of the day. The letter appeared following the Brussels summit on March 2017, the session which saw Donald Tusk re-elected as the President of the European Council, over strong objections from Poland's government.