

## Conclusions

### 10th International Seminar on Language and Journalism

#### «Clear language, a 21<sup>st</sup> century challenge»

- Clear communication allows people to easily find and understand the information they need, and **make informed decisions**.
- This type of communication should be considered a **citizen right**. Administrations and companies need to communicate clearly with citizens. Message clarity is linked to transparency, accountability and responsibility.
- **It does not mean oversimplifying the message** in a negative sense, **nor patronizing** the recipient. It entails clarity and accuracy, not watering down content.
- To elaborate clear messages it is essential to **think about the recipient** more than about the environment in which they are drawn up (administration, business...).
- **Laws should be written in plain language**, to ensure that all documents originating from them (regulations, instructions, forms...) can be clear.
- Clear communication is **cost effective**. It increases confidence in businesses and institutions, boosts their reputation and saves costs resulting from misunderstandings of forms, letters and any type of communications.
- Clear communication **is text** but also, **structure, layout, visual language, design, interactivity, usability, user experience...** This must be taken into account in all channels of the relationship between the citizen and administrations and businesses (computer, smartphones...).
- To apply clear language guidelines organizations need to be determined to do it. But that is not all. The **process needs to be professionalized** with the involvement of specialists with thorough knowledge of the techniques and guidelines.
- To be successful, language clarification initiatives need to be **promoted by the highest levels of the organization**. These are long-term projects, which need teams consisting of experts in the matter at stake, linguists, and specialists in clear language, design, usability....
- The existence of clear language **manuals and training courses is necessary**, but insufficient if their application is not turned into a requirement.
- Clear language is **not the same as easy reading** (aimed at, particularly, people with cognitive difficulties), but shares a common goal with it: Ensuring that all citizens have the information they need in an understandable manner.
- **The press must not forego clarity** in its content, form and structure. The pace at which news items are produced, and the dwindling, almost extinct, importance of the role of the editor have a negative impact on the final product, which is frequently less clear.
- **The press needs to avoid using** the euphemisms and other **obscure language** formulas that sources often use.