



PORTO

COMMUNICATION

Higher Education Staff Week

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Porto - Portugal

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Photo: Rita França

What kind of tools can we use to face this era of fake news and misinformation? How can we be better at communicating scientific results in the public eye? And how can we be prepared for crisis communication situations within organizations? This was the motto of the first edition of "Porto Communication in Higher Education: Building Trust", a Staff Week totally oriented to professionals in the area of communication in Higher Education, which took place between June 13 and 17, at the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Porto.

Over the course of the week, 70 professionals from the communication offices at several European universities had the opportunity to learn about relevant issues and discuss them with academics and consultants who have been recognized for their work in the areas of strategic and Crisis Communication, Brand/Institutional Reputation and Notoriety as well as enhancing the Public Dissemination of Science.

Reflection was also given to the efficient use of new communication platforms in the involvement of new publics and the contribution of researchers and scientists themselves in building this network.



Norman Macha
Technical University Munich - Germany

Was it your first staff week?

Yes, this was my first staff week and first time in Portugal as well.

What did you learn most from this experience in Porto?

Not anything I learned from one specific presentation or panel discussion but a realization: All European Universities, even though we come from vastly different countries with different laws and languages, face similar challenges in communications. Being connected to other communicators can help us face and overcome these with new perspectives and ideas.

What was one of the highlights of this staff week at FEUP?

The presentation about reputation management – an issue that has seen a sharp rise in interest in recent years but which communicators still struggle to fully grasp and understand. The presentation gave great insights and ideas about understanding, preventing and handling reputational issues. My overall highlight is the amazing group of people that I met during the Porto Communications Week. Weeks later, it still stuns me how fast you can make strong connections.

What did you like most about the city?

The bridges with the river beneath them are such a great spot to have a look at the city and watch the sunset. I was surprised how steep and uphill the city is but to be honest, I kind of miss walking uphill now that I'm back. And, of course, just the general vibe of the city and the people and the Port wine.



Johanna Saravanaradjou
Sorbonne University - France

Was it your first staff week?

Yes.

What did you learn most from this experience in Porto?

In one word: community. This staff week showed me the reality of this community. Being European is more than just building infrastructure together. It is about something human. I was delighted to see how we were growing together in so many ways and this in just one week. We are from different places, with different culture and best practices, but thanks to this amazing week, we could share our knowledge, learn and build. As a community. The European family.

What was one of the highlights of this staff week at FEUP?

It is super difficult to select just one highlight. There were so many: the quality and diversity of the speakers' profiles. We learned a lot. I've got back having made new friends who are now part of my life like it has been forever. And the incredible kindness of the people of Porto in general. But if I had to select just one highlight on the core staff week program, it will be Elsa's speech. Not only did I learn a lot about managing crisis, but I was totally hooked on the subject. Thanks to this I returned with a broader view on the extensive field of research in communication.

What did you like most about the city?

The stunning sunset view of the river and discovering Porto Tonic! It is definitely on the list of my favorite cocktails now.



Ellen Geerts
University of Applied Sciences and Arts Antwerp - Belgium

Was it your first staff week?

It was not my first staff week, but it was one of the most interesting ones and definitely the most fun one!

What did you learn most from this experience in Porto?

I was happy to see that more than half of the lectures during this week were very specifically about my field of work: science communication. Often staff weeks about communication concentrate their lectures or workshops on communication for student recruitment and not much else. I was glad to see that the organizing team of Porto Comms staff week took a significant interest in research and science communication. I learned a lot about using social media for communicating about research, which I found very useful seeing I have a love-hate relationship with social media myself.

What was one of the highlights of this staff week at FEUP?

Our visit to the biodiversity museum and the surrounding botanical gardens. I love museums and nature so this combined visit was right up my alley. Also our dinner by the seaside, but that was more about the great group of people I shared my meal with than it was about the location. Meeting so many wonderful, new people was the biggest highlight of the week.

What did you like most about the city?

I loved walking around the old part of town. The streets are cosy and around every corner there are more beautiful buildings. Even though I'm a bit scared of heights, I must say the views from the bridges are amazing!

On our day off, a couple of us went strolling along the river and enjoyed some port wine tasting. This was a very good way to end the week.



Claire Floury-Guépin
IUT de Valence / Université Grenoble Alpes
- France

Was it your first staff week?
No, I went to Finland 5 years ago.

What did you learn most from this experience in Porto?
It is possible to organise such an event with 70 people! For a first time it was a great achievement! Thank you for that.

What was one of the highlights of this staff week at FEUP?
I really like the way you mixed visits with academic knowledge and experiences.

What did you like most about the city?
The atmosphere (music, people, restaurants, the Douro...).



Christina Fortwängler
Technical University Munich - Germany

Was it your first staff week?
Yes, it was my first staff week, but I'll definitely apply again next year.

What did you learn most from this experience in Porto?
That there are universal issues that affect almost all European universities and that reflective, user-centered science communication is more important than ever.

What was one of the highlights of this staff week at FEUP?
The group. Everyone was so nice, open-minded and grew on me in just one week. I also really enjoyed the carefully selected activities and presentations, especially the influencer "@sciencewave" who offered a young and fresh look at science communication via Instagram.

What did you like most about the city?
Its beauty, culture, relaxed mentality and of course the proximity to the sea. I also loved the fact that on summer evenings everything happens on the streets.



Arelis Ardiles
Université de Lille - France

Was it your first staff week?
Yes, it was my first staff week and it was definitely an excellent way to start!

What did you learn most from this experience in Porto?
The opportunity to learn about colleagues also working in communication, but in such different ways, made this week a truly enriching experience. I was unsure about what I could learn during one week working with people doing the same job. I was completely wrong; it was a huge surprise to discover the differences and the common ground among the group. As a communication officer in the international office of the University of Lille, it was also a great experience to work in a multicultural and international environment.

What was one of the highlights of this staff week at FEUP?

The variety of presentations was definitely one of the best things about this week. To learn about all these people working in communication from several different areas and to exchange experiences, points of view and issues related to communication was very interesting. My favorite moment of each day was the coffee break. Every day, a new opportunity to meet someone and also the best way for networking.

What did you like most about the city?
It was my second time in Porto and what I like most about this city is definitely the Portuguese people. Portuguese people are always smiling, ready to help you. They are amazing, and it felt like a really warm welcome. The food is also incredible, and it makes me think about my home country, Venezuela.



Andrzej Charytoniuk
Wroclaw University of Science and Technology
- Poland

Was it your first staff week?
No, it was my second one. First time I was in Bergen, Norway, in 2019.

What did you learn most from this experience in Porto?
The most interesting meetings were those on crisis communication and the future of social media. The presentations of the individual participants were also very interesting, with many things worth implementing.

What was one of the highlights of this staff week at FEUP?
It was definitely the three organisers, Mafalda, Ana and Raquel, who did everything at every step to make our stay at FEUP perfect. And, of course, they succeeded.

What did you like most about the city?
It's been a long time since any city has impressed me as much as Porto. It was delightful. Atmospheric streets, delicious food, friendly people, no crowds, good transport, wonderful views. And the peaceful, relaxing rhythm of life. I would love to come back here again!

