



FROM Hayo van der Wal
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SUBJECT Managing the Challenges in Communication Facilities of SAIs and Strengthening their Relationship with the Media and NGOs

Outline

Modern society demands different communication from SAIs with the media, NGO's and other stakeholder and with the general public. In her presentation, Saskia J. Stuiveling, President of the Netherlands Court of Audit, will argue that SAIs need to change. They need to innovate, both in their work and in their communication, otherwise they will risk to become irrelevant.

In her presentation Ms Stuiveling will go into:

- Modern society and rapid changes
- The information revolution, the way in which information is produced and processed is rapidly changing and this has implications for SAI work.
- The consequences for SAIs: change, only doing what we always did means that at some point we will become irrelevant.
- SAIs need to innovate their work and modernise their communication:
 - In their work SAIs need to make use of new (technological) developments, this will make their contribution much more valuable for parliament and the general public, some (non-SAI) examples are: www.recovery.gov and www.usshahidi.org.
 - In order to inform parliament the SAIs needs to consider carefully what the best medium of information is, sometimes this is a text, but sometimes a picture says more than a thousand words!
- The relationship of SAIs with stakeholders, such as for example, the tax services:
 - SAIs need to talk and cooperate with auditees to improve good governance and government spending
 - At the same time SAIS need to remain the auditor. This requires a fine balance.
 - SAIs are also in a perfect position to help governments connecting different policy areas, SAIs can work as mediators, or information brokers.



- The relationship of SAIs with the media and, equally important, the general public:
 - SAIs do their work to improve good governance and to check that government money is spent well. They do this for the general public, therefore the SAIs has a moral requirement to inform the general public on its work. The Netherlands Court of Audit does this in different ways, one of which is a dedicated website called “passion for public accountability” (www.passievoorpubliekeverantwoording.nl).
 - SAIs need to keep up-to-date with how the media and the general public communicate, not only to inform the public, but also to learn from the public. Therefore the Netherlands Court of Audit is now active on Twitter (@rekenkamer)
- There are no easy answers to the challenges of modern rapidly changing society. But it is essential that SAIs try to keep up with the changes, whilst keeping their authority. If possible the audience might want to discuss:
 - How can SAIs focus on processing information, analysing and refining it and at the same time not being exclusive, but rather inviting stakeholders to share information, experiences and ideas?
 - How can SAIs focus on making information accessible, reliable, relevant and useable for stakeholders (parliament, auditees, public)?