ESPGHAN Crisis Communications Protocol

Purpose of the Protocol
This protocol has been developed in order to provide organisational procedures that should be immediately and swiftly implemented when an organisational crisis occurs. The aim of this protocol is to ensure effective, unified and controlled communications to minimise the impact of the crisis and to mitigate further reputational damage to ESPGHAN.

The Crisis Team
The responsible person’s/organisations in the event of a crisis will be:
➢ The Chief and Deputy-Chief Spokespersons of ESPGHAN
➢ The Press Agency (Spink Ltd.)
➢ The Office

In the event that there are legal considerations to take into account, the Crisis Team may determine to seek legal counsel before undertaking any communications response to the crisis at hand.

Determining a Crisis
A crisis is defined as any event or circumstance that has a significantly negative impact on ESPGHAN’s reputation, credibility, or brand. It is important to note that this protocol does not apply when preventing a crisis occurring and it should only be used when a crisis actually occurs.

If any member of the Crisis Team considers that ESPGHAN is facing a crisis, it should inform the other members of the team in order to co-ordinate the necessary response and determine whether to invoke this protocol.

Designated Spokesperson
In the event of a crisis situation, ESPGHAN’s designated spokesperson will be the Chief Spokesperson of the organisation unless the Chief Spokesperson is unavailable, incapacitated or is the subject of the crisis, in which case the designated spokesperson will be the Deputy Chief Spokesperson.
➢ The Chief Spokesperson of the organisation is the President of the Society.
➢ The Deputy Chief Spokesperson of the organisation is the General Secretary.

The designated spokesperson will be assisted by the Office and the Press Agency, with the Press Agency fielding all first-line interactions with the media and the public.

Press Agency
The Press Agency will act as gatekeeper and will be responsible for managing all interactions with the media and the public. The Press Agency’s role will be to provide expert advice on messaging, statements and pre-prepared answers to possible questions.
Where possible, the Press Agency will seek to prevent live media interviews but, in such situations, where this is not possible, the designated spokesperson should not undertake any media interviews without prior briefing from the Press Agency.

**Media Blackout**
In the event of a crisis occurring, the Office should immediately issue advice to members, informing them of the situation and advising them on what to do in the event that they are contacted by an external party – including but not limited to the media and the public.

The standard advice:
➢ ESPGHAN members should not comment on a crisis situation
➢ ESPGHAN members should refer any and all media and public enquiries to the Press Agency
➢ ESPGHAN members should be made aware that ONLY the dedicated spokesperson will be permitted to speak officially on behalf of the Society

**Holding Statement**
In the event of a crisis occurring, the Crisis Team should look to issue a holding statement acknowledging the crisis and determining the action that the Society is taking in the immediate future.

This holding statement should be issued:
➢ On the front page of ESPGHAN’s website
➢ In a direct email to Members
➢ Posted on ESPGHAN’s official social media portals

Contingent on the advice of the Press Agency, the holding statement may also be proactively issued to the media, via the Press Agency’s media databases.

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