

# ISSUES MANAGEMENT & PUBLIC AFFAIRS



# Issues Management & Public Affairs at a glance

The environment of most organisations is currently changing rapidly, driven by mega-trends such as the sustainability revolution, technological advancements like AI, robotics, and energy, and massive geopolitical shifts. These changes have created a new paradigm where (1) managing social and political issues is more critical than ever, and (2) the methods and capabilities required to do so are evolving just as quickly.

This course explores the critical role of issues management and public affairs in helping organisations navigate the complex business-society interface. These two interlinked disciplines highlight the importance of addressing societal and political challenges, as they directly impact an organisation's societal license to operate and long-term success.

**Issues Management** provides a structured approach to identifying and tackling areas of societal contention that stem from a company's business model and strategy. This multidisciplinary effort requires collaboration across corporate functions to comprehensively address stakeholder concerns. Core aspects of Issues Management include environmental scanning to detect emerging challenges, strategic positioning to align with

stakeholder interests, and the proactive use of communication strategies and platform-building to manage issues effectively.

**Public Affairs**, on the other hand, focuses on integrating market and non-market strategies to address political and regulatory challenges. Public Affairs teams play a crucial role in navigating the public policy process, transforming potential threats into opportunities, and ensuring the organisation's actions align with societal and governmental expectations.

Through real-world case studies and practical analysis, participants will gain the skills needed to manage social and political issues effectively, positioning their organisations for success in a rapidly changing world.

# Learning objectives

The following key learning objectives have been set for this Advanced Elective Course Issues Management & Public Affairs:

- **Strategic Issue Identification:** Learn to identify and analyse key societal and political issues affecting business and society.
- **Sustain a Strategic Position:** Develop and maintain a sustainable position on critical social and political issues to protect reputation and license to operate.
- **Effective Responses to Issues:** Master strategies for managing complex issues and aligning responses with market and nonmarket strategies.
- **Impact of Government Policies:** Understand how government policies influence business and integrate political factors into strategic planning.
- **Engage with Policymakers:** Learn strategies for engaging with policymakers and shaping public policies that impact business.manner.
- **Analyse Competition:** Manage competition from various stakeholders in both market and nonmarket contexts.
- **Non-market Strategy:** Develop and execute a nonmarket strategy to address social, political, and regulatory challenges while driving long-term success.



# Your learning experience

This Advanced Elective Course follows a seminar-style approach, emphasising active participation for effective group learning. It primarily uses the case study method, as pioneered by Harvard Business School and adopted by top institutions worldwide. Beyond theoretical knowledge, participants engage in real-world scenarios to develop practical skills in issues management and public affairs. The course fosters an interactive learning environment where students actively contribute to discussions, enhancing their ability to think and act like professionals in the field.

The course provides an environment based on experiential learning, which will help you to assimilate new knowledge. It combines these learning tools:

- **Lectures** that provide the basic theoretical frameworks to approach every topic, and additional reading to further develop your understanding of each course topic.
- **Case studies** to help you discuss each topic in depth and better understand how to practise the theoretical concepts.
- **In-class discussions** which encourage active engagement and sharing of experiences.

## Certification and ECTS

Participants are encouraged to apply the theoretical and practical notions learned and developed in the classroom environment to a final concrete case. Participant teams will be assigned to one of the issues discussed in the case. The purpose of the assignment is to develop a 1,000 word white paper. This is a group assignment. You will learn more about this in the final session of the course.

You will receive a certificate upon successful completion of the course.

This course is worth 5 ECTS, if you take this as part of RSM's complete part-time MSc in Corporate Communication.

# Your learning experience

## For whom?

This course is designed for professionals managing the intersection of business, society, and politics, making it ideal for leaders in corporate communication, public affairs, strategy, and sustainability. Executives responsible for stakeholder engagement, government relations, risk management, and corporate reputation will gain valuable insights and tools. Additionally, consultants and policymakers will benefit from understanding how organisations integrate market and non-market strategies to navigate societal and political challenges effectively.

In our classroom, you will meet a diverse group of accomplished, driven and open-minded professionals from Europe and beyond, working in various communication positions in the public and private sectors, NGOs, and consultancies. All participants should be educated at least bachelor level, and have at least three years of work experience.



# Why Issues Management and Public Affairs?

This course equips participants with the skills to navigate complex business-society dynamics, protect corporate reputation, and maintain a societal license to operate. By mastering issues management and public affairs, professionals can anticipate risks, shape public policy, and integrate social and political considerations into their corporate strategy.

At RSM, you will learn from renowned faculty and industry experts, engage with real-world case studies, and gain practical tools to identify, address, and respond to emerging challenges. This course equips you with the strategic insights to align market and nonmarket strategies, build strong stakeholder relationships, and shape public policy discussions.

Designed for professionals in corporate communication, public affairs, strategy, and sustainability, this programme offers a unique blend of academic rigor and hands-on learning, ensuring you leave with actionable strategies to drive impact within your organisation.



# Programme overview

## Day 1

### *Foundations of Issues Management and Public Affairs*

- Foundations of Issues Management and Public Affairs
- The Process of Positioning Strategies
- Exploring Strategic Issue Positioning Framework
- Case Study

## Day 2

### *Aligning Strategies*

- Issue Management Strategies
- Best practices in Issues Management
- Integrating Market and Non-Market Strategies
- Case Study

## Day 3

### *Integrating Issues in Strategy*

- Public Affairs in a Competitive Context
- Advantages of Combining Issue Management and Public Affairs
- Case Study
- Wrap-Up



# Teaching experts

## **Professor Jean-Philippe Bonardi – *Enterprise for Society Center, Switzerland***

Jean-Philippe Bonardi is a Professor of Strategic Management and Co-Managing Director of the Enterprise for Society Center (E4S). From 2015 to 2021, he served as Dean of HEC Lausanne, the Faculty of Business and Economics at the University of Lausanne. He holds a PhD and a Master's degree from HEC School of Management (Paris, France) and a Master's degree in Economics from the University of Aix-en-Provence. Prior to his role at Lausanne, he was an Associate Professor at the Richard Ivey School of Business, University of Western Ontario (Canada), and has held visiting positions at the University of California, Berkeley, Tulane University (USA), and the University of New South Wales (Australia).

Professor Bonardi's research focuses on strategy formulation, particularly the interplay between firms' strategies and public policies, including macroeconomic and regulatory frameworks in a global context. He examines how firms are influenced by such policies, how they actively participate in their development, and how they manage relationships with external stakeholders such as media, NGOs, activists, and consumer groups. His work has been published in leading

academic journals, including the *Academy of Management Journal*, *Academy of Management Review*, and *Strategic Management Journal*. He also served as an Associate Editor of the *Academy of Management Review* from 2008 to 2011.

Beyond academia, Professor Bonardi has extensive experience as a consultant to companies in Europe and North America. He has also developed and delivered executive education programmes for organisations such as the United Nations, Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC), RBC Royal Bank, Veolia, Air France, and many others.

# Practical information

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Explore the latest updates on dates, fees, and locations by visiting our website at [rsm.nl/mcc](https://rsm.nl/mcc). Take advantage of the convenience of our frequently offered live online courses.

If you have any questions or need more information, we're here to help. Feel free to reach out to us at [ccc@rsm.nl](mailto:ccc@rsm.nl) or call us at +31 (0) 10 408 2851.

Ready to take the next step?  
Secure your spot by completing our online [application form](#).

We look forward to welcoming you to our programme!

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# About our Part-time Executive Master in Corporate Communication programme

This course can be followed on its own, or as a part of our **Part-time Executive MSc in Corporate Communication**.

We have offered this master programme since 1998, to communication professionals who wish to further enhance their careers. The aim is to provide strategic, leadership and management skills, as well as in-depth knowledge of corporate communication, reputation management and related disciplines. Participants who complete the whole programme are rewarded with a master degree from Erasmus University Rotterdam.

Our accredited programme is designed to be flexible, and can be combined with a full-time career. You can therefore start at any time, with any of our four modules:

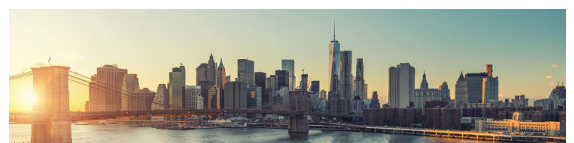
**Part I**  
**Foundation of corporate communication**  
Foundation course (in January or June)



**Part II Six advanced elective courses**  
Six advanced elective courses. You can choose six courses from the 15 that are offered, depending on your personal or professional interest and availability



**Part III**  
**Study trip**  
International study trip



**Part IV**  
**Master thesis**  
Master thesis.



To obtain the master degree you must complete all four modules. Upon completion, you will have gained insight from new academic, international perspectives, and learned from working with international peers from diverse industry backgrounds within Europe and beyond.

[www.rsm.nl/mcc](http://www.rsm.nl/mcc)

Accredited by



#### RSM Executive Education

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Burgemeester Oudlaan 50  
3062 PA Rotterdam  
The Netherlands  
[www.rsm.nl/mcc](http://www.rsm.nl/mcc)

#### Rotterdam School of Management Erasmus University (RSM)

is one of Europe's top-ranked business schools. RSM provides ground-breaking research and education furthering excellence in all aspects of management and is based in the international port city of Rotterdam – a vital nexus of business, logistics and trade. RSM's primary focus is on developing business leaders with international careers who can become a force for positive change by carrying their innovative mindset into a sustainable future. Our first-class range of bachelor, master, MBA, PhD and executive programmes encourage them to become critical, creative, caring and collaborative thinkers and doers.