

# Science and Society: a new Methodology to assess the Public Understanding of Climate.

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In the present world it is important the dissemination and understanding of science and of scientific results not only by politicians and by the so-called decision makers, but also by the general public at all levels of education. Several initiatives of Public Understanding of Science are more often promoted by different Institutions, although there is a lack of adoption of proven and successful methodologies. Nowadays one of the major fields of general concern is the climate and climate change issue. The most relevant questions such as: i) is climate change occurring? ii) at which rate? iii) what are the reasons? iv) which the mechanisms? deserve, on one hand, a deep scientific knowledge of the problem, and, on the other hand, the correct divulgation of scientific findings to various audiences. This dissemination process in this case is necessary in order not only to supply to the lack of correct information, but also to help to answer the question: What can be done by the Community and by the single citizen?, the last question being the most urgent and requiring a global approach, leading to the adoption of the more suitable adaptation and/or mitigation policies at national and international levels.

In this perspective, a project of Public Understanding of Science has been conducted in high schools in Rome – Italy showing how a rigorous approach to the problem can be useful in the dissemination of correct information. Three research Institutes of the Italian National Research Council (CNR), namely CERIS – Section on Institutions and research policy (coordinator), the Institute of Biometeorology and the Institute of Atmospheric Science and Climate organized a project called CLISCET (*Clima: Scienza ed Etica*, i.e. “Climate: Science and Ethics”).

This initiative, born in the framework of the Action plan “Science and Society” of the EU VI framework, started from the consideration that there is a lack not only of links between scientific policy and science, with a subsequent lack of counseling and advertising, but also a lack of trait-d’union between the scientific community on one side and media, society and institutions on the other side.

In the present communication, the methodology will be described and results of the Project will be discussed. Results show how the main aim of the project, i.e. to experiment a new methodology of dissemination, communication, and, possibly, of medi-

tation, on issues related to the scientific findings in climate science, through the establishment of relationships between scientist and cultural institutions, schools, politicians, has been successfully achieved, making the method a prototype to be adopted in the future with a wider audience on similar issues.