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Vatican media need to 'up their game,' says adviser

By Lauren Dugan [Catholic News Service](#)

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VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- A new papal commission is looking at how Vatican media outlets can better communicate the church's message "of healing, of love, of hope, and of generosity of spirit," said the panel's leader.

The group is drawing up "proposals that will recognize the particular importance of what the church is communicating and the way in which it can best communicate that message in the 21st century," said British Lord Chris Patten, commission president.

Patten, who formerly served as chairman of the BBC Trust, chancellor at the University of Oxford and governor of Hong Kong, spoke to Vatican Radio Sept. 24 about the commission's first meeting at the Vatican since it was established by Pope Francis in July.

Composed of 11 media experts from Europe, North America, Latin America, Asia and Vatican offices, the commission's aim is to propose how the Vatican's numerous media outlets can work more efficiently and closely together.

Mastering newer technologies and making sure different institutions work together is a challenge, Patten said.

"We have to make sure that the wonderful message the Catholic Church has to offer is offered in ways which get through to the young, to the poor, and to other groups in the most effective ways," he said.

Using the church's financial resources more effectively is also a goal of the committee, but not at the cost of diminishing outreach, Patten said.

Patten called Pope Francis an "extraordinary communicator," who "makes us realize how much the rest of us have to do -- to use a sporting phrase -- to up our game!"

The Vatican has nearly a dozen separate communication outlets and offices, many of which operate independently of one another. They include the Pontifical Council for Social Communications; the Vatican newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano; Vatican Radio; the Vatican television production studio, CTV; the Vatican Information Service; the Vatican press office; the Fides missionary news agency; the main Vatican website; the news.va news aggregator; the Vatican publishing house LEV; and the Vatican

printing press.

A reorganization of the media structures has been a long time in coming. A papal commission kick-started the process in December 2013 when it hired the U.S.-based global management consulting firm McKinsey & Company to provide recommendations for making the Holy See's communications' outlets more "efficient and modern."

Lord Patten said the commission wants to hear from everyone, including the Vatican's own media operations, as well as bishop conferences and outside journalists who cover the Vatican.

He said he hoped the commission would have proposals ready by early April to give to the Vatican's Secretariat of State and the Secretariat of the Economy.

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